

**Embodied Expression:
The Role of the Lived Body in Husserl's Notion of Intention-Fulfillment**

Irene McMullin

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In this paper I argue that Husserl's characterization of evidence as fulfilled intention is best understood in terms of the most fundamental mode in which we experience such fulfillment: the expression of the 'I can' through the responsivity of the lived body. Despite his early tendency to understand fulfillment primarily in terms of linguistic or logical meaning-identity, it is my contention that Husserl's later work should be viewed as increasingly characterizing the core meaning of fulfillment in terms of practical agency accomplishing its intentionality through the body that enacts and confirms that intentionality – though it is far from clear that Husserl himself recognized this direction in which his own phenomenological analyses were leading him. The central meaning of fulfillment, I will argue, is *realized intentionality* – and on the most basic level the unity of intention and realization is experienced in the practical 'holding sway' of the ego in the lived body. Thus the unity of self qua ego and self qua lived body that occurs in practical agency involves a pre-thematic experience of identity between intention and its fulfilling intuition – an identity that serves as the basis for all higher-order fulfillment experiences. The empty/fulfilled structure has its genetic and transcendental 'origin' in embodiment and its various levels of agential satisfaction or dissatisfaction.¹ As a result, the experience of ego-*Leib* unity underwrites our practical understanding of all other experiences of fulfillment.

¹ I am grateful to Steven Crowell for this formulation.

Though Husserl himself did not explicitly make or endorse this thesis, I will argue here that it is both consistent with his position and more phenomenologically compelling than the dominant Husserlian view, which locates the meaning of fulfillment in isolated acts of perception. Though the foundational role of embodied praxis is more closely associated with Husserl-inspired thinkers such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, I will argue that it is already a latent presence in Husserl's own work – a presence that makes itself known not only in his increasing emphasis on the complexity of the living body qua practical agent, but even in the metaphors that Husserl uses to describe the experience of fulfillment itself.

Fulfillment

What is fulfillment, and how do we recognize it as such? In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl characterizes the relationship between meaning-intending and meaning-fulfilling acts as a type of coinciding unity (*Deckungseinheit*)². This unity is experienced as such when the meaning intention is *fulfilled*, when it becomes “saturated with the fullness of exemplary intuition” (Introduction, §4, 173). The notion of fulfillment is the foundation of Husserl's epistemology, since fulfillment experiences serve as the *Evidenz* in terms of which phenomenological analysis can make a claim to truth with any legitimacy. *Ideas I* makes this clear: “*Immediate 'seeing,' not merely sensuous, experiential seeing, but seeing in the universal sense as an originally presentive*

² Husserl, Edmund. *Logical Investigations*. Trans. J.N. Findlay, Ed. Dermot Moran (New York: Routledge, 2001, VI, §6, 209). References to the *Investigations* will be to this edition and identified parenthetically in the text by “LI” followed by the investigation number, the section number and the page number from this translation.

consciousness of any kind whatever, is the ultimate legitimizing source of all rational assertions.”³

How are we to understand this ‘immediate seeing’ that is originally presentive of the things themselves? Husserl describes this experience of the intentional object’s givenness to experience as: “‘itself there’, ‘immediately intuited’, ‘given originaliter.’ For the Ego that signifies: not aiming confusedly at something, with an empty expectant intention, but being with it itself, viewing, seeing, having insight into, it itself.”⁴ Husserl believes there are many different types of such fulfillment experiences or “originally presentive intuitions” – be they spatio-temporal objects encountered in experiences of fulfilled perceptual intentionality, or ideal objects given in the fulfillment experiences corresponding to higher-order modes of intentionality. Because of this plurality of modes of fulfillment, one is lead to question the nature of their unity. What makes them all instances of *fulfillment*? What is the most basic stratum of meaning in terms of which this diversity of fulfillment types can all be understood as instances of fulfillment as such? In other words, in order to understand this kind of fulfillment relationship, we must engage in a phenomenological analysis of fulfillment itself, uncovering the most basic sense of the meaning of such fulfilling ‘saturation.’ How is the experience of fulfillment – the first-person experience of the unity of intention with saturating exemplary intuition –

³ Husserl, Edmund. (1998) *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book*. Trans. F. Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers). Section 44, pp. 36/36. Henceforth referenced parenthetically in the text as *Ideas I*, with original German pagination listed first, followed by the English translation.

⁴ Husserl, Edmund (1999) *Cartesian Meditations*. Trans. Dorion Cairns. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 92-93/57. Henceforth referenced parenthetically in the text as *CM*, with original German pagination listed first, followed by the English translation.

recognized as such? Further, how do we even investigate this problem when such events of fulfilling recognition are necessary for the investigation itself to proceed?

The argument of this paper is that the experience of the ego's holding sway over its own living body serves a foundational role in the meaning of fulfillment – a role, as we will see, that helps explain Husserl's consistent use metaphors of embodiment in his efforts to explain what he means by fulfillment.⁵

To speak of self-evidence, of self-evident givenness, then, here signifies nothing other than *self-givenness*, the way in which an object in its givenness can be characterized relative to consciousness as 'itself-there,' 'there in the flesh,' in contrast to its mere presentification [*Vergegenwärtigung*], the empty, merely indicative idea of it (EJ 19).

All instances of fulfillment implicitly refer back to this primal form of fulfillment in the givenness of the self to itself 'in the flesh' of embodied agency. Self-evidence and apodictic insight are themselves to be understood as idealized forms of this more fundamental experience of self-givenness – something being experienced as there 'in person.'

There are a number of different ways in which such a foundational role for embodiment could be understood:

⁵ For example, see *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, where he describes complete self-givenness as "complete givenness in the flesh." Husserl, Edmund. *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*. Trans. Anthony J. Steinbock. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001, 293/579. Henceforth referenced as *PAS*, with the German pagination listed first, followed by the page of this English translation. In *Experience and Judgment*, Husserl talks of how the givenness "in person [*Leibhafti*]" of a conflicting perceptual appearance can create doubt (Husserl, Edmund. *Experience and Judgment*. Ed. Ludwig Landgrebe. Trans. James Churchill and Karl Ameriks. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 93. Future references will be to this edition and identified parenthetically in the text by "EJ" followed by the page number. In *Ideas I*, originally presentive consciousness is characterized as a 'grasping' the fulfillment of the sense: "Focusing on the noema we find, fused with the pure sense, the characteristic 'in person' (as originary fulfilledness)" (*Ideas I* §136, 282-283).

- a.) As a *normative* foundation in the sense of an ideal standard against which all other acts of fulfillment are assessed for their degree of perfection.
- b.) As a *constitutive* foundation, serving as the blueprint for the ego's intentional achievements and, as such, constitutive of the basic meaning of fulfillment.
- c.) As the *abstractive* foundation or origin of our *concept* of 'fulfillment'⁶

My claim here is that the ego-*Leib* unity of the lived body is best understood as foundational in the sense of b.). It is not my intent to argue for c.) since it is clear that for Husserl, any number of experiences of a particular type could serve as the abstractive foundation of the concept designating that type. Thus the abstractive origin of someone's *concept* of fulfillment could be any specific example of fulfillment that is available if and when the agent decides to engage in the higher-order act of abstracting. What we are concerned to show here, rather, is that the ability to recognize higher-order instances *as* fulfillment presupposes a pre-conceptual familiarity with basic experiences of fulfillment – experiences which set the terms for what counts as such in our everyday pre-theoretical grasping of intentions as fulfilled.

How, then, should we understand the notion of a 'constitutive foundation' and the way in which ego-*Leib* unity play this role? By a 'constitutive foundation' I understand a core element of a complex meaning on which other aspects of that meaning depend – in this case, the meaning is intention-fulfillment and the core element is the ego-*Leib* unity in which practical agency is ongoingly realized. The argument of this paper will be that grasping the meaning of fulfillment as such depends on an implicit awareness of ourselves

⁶ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for helping me clarify these three different interpretations of what such a foundational role could involve.

as agents who form intentions that may or may not be realized in the world. Fulfillment is about intentionality, and intentionality is fundamentally a feature of practical agency – it is an orientation toward the world in which expectations are set up and then realized. In and through specific moments of fulfillment, there is an on-going implicit confirmation or realization of oneself *as* a successful practical agency. Thus the most basic sense of coinciding unity grounding the meaning of fulfillment as such is the experienced identity of different facets of our agency: the intending ego and the embodied agency that realizes or fulfills that intending.

Perfect fulfillment would be experienced as such when one's actions perfectly manifested one's practical striving; where intention and enactment are so perfectly fitted that there is no gap in one's experience. Because it does not always display this perfection of fit or coinciding unity, ego-*Leib* unity is unable to fully serve the normative foundational role staked out in a.) – which is better captured by ideal instances of perfect fulfillment as found in, say, math or logic. Thus a.) specifies the ideal of perfect fulfillment against which particular instances of fulfilled intention are assessed for the *degree* of fulfillment that they display. Husserl expresses this idea in *Cartesian Meditations* as follows: “*Perfect evidence* and its correlate, *pure and genuine truth*, are given as ideas lodged in the striving for knowledge, for fulfillment of one's meaning intention” (CM 52/12). He acknowledges there that “the question whether adequate evidence does not necessarily lie at infinity may be left open” (CM 55/15). The characterization of fulfillment as a condition that can obtain in *degrees*, however, indicates that while the ideal of perfect fulfillment is in some sense constitutive of the basic meaning of fulfillment itself, it only

functions as such against a background understanding of fulfillment as a continuum or range of possible unity. The ideal of perfect fulfillment is an abstraction derived from the more basic meaning of fulfillment understood in terms of degrees of coinciding givenness (LI VI, §39, 263). As we will see below, the unification of ego and *Leib* in the expressive manifestation of agency comes in degrees in this way. Thus the baseline of unity constitutive of embodied agency sets the terms for understanding fulfillment itself, but it is only when there is a perfect fit between ego and expressive body that we could also see this unity serving as a pre-theoretical standard for fully adequate evidence.

