CHAPTER-IV
THE BODY SUBJECT : TEMPORALITY AND THE SPATIALITY OF THE HUMAN WORLD

The fourth chapter of the thesis is attempted to characterize and show as to how the 'Body Subject' experiences time and space. Merleau Ponty's investigation aims at comprehending the structure of human experience both in time and space. In his decisive chapter in the 'Phenomenology of perception' introducing the synthesis of the lived body, Merleau-Ponty claimed that "the body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art".¹

Merleau Ponty's analysis of time and temporality paved way for a reinterpretation and recasting of the concept of subjectivity itself. The chapter on 'Temporality' in the Phenomenology of Perception is actually an attempt to combine Husserl's phenomenology of time with that of Heidegger's, Being and Time. Merleau Ponty quotes extensively, beginning with a motto that follows one from Paul Claudel, both to the effect that temporality is the meaning of existence.

i) Time as Dimensions of Subjectivity

Time, according to Merleau-Ponty, is not part of the objective world. Past and future, in particular, "withdraw"

from being and can be found only as dimensions of our subjectivity. As such they appear in the field of our present. Merleau-Ponty describes the relation of past and future to the present much more concretely by showing their imbeddedness in our present time consciousness. There is also one difference: Past and future cannot be supported simply by an objective present. They can occur only in a subject that is a temporal being: A subject is characterized in this respect by the fact that it breaks up the "fullness of being" and introduces into it the phenomenon of perspective and, in Merleau Ponty's view, of non-being. It thus can reach out beyond the present into the past and future. Merleau-Ponty calls this property of the subject "ecstatic", using a term which had been applied before by Hegel, and Sartre for similar purposes. The ecstatic character of temporality and that of the temporal subject are so intimately related that Merleau Ponty finally characterizes "time as the subject and the subject as time". By this he means that the subject is not simply in time, for it assumes and lives time and is involved in time: It is permeated with time.

This ecstatic outreaching of temporality makes possible not only subjectivity but also "sense" and "reason", as they imply the movement toward referents other than themselves.

It thus constitutes an "operative intentionality" that underlies the "intentionality of the act". The foundation for such acts can only be a being oriented or polarized toward something which it is not, which transcends itself toward a world. Thus, the world is again inseparable from the subject, but the subject is also inseparable from the world. This interdependence is at the same time Merleau Ponty's settlement of the perennial controversy over idealism and realism, which thus far even phenomenology had been unable to achieve. The recognition of the mutual dependence of subject and object allows us to pass beyond this stale and hopeless impasse; it seems almost too obvious to refer here to the pattern of the Hegelian synthesis, which Merleau-Ponty himself does not mention on this occasion. Instead, Merleau-Ponty calls subject and object two abstract elements of one single structure called "Presence", in which the subject is essentially presence at the world, and the world is "subjective". The ecstatic transcendence laid out in the temporality of the subject provides the ultimate bond of this interconnectedness.

ii) Existential or Lived Time

Existential or lived time is not a present linked to a future and to a past or a succession of discrete instants, Rather, it is one's field of the presence. The future and the past are experienced as the horizons of the living present, they are, rather, the intentionalities which bind
on to his environments/projects. Thus what presupposed in all experiences is not a central 'I' or self but temporality so that phenomenologically subjectivity is temporality. As Merleau-Ponty remarked\(^3\), there is not a natural time, a time without subjectivity, but a generalized time "the perpetual reiteration of the sequence of past, present and future".

Merleau Ponty argues that "time presupposes a view of time"\(^4\) which means that as a product of intentional space "my body takes possession of time; it brings into existence a past and a future for a present; it is not a thing, but creates time instead of submitting to it".\(^5\) Time becomes an affecting of self in the sense that the movement to the future is the transition from one present to another in which the "affecting agent and affected recipient are one".\(^6\) It is in this sense that phenomenologists speak of the lived body experience of the perceiving-perceived or the speaking-speech.

iii) Temporality

Temporality in Merleau-Ponty's conception assumes that the thing and the world around it exist only through the

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 411.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 240.
\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 425-426.
experience that one has of them. There is a "concatenation of our perspectives, yet they transcend all perspectives because this chain is temporal and incomplete". The present mediates between for oneself and for others, between individuality and generality. True reflection presents me to myself one as idle and inaccessible subjectivity, but as identical with my presence in the world and to others, as I am now realizing it. I am all that I see, I am an inter subjective field, not despite my body and this situation, but, on the contrary, by being this body and this situation, and through them, all the rest.

The primordiality of time as the present is observed most profoundly in the act of speaking in which the body subject presents himself as public man born of private man. "Communication exists between the moments of my personal time, as between my time and that of other people, and in spite of the rivalry between them". In such an analysis, Merleau Ponty covertly follows the view expressed by Heidegger that "discourse in itself is temporal, since all talking about, of, or to, is grounded in the ecstical

8. Ibid., p. 452.
unity of temporality".\textsuperscript{10} He amounts to saying that, "In order to become the unlimited milieus that human experience finds in them, Space and time demand symbolic activity".\textsuperscript{11} The two concepts of spatiality and temporality as they exist in Merleau-Ponty are a complex synoptic fabric that is in part a theory of sensation and intellection that allows the unitary existence of man as a body. This body is in turn the union of a "Psyche" and its visual body, which is a lived body of virtual space creating time. The transition of the body-Subject from a world of private perception to a world of shared experience occurs through the agency of the other as lived encounter with myself. All of these elements in the various agencies of essential becoming and existential being are in fact "perception" in the lived body experience. There is a primacy to this perception that is synoptic of these elements, yet it could not be known as synoptic unless the parts were present first as individual, reciprocal entities.

In a sense, the highest point of philosophy is perhaps no more than rediscovering these truisms: thought thinks, speech speaks, the glance glances.\textsuperscript{12} But each time between

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\item[11.] Merleau Ponty, Structure of behaviour, p. 104.
\end{itemize}
the two identical words there is the whole spread one
straddles in order to think, speak, and see.\textsuperscript{13} The "Whole"
that one straddles is the ambiguity of human existence that
perception in its primacy of synergism clarifies and gives
meaning to by moving from thought to speech to the
understanding that is seeing.

\textbf{iv) Time and Subjectivity}

In the preceding pages, we have already spoken of time
as a way to subjectivity, and it is evident that all our
experiences, in as much as they are ours, arrange themselves
in terms of before and after, because temporality, in
\textit{Kantian} Language, is the form taken by our inner sense, and
because it is the most general characteristic of 'Psychic
facts'. But in reality, and without prejudging what the
analysis of time will disclose, we have already found,
between time and subjectivity a much more intimate
relationship. We have seen that the subject, who cannot be a
series of psychic events, nevertheless cannot be eternal
either. It remains for him to be temporal not by reason of
some vagary of the human make-up, but by virtue of an inner
necessity. We are called upon to conceive the subject and
time as communicating from within. To analyze time therefore
is not to follow out the consequences of a pre-established
conception of subjectivity, it is to gain access, through

\textsuperscript{13. Merleau Ponty, Structure, p. 104}
time, to its concrete structure.

We say that time passes or flows by.\textsuperscript{14} We speak of the course of time. The water that I see rolling by was made ready few days ago in the mountains, with the melting of the glacier, it is now in front of me and makes its way towards the sea into which it will finally discharge itself. If time is similar to a river, it flows from the past towards the present and the future. The lesson of the analogy is that the present is the consequence of the past, and the future of the present. But this often repeated metaphor is in reality extremely confused. For, looking at the things themselves, the melting of the snows and what results from this are not successive events, or rather the very notion of event has no place in the objective world. When I say that the day before yesterday, the glacier produced the water which is passing at this moment. I am facitly assuming the existence of a witness tied to a certain spot in the world, and I am comparing his successive views: he was there when the snows melted and followed the water down, or else, from the edge of the river and having waited two days, he sees the pieces of wood that he threw into the water at its source. The events are shapes cut out by a finite observer from the spatio-temporal totality of

the objective world. But on the other hand, if I consider
the world itself, there is simply one individual and
changeless being in it. Change presupposes a certain
position which I take up and from which I see things in
successive procession before me: there are no events without
someone to whom they happen and whose finite perspective is
the basis of their individuality.

