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SITUATIVE DIFFERENCE. A CONCEPT FOR POLITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY

abstract

To exist corporally, i.e., in corporeal difference, to the world means that the space of possibilities does not exist as a virtual multiplicity of abstract possibilities, but always only as a horizon of possibilities that orients actions in a situation. For a political phenomenology, the notion of situatedness is attractive because it articulates a rupture in the political. The perspective of an embodied situated subject can neither be transferred into an 'objective' situational picture (a position), nor can its place be assigned in it and thus mapped in it. But if situated subjects want to become visible in the agonistic field of power, they have to choose a position. Only as a position it becomes recognizable what one stands for, even if there is no safe way from situatedness to positioning. A phenomenology of situatedness thus leads to a politics of positioning.

keywords

situation, position, political phenomenology, split subject, feminist phenomenology

Phenomenology and Mind, n. 26 - 2024, pp. 164-174
DOI: 10.17454/pam-2613
https://www.rosenbergesellier.it/eng/journals/phenomenology-and-mind

ISSN 2280-7853 (print) - ISSN 2239-4028 (on line)

Situatedness is not something. It is not a thing, not something to be pointed at, not an entity. My situatedness is neither a phenomenon because it does not appear to me, it does not present itself to me *as* something in the manner of its appearing. But even if it does not appear itself, it is always given along with the appearing of things – what Husserl calls "co-given" (Husserl, 1989, p. 223) ("mitgegeben)." This character of being given along with something else makes it problematical to address the topic and indeed makes it impossible to address it in a direct manner. Our attention is then directed more to the "situation" than to "situatedness", a concept familiar from numerous classical phenomenologists such as Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Waldenfels. The interest in the notion of situatedness is a political one, because the difference between the notion of situation and that of position, or between situatedness and positioning, can serve to show that we are inescapably politically responsible when we position ourselves *in* situations. In what follows, it will be argued that this difference, which might be called the "situative difference," can provide a basic concept of political phenomenology.

This will be outlined through four steps: Firstly, I will summarize widely recognized phenomenological descriptions of situatedness. The second part will involve a reflection on the feasibility and limitations of addressing it as a subject. The third part will develop the concept of "situative difference," which explores the relationship between situation and position, or between situatedness and positioning. Finally, the fourth and final step will initiate the development of a perspective for political phenomenology emerging from these discussions.

1. Givenness of the Situation

Perception, speech and action exist only in situated form. Bodily forms of perception, speech and action do not exist as mere incidents at a seemingly neutral point in three-dimensional space, but rather are bound to and anchored in their situation from which space is accessed as space and thus as a context of significance. When things or people appear to me as something or someone, they do not do so as atomized particular objects, but rather embedded in a significant overall context. The phenomenality of things appears only in the meaningful context of a situation. Corporally I experience things in their relatedness – among each other and in relation to me. Desks, lecterns and rows of seats shape the room, they are familiar to me with regard to their utility and readiness to hand and make it possible for me to orient myself in space. Corporal orientation in space does not measure clearances and distances, but rather experiences them as appropriate, beneficial, difficult or unsuitable with respect to one's own

wishes, aims and desires.

During my academic talk, the lectern shields a part of my body from the gaze of the others (specifically, the part that is considered insignificant in academic discourse according to Western norms: only my gestures, facial expressions and my speech organs are of interest), but it also supports me. I have something to hold on to when I feel insecure about the reaction to my lecture. The lectern gives stability and security to me. The lecture hall or seminar room is not only furnished with objects, but also with other bodies. The number of bodies in the room is not without meaning. If the room could accommodate more bodies, I would probably sense, that there aren't enough people in it. My own fear of failure correlates with the projection of potential reasons for emptiness, which could be due to me or the topic of my lecture. If, however, the room is fuller than expected, the expectation in the room adds up to a demand of which I'd fear that it cannot be fulfilled. One way or another: it is good that the room has these openings through which I came and through which, if need be, I could quickly escape. All entrances are potential emergency exits.

Additionally, the distribution of bodies within the room is not haphazard. Rather, there exists a discernible pattern of significance within the crowd, as I share a more or less extensive and meaningful history with certain individuals in the audience. On the other hand, there are others who remain entirely unfamiliar to me. The presence of familiar faces provides me with a sense of security, much like the lectern does. In moments when self-doubt threatens to overpower me, I can direct my attention solely towards them and allow the rest to fade into the background. Consequently, it is all the more jarring when the familiar face I am addressing appears vacant. Such a response can only be interpreted as skepticism or boredom, as I do not even entertain the notion of tiredness or distraction, which are unrelated to me.

However, beyond these individual factors, there exist atmospheres and tenors permeating the room itself, akin to the tuning of a musical instrument. There may not always be a resonance between the physical space and my own bodily presence, which can either amplify and intensify my own resonance or hinder it. The ambiance of the room can facilitate a smoother beginning than anticipated, but it can also feel chilly, suppressing my voice within my throat. Both my own emotions and those of others intertwine, resulting in co-affective situations. (Waldenfels, 2015).

To be related to the world corporally, by a physical body, that is, in corporal difference, means that the space of possibilities presents itself not as a virtual manifold of abstract possibilities, but rather always as a horizon of possibilities that orients action in a situation. The concept of *situation* is systematically in opposition to the concept of *position*. Physical things are located by an observer in three-dimensional space; this can also be done by technical means (for example floor plans, GPS systems, device tracking and the like). They are localized in a "general position" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 346)[1] in relation to other physical things, their outline is traced, their distances measured and sizes identified. They are *in* space. Physical bodies, by contrast, are "en situation" (Sartre), they are situated at the "zero-point of experience" (Husserl) *from which* space is constituted *as* space and thus becomes experienceable. Similarly, freedom, as existential phenomenology has shown, is first and foremost not conceivable as the abstract ability of a transcendental subject or an atomized liberal subject of law; rather, there is "freedom only in the situation, and there is a situation only through freedom." (Sartre, 1953, p. 489) In view of the facticities, conditions of possibility and limitations inherent to the situation, freedom is logically conceived as being at once groundless and unbounded and at the same time contextual and significant. It is *groundless*

1 Unfortunately, the English translators choose "situation" to translate "Lage". Correction of the translation is mine.

because it has no other ground or foundation than the situation in which it is articulated together with the actual possibility of overcoming its limitations from within the situation by "projecting" itself. But it is also always a *contextual* freedom, not abstract, but rather concrete freedom, and as such related to the horizon of possibility, of "I can". However, "I can" is by no means the only dimension of experience in situations. Rather, in situations we are also confronted with moments of deficiency and impossibility. The desire, the intentions and the various forms of expression and action are confronted with resistance that shape the situation and limit the spaces of possibility. Even if it may be experienced as an external limitation, inability is not a subtraction from an essentially comprehensive ability that is supposed to represent the "truth" of the situation.

There is a considerable difficulty involved in becoming conscious of one's own situatedness. In the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, it has the structure of a "totalizing totality". It is the totality of the conditions of possible meaning, the totality of what can be experienced. Experience is always structured along the lines of sense; otherwise it would not be experience. That does not exclude nonsense or absurdity for it can only appear before a meaningful background *as* nonsense or absurdity. But things that are completely devoid of sense do not take part in situations (they are similar to noise in media communication).

The process quality of totalizing consists in the fact that it does not simply exist, but rather that it happens, or more precisely: it is done.-The fact that one is *in* a situation does not mean that there is a choice to be outside of the situation and so to speak from there to gain information about what is happening "inside". Rather, the fact that the situation "totalizes" means that by virtue of practicing the situation the totality of what is meaningful for someone in the situation is produced. Since we cannot be located outside of the situation, it cannot be addressed as an object without further ado. It is not a phenomenon that can be subjected to phenomenological description.