Though there will be degrees of fit evident in such embodied fulfillment, then, the experience that it designates is so foundational to the meaning of intentional agency that it establishes the terms in which fulfillment is understood in the most basic way. Despite the fact that there will be different modes of fulfillment for different types of intentional object, the unified fulfillment experienced in the ego holding sway over the body gives fulfillment itself its very sense – namely, that of an intention being realized. Thus the ego-*Leib* fulfillment experience serves as a pre-theoretical constitutive foundation of the meaning of fulfillment itself.

Perception

In contrast to this suggestion, one might be tempted to take *perception* as the paradigm for understanding the meaning of fulfillment, since perception seems to display the relevant relationship between empty intention and fulfilling intuition in a clear and basic way. For example, I expect to find coffee in my mug and when I look in the cup the

immediate givenness of the coffee to my perception fills my hitherto empty orientation to the object. Such examples reveal the phenomenal unity of intention and intuition essential to the notion of fulfillment, and, one might claim, do so with greater accuracy.

Experience and Judgment seems to support this prioritization of perception.⁷ There Husserl notes that the ideal of fulfillment or self-evidence has never been adequately addressed; it has, for the most part, simply been assumed. Nevertheless it too requires a justification:

[P]roblems of self-evidence, which supply the natural point of departure of every regressive subjective questioning concerning logical structures, have, in the tradition, never been seriously understood and examined at all as such. Men believed that they knew in advance what self-evidence is. They believed that they could measure every other item of cognition against ideal, absolute, apodictically certain knowledge. They did not suspect that this ideal of knowledge (and with it the cognitions of the logician, which imply a claim of apodicticity for themselves) could for its part also require a justification and originary foundation (EJ 18).

What is the justification and originary foundation for the ideal of knowledge? It seems that it might be best understood in terms of perception: though self-evidence has different modes of object-givenness, it is ultimately a type of self-giving immediacy that Husserl consistently describes in terms of perceivable physical presence. Thus Husserl notes in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* that “all truth and all judicative evidence, so we see, are related back to the primitive basis, experience”⁸. Experience, for Husserl, ultimately means a direct relation to an individual sensuous object (EJ 27). In order to arrive at the primitive

⁷ This is not to suggest that Husserl does not prioritize perception elsewhere. E.g. “Perception is the primordial mode of intuitiveness” (PAS 69/110). Mary Rawlinson argues that for Husserl perception – and more specifically vision – acts as the model on which truth qua fulfillment is understood: “Perspectives and Horizons: Husserl on Seeing the Truth” in *Sites of Vision*. Levin, David Michael (ed). Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997, pp. 265-292.

⁸ Husserl, Edmund. (1969) *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. Translated by Dorion Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 211. Future references will be to this edition and identified parenthetically in the text by *FTL*, followed by the page number.

basis of self-givenness, the objects of judgment must be absolutely “*ultimate substrates*” (EJ 26) – in other words, they can in no way have been generalized or subsumed to a category. The consequence of this is that “every thinkable judgment *ultimately* refers to individual objects” (EJ 26). The pre-predicative self-givenness of individual perceptual objects is therefore the first element of any theory of judgment (EJ 27). Though the purpose of judgment is to achieve the higher level of ‘once and for all’ confirmations [*Feststellungen*] of the object’s identity and its ‘how and what,’ such confirmations are always *grounded* on the immediacy of fulfillment accomplished at the level of the sensuous givenness of particulars: “...the structures of perception are taken into consideration only to the extent that it is necessary to understand how, on the basis of sensuous perceptive experience, logical operations, with their resulting logical formations, are established” (EJ 68). The higher order objects of judgment are thus “founded objectivities.”⁹ They are founded on primal intentional objects – i.e. perceptual noemata or sense-objects that are graspable in the most direct way.

Such claims would seem to put perception in a good position for understanding it as the key to the meaning of fulfillment. However, when Husserl speaks of the sensuous perceptual experience of individual objects as being foundational for the logical, he notes that “At the point at which our analyses begin, various constitutive strata and operations are therefore *presupposed*” (EJ 68, emphasis mine). These presuppositions include a field of spatial things, kinesthetic strata, and temporality. These are all “dimensions of

⁹ Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book*. Trans. F. Kersten. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989, p. 17/19. Henceforth referenced parenthetically in the text as *Ideas II*, with German pagination listed first, followed by the pagination from this translation.

constitutive investigation which lie still deeper than those conducted here and which can only be alluded to at this time” (EJ 68). In other words, *Experience and Judgment*'s attempt to investigate the foundation of the ideal of fulfillment stops short of the constitutive strata that are, I believe, central for understanding it. These dimensions of investigation that 'lie deeper still' are what must ultimately cause us to be unsatisfied with Husserl's claims that *perception* is the most primal form of fulfilling presence, since perception is only possible against the background of a more primordial form of unity – that of the ego-expressing body engaged in the act of perception. Perception comes late in the game, so to speak, since all specific events of perception depend on and are secondary to the unity of the perceiving body. The ongoingly confirmed status of the body as unified organ of perception demonstrates a pre-theoretical mode of self-givenness prior to and as a condition for particular perceptions. By examining this point in greater detail, we will be in a position to turn to the mode of confirmation characteristic of *ego-Leib* unity and show how it provides a constitutive foundation for understanding the fulfillment experience found in perception. Despite the tendency to grant perception *the* foundational role in the meaning of fulfillment, then, perception's dependency on accomplishments of the living body requires us to re-think this tendency and recognize, instead, that the fulfillment accomplished in the body's ego expressiveness is more basic than that experienced in individual acts of perception.

The Living Body

By addressing these constitutive dimensions that lie ‘deeper still’ than even *Experience and Judgment*’s ultimate substrates of judgment, it will become apparent that modeling the fulfillment relationship on perception is only a first step toward understanding its more fundamental grounding on embodied experience. Husserl recognized that one cannot understand perception without recognizing the complex and dynamic role of the perceiving body. As he begins to realize in *Ideas II*, it is the *living body* that must be taken as the ‘ultimate substrate’ of experience, the first ‘individual object’ in terms of which all other objects are perceived:

...the ego’s active functioning of the living body or the bodily organs, belongs in a fundamental, essential way to all experience of bodies....In a quite unique way the living body is constantly in the perceptual field immediately, with a completely unique ontic meaning....[as that] in which I hold sway quite immediately.¹⁰

Note his emphasis on ‘immediacy’ in all of his characterizations of ‘holding sway’ – an emphasis that demonstrates the distinction on this level between *Leib* and *Körper*. The former refers to the body as the worldly manifestation of one’s agency – the living body – while the latter refers to the body understood as a spatio-temporal object. Husserl is clear that fully constituting the body as a spatially and temporally objective thing requires the presence of other embodied knowers.¹¹ But understood as living organ of will, it is the expressive Body – not another object in the perceptual field – that serves as the primordial and immediate ‘object’ of experience in a “quite unique way.” Perceptual objects –

¹⁰ Husserl, Edmund. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Ed. David Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970, p. 107. Henceforth referenced in the text as *Crisis*, followed by the pagination from this translation.

¹¹ See, for example, *Ideas II*, pp. 166-167/175 and 242/254.

including my own body qua *Körper* – are secondary to the ‘holding sway’ of the living body, which provides the perceptual terrain in terms of which specific perceptual objects can appear.

This perceptual terrain is accomplished by several essential features that distinguish the living body from all other objects. First, the body is a bearer of localized fields of sensations constitutive of a kind of irrefutable self-presence of the body to itself. Through kinaesthetic self-awareness and the sense of touch, I am given to myself as body. In touching my hand I find that there is a “series of touch-sensations, which are ‘localized’ in it” (*Ideas II*, 145/152). Unlike vision – in which one can in a sense forget oneself – touch binds me to the body and makes me present to myself *as* body. Husserl suggests that the localization of touch is constitutive of the first-person self-immediacy of the body that is not found in vision. “What I call the seen Body is not something seeing which is seen, the way my Body as touched Body is something touching which is touched” (*Ideas II*, 148/155). If I only had vision “it would only be as if the Ego, in unity with this freedom in the kinaesthetic, could immediately and freely move the material *thing*, *Body*.” (*Ideas II*, 150/158). In contrast, through the immediate givenness of self to self constituted in touch, the body’s unique status as *living* is accomplished.¹²

¹² In “The Body in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty,” (*Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 27 (1999): 205-226). Taylor Carman takes this to be indicative of the fundamental flaw that makes Merleau-Ponty’s account of embodiment superior to Husserl’s; namely, that Husserl presents an overly mentalistic account in which there is a transcendental self prior to and independent of the body that is only recognized as ‘its’ through the act of identification accomplished through touch. Carman argues that this is evident in Husserl’s claim that it is only through touch that “Body as such can be constituted originally” (*Ideas II*, pg. 158). But it is important to remember that this discussion occurs in §35 of *Ideas II*, where Husserl is considering the question of “the constitution of man as he presents himself to a naturalistic point of view: as material body upon which are constructed new strata of being” (*Ideas II*, 143/151). In other words, Husserl is not suggesting that this is the only or most essential dimension in terms of which bodily intentionality is first-personally manifest. Rather, when *starting* with a naturalistic conception of our own bodies it is through the sense of touch that we

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... *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*, 150/157).

