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## Embodiment and Animality

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to examine the problematic frontier that separates the phenomenology of the body and the phenomenology of animality. The main difficulty is to differentiate phenomenologically not only between embodiment and animality, but also between specifically human embodied experience and what is accessible to us through empathy in relation to the corporeality of the animal. I will tackle these questions by considering relevant textual material from the writings of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. On the one hand, I will show that although embodiment and animality are convergent on the level of the naturalistic attitude in Husserl's *Ideas II*, they are divergent as soon as we place ourselves in the personalistic attitude, where the body enters into a different conjunction—namely, with the idea of person and of the spiritual world. On the other hand, Heidegger claims that, in spite of the abysmal bodily kinship with the animal, there is an essential difference between the human body and the animal organism, thus opposing the tendencies to humanize the animal and to animalize the human.

### KEYWORDS

Animality; embodiment; Husserl; Heidegger; anthropological difference

### 1. Introduction

In this article, I would like to open a series of interrogations regarding the relation between embodiment and animality. We are facing two major groups of issues, two complex thematic sets, two dense fields of phenomenological analysis: embodiment and animality, the body and the animal. Each of these topics has been addressed in various ways and from different perspectives along the phenomenological tradition, starting from Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty up to Levinas and Derrida. Consequently, we can now talk about two major descriptive lines, related yet distinct, which are known under the title of the *phenomenology of embodiment* on the one hand and the *phenomenology of animality* on the other. And the question is how, precisely, we should determine the relation between these two fields within the phenomenological tradition. What is ultimately the relation between the phenomenology of embodiment and the phenomenology of animality? How are these two neighbouring descriptive approaches mutually articulated? It is obvious that we are dealing with a thematic kinship, but does this kinship make room for specific differentiations between these two domains of phenomenological research?

How, exactly, do these two areas meet or overlap, and how do they divide or diverge? Therefore, where, exactly, does embodiment end and animality begin?

In other words, the question would be whether these two major phenomenological topics—embodiment and animality, the body and the animal—should be analyzed on the assumption of an essential interdependence or on the assumption that each of these phenomenal areas claims its own specificity in relation to the other, its own theoretical autonomy or independence. Thus, between embodiment and animality are we dealing with an essential correlation or with an essential distinction? If the correlation between these phenomena is essential, then their distinction should be seen as superficial. And conversely, if the distinction is fundamental, then their connection would instead be a lateral or even a non-essential one. Let's start by tracing out the main implications of these two distinct assumptions.

If we follow the first hypothesis (that of an intrinsic correlation between embodiment and animality), a series of new questions arises, since this fundamental connection, this essential association can be understood in several different ways—for example, as a mutual belonging, or as a grounding of one phenomenon upon the other. In the latter case, we can ask whether animality essentially belongs to the phenomenon of embodiment, or whether, on the contrary, embodiment belongs to the essence of animality. Therefore, either embodiment is part of the essence of animality, or animality is part of the essence of embodiment. Thus, following this first assumption, the dilemma would be whether we should understand animality by beginning with embodiment or whether, on the contrary, we should analyze embodiment by beginning with animality.

Nonetheless, we can also take into account the second hypothesis, and consider these phenomena—embodiment and animality—as essentially *distinct*, although somehow related. But then it would be necessary to point out a kind of *exclusive essential specificity* in *each* of these two thematic fields. In other words, we should indicate what, precisely, from within the phenomenon of embodiment is in fact *irreducible* to the phenomenon of animality. And conversely, we should find out what, precisely, from within the phenomenon of animality would be ultimately *irreducible* to the phenomenon of embodiment. To this last question—whether animality is or is not reducible to embodiment—ethology may be able to provide certain answers, focusing not on the animal *body* itself, but rather on animal *behaviour*, on the complex relationship of the animal to its environment, on communication between animals and its emotional dimension. In this way, one can plead very well for the idea that “the animal is essentially much more than its body,” that the way of being of the animal cannot be reduced to its purely corporeal dimension, to its bodily structure, to its embodiment. However, we are still left with the task of finding an answer to the other question—namely, whether, in turn, *embodiment is or is not reducible* to animality. In other words, we should ask: is there something belonging to the essential meaning of embodiment that cannot simply be reduced to animality, and cannot be understood *on the basis of* the meaning of animality? For it is only in this way that we can sharpen and refine the distinction we are focusing on, that between embodiment and animality.

Finally, the relation between embodiment and animality can be settled only if we concentrate exclusively on the core of our question: namely, if we question not only the generic relation between “the human” and “the animal,” between the “essence of the human being” and the “essence of the animal,” but also the relation between the

human *body* and the animal *body*. Therefore, do we have an essential *identity* between the human body and the animal, or are we dealing with an essential *difference* instead?

Obviously, both the human and the animal are beings endowed with a body. And the fact that human and animal are embodied beings, that they live because they have a living body, apparently justifies putting them together, as well as unifying the themes of embodiment and animality in the same whole, which to a certain extent illustrates the first assumption we mentioned. In fact, this is the point of view supported by the naturalistic perspective of biology, which places the human in the animal kingdom along with the other animals, and that of physiology, medicine, and genetics, which investigate both the human and the animal corporeal body with the same mindset and the same conceptual instruments: the body—be it human or animal—is a living organism, articulated into various systems (circulatory, digestive, respiratory, etc.), with systems composed of organs, organs composed of tissues, and tissues composed of cells, all to be analyzed in their ultimately discernible biomolecules, up to the register of the genetic code.

Thus, according to this perspective, the human, by virtue of its corporeal body, is an animal just like all other animals. There is an animal dimension of human existence, just as there is a bodily dimension of animal existence. The human's animality is one and the same as its bodily corporeality. And conversely, human bodily corporeality is indistinguishable from its animality, from its animal dimension. In this regard, there is no difference between bodily corporeality and animality, and the two sets of issues merge or overlap. There are merely two different terms that mark out one and the same problematic, one and the same phenomenon: the living body, be it human or animal. The human is also an animal among other animals, while other living beings are “non-human” animals, i.e. they are simply “the *other* animals.” Consequently, within this naturalistic-biological viewpoint, no *essential* difference can be discerned between the human body and the animal body, since animality is a substratum that we share with all animals through our organic bodily nature.