In all discussions of experience we have an inescapably
spatial structure viz: how spatial perspectives are unfolded
by the body? Spatial perspectives and syntheses, however,
are also inherently temporal: relations of distance, of near
and far, are determined just as much by the subject's
temporal situation as his spatial one; the two are
inseparable. The very notion of spatiality implicates
temporality: "things co-exist in space because they are
present to the same perceiving subject and enveloped in one
and the same temporal wave".15 Perception is also through
and through a temporal as well as a spatial affair. The
unity of the perceptual object is achieved through a dual
temporal process of protention and retention. There is,
first, prospective focussing, the bringing together of the
confused mass of colours and reflections which flood the
consciousness as one open himself to the perceived world and

15. Merleau Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans.,
p. 275.
direct himself towards the expectation of a determinate object, so that it can be maintained that "the object is the final stage of the process of focussing". There is also a process of retrospective apprehension of the perceptual object, since it presents itself as real and determinate prior to the act of focussing and hence as the prime mover and stimulus to all the perceptions.

v) **Time Presupposes a human attitude**

Time presupposes a human attitude towards time, and expresses the relationship to the world. In the objective world in itself if such a thing could be conceived, since the very conception is already a relation between myself and the world and hence a world for the imagination there would be no time and no change, no 'before' and 'after', since it takes a human observer to introduce such distinctions. To say, for example, that 'the water flowing past me was yesterday at its source' is to establish my perspective on events as advantage point, an anchorage by which to link up the water yesterday and the water now. Indeed, the very concept of an event in nature is the result of the human programme of cutting nature up to make it intelligible. Hence, prior to, and at a level more primitive than that of objective time, the time of clocks, we find a pre-thematic existential experience of time as a network of operative intentionalities binding us to the world. Merleau Ponty, claiming support from Husserl, makes a basic and crucial
distinction between two kinds of intentionality; intentionality of acts, which is that of our judgements and express volitions when we consciously and voluntarily take up a position; and operative intentionality, which is only brought to light through the phenomenological reduction. Time is, metaphorically, not a line, moving in one direction through only one real point, the present. Neither is it a stream or river, making us believe that the past pushes the present into view, which in turn pushes the future—the problem with all spatial metaphors is that they are based on motion, which itself presupposes time. Time is rather to be understood as a flux, a pattern of intentionalities.

vi) Lived Time and its Environing Character

Hence existential or lived time is not a present linked to a future and to a past, or a succession of discrete instants, as it is at the objective level but a single movement or thrust by which human projects carve out relations of 'before' and 'after' in the world. It is the field of presence, the arena of the projects and actions in the world, which is the "primary experience" in which time and its dimensions is most clearly revealed. The future and the past are experienced as the horizons of the living presents. The future is that towards which the tasks and projects are directed (projected), and hence is that which makes sense of the present since it defines the orientation (sense), or at least the style, of the present actions. The
past is an ever-receding platform to the present situation, yet which is subject to continual re-interpretation in the light of the present and future projects. Future and past are not points on a line, but intentionalities that anchor the individual to the environment.

In short, we find presupposed in all experience not a central I or self, but temporality, so that, phenomenologically, subjectivity is temporality. Like the objective and phenomenal body, or objective and existential space, the lived experience of time is intimately related to an objective time which takes shape on the horizons of all modalities of existential time, to which all the experience is linked in some way, and which makes hours, days, months, years, etc, arise as fixed points. There is not a natural time, a time without subjective, but a generalized time, 'the perpetual reiteration of the sequence of past, present and future', upon which all existence is founded.16

The origin of objective time, with its fixed positions lying beneath our gaze, is not to be sought in any eternal synthesis, but in the mutual harmonizing and overlapping of past and future through the present and in the very passing of time. Time maintains what it has caused to be, by its predecessor as destined, and to become present was the same

thing as being destined to pass away. Temporalization is not a succession of ecstasies. The future is not posterior to the past, or the past anterior to the present. Temporality temporizes itself as future which lapses into the past by coming into present. The past, is not past, nor the future. It exists only when a subjectivity is there to disrupt the plenitude of being in itself and to introduce no-being into it. A past and a future spring forth when an individual reach out towards them. We say that there is time as we say that there is a fountain: The water changes while the fountain remains because its form is preserved, the form is preserved because each successive wave takes over the functions of its predecessor: from being the thrusting wave in relation to the one in front of it, it becomes, in its turn and in relation to another, the wave that is pushed, and this is attributable to the fact that, from the source to the fountain jet, the waves are not separate; there is only one thrust, and a single air-lock in the flow would be enough to break up the jet.

vii) Time as Subject

We may understand time as the subject and the subject as time. What is perfectly clear, is that this primordial temporality is not a juxtaposition of external events, since

it is the power which holds them together while keeping them apart. Ultimate subjectivity is not temporal in the empirical sense of the term; if consciousness of time were made up of successive states of consciousness, there would be needed a new consciousness to be conscious of that succession and so on to infinity. We are forced to recognize the existence of 'a consciousness having behind it no consciousness to be conscious of it' which consequently, is not arrayed out in time, and in which 'being coincides with being for itself'. We may say that ultimate consciousness is 'timeless' in the sense that it is not intra-temporal. 'In' my present, if I grasp it while it is still living and with all that it implies, there is an ek-stase towards the future and towards the past which reveals the dimensions of time not as conflicting, but as inseparable : to be now is to be from always and for ever. Subjectivity is not in time, because it takes up or lives time, and merges with the cohesion of a life.