Hence, the situation can only become reflective when the unquestioned character of what is situatively obvious is fractured. When the horizon of the "practical possibility of the I can" (Husserl, 1989, p. 270) is obstructed by an "I cannot" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 161). In opposition to the conception of an expansion of bodily possibilities, as put forward by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in their phenomenologies, Sara Ahmed speaks of a "phenomenology of 'being stopped'" (ibid.). It may well be that situatedness *as* situatedness can only become conscious when "I can" is accompanied by "I can't", or more to the point: when it is thwarted.

2. Reflectivity of Situatedness

At the beginning it was said that the situation from which I proceed is my situation, that the first-person perspective is unavoidable. That is correct, but it needs to be made more precise inasmuch as the manner of expression is misleading in two ways that are related to each other. The first person is not one person and it is not a subject of consciousness.

1) Experiences that we have as corporal beings, as beings with a physical body are always more or less shared experiences; even if it is not the case that several people "have" the same experiences as experiences, they do take place in a space whose meaning dimensions are socially mediated. There is no private-language meaning. Just as there can be no private language (as Wittgenstein puts it), there are no "private situations" in so far as even purportedly private situations are characterized by the presence of other people even when they are actually absent. The sociality of meaning is based on the linguistic mediation of our relatedness to the world. We participate in meaning with others, and we have no other meaning to understand than that of others. Being is "co-", as Jean-Luc Nancy tirelessly insists (Nancy, 2000). Not "co-being" or "co-existence" (in the sense that Heidegger referred to) – which would make it necessary to discuss what "being" and "existence" are – but rather the bare minimum of

determination of "co" or "with", splitting, division, sharing. In the theory of alterity, intersubjectivity always begins with the "other in the core of myself" (Levinas, 1998, p. 141). In terms of social theory situations are experienced in embodied practices (in the sense of culturally formatted, habitualized units of performed actions). Practices are always situated practices. The first-person perspective is accordingly not an undivided experience with the first-person quality seal of sole responsibility and security; at best, it is a first-person-plural perspective in which the social and cultural mediation of all experience is also expressed.

2) By the same token, this "first person" is also not a subject of consciousness that "constitutes" the perspective of experience and the objects appearing in it. Rather, things also simply happen to the subject that is exposed as a physical body and is a befallen subject. Experiences do something "to me" while I "have" experiences. I am somewhat addressed by my experiences. What is called the first-person perspective is accordingly not experience with a guarantee of genuine, transparent consciousness. Rather, it designates the address of the person to whom an experience happens or who is befallen by the experience. Events in experience that do not just routinely repeat the same old things on and on (although in the identity of repetition there is, as we all know, a minimum of difference), these events are things that "befall" us, they are "Widerfahrnisse" (Waldenfels, 2002, p. 98sq.). (I don't' make them "happen" but they "happen to me".)

The consequence of these two corrections to an interpretation of the first person as an isolated, autonomous entity is that there is something implicit behind the first person or backing it up, something that provides the conditions of possibility for meaningful experience in the situation. Structures, social constructions of reality that make the world what it is for us or for me. And which help to shape my ability and inability in situations.

If, for example, we take my situation as a speaker giving an academic talk, it would be underdetermined if I narrow it down to my individual psycho-biographic insecurities and fears. It could seem that these are merely subjective characteristics of experience that have something to do with other people and the world only to the extent that they have an influence on my acting and speaking in the world and sometimes confine them. Fears always have an intersubjective tune and trigger, for example, previous experience or even experiences in early childhood or projections (as psychoanalysis teaches us). But the intersubjective trigger and characterization of one's own mental economy is not what primarily matters to me here. Every situation as such has a social and cultural structure, it is pervaded by visible and invisible vectors, powerful allocations of space on the body, by inclusions and exclusions of the body. Spaces also have colors.

Calling a room "white" does not mean a color of the skin, but rather a sense-giving structure of space that organizes inclusions and exclusions and distributes the right to speak. In a white room I am "white" in this sense, that is, I am inconspicuous, my presence is not noticed as something special. I fit in, my position as a speaker is not disputed. Independent of my inner mental disposition, I am welcome here so that my white body is not an issue. The audience can concentrate completely on what is said and discuss the "things themselves" that I present. They do not bother about me because as a white man, I am neither invisible (or invisibilized), nor does white appear as a color. White is the non-color from which all the other conspicuous colors are set off. Since I am not conspicuous, my statements carry weight, they can be of consequence (which for its part intensifies my insecurities: I am obligated to have something to say). In structural terms, what is said can be extensive and occupy space in its own right because my position seems unmarked as a sort of empirical position

of objective speech in rational communication. The white place appears as a non-place, as the empirical presupposition of the "God's trick" (Donna Haraway) that seems to speak from above or outside because it does not seem to occupy a shared place among other bodies. In this sense, my white speaking position tends to "ontological expansiveness" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 144). It is not limited by spatial separations and allocations of position, it appears to itself to be (if it appears at all) the most natural position at all. Since it does not seem to be a position among others, it can occupy every position and speak to everybody about everything. It is the universal position that evaluates and debates claims to validity without any need to address the situated genesis of validity. It thus presents itself paradoxically as an "unsituated situatedness", or in other words: it imagines itself as the speaking position that does not owe its position to a situation.

Reflecting on the first-person perspective thus makes it possible to see that white situatedness is only one among innumerable others and hence that it is contingent. A critical look at the conditions of possibility, at the "historical apriori" of one's own speaking, makes it possible to recognize that the genesis of one's own claims to impartiality is an illusion. However, the term must not then be affiliated with Husserl, where it still denotes a teleology of "humanity" that finally ends at an "absolute apriori" that is supposed to be valid "for all men, all times, all peoples" (Husserl, 1970, p. 377) regardless of all historical and cultural differences. For Foucault, on the other hand, this is the designation of the ground of conflicting simultaneity and mutual modification of rationalities (Foucault, 1983, p. 202)[2]. To conceive of situatedness as a historical a priori means thus to reflect on the political-historical structures of contingent lifeworlds (Guenther, 2021, pp. 10-11). In very classical terms, criticism helps us to become aware of the limits of one's own claim to valid descriptions.[3]

3. Situatedness and Positioning: Situative Difference

Without explicitly stating so, I have been referring not merely to situations, but to situatedness and positions or positioning. It is crucial to refine this terminology further. As previously mentioned, a situation is a totalizing totality, the totality of conditions of possible meaning, the totality of what can be experienced. It is described in concrete terms for a corporal subject, a subject with a physical and living body in its here and now. In this context, I use the term situatedness to denote the "historical a priori" of the situation. It represents the underlying structural conditions of possibility that enable a situation to arise, which are subject to historical variability and shaped by "power-knowledge regimes" (Foucault). For the reflective ego, this implies that the situation one can describe, is the situation from a first-person perspective, while one's own situatedness can only be perceptible indirectly through the viewpoints of others. Similar to how one can only perceive the external aspects of their physical body through the gaze of another person (as elucidated by Sartre's phenomenological analysis of shame, Sartre, 1953, p. 252sqq.), the reflection on one's own situatedness necessitates the involvement of the other person's view. The other person's gaze encompasses my being-for-others, which is an inherent aspect of my experience, but only insofar as it is entwined with the perspectives of other individuals. Consequently, an exploration of the potentialities and limitations of one's own situatedness can only be undertaken reflectively in communication with others, albeit even then such an understanding remains incomplete.

2 For more about the comparison of Husserl and Foucault on the historical apriori see Aldea, Allen 2016.

3 This attitude has lately been called a "critical phenomenology" or "political phenomenology". See Weiss, Salamon, Murphy 2019 and Bedorf, Herrmann 2020. In what follows, "critical" and "political phenomenology" will be used interchangeably as designations for a common critical *practice* of phenomenological thought. The question of whether "critical phenomenology" can and should also serve as an organizing term for authors and phases in the history of phenomenology has already begun elsewhere. See Aldea, Carr, and Heinämaa 2022.

In concrete terms, reflecting on the situatedness of white speakers necessitates engaging with phenomenological analyses that shift the focus to the "color line" (Du Bois) from the perspective of People of Color. This approach is essential as it allows for a comprehension of the fear arising from questioning the validity of one's own statements on the basis of a certain situatedness. For a different subject with a different situatedness, a complementary fear may arise: instead of the fear of failure on the stage of academic discourse, where the content itself holds significance, the foreground may feature the fear of invisibility and not being heard (as in Boger, 2020, p. 97). The initial fear of failure can be recognized as "white" since it appears to be a commonly shared experience. Some of you may already be familiar with this fear. It is deemed "white" because it does not stem from a specific situatedness. Furthermore, it can be labeled as "white" and "masculine" due to its association with the notion of a position characterized by universal and supra-historical impartiality, wherein everything can be expressed "objectively." The corresponding fear linked to this position is the fear of losing potency, the apprehension of falling short in one's own abilities ("I can")—an ability that is simultaneously perceived as universal. From a psychoanalytical perspective, it can be understood as a fear of castration.

The comprehensive understanding of my whiteness relies on the contributions of feminist and post-colonial phenomenologists. Without their work, the assessment of my racial identity would not only remain incomplete but would also be rendered impossible. As previously mentioned, the recognition of racial markers, among other aspects, can only be achieved through interactions with other situated perspectives. Acknowledging the epistemological advancements made by phenomenologies of racialized subjects is not merely a superficial political gesture, nor is it merely a reflection of the prevailing spirit of political correctness. Instead, it emerges as an essential epistemological imperative.

The concept of position and positioning requires further examination, particularly as they are often used interchangeably in political and activist contexts. To provide a crucial distinction, we can explore the phenomenology of "corporal difference," (Bedorf, 2017) a term that captures the unity within the diversity of the physical and living body ("Körper" and "Leib"). As discussed earlier, we can differentiate between situational and positional spatiality. Situations emanate from a place that they unfold and make accessible, similar to on-site works of art. On the other hand, physical bodies are situated in ways that determine the accessibility or inaccessibility of possibilities for perception, speech, and action. In contrast, positions refer to the objective spatial location that is externally delineated. Positions are determined by distances and gaps, yet within these terms, space lacks intentional direction.

One might perceive a dichotomy between place and space, as if phenomenology aims to rehabilitate the bodily place in contrast to the purportedly asubjective space of physical objects. However, treating the reinstatement of place (against an assumed asubjective space) as a return to fervent authenticity parallels the discourse on rediscovering or reconnecting with the living body. It suggests that place and body are inherently more authentic than space and physical objects, and thus need to be rediscovered. To avoid an overemphasis resulting from an authenticity-driven philosophy, place and space should be understood as differential concepts, just like the living body and the physical object. Just as Edmund Husserl occasionally referred to "Leib-Körper" (living-physical bodies), we can also consider the notion of "Orts-Raum," a spatial place (Waldenfels). Similarly, I employ the term "corporal difference" to convey the ambiguous nature of the living and physical body; "situative difference" would be a suitable choice for "spatial place," highlighting the ambiguity between one's own place and the objective space. This perspective acknowledges that we are never merely situated, but also positioned or assigned a position. Positions, functioning as coordinate points in space, externally mark me, for example, within a political realm. Just as there is no inherent living

bodiliness, but rather bodily existence emerges through interactions with the routines of the physical body and external attributions of meaning, situatedness itself is not an isolated state but exists in relation to positioning. Therefore, any description of situatedness inherently incorporates positional concepts.

4. Perspectives for a Political Phenomenology

The concept of the situation in the perspective of phenomenological theory of corporeal practice aligns with the concept of situated knowledge in feminist epistemology. Feminist epistemology had shown that criteria of the objectivity of scientific knowledge turned out to be historically contingent and are thus dependent on socially allocated speech positions, exclusions and power asymmetries. To scientifically explore this reality, the perspectival nature of specific experiences will have to be taken into consideration rather then generalizing from *one* particular perspective (that of the standard disinterested white male subject). Thus, the understanding of objectivity requires the inclusion of situated perspectives as fundamental prerequisites. Like "correlationalist" phenomenology (Meillassoux, 2006, p. 18)[4], feminist epistemology emphasizes the political responsibility that arises from acknowledging and engaging with perspectivizing situations (I shall come back to this in the concluding remarks).

Due to the possibility of taking a *position* in situatedness, situations can be politicized. However, it is important to note, that the opposition between situation and position implies that situations cannot be transformed into positions without difficulty. They are separated by a categorial gap. The perspective of an embodied, situated subject cannot be directly translated into a top-down floorplan view or be assigned a specific place within that plan. As a result, a literal "positing" in the sense of the Latin term "ponere" is unattainable within situatedness. Subjects find themselves situated without firm *ground* or foundation. While they do occupy a place, this place does not offer a natural footing or solid ground.[5] If an ethical dimension can be derived from groundless situatedness, it would involve a reminder not to lose sight of one's own decenteredness or to projectively construct a false sense of positing. To borrow the words of Theodor Adorno, the ethical imperative resulting from groundlessness would then be "not to posit oneself" (Adorno, 1996, p. 251).

Given that the concept of situative difference highlights the *inseparability* of situations and positions, it becomes evident that an emphatic, purely situative corporality would be an unrealistic and idealized notion. Positions are thus indispensable. To maintain the corporeal metaphors of phenomenology, positionings can be referred to as *stances* adopted within situated contexts. As stances occur in space, they can be comprehended as political positions, particularly when they are *collective* in nature. It is important to note that stances should not be confused with moral actions; instead, they represent political responses to the ethical imperative not to posit oneself.

One *is* situated, but one *takes* a position. The distinction between being situated and taking a position is significant. This syntactical difference highlights that situatedness is not a matter of personal choice, whereas a position is. The transition from a situation to a position should not be assumed as automatic or predetermined. In terms of the *situative difference*, it is impossible to *avoid* taking a position. However, a particular position does not necessarily arise from a given situation. Consequently, since the transition from situatedness to positioning

4 This adjective was meant as a criticism of phenomenology in the brief debate on "speculative relativism"; in truth, however, it is a quite appropriate characterization of phenomenology and should be affirmed by phenomenologists.
5 Except in the newer sense of a relational instead of a substantial ground ("terre") on which one "lands" ("atterrir"). See Latour 2017.

always involves a rupture, it can only occur as a strategic choice (as illustrated by Gayatri Spivak's perspective on this matter). A position reflects one's behavior in response to and in consideration of their own situatedness. As a result, in political theory, the opposite term to situation is not position, but rather *positioning*, which is flexible and can be altered or revoked. Therefore, a political phenomenology of the corporally situated subject leads to a "politics of positioning."

It is not by chance that the expression "politics of positioning" is derived from the experience of the political struggles of the marginalized – and that it arises from their situation. It emerged from feminist, anti-racist, and post-colonial theories and practices that challenged the notion of presumed objectivity. These theories and practices stemmed from the recognition of specific experiences of minority groups, experiences of oppression and exclusion, and the imperative to assert their own visibility and audibility within the political realm. Such recognition became the starting point for their situated political struggles.

From this historical context, I will conclude by providing a brief reminder of Donna Haraway's perspective to highlight the connection between feminist "standpoint theory"[6] and political phenomenology. Stemming from the historical and epistemological convictions about "objectivity" as a power relation that arose from political struggles for emancipation, feminist epistemology has embraced the concept of "situated knowledge" (Haraway, 1991, p. 188). It adresses the double task, as articulated by Haraway, of acknowledging the contingency of knowledge *while* still remaining committed to understanding the realities of the world. This notion of "feminist objectivity" can be characterized by four key elements:

1. In situated knowledge, the consideration of *corporeality* is essential. The conventional epistemological division between knowing subjects and known objects, between processes and materialities, is not inherently objective because all acts of seeing *are* inherently shaped by corporeality and materiality. Even the perspectives captured by laboratory cameras are not neutral, detached views from an objective standpoint. To put it succinctly, as Donna Haraway states, "only a partial perspective promises objective vision" (Haraway, 1991, p. 190).
2. It is important to note that the acknowledgment of partial, situated perspectives does not lead to relativism. Calling situatedness relativistic is precisely to dismiss the very starting point from one experiential space that makes perspectives possible in the first place. It is an attempt to assume an objectifying meta-perspective that claims equal validity for all perspectives, effectively being nowhere while pretending to be everywhere. As Haraway asserts, "Relativism is a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally." (Haraway, 1991, p. 191) In this perspective, relativism and totalizing objectivity are both seen as illusory constructs. They are both "god's tricks" (Haraway, 1991, p. 191), as they presume the possibility of detachment from situated perspectives. Consequently, Haraway maintains skepticism towards the proclaimed death of the subject that was declared long ago. The notion of the dying subject, often associated with the "command center of will and consciousness" as identified by the "boys in the human sciences", is approached differently. By embracing the idea of "non-isomorphic subjects" (Haraway, 1991, p. 192), the heroic proclamation of their demise becomes unnecessary.
3. Partiality, far from hindering it, actually enables "objectivity". The idea of a central command center of knowledge is fiction, just as the divine gaze is an idealized image of scientific knowledge. However, if the self is understood not as a unified identity

6 The term is due to Nancy Hartsock. See Hartsock 1983.

but as a division, then intersubjective validity of knowledge can only be conceived through the exchange between subjects and their inherently partial experiences. This "partial connection" among multidimensional selves forms the foundation of the new notion of objectivity, and it is this intertwining of perspectives that renders these scientific views inherently political. An "optics is a politics of positioning." (Haraway, 1991, p. 193)

4. *Rationality* is rooted in a political-ethical positioning. The idea that non-political standards of rationality ensure the scientificity of knowledge, with subsequent decisions made using criteria external to science, is not accurate. Instead, positioning entails taking "responsibility for our enabling practices. It follows that politics and ethics ground struggles for the contests over what may count as rational knowledge." (Haraway, 1991, p. 193)

The generation of situated knowledge originates from bodily experiences, wherein the partiality of a particular perspective is embedded. This process leads to the production of objectivities that do not rely on a detached "view from nowhere." Similarly, the phenomenological notion of situatedness contributes to understanding a historically contingent reality that possesses meaningful structure, characterized by its projection towards possibilities and encounters with obstacles. Thus, even if coming from different philosophical grounds, the politics of positioning can be seen as a common feature of feminist standpoint theory and political phenomenology.

Crucial for the political or: politicizable dimension of situated corporeality is that while each experience is singularly situated, there is always *more* than *one* experience that gives rise to conflicts that cannot be reconciled by common "standards of rationality" but exist as irreducible conflicts (Bedorf, 2006). The plurality of situated modes of experience situates them within an "agonistic power field." (Haraway, 1991, p. 185) It is not just a matter of trivially acknowledging the existence of other experiences, but rather, if objectivity is linked to situatedness, there is always contention over "situated objectivity." Situations become political when they are collectively and publicly articulated, in other words, when they are positioned. They gather experiences from which political actions may emerge. A "politics of location" (Rich, 1994, p. 215), which begins with bodily situatedness, always entails a responsibility that arises from situatedness itself (Rich, 1994, p. 220). The responsibility to position oneself in relation to these experiences cannot be delegated. On the contrary, as Haraway emphasizes, the recognition of the situatedness of knowledge makes (political) responsibility inevitable. Just as phenomenologically speaking, "ethics is an optics" (Levinas, 1969, p. 23) because every response to otherness simultaneously provides us with a perspective on the world, every optic, i.e., every perspectival situatedness of our experiences, implies a "politics of positioning".

Translated by Donald Goodwin

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