The same idea is expressed by the traditional definition of the human as *zoon logon echon* or *animal rationale*. According to this metaphysical definition, the human is a living being with something else superadded (reason, logos, language, culture, meaning, history, etc.). And if one really wants to find out in what the *humanity* of the human, as distinct from the *animality* of the animal, consists, one should *not* focus *at all* on the phenomenon of living corporeality, since bodily nature belongs to both the human and the animal, but must search elsewhere—in vain or not—for an allegedly specific difference.

However, in another approach to this continuum that seems to link the history of metaphysics and the naturalistic-biological perspective, we can ask: what is the originality that the *phenomenological* perspective brings to our understanding of the relation between the human body and the animal body, on the one hand, and between embodiment and animality, on the other? In what follows, I will tackle this question by bringing to light the tension between the first two solutions given to this problem in the history of phenomenology: that of Edmund Husserl and that of Martin Heidegger.

## 2. Husserl, Animated Beings, and Animals

In the case of Husserl, this topic is first of all placed in the gap opened between the conceptual category designating “*animated beings*” (*Animalien*) and that designating “*animal*

beings” (*Tiere*). This distinction is frequently blurred in the translations that indistinctly render both *Animalien* and *Tiere* by “animals.” Consequently, quite often it is not clear when Husserl is referring precisely to animals as such (*Tiere*, different from humans) and when he is referring to the more general category of animated beings (*Animalien*), which includes both humans and animals.

Announced in § 53 of *Ideen I*<sup>1</sup> and explored in detail in the second section of *Ideen II*,<sup>2</sup> the problem of the constitution of animated beings (*animalische Wesen* or *Animalien*) is directly related to the bodily dimension. At stake here are those beings that govern in their own bodies as ego-poles, having a body that is not just a corporeal thing (*Körper*), but a living body (*Leib*) endowed with sense organs and sensory fields, being thus animated by a soul. Therefore, in relation to the category of *Animalien*, we have a multilayered structure, beginning with a primary stratum comprising the corporeal body understood as a simply material thing (*Körper*), as a purely physical thing and nothing more—a body that is *spatial and fragmentable*, since its distinctive trait is extension.<sup>3</sup> On the second layer, we are dealing with the animated reality of the living body (*Leib*), which is spatial but *cannot be fragmented*: “Material things are open to fragmentation, something which accompanies the extension that belongs to their essence. But men and animals cannot be fragmented [*Menschen und Tiere sind nicht zerstückbar*].”<sup>4</sup> Finally, the soul (*Seele*) is *non-spatial and non-fragmentable*: “the soul is nowhere”;<sup>5</sup> “The soul [...] has no places, no pieces. It is absolutely not a fragmentable unity, understood in the genuine and strict sense of a soul in which souls, as parts, would be distinguishable and, furthermore, separable into pieces.”<sup>6</sup> Yet the soul is *spatialized* in the sense that it is *localizable* through the body<sup>7</sup> to which it belongs: “The soul is in the Body and is there where the Body presently happens to be.”<sup>8</sup> Just as the living body (*Leib*) appears only in connection with a corporeal body (*Körper*) upon which the former depends, so too does the soul (*Seele*) appear only in connection with the living body (*Leib*) it animates: “The soul animates or be-souls the Body [*die Seele beseelt der Leib*], and the animated Body is a natural Object within the unity of the spatio-temporal world.”<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, we are dealing with the conjunction of two binary articulations: on the one hand, the articulation between the *corporeal body* and the *living body* (*Körper-Leib*); on the other hand, the articulation between the *living body* and the *soul* (*Leib-Seele*). In this way, animated nature (*Animalien*)—comprising humans and animals alike—is a complex made up of a lower stratum (material nature, essentially defined by extension) and a higher stratum (the soul, which essentially excludes extension).

<sup>1</sup> Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Erstes Buch: *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* (hereafter Hua III/1) 116–18 (tr.: *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, First Book: *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, 124–27). All citations refer first to the German original and then to the English translation.

<sup>2</sup> Husserl, Edmund. 1952. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Zweites Buch: *Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution* (hereafter Hua IV) 90–172 (tr.: *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. Second Book: *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, 96–180).

<sup>3</sup> Hua IV, 30 (tr. 33).

<sup>4</sup> Hua IV, 33 (tr. 36).

<sup>5</sup> Hua IV, 167 (tr. 176).

<sup>6</sup> Hua IV, 133 (tr. 141).

<sup>7</sup> Hua IV, 177–78 (tr. 187).

<sup>8</sup> Hua IV, 168 (tr. 176).

<sup>9</sup> Hua IV, 175 (tr. 185).

However, we must emphasize that this structure *Körper–Leib–Seele*, which determines the category of *Animalien*, belongs in fact to the naturalistic attitude. Thus, another important differentiation intervenes here, namely, that between the *naturalistic* attitude (*naturalistische Einstellung*) and the *personalistic* attitude (*personalistische Einstellung*). This contrast between the naturalistic attitude and the personalistic attitude will prove to be essential for the way we understand the relation (as similarity or divergence) between “animality” and “embodiment,” between “animal body” and “human body.”

As we know, the naturalistic attitude is the object of the analyses in the first two parts of *Ideen II* (§§ 1–47), while the personalistic attitude is the object of the third part of this work (§§ 48–64). Husserl repeatedly speaks (especially in §§ 34, 49, and 62) about the necessity of *distinguishing* between these two fundamental attitudes, one focused on nature, the other on spirit.<sup>10</sup> The naturalistic attitude is essentially theoretical, aiming to explain the world in a causal way. In contrast, the personalistic attitude belongs to practical life: it is not causal but motivational, pertaining to the environing world of everydayness.<sup>11</sup> In other words, what is at stake is the distinction between the objectifying attitude of the natural sciences (*naturwissenschaftliche Einstellung*) and the personal attitude of the sciences of spirit (*geisteswissenschaftliche Einstellung*), between the psychological apprehension (*psychologische Auffassung*) and the personal apprehension specific to the sciences of spirit (*geisteswissenschaftliche / personale Auffassung*). Both the *naturalistic attitude* and *personalistic attitude* belong, each in their own way, to the general *natural attitude* (*natürliche Einstellung*), which in turn can be thoroughly analysed only through the “parenthesizing” or “bracketing” (*Einklammerung*) that opens the phenomenological attitude (*phänomenologische Einstellung*). Thus, the tension between the *naturalistic* attitude and the *personalistic* attitude can be explored only against the background of a more primordial differentiation: that between the *natural* attitude and the *phenomenological* attitude.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the natural attitude encloses both theoretical and practical components: it enfolds the naturalistic and the personalistic attitudes as its main possibilities.<sup>13</sup> The naturalistic attitude is only a particularization of the natural attitude, one of its specifications on the objectifying-theoretical level. And it is within the phenomenological attitude (through the *epoché*) that one can describe the way in which both these types of apprehension (naturalistic and personalistic) function within the natural attitude and constitute their specific objectivities.

Having in mind this complex syntax articulating the various attitudes (naturalistic and personalistic, natural and phenomenological), we emphasized that the structure *Körper–*

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Melle, ‘Nature and Spirit’, 15–35.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Villela-Petit, ‘Naturalistic and Personalistic Attitude’, 205–18; Sakakibara, ‘The Relationship between Nature and Spirit in Husserl’s Phenomenology Revisited’, 256–7.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Luft, ‘Husserl’s Phenomenological Discovery of the Natural Attitude’, 153–70; Luft, ‘Husserl’s Notion of the Natural Attitude and the Shift to Transcendental Phenomenology’, 114–8.

<sup>13</sup> It is true that the personalistic attitude corresponds to the naïve natural attitude, while the naturalistic attitude is indeed an artificial deformation thereof. But this does not exclude the fact that, seen from the perspective of the phenomenological attitude, the naturalistic attitude still belongs to the natural attitude. It is in this sense that Husserl speaks of “sciences in the natural attitude” (*Wissenschaften der natürlichen Einstellung*) in the first paragraph of *Ideen I*. See Hua III/1, 11 (tr. 6). See also Behnke, ‘Edmund Husserl’s Contribution to Phenomenology of the Body in *Ideen II*’, 137–38. For a different view, cf. Soffer, ‘Perception and Its Causes’, 41:

The personalistic attitude is quite similar to the natural attitude of *Ideen I*, the attitude of everyday life, in which we perceive persons, values, and cultural objects, and not merely inanimate (or animate) nature; and the personalistic world is the concrete lifeworld of the *Crisis*.

*Leib-Seele*, with its specific grounding order, belongs only to the naturalistic attitude. On this level of the naturalistic attitude, the human and the animal body are indeed constituted *in the same way*, without any essential distinction, in the sense that the experience of the body (*Leibeserfahrung*) is constitutive for both humans and animals:

[...] the experience of the physical as foundational [*physische Erfahrung als grundlegende*] and, resting on it and enveloping it, the experience of the Body [*Leibeserfahrung*], which is constitutive of man and animal; based on the latter, as constitutive stratum, is the experience of the soul [*Seelenerfahrung*].<sup>14</sup>

But within the *personalistic* attitude, the situation radically changes.<sup>15</sup> Here the body is understood solely as the *body of a person*, as an *expressive* reality that depends on the spirit:

What has been said concerns all our fellow men as well as ourselves, to the extent that we consider ourselves theoretically precisely in this attitude: we then are animated Bodies, Objects of nature, themes of the relevant natural sciences. But it is quite otherwise as regards the personalistic attitude, the attitude we are always in when we live with one another, talk to one another, shake hands with one another in greeting, or are related to one another in love and aversion, in disposition and action, in discourse and discussion.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, the body is understood in the personalistic attitude only as a *human* body, apprehended in its expressive gestures as the unity of the “expression” and the “expressed.” The structure here is no longer *Körper-Leib-Seele* (as in the naturalistic attitude),<sup>17</sup> but *Leib-Person-Geist*. Consequently, the relation *body-soul* (*Leib-Seele*) specific to the naturalistic attitude (one in which the soul depends on the body and is founded on it) is replaced in the personalistic attitude by the relation *body-spirit* (*Leib-Geist*).<sup>18</sup> Here the focus is on the category of *person*, on one’s spiritual individuality, which is always in relation to a community, to one’s own past and one’s own personal history.

An important aspect of this discussion is related to the fact that the *foundational order* is reversed: while in the naturalistic attitude the soul depends on the living body and the living body depends on the corporeal body, in the personalistic attitude the body depends on the spirit and *belongs to it*. In the personalistic attitude, I do not discover myself as located somehow in a body, founded in it; rather, I discover the body as *my body*, as belonging to myself:

It is absolutely out of the question that I am here intending or encountering myself and my cogito as something in the Body [*als etwas am Leibe*], as founded in it [*als in ihm fundiert*], and as a localized annex of it. It is rather the reverse: the Body is *my* Body [...].<sup>19</sup>

Here we are not dealing with a soul belonging to a body and founded upon it, but with a body belonging to a *personal I*.

<sup>14</sup> Hua IV, 174 (tr. 184).

<sup>15</sup> Hua IV, 236–47 (tr. 248–59). Cf. Heinämaa, ‘Selfhood, Consciousness, and Embodiment’, 327.

<sup>16</sup> Hua IV, 183 (tr. 192). See also Behnke, ‘Edmund Husserl’s Contribution to Phenomenology of the Body in *Ideas II*’, 140–42.

<sup>17</sup> Hua IV, 244 (tr. 256):

Here we do not have an apprehension of the Body as bearer of something psychic [*kein Auffassen des Leibes als Trägers eines Psychischen*] in the sense that the Body is posited (experienced) as a physical Object [*Leib als physisches Objekt*] and then something else is added on to it [...].

<sup>18</sup> Hua IV, 139–40 (tr. 147).

<sup>19</sup> Hua IV, 212 (tr. 222).

In other words, while in the naturalistic attitude the apprehension of the soul is grounded upon the apprehension of the body, in the personalistic attitude the apprehension of the body is subordinated to the apprehension of the spirit and “absorbed” in it:

the one who understands and who, in seeing this Body, grasps the human person as a companion [*mit diesem Leib die menschliche Person als Genossen erfasst*] [...] does not posit or grasp in the proper sense (in the sense of an actively performed thesis) the actuality of the Body [*die Wirklichkeit des Leibes*] when he grasps the person expressed therein [...]; the Body appears, but what we perform are the acts of comprehension [*Akte der Komprehension*], and what we grasp are the persons and the personal states ‘expressed’ in the appearing content of the Body.<sup>20</sup>

In this way we already have a first demarcation, albeit an implicit one, between the human body and the animal body, for it is only in the naturalistic attitude that we have a kind of constitutive *indistinctness* between the animal body and the human body. However, this is simply impossible in the personalistic attitude, where what is given is a person, a personal I. Only the personalistic attitude allows the givenness of a personal body, a body that belongs to a personal I, therefore an essentially *human* body, having facial expressions and gestures, a body that is closely related to the spirit that governs it:

Persons apprehend themselves comprehensively [...] in the certainly first and fundamental way, namely that the one understands, as Body, the Corporeality of the other belonging to his surrounding world and its spiritual sense [*der Eine die zu seiner Umwelt gehörige Leiblichkeit des Anderen und deren geistigen Sinn als Leib versteht*], thereby interpreting the facial expressions, gestures, and spoken words as intimations of personal life [*Kundgebung persönlichen Lebens*][...].<sup>21</sup>

Thus, although embodiment and animality *are convergent* on the level of the naturalistic attitude in relation to the category of *Animalien*, they seem to diverge as soon as we place ourselves in the personalistic attitude, where the body enters into a different conjunction, namely, appearing in conjunction with the idea of a person and of a spiritual world. If within the naturalistic attitude we make *no essential difference* between the human body and the animal body, within the personalistic attitude we have to distinguish *Menschenleib* and *Tierleib*, since we understand the human body precisely as a personal body, while animals cannot be understood in this way.<sup>22</sup>

But the most crucial aspect here is that the naturalistic attitude is in fact *subordinated* to the personalistic attitude. The naturalistic attitude arises within the personalistic attitude, starting from it, as a modification of it: “nature [presents] itself as something constituted in an intersubjective association of persons, hence presupposing it.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore, we have a *hierarchy* between the two attitudes, a *preeminence* of the personalistic attitude (which is primordial) over the naturalistic attitude (which is derivative). And if the naturalistic

<sup>20</sup> Hua IV, 244 (tr. 256).

<sup>21</sup> Hua IV, 192 (tr. 202). Cf. Heinämaa, ‘Embodiment and Expressivity in Husserl’s Phenomenology’, 1–15.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Lotz, ‘Psyche or Person?’, 196:

Husserl does think that animals lack the constitutive layer of personality and spirit [*Geist*], namely for two reasons. First, animals lack individuality because individuality is opposed to typical behavior and constituted throughout its own history. Second, animals lack individuality because we do not have any chance to conceive animals *independently from their natural circumstances*, that is to say, in regard to their bodies. In Husserlian words, animals cannot be conceived within the personalistic attitude. Animals have a *necessary* connection to their bodily appearance (because they are just psyches), persons have not.

<sup>23</sup> Hua IV, 210 (tr. 220).

attitude acquires a kind of independence in relation to the personalistic attitude, this happens, Husserl says, only because of a kind of “self-forgetfulness”:

Upon closer scrutiny, it will even appear that there are not here two attitudes with equal rights and of the same order, or two perfectly equal apperceptions which at once penetrate one another, but that the naturalistic attitude is in fact subordinated [*unterordnet*] to the personalistic, and that the former only acquires by means of an abstraction or, rather, by means of a kind of self-forgetfulness [*Selbstvergessenheit*] of the personal Ego, a certain autonomy [*Selbstständigkeit*]<sup>24</sup>—whereby it proceeds illegitimately to absolutize its world, i.e. nature.

We might ask whether this subordination of the naturalistic attitude to the personalistic attitude is not mirrored in our topic as well. Namely, we can ask whether the meaning of the *animated body* (equally specific to the human and the animal, and accessible within the naturalistic attitude) is not in fact *subordinated* to the meaning of the *personal body* (specific *only to the human*, and accessible only within the personalistic attitude). This subordination would imply the necessity of understanding the animal body *on the basis of* the human body, in light of it. In this case, we would have to consider that the meaning of the animal body is constitutively derived and secondary, while the human body would have a phenomenological primordially.

Far from being hazardous, this idea of a derivation is consistent with a number of later comments where Husserl emphasizes that animal embodiment (*Tierleiblichkeit*) can be understood in empathy only by beginning with human embodiment (*menschliche Leiblichkeit*), as a modification of it, characterizing the animal as an “abnormal” variant of the human, one whose body appears as a “distorted human.”<sup>25</sup> The animal is comprehended as a *variation of the primordial type* “human” (*Urtypus Mensch*), therefore in terms of a *transcendental alteration* of the meaning of the *bodily typicality* of the human.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the relation between the human body and the animal body receives a different configuration than the one we discovered earlier in *Ideen II*. Here, in the later works, the relation between human and animal (between human body and animal body) is mediated by the theory of normality and abnormality, which crosses multiple layers of the problem of intersubjectivity. The animal body is constituted in empathy but through a *modification* of normal intersubjectivity. However, normal intersubjectivity is itself constituted between a human normal subject and another normal human subject precisely because it is constituted on the background of a *bodily similarity* that underlies

<sup>24</sup> Hua IV, 183–84 (tr. 193). See also Pulkkinen, ‘Lifeworld as an Embodiment of Spiritual Meaning’, 126–27. It is not without importance that this subordination of the naturalistic attitude to the personalistic attitude will be reformulated by Heidegger in his own terms in the existential analytic, where the *existentiell* comportment of *Dasein* and its pre-theoretical encounter with ready-to-hand entities ontologically *precedes* any theoretical cognitive approach to so-called objective presence. In a certain way, the duality of *Vorhandenheit* and *Zuhandenheit* thereby reflects the duality of the naturalistic attitude and the personalistic attitude. See also Luft, ‘Husserl’s Concept of the “Transcendental Person”’, 141–77.

<sup>25</sup> Hua XIV, 126: “ein verzerrter Mensch in leiblicher Hinsicht, in einzelner gewandelt, verbildet, ‘anomal.’” I have addressed this topic in Ciocan, ‘Husserl’s Phenomenology of Animality and the Paradoxes of Normality’, 175–90.

<sup>26</sup> See also the corresponding passage in the *5th Cartesian Meditation*: Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge* (hereafter Hua I), 154 (tr. *Cartesian Meditations*, 126):

Among the problems of abnormality the problem of animality [*das Problem der Tierheit*] and that of the levels of *higher and lower animals* [*höherer und niederer Tiere*] are included. Relative to the animal, the human being is, constitutionally speaking, the normal case [*Normalfall*]<sup>26</sup>—just as I myself am the primal norm [*Urnorm*] constitutionally for all other human beings. Animals are essentially constituted for me as abnormal ‘variants’ of my humanness [*als anomale Abwandlungen meiner Menschlichkeit*], even though *among* them in turn normality and abnormality may be differentiated. Always it is a matter of intentional modifications in the sense-structure itself, as what becomes evinced. (Translation slightly modified).

the empathy. Ultimately, this normal intersubjectivity essentially depends on the normal constitution of the subject in its own primordial sphere of experience, in one's own bodily subjective typicality.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the relation between embodiment and animality, understood through the filter of the couple normality/abnormality, entails multiple layers or "regressive" leaps: the animal body is constituted *starting from* the modified meaning of the body of the *other human*; in turn, the body of the other human is intersubjectively constituted *starting from* the original meaning of my own body in the sphere of primordial experience. Here we have neither a *community of essence* (or an *ontological indistinctness*) between the *human* and the *animal* body, as in the naturalistic attitude of *Ideen II*, nor a clear disjunction as in the personalistic attitude, where only the expressive human body is at stake due to the fact that it belongs to a personal I. Instead, we have a transfer of meaning, in successive steps and layers, from one's own body to the body of the other human, and then to the animal's body. We still have a continuity of meaning, even though in leaps.

### 3. Heidegger and the Abysmal Bodily Kinship with the Animal

Quite different are these matters in the case of Heidegger, who in his *Letter on Humanism* asserts that "the human body is something essentially other than an animal organism [*der Leib des Menschen ist etwas wesentlich anderes als ein tierischer Organismus*],"<sup>28</sup> that "the essence of divinity is closer to us than what is so alien in other living creatures [*das Wesen des Göttlichen uns näher als das Befremdende der Lebe-Wesen*]"<sup>29</sup> that we are faced with "our scarcely conceivable, abysmal bodily kinship with the animal [*die kaum auszudenkende abgründige leibliche Verwandtschaft mit dem Tier*]." <sup>30</sup> These are undoubtedly categorical statements that emphasize an essential difference, a radical opposition between human and animal, between the human *body* and the animal *body*, an opposition for which we do not find an equivalent in Husserl's texts. Even if Heidegger does acknowledge a "bodily kinship" (*leibliche Verwandtschaft*) to a certain extent, it is characterized as "abysmal" (*abgründig*) and "hardly conceivable" (*kaum auszudenkende*). In any case, we can also detect here, in Heidegger's drastic differentiation between human and animal, an implicit polemic in relation to Husserl's position. However, this hidden tension becomes somewhat visible in the following phrase hinting towards the three-level structure of *body-soul-spirit* we mentioned earlier:

Nor is the error of biologism [*Verirrung des Biologismus*] overcome by adjoining a soul to the human body, a spirit to the soul, and the existentiell to the spirit [*dem Leiblichen des Menschen die Seele und der Seele den Geist und dem Geist das Existentielle aufstockt*].<sup>31</sup>

The fact that after the threefold Husserlian sequence "body-soul-spirit" Heidegger adds his own concept of "existentiell" as a fourth level can be seen as an indication that he understands his own project of the existential analytic as a modification or radicalization of the Husserlian *personalistic* attitude (in its differentiation from the naturalistic attitude).

<sup>27</sup> See also Taipale, *Phenomenology and Embodiment*, 150–55.

<sup>28</sup> Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (hereafter GA 9), 324 (tr. *Pathmarks* 247).

<sup>29</sup> GA 9, 324 (tr. *Pathmarks*, 247).

<sup>30</sup> GA 9, 326 (tr. *Pathmarks*, 248; translation modified).

<sup>31</sup> GA 9, 324 (tr. *Pathmarks*, 247; translation modified).

Therefore, we need to see how Heidegger, in contrast to Husserl, determines the relationship between embodiment and animality. If “the human body is something essentially other than an animal organism,” it seems that we have to tackle three interconnected questions: What is the *human* body? What is the *animal* organism? How and why are they different, or more precisely, *essentially* different? We know that Heidegger did develop a laborious phenomenology of animality, especially during his 1929–1930 course. But the same cannot be said regarding the phenomenology of embodiment, which is not so well illustrated in Heidegger’s work:<sup>32</sup> first, in *Being and Time* we have only an elliptical remark on the “spatialization of *Dasein* in its ‘corporeality’ [Verräumlichung des *Daseins* in seiner ‘Leiblichkeit’]”;<sup>33</sup> then, in a few texts from the 1940s (including the *Letter on Humanism*), the problem of the body reappears, but only in a declarative way, without any proper analysis. Finally, it is only in the late 1950s, especially in the *Zollikon Seminars*, that the problem of the body is consistently taken up and thematically discussed.<sup>34</sup>

In a sense, as compared to Husserl, the situation is symmetrically reversed, for while Husserl has offered *extensive* analyses of the body and *sporadic* incursions into the area of animality, Heidegger has instead offered *detailed and thorough* analyses of animality<sup>35</sup> and a rather *sparse* investigation of embodiment. But unlike Husserl, who often discusses the themes of embodiment and animality in a *convergent* way, Heidegger always discusses them *separately* and deliberately avoids mixing them in any way. One can easily notice that during the 1929–1930 course dedicated to animality Heidegger does not put any emphasis on embodiment *at all*; conversely, in the *Zollikon Seminars* and in other contexts in which the phenomenon of the body is discussed, he does not relate it *in any way* to the question of animality. This choice is also reflected in the terminology used: in the course of 1929–1930, Heidegger does not use the term “animal *body*” (*Tierleib*), but insists on the semantic-scientific line of the term “*organism*.” The same terminological distinction is evident in the passage quoted earlier from the *Letter on Humanism*, where the abysmal distance that Heidegger speaks of is between the “human *body*” (*Leib des Menschen*) and the “animal *organism*” (*tierische Organismus*).

Thus, the difference between *human* and *animal* is doubled by the difference between *body* and *organism*. Heidegger not only avoids the term *Leib* when he describes the animality of the animal, but also contests the legitimacy of the concept of “organism” in relation to the human being. In other words, if regarding the animal Heidegger insists upon the scientific terminology of the idea of “organism,” regarding the human he will precisely contest the validity and adequacy of this conceptuality. Accordingly, he will explicitly say the following:

The fact that physiology and physiological chemistry can scientifically investigate human being as an organism [*Menschen als Organismus*] is no proof that in this ‘organic’ thing, that is, in the body scientifically explained [*wissenschaftlich erklärten Leib*], the essence of the human being consists.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Aho, *Heidegger’s Neglect of the Body*, 29–33.

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (hereafter SZ) 108 (tr. *Being and Time*, 101). Cf. Ciocan, ‘The Question of the Living Body in Heidegger’s Analytic of *Dasein*’, 72–89. For an analysis of this problematic in Heidegger’s early works, see Overgaard, ‘Heidegger on Embodiment’, 116–31.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Ciocan, ‘Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Embodiment in the *Zollikon Seminars*’, 463–78.

<sup>35</sup> For this topic, see Beinsteiner, ‘The “As” and the Open’, 41–56; Andersson, ‘Otherworldly Worlds’, 57–81.

<sup>36</sup> GA 9, 324 (tr. *Pathmarks*, 247).

The crucial question is this: what can in fact be “scientifically explained,” the *living body* (*Leib*) or the *corporeal body* (*Körper*)? In the *Zollikon Seminars*, Heidegger will insistently emphasize the idea that the life sciences (and above all the medical sciences) do not have access to the originary phenomenon of *Leib*, but only to the *Leib-Körper*, to the corporeal functions of the body, understood in a causal, measurable, and quantitative way.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the scientific perspective first and foremost addresses *Körper*; and if, in a second step, it takes *Leib* into account as well, it considers *Leib* only from the angle of *Körper* and thus fatally misses the meaning of embodiment as a fundamental phenomenon. In contrast, Heidegger states, *Leib* has to be understood as an originary and unique phenomenon, irreducible to mechanistic systems or to causal and quantitative explanations. In other words, the phenomenological viewpoint approaches *Leib* first and foremost; and if, in a second step, it also takes *Körper* into account, it will consider the latter only from the perspective of *Leib*.

As we saw in the fragment previously mentioned, Heidegger insists upon the idea that the human essence does not reside in something organic. On the contrary, what we perceive as bodily nature must be *traced back once again* to the essence of this entity, to the foundation of the being of this entity. In other words, all bodily phenomena must be understood *starting from* the essence of the human being, *in light of* the primordial meaning that this essence confers upon the human being.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the essence of the human being *does not reside in* embodiment; rather, embodiment *resides in* the essence of the human being and must be returned to this essence, re-conducted towards it, reintegrated or reabsorbed in this essence. The essence of the human being *is not founded* on something of a corporeal or bodily nature, but the phenomenon of the body (in its *Leib-Körper* ambivalence) is in fact founded on the essence of the human being and acquires its meaning only on the basis of this essence. What the human body fundamentally is, in an originary—phenomenological and ontological—sense, can be disclosed only by taking the grounding meaning of the essence of the human being as the point of departure.

It is in this sense that Heidegger emphasizes in the *Letter on Humanism* that “even what we attribute to the human being as *animalitas* on the basis of the comparison with ‘the animal’ [*Vergleich mit dem ‘Tier’*] is itself grounded in the essence of ek-sistence.”<sup>39</sup> Precisely in relation to this essence, the simple idea of *comparing* the “human body” with the “animal organism” is just an error (if not a deviation) made possible by the comprehensive infrastructure of metaphysical biologism. Thus, Heidegger not only refuses the biologist-scientific assimilation between human and animal, but even seems to reject the very idea of *comparison*, the idea of a comparative examination. This is why he asks, more or less rhetorically: “Are we really on the right track toward the essence of the human being as long as we set him off as one living creature [*Lebewesen*] among others in contrast to plants, animals, and God?”<sup>40</sup> The shadow of doubt that this question mark reveals (“are we on the right track ... ?”) can also be understood as a kind of step back (or even a self-critique) in relation to his own 1929–1930 approach, where Heidegger advances precisely in this

<sup>37</sup> Heidegger, *Zollikoner Seminare* (hereafter ZS) 232–233 (tr. *Zollikon Seminars*, 186).

<sup>38</sup> This is why Heidegger suggests in *Being and Time*, for example, that even illness should be understood first of all as an *existential* phenomenon, and only subsequently as a *medical* phenomenon. Cf. SZ, 247 (tr. 229).

<sup>39</sup> GA 9, 324 (tr. *Pathmarks*, 247; translation modified).

<sup>40</sup> GA 9, 323 (tr. *Pathmarks*, 246; translation modified).

way, on the path of a comparative examination (*der Weg der vergleichenden Betrachtung*)<sup>41</sup> between stone, animal, and human in relation to the phenomenon of the world (*Weltlosigkeit, Weltarmut, Weltbildung*).

The fact that with regard to animal bodily nature Heidegger insists on the theoretical terminology of biological science—namely, on the idea of the organism—seems to support the view that for Heidegger, animals, in their peculiar corporeality, are accessible for reflection only within the theoretical attitude, which is a derived one, while one's own body is given in the original pre-theoretical sense, and can therefore become the object of a genuine phenomenological investigation. It is symptomatic that in Heidegger's writings we do not find—even only as an illustration—any descriptions of concrete or experiential encounters with animals, as we find the description of a cat in § 49 of Husserl's *Ideen II*, or in Derrida's book *The Animal that I therefore am*, or, again, the dog Bobby (“the last Kantian in the Nazi Germany”) in a famous text of Emmanuel Levinas. In Heidegger's texts, we do not find such illustrative examples taken from the existentiell level of factual life, but only technical considerations about the *essence* of the animal, reflections related to the theoretical experience of biology, which Heidegger interprets phenomenologically. In fact, Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of animality developed in 1929–1930 is not only elaborated in close dialogue with the biology of his time, but also has the subsidiary aim of setting the ontological basis for a phenomenologically legitimated biology. (In the background, we therefore have the tension between the positive sciences, the regional ontologies, and fundamental ontology). In any case, animals as such, as concrete entities, do not come to the forefront; only *animality* (or the *essence* of the animal) is of interest for the phenomenologist. Here the approach to animals is not concrete or experiential, but rather theoretical and essentialist.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks: Contrasts and Demarcations

If we want to identify both parallels with and divergences from Husserl's positions outlined above, we can first of all say that Heidegger *radicalizes the contrast* between the *personalistic* attitude in which the body is given as a human body—as the body of a personal self in the pre-theoretical experience of the lifeworld—and the *naturalistic* attitude, which is eminently theoretical and where the animal body is given as an organism in its biological structure.

Second, Heidegger is in disagreement with Husserl's idea that the animal body would be given as an abnormality through an intentional *modification* of the human body (understood as normality). For instance, we can consider the relation between the human hand and the animal paw. Husserl would say that we can assign a meaning to an animal paw only through an intentional modification, i.e. on the basis of an alteration of the meaning of the human hand. A meaning, albeit a modified meaning, is transferred from the human to the animal, from the human hand to the animal paw (and the transfer is similar regarding all of the body parts we can compare). Yet Heidegger strongly opposes this kind of perspective. For example, in the *Parmenides* course, he emphasizes that the animal has *no hand*, and the hand *does not originate* from something like paws or claws.<sup>42</sup> And in *Was heißt Denken?* he will insist in a similar manner on the fact that

<sup>41</sup> GA 29/30, 261–264 (tr. 176–178), 272–274 (tr. 184–186).

<sup>42</sup> Heidegger, *Parmenides* (hereafter GA 54), 118 (tr. *Parmenides*, 80).

although apes have grasping organs, they have no hand. He will emphasize that there is an *abyss of essence* between the human hand and the ape's organ of apprehension:

In the common view, the hand is part of our bodily organism. But the hand's essence [*Wesen der Hand*] can never be determined, or explained, by its being an organ that can grasp. Apes, too, have organs that can grasp, but they do not have hands. The hand is infinitely different from all the grasping organs—paws, claws, or fangs—different by an abyss of essence [*Abgrund des Wesens*].<sup>43</sup>

We can, of course, further explore this difference not only in relation to body parts—be they practical (hands, feet, etc.) or sensory (eyes, ears, etc.)—but also in relation to bodily *capacities or abilities*, since one might very well point out that seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting are equally relevant for humans and for animals. However, Heidegger states that we find ourselves in “the greatest perplexity [*die größte Verlegenheit*] [...] as soon as we compare the discriminatory capacity of a falcon's eye with that of the human eye or the canine sense of smell with our own.”<sup>44</sup> In this case, is there an *essential* difference between human and animal sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, etc.? Should we understand animal sight *starting from* human sight, animal touch *starting from* human touch, and so on? We know that in his analysis of animality, Heidegger explores the relation between a sensory organ and its ability (*Fähigkeit*), saying that it is not the organ that has an ability, but the ability that has the organ; it is not the ability that belongs to the organ, but the organ that essentially belongs to the ability. It is in this sense that Heidegger asks: “Can the animal see because it has eyes, or does it have eyes because it can see?”<sup>45</sup> But in other texts, he will say practically the same thing, this time referring precisely to *human* seeing and hearing: we do not hear because we have ears, but we have ears because we can hear,<sup>46</sup> and we do not see because we have eyes, but we have eyes because we can see.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, for humans too the capacity *precedes* the sensory organ, just as for animals. The same *syntax* of precedence and preeminence of the function, capacity, or ability over the sensory organ is to be found in animals and humans alike. Then what, precisely, distinguishes human and animal sight (as well as hearing, touch, smell, and taste), given the fact that in many cases, the acuity and performance of animal senses are incomparably better than their human counterparts? Heidegger's response would be that it is precisely the way in which these sense capacities (or sensorial abilities) are *articulated and gathered together* in the essence of the entity in question, as in a more primordial and grounding unity on the basis of which they receive their essential meanings. Thus, Heidegger's answer would be that there is an abyss between human sight and animal sight, between the human eye and the animal eye, precisely because the capacity or ability (to see, to hear, to touch, to smell, etc., with their subordinated sensory organs) is in each case integrated in and subordinated to the essence of the entity in question, which is finally the grounding phenomenon. To put it another way, if there is an abyss, it is first of all that between the essence of the human being (understood as *ek-sistence*) and the essence of the animal (considered as “captivation” [*Benommenheit*]), between human

<sup>43</sup> Heidegger, *Was heißt Denken?* (hereafter GA 8) 18 (tr. *Basic Writings*, 380).

<sup>44</sup> Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (hereafter GA 29/30) 285 (tr. *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 194).

<sup>45</sup> GA 29/30, 319 (tr. 218).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (hereafter GA 7) 219–220 (tr. *Early Greek Thinking*, 65).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. GA 54, 217 (tr. 145–146).

“comportment” (*Verhalten*) and animal “behaviour” (*Benehmen*). Thus, we see that the idea of an “abysmal difference,” the abyss of essence (*Abgrund des Wesens*), repeatedly occurs in Heidegger’s attempts to distinguish human and animal.<sup>48</sup> But equally *abysmal* is the bodily *kinship* (*abgründige leibliche Verwandtschaft*) between human and animal. Therefore, we have both an *abysmal difference* and an *abysmal kinship* between human and animal, between the human body and the animal body. And this primordial difference, *abysmal* as it is, is consequently mirrored in the capacities and then in the organs as such. It is in this way, perhaps, that we can phenomenologically explore the difference between seeing and looking, between hearing and listening, between touching and caressing, between the basic senses of tasting and smelling (vital in eating what is edible and drinking what is drinkable) and the complex way we distinguish and appreciate gustatory and olfactory nuances.<sup>49</sup> In this sense, one can argue that even if an animal can *see* the object we call a “painting,” it cannot *look at* the painting and observe the chromatic relations that this painting manifests. And even if the animal can hear the sounds of what we call “music,” it cannot *listen to* this symphony and follow the acoustic harmonies and progressions. Even if the gustatory and olfactory perceptions of animals allow them to detect and avoid dangerous food better than any human can, no animal can develop an interest in refined gastronomy and sophisticated perfumery.

Finally, there would be yet another aspect in which Heidegger is distancing himself from Husserl: the relation between *Leib* and *Körper*. As we have seen, for Husserl, any living body (*Leib*) is a corporeal body (*Körper*): even if *Leib* is “much more” than a mere *Körper*, the meaning of *Leib* essentially depends on the meaning of *Körper* and is based on it. There is, of course, a difference of stratum between *Leib* and *Körper*, but the unity of a “corporeal living being” (*Leib-Körper*, *körperliche Leib*, or *leibliche Körper*) is nevertheless an indissoluble one: it is finally the same reality, seen from two distinct perspectives. Heidegger, however, disputes precisely this fundamental unity, this essential link between *Leib* and *Körper*. And he does this by putting into play the concept of limit: in the *Zollikon Seminars*, he says that between the limits of the *Leib* and the limits of the *Körper* we have not a *quantitative*, but rather a *qualitative* difference.<sup>50</sup> While the limits of the *Körper* are given in what we call our epidermis (the skin), the *Leib*—which is always mine<sup>51</sup>—does not end where my *Körper* ends. On the contrary, the limits of my *Leib* are configured by the horizon of being in which I dwell. Thus, *Leiblichkeit* is understood *on the basis of* the triad *Jemeinigkeit–Seinshorizont–Aufenthalt* belonging to ek-sistence as the essence of the human being. Here Heidegger gives an insightful example: when I point at the corner of the window, my *Leib* does not end at the extremity of my pointing finger.<sup>52</sup> The way in which my body essentially is as a body (not in a *substantial*, but in a *verbal* sense, as “bodying forth” [*Leiben*]<sup>53</sup>)

<sup>48</sup> GA 29/30, 384 (tr. 264): “the animal is separated from man by an abyss [*ist das Tier durch einen Abgrund vom Menschen getrennt*].”

<sup>49</sup> Cf. GA 29/30, 308 (tr. 210):

It [the animal] feeds with us—and yet, we do not really ‘feed.’ It eats with us—and yet, it does not really ‘eat’ [*Er frißt mit uns—nein, wir fressen nicht. Er ißt mit uns—nein, er ißt nicht*].

<sup>50</sup> ZS, 112 (tr. 86).

<sup>51</sup> ZS, 113 (tr. 86).

<sup>52</sup> ZS, 113 (tr. 86). For this topic, see Ciocan, ‘Heidegger’s Phenomenology of Embodiment in the *Zollikon Seminars*’, 463–78.

<sup>53</sup> ZS, 113–114, 118, 122, 126, 131–133, 140–141, 244–245, 248, 251, 257 (tr. 86–88, 91, 93, 96–97, 101–102, 108, 196–197, 199–200, 202, 206).

extends throughout the dwelling horizon of my existential being, up to the window to which I am pointing with my finger. *Leib* accordingly has a “reach” (*Reichweite*) that is not only larger, but also of a different nature than the extension of *Körper*.<sup>54</sup> The phenomenon of the body is therefore integrated into the essence of the entity existing (better: existing) as a body, and can only be understood starting from the being of *Da-sein*. It is only in this sense that we can understand how Heidegger can state that we are dealing with an *ekstatic character* of our bodily nature (*ekstatische Leiblichkeit*).<sup>55</sup>

To conclude, the tension between embodiment and animality, indicated in this paper through the contrast between Husserl and Heidegger<sup>56</sup>, can have several possible shapes, ranging from *identity* to radical *difference*, taking different forms of proximity and distance, convergence or divergence, superposition and distinction, fusion and separation, and so on. In any case, the way in which we configure the relation of embodiment and animality might be highly indicative for the discrepancies of the orientations we currently find in the field of contemporary phenomenology—discrepancies between tendencies aiming towards a more naturalizing approach, more inclined towards coherence and compatibility with the natural sciences, and the opposite tendencies aiming to preserve a phenomenological *precedence* or *preeminence*, be it transcendental or ontological, with regard to any scientific or naturalistic approach. But these are issues for further studies.

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<sup>54</sup> ZS, 111–113 (tr. 85–87).

<sup>55</sup> ZS, 118, 278 (tr. 91, 221).

<sup>56</sup> For the difference between human body and animal body in Merleau-Ponty, see Gléonec, ‘Corps animal et corps humain’, 109–32.

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