The body is also the ‘zero point’ of my orientation toward the world – another essential feature for understanding the possibility of perception. The body is “the bearer of the here and now, out of which the pure Ego intuits space and the whole world of the senses. Thus each thing that appears has *eo ipso* an orienting relation to the Body, and this refers not only to what actually appears but to each thing that is supposed to be able to appear” (*Ideas II*, 56/61). All of my experiences are ‘oriented’ in terms of this bodily place from which I perceive the world. I understand spatial relationships like left/right, up/down, near/far in terms of their placement in relation to my body: “I have all things over and against me; they are all ‘there’ – with the exception of one and only one, namely the Body, which is always ‘here’” (*Ideas II*, 159/166). Perception’s intrinsically perspectival mode of givenness rests on the oriented nature of the body and the perceptual terrain that it opens up.

Finally, perception depends on the body understood as the unique vehicle of the will insofar as perception is essentially and irrevocably *mobile*. We experience spatio-temporal objects as having a horizon of possible future profiles because of the possibility

become aware of the failures of that attitude in capturing the nature of the human body: once I include touch sensations, Husserl says, “then it is not that the physical thing is now richer, but instead *it becomes Body [Leib], it senses*” (*Ideas II*, 145/152). None of this rules out Husserl’s recognition that from the personalistic attitude – which has priority – the body is always already non-thematically present to me as the manifestation of my agency. To keep this discussion within manageable limits, I am bracketing the question here whether Merleau-Ponty did a better job of recognizing this point than Husserl himself did. For further discussion of these issues, see Crowell, Steven “The Normative in Perception,” in *Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 124-146.

of getting closer and grasping; a possibility that is dependent on the ego successfully holding sway over the body such that it is the effective vehicle of its striving. The active agency of the body accomplishing the ego's intentional orientation is a necessary condition of the elements constitutive of any particular perception. Moving one's eyes this way or that is necessary to gather visual data, applying pressure on something allows one to assess its resistance, etc. Husserl regularly discusses the necessary if/then relationship between bodily movement and the possible series of sensations that it will open up.¹³

We constantly find here this two-fold articulation: kinaesthetic sensations on the one side, the motivating; and the sensations of features on the other, the motivated... Perception is without exception a *unitary accomplishment* which arises essentially out of the playing together of two *correlatively related functions* (*Ideas II*, 58/63).

Thus the perceptual terrain is accomplished in the holding sway that manifests the responsiveness of the living body to the 'I can' of agency. The very possibility of perception depends on the body successfully serving as the unique vehicle of the ego's striving:

...in all perception and perceptual exhibition (experience) the Body is involved as freely moved sense organ, as freely moved totality of sense organs, and hence there is also given the fact that, on this original foundation, all that is thingly-real in the surrounding world of the Ego has its relation to the Body (*Ideas II*, 56/61).

¹³ For further discussion of perception qua dynamic and temporally extended correlation between perceptual systems and experienced objects, see Drummond, John, "On Seeing a Material Thing in Space: The Role of Kinaesthesia in Visual Perception" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (Vol. 40, No. 1 (1979) pp. 19-32); Pacheri, Elizabeth "*Leibhaftigkeit* and Representational Theories of Perception" (pp. 148-160) and Jean-Luc Petit "Constitution by Movement: Husserl in Light of Recent Neurobiological Findings" (pp. 220-244) both in *Naturalizing Phenomenology*, Ed. Jean Petitot, Francisco Varela, Bernard Pachoud and Jean-Michel Roy. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

It is for these reasons that Husserl will claim that “For the person, the living body is the privileged object in the surrounding world, over which it holds sway immediately”¹⁴.

Such claims about the *immediacy* of the connection between the intending agency and the body that enacts or fulfills that agency may complicate any attempt to understand all fulfillment experiences in terms of it. After all, one might object that despite its *founding* on the lived body, perception should continue to be taken as the appropriate model for understanding the fulfillment relationship, since fulfillment is standardly understood as a relationship between two distinct experiences - an empty or signitive experience that is then “fulfilled” by an intuitive (e.g. perceptual) experience that bears the same meaning-content as that being designated in the signitive experience. Both experiences reveal themselves to be presenting the same object, thereby providing the relationship of *Deckungseinheit* characteristic of fulfillment. And most importantly, in doing so, the givenness of the object in intuition *confirms* what the empty intention merely posits. In other words, what seems to be essential to fulfillment is that the one experience provides *evidence* for the legitimacy of the other. How can the ego-*Leib* unity play this kind of truth-making role – a role characteristic of perception and one that is taken to be essential to the meaning of fulfillment? Just because the unity of the lived body is a necessary condition for the fulfillment relationships found in perception does not allow us to conclude that this unity is itself a constitutive *instance* of such confirmatory fulfillment.

¹⁴ *Crisis*, p. 323, Appendix III: “Natural Science and Humanistic Science.” The immediate givenness of the ego in the body is available only in one’s own case and can only be approximated in other relationships, a fact that plays a pivotal role in Meditation V of the *Cartesian Meditations*, where the ‘accessible inaccessibility’ definitive of the phenomenological meaning of the Other turns on the fact that the other’s body intimates or expresses the presence of another ‘I can’ that can never be directly experienced as such. For an examination of this point, see Tanja Staehler’s “What is the Question to Which Husserl’s *Fifth Cartesian Meditation* is the Answer?” *Husserl Studies* 24 (2008): 99-117.

To answer this objection, we need to examine further the nature of the relationship between ego and *Leib* that is presupposed in perceptual acts.

Expression

Husserl regularly uses the concept of *expression* (*Ausdruck*) to capture the essence of this kind of ego-*Leib* unity.¹⁵ What does he mean by ‘expression,’ and how will it help us to understand the living body’s role in the meaning of fulfillment?

Husserl’s early discussions of ‘expression’ in the *Logical Investigations* are focused exclusively on the linguistic meaning of expression. These expressions are presented as signs that instantiate a meaning-intention. In keeping with his characterization of the ideality of meaning, he argues that expressive speech acts cannot be broken down solely into the physical sign and the mental state of the person who uses it. The expression does not merely indicate a mental state but instantiates an ideal meaning and thereby establishes a relation to what is objective. When this objective something that is meant is actually present then the meaning-intention embodied in the expression is fulfilled. Thus an expression sets up conditions of possible fulfillment insofar as the meaning that it embodies is or is not realized. Such fulfillment occurs when the object is given in an act that becomes “fused with the meaning-conferring acts in the unity of knowledge or

¹⁵ Ulrich Melle noted the extensive use of the concept of ‘expression’ in his paper entitled “Das Rätsel des Ausdrucks” (Paper presented at the Husserl-Archive Arbeitstag, November 2006, Catholic University, Leuven). Melle discusses the degree to which Husserl uses metaphors of the body-soul relationship to characterize expression, but he does not pursue what I take to be the most important implications of this: “Ausdrücke sind Doppeleinheiten, in denen wir den Gedanken einen festeren, dauerhafteren und leichter verfügbaren Körper geben” (p. 16). Husserl also uses the notion of ‘externalization’ to capture this double aspect of the self: “The radical consideration of the world is the systematic and purely internal consideration of the subjectivity which ‘expresses [or ‘externalizes’] itself in the exterior” (*Crisis* 113).

fulfillment” (*LI I*, §9, 192). Thus an expression is a unity in which a physical form embodies a meaning that can then be fulfilled through an act of intuitive givenness.

If we seek a foothold in pure description, the concrete phenomenon of the sense-informed expression breaks up, on the one hand, into the *physical phenomenon* forming the physical side of the expression, and, on the other hand, into the *acts* which give it *meaning* and possibly also *intuitive fullness*, in which its relation to an expressed object is constituted. In virtue of such acts, the expression is more than a merely sounded word. It *means* something, and in so far as it means something, it relates to what is objective (*LI I*, §9, 191-2).

When employed in communication with others, an expression “also functions as an indication” (*LI I*, §6, 188) – i.e. as a sign that intimates the speaker’s “sense-giving inner experience” (*LI I*, §7, 189) to one who does not have direct access to it.¹⁶ Qua communication, then, expressions are a type of external manifestation or incarnation of the ‘internal’ meaning-intending. Expressions need not play this communicative (indicative) role, however: they may also occur in solitary life simply as the meaning-conferring act of making a sign that is infused with sense (*LI I*, §9, 192). The import of these claims for intersubjectivity will be examined in greater detail below, but it is important to note here that Husserl distinguishes between the speaker’s *own* experience of the expressive manifestation of her meaning intention and the hearer’s experience of this unity. The hearer, he argues, can only presume the correspondence between the speaker’s meaning intention and the sense-informed expression that embodies it – he cannot himself directly experience this unity. The speaker, in contrast, will “live in the understanding of a word”

¹⁶ Husserl contrasts expression with indication in *LI I*, §5-7, 187-190. In “The Living Body as the Origin of Culture: What the Shift in Husserl’s Notion of ‘Expression’ Tells us About Cultural Objects” *Husserl Studies* (2009) 25:57–79, Molly Brigid Flynn characterizes the difference as follows: “The indicating thing and the indicated thing are phenomenally two, and, due to the apprehension of a real connection between them, we are led directly from belief in one to the belief in the other. In contrast, the expression and the expressed are phenomenally unified, and we are lead through one to the intention of the other by way of an act of meaning” (61-62). Thus while expression involves a prior unity, indication involves separateness.

(*LII*, §8, 190) i.e. in the immediate experience of the sign as expressive of a meaning that she intends as such. This meaning-intending establishes the conditions for what will count as fulfillment of that meaning; namely, the intuitive givenness of the objectivity picked out by that meaning-saturated expression.

Comprehensive Unities

In *Ideas II* Husserl expands the notion of expression significantly; in the early work he reserves this term simply for the way that verbal expressions enact or embody a meaning, while in the later work the concept comes to characterize all instances of what he calls comprehensive unities: “the unity of the ‘expression’ and the ‘expressed’ ... *belongs to the essence of all comprehensive unities*” (*Ideas II*, 236/248). Comprehensive unities refer to all unities that have “as it were a sensuous Body for a spiritual meaning that is grasped by way of understanding” (Husserl, *Ideas II*, 320/333). This includes the bodies of others and cultural objects such as artworks. But Husserl argues that *those* comprehensive unities are in turn founded on a more primordial form of such unity: the unity of one’s own ego and *Leib*: “all such comprehensive unities refer back to the unity of Body and spirit in the ordinary and most proper sense” (*Ideas II*, supplements, 320/333).

How are we to understand this suggestion that the relationship between ego and *Leib* serves as the exemplar for the unity of all comprehensive unities, and that these relationships can all be understood in terms of the idea of *expression*? If we are to take the early discussions of expression to be instructive for understanding this expanded sense of the term, it seems that Husserl is suggesting the following analogy: the living body is to the

expressive word as the ego is to the intended meaning embodied in that word. In other words, the living body is expressive insofar as it instantiates the intending ego, just as the word instantiates the meaning intended through it. On this reading, then, the intending ego is the meaning of the body in which it finds expression.

If this is right, how does the notion of *fulfillment* relate to the comprehensive unity of ego and *Leib*? As we saw in the case of linguistic expression, the expressive word functions as a meaning-intention that is fulfilled when the object designated by that word is brought to intuitive givenness. As such, the expressive word essentially functions as an empty meaning intention that must be brought together with a separate fulfilling act in order for fulfillment to occur. This does not appear to be the case when it comes to comprehensive unities, however, since they manifest first and foremost as a whole in which the constitutive elements ongoingly confirm their mutual presence within that whole, and in doing so they do not point to a fulfilling condition outside of themselves. Rather, a single object is grasped as simultaneously manifesting both a bodily and a spiritual aspect. There are not two distinct experiences – one of the bodily and one of the spiritual aspect – followed by the recognition of their correspondence. Rather, the expressive whole ongoingly presents the continued unity of the elements comprising it. A single object or event is experienced as having two different but related aspects – aspects that are not experienced as separate but as facets of a single complex whole, just as the meaningful word is experienced simultaneously as physical sign and bearer of meaning. Though these different facets are present to varying degrees in many comprehensive unities (e.g. the other's psyche can only ever be apperceived, not perceived in the way his

body can) – the unified whole nevertheless has priority and the aspects can only be separated through abstraction (*Ideas II*, 241/253).

As a result, it seems that the nature of the unification of aspects found in expressive comprehensive unities makes it difficult to understand how an experience of ego-body *Deckungseinheit* could count as a genuine instance of *fulfillment*. After all, the one does not seem to provide *evidence* for the validity of the other, as is the case in supposedly paradigm instances of intention-fulfillment like perception, whereby the empty intention is *confirmed* by the subsequent intuition. Perception unifies fulfilling givenness with prior intention and thereby legitimates the latter. Why, then, should we take the expressive unity of body and spirit to be foundational for the meaning of the unity involved in fulfillment generally if it does not have this evidence structure? After all, the early account of expression only appears to explain how meaning *intending* is accomplished via incarnation in the expressive word. Even if the ‘reference back’ to the lived body is constitutive of comprehensive unities, why should we take this to be constitutive for understanding the legitimation structure of fulfillment itself?

In answering this important objection, we must be sure not to allow the specific evidence structure of perception to color our understanding of what kinds of fulfillment might be possible. As he notes in *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*: “not every process of bringing to intuition, that is, not every fulfillment is confirming” (68/109). We can see why this might be so when we recall what Husserl says in *Ideas I* regarding the necessity of distinguishing between mental and physical experiences. In the latter case there is a necessary inadequacy built into all such perceptual experience:

Of necessity, a physical thing can only be given one-sidedly;’ and that signifies, not just incompletely or imperfectly in some sense or other, but precisely what presentation by adumbrations prescribes. A physical thing is necessarily given in mere ‘modes of appearance’ in which necessarily a *core of ‘what is actually presented’* is apprehended as being surrounded by a horizon of ‘*co-givenness, which is not givenness proper, and of more or less vague indeterminateness*’ (*Ideas I*, 80/94).

Because of the adumbrated quality of perceptual experience, there is necessarily a halo of absent but co-given dimensions surrounding the immediate presence of the fulfilling intuition. The perceptual object is given in an unfolding series of partial profiles that can never be completed. As such, perception can never entirely rule out skepticism. Thus *perceptual* fulfillment is necessarily understood in terms of legitimation procedures because it gradually reveals dimensions of a domain of experience that is irrevocably haunted by uncertainty and contingency. The structure of perception *calls out* for legitimation:

It is of the essence of the physical world that no perception, however perfect, presents anything absolute in that realm; and essentially connected with this is the fact that any experience, however extensive, leaves open the possibility that what is given does *not* exist in spite of the continual consciousness of its own presence ‘in person.’ According to eidetic law it is the case that *physical existence is never required as necessary* by the givenness of something physical, but is always in a certain manner contingent. This means: It can always be that the further course of experience necessitates giving up what has already been posited with a *legitimacy derived from experience* (*Ideas I*, 86/102).

Characterizing *all* fulfillment relationships in terms of the confirmation structure of perception, however, presupposes as universal the demand for existential evidence that is built in to the dubitability of our experience of perceptual objects. But the basic meaning of

the intention/fulfillment relationship must have such an evidence structure only if it is defined in advance as being perceptual in that way. Since Husserl indicates that there are multiple kinds of fulfillment, however, we might legitimately ask if the demand for evidence built into perception is indeed constitutive for understanding *all* fulfillment relationships.

Despite such potential answers to the objection, there is nevertheless a sense in which the idea of confirmation seems intrinsic to the meaning of intention fulfillment. How are we to understand such confirmatory dimensions of the fulfillment experience if they are *not* understood in advance exclusively in terms of perceptual evidence – i.e. in terms of existence-confirmation cases where this existence is always open to doubt?

If we return to our discussion of expression and comprehensive unities, it seems possible that though the fact of the relationship of the parts – the ego embodied in *Leib* as the tool of its agency – is not in question when we grasp the whole as such, we might nevertheless experience specific manifestations of that relationship as being more or less successful in expressing that whole. This will require us to clarify the nature of the meaning-bestowing intentionality that is operative in the ego-*Leib* relationship and what kind of fulfillment possibilities it establishes. Doing so will show us the way in which the analogy with linguistic expression ultimately fails, since the living body must be understood as both the expressive manifestation of the ego's intentionality *and* the ongoing confirmatory fulfillment of that intentionality. In other words, the expressive word embodies a meaning whose confirmation or fulfillment comes from outside itself¹⁷, while

¹⁷ Except, perhaps, in the case of linguistic expressions that are themselves manifestations of agency (e.g. "I promise").

comprehensive unities involve an expressiveness that is in a sense self-fulfilling. The ego-*Leib* whole – like the meaning-word whole – specifies a possibility of fulfillment, but in the former case that fulfillment is ongoingly occurring in the *Leib*'s successful expression of the ego's intentionality as such. Though the ego-*Leib* unity is not a contingent or external unity in the same way that the unity of perceptual intuitions and intentions is, it nevertheless is more or less successful at manifesting or *illustrating*¹⁸ its unity within its specific actions. The living body is like a word that speaks on behalf of its own fittingness for expressing the meaning intention that it is attempting to express. Put otherwise, acts that manifest the coinciding unity of intending ego and expressive body will not serve as evidence for the *existence* of what is an on-going and irrefutable fact (i.e. that one is an embodied practical agent). Nevertheless, there is a sense in which experiences of this unity can play a kind of confirmatory or demonstrative role, illustrating the legitimacy of the connection between the intending ego and the body in which it comes to expression.

Modes of Intentionality

In order to understand how this can be, we must distinguish between two different modes of intentionality: that displayed in specific acts – reaching for the coffee, perceiving the apple – and that characterizing an agent's overarching drive to grasp the world and recognize itself in that grasping.¹⁹ The latter is characterized by Husserl in terms of the pre-

¹⁸ Husserl uses both “confirming” and “illustrating” as stand-ins for the “logically basic relation of fulfilling” (*LI I*, §9, 192).

¹⁹ This general distinction is sometimes characterized as a distinction between intrinsic and derivative intentionality; the latter refers to particular intentional acts, while the former refers to the underlying mode of agency that makes this directedness toward things possible. For a discussion of the intrinsic/derivative debate, see John Haugeland's “Understanding: Dennett and Searle” in his *Essays in the Metaphysics of Mind*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 291-304..

theoretical striving for knowledge. This intentional orientation should not be understood as a deliberate position-taking on the part of the *ego cogito*, however, but as a general orientation of its agency itself:

Striving after knowledge in the very broadest sense is precisely a striving directed toward being itself, and already belonging here is the most primitive presenting that has the structure of aiming-at. To be sure, we must not take this striving as an isolated intending, but rather, if we want to have the normal concept of knowing in the logical sense, we must conceive of the epistemic striving in connection with a habitual consistency that does not break off and is not arrested in a single act” (*PAS*, 85/128-129).²⁰

On the most primal level the very possibility of perception depends on the body’s perceptual systems being harmonized and placed in the service of the ego’s pre-theoretical project of knowing the world. Thus the kind of fulfillment operating in distinct acts of

²⁰ Here one might object that this ‘intention’ to know the world better is simply intrinsic to intentionality rather than a practical ordering of the self toward the world, and this is why Husserl talks about it as an “instinct” towards clarifying our sense of objects and towards finding the truth. In other words, it does not involve an active intention of any sort but is simply present in other intentions. At times Husserl does indeed appear to be hesitant about definitively endorsing the practical view I am presenting here: “One cannot say without further ado that inherent in every consciousness is a striving, an intending toward its object to possess the self [of the object]” (*PAS* 85/128). Nevertheless, he appears to want to do so: “Still, it is certainly a general, essential possibility that every consciousness, no matter through what kind of motivation (we mentioned associative awakening in the passive states), takes on an orientation, and in this connection takes on the intending directedness toward the very self of being. At most, there is the possibility that every consciousness becomes a consciousness that intends being, that it become a striving after knowledge, an endeavouring meaning that is satiated in a synthesis of confirmation” (*PAS* 85/129). Husserl speaks of this in *Experience and Judgment* as “the striving which belongs to the essence of normal perception” – a striving that is not to be characterized as an explicit act of the will, but as a practical tendency toward more complete grasping (*EJ* 85). Despite Husserl’s initial hesitations, then, he appears to become increasingly comfortable with viewing this striving as a kind of pre-theoretical intentional orientation that underwrites but is different than all other specific intentions. Characterizing this kind of intentionality as an ‘instinct’ ignores the sense in which I experience myself as *at stake* in this striving – the way in which my agency is present to itself as a task that it can succeed or fail at manifesting. This being at stake in the success of my activities is what establishes that the success and failure conditions of specific intentions show up as such. Thus it is not enough to say that this striving to be a successful agent is reducible to all the local strivings of specific intentions, since that obscures the way that my struggle to be in the world well – the fact that it *matters* to me in a particular way – sets up the specific intentional strivings as having success conditions. To develop this argument fully might require a Heidegger-style account of the self as at *issue* for itself in such a way that specific intentional orientations are experienced as normative. See, for example, Crowell 2013, “The Normative in Perception.” The key point here, however, is that both Husserl’s own texts and the phenomena themselves give us reason to adopt this as the best way to read Husserl’s account of intentional agency. I am grateful to an anonymous referee for pushing me on this point.

perception only has its meaning *as* fulfillment in light of the over-arching epistemic striving of the ego that succeeds or fails at expressing itself into a unified world experience. The perception of ‘hot coffee’, for example, can only serve as *confirmation* or *evidence* if my practical agency has already set up an expectation of the way perceptual horizons will continue to maintain and confirm my harmonious world experience.²¹

Husserl discusses this point in *Experience and Judgment*, when he shows the manner in which practical agency involves a constant flow of confirmations that include a reference back to the agency of the ego-*Leib* unity that performs them: experience has “from the first an open, empty horizon of explications to carry out (in the ‘I can,’ ‘I can proceed,’ ‘get a closer look,’ ‘turn it around,’ and so on)” (EJ 38). The paradigm of “the body which confirms itself in the harmony of experience” (EJ 54) is not an external object that acts as an identity pole within the manifold of experience, but the living body of the practical knower whose embodied ‘I can’ – whose *agency* – is constantly confirming itself and its projects in the harmony of intentionally directed kinesthetic activity.²² In doing so, the ego-*Leib* structure establishes the first experiences of coinciding unity between intention and fulfillment in terms of which external objects can be constituted: “The Ego has the ‘faculty’ (the ‘I can’) to freely move this Body – i.e., the organ in which it is

²¹ The formalization of this intrinsic striving for knowledge is evident in phenomenology’s commitment to self-responsibility and the ultimate grounding of its claims in first-person experiences of fulfilled intentions. For Husserl’s statement on the radicalness of phenomenology’s self-responsibility see especially CM §2-5 and the Epilogue to *Ideas II*.

²² In keeping with this emphasis on the primacy of the living Body as field of responsiveness to the will’s holding sway, Bernard Pachoud argues in “The Teleological Dimension in Perceptual and Motor Intentionality” that Husserl’s insight into the essential motor dimension of all experience “requires us to see in movement, or in action, rather than in perception, the model on the basis of which to think intentionality” – not vice versa, as has been the trend”. In (1999) *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Ed. Jean Petitot, Francisco J. Varela, Bernhard Pachoud and Jean-Michel Roy (Stanford: Stanford University Press): pp. 196-219, 217.

articulated – and to perceive an external world by means of it” (*Ideas II*, 152/159-160).

Such movements are expressive of the ego’s ‘I can’ only insofar as they are intentionally articulated – they are not mere spasms but ordered manifestations of a practical intentionality expressing itself through the perceiving body:

[T]he character of subjective movement, of the ‘I move’ ... from the very outset can be apprehended as something practically possible. Indeed, we have to say in general that only what has this subjective character admits apriori of such an apprehension. Originally, it is only here that the ‘I will’ emerges. Originally, it is here and only here that an imagined will can be affirmed and can become an actual willing (*Ideas II*, 259/271).

What this point allows us to recognize, then, is that the basic meaning of fulfillment refers to the overarching practical intentionality of agency being fulfilled by its embodied acts, by the givenness of the body as the incarnation of that intentionality. The actual willing of embodied striving affirms the imagined willing of the ego, whose intention to know the world is ongoingly confirmed by the givenness of the body engaged in realizing that project.²³

As we noted above, all comprehensive unities of expression refer back to this most fundamental unity in which body expresses spirit – but we can now see that so too do the unities accomplished in perceptual fulfillment, since the latter only arise as *moments* in the on-going practical fulfillment of the knowing, embodied agent. Indeed, we must recognize

²³ One might object here that the living body is part of, rather than the fulfillment of, my intending. But if the intention at issue is the overarching project of being an efficacious agent in the world, then that intention is fulfilled insofar as the living body enacts that worldly efficaciousness. When considering the fulfillment of specific intentions to know or do this or that thing, however, it is the given thing itself that fulfills the intention. In such cases, the embodied agency grasping the object does indeed become part of the intending itself. Thus the living body plays more than one role in the intention/fulfillment relationship, depending on the type of intentionality that is at stake – intrinsic or derivative. The body can and does play both roles at once – it is both the vehicle and realization of my intentionality. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this objection to my attention.

that the meaning of the empty intentions to be fulfilled by perception only derive their signative content from the over-arching praxis of the agent who lives out the 'I can'. Thus perceptual givenness would not count as *evidence* if there were no empty intentions set up by the practical movements of an embodied ego engaged in the project of successfully navigating the world. So the meaning identity operative in fulfilment – the identity of ego and *Leib* that founds practical agency – is only secondarily about specific meanings like 'coffee' or 'triangle' – rather, those specific meaning intention/fulfilment unities function as such because my practical agency sets them up as intentions for me to have and thereby establishes what could count as fulfilling them. It is important to be careful, then, not to endorse a priority of perception that is only possible by artificially isolating perceptual events from the flow of the life in which they occur. The ability of specific perceptual acts to serve as knowledge-bearers is derivative of the more originary intention/fulfillment relationship that occurs when a practical agency confirms for itself the success of its intentional striving to know the world through a body that realizes that agency.

Perception and Passive Synthesis

One might be wont to object, however, that the most basic kinds of fulfillment don't occur on the 'practical' level but are to be found, rather, in the passive syntheses of perception. For example, the grasping of hyletic sense data may be a more appropriate arena for understanding primordial fulfillment experiences, since such sense-data operate

on a stratum prior to active sense-constituting.²⁴ Thus Husserl notes in *Ideas II*, supplement VI that:

...*sensations* are subjective, but in quite a different way than acts are. I *have* sensations – it is in quite a different way that I carry out acts. The Corporeal body as bearer of sense-data ‘localized’ in it, as substrate of fields of sensation, is subjective in a metaphorical sense; but in addition it is a field of free movement (317/330).

But note here that Husserl is referring to the Corporeal body – namely, body understood from within the naturalistic attitude as a particular kind of spatio-temporal object causally affected by sense data. Such a body is subjective only in a metaphorical sense – it is not *lived* as subjective; i.e. it is not the site or bearer of intentions that could or could not be fulfilled. Note also Husserl’s distinction between *having* and *carrying out* – the former indicating the manner in which the Corporeal body is viewed as receptor of sense data that only becomes *my intentional object* insofar as it is taken up in an active meaning-intending. The active and personal self – the *intentional* self – is characterized by meaning-constituting intentional relations to the world that cannot be accommodated by the passivity of sensation or the causal story on which it rests. Thus the genuine subjectivity of intentionality always presupposes a ‘carrying out’ – not a bare ‘having’ – and therefore

²⁴ In regard to this early approach to the issue to be found in Husserl’s work, Juan-José Botero notes that “...in a sense it is true that the hyletic moments prescribe the object. Yet they are not intentional by themselves. It is the *noesis* that necessarily informs the *hyle* and determines which object will be constituted. Accordingly, the objective *noema* is the outcome of the intentional unification through noetic *Leistungen* of a hyletic diversity. This is the sense in which it can be said that the object is ‘given’ by the hyletic data” (1999) “The Immediately Given as Ground and Background”. In *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Ed. Jean Petitot, Francisco J. Varela, Bernard Pachoud and Jean-Michel Roy (Stanford: Stanford University Press) p. 448. As Steven Crowell points out, however, the later Husserl comes to abandon the view that sensations are not intentional objects but only become so through the interpretive *Auffassung* that makes them so. Husserl came to recognize that the problem with such a view is its inability to explain the universality and normativity belonging to perception as such (Crowell 2013, pp. 130-135).

implies the practical agency of epistemic striving and the embodied expression that makes carrying it out possible.

Within the scope of this practical agency, however, we can distinguish between two different meanings of intentionality and its fulfillment: both the spontaneous, active verification of meaning intentions occurring in the *ego cogito*'s deliberate judgments, and the 'passive' confirmation that belongs to the perceptual sphere.²⁵ It is important for us to complicate the active/passive dichotomy, however, by recognizing that this latter 'passive' form of perceptual intentionality is in fact quite active – though it is accomplished by an embodied activity occurring on a pre-thematic level.²⁶ Its activity consists in pointing forward toward the horizon of empty intentions through an ongoing confirmatory striving. As Husserl points out, we do not have the language to fully capture the sense in which the 'passive' intentionality of embodied perceptual grasping is characterized by a kind of overarching active “teleological directedness” or “meantness.” (PAS 76/118).

Nevertheless, he notes the importance of distinguishing between the intentional spontaneity of the active ego and the 'passive' intentionality “whereby the ego, and in a totally different sense, is the radiating point of directedness, of a directedness toward the object. For want of terms at our disposal, we avail ourselves of the apposition, ‘passive,’ passive intention” (PAS 76/118).

Husserl characterizes the former, 'active activity' as being entirely dependent on the 'passive activity' of embodied perception. Thus he notes that:

²⁵ See Sections 16-18 of PAS.

²⁶ For a reading of Husserl in terms of Dreyfus' notion of “everyday coping” see Arp, Kristana “Husserlian Intentionality and Everyday Coping” in *Issues in Husserl's Ideas II* (eds. Thomas Nenon & Lester Embree. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996, pp. 161-171).

Perception has its own intentionality that as yet does not harbor anything of the active comportment of the ego and of its constitutive accomplishment. For the intentionality of perception is rather presupposed in order for the ego to have something for which or against which it can decide. (*PAS*, 54/94).

This perceptual intentionality refers not only to such things as the unthematized movements of the eye constitutive of vision, but to the overarching commitment on the part of the perceiver to continue perceiving in a harmonious way. Though Husserl takes predicative judgment to be founded on the pre-theoretical grasping of ‘passively received’ perceptual objects, then, these perceptual objects are given in a “unity of experience” (*Ideas II*, 40/43) which is itself only possible against the background of the unity of the ego-saturated body striving to know. “The sense-things are what they are as unities ‘in’ a manifold of perceptions and kinesthetic constellations of subjectivity” (*Ideas II*, 65-66/70). Though perception is a precondition for judgment, perception is only possible as a result of a more primordial givenness – the self-givenness of the embodied, perceiving ‘I’ committed to the dynamic and ongoing project of knowing the world, and confirming for itself its success in carrying out this project through the responsiveness of the lived body. Placing the kinaesthetic movements of the lived body on the side of pure passivity obscures the manner in which there is a kind of deliberate but unthematized intentionality running throughout all such perceptual movements – an intentionality that falls under the auspices of “a constant process of expanding knowledge” (*PAS*, 25/63); a “striving and actualizing intention” that is a “*fundamental trait of all intentional life*” (CM 93/57-58). Despite his tendency to speak of the pure passivity of the ego in perceptual receptivity, then, this sharp passive/active distinction is misleading. The condition for perception is the

body, and the perceiving body is not purely passive – it enacts its own animated condition (and the perceiving that this allows) in light of the ego’s drive for reliably unified experience. Thus the fact that all higher-order ego-orientations depend on perception – and perception depends on the lived body – means that the ego is ‘infected’ with its lived embodiment all the way down.²⁷

Any *specific* instance of perceptual fulfillment, then, is only possible in light of a prior practical commitment – a pre-theoretical ‘directedness’ on the part of the knower to finding greater knowledge and overcoming information conflicts: “running through passive life are ever newly interweaving syntheses of fulfillment. A continual striving after intuition that realizes the meant self, a continual – we couldn’t help thinking of the term – confirmation” (*PAS*, 102/146).

Successes and Failures of the Striving Self

Invoking ‘confirmation’ here returns us to the problem, though. How can this epistemic striving be normative? What is the relationship between specific acts of perception and the practical striving that underwrites their possibilities of fulfillment? In particular we must ask how we can understand this overarching practical intentionality as normatively governed such that the concept of fulfillment applies to it. After all, specific successes or failures of perception do not themselves seem to ratify or challenge that embodied practical intentionality itself. The unity of ego and expressive body is not open to failure or fulfilling confirmation in the same way that specific acts of perception or

²⁷ See Crowell, Steven “Husserl’s Subjectivism and the Philosophy of Mind” *Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger*, pp. 147-165.

praxis are. How, then, can we understand this unity as normatively structured? What could it mean for the body to *fail* to adequately express the practical project of knowing the world through perception?

As Husserl notes in *Experience and Judgment*, there are cases in which the harmony of the perceptual manifold breaks down, and the origin of negation is the experience of such disappointed intention, such disharmony. These disappointments can only occur *as* disappointments, however, against a background in which "...a certain measure of continuous fulfillment is presupposed," (EJ 88). As we have seen, the uniform framework of sense that provides this background constancy of fulfillment is not only the object or the world but the body as the site of agency and experience in terms of which object and world can come to givenness. In what sense can that embodied agency itself be characterized by a normativity that would permit us to speak of its successes or failures using the language of fulfillment?

There is a certain sense in which the ego's body fails to be present to it: namely, as a perceptual object towards which one has unfulfilled intentions and unexpected experiences that give rise to the possibility of negation. Qua perceptual object, the body is characterized by incompleteness. As Husserl explicitly notes, the body is a remarkably poorly constituted thing (*Ideas II*, 159/167). But *this* kind of inadequacy and incompleteness only speaks to the body qua *Körper*, i.e. qua spatio-temporal object given to me as other spatio-temporal objects are. The kind of failure that can characterize the experience of the *lived* body expressing the ego's agency is different in kind than that of other perceptual objects. When experiencing other perceptual objects, the open horizon of

their possible appearances cannot foreclose the possibility that they will prove to be mere phantasms; that the rabbit in the meadow will turn out to be a trick of the fading light. In the case of the lived body, however, I cannot discover that this *Leib* over which I am holding sway is not really there in the same way – the necessity and immediacy of this connection resists the constant possibility of skepticism that characterizes perception: “I do not have the possibility of distancing myself from my body” (*Ideas II*, 159/167). Thus when viewed through the lens of the naturalistic attitude, my body – my *Körper* – is indeed just another perceptual object about which I could be radically mistaken. But when seen through the lens of the agency that does not observe its body but *lives* its body as the terrain of its intentionality, the nature of the failure must be quite different.

Again we must distinguish here between specific and general intentionality. Though I may discover that the living body is failing to adequately manifest my agency through particular intentions – to reach the cookies, to miss the icy patch on the ski hill – these failings do not (for the most part) undermine the fundamental expressive unity of living body and animating ego. Such specific failures do not lead me to question whether I am embodied at all or whether *this* living body is the unique vehicle of my expressive ego. After all, the background framework of sense that is the expressive agency of ego-*Leib* unity provides the constant in terms of which I can experience the anomalous as such. It would only be in the most extreme cases of breakdown that this pairing relationship would itself fail – in death or coma or perhaps extreme cases of mental illness. In such cases, however, there is indeed a loss of *Deckungseinheit* – the ‘living body’ is no longer *lived*. It is no longer the field in which the ego finds manifestation.

If this is the case, then, the way in which fulfillment functions in terms of practical intentionality must be understood instead as a *continuum* of success and failure, whereby the self's embodied practices are more or less successful in manifesting its agency in the world. This notion of 'more' and 'less' – of *degrees* of fulfilled agency – is operative in Husserl's discussions of the process whereby one learns to take up and master one's embodiment. It is the fact that the ego-*Leib* unity must be *learned* or *mastered* that will help us explain the manner in which this fundamental unity relationship can nevertheless be characterized by success and failure conditions analogous to the evidence structure of perception. Despite the fact that we are from the beginning characterized by an intentional agency that is realized in the living body, we nevertheless must become *habituated* to it and are constantly responding to how this unity is a more or less successful manifestation of the will's intentionality.

Learning to Be Embodied

Husserl discusses the idea of having to take up one's embodied condition in *Ideas II*, where he notes that the child comes to *recognize* the unity of its internal and external dimensions:

[I]n the child the self-produced voice, and then, analogously, the heard voice, serves as the first bridge for the Objectification of the Ego...before he can acknowledge to the other a tactual Body and a Body incarnating the will (*Ideas II*, 97/101fn).

These different 'dimensions' of the body – a tactual Body and a Body incarnating the will – cannot be acknowledged to the other because it is precisely in such primal 'bridging'

experiences that these dimensions of *oneself* are first recognized as unified.²⁸ Early on one must learn to see certain bodily events *as* the ‘external’ fulfillment of one’s intentions. One can note, for example, ways in which the extremely young infant – even the fetus in the womb – begins to engage in directed movement such as thumb-sucking. As Husserl argues in *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, for example, a “child in its mother’s womb already has kinestheses and through this kinesthetic movement, its things” – as a result, the child at birth “is already an I with a high level of experience (since) such an experience has already been acquired in its intrauterine existence.”²⁹ In such proto-instances of ‘holding sway’ – in which intention and fulfilling movement are first experienced as both being ‘me’ – the child accomplishes a type of unity of self-giveness that first inaugurates it into the realm of intentionality and fulfillment. What begins as instinct becomes intention: the child learns to accomplish a coinciding unity between intention and fulfillment – the unity that is the condition of agency as such – through its holding sway in the responsive body.

This is not to suggest that there is ever a stage at which there is *no* unity, however – even the most primitive, struggling forms of embodying the ‘I’ are themselves a *way* of holding sway over one’s body. In this primitive form, however, we can most clearly recognize the important middle ground staked out between automatic, sub-personal mechanisms and full-blown active, conceptual thought.³⁰ Primal events of holding-sway

²⁸ Steven Crowell suggests that in this regard the infant hearing itself must be understood as a modality of touch. See “Husserl, Derrida, and the Phenomenology of Expression” *Philosophy Today* 40 (1996): 61-70, p. 68 n.6.

²⁹ Vol. III, p. 605. Quoted in Jean-Luc Petit’s “Constitution by Movement: Husserl in Light of Recent Neurobiological Findings” (1999) Trans. Christopher Macann. In *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*. Ed. Jean Petitot, Francisco J. Varela, Bernhard Pachoud and Jean-Michel Roy (Stanford: Stanford University Press) p. 223.

³⁰ See Crowell 2013, p. 140-141, where he discusses the manner in which the standard of wholeness governing the process of perception is not conceptually but “*feelingly*” present to the body as such – a feeling

occupy this middle ground: they are normatively structured unity events that occur on the most basic levels of practical agency – as such, they are neither purely active nor passive, neither automatic nor conceptual. They are a pre-theoretical intentional struggle to respond appropriately to the most fundamental success and failure conditions to which the practical ‘I’ is always attuned – success or failure at being an embodied self navigating the world and confirming for itself its ability to do so. Thus there is a kind of tension between the body and the ego that gives it purpose; the striving ego is both enabled by the body but also made vulnerable by its limits – a tension that sets up the understanding of fulfillment as a continuum encompassing degrees of self-givenness.

Specific perceptual confirmations are therefore derivative of this overarching practical striving and our characterization of fulfillment must correspondingly change to accommodate this fact. Unlike in specific perceptual acts, the mode of confirmation characteristic of the latter kind of expressive unity does not provide evidence of spatio-temporal existence. It provides, rather, confirmation of the lived body’s responsivity to the ego’s project of epistemic striving. The primordial meaning of fulfillment relates primarily to the success or failure of that practical agency, not to individual intentional acts that fall under the umbrella of that overarching agency. Because the ego-*Leib* unity is constitutive of this agency it cannot be adequately understood on the model of discrete intentional acts. Rather, it is an ongoingly present or comprehensive unity whose individual manifestations

of fit that occurs against the background of the body’s practical skills, the ‘I can’ of its embodied agency. Crowell goes on to suggest that Husserlian phenomenology’s emphasis on consciousness is not able to cash out Husserl’s own insights in this regard, and it is only later phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger who were able to transform Husserl’s conception of the transcendental subject to account for this primacy of caring, embodied agency (146). See the remainder of Crowell’s excellent book, *Normativity and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) for an elaboration of this view – a view which I endorse, though it should be clear from this paper that I believe this approach is already more fully present in Husserl than is often acknowledged.

serve a confirmatory or illustrative role for the overarching agency that enables and gives meaning to those individual manifestations. An agency, further, that need not be understood as an all or nothing state, but a continuum of confirmation that we are aware of as such because of a.) our past and current struggles for a mastery that better expresses that agency, and b.) breakdown conditions such as illness that remind us of the ways in which that agency can be both enabled and thwarted by the body in which it finds expression.

Temporality

At this point one might be tempted to object that I have overlooked the mode of fulfillment operative in temporality. After all, isn't the most primordial form of experienced unity not that of the ego-expressing lived body but the temporal flow of consciousness itself, constantly confirmed by the transition of protentions into the living now? Why isn't the pure I of temporality sufficient for understanding fulfilled self-identification? Throughout his work, Husserl emphasizes the essential unifying role of the temporal stream and the fact that it occurs on a more fundamental level than even embodied holding-sway. Should we not take the fulfillment of protentions to be the most foundational sense of fulfillment event, then – more primordial than both perceptual and ego-*Leib* fulfillment? Husserl claims, for example that “protention, unlike retention, is essentially a meaning-intention” (PAS 86/129). When we look to the temporal structure underwriting perception, we see that perception “harbors, at every moment, the anticipatory certainty of what is to come, the certainty of its futural occurrence (and it does this completely without our help)” (PAS, 87/131). Further, he suggests that we cannot even

imagine consciousness without the lawful nexus of temporal unfolding – an unfolding in which we are constantly expecting and being confirmed in our expectations of an arriving future.

The nature of this kind of ‘fulfillment’ is of a radically different kind, however, than the perceptual or *ego-Leib* confirmation events that we have been discussing. The reason for this is that the temporal flow occurs on such a level of pre-personal passivity that describing our relationship to the advent of the future as ‘expectation’ or ‘anticipation’ is already too active – the future comes, no matter what our stance toward it. To characterize our relationship to its arrival as a confirmation or as an event of intention-fulfillment, then, is misleading. Rather, the dimensions of temporal streaming occur on a level prior to even the most basic modes of intentionality:

Since we are certain from the outset that something is going to arrive in the living perception, there is no room at all for a wishing that it should be, or even for a willing that it should become by realizing it in our actions (*PAS*, 87/131).

This must be the case, since the streaming unity of temporality is the most basic condition for the unity of experience. Without this flowing unity – its character of ongoing becoming – consciousness itself would be impossible. The consequence is that the unity of temporality cannot be experienced as a normative continuum – there is no sense in which the arrival of the future comes in *degrees* or involves the possibility of an experienced lack of confirmation. Indeed, though Husserl characterizes the living-present in terms of “temporal flow,” he nevertheless admits to using the term metaphorically, since it itself is

not characterized by succession or any of the predicates that characterize objects or processes within time.³¹

Further, this kind of constantly renewed unity of the streaming present is also, in a sense, *empty* – we can only speak of these temporal structures in terms of the content that fills them and allows us to recognize protention, retention and present *as such*:

[W]hat makes division possible and the relation between parts in consciousness, and so forth – the analysis of time alone cannot tell us, for it abstracts precisely from content. Thus it does not give us any idea of the necessary synthetic structures of the streaming present and the unitary stream of the presents – which in some way concerns the particularity of content” (*PAS*, 129/174).

As soon as we begin to speak of the *content* of internal time consciousness, then, we are returned to the embodied I, to which all content irrevocably refers:

I assert that our given consciousness and its given type and its essential type has this marvelous feature, not only to constitute objectively (in the sense of demonstrated absolute necessity) its own temporal being with respect to the past up to the present, but also its future. If we ask, however, how our streaming consciousness brings that about, our answer runs: through the fact that it constitutes

³¹ See Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, No. 54, 370-1/381-2 (trans. John Barnett Brough. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991). The manner in which this bedrock of internal time – along with the ‘*Langsintentionalität*’ through which it is given and the problem of infinite regress that threatens it – is a matter of much debate. Commenters agree, however, that such self-presence cannot (easily) be understood in terms of intentionality (and corresponding fulfilment experiences). For example, Toine Kortooms suggests in *Phenomenology of Time: Edmund Husserl’s Analysis of Time-Consciousness* that “Husserl develops a radical notion of the passivity of pre-consciousness in which the syntheses occur that lead to the formation of primally associative, pre-temporal unities. In order to underscore the radical character of this notion, Husserl no longer wishes to speak about an intentionality here, even if it were to be a non-egoic intentionality (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, p. 286). As Luis Niel puts it: “It should be clear by now that ‘stream-intentionality’ can only be called ‘intentionality’ in a sense analogical to that of act-intentionality, since by the former we do not find any accomplishment of an act nor anything like an objective correlate of intentionality” (“The Phenomenology of Primal-Phenomenality: Husserl and the Boundaries of the Phenomenology of Time” *Husserl Studies* 29 (2013): 211-230, p. 216-217). See also Brough, John. “The Most Difficult of All Phenomenological Problems” *Husserl Studies* 27 (2011): 27-40; Hoerl, Christoph. “Husserl, the Temporal Flow, and Temporal Experience” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 86 (2013): 376-411; Zahavi, Dan. “Time and Consciousness in the Bernau Manuscripts” *Husserl Studies* 20 (2004): 99-118; Zahavi, Dan. “Inner Time Consciousness and Pre-reflective Self-awareness” in *The New Husserl* (ed. Donn Welton. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003, pp. 157-180).

within itself an objective world in a transcendent intentionality. A stream of lived-experiences of spatio-material existence runs throughout the stream of the lived-experiences such that all things experienced in the course of the steady sequence of perception are referred to one's own lived-body with which everything else that emerges in the course of lived-experience under the rubric of psychical lived-experiences is then constituted as intertwined in a regulated manner (*PAS*, 213/265).

The continuity of temporal experience cannot be legitimately characterized as instances of *fulfillment*, then, since it occurs on a constitutive level prior to intentionality and its objects.³²

Indeed, the immediacy and primordially of the embodiment relationship might lead us to question whether the 'spatiality' of embodied expression is *equiprimordial* with the temporal unity that Husserl takes to characterize consciousness on its most basic level. Husserl himself seems to consider this when he notes that:

Thus, miraculously a perceptual object that we call one's own lived body is distinctive in such a way that with each perception of an object, whatever it may be, the lived-body is always there and always co-constituted. And this object is entirely unique by virtue of the fact that it always 'bears within it' the zero-point, the absolute Here, in relation to which every other object is a There. Just as universal, unending time is constantly and inexorably referred to the absolute Now, so too is the entire unending space inexorably referred to the absolute Here and to the coordinates of orientation attached to it (*PAS*, 584/298).

Insofar as experience refers merely to that which is passive and pre-personal it is temporal in form; but if we are to speak of consciousness in terms of intentional encounters with objects that can succeed or fail at fulfilling these intentions we are irrevocably returned to

³²As Niel points out, this raises many problems for the analysis of this most basic stratum of time consciousness, "since in our experience we are always dealing with temporal experiences and not with the flow itself. Thus we can only outline what this flow is by contrasting it with what it is not, i.e., constituted unities in time (whether subjective or objective). Thus, according to Husserl, '[t]he flow is something we speak of *in conformity with what is constituted*' (CW IV, p. 79, Hua X, p. 75)" (Niel 2013, 215).

the manner in which consciousness individuates itself spatially through the orientations and activities of the living body.

Indeed, Husserl seems to tentatively consider what I take to be the crucial point: namely, even ‘pure’ inner consciousness – the absolute meaning field of the transcendental Ego – cannot escape understanding itself in terms of primal *spatial* concepts of location, orientation, direction, etc. because the ‘pure Ego’ cannot but rely on the unacknowledged models and standards derived from the nature of its embodied agency³³:

The structure of the acts which radiate out from the Ego-Center, or the Ego itself, is a form which has an analogon in the centralizing of all sense-phenomena in reference to the Body. In absolute consciousness there is always a ‘field’ of intentionality, and the spiritual ‘focus’ of the attention ‘directs’ itself now onto this, now onto that. The question is whether these images have an original meaning and are expressing a primordial analogy. That is to say, does there lie in the act of attention, abstraction made from the spatial, whence the image is derived, something like a directing that emanates from a point? (*Ideas II*, 105-106/112).

If we recognize the deep role that spatiality plays in the structure of consciousness, then, it is easy to see how the experience of fulfilled intention accomplished in the body’s expression of the ego’s holding sway is a type of ‘primal instituting’ of the meaning of fulfilled intention. It serves, so to speak, as a ‘primordial analogy’ in terms of which higher-order fulfillment events are recognized. Such primal experiences are exemplars insofar as they are concrete yet normative experiences: they are livingly present to all embodied knowers as fulfillment events in terms of which other fulfillment experiences are

³³ Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s book *The Roots of Thinking* (1990) (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990) offers a more thorough examination of this general approach by using genetic phenomenology together with paleoanthropology to demonstrate the ways in which meanings originate in primordial experiences of the living body. Basic human concepts, she argues, “ultimately revert to the body as semantic template. What was – and is – originally thought was – and is – founded on a bodily logos” (7-8). In *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*, Mark Johnston similarly argues that embodiment is indispensable for meaning, since it provides imaginative schemas in terms of which rationality and understanding function. For example, the way in which we intertwine the senses of ‘more’ and ‘up’ is founded on a ‘verticality schema’ rooted in the body (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, xv).

understood as such. All intention-fulfillment experiences that involve higher-level objectivities involve a reference back to this basic meaning of fulfillment as agency realizing itself in the world. Characterizing the body as the first ‘object’ is misleading, then, since embodied expressions of will are the founding events of intention-fulfillment in terms of which the orientation toward ‘objects’ becomes possible at all – including perceptual objects and those objects so foundational for constituting objectivity: the lived bodies of others.

The Community of Embodied Knowers

As Husserl’s account of the sciences makes clear, scientific objectivity relies on our ability to *activate* in others the same primordial experiences of self-givenness that we ourselves have had. Thus Husserl notes in “The Origin of Geometry” that scientific propositions persist as an ideal across time precisely because they rely on our “capacity for translating these sentences from vague linguistic understanding into the clarity of the reactivation of their self-evident meaning.”³⁴ Science’s claims, he continues, “can be justified as an expression of the alleged truth-meaning only through the actual capacity for reactivation” (*Crisis*, 368). This ‘capacity for reactivation’ – i.e. for shared verification through multiple first-person graspings of the givenness of a particular meaning – is presupposed in the idea of phenomenology as a science – especially as a *descriptive* science. The primary sense of description, Husserl notes, is “gifted in provoking intuition”

³⁴ *Crisis* 366, Appendix VI: “The Origin of Geometry.”

(*Ideas II*, 372/382, supplements) – in other words, gifted in activating in others the immediacy of experiences of self-givenness.³⁵

Phenomenology, then, if it is to be a science as Husserl conceives of science, is not only about seeing, but about both *seeing and communicating together*. The communication of phenomenological insights through description are indispensable to the practice of Husserlian phenomenology (Koukal 2001, 24).

It is not enough for a phenomenologist to uncover the structures of first-person consciousness for herself – rather, like all sciences, phenomenology is committed to the idea that such first-person experiences can be confirmed by others who can also be brought to have them. Thus phenomenology includes an irrevocably discursive and rhetorical moment – its descriptive flourishes are not accidental but central to the project of bringing the other knower into a first-person grasping of the thing itself.³⁶

What is of particular interest for us here is the extent to which Husserl uses metaphors of embodiment when speaking of phenomenology's capacity to do so in the case of fulfillment. He frequently describes an experience of fulfilled intention in terms of

³⁵ Thus J.N. Mohanty argues that the difference between linguistic indications and *expressions* is that the former merely points to something while the latter involves bringing the hearer to 'see' the meaning being expressed. In *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning*, 2nd Edition (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969, p. 11). David Koukal examines this point in some detail, claiming, for example, that for Husserl "an expression can be thought of as a sort of advocate for a given experience, as opposed to merely pointing to the experience". In "The Rhetorical Impulse in Husserl's Phenomenology," *Continental Philosophy Review* 34 (2001) pp. 21–43, p. 26.

³⁶ Koukal examines the way in which expressive language functions in this way to "*actually make the hearer apprehend*" the expressed meaning (Koukal 2001, 28-31). The implications for phenomenology are that "In order to evoke meaning, and possibly incite phenomenological insight, we must in a sense "breath life" into the sign and thereby speak the word *well*" (Koukal 2001, 32). In *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl acknowledges the difficulty involved in finding a perfect rhetorical fit between pre-expressive experience and the expressions meant to embody them: "But the expression as such has its own comparatively good or bad way of fitting what is meant or itself given; and therefore has its own evidence or non-evidence" (CM 11/52); "Because the sciences aim at predications that express completely and with evident fitness what is beheld pre-predicatively, it is obvious that I must be careful also about this aspect of science" (CM 13/54). For further discussion of this issue, see Crowell 1996.

‘bodily presence.’³⁷ The fulfilling intuition is *leibhaft* – a descriptive choice that is not accidental but essential for phenomenology’s ability to serve as a descriptive science of the most fundamental dimensions of consciousness. In other words, Husserl speaks of something as ‘self-evident’ insofar as the presence of an object or context of meaning is as undeniably and immediately real as one’s own living body – an experience of immediate and unquestionable self-givenness that Husserl can rely on every reader to recognize. It is, after all, *the* ‘primordial analogy’ by which we can make the deepest structures of consciousness understandable.

Though Husserl does not explicitly articulate the role that this primal *ego-Leib* relationship plays in the meaning of fulfillment – and perhaps did not fully recognize it himself – its presence is clear. Effective description is capable of evoking a corresponding sense of self-evidence in other members of the phenomenological community and when faced with describing the most basic meaning of fulfillment, Husserl turns again and again to metaphors that express the fundamental sense of fulfilled intention in terms of embodied agency – an experience that is common to all embodied knowers. His use of terms like ‘in person,’ ‘in the flesh,’ ‘seeing’ or ‘grasping’ to explain the relationship of intention-fulfillment is therefore a revealing expression of the foundational nature of this relationship, betraying the role that the experience of embodied agency plays in constituting what meaning-fulfillment *means*. Indeed, even when he is expressing the ‘principle of all principles’ he claims that we are to accept “*everything originally* (so to speak, in its ‘personal’ actuality)” (*Ideas I*, §24, 43/44). Since the intuition Husserl is

³⁷ See, for example, section §136 of *Ideas I*, where he repeatedly talks about fulfillment in terms of being there ‘in person.’

seeking to provoke there is the meaning of intention-fulfillment itself, what better way to do so than by pointing to the primal experience of such intention-fulfillment – the expressive unity of embodied agency – which is the very foundation of that meaning?

Much more needs to be said about the extent to which Husserl himself was aware of this shift toward a practical foundation for the meaning of fulfillment, in addition to the ways in which this Husserlian interpretation compares to variations on this theme in thinkers like Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. What I hope to have done here, however, is simply call into question the dominant narrative whereby the meaning of fulfillment is simply taken to be founded upon isolated acts of perception.