Time exists for me only because I am situated in it, that is, because I become aware of myself as already committed to it, for the whole of being is not given to me incarnate, and finally because one sector of being is so close to me that it does not even make up a picture before me-I cannot see it, just I cannot see my face.

Time exists for me because I have a present. It is by coming into the present that a moments of time acquires that
indestructible individuality, that 'once and for all' quality, which subsequently enables it to make its way through time and produce in us the illusion of eternity. The present, nevertheless enjoys a privilege because it is the zone in which being and consciousness coincide. In the present and in perception, my being and my consciousness are at one, not that my being is reducible to the knowledge. I have of it or that it is clearly set out before me on the contrary, perception is opaque, for it brings into play, beneath What I know, my sensory fields which are my primitive alliance with the world but because 'to be conscious' is here nothing but 'to be at', and because my consciousness of existing merges, into the actual gesture of 'ex-sistence'. We hold time in its entirety, and we are present to ourselves because we are present to the world.

Time is "the affecting of self by self", what exerts the effect is time as a thrust and a passing towards the future: What is affected is time as an unfolded senses of presents: the affecting agent and affected recipient are one, because the thrust of time is nothing but the transition from one present to another. This ek-stase, this projection of an indivisible power into an outcome which is already present to it, is subjectivity. The primary flow says Husserl, does not confine itself to being, it must necessarily provide itself with a 'manifestation of itself', without our needing to place behind it a second flow which

157
is conscious of it. It 'constitutes itself as a phenomenon within itself'. It is of the essence of time to be not only actual time, or time which flows, but also time which is aware of itself, for the explosion of the present towards a future is the archetype of the relationship of self to self, and it traces out an interiority. It is through temporality that there can be, without contradiction, ipseity, reason, identity with itself; as with time, it is of its essence, in order to be genuine subjectivity, to open itself to an other and to be forth from itself.

It is always in the present that we are centered, and our decision starts from there; they can therefore always be brought into relationship with our past, and are never motiveless, and though they may open up a cycle in our life which is entirely new, they still have to be subsequently carried forward, and afford only a temporary reprieve from dispersion. There can therefore be no question of deriving time from spontaneity. We are not temporal beings because we are spontaneous and because, as consciousness, we tear ourselves away from ourselves. On the contrary, time is the foundation and measure of our spontaneity, and the power of out-running and of 'nihilating' which dwells within us and is ourselves, is itself given to us with temporality and life. Our birth or, as Husserl has it in his unpublished writings, our 'generativity' is the basis both of our activity or individuality—that inner weakness which prevents
us from ever achieving the density of an absolute individual. We are not in some incomprehensible way an activity joined to a passivity, an automatism surmounted by a will, a perception surmounted by a judgment, but wholly active and wholly passive, because we are the upsurge of time.

For Merleau-Ponty temporality is the "structure of all structures", as being is the "Situation of all Situations". For the study of the logic of situations, an analysis of the form of temporality is basic. There has been a close connection between three major concepts: Being, temporality, and subjectivity. We concluded that being temporalizes itself by constantly seeking to overcome the otherness that lies in an indefinite future, through ever-renewed attempts at self-coincidence in a present, while always maintaining and using those aspects of itself which were already determined in its past.

A large number of the elements and problems that one encounters in his study of being can be finally articulated through the study of temporality, and many of the problems resolved. It will explain how Being can be an endless thrust, how we can understand its finitude and otherness; how it can cohere with itself throughout its evolution, how its whole movement is to articulate itself and become conscious of itself, how its otherness can blend with its determinations, why it has been traditionally characterized.

159
as presence, how we can grasp its identity in spite of its radical alterity, and how it can be one yet many.

viii) Time as the Field of Presence

In opposition to an objective and analytic conception of time, Merleau-Ponty insists that time is not merely a uniform succession of nows or the following of one discrete and indivisible moment upon the previous moment, which was also exhaustively presented and in itself. He counters this traditional model of time, which is the thematic and cognitive version of lived time, by showing that the present is not an instant but must be understood as our "field of presence"; that past, present and future are three distinct dimensions of time; that the whole of time is contained in every present; and that time moves throughout its whole length, as it is essentially "Lapse", "flux", or "ekstase". The only distinctions Merleau-Ponty allows in time's "unique movement" are those between the past, present and future for each is given in a different way. The future is not empty or nothing, but consists of protensions, or "lines of intentionality which trace out in advance at least the style of what is to come". The past is given as retentions of previous presents. These two dimensions tend to collapse into the present, which we can define either as our present field with all its horizons or as the "point" which anchors the "system of retentions" which is putting forth the most up to date "system of protensions".
One of Merleau-Ponty's best concise descriptions of time is that it is the "thrust" or "the power that holds events together by distancing them one from the other". He repeatedly states that subjectivity is temporality. He demonstrates that the lapse we have discovered to be the essence of time must be explicated as a thrust or drive into otherness, as the "cohesion of a life", and as the birth of a consciousness. Subjectivity is "a single experience inseparable from itself, a single "cohesion of life", a single temporality that progressively explicates itself from its birth and confirms its singularity in each present". We can now see that this cohesion and equal primordiality are "given with its ek-stase", or that facticity is directly derived from the essential characteristics of temporality. Strictly speaking, the subject does not reflect temporality nor is it founded on temporality; rather it is temporality. As Merleau-Ponty insists, subjectivity explains and clarifies time as much as time does subjectivity. For him the unity of time, space, and the world is "a flux" which "dominates diversity" through a "synopsis" which "does not indicate an explicit positing of diversity". Similarly, space must not be seen either as an "irreducible multiplicity" or a "unique and indivisible" unity.

ix) Spatiality

As we proceed, another structural characteristic of consciousness emerges. Human consciousness is intimately
connected with the peculiar spatiality of the human world. The term spatiality is designed to suggest the sense of personal placement in a perceptual reality defined by the individual. Our basic understanding of space arises from the fact that we exist spatially and already are oriented to space. This is in virtue of the fact that we are bodies, occupying space and located at particular points in space. Space is from the beginning organized in terms of our bodily participation in space. Merleau-Ponty distinguishes objective space from existential (lived) space. According to him, there are different kinds of existential spatialities which exist in relation to different modalities of being in the world. Just as Merleau-Ponty differentiates the existential phenomenological conception of body from "objective body", he also differentiates the "objective space" from existential space, i.e. lived, phenomenol or virtual space. He indicates that there is a virtual space which is the possible act of man within actual space. The virtual space is recognized as the spatial values that a point would receive in terms of any other corporeal position for us to assume. With this structure at hand a "cultural space" is built up in which others and myself participate in the same or similar spatiality of situations. Objective space is the space of rulers and tape measures, the space dealt with by science, a space in itself which is 'there prior to any spatial subject. This is the only space one
meets in Empiricism and rationalism. For empiricisms, objects occupy pure positions, and have a kind of spatial orientation in-themselves apart from a subject. Rationalism - since the only space it allows is objective space - conceives of the subject as disembodied, a pure intellect without inherent directedness, though able, in thought, to trace out all possible directions in space. Both ignore live or existential space, our actual experience of being oriented in the world and situated in relation to objects. This is spatiality of situation rather than of pure position. Spatial terms like 'top', 'bottom', 'near', 'far' etc, derive their significance from my lived space, which is my spontaneous evaluation of my environment in terms of my projects at hand.

x) Kinds of Existential Spatialities

Different kinds of existential spatialities exist in relation to different modalities of being-in-the-world. E.g. there is (1) The space of night time; when the world of clear and articulate objects is abolished and we evolve a kind of spatiality without things; (2) The space of dreams or myths; in which events and object become embedded in their vital significance and the events of objective space are distorted. (3) The space of dancing; an aimless and unoriented space, where the movements of the body are an end in themselves and have an emblematic value. (4) Hallucinatory space: where the boundaries normally drawn the
body and the world collapse, and objects, instead of keeping their distance, become rooted in our body, or our body extends to the world. In these different modalities of existential space, it can be seem that the meaning of objects and of the world changes depending on the form of our spatial hold on the world: objects can become indistinct, or charged with symbolism or totally alien. We see here, once again, operative intentionality at work carving out a primitive significance in the world.

Spatiality, in so far as it makes possible and expresses our implantation in the world, is co-extensive with existence. All existence is spatial, and space is a kind of pre-personal horizon to all our experience. The constitution of a new spatial level always takes for granted a level already given and because we are in a world of real objects, a world not created by consciousness for its own purposes, all modalities of existential space are related in some way to physical or objective space, that space necessary for the practical utilisation of objects in the world. Objective space lies on the horizon of every existential space, so that, eg, the space peculiar to dreaming must still work on and refer to the spatiality distinct objects of the real world. Indeed, the loosening of existential space from its anchorage in physical space is the defining characteristic of hallucinations.
Movement displays in striking fashion how our body inhabits space. It reveals, behind our objective ideas about how movement occurs in terms of a change in physical space, the pre-objective experience on which it is grounded, where movement is linked to the subject and his field, and expresses a variation of his hold on the world.

A system of correspondence is established between our spatial and that of others, and each one come to symbolize others. This insertion of our factual situation as a particular case within the system of other possible situations begins as soon as we designate a point in space with our finger. For this pointing gesture, which animals donot understands, supposes that we are already installed in a virtual space at the end of the line prolonging our finger in a centrifugal and cultural space.

The use of the body in virtual space is not a conception since the gesture is a function of our body. Yet, there is the fundamental theory of the mind in the body which is manifest in the reciprocal exchanges that is made with the instruments of the body; there is an existence which is virtual space. The value of such virtual space is recognized in ourselves and others by the correspondence of bodily movement manifesting psychic intent.

Sensation as it is brought to use by experience is no longer some inert substance or abstract moment, but one of
our surfaces of contact with being, a structure of consciousness, and in place of one single space, as the universal condition of all qualities, we have with each one of the latter, a particular manner of being in space and, in a sense, of making space.

It is in this frame of reference that Merleau Ponty is led to conclude that "being is synonymous with being situated". Space, therefore, is to be defined not as "the setting in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the positing of things becomes possible". The best insight to space as a positing of elements is the dimension of depth that is a direct positing from width and height. Depth is the most existential of all dimensions because it is not impressed on the object itself, "it quite clearly belongs to the perspective and not to things". This phenomenon is apparent in an example that was cited previously, namely, the perception of railroad tracks moving away toward the horizon. The perception of depth is product of width and height in relation to one another. The convergence of the rails at the horizon is necessary to their divergence before us.

We have stated that space is existential, we might just as well have said that existence is spatial, that is, that through an inner necessity it opens on to an `outside', so that one can speak of a mental space and a `world of meanings and objects of thought which are constituted in
terms of those meanings'. In this view Merleau Ponty evolves virtual space as a model of being. This is to say topological space is the encounter of a 'perpetual residue of virtual space.

xii) Spatiality and Body

Let us first of all describe the spatiality of one's own body. If one's arm is resting on the table I should never think of saying that is beside the ashtray in the way in which the ashtray is beside the telephone. The outline of my body is frontier which ordinary spatial relations do not cross. This is because its parts are inter-related in a peculiar way: they are not spread out side by side, but enveloped in each other. For example, my hand is not a collection of points. In cases of allocheiria, (a disorder of sensation in which sensations are referred to the wrong part of the body) in which the subject feels in his right hand stimuli applied to his left hand, it is impossible to suppose that each of the stimulations changes its spatial value on its own account. The various points on the left hand are transferred to the right as relevant to a total organ, a hand without parts which has been suddenly displaced. Hence they form a system and the space of my hand is not a mosaic of spatial values. Similarly my whole body is not an assemblage of organs juxtaposed in space. I am an undivided possession of it and I know where each of my limbs is through a body image in which all are included. But the
notion of body image is ambiguous, as are all notions which make their appearance at turning points in scientific advance. "Body image was at first understood to mean a compendium of our bodily experience, capable of giving a commentary and meaning to the internal impressions and the impression of possessing a body at any moment. It was supposed to register for me the positional changes of the parts of my body for each movement of one of them, the position of each local stimulus in the body as a whole, an account of the movements performed at every instant during a complex gesture, in short a continual translation into visual language of the kinesthetic and articular impressions of the moment. When the terms body image was first used, it was through that nothing more was being introduced than a convenient name for a great many associations of images, and it was intended merely to convey the fact that these associations were firmly established and constantly ready to come into play. The body image was supposed gradually to show itself through childhood in proportion as the tactile, kinesthetic and articular contents were associated among themselves or with visual contents, and more easily evoked them. Its physiological representation could then be no more than a focus of images in the classical sense. Yet in the use made if it by psychologists, it is clear that the body image does not fit into this associationist definition eg. In order that the body image may elucidate allocheiria, it
is not enough that each sensation of the left hand should take its place among generic images of all parts of the body acting in association to form around the left hand, as it were, a superimposed sketch of the body, these associations must be constantly subject to a unique law, the spatiality of the body must work downwards from the whole to the parts, the left hand and its position must be implied in a comprehensive bodily purpose and must originate in that purpose, so that it may at one stroke not only be superimposed on or cleave to the right hand but actually become the right hand. When we try to elucidate the phenomenon of the phantion limb by relating it to the body image of the subject, we add to the accepted explanations, in terms of cerebral tracks and recurrent sensations, only if the body image, instead of being the residue of habitual cenesthesia, becomes the law of its constitution. If need was self to introduce this world, it was in order to make it clear that the spatial and temporal unity, the inter-sensory or the sensori motor unity of the body is, so to speak de jure that it is not confined to contents actually and fortuitously associated in the course of our experience, that it is in some way anterior to them and makes their association possible. We are therefore feeling our way

towards a second definition of the body image: it is no longer seen as the straightforward result of association established during experience, but a total awareness of my posture in the intersensory world, a 'form' in the sense used by gestalt psychology. But already this second definition too is superseded by the analyses of the psychologists. It is inadequate to say that my body is a form, or to say a phenomenon in which the totality takes precedence over the parts. Psychologists often say that the body image is dynamic. Brought down to a precise sense, this term means that my body appears to me as an attitude directed towards a certain existing or possible task. And indeed its spatiality is not, like that of external objects or like that of 'spatial sensations', a spatiality of position, but a spatiality of situation. If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both hands, only my hands are stressed and the whole of my body trails behind them like the tail of a comet. It is not that I am unaware of the whereabouts of my shoulders or back, but these are simply swallowed up in the position of my hands, and my whole posture can be read so to speak in the pressure they exert on the table. If I stand holding my pipe in my closed hand, the position of my hand is not determined discursively by the angle which it makes with my forearm, and my forearm with my upper arm, and my upper arm, with my trunk and my trunk with the ground. I know indubitably where my pipe is,
and thereby I know where my hand and my body are, as primitive man in the desert is always able to take his bearings immediately without having to cast his mind back, and add up distances covered and deviations made since setting off. The word 'here' applied to my body does not refer to a determinate position in relation to other positions or to external coordinates, but the laying down of the first co-ordinates, the anchoring of the active body in an object, the situation of the body in face of its tasks. Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and envelop its parts instead of spreading them out, because it is the darkness needed in the theatre to show up the performance, the background of somnolence or reserve of vague power against which the gesture and its aim stand out, the zone of not being in front of which precise beings, figures and points can come to light. Finally, if my body can be a 'form' and if there can be, in front of it, important figures against indifferent back grounds, this occurs in virtue of its being polarized by its tasks, of its existence towards them, of its collecting together of itself in this pursuit of its aims; the body image is finally a way of stating that my body is in the world. As far as spatiality is concerned, and this alone interests us at the moment, one's own body is the third term always tacitly understood, in the figure-background structure, and every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and
bodily space.

Let us in this context analyze closely an example of morbid motility, which clearly shows the fundamental relations between the body and space. A patient whom traditional psychiatry would class among cases of psychic blindness is unable to perform 'abstract' movements with his eyes shut; movements, that is which are not relevant to any actual situation, such as moving arms and legs to order, or bending and straightening a finger. Nor can he describe the position of his body or even his head, or the passive movements of his limbs. Finally, when his head, arm or leg is touched, he cannot identify the point on his body; he cannot distinguish two points of contact on his skin even as much as three inches apart; and he cannot recognize the size or shapes of objects placed against his body. He manages the abstract movements only if he is allowed to watch the limb required to perform them, or to go through preparatory movements involving the whole body. Even when his eyes are closed, the patient performs with extraordinary speed and precision the movements needed in living his life, provided that he is in the habit of performing them: he takes his handkerchief from his pocket and blows his nose, takes a match out of a box and lights a lamp. Let us examine the question more closely. A patient, asked to point to some part of his body, his nose eg, can only manage to do so if he is allowed to take hold of it. If the patient is set the
task of interrupting the movement before its completion or if he is allowed to touch his nose only with a wooden ruler, the action becomes impossible. It must therefore be concluded that 'grasping' or 'touching' even for the body, is different from 'pointing'.

It may be noted that a point on my body can be present to me as one to be taken hold of without being given in this anticipated grasp as a point to be indicated. But how is this possible? If I know where my nose is when it is a question of holding it, how can I not know where it is when it is a matter of pointing to it? It is probably because knowledge of where something is can be understood in a number of ways. Patient is conscious of his bodily space the matrix of his habitual action, but not an objective setting; his body is at his disposal as a means of ingress into a familiar surrounding, but not as the means of expression of a gratuitous and free spatial thought. When ordered to perform a concrete movement, he first of all repeats the order in a questioning tone of voice, then his body assumes the general position required for the task; finally he goes through the movement. It is noticeable that the whole body is involved in it, and that the patient never cuts it down, as a normal subject would to the strict minimum.

As far as bodily space is concerned, it is clear that there is a knowledge of place which is reducible to a sort of co-existence with that place, and which is not simply
nothing, even though it cannot be conveyed by a description or even by the mute reference of a gesture. The analysis of 'abstract movement' in patients throws into relief this possession of space, this spatial existence which is the primary condition of all living perception. It the patient is ordered to shut his eyes and then perform an abstract movement, a set of preparatory operations is called for in order to enable him to 'find' the operative limb, the direction or pace of the movement, and finally the place in which it is to be executed. If, for instance, he is ordered to move his arm with no details as to how, he is first of all perplexed. Then he moves this whole body and after a time his movements are confined to his arm, which the subject eventually 'finds'. It is a question of 'raising his arm' the patient must also 'find' his head by means of a set of pendulum movements which are continued throughout the action and which sense to establish the objective. The patient either conceives the ideal formula for the movement, or else he launches his body into blind attempts to perform it, whereas for the normal person every movements is indissolubly movement, and consciousness of movement. This can be expressed by saying that for the normal person every movement has a background, and that the movement and its background, are 'movements of unique totality'. We must therefore avoid saying that our body is in space, or in time. It inhabits space and time. I am not in space and time.
nor I conceive space and time' I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them. My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my 'symbolic' or objectifying function'.

Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things becomes possible. This means that instead of imagining it as a sort of ether in which all things float, or conceiving it abstractly as a characteristic that they have in common, we must think of it as the universal power enabling them to be connected. Therefore, either I do not reflect, but live among things and vaguely regard space at one moment as the setting for things, at another as their common attribute- or else I do reflect : I catch space at its source, and now think the relationship which underlie this word, realizing then that they live only through the medium of a subject who traces out and sustains them ; and pass from spatialized to spatializing space. In the first case, my body and things, their concrete relationships expressed in such terms as top and bottom, right and left, near and far, may appear to me as an irreducibly manifold variety, whereas in the second case I discover a single and indivisible ability to trace out space. In the first case, I am concerned with physical space, with its variously qualified regions; in the second with geometrical space having interchangeable dimensions, homogeneous and
isotropic, and here place which would leave the moving body unchanged, and consequently a pure position distinct from the situation of the object in its concrete context.

Movement is a displacement or change of position even if it cannot be defined as such. As we initially encountered an idea of position which defines it in terms of relationships in objective space, so there is an objective conception of movement which defines it in terms of relations within the world, taking the experience of the world for granted. And just as we had to trace back the origin of the positing of space to the pre-objective situation or locality of the subject fastening himself on to his environment, so we shall have to rediscover, beneath the objective idea of movement, a pre-objective experience from which it borrows its significance, and in which movement, still linked to the person perceiving it, is a variation of the subjects hold on his world. Things co-exist in space because they are present to the same perceiving subject and enveloped in one and the same temporal wave. But the unity and individuality of each temporal wave is possible only if it is wedged in between the preceeding and the following one, and if the same temporal pulsation which produces it still retains its predecessor and anticipates its successors. On the whole, for Merleau Ponty, spatiality in so far as it makes possible and expresses our implantation in the world co-extensive with existence, space is the pre-personal
horizon to all our experience. Although we are body-subjects and capable of constituting new spatial levels and spatial terms in relation to us, yet the constitution of new spatial levels always presumes a level already there. Merleau Ponty concludes that the loosening of existential space from its anchorage in physical space results in hallucinatory experiences. His writings provide us with a very balanced linkage between objective and lived space. And because we are in a world of real objects, a world not created by consciousness for its own purposes, all modalities of existential space are related in some way to physical or objective space and that space necessary for the practical utilization of objects in the world. Objective space lies on the horizon of every existential space, so that, for example, the space peculiar to dreaming must still work on and refer to the spatially distinct objects of the real world.