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MERLEAU-PONTY

SPACE, PLACE, ARCHITECTURE

Merleau-Ponty

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Space, Place, Architecture

EDITED BY
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*Patricia M. Locke dedicates this work to
Michael Coursey Jr. and Julia M. Coursey,
two creative and inspiring thinkers.*

*Rachel McCann dedicates this work to
Alex Lewis, Adrian Lewis, and Joshua Gray,
three men whose wild being echoes deeply
within the flesh of the world.*

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Part III: Shared Space

ABBREVIATIONS

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Abbreviated references for Merleau-Ponty's texts are below. Where an author refers to both the English translation and the original French, we have placed the English page(s) first, followed by the French page(s). For example: "The question of *where* was not to be asked" (EM, 141/68). Where more than one English translation exists, refer to each chapter's bibliography for the version used.

AD   *Adventures of the Dialectic*. Translated by Joseph Bien. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973. Originally published as *Les aventures de la dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955).

CAL   *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language*. Translated by Hugh J. Silverman. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973. Originally published as "La conscience et l'acquisition du langage," *Bulletin de psychologie* 236, no. 18 (1964): 3–6.

EM   "Eye and Mind." Translated by Carleton Dallery. In *PrP*, 159–90. Where indicated, the translation cited is by Michael B. Smith in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, 121–49. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993; or by Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, ed. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor, 351–78. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007. Originally published as *L'Oeil et l'Esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

HT   *Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem*. Translated by John O'Neill. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969. Originally published as *Humanisme et terreur: Essai sur le problème communiste* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

IP   *Institution and Passivity: Course Notes from the Collège de France (1954–1955)*. Translated by Leonard Lawlor and Heath Massey. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010. Originally published as *L'institution, la passivité: Notes de cours au Collège de France (1954–1955)*, ed. Dominique Darmaillacq, Claude Lefort, and Stéphanie Ménasé (Paris: Belin, 2003).

IPP   *In Praise of Philosophy and Other Essays*. Translated by John Wild, James Edie, and John O'Neill. Evanston, IL: Northwestern

University Press, 1963. Originally published as *Éloge de la philosophie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1953).

N   *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*. Translated by Robert Vallier. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003. Originally published as *La nature: Notes, cours du Collège de France*, ed. Dominique Séglard (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).

NC   *Notes de cours, 1959–1961*. Edited by Stéphanie Ménasé. Paris: Gallimard, 1996.

PhP   *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. London: Routledge, 2012. Originally published as *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945).

PrP   *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*. Edited by James M. Edie. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964.

PW   *The Prose of the World*. Translated by John O'Neill. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973. Originally published as *La prose du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

RC   *Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952–1960*. Translated by John O'Neill. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970. Originally published as *Résumés de cours, Collège de France, 1952–1960* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968).

S   *Signs*. Translated by Richard C. McCleary. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964. Originally published as *Signes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960).

SB   *The Structure of Behavior*. Translated by Alden L. Fisher. Boston: Beacon, 1963. Originally published as *La structure du comportement* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942).

SNS   *Sense and Non-Sense*. Translated by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964. Originally published as *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Nagel, 1948).

VI   *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes*. Edited by Claude Lefort. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968. Originally published as *Le visible et l'invisible, suivi de notes de travail* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

WP   *The World of Perception*. Translated by Oliver Davis. London: Routledge, 2004. Originally published as *Causeries 1948*, text established and annotated by Stéphanie Ménasé (Paris: Seuil, 2002).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

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Patricia M. Locke

> No longer is it a matter of speaking about space and light, but of making space and light, which are there, speak to us. There is no end to this questioning, since the vision to which it is addressed is itself a question. All the inquiries we believed closed have been reopened. What is depth, what is light, *tí tó őv* [what is being]?
>
> —Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind"

Architecture is a place to question and, through questioning our very sense experiences, to draw back from the forgetfulness that makes us take being alive for granted. Architecture can, in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's words, make "space and light, which are there, speak to us."[1] By articulating light and space, among other factors, architecture reopens thought about human perception of and relation to how we remake and occupy the world around us.

Perception undergirds our cognitive and affective schemata, our experiences of simultaneity and disjunctive multiplicity, and our social institutions. The general theme of *Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture* is the experience and expression of space on multiple levels, addressing questions central to the work of philosophers, architectural theorists, and readers in a range of creative fields. This introduction situates Merleau-Ponty's thought within an understanding of lived space and shows how the three sections of the book contribute to an integrated understanding of spatiality. They transgress habitual spatial categories to explore darkness, psychological depths, imagined

landscapes, art's pliable spatiality, and space's intertwining with time and memory or mangled conditions in torture chambers and in prison.

Architecture is a privileged mode of experiencing space, and it acts as a nonverbal way of knowing. Through the agency of architecture, places (and human beings) are shaped, confirmed, and questioned. Places ask questions of Merleau-Ponty: Why does the world appear to us as it does? How do places show and modify us? If space and light really do "speak" to us through architecture, how do we enter into the conversation? The authors of *Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture* respond in a variety of ways, thinking with Merleau-Ponty as well as with some of his interlocutors.

Architecture, like painting, can serve to show us what it means to be human. The representation of our experience in painting is akin to place-making architectural expression. Architecture can support human flourishing by providing the arena in which we act, while at the same time having a figural prominence of its own. Distinct from the unframed natural environment around us, the built world at several scales (home, neighborhood, city, etc.) offers anchorage for the specifically human activities of the upright animal. We both sense and come to know ourselves as embodied subjects, yet intertwined irrevocably with others. Distance highlights the spatial self-awareness revealed by architecture more than the other arts. Merleau-Ponty's late work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, emphasizes our intimate connections with the overlapping natural and cultural milieu. Yet we know ourselves also to be spatially integral wholes (albeit with porous boundaries) analogous to architectural wholes.

Phenomenology values experience and respects the world's self-presentation in the here and now. We don't need to belabor the point that Merleau-Ponty and Edmund Husserl made in the 1940s: the world is in a crisis, its flash points made all the more volatile with the postmodern turn. Climate change, chronic war, violence in political and social life, and the widening gap between rich and poor are companion to a felt sense of estrangement from one another and the natural world. More recently, critics such as Paul Virilio would add globalization and virtuality to these all too familiar problems.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty diagnoses our difficulties as rooted in part in misperceptions of the world of space and time that we inhabit. He values prereflective experience over the sedimented "knowledge" we've been taught about the way things are, and he agrees with Edmund

Husserl's critique of contemporary high altitude thinking. "High altitude" thinking about the world as a map, regularized and spread out below us, offers the illusion of comprehensive sight. We imagine that we simultaneously can see all spaces, without folds or hidden corners, and can account for them in a quantifiable manner.

The book of nature, according to Galileo, is written in mathematical language. Without this language, one "wanders in vain through a dark labyrinth." A mathematizing approach leaves out qualitative experience of world and expressive responses in art and architecture, ethics, and other value-laden domains. What we gain in physical predictive power, we lose on the level of lived experience. Merleau-Ponty might agree that the world presents itself as a labyrinth, but would claim that our access to it is to follow its twists and turns as moving, perceptually sensitive beings. The boundaries are felt as directing or motivating our intentional acts toward goals, in deeply etched but ineffable patterns, rather than as geometric lines specifying distinct but homogeneous areas. Likewise, successful architecture supports human intentions, which are many and varied. Building that comes from preconceived assumptions about function and form will not attain the resonating characteristics of light, built place, and original "speaking" through silent means that I attribute to the word *architecture*.

High altitude thinkers impose worldviews, whether historically sedimented or based on a priori conditions, which obscure our immediate experience. Yet there are other anthropocentric/patriarchal/Enlightenment attitudes toward nature, the city, and the wider world that might be invoked as similarly blocking our contact with things. Postmodern positions that overemphasize shock, novelty, or the reduction of material bodies to language also may be too abstract to account for the ways particular human beings, especially those who suffer, experience life in the world. Merleau-Ponty turns to artists and poets as well as to philosophers, putting them into dialogue with one another. We need to return "to the things themselves," to make the familiar strange again, in order to overcome our disengagement from the overly determined places (or the virtual placelessness) around us. Given that Merleau-Ponty draws often upon scientific studies, especially of the human body and sensory or cognitive capacities, he is not opposed to science or technological advances per se. Rather, he brings into question the fantasy of comprehensive knowledge and the presupposition of a world that is more "real" in scientific or hyperlinguistic, rather than phenomenological, description.

Merleau-Ponty suspends what we think we know about quantifiable space and the contents therein to notice what shows up when we attend to partial perspectival perception. Without constructing a theatrical space based on a priori conditions for sensing figures against a neutral backdrop, we wake up already in the world. Merleau-Ponty argues that our perception is inextricably bound to movement, and we become aware that the horizon moves with us. This moving horizon displays and occludes various aspects of things, relating them to our own bodies' intentions in space. Spatial contours can be described by this prepersonal, lived point of view. Spatial perception is "a structural phenomenon and is only understood from within a perceptual field that, as a whole, contributes to motivating it by proposing to the concrete subject a possible anchorage" (*PhP*, 293). Contra Newtonian space, which is infinite in extent and neutral in orientation, the lifeworld offers us finite reasons to move, or places to stay put, directed by our bodily experience. We are motivated initially by interconnected aspects of natural topography and social features such as class, race, gender, and language. Our homes, cities, and wider terrain are organized in particular ways, and we live in a specific situation, even as it overlaps others.

Merleau-Ponty is critical of derivative Cartesian or Kantian views that conceive of space as logically and physically neutral and consistent, viewed by an observer outside the system. He would appreciate certain features of a classical perspective such as Aristotle's account, with its emphasis on the qualitative differences in spatial regions and directed motion toward or away from them. Yet, neither an absolute outsider's viewpoint nor an individual human's limited perception are important to an Aristotelian who views the cosmos organized from an earthly center to a celestial periphery. Merleau-Ponty's critique of prior understandings of space and place yields positive strategies to overcome the dualistic split without a return to a classical position.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, he argues that "I" am an embodied center of both perception and movement, the moving origin point of space, and where I stand distinguishes all things as partially hidden and revealed, oriented to the left or right, front or back of my own place. I realize that it is through my body that I have relations to other bodies, other persons. Space is experienced as having differentiated regions, particular places endowed with triggers for memory and imagination. I do not sort places according to the heavy and the light, as an Aristotelian would, but by those that draw me toward them, or seem threatening, or are barred from my investigation.

This primary spatiality offers the most significant orienting marker for the embodied being: depth. Depth registers my relations in terms of distance and proximity to others, and incorporates qualitative, affective responses to them. Merleau-Ponty rejects the common height, width, depth parameters of geometrical space as descriptive of location, and brings forward depth as the first dimension. He does not mean this metaphorically. When we assume that height and breadth are primary, and depth is a kind of breadth seen from the side, we imaginatively shift our perspective in space. We no longer feel the contours of the presented world. We have abstracted from any particular viewpoint to claim a constructed array of ideal sights, objects we might see if we could be in several places at once. On the contrary, Merleau-Ponty argues, "Depth is born before my gaze because my gaze attempts to see something" (*PhP*, 274). This gaze is solicited or motivated by the world, and offers a horizon to the lifeworld in return. Within a field of presence that is both spatial and temporal, things and the gaze envelop or embrace one another. He highlights the reciprocity between the spontaneously organized world, which provides possible anchorage for the moving perceiver, and the intentions of the embodied being responding to that milieu. We are firmly embedded in a world, even before we represent it to ourselves through geometrical or symbolic means. The givenness of the anonymous human being, like the field itself, provides a thick atmosphere within which perception takes place.

I am geared into this fundamentally intercorporeal world shared with others who have their own viewpoints and agency. This insight is a motive for renewed wonder, and brings the authors of *Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture* to work out the critical and productive implications of his thought. Phenomenologically based architects, too, explore the consequences of the thinking body by designing on a human scale, highlighting texture, touch, and other sensorial elements, and by emphasizing the qualitative dimension of experience in their expressions of space. Contemporary architects whose built work shows kinship with Merleau-Ponty include Steven Holl, Maya Lin, Peter Zumthor, Glenn Murcutt, Will Bruder, Antoine Predock, and Lisa Iwamoto / Craig Scott, among others.[2] We can see in their work attentiveness to site, depth, materials (including light and volume), and the human experience of inhabiting a particular place over time. Their projects invite us to a corporeal companionship with Merleau-Ponty's embodied phenomenology. Our authors draw out features of his thought that could support meaningful design practices, while a sensitive

dwelling with these architects' projects could make our essays' implications more concrete.

Our book spans from Merleau-Ponty's major work *Phenomenology of Perception* to the shift in ontological focus in his uncompleted manuscript, *The Visible and the Invisible*. I contend that there are three strands of philosophical thought about place and space in response to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy that can draw continued intellectual support from it: feminist philosophy (and other cultural critiques), deep ecology or ecophenomenology, and philosophies of material objects in the wake of Deleuze.

Space is a major theme of *Phenomenology of Perception*, both in the chapters on the body and motricity and in the main chapter on space. The embodied being who experiences himself or herself both as subject and as an object for others displays this self-understanding in intentions toward movement and perception. Responsive to others and the general milieu in the moment of action, the agent's motives are grounded in and are most immediately noticeable in body habits and the inhabitation of place. It is here that feminist criticism finds a foothold, both exploring the possibilities Merleau-Ponty's view offers and pointing out his culturally bound limitations.[3]

Deep ecology, represented in its Merleau-Pontian strand by David Abram's writing, thinks about the natural world and humans' not entirely benign residence within it.[4] Parallel arguments to those of ecophenomenology can and have been constructed to inform our thinking about architecture. Here, too, ethical concerns can become more prominent than the questions of spatial knowing and being that underlie them.

In *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty observes that we understand "why we see the things themselves, in their places, where they are, according to their being which is indeed more than their being-perceived— and why at the same time we are separated from them by all the thickness of the look and of the body" (135). The distance necessary for sight and the proximity of touch are our means of communication with things. At the same time, things in their places continue to interact with one another, to cohere or to dissolve over time. We can think about things among themselves when we aren't subjects attending to them and accounting for their histories in purely physical or chemical terms. Or we can emphasize difference and multiplicity over the preservation of identities, along Deleuzean lines. Among material philosophers, Jane Bennett thinks with both

Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze, challenging views of physical matter as inert stuff for human shaping. Rather, she and others claim that "vibrant matter" has its own effectiveness and agency, qua matter. She cites Merleau-Ponty as noticing that "objects" are already expressive, and that we know this when we know our own being as physical, alive, and present.[5] This seems a promising direction for architecture and landscape architecture to investigate. Our authors comment on the premises of all three of these fields, especially when they focus on Merleau-Ponty's later philosophy of the flesh.

Flesh is an element as fundamental as the ancient Greeks' earth, air, fire, and water are in their varied conceptions of matter in time and space. Each traditional element has two primary meanings: a physical fire burns the cedar in my fireplace, and, at the same time, fire can be considered as "the dry and the hot" component of composite beings. For Merleau-Ponty, flesh can likewise refer to the thickness of what lies beneath my skin, being of the same nature as the bodily flesh of others. It can also refer to the zone or straits that acts as a medium of communication, revealing relations between the human being and the world that includes latent or "invisible" aspects not fully disclosed or even able to be so. He specifies that flesh is an "incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an 'element' of Being" (*VI*, 139).

The latent features contribute to depth felt as thickness in time and space. Our own bodies share the world, are objects for others, and change over time along with them. We bring the past with us, much as a cape streams out behind in the wind that is the future blowing our way. Thus we are in touch with the others who inhabit our milieu. Change can be measured only against a steady ground, but the notion of flesh reimagines what counts as ground. Taken as the in-between, it allows for us to change direction together, possibly with the recognition of what will support human flourishing rather than destruction. Merleau-Ponty's introduction of flesh as an incarnate principle, visibly allowing the latent to be felt in our experience of space and time, provides a new conceptual support for acknowledging our intimate weave into the world that gives itself to us.[6]

Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture is divided into three sections, grouping essays with similar or complementary foci. Let's turn to liminal space, temporal space, and shared space to draw out the implications of spatiality as outlined above.

PART I: LIMINAL SPACE

By the term "liminal space," I mean to draw attention to the border regions or boundaries that allow us to become aware of how we experience space and time. As dusk disturbs the clear sight of day and offers a progressive modulation of our perception into the dark, so, too, our act of seeing shifts and we are aware of these shifts. The "object in space," taken for granted in the natural attitude, is destabilized by shifting appearances on the border. Gestalt psychology influenced Merleau-Ponty's early understanding of the figure/ground structures that govern our vision. Visual illusions that oscillate between figure and ground bring the character of the liminal zone itself into question. Noticing figural emergence and subsiding as other aspects become prominent, the perceiver acts as a third party to figure/ground structures.

In chapter 1, Glen A. Mazis considers the poetic region inscribed by the effacing of boundaries, the blurring of edges, as night deepens. The presence and juxtaposition of incompossibles is not as jarring in the softer, more fluid conditions of the dark. His essay, "Hearkening to the Night for the Heart of Depth, Space, and Dwelling," takes descriptive aim at the night itself. Mazis explores the density of irregular or indeterminate spaces, encroachments of the inside and the outside, and the resultant closeness to animal inhabitation. He begins by taking up Catherine Ingraham's book, *Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition*, to place his thinking about nocturnal conditions in the context of explicitly architectural concerns. Mazis argues that the felt experience of night might lead us to have more depth in our making of daytime structures.

We shift from night to shadows with Galen A. Johnson's essay, "Depth of Space and Depth of World: Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, and Rembrandt's *Nightwatch* on a Modern Baroque." Johnson analyzes Rembrandt's painting, following Merleau-Ponty's suggestion that it shows the liminal nature of shadows that provide divergent and coexisting perspectives. In the preface to *Sense and Non-Sense*, Merleau-Ponty declares his intention to "form a new idea of reason" that "borders on unreason." On the one hand, Galen Johnson argues, reason might be construed as widening to include articulation in the arts, literature, and the psychology of eros and dreams. On the other, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy might explore a world prior to reason, the prepersonal experience of the child, or the wild and brute Being of nature (*l'être sauvage*). The implications of these ways of thinking about reason for Merleau-Ponty's

phenomenology of depth perception and spatial depth lead Galen Johnson to analyze carefully Merleau-Ponty's use of the term "baroque" beyond an art historical category that includes Rembrandt's painting. The term here refers to the primary spatial perception of an unstable, untamed process on the level of wild being "that is asked to create culture anew" (*S*, 181/228). Johnson draws, too, on Deleuze's work on Leibniz, and especially on Francis Bacon, whose painting has some features in common with Rembrandt's work. The "modern baroque" is a space of ambiguity, shock, and dislocation.

Boundaries and edges are most emphasized in Merleau-Ponty's later work, especially *The Visible and the Invisible* and "Eye and Mind." The concept of chiasmus comes into play, as distinct entities cross over onto one another, as, for example, in Cézanne's painting. Cézanne claims that "the mountain thinks itself in me," and that thought emerges as artistic expression. The language of crossing, enveloping, or overlapping rests upon the possibility of boundaries in the knot or network of human relations with one another and with the surrounding landscape.

Edward S. Casey's lifelong exploration of the question of boundaries comes to bear on his contribution here: an analysis of the iconic Parthenon. It is an explicitly phenomenological description of architecture, à la Merleau-Ponty. He points to the clarity and heaviness of the Parthenon's material foundation, which moves in graduated steps toward the element of air. This yields an intensity of sensation and affect that we continue to respond to today. Casey thematizes different levels of the articulation of interior and exterior surfaces in domestic architecture as well, since edges that are based on proportions of the human body help us make sense of our environment. He is interested in the gestural, narrative, and kinetic boundary conditions that show us the world and our own selves within it. Casey's essay, "Finding Architectural Edge in the Wake of Merleau-Ponty," reminds us that although Merleau-Ponty is rightly regarded as a thinker of deep continuities, edges are necessary to distinguish figure from ground. In Merleau-Ponty's later work, there is an explicit formative presence of edges in linguistic signs, the folding of flesh, and the active linearity at stake in art. The implications are significant and various, so Casey's careful descriptive assessment of the edges at work in the Parthenon is a model we might employ in other contexts.

By contrast, rites of exchange and fluidity are considered in Randall Johnson's essay, "Liquid Space of Matrixial Flesh: Reading Merleau-Ponty and

Bracha L. Ettinger Poolside." Water is the space of immediate contact, as distinguished from the distance inherent in high altitude thinking. Immersed in the liquid medium of the swimming pool, we can be open to an affective sensibility of our very inherence *as* space. Randall Johnson draws on Bracha L. Ettinger, an artist and psychoanalyst, to speak to the symbolic, real, and imaginary aspects of the womb-like borderspace of the pool. In both Ettinger's art and writing, Johnson notices how space exceeds us, and he introduces the aspect of pleasure. Pleasure is not motivated exclusively by sight at a distance from the object-of-the-gaze, but includes the pleasure of being embraced by the proximate milieu of water. Johnson traces thinking from an abstract space-without-time to an intimate atmosphere, space-with-affect. This brings us to the threshold of part 2.

PART 2: TEMPORAL SPACE

While time and space may be distinctly thought, they are necessarily intertwined in the lived world. Simultaneous and adjacent spatial fields seem different from the succession of temporal events in the now. Yet differentiation in how we perceive the spatial world, even through sight, is also dynamic and continuing. This section shows some of the implications of the intertwined spatiotemporal dimensions of human existence. Merleau-Ponty's flesh shows us to be intercorporeally woven together with others, not simply spatially, but also vertically in time.

While part 1, "Liminal Space," seeks to think more carefully about the boundaries between articulated places and the effects of ambiguous borders, this part emphasizes the continuity provided by temporality in the experience of the world. Perception of any object in front of me includes the time it takes to situate it in context and attend to it as figure. The autumn moon, for example, is enormous, round, and orange on the horizon. Later the same evening, I observe that it is smaller away from the framing trees and buildings at the ground plane. What can account for this? These regions of space show me a thing, the moon, which I take as the same unmeasured being under different aspects, in a world that emerges over time. Memory acts as a loosening grasp on the temporal flow, treating features of more or less past experience (as, for example, tonight's harvest moon on the horizon, or the full moon seen from the back of a pickup truck in Idaho long ago), as present to our

current situation. Thus those memories, which are now present, are of a past that never was as it is now. The future also bears down upon us, and we intend our movements in space, taking time, in pursuit of our goals.

When we think about time experienced outside of personal perception and goals, we may think first of geological or archaeological time markers in the landscape, but Merleau-Ponty points as well to the cultural temporal traces that are inscribed in our inherence in space. History builds in layered, elaborated structures for our city dwelling. What happens to places over time includes changing inhabitants as well as the aging of buildings. Built memory demonstrates use, paths worn smooth, for example, but also the disintegration and renewal of articulated places. David Morris's essay, "Spatiality, Temporality, and Architecture as a Place of Memory," offers a phenomenological account of the way that memory extends far beyond personal memory. He is concerned with the distinctions between passivity, marked by embodied habit, and activity, marked by moving perception. A Merleau-Pontian perspective suggests a peculiar form of passivity outside of the perceiver, an "I already can move," embedded in the surrounding field. Architecture activates this possibility for us and thereby cultivates memory.

Dorothea E. Olkowski gives more emphasis to the temporal dimension of the conjunction between being-for-itself and being-in-the-world, which makes freedom possible. She shows that for Merleau-Ponty, the body is in space only to the degree that it is an expression of the temporal relations of a subject that tends toward the future. Her essay, "In Search of Lost Time: Merleau-Ponty, Bergson, and the Time of Objects," locates Merleau-Ponty between Bergson and Husserl in his view of the fundamentally temporal character of the field in which we act. She argues that time, in "alignment with the network of relationships that define our acts, acts which are also our abode, the place within which we dwell," marks out a territory within which we are capable of asserting our freedom. Olkowski considers properties of spatial relations to be secondary to temporal structures that anchor future-oriented commitments to a coherent past.

But what about disruptions in the spatiotemporal intertwining, or the suspension of motivated goals? Merleau-Ponty's early work commonly used the strategy of looking to pathological cases to examine their substitutions for healthy functioning. By extension, we can question dysfunctional spaces that suppress senses of time, to see what the impact is upon the individual and

the community. Lisa Guenther's essay, "Inhabiting the House That Herman Built: Merleau-Ponty and the Pathological Space of Solitary Confinement," argues that prolonged solitude produces perceptual distortions, hallucinations, and a global deterioration in the ability to think or interact with others. Guenther paints a stark picture of the ways in which the prisoner's own affective intercorporeality turns against himself or herself in a forced self-betrayal. He or she finally succumbs to the radical impoverishment of the spatiotemporal milieu, unless the prisoner can resist through an intention toward a possible future.

One of the most difficult spatiotemporal distortions to imagine, but unfortunately all too topical, is the enclosed world of torture. D. R. Koukal offers a phenomenological description of torture that goes beyond the effects on the body. His essay, "Stolen Space: The Perverse Architecture of Torture," argues that the victim's experience of the spatiality of torture leaves him or her irretrievably damaged at the ontological level. Merleau-Ponty grounds the embodied subject in his or her inherence in space and time, and thus human life has a meaning as spatial and spatializing. Koukal shows how that meaning is destroyed, even if the victim survives the ordeal physically "unscarred." Can we expand this account to consider other violent events, such as strategic targeting of monumental religious or artistic buildings during wartime conflicts, which leave other aspects of the city intact? What kind of cultural trauma is caused by the permanent eradication of historical structures that help inhabitants constitute themselves as a community? Can these violations be repaired, offset, prevented? Koukal does not ask these questions directly, but they come to mind in the wake of his analysis of severe degradation of space and time through "enhanced interrogation techniques." Recall also the case study of Schneider in *Phenomenology of Perception*, a wounded war veteran who would like to form political or religious views, would like to have intimate relationships, but knows that it is no use. His prospects of experiencing space in the future are similarly compromised, for he can no longer go for a simple walk without a specific errand to run. His experience of space and time is strictly of utility, based on deliberate thought-through movements rather than a natural intention toward his goals. He can no longer play, imaginatively and flexibly exploring places within his horizon. Koukal's essay articulates both individual and communal disruptions in intending a future, given the radical impact of torture.

PART 3: SHARED SPACE

The lifeworld is felt as value-laden, both aesthetically and morally. Our intended purposes, whether accomplished or not, govern our activity within the spatial and temporal horizon. Merleau-Ponty's term "intercorporeality" expresses a particular dimension of inhabiting space. Whether we are gracious or resistant, it is clear from natural consequences that we are intimately and bodily connected to one another—widely construed to include other people, animals, and our habitat, the earth. In *Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture*, we are explicitly focused on the relations between human beings and their joining in societal spaces and place-making activities. Part 3 is intimately connected to the earlier sections of the book, since our ways of sharing space or making place are developed in time and in liminal relations with one another.

Rachel McCann's essay, "Through the Looking Glass: The Spatial Experience of Merleau-Ponty's Metaphors," imaginatively explores the metaphors in Merleau-Ponty's late work. She holds up images for us, such as Merleau-Ponty's famous depiction of intersubjectivity, like color, as a "straits, ever gaping open" and investigates the philosophical consequences of this kind of language use. If we are indeed boundary regions ourselves, fields in which the world comes to play, open to change through simple physiological processes such as respiration and through sociopolitical processes such as democratic discourse, we must ask: How does thinking this way permit us to collaborate, to welcome exchange, rather than to imagine that we go it alone? As an architect herself, McCann takes the uniquely Merleau-Pontian element of flesh as a bridge from his ideas to the spatially grounded acts of experiencing and designing architecture. The flesh, she reminds us, is a domain of continual self-questioning. The embodied being participates in an ongoing, transformative exchange as perceiver and as perceived, as experience and as expressive.

The essays that follow consider the implications of the embodied being as ethically, physically, and aesthetically intertwined with others, within a place of exchange. When spatial experience is restricted or radically cut off, through homelessness or torture, for example, the outcomes operate as warnings of what is essential to human life. Without privacy and protection or the ability to gesture toward others across a space that is laced with our shared intentions, the human being is degraded as a species. There may be

permanent damage in the capacities to perceive as well as express the inherently embodied character of human life, as we have seen in the essays by Guenther and Koukal. Suzanne Cataldi Laba's essay, "Sheltering Spaces, Dynamics of Retreat, and Other Hiding Places in Merleau-Ponty's Thought," examines the multiple associations we have with the term "shelter." On the one hand, shelter evokes protection, comfort, security, and privacy; on the other, we think of the shelters for the homeless, placeless, and those lacking in bodily privacy. Cataldi Laba uses Merleau-Ponty's understanding of embodiment, movements of withdrawal, and chiasmic intertwining to draw out existential and political connections to shelter. She questions the adequacy of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to accommodate a worldly sense of interior space and a domain of the private intrinsic to political freedom, and draws her own conclusions. We come to the edge of thinking with Merleau-Ponty, and we continue to develop insights further in the worlds we encounter.

"Dimensions of the Flesh in a Case of Twins with Which I Am Familiar," by Nancy A. Barta-Smith, is based on her experience of being a twin. In *Signs*, Merleau-Ponty calls others "my twins or the flesh of my flesh. Certainly I do not live their life; they are definitively absent from me and I from them. But that distance becomes a strange proximity as soon as one comes back home to the perceptible world" (15). Barta-Smith explores the implications of this proximity in the case of identical twins. She argues that an appreciation of spatial copresence is obscured in the privileging of temporal frameworks (defined by desire and distance), in contrast to depth and spatial proximity (implied by affect, sensation, and perception). Her argument has been influenced not only by Merleau-Ponty's work, but also by the reconsideration of Jean Piaget's developmental psychology by comparative biologists and by George Lakoff's recent discussion of the biology of empathy. Lakoff's work also suggests prospects for a progressive moral and political philosophy. Barta-Smith's descriptive analysis of the spatial experience of twins opens this as a human possibility for the singletons among us in our relations with proximate others.

Helen A. Fielding reads Merleau-Ponty with an inflection, through Luce Irigaray. Fielding is thinking about the ways in which the sexed body moves through and senses space. Walking and looking become, as it were, "thinking on your feet." But further, she wants to consider the expression of space, grounded in the embodiment Merleau-Ponty describes in *Phenomenology of Perception*. She draws as well on the *Institution* lectures to show how art institutes shared perceptual traditions and thus shared ways of thinking.

Richard Serra's *Tilted Spheres*, found in Toronto's Pearson International Airport, offers travelers an experience of modulated space. Fielding walks through, goes around, and sits with this large sculpture, giving a detailed phenomenological description of its enhancement of our depth sensitivity. *Tilted Spheres* becomes a companion in the hurried, transitional space of an airport. In her essay, "Dwelling and Public Art: Serra and Bourgeois," Fielding also describes Louise Bourgeois's *Maman* with similar goals and deft description. She argues that we bring to the public world different interior worlds, which allows for the intertwining of different relational possibilities. I would add that respect for these differences supports the continued flourishing of artworks on a grand scale that intend communal experience. Fielding's thought resonates with Galen Johnson's descriptions of depth in Rembrandt's painting and Bracha Ettinger's unusual expressivity in painting, as described by Randall Johnson. Chapter 12 also is companionable with Ed Casey's analysis of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. As a counterpoint in scale and mass, *Maman* (cast 2003) inhabits the Guggenheim Bilbao's plaza, while Serra's *Snake*, created especially for the museum, resides inside it along with major Serra works (such as *Torqued Spiral* [2003–2004]) clearly related to *Tilted Spheres*. The section "Shared Space" comes to a close as a conversation among the authors, with different interior worlds opening onto this book.

CONCLUSION

Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture traces its own intentional arc in thinking with Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It ranges from an articulation of figures and ground, both in space and in time, toward descriptions of intimate intertwining between the human being and the milieu taken widely to encompass not only other humans, animals, and built structures, but the landscape itself. The "total situation" in which we find ourselves rests on the latent deep structures that support us as sensitive, motile, but also thoughtful beings. Merleau-Ponty argues:

> It is a question not of putting the perceptual faith in place of reflection, but on the contrary of taking into account the total situation, which involves reference from the one to the other. What is given is not a massive and opaque world, or a universe of adequate thought;

it is a reflection which turns back over the density of the world in order to clarify it, but which, coming second, reflects back to it only its own light. (*VI*, 35)

When we consider the different reflections on lived spatiality presented by the authors of *Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture*, we can see possibilities open up both for further philosophical questioning and for architectural construction.[7] Maurice Merleau-Ponty has a deep understanding of the ways that time and space are bound together, the ways that human beings make place even as they are responsive to their own shaping by the multiple dimensions of those places, and the ways that architecture creates an atmosphere that we inhabit. Architecture and landscape architecture are arguably the most spatial arts, and enact questions about spatial existence in creative ways. As a vital interlocutor and guide for our own work, Merleau-Ponty stands as a major thinker with whom to face twenty-first-century challenges.

NOTES

1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, trans. Michael B. Smith (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 138. All subsequent references to Merleau-Ponty's work in this volume will be keyed to the list of abbreviations.

2. See these architects' websites and monographs for projects and bibliography. Steven Holl: http://www.stevenholl.com. See especially Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture* (San Francisco: William Stout, 2006); Steven Holl, *Color, Light, Time*, with essays by Jordi Safont-Tria and Sanford Kwinter (Zurich: Lars Mueller, 2012). Maya Lin: http://www.mayalin.com; and *Boundaries* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006). See her latest multimedia project, *What Is Missing*, at http://www.whatis missing.net. For Peter Zumthor: http://zumthor.tumblr.com; *Thinking Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Basel: Birkhäuser Architecture, 2010); and *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments, Surrounding Objects* (Basel: Birkhäuser Architecture, 2006). On Glenn Murcutt: *Glenn Murcutt: Thinking Drawing / Working Drawing* (Tokyo: TOTO, 2008). Will Bruder: http://willbruderarchitects.com. With regard to Antoine Predock: Christopher C. Mead, *Roadcut: The Architecture of Antoine Predock* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011). Lisa Iwamoto / Craig Scott: www.iwamoto scott.com.

3. There are a variety of feminist critiques of Merleau-Ponty, some focused primarily on the embodied subject of *PhP*; others think through his concept of flesh. Works by Luce Irigaray, Gail Weiss, Kirsten Jacobson, Shannon Sullivan, Sara Ahmed, and Elizabeth Grosz are particularly relevant to spatiality and architecture. Irigaray's *The Way of Love*, trans. Luce Irigaray, Heidi Bostic, and Stephen Pluháček (New

York: Continuum, 2002); and *Sharing the World* (New York: Continuum, 2008) consider visibility and irreducible invisibility, as well as healthy ways of encounter in a world we construct together. Weiss's essay "Urban Flesh" takes a clear-eyed look at the implications of a generalized flesh, cautioning us to refuse to privilege unity over difference, or to give preference to difference, in the context of the city. Gail Weiss, *Refiguring the Ordinary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 127–43. Jacobson analyzes spatial dysfunctions that tend to affect women more often and more intensely, such as agoraphobia. Kirsten Jacobson, "Embodied Domestics, Embodied Politics: Women, Home, and Agoraphobia," *Human Studies* 34, no. 1 (2011): 1–21. Sullivan suggests an amendment to phenomenological intentionality, "hypothetical construction." A hypothetical interpretation of the world is offered in a provisional manner that invites a response that she terms "building-with," a corrective offered by the world. Thus the emphasis is more heavily on the intercorporeal end of the spectrum than the motile, seeing subject. See Shannon Sullivan, "Domination and Dialogue in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*," *Hypatia* 12, no. 1 (1997): 1–19, and responses in following issues. One might argue that Merleau-Ponty himself heads in that direction in his last works. However, his anonymous, prereflective body that subtends our interactions in the world may still be open to question, as having his own culturally European white male characteristics. Sara Ahmed, in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), takes up orientation in spatial and social aspects, to both critique and make more nuanced Merleau-Ponty's work. In *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Boston: MIT Press, 2001), Elizabeth Grosz argues for the significance of the temporal and sexual dimensions of architectural space.

4. David Abram, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011). See also Ted Toadvine, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Nature* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009), for a clear and specific account of Merleau-Ponty's foundational work useful for this area. Suzanne L. Cataldi and William S. Hamrick edited another useful volume, *Merleau-Ponty and Environmental Philosophy: Dwelling on the Landscapes of Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). David Ruy, in his essay and editing of *Tarp: Not Nature, Architecture Manual* (Spring 2012), offers a critique of taking field relations among humans, the natural world, and building too far. He does not refer directly to Merleau-Ponty, but this issue highlights for me the continuing relevance of the two main phases of Merleau-Ponty's thought. Both the Gestalt-based figure/ground spatial awareness in his earlier work and the late ontology of flesh can be pertinent to architectural practice and our thinking about the serious environmental challenges we face today.

5. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). See the speculative realists, who have a strong critique of phenomenology yet are interested in the life of things outside human surveillance. Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of Moderns*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); and the exhibition catalog: Latour, *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Boston: MIT Press, 2005). See also object-oriented ontology as, for example, Graham Harman, "Non-Relationality for Philosophers and Architects," in *Bells and Whistles: More Speculative Realism* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2013). Merleau-Ponty's articulation of figure/ground shifts in *PhP* can support the object-oriented architect. There is a surplus of meaning in the architectural object, even as it may be ground for other figures. We

can draw as well on Merleau-Ponty's late ontology to respond to the various objections to human-centered approaches to philosophy and architecture.

6. Gail Weiss summarizes Luce Irigaray's critique of flesh as follows: "Opposing Merleau-Ponty's 'elemental' logic of generality, a generality that she claims is at odds with the ongoing, polymorphous sex-specific differentiation that distinguishes feminine flesh, the sex 'which is not one,' Irigaray is nonetheless clearly indebted to Merleau-Ponty's insight that the flesh functions as an 'incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being.' Indeed, I would argue, Merleau-Ponty's provocative understanding of how the flesh stylizes being suggests an ongoing process of differentiation that cannot be reduced to sameness. And yet, insofar as it stylizes, the flesh also unifies, weaving together disparate gestures, movements, bodies, and situations into a dynamic fabric of meaning that must be continually reworked, made and unmade." Weiss, "Urban Flesh," 128–29.

7. Finally, a word or two about Merleau-Ponty's style is in order. He is a generous reader of the tradition, as evidenced by his presentation and critique of thinkers like Descartes and Kant in *Phenomenology of Perception*. He is as well actively engaged with contemporary sciences, arts, and philosophies, as can be seen in his lectures and the attention paid to Sartre in *The Visible and the Invisible*. In many cases, one must read quite carefully to determine where his assessment of another's thought leaves off and his own reckoning with the question begins. In this respect, Merleau-Ponty encircles and is encircled by the attitudes and views of his interlocutors. He finds himself at home in conversation about the things that matter most to human beings, who continue to live amid intellectual and practical problems that are difficult to solve. *Merleau-Ponty: Space, Place, Architecture* means to take up his generosity, rigor, and sensitivity to spatial concerns, and to invite the reader to do likewise.

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Liminal Space

. . . .

HEARKENING TO THE NIGHT FOR THE HEART OF DEPTH, SPACE, AND DWELLING

Glen A. Mazis

I. SPACE AND DEPTH IN THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF BODILY SITUATION VERSUS THE HIGH ALTITUDE SPATIAL GRID

The work of Merleau-Ponty subtly shifts the sense of our perceptual relations with the world into another key, so the space we inhabit comes to appear anew. As if in hearing a symphony we were used to hearing, we are startled with new pacing, intonation, and by being transposed into another key. Merleau-Ponty takes our experience of depth, the night, and dwelling, as well as other aspects related to the sense of space, and articulates them in startlingly transposed ways. In Merleau-Ponty's work, space becomes continually dynamic, alive with tensions, and reciprocally open among what had seemed sealed boundaries in such a way that architecture, as described by Catherine Ingraham, which "has always required something like a free passage between inside and outside; some vital movement from protected to open air," is given new philosophical ground for understanding and exploring possibilities.[1]

Most original and transformative of our sense of space in Merleau-Ponty's work is his reworking of the notion of depth. Additionally, depth, as Merleau-Ponty articulates it, opens a bridge from its spatial sense toward integration within a nexus of relations among persons with nature, culture, things, and animals. Merleau-Ponty discovered that by articulating another sort of depth in perception, a displacement occurs of the traditional philosophical and cultural understandings of the ontological, epistemological, and ethical status of the many types of beings of the world. Space is a *bodily space* for Merleau-Ponty. Space emerges through the way the body *inhabits* the world, lodged

within the many vectors of activity that surround it continually. Within this lived, bodily space of interrelation, depth for Merleau-Ponty is manifest beyond subject-object dualisms and beyond linear time and space. Depth is the phenomenon that opens up "the flesh of the world." As Merleau-Ponty says in a "working note" of *The Visible and the Invisible*: "It is hence because of depth that the things have a flesh" (219). Depth allows flesh to become manifest, and, in doing so, depth is reciprocally intensified in its sense. This means, as Edward Casey points out, that "built places, then, are extensions of our bodies."[2] Architecture becomes an art of this fleshly enmeshment of body and world.

Merleau-Ponty's "indirect ontology," as he called it, articulates a *space of envelopment* in which perceiver and perceived fold back within each other as they unfold and intertwine, undercutting traditional dualisms of subject/object, self/other, mind/matter, and passivity/activity. This notion of depth has another kind of logic as a "dehiscent inclusiveness" that preserves duality while simultaneously overcoming dichotomy. In turn, this sense of phenomena can emerge only from a striated space that folds back into itself from myriad discrete vectors, as they become situated in that space but simultaneously loop back into its ongoing originary sense, rather than a traditionally conceived homogeneous space. This makes manifest another kind of space, which might be used to undergird architecture's reckoning with space. Depth in Merleau-Ponty's sense is equally about time. The depth of time contains myriad interplays among its varied times that burst forth to enfold one another in manifesting an ongoing becoming. It is not a linear, progressive becoming, but rather a riddled becoming of a primordial depth where all particular spaces and times are enjambed. This sense of time also gives another dimension to the dwelling that architecture can employ.

Depth as understood by Merleau-Ponty is not one dimension of space, but rather the *dimension of dimensions*. In other words, "if [depth] were a dimension, it would be the *first* one," as stated by Merleau-Ponty in "Eye and Mind" (180). In the philosophical tradition that he confronted, depth is the "third dimension," after length and breadth, a rational and linear concept built up from simple givens in order to complete a rationally determinate and quantifiable grid of location and orientation (180). The title of Kandinsky's 1926 book, *Point and Line to Plane*, about a very different sense of space of relations than the traditional progressive building up of space, nevertheless expresses well the traditional sense of the genesis of space. Using the Cartesian method of thought that starts with the most simple constituents,

space was seen as the progressive adding from the simple spatial given of a point, to connecting them to form lines, to then projecting lines into planes, and yielding a uniform space and sense of depth that not only can be plotted on a Cartesian grid as projected into a third dimension, but renders a certain intelligibility to depth that erases its most ontologically significant sense, according to Merleau-Ponty—*the going together of incompossibles*. Depth, for Merleau-Ponty, calls for a new logic of relations. This is why Casey warns in *Getting Back into Place* that "finding ourselves in built places is no straightforward matter."[3] Casey warns, "The thoughtful architect or builder is aware of these diverse modalities of the in-out relation."[4]

The traditional notion of depth expresses several errors at once, all of them being examples of the "experience error," as Merleau-Ponty phrased the tendency to posit the outcome of rational analysis and reconstruction as being the source of phenomena and their central sense (*PhP*, 5). One might at first think the rearticulating of the traditional notion of depth is chiefly another example of Merleau-Ponty's undermining the atomism and intellectual constructionism that has plagued Western thought, in order to re-place it with a more Gestaltist one. Although Merleau-Ponty's conception of depth does achieve this, it is more about taking on a style of thinking that in the first place is a "survey from above" in the sense of a "second order" rational reconstruction of a determinate world that forgets its natality in the shifting ambiguous way that things, events, and meaning come to announce themselves in embodying being.[5] In terms of painting, sculpture, film, and other arts, and certainly in terms of architecture, the traditional conception harbors a palpable detachment that influences the style of the work to be achieved. In other words, depth as traditionally conceived is an abstraction "away from" the teeming matrix of perception and concrete existence.

In the second place, the notion of depth that emerges from this abstracted understanding is at the same time a felt spatial trajectory inscribed in our sense of the world, as are all our understandings of the world once we grasp Merleau-Ponty's sense of space. It is literally a kind of aerial perspective, a privileging of vision from "on high" and a hovering in the impossible and thus illusory infinitude of everywhere and nowhere "outside" an anchorage in lived space. To say this sense of space is illusory as an originary description of the world is not to say that it is not vital for certain purposes, nor is it to deny that through sedimentation it shapes the sense of what we assume of the orientation of our world. Yet, there are consequences of dwelling within a "high altitude" culture, especially for practices such as architecture

or painting, that might be based upon this assumed mode of spatiality as the primordial one.

The arts have been in this quandary since Leon Battista Alberti's treatise *On Painting*, which gave a set of imperatives and a method for the rational construction of depth and space for Renaissance painting that paradoxically expressed the aim of achieving *both* a "high altitude" perspective in its rational abstraction away from the indeterminately lived experience of the painter, and a way to render the concrete things, people, and scenes around the artist. This method attempts to achieve this rendering by a literal placing of a grid of uniform spatial elements upon what is seen before the painter, who must screen himself or herself from his or her envelopment in what is being painted. It is also the assertion of the dominance of a certain kind of airy, floating, capacious, and yet thoroughly civilized, tamed, orderly kind of space. The lines of force that move within this space conflate the height of transcendence taking up the depth that animates primordial perception that is at the heart of our lived sense of the world. It is as if one sort of space can be fully encompassed by the other.

This coming to space from above, however, precedes Enlightenment and Renaissance thought in the medieval relationship with space as embodying the spiritual sense of the human place on earth. Yi-Fu Tuan says in *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*: "Medieval ideals in Europe find their most exalted architectural expression in the cathedral. The vertical cosmos of medieval man is dramatically symbolized by pointed arches, towers and spires that soar."[6] Roland Recht suggests that the urgency of this need to ascend to another realm has a dramatic effect on architecture: "The unceasing emphasis on verticality in the architecture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries taken to the point where the material is close to disintegrating . . . is the concrete and measurable expression of a world ordered bottom upwards."[7] The towering interiors of some of the great churches of Europe are a kind of verticalized depth, a depth projected upward and outward to become permeated with expansiveness in order to open the space of a vision to the enclosed mortals below. The mortals experience both this subjugation to the power on high of a divinity looking down upon them potentially from everywhere and also their emplacement within the rationalized world of progressively unfolding dimensions that echoes his power and order, including emanations from those who are his representatives on earth within these churches. However, the subjects to this divinity also are granted the promise of simultaneously elevating themselves through

a limited or asymmetrical reversibility felt in the uplift of identifying in the most blessed portions of their being, their immortal souls, with the ascendant all-seeing eye above.[8] This partial identification is with an "essence" within them, a soul, whose true home is on high, escaping from the existence that is mired in history in the struggle to survive and caught within social oppression and foreclosed economic possibilities. The depth of the soul and spirit within this world rebounds from its material depths toward a release in the immaterial, infinite heights suggested by the architectural lines of the majestic churches.

This sort of architectural space, however, instantiates Merleau-Ponty's notion of space as expressing the cultural and historical tensions of the time. It is a "motivated sense of spatiality," in Merleau-Ponty's use of that term (*PhP*, 270),[9] as a trajectory of flight away from their embodying being caught in onerous circumstances and as being offered an avenue of escape from the life of the painful sensation, of suffering emotions, and of crushed imagination experienced in witnessing dying offspring, the vexing struggle for bread, the weary muscles of overwork, and the cramped feeling within the dingy, dark, smoke-filled quarters with no change in life circumstances that could be envisioned. It is offered to the population by the powers of that time as a compensation for their oppressed existences and therefore as a way to maintain the status quo. As Merleau-Ponty's analysis reveals, this sense of space, as any sense of space, is inseparable from the political, historical, and social structures of that time and cannot be taken as a universal sense of space to ground architecture or any other of the arts.

The formal structure of this notion of spatiality is appropriated by the Renaissance in its assumption of the place of power formerly granted to divinity as usurped by humanity through the power of science. Space is "first captured by the grid in the Renaissance," says Ingraham.[10] It moves into the vacated space above the everyday, embodied, enmeshed space, but transformed from realm of spirit to realm of mathematical precision: "Architecture captures 'objects in the world' in the Renaissance by means of spatial coordinate systems . . . in a way that accounts for almost everything about architectural objects: their meaning, construction, placement on a site, design, authority as artistic objects, and status as theoretical objects. Part of the claim of the object in the Renaissance is to be mathematically 'known' in space."[11] The Albertian or Cartesian space that emerges in this transition remains the commonsense conception of the American and European cultures, where space is conceived of as the emptiness between things the container of

isolated objects, the measurable "span" among discrete beings, the infinite set of points demarcating possible locations in a grid of projected orientation. This sense of space leads to architectural structures replete with right angles and rectilinear spaces, expressing the regularity of mathematical reason's progress in the logical mastery of the world. Ingraham asserts that architecture since the Renaissance has been captured by the grid of a rationalized Renaissance sense of visual and mathematical space, which she asserts still makes its presence felt in the tendency of architecture to create what she calls "space-box and perspectival cages."[12]

II. PULSING SPACE AND AN ENJAMBED TIME AS THE DEPTH OF INHABITATION

The Enlightenment "high altitude" approach to space, as Merleau-Ponty called it, is an intellectual screen analogous to the physical screen Alberti imposed between painter and what is being painted. This notion of space screens out the primordial, perceptual sense of depth as enveloping and also screens away that space is equally "existential" in being "a direction of significance," and therefore has cultural and personal sources of its seeming natural sense. In the "Space" chapter of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty notes that being downcast and a slumping of our posture, or aspiring for something seemingly "above us" and a gesture upward, or dreaming about falling and then experiencing a downturn in the well-being of affairs, is not just an associational or symbolic connection of meaning, but rather that the direction in space and the sense we feel affectively about varied aspects of our lives are interwoven senses. Directions in space "genuinely contain their sense," as they are equally an "existential tide that runs through" space as the "pulsation of my existence" (*PhP*, 298). Space is primordially these pulses of direction, connection, and dwelling, affect-laden and having its layers of imaginal, memorial, and other senses, which have both personal and cultural sources.

Space is a matrix of sense that led Merleau-Ponty to "rediscover beneath depth as a relation between things or even between planes (which is an objectified depth, detached from experience, and transformed into breadth) a primordial depth that gives the former one its sense" (*PhP*, 278). Space as the directedness, the rootedness, the expansiveness, the belonging, the interest, the desire, and all the relational modalities of how we and the world have

become entwined in our mutual unfolding is first of all a depth that comes from the taking to heart of embodying concern such that there is "a mythical space in which directions and positions are determined by residence in it of great affective entities" (298). Rather than a neutral and universalizing space being the foundation of existence, which then might accrue other meanings from the associations of accidental—in the sense of cultural, historical, or personal—significances, for Merleau-Ponty, space becomes manifest from within the nexus of lived relations of situation. This means that creating trajectories in space, shapes in space, and the overall space for architecture is equally an expression of affect and the imaginal, which allows for different sorts of inhabiting that built space.

Despite the prevalence of the Enlightenment notion of space, these force field lines of relation running through space as described by Merleau-Ponty persist and are not severed by moving to render space from an ascendant God's-eye perspective, "beyond space" and looking down upon it from everywhere and nowhere, since *the existential space remains as the fundament of this space*, and not vice versa. Merleau-Ponty accounts for the cultural tradition of flight to the heights as being the trajectory toward which perceptual faith tends to lead us in its drive to explore ever more perspectives in venturing into the richness offered by any perception. However, the God's-eye perspective is a projected impossible outcome of an infinite being and not the foundation of our finite experience of a space riddled with existential tides of affect, memory, kinesthesia, and other felt relations (*PhP*, 70–71).

Merleau-Ponty's work takes seriously the original project of phenomenology as he understood it, which proceeds in the direction of finding how the contingent, the accidental, and the historical become the structure of our lives and give a varied sense to differing lives and to both space and depth. Merleau-Ponty defines existence as "the perpetual taking up of fact and chance by a reason that neither exists in advance of this taking up, nor without it" (*PhP*, 129). Space is not an a priori of universalizable and formal structures; rather, its structure emerges from the interweaving of all the relationships that emerge in the historical and idiosyncratic unfolding of lives thrown into situations such that "there is no longer any means of distinguishing a level of *a priori* truths and a level of factual ones" (229). This sense of spontaneous coming together of the accidental to give space a sense is akin to the idea of "bricolage" in the arts and allows another sense of the space of inhabitation that can be drawn upon by architecture. Rather than architectural structures that seem to have been arrived at as essences of the mathematically

formal to be used throughout—the rectangle, the circle, the square, the right angle, and so on, now with Merleau-Ponty's insights there is a philosophical ground for using the irregular, the angled, the undulating, the "smashed in," and other structures expressive of the coming together of the accidental that can be seen to express the rhythms of inhabiting space.

The space that Merleau-Ponty articulates, striated with existential tides of affect, the imaginal, felt kinesthetic rhythms, and at odds with itself in a multiplicity of beckonings, repulsions, and belongings in depth, suggests building spaces as varied and irregular as our existence woven of chance circumstances that emplace us. Rather than thrusting upward in a linear trajectory that expresses reason's transcendence and its containment of our life and its activities, Merleau-Ponty's description of primordial space would lead to an architecture of varied spaces that have folds and inclusions of varied affective vectors of energies pulsing that demarcate the varied places of different felt relations to aspects of felt concerns and desires that are nested within any expanse of space. Equally important is the presence of an openness to the outside from the inside and reciprocally so, and also an enjambment into a depth of space that has seemingly incompossible senses of direction and volume interwoven with one another. Finally, this new architectural space would also express differing times resonant within one space.

For Merleau-Ponty, the phenomena of space and its unfolding in time that give it depth are multiplied indefinitely, for there are many ways to be a body, a perceiver, a person, a thinker, a feeler, a language user, and many ways for others, the material world, the natural world, cultural world, and so on to be manifest as what they are, rather than traditional European philosophy's search for a firm and absolute foundation (*PhP*, 303–5). If one can allow these nuances to come forth, then there are myriad spaces that can become manifest through Merleau-Ponty's manner of articulation. As Merleau-Ponty explains, "Thus, we are forced to broaden our research: once the experience of spatiality has been related to our being firmly set within the world, there will be an original spatiality for each modality of this anchorage" (296). This sense of the multiplicities of the ways the body uncovers varied types of space in the world frees architecture to be experimental, daring, and expressive in finding new ways to bend, fold, connect, open, and shape built spaces.

Space is emergent through an ongoing forging of relationships with all things within the field of perception (or within the thickness of the flesh, using the vocabularies of earlier and later articulations) through "the

originary experience of space prior to the distinction between form and content" (*PhP*, 259). Space and depth were reified as functions of the external relations among substances understood from the aerial perspective of nowhere and everywhere, and as witnessed from above in a Zenonian stasis of clearly and distinctly grasped instants in a linear succession. In this model of space, since the experience of depth is dependent upon an observer being located somewhere and having things occluded from his or her perspective, requiring a moving through obstacles within the spatial grid, this working through and among things is seen as inessential to the essence of the things themselves, since this being caught in a location would disappear when the subject gained the God's-eye perspective of objectivity. Depth, then, is counted as mere epiphenomenon, a product of the subjectivity of experience that can be surmounted. Merleau-Ponty concludes that this tradition cannot fathom depth, given its perspective on the world: "Thus, depth cannot be understood as the thought of an a-cosmic subject, but rather as the possibility of an engaged subject" (279). This means that depth will disappear not only for a philosophy that seeks to ascend to a God's-eye perspective, but also for an architecture or for a visual artist who does not render space as it is lived from within some particular situation with its accidents of history, its rhythms of moving in concert with the moving natural world, its loves and hates of those events and people who have coexisted at different vectors within differing pulsations of connection, and with a host of other sorts of interrelations. Merleau-Ponty's sense of space as rendered by architecture would be a space that is irregular, mobile, and inclusive.

III. THE DARKNESS WITHIN LIGHT
AND THE INCOMPOSSIBLE

There is an interesting ambivalence toward the phenomenon of light in the tradition of philosophy from Plato through Hegel that is interrogated by Merleau-Ponty. On the one hand, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy stands apart from how philosophy has been pursued in Western culture as an ascent toward the light, first symbolized by Plato as the ascent of reason toward the sun as symbol of the source of its intelligibility and being. This represents one side of the traditional relationship between philosophy and light. It is the side that valorizes illumination and takes the everyday phenomenon of light metaphysically and symbolically as standing for the highest truth—a transcendent truth.

However, the actual play of light in the lived world is ignored by traditional philosophies as merely an accidental and merely empirical feature of existence. For Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenon of light as it appears in perceptual situations is a key to their sense and to the phenomenological truth he seeks to articulate. In the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty states, "The red patch I see on the rug is only red if the shadow that lies across it is taken into account; its quality only appears in relation to the play of light, and thus only as an element in a spatial configuration" (5). The play of light is inseparable from how qualities appear and what sense they have, and it is also inseparable from the structure of the space and its sense. Also, Merleau-Ponty recognizes that qualities such as color have a sense that is inseparable from "a certain organization of color itself, the establishing of a lighting/object-illuminated structure, which we must describe more closely if we want to understand the constancy of the thing's 'own' color" (320). These insights are part of the ongoing practice of architecture, which continually uses the created play of lighting to sculpt spaces and the qualities of aspects of built structure; but now in Merleau-Ponty's analyses, there is a way of understanding philosophically the aspects of embodied space revealed through perception that are the sources of these practices.

Philosophy understood as the ascent toward the highest realm of illumination pursues a place that basks securely in the glare of the noonday vision, the revelation of the absolutely clear and the distinct. The time of noon illumination is also the time of finding the center, the unbounded vista, sharply delimited outlines, light and dark in sharp opposition, self-identity, and the power and praise of Apollo's reasoned mastery. Yet, as Nietzsche has Zarathustra discover, at noon there is a soporific quality, like the air of all those who are certain of what they believe. The sun shining down induces Zarathustra to drift off into a nap that is like a "strange drunkenness."[13] Whereas from the deep midnight resounds a wisdom that Zarathustra will repeat several times: "I was asleep—From a deep dream I woke and swear: 'The world is deep, deeper than day had been aware,'"[14] there is kinship of depth and night with a special insight or wisdom also recognized by Nietzsche and Bachelard,[15] which runs through Merleau-Ponty's work. There is a sensitivity of vision that can discern the power of a darkened space and how its shadow lingers even in the midst of brightly lit space and gives it a deeper sense.

This evocation of the power of the play of light and of the dark forgotten by the philosophical and cultural noontime focus is powerfully expressed

by Merleau-Ponty in his discussion of the schizophrenic's "deviation" of his sense of space in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. This altered sense of space and a revelation of another kind of depth in its appearing are introduced by Merleau-Ponty immediately after he has given his reader a novel definition of depth as union of incompossibles and right after he has spoken of the power of night to yield humanity's experience of pure depth. Merleau-Ponty relates how a patient with schizophrenia sees a black sky at the heart of the open blue sky. The patient pauses before a mountain landscape and feels a threat somehow hanging over him: "Suddenly the landscape is snatched away from him by some alien force. It is as if a second sky, black and boundless, were penetrating the blue sky of the evening. This new sky is empty, 'subtle, invisible and terrifying.' Sometimes it moves in the autumn landscape and at other times the landscape too moves" (*PhP*, 300). It may seem distinctive to the schizophrenic's perceptual deviation to see the black sky at the heart of the blue sky, but this is not the case. Merleau-Ponty suggests we understand it in a wider frame as "this second space permeating visible space," as part of the experience of all humanity (300). Merleau-Ponty states that the schizophrenic has come to dwell in a private world, carving out a "space of the landscape" in which he or she remains instead of moving within a larger shared "geographical space" of which this is one space of varied contents among an indefinite number of possible spaces (300). The only difference between the ordinary perception of the sky and the terror of the patient's perception is that others allow other skies to interplay with this one and temper its force, whereas the patient has retreated to this one fragment, the landscape space beneath the black sky.

Yet, Merleau-Ponty contends that without understanding this "landscape space" as part of our shared space, our assessment of our sense of the blue sky of the bright day and our sense of the space enveloping us becomes impoverished, because it is rendered too bright and too clear. Our space is informed by these black spaces, related to the shadows of the night, which linger long after daybreak. In granting philosophical attention and significance to what moves in the shadows, in the background, in the juxtaposing dimensions of space, time, and world in embodying being, Merleau-Ponty opens a philosophical way of hearkening to the shifting, unfolding heart of our experience. With this careful hearkening, Merleau-Ponty opens an ontology of that which is fragile but strongly meaningful. Indirect ontology requires an attention to the shadows, nuances, and the other sides of things often lost in the glare of the full sun.

The unsituatedness of the tradition of Western philosophy's perspective from Plato onward makes it insensitive to depth, and it forecloses seeing a dark logic of compossible incompossibility that comprises depth. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty introduces his notion of depth in explicating how the vision of the sides of the road as they sweep before me toward the horizon are given to me as neither parallel nor as convergent, but as both simultaneously in the sense of manifesting that "they are parallel in depth" (272). Similarly, he describes how the sides of a cube are neither given to me as six equal squares facing each other at six equal right angles nor as obliquely skewed parallelograms trailing off from the side directly facing me, but as both in an enjambed sense that manifests depth (276). In each case, to see the road or the cube in the manner of either of these two alternative schemas of traditional analyses is not to capture the phenomenon of depth.

To switch back and forth between the two alternatives would also mean that the perceiver would lose the phenomenon of depth. This alternation would accord with the traditional binary logic that we can see only one thing or another, but not two differing entities in the same place and time. Yet depth is precisely the case within perception in which two possible but distinct moments that differ in their nature are "enjambed" or piled into each other in one instant of perception. They are distinctly registered but only within the seemingly logically impossible "co-givenness" of a single percept, which is not one or the other but instead is both alternatives and also their combination as given in the single phenomenon of depth. Each conflicting aspect of the phenomenon lacks the sense of the overall experience that emerges only within the temporal unfolding of the sensed unity in disunity. Depth becomes manifest as the felt tension of what can't go logically together, but does, and by the coming together of a space that wouldn't be so in a linear side-by-side layout.

Far from being successive and rationally progressive as the traditional notion builds up depth, Merleau-Ponty's notion of depth embraces a logic of ambiguity or encroachment[16] as a positive phenomenon within perceptually grounded sense, in which space and time are enfolding, transgressing themselves as their very way of being: "This simultaneous presence to experiences that are nevertheless mutually exclusive, this implication of the one in the other, and this contraction into a single perceptual act of an entire possible process are what make up the originality of depth; depth is the dimension according to which things or the elements of things

envelop each other, while breadth and height are the dimensions according to which they are juxtaposed" (*PhP*, 276). As manifesting depth, the fact is that the sides of the square are neither equal nor unequal and the sides of the road are neither parallel nor convergent. They are both at once as having depth. Depth is this phenomenon of experiencing the going together of what should otherwise be incompossible, whether right-angled squares are also simultaneously parallelograms or nonconvergent lines are also simultaneously convergent lines. It seems that rationally, within temporal unfolding, things should be linear and successive as logically discrete moments, yet they are within a space and time of *impaction and contraction.* Space and time have other more dense and complex senses than the logically progressive one, and would lose their sense if transparent. They are instead darkly suggestive.

IV. NIGHT, PURE DEPTH, AND CONTINGENCY

Late in the "Space" chapter of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty asserts that we will never understand how we perceive space if we take it as a "state of consciousness," but rather need to understand the differing modalities of space that "always express the total life of the subject" (296). Space is not uniform and is not separable from the energies enmeshing someone in a specific situation "through his body and the world." An ongoing, dominant aspect of our embodied situation is our perceptual being in the night, described by Merleau-Ponty:

> When, for example, the world of clear and articulated objects is abolished, our perceptual being, now cut off from its world, sketches out a spatiality without things. This is what happens at night. The night is not an object in front of me; rather, it envelops me, it penetrates me through all of my senses, it suffocates my memories, and it all but effaces my personal identity. I am no longer withdrawn into my observation post in order to see the profiles of objects flowing by in the distance. The night is without profiles, it itself touches me and its unity is the mystical unity of the *mana*. Even cries, or a distant light, only populate it vaguely; it becomes entirely animated; it is a pure depth without planes, without surfaces, and without any distance from it to me. (*PhP*, 296)

Night has a different spatiality from the space of the daylight world, or even from the altered world that is darkened by night but whose sense has been dispersed and dispelled by being saturated with light by artificial means. In looking into the heart of the night or enough of the surrounding black to retain its distinctive sense, pure depth emerges and enfolds us.

Night's sense of depth has been one of those topics about which philosophy has not much to say, and its enveloping power has been avoided in favor of the rational construction of depth of the sort like Alberti's model of depth—an ordering of the world according to grids and manageable spaces, a rationally constructable horizon that would place us at a distance from ourselves and the interrelating nuances of the world. The depth of night is an overcoming of structures, an envelopment, an infiltration, a blow to our secure sense of ourselves, and a transgression of boundaries—this power of the depth of night, however, even if avoided, remains as a reverberation, as a stratum of sense. An analogy might be drawn to the lingering sense of indivision with the world of infancy within the experience of the adult that in "The Child's Relations with Others" Merleau-Ponty calls an "abiding acquisition,"[17] but here, in an analogous way, it is the sense of the night that remains abiding within the light of day.

In the next sentences after the passage describing night as pure depth, Merleau-Ponty describes a distress felt by those who are psychologically off-balance, brought on by the night, which "comes from the fact that the night makes us sense our contingency, that free and inexhaustible movement by which we attempt to anchor ourselves and to transcend ourselves in things, without there being any guarantee of always finding them" (*PhP*, 296).

In the depths of the night, the order of things is experienced as suddenly precarious. It is an order that easily could be otherwise given different accidents of history and an unfolding of relationships. This lack of rational foundation palpable within the night strikes us on a lived level. If already off-balance, people can become dislocated by this precarious sense. The spatial sense of their lives could easily differ. They might not be drawn into the particular depths that envelop their existence. For example, one might not have been born in Paris, France, and may not have become entwined with the darkened city streets, with their intrigue of hustlers and historical echoes of the Nazi occupation, that still also resound with the desperate revolution of peasants against the crushing power of the royals, but also buoyancy of the visions of artists, the liveliness of markets, the earnest discussions in cafés, the romantic couples by the Seine, and many other rhythms and forces; or,

for another example, one may feel bodily rooted in the sense of space of one's upbringing in Topeka, Kansas, with the wind-whistling desolation of the icy plains and echoes of hardy pioneers enduring hardships. The alliance of depth, night, and the obscure coming together of events means the space of the world will always be haunted by, streaked with, and enveloped by each person's own particular lines of force of a history, culture, geography, biology, and a host of contingently given dimensions of existence. The night announces their fragility.

These obscure depths silently beckon to be fathomed, if one wants to make these webs of relationships more deeply felt and registered, but remain nevertheless always as a night shadow to our day reasonableness. We can't escape these shadows of our situatedness, but, as with other dimensions of perceptual being, they also escape us. Our rootedness is always an unfinished task, but never finally achieved, or, as Merleau-Ponty aptly put it, we find ourselves with the "inexhaustible movement by which we attempt to anchor ourselves and to transcend ourselves in things" (*PhP*, 296). The ordered day view will always be transgressed by night's envelopment and infiltration by what could be called a more "wild space," akin to Merleau-Ponty's sense of "wild being" in the late work. The night of contingency besieges always our more ordered day world and threatens it, something we feel sometimes in the middle of the night, but its shadows in the day world give the day more flow, a more obscurely felt sense of underlying meanings, more imaginal and affective paths of enlacement, and deepen the space of our lives.

It is for this reason that Merleau-Ponty had declared earlier in the work, toward the conclusion of his description of spatiality, that "the fantasies of dreams reveal even more clearly the general spatiality in which clear space and observable objects are embedded" (*PhP*, 297). It is not only the surrounding space of the night, but also the psychic space of the night in dreams highlighting those imaginal, affective, and idiosyncratically important vectors within space, that provides a background of sense in which the day world of the more rational sense of things finds its place. An expressive rendering of human space and a practice that seeks to use space creatively need to come to terms with this "underside" or "other side" of depth and space as comprising a vital dimension of the sense of embodying being. For architecture, this means that the overly lit spaces of linear arrangement can be expressions of our fear of the depth of the night or at least testimony of our failure to hearken to its rich sense. Houses and buildings designed with irregular spaces, with their dim nooks and the varying degrees of light and shade that can be

allowed to dapple the overall space of a structure, may be vital at times for creating a building attuned to our vital rhythms and to allow us to encounter what is particular about ourselves at our own depths. Structures that express the specifics of the historical and cultural events and values of those who will use them bring into expression the contours of their lived space. Structures that find a way to echo the rhythms, the shapes, and the lines of force of the peculiarities of the natural surround to the building help us express the sense of our embodying being living or working in that setting. Buildings that express a sense of fragility, of hazard, of idiosyncrasy and yet given modern materials are secure in their structure, are expressive of the depths of our existence, and are vital to feeling at home or dwelling.

V. THE DEPTH OF INCOMPOSSIBILITY IN MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Last, there is the enjambment of the varied perceptual avenues of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and kinesthesis that also engenders depth. A powerful example offered by Merleau-Ponty of the impact of such vectors in perceptual space is his description of leaving the concert hall: "In the concert hall, when I reopen my eyes, visible space seems narrow in relation to that other space where the music was unfolding just a moment ago, and even if I keep my eyes open during the performance of the piece, it seems to me that the music is not truly contained in this precise and shabby space" (*PhP*, 230–31). Not only is space not unified in differing cultural, topographical, historical, and other pulses at any moment, but the modalities of differing perceptual accesses to the world are themselves incompossibles that, despite going together as depth: "the spatial domain of each sense is, for the other senses, an absolute unknowable" (230–31). This means that to construct a space that allows the full richness of the existential tides running through it entails constructing a space such that "the unity of space can only be found where the sensory domains gear into each other" (230–31). The transgressive nature of each sensory realm can be overlooked with the dominance of the visual paradigm used in the rationalization of high altitude space. However, like the shadows of the night, incompossibilities of inside/outside, or the play of lighting, the spatiality given by each sense transgresses and transforms the spatiality of the others: "Music is not in visible space, music erodes visible space, surrounds it, and causes it to shift, such that these overdressed listeners—who

take on a judgmental air and exchange comments or smirks without notic-
ing that the ground begins to tremble beneath them—are soon like a ship's
crew tossed about on the surface of a stormy sea" (234). Visual space, tactile
space, aural space, and the space of other senses differ in their dimensions yet
come together in depth.

Merleau-Ponty connects the incompossibility of the senses that neverthe-
less go together with the sense of darkness and night that we have discussed,
comparing this transgression to the landscape sky and space of that same
patient. As he declares of the difference of a tactile space to visual space:
"Music insinuates a new dimension across visible space where it unfurls just
as, for persons suffering hallucinations, the clear space of perceived things
is mysteriously doubled with a 'dark space' where other presences are pos-
sible" (*PhP*, 231). An architectural practice that attempts to utilize all of the
rich sense of space and to bring to the fore its manifold aspects of dwelling
would have to strive to bring forward into visual space the sense of the tex-
tural, its communion and reciprocity into an interplay with the visual space,
as well as with the varying senses of the spatiality of the other sensory mo-
dalities, whether it be interpersonal interpenetration of the aural space or the
infiltration of the things of the world into our body in olfactory space. An
architecture would have to have inscribed within its openness to a variety of
textures, the differing aural ambiences, the funneling of differing kinds of air
flows, the channeling of water flows to create differing sounds as they move,
and also to have varied colors and lighting that resound with differing senses
of hush or noise, the sense of movement in the sweep of banisters or stairs or
hallways that give the sense of varied rhythms of life's differing motions, and
so on in many other ways of suggesting how the sensual registers interweave
and move in myriad currents as part of a deeper space that has the myriad
senses of the dynamic of life.

Merleau-Ponty's articulation of inside and outside as being in a recipro-
cal but asymmetric relationship requires a more imaginative architectural
relationship between the inside of the building and its overall shape with
surrounding contours and features of its landscape environment than a kind
of seamless "fitting" between as might be deemed by a rational approach
to dwelling. The more imaginative approach would have to understand the
écart or gap that Merleau-Ponty always finds between inside and outside,
that despite palpable difference go together. The imaginative and affective
expressiveness of forms and structures of such a kind of reciprocity is what
we find in the architectural work of Frank Gehry, who uses more playful,

spiraling, and painterly flowing lines of design. He is not afraid to design a building that appears whimsical in contrast with the angular standards of linear rationality, nor does he shy away from constructing extravagantly dehiscent structures. Yet, even though the varied vectors of parts of the building express divergent force flows, unlike the monolithic force of the space boxes, they find a rhythm that, like having differing melodic lines nevertheless join in a concerted movement, forms a depth like that described by Merleau-Ponty. If we take his art museum at Bilbao, Spain, as one example, the blades and flows of the roof and the layers of the walls evoke lines of enthusiasm and energy, the kind of creative movement out of oneself into the world by taking up its variety of rhythms that are at the heart of the artist's endeavor. In addition, the sense of streaming energy and turbulence of the cascading parts of roof and walls and their curving momentum also picks up the energy of the flow of the Nervion River running by the museum.

There is a reverberation with the complexity of the space of art and with its relationship to the natural world and also with the revolutionary fits and starts of the unfolding of the modern art world. Even when Gehry designs a building that at first blush might seem to be more angular and linear, made of boxes, it does not fit together as a massive, logical whole, but is splintered and open, drawn into myriad lines of force among its parts and with the outside of its walls that do not form a unitary solid facade. The Gehry house in Santa Monica, California, uses the areas that seem linear or equiangular regularities, yet the gaps among them, the differing planes on which they are set, the variety of textures and materials, undermine the geometricity and make these shapes seem in their interplay almost biomorphic and at one with the constant back-and-forth of energy with the surroundings. Gehry, then, used glass and open spaces to create an interior that seems to be utterly open to the exterior and vice versa, whether it is the entranceway that seems both inside or outside simultaneously or the kitchen, which, unlike kitchens with an open glass wall on one side, has open glass walls above, beside, and around. Since the glass walls are at odd angles, there is a further play of "inside' and "outside" that Gehry himself describes: "The windows . . . I wanted to make them look like they were crawling out of this thing. At night, because this glass is tipped, it mirrors the light in. . . . So when you're sitting at this table you see all these cars going by, you see the moon in the wrong place . . . the moon is over there but it reflects here . . . and you think it's up there and you don't know where the hell you are."[18] There is an openness and reversibility that make Gehry's house an inhabitation in a way that echoes Merleau-Ponty's

sense of the body inhabiting space. There are other architects at work today who, like Gehry (and in their unique ways), create a depth that enjambs the differing, the seemingly opposed but expressive shapes, flows, and senses of our deeply felt past relations with the world that have emerged through culture and history, while giving room for newly imagined flourishes that playfully continue a responsive dialogue with the surround. Merleau-Ponty, I believe, would be pleased to see architects "muse" with buildings, as he said of Klee that he "let a line muse" (EM, 183), or, in other words, that Klee could let himself become encompassed by the varied rhythms in the body's dancing with the world that were expressed by his line in drawing. Architects would express a motion by vibration that expresses an affective and imaginal depth of incompossibilities. A building would encompass night in the midst of day, opposing lines of force that nevertheless mesh, and shades of shifting lighting and the spiraling of inside and outside. These tensions would emerge in a rhythm that expresses how the body weaves a coherent inhabitation from the jarring accidents of history, whether personal or collective, to form its unique dwelling in existence.

NOTES

1. Catherine T. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 7.

2. Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 120.

3. Ibid., 120.

4. Ibid., 123.

5. I use the phrase "embodying being" instead of the more common term "embodiment," for there is a continual movement, a dynamism, of the becoming of embodied relations. The sense of the body should not be taken as a description of "the body" as a noun, nor should "embodiment" be taken as the embodying of "something," but rather embodying is gerundial—in the way that Heidegger's use of *Sein* is about the be-ing, the worlding of the world, without anything underlying as a foundation.

6. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 137.

7. Roland Recht, *Believing and Seeing: The Art of Gothic Cathedrals*, trans. Mary Whittall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 312.

8. Casey discusses how this impact of the spiritual cosmos upon architectural space continued in the Italian Renaissance, commenting how Bramante's design for Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome "shows the dome not only rising skyward but resembling the vault of the sky itself. Here the human spirit rises up even as the divine essence is lured down" (Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 134).

9. "This means that the journey has its origin in certain given facts, not that these facts by themselves have the physical power to produce the journey, but insofar as they offer reasons for undertaking it. The motive is an antecedent that only acts through its sense" (*PhP*, 270).

10. Ingraham, *Architecture*, 62.

11. Ibid., 82.

12. Ibid., 164.

13. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1977), 387–90.

14. Ibid., 339–40.

15. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos*, trans. Daniel Russell (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 113–14.

16. Emmanuel de Saint Aubert articulates in great detail how this "logic of encroachment" is the key to understanding Merleau-Ponty's philosophy in *Du lien des êtres aux éléments de l'être: Merleau-Ponty au tournant des années 1945–1951* (Paris: Vrin, 2004).

17. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Child's Relations with Others," in *PrP*, 138.

18. Adelyn Perez, "Gehry Residence / Frank Gehry," *Arch Daily*, July 5, 2010, http://www.archdaily.com/67321/gehry-residence-frank-gehry.

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DEPTH OF SPACE AND DEPTH OF WORLD: MERLEAU-PONTY, HUSSERL, AND REMBRANDT'S *NIGHTWATCH* ON A MODERN BAROQUE

Galen A. Johnson

> For Rembrandt, flesh is so much mud redeemed by the gold of light.
>
> —Paul Valéry, "Degas, Dance, Drawing"

I would like to explore the development and progress of Merleau-Ponty's concept of spatial depth, both pictorial depth in paintings and the spatial depth of the world. I am particularly interested in the dramatic conclusion of "The Philosopher and His Shadow," in which Merleau-Ponty refers to earth, space, and outer space as "this baroque world" (*ce monde baroque*). We will be able to augment this published text with two unpublished passages (*inédits*) that further develop the meaning of "this baroque world" that Merleau-Ponty discovers.

The philosopher's phenomenology of depth began rather tamely in *Phenomenology of Perception*, it seems to me, influenced by the Gestalt psychologists and Husserl's notion of horizon, but as it matured in the later writings, it grew into a philosophy of ontological depth or the depth of the world that is much bolder, inflicted with rivalry, edges, trespass (*empiètement*), incompossibility, and the baroque. We will see this especially in the account of depth in "Eye and Mind," and of earth and untamed Being (*l'être sauvage*) in "The Philosopher and His Shadow." Both of these works belong to the same period in Merleau-Ponty's development. "The Philosopher and His Shadow" dates from October 1959, and the third and last draft of "Eye and Mind" was completed in the summer of 1960. Both works were developed in the sixteen-month hiatus between chapters 1–3 of *The Visible and the Invisible*,

beginning in June 1959, and Merleau-Ponty's writing of the important chapter 4, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm," in the fall and winter of 1960–1961. Thus, both of these works make crucial innovations with respect to Merleau-Ponty's central ontological ideas of depth and Flesh.

Most of the painters that Merleau-Ponty cites as pioneers in experiments with pictorial depth are moderns: Cézanne, Giacometti, Delaunay, Matisse, and Klee. It comes as a surprise, therefore, that the one painting he cites explicitly by title in "Eye and Mind" for its success in rendering depth is a baroque work, one of the most famous paintings in the history of Western art, Rembrandt's *Nightwatch* (1642). Therefore, we will want to spend some time with Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of this artwork by Rembrandt in "Eye and Mind." We will enrich and extend the lines of that interpretation through related texts from Claudel, Valéry, and Deleuze, in this way contributing to our understanding of the experience and expression of space.

FROM SPATIAL DEPTH TO ONTOLOGICAL DEPTH

In "Eye and Mind," following artist Robert Delaunay, Merleau-Ponty argues, "Depth is the new inspiration." Giacometti said, "I believe Cézanne was seeking depth all his life" (EM, 140/64).[1] Four centuries after the perspective "solutions" of the Renaissance and three centuries after Descartes—and in our day we could add another half-century to these—"depth is still new" (140/64). There is a sustained argument over the course of all of Merleau-Ponty's writings that there is a way to get space wrong: this is the way of detached survey (*le survol*), construing space as everywhere homogeneous, as if viewed from an airplane flying above the panorama or from a God's-eye view. Descartes's *Optics* treated depth as if it were a "natural geometry" of lines, angles, and triangles measured by the "mind's eye" construed as a camera obscura performing a mental calculation of apparent size based upon the convergence of lines and triangles striking the eye and resulting in mental measurement of distance. This optic is the philosophy of perception that stands behind fixed single-point perspective drawing, painting, and architecture: no movement in the visual field, no movement in the artist's perspective, and no movement in the eyes and bodily position of the viewer. If there is one thing to say above all about Merleau-Ponty's search for depth, it is that he seeks living space in movement, "by vibration or radiation" (144/77).

> Marey's photographs, the cubists' analyses, Duchamp's *La Mariée*
> do not move; they give a Zenonian reverie on movement. We see a
> rigid body as if it were a piece of armor going through its motions;
> it is here and it is there, magically, but it does not *go* from here to
> there. Cinema portrays movement, but *how*? (EM, 144/78)

Philosophers have been as forgetful as everyone else of the "originality of
depth," which is literally the "phenomenon of the world, that is, its birth
for us" (*PhP*, 267), the mountain making itself mountain before our eyes
(EM, 128/29). Depth is an envelopment and voluminosity experienced from
the inside, but this envelopment is hard-won because the things stand forth,
each with their stubborn, insistent autonomy. They "eclipse one another,"
they are "rivals before my sight" (EM 140/64). Space as a placid, geometri-
cal "shell" cannot convey this struggle toward a coherent visual field: "That
shell of space must be shattered—the fruit bowl must be broken." Things
move one against the other in the struggle for the birth of a world that is only
achieved out of and after the "deflagration of Being" (140/65). This word
deflagration refers to a violent explosion together with its aftershocks.

We are now very far from that space surveyed from the outside (*le survol*),
in which space had been taken as self-evident and "the question of *where*
was not to be asked" (EM, 141/68). We are now at the birth of a world as
expression in which there is a convergence between perception and desire. In
the well-known sentence from *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty
wrote that "henceforth movement, touch, vision, applying themselves to the
other and to themselves, return toward their source and, in the patient and
silent labor of desire, begin the paradox of expression" (144/189).

There are only hints of this struggle, labor, and desire in the philosopher's
analysis of depth in *Phenomenology of Perception*, where we find a more
placid, peaceful, or tamed philosophy of space. There Merleau-Ponty offers
us two sustained examples of the organization of visual depth as a field, the
first being the well-known Necker cube Gestalt studies by Kurt Koffka, in
which one of the faces of the cube moves into the foreground or retreats into
the background. The second is the problem in depth perception of gauging
the size of a man two hundred yards away in comparison with the same man
at five yards away. Merleau-Ponty argues that the constancy of the apparent
size of the retreating man or the approaching man is not a function of some
mental image of the man nor of a measuring instrument, such as if I shut
one eye and hold out a pencil at arm's length. Rather, the man two hundred

yards away is the same man as a much less distinguishable figure, he presents fewer identifiable visual features, he is less geared into my powers of visual exploration, and he less completely occupies the visual field (*PhP*, 272–73). Merleau-Ponty's account here refutes both mentalist and mathematical accounts of visual constancy in favor of a phenomenological one. Yet it still operates within the parameters of "convergence, apparent size, and distance," even while showing how these are "read in each other, symbolize or signify each other naturally" (273).

In the *Phenomenology*'s work on depth perception and spatial depth, we do find important precursors of the later more radical view. That work contends that the comprehensive organization of the visual field arises out of a play of differences between things as "my gaze attempts to see *something*," which means that space is not alien to time, but space and time "belong to the same temporal wave" (*PhP*, 274). Merleau-Ponty argues that it would be better to avoid the Kantian language of "synthesis" of perspectives, but in the language of Husserl, we can say that depth perception is a temporal "transition synthesis" (*PhP*, 277). Apparent size does not vary proportionately to the retinal image: for example, the train rushing toward us in the cinema increases in size much more than it would in its natural environment. Merleau-Ponty also moves his phenomenology of depth toward desire and affect. Space becomes sacred place, as it is for the augur of aboriginal peoples. He argues that the organization of the visual field in daytime space is like the visual organization of dream space and mythical space, which are expressions of "what our desire moves toward, what strikes fear in our hearts, and upon what our life depends. Even in waking life, things do not proceed otherwise" (298–99).

In addition to temporal wave, affect, and desire, the *Phenomenology* also knew about an alien and resistant element in spatial depth perception, for in its chapter "The Thing and the Natural World," the philosopher says that ordinarily we do not notice the "non-human element" in things because our perception in the context of our everyday concerns "bears upon the things" only "enough to rediscover what of the non-human is hidden within them" (*PhP*, 336). In contrast, primary perception exports us out of everyday secondary perception into a world beyond the safety of personal history and subjectivity, into a world that is a stranger, "foreign, it is no longer our interlocutor, but a resolutely silent Other." This is why the paintings of Cézanne are "those of a pre-world where there were still no men" (337). In "Cézanne's Doubt," Merleau-Ponty says that the painter's vision "penetrates right to the

root of things beneath the imposed order of humanity" (*SNS*, 16/28). In Cézanne's late paintings of Mont Saint-Victoire, the visual field breaks up into patches of blues, purples, and greens. Even the stable, stony mountain is a becoming, a process. This primary perception bears many features of the Kantian sublime: the inhuman, awe and respect, yet risk and threat to personal safety and everyday preoccupations. Primary perception is a characteristically "baroque" perception of the world in which meaning is not a stable given but a process, even a struggle, toward meaning and structure.[2]

Time, desire, and an alien, inhuman preworld: in "The Philosopher and His Shadow," I would say that Merleau-Ponty radicalizes these into a notion of an ontological depth, a sublime point and sublime moment within Being itself. In this text, Merleau-Ponty is inspired by Husserl's discussion of flight in outer space in the then unpublished *Umsturz* text ("Overthrow of the Copernican Theory"), now published under the title "Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature."[3] This text contains Husserl's famous provocation that "the earth does not move,"[4] for a rigorously phenomenological philosophy, which is to say it does not move from its central position in our perceptual worldview. The earth is our horizon, our "root-body," the "basis-body," that anchors all perspectives and points of view. Merleau-Ponty comments that the earth is the "soil" or "stem" of our thought and our life: "We shall certainly be able to move it or carry it back when we inhabit other planets, but the reason is that then we shall have enlarged our native soil" (*S*, 180/227). In the words of Valéry quoted in "Eye and Mind," "We always take our bodies with us" (123/16), and, therefore, "the Earth is the matrix of our time as it is of our space" (*S*, 180/227).

The world is not the "well-behaved" world imagined by classical rationalist philosophy and science; rather, there is an uncanny "back side of things." Though "we Copernicans," as Husserl says, conceive the earth in motion in our scientific idealizations and objectifications, we must understand, Merleau-Ponty comments, that "the Earth is not in motion like objective bodies" (*S*, 180/227). He adds that it would equally be an error to speak of the earth as at rest, for this would be another variant of the idealizing error, as if we were not of the earth and were viewing it and making judgments from an outside detached survey (*un survol*). Today we have the moving photographs of the beautiful blue and white "ball" of the earth taken from outer space, yet we must recall that these are photographs taken by humans with instruments created by humans. Our being is "being-in-the-world"

(*l'être au monde*), and neither the human side nor the world side of things is detachable the one from the other. It is important to stress that this resistance to objectification of Nature does not in any sense "subjectivize" it, for earth, space, and outer space equally over and over again disclose an uncanny, wild "back side." This is Nature as untamed being (*l'être sauvage*) and brute mind (*l'ésprit brut*) that Merleau-Ponty refers to as the "irrelative." Regarding Schelling, he wrote: "What resists phenomenology within us—natural being, the 'barbarous' source Schelling spoke of—cannot remain outside phenomenology and should have its place within it" (*S*, 178/225). And from the *Nature* courses, Merleau-Ponty speaks of Schelling regarding "this barbaric principle, the source of all grandeur and all beauty" (*N*, 38/62).

Precisely here, with this thought of an irrelative of wildness, Merleau-Ponty brings "The Philosopher and His Shadow" to its dramatic conclusion by speaking of this perceptual and ontological depth as a rivalry between things that is "flaying our glance with their edges" and a "baroque world":

> Willy-nilly, against his plans and according to his essential audacity, Husserl awakens a wild-flowering world and mind (*un monde sauvage et un esprit sauvage*). Things are no longer there simply according to their projective appearances and the requirements of the panorama; but on the contrary upright, insistent, flaying our glance with their edges, each thing claiming an absolute presence which is not compossible with the absolute presence of the other things, and which they nevertheless have all together by virtue of a configurational meaning which is in no way indicated by its "theoretical meaning." . . . This baroque world is not a concession of mind to nature. . . . This renewal of the world is also mind's renewal. (*S*, 180–81/228)

This remarkable account attempts to set forth a renewal of our understanding of Nature as untamed by our sciences. When Merleau-Ponty speaks of the "absolute presence" of things, he means to express, I would want us to understand, their monumentality, their "thingliness," rather than some more Cartesian and foundationalist construal of absolute presence. The things are stubborn, recalcitrant, and edgy, not easily assimilated into a relaxed Renaissance perspective panorama or algorithmic mathematization of topological space. Other persons are part of these flaying, absolute, and incompossible presences as well, not as minds or "psychisms," but "as we face them in anger

or love . . . each one of us pregnant (*prégnant*) with the others and confirmed by them in his body" (*S*, 181/228). Merleau-Ponty had already signaled this imposition of each upon others in his account of *empiètement*—encroachment, trespass—in human relations.[5] To give but one passage, we read the following in the last chapter of the published version of *The Prose of the World* on "Dialogue and the Perception of the Other": "We shall completely understand this trespass (*empiètement*) of things upon their meaning, this discontinuity of knowledge which is at its highest point in speech, only when we understand it as the trespass (*empiètement*) of oneself upon the other and of the other upon me" (133/185). On these bases, Merleau-Ponty arrives at a very rare appellation. This world is a "baroque" world, which is "rediscovery of that brute mind which, untamed by any culture, is asked to create culture anew" (*S*, 181/228). Let us now think further about this "baroque."

"THIS BAROQUE WORLD": REMBRANDT'S *NIGHTWATCH*

This word *baroque* is so unusual in Merleau-Ponty's oeuvre that its use here signals something important and very deep. Of course, it brings into view the artwork of Rembrandt as historically situated within the period of Western art history that we have come to designate in twentieth-century periodization as the baroque, the period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that included the revolutionary school of the "golden age" of Dutch painting with masters such as Rembrandt, Vermeer, Frans Hals, Jan Steen, and so many others. Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty signals that this word *baroque* carries much more meaning for him than that of a historical school, for he uses it, as he says, to refer to that "brute mind" that is "untamed by any culture," the "irrelative" of all cultures" (*S*, 181/228). He refers, in fact, to that older sense of the term "baroque" meaning bizarre, shocking, strange, eccentric, unusual or unexpected, irregular, singular, even grotesque and burlesque. In *Le Baroque dans le théâtre de Paul Claudel*, Tricaud cites Wölfflin in defining the baroque: "Le Baroque recherche le mouvement, le changement; au lieu de ce qui est limité et saisissable, il recherche l'illimité et colossal" (The Baroque seeks movement, change; in place of what is limited and comprehensible, it seeks the unlimited and colossal).[6] Tricaud also cites the dictionary of the Academy from 1690, which adds the meanings "bizarre, d'étrange . . . gothique au XVIIᵉ siècle, pour designer un art qui échappe aux canons classiques" (bizarre, strange

. . . gothic of the seventeenth century, to designate an art which escapes classical canons).[7] One thinks, for example, of gargoyles stretching across Western architecture from ancient Egypt and Greece to Gothic and even nineteenth- and twentieth-century facades: devils, monsters, serpents, lions, dogs, eagles, wolves, and so forth.

In such ways, the meaning of the "baroque" is clearly linked with the experience of the sublime. Within Kant's own dual analysis of the sublime feeling as the experience of either great might or great magnitude, he characterizes the sublime feeling as a torsion of pleasure and displeasure. The agitation of soul that occurs in the experience of both great magnitude and great might may be compared, Kant tells us, with a vibration that is a rapid alternation of repulsion from and attraction to one and the same object. Kant's text on this emotional tension, or emotional dissonance, is highly engaging:

> If a thing is excessive for the imagination and the imagination is driven to such excess as it apprehends the thing in intuition, then the thing is, as it were, an abyss in which the imagination is afraid to lose itself. Yet, at the same time, for reason's idea of the supersensible, this same thing is not excessive but conforms to reason's law to give rise to such striving by the imagination. Hence the thing is now attractive to the same degree to which formerly it was repulsive to mere sensibility.[8]

Respect, admiration, and awe, on the one hand, in tandem with fear on the other, even fear of an abyss—these are the emotions of the Kantian natural sublime, both pleasant and unpleasant, discordant yet held in a simultaneous unity. Kant included the "monstrous" within the meaning of the sublime as immensity of magnitude: An object is *monstrous* "if by its magnitude it nullifies the purpose that constitutes its concept."[9] The colossal "borders on the relatively monstrous."[10] We will leave to one side here further elaboration of these Kantian definitions.[11]

Two unpublished writings (*inédits*) by Merleau-Ponty confirm and reinforce the interpretation of the baroque we are suggesting. They have been communicated to me by Emmanuel de Saint Aubert.[12] The first passage dates most probably from the end of 1957, taken from the unpublished *La nature ou le monde du silence*, known to be the first ontological manuscript of Merleau-Ponty, in which he extends his debate with Descartes:

> Ainsi il y a eu un homme pour former cette pensée extraordinaire: la figure de ce monde, telle que nous la voyons en ouvrant les yeux, *n'est pas à expliquer*. Il n'y a pas à se demander pourquoi un ciel, pourquoi un soleil et des étoiles, pourquoi la Terre, - et non pas un monde autrement fait. Tout cela est tel par définition. Tout ce *monde baroque* est l'exacte expression, la seule expression possible du *surgissement de l'être en général*. Le monde est ce qu'il est parce qu'il est monde.

> [So there was a man forming this extraordinary thought: the figure of this world, such as we see it in opening our eyes, *is not for us to explain*. It is not for us to ask why a sky, why a sun and stars, why the earth—and not a world made otherwise. All that is such by definition. All this *baroque world* is the exact expression, the only possible expression, for the *upheaval of Being in general*. The world is what it is because it is the world.][13]

This statement is very strong: "this baroque world" is the exact expression and the only possible expression to capture Being in its surging forth.

In the second *inédit*, which dates from December 1960, Merleau-Ponty criticizes "la tentative hégélienne pour rendre le temps rationnel" (the Hegelian attempt to render time rational): "Montrer au contraire le temps comme *scandale*, comme *baroque,* comme **être sauvage** ou *barbare*. [. . .] Montrer dans le temps une de ces *essences sauvages* que j'ai essayé de dévoiler avec Proust." (To show, on the contrary, time as *scandal*, as *baroque*, as *untamed* or *barbarous being*. [. . .] To show in time one of these *untamed essences* that I have tried to disclose with Proust.)[14]

These two passages situate the meaning of the baroque in Merleau-Ponty as part of his lifelong debate with classicism in the large sense of rationalism, arguing against the absolutist prerogatives of Reason. From the time of Merleau-Ponty's lecture on "The Classical World and Modern World" (Monde Classique et Monde Moderne) in *Causeries 1948*, Merleau-Ponty customarily drew the important opposition between the classical world of rationalism initiated by Descartes and sustained in philosophy through much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as opposed to what he names the "modern world," a term whose vagueness he apologizes for. "Modern thought displays the dual characteristics of being unfinished and ambiguous" (*WP*, 106/63–64). The baroque world in Merleau-Ponty's sense, then,

does not designate another historical world or period of history different from the classical and the modern; rather, it designates one of the ways in which Being, space, and depth show themselves within the "modern" in philosophy, science, and art as ambiguous and unfinished. Therefore, we are now compelled to speak of a "modern baroque" or a "baroque reason" and "baroque space" within the modern. This will be a reason and space of ambiguity and incompletion, therefore, of rivalry, interruption, and dislocation rather than a reason and space of the subject, consciousness, intention, and continuity.

In developing her own parallel concept of the "modern baroque" in *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*, Christine Buci-Glucksmann goes even further toward shock, catastrophe, melancholy, and ruin, which she finds in the sensibilities of Walter Benjamin, Kafka, Klee, Baudelaire, and more. She writes: "Where there is shock—historical trauma—interpretation can therefore appear. . . . Any dialectical philosophical study therefore demands that due account should be taken of the privileged baroque moment of modernity."[15] Buci-Glucksmann is influenced, perhaps above all, by Walter Benjamin's *Origin of German Tragic Drama*. She writes it was in this work that "Benjamin fully comes to terms, philosophically and historically, with the relationality of Power, as 'power of the King,' which always tends towards a state of emergency, and with an allegorical imaginary of a time of ruin and dislocation."[16] We lack any explicit link between Merleau-Ponty and Benjamin, to my knowledge, yet the influences of Proust's *Search for Lost Time* and Klee's artwork are profoundly in play for each thinker. Klee's drawings of angels, intermediate beings in between animal/human being and fully spiritual being, express this dislocation, internal conflict, and the shock of time and history. Among these, *Angelus Novus* (1920) is emblematic, which presents a young novice angel, wings upraised against what appears to be a windstorm. Benjamin purchased this Klee work around 1921 and displayed it in his Munich apartment.[17] Benjamin saw in the work the angel of history attempting to hold back a history that "piles wreckage upon wreckage," which the angel is unable to prevent because "a storm is blowing from Paradise."[18]

With these thoughts and context in mind, we now turn our attention to Rembrandt's "baroque" artwork, *Nightwatch* (*la Ronde de Nuit*), a work that has fascinated and puzzled viewers and scholars on many levels of feeling, thought, and historical meaning. It is at once vivid and at the same time ambiguous and enigmatic. *Nightwatch* is the popular title for the group portrait completed by Rembrandt in 1642 at age thirty-six under the full

FIGURE 2.1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Nightwatch*, 1642. Oil on canvas.
Photo credit: Album / Art Resource.

historical title, *Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Cocq and Lieutenant Wilhem van Ruytenburgh*.[19] This more prosaic title gives the subject of the painting. Placed front and center is Captain Frans Banning Cocq, dressed in formal black, lace collar, gold brocade, and red sash, rapier at his side. His left hand and arm are thrust forward and his mouth appears open, giving the order for the militia to "fall in" and march. Alongside him and sharing the place of honor is Lieutenant van Ruytenburgh. His face is shown in profile looking toward Captain Banning Cocq, and he is dressed in a bright yellow costume with boots, bluish-white sash, and steel sword fully visible. Finally, gathered around and behind the two officers appear sixteen additional militiamen of Amsterdam. Their names are inscribed on a shield placed above and center on the archway through which they are marching. One source says that the inscriptions on this shield were added later by an unknown artist, since several of the militiamen are shown in half shadow and a few heads are obscured to such an extent that their status as portraits

is doubtful.[20] Prominently painted to the captain's right in red costume and large brimmed hat, so prominent, in fact, as nearly to rival the captain and the lieutenant, a musketeer loads his musket, preparing to fire. In the upper right, also gesturing with outstretched hand and arm, appears a sergeant wearing the traditional garb of a philosopher—black, belted robe; white ruffle collar; and black, brimmed hat—although he, too, shoulders a musket.

Figures in addition to the members of the militia have been added by Rembrandt to support the action. A drummer boy and a barking dog appear in the lower right; a dwarf on the lower left appears to be running out of the scene. The flag is unfurled, and just behind and to the right of the captain a young girl in gold and blue dashes laterally into the picