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INTRODUCTION

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Phenomenology originated in the tradition of transcendentalist philosophy, but very soon—already in the works of the founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl—it focused on the issue of the body to the extent previously unheard of in transcendentalist philosophy. Crucially, phenomenology never considered a body to be just a kind of tool or mean to be used by "spirit" or the "soul"; rather, the body was analyzed as imbued with an intentionality of its own. Already in Husserl's works, the most basic structures of our thinking, even the basic logical principles, can be gradually traced back to their roots in bodily experience, perception, or sensation. Later phenomenological philosophy has developed these initial insights in a more detailed manner, and a rich philosophy of the body has arisen in the phenomenological tradition.

The thematic volume *Hand – Work/Labor – Matter* is a contribution to this phenomenological philosophy of the body. In general, five studies opening this issue present phenomenological investigations of the body at work. In this work, the body is not just another tool we use. Rather, the body is already who we are. This work of the body is simultaneously a negotiation of our relationship and access to the world; it delineates possibilities for both our practical engagement and our theoretical understanding. The body is co-extensive with the world, and it straightforwardly not only responds to the world as matter but also discloses the world as a matter, too. Any phenomenological investigation of the body at work is therefore always a reflective philosophical investigation as well, a certain retracing of our steps in our self-understanding which ultimately reveals the primordial conditions of our thinking and action.

The first two studies focus more particularly on the phenomenology of the hand. The hand can be a leading clue for a phenomenological analysis of the broad field of haptic experience. Various intentional determinations of our corporeality

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belong here: the conscious or unconscious assessment of force, distance or radius of movement, immersing the hand in the matter, grasping, stroking, scratching, striking, shredding, throwing. Our body relates to each of these actions in a different manner.

A hand discloses not only a nature of the matter which we touch and work with, but also of the matter which we think and imagine. The imagination of matter is based on our own touches. The work of the artist with the matter and the capturing of the matter in the work of art are two different intentional acts, and yet they are linked to the unifying experiences with the matter. How shall one, on the one hand, capture the unformed matter in the work? And how shall one, on the other hand, materialize an image? How does touch translate into words with which the poet, essayist or philosopher describes the lived or imagined experience?

The analyses of the phenomenality of the hand open the dimension of the meaning of the work or labor, too. Latin "*labor*" or French "*travail*" point to the meanings of exertion, toil, or drudgery. A hard-working laborer knows the vibrations accompanying the struggles with the matter, for example, when drilling the ground, rock, or other hard surface. The task of the worker does not have only its political dimension but also a dimension of a particular anthropological experience, which inscribes itself to the life of community. The heterogeneity of manual work mirrors the social structures of schemes as well as the particular culture in its geographical and historical contexts.

As for the studies in the phenomenology of the hand in this volume in particular, Anton Vydra tackles the relationship between the engravings of Albert Flocon and the philosophy of Gaston Bachelard. It may seem counterintuitive that there are any links between such a concrete action as an engraving and a highly abstract undertaking such as philosophy, but Vydra shows that this is indeed a case in Bachelard's philosophy. There are notions used to describe theoretical thinking which are derived from the work of the hand—for example, we say we "grasp" something, or in German the word for "concept" is *Begriff*. Vydra shows, with Bachelard's assistance, that these should be understood to be more than metaphors. Inspired by Flocon's engravings, Bachelard developed his original method of philosophizing, one that is not "grasping"—where "grasp" implies firm control or possession—but one that is more akin to gentle touching, one that is responsive to the matter in the very same way engravings are responsive, one that lets itself be guided by the matter itself. An engraving is shown to be at the roots of Bachelard's *phenomenotechnique*.

Jaroslava Vydrová focuses on the work of the hand in crafts and art. Developing the investigations of the body in Husserl's works as well as in the work of the architect and theoretician Juhani Pallasmaa, she makes the case that the hand

should be considered as "thinking"—that the practical "handling" of the matter and the special tactile experience are crucial for our self-understanding. Vydrová analyzes several examples from sculpture, crafts, and architecture to support her case. She contrasts these examples with the intervention of "hands-free" technology in the very same fields, when, for example, woodcarving—which was previously done by hand—can now be more efficiently done by a machine, or when sketches of architectural blueprints are no longer drawn by hand but are computer generated. She interprets this gradual loss of handwork as a loss, the consequences of which are broader than may be initially apparent—as a result, it is a loss that changes the way we think and understand ourselves.

The remaining three studies focus on the relationship between the body and technology in various fields. In his study Michal Lipták investigates this relationship in the field of music, with a particular focus on electronic music. Starting with "classic" works in phenomenological aesthetics by Husserl, Ingarden, Merleau-Ponty, and Dufrenne, and complementing them with case studies of a pioneer of electronic music, Pierre Schaeffer, Lipták analyzes the function of the body within music. The body is presented as a reservoir of types which allow us to easily recognize music *qua* music. The erasure of the body from music is then disclosed as a subversion of the established typology and, therefore, as fundamentally an avant-garde technique. Electronic music is thus interpreted as a kind of music where this avant-garde technique suddenly succeeds, so to speak, in one stroke. This instant loss of the body is troubling, but it also opens up new possibilities; therefore, the deficiency introduced through technology is interpreted as potentially positive and creative, too.

In his study, Jon Stewart likewise addresses the issue of the development of technology and the body, this time in the context of labor. Specifically, Stewart proceeds by means of close reading of Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which he presents as a Marxist phenomenology or phenomenology of the body *avant la lettre*. Stewart argues that far from simply documenting the negative health effects of industrial labor on the workers in 19th century England, Engels disclosed the ascent of industrial labor as drastically altering the way we relate to the world and the way we understand ourselves. This change, which has vast political and social consequences, is rooted in the different interpretation of the body in industrial labor. While the body was once understood—for example, in the work of a craftsman—as a psychophysical unity through which we express ourselves and relate to the external world, in the factory the labor of the body becomes particularized, and the body becomes a cog in the machine, repetitively—and in a way inhumanly—performing a single simple task. Whereas craftsmanship requires skill and specialized long-term training of the body, factory work requires

just simple physical stamina that exceeds what the human body is capable of. Industrial labor therefore damages the body and causes grave health problems, even to the point of reconfiguring the physiology of the body itself. Moreover, the psychological problems that arise with the long work hours attending a machine in a factory are even much more thoroughly damaging and dehumanizing.

Finally, Peter Šajda investigates the relationship between the body and technology in warfare, analyzing the development of Ernst Jünger's thinking about a fighter. Šajda identifies three lines of thought in Jünger. First, he considers the natural "will to fight," a primordial emotion-based drive to survival which directs the fight in the heat of the battle. This will to fight can be coupled, however, with a service to an idea, which is what Jünger in his second line of thought identifies with a knight. While the specific ideas may vary, the knights are united in a "metaphysical community" of knights by means of their manner of fighting, where the primordial, emotionally driven (for example, hate driven) savage fight is tempered, and as a result the manner of fighting is "noble." Knightliness is only possible in a war between professional armies. Thirdly, and finally, this knightly fight is opposed to the doctrine of a "total mobilization" which turns every worker—both combatant and non-combatant—into a component of a global war machine. This "total mobilization"—whereby a ground for it was undoubtedly prepared by the industrial transformation of the body in factory, as analyzed by Stewart in this volume—initiates a search for a unifying ideology driving such mobilization, which ultimately dissolves the metaphysical community of knights.

All five studies of this thematic volume *Hand – Work/Labor – Matter* show not only that the phenomenological investigation of the body is fruitful but also that it can serve as an entry point for phenomenology to penetrate surprisingly varying fields. For example, Vydrová suggests links between the phenomenology of the hand and robotics, while Šajda shows how phenomenology can be useful for an analysis of warfare. Moreover, the phenomenology of the body can be productive in finding a common ground with philosophical schools that may be otherwise seen as antagonistic to phenomenology. In this regard, Stewart makes convincing case for phenomenological Marxism, while Lipták suggests a connection between phenomenology and critical theory. Aside from tackling their specific topics, therefore, all these studies together make a general case for continuing the fruitful research in the phenomenology of the body and for encouraging far-reaching dialogues between such a phenomenology and various other fields and philosophical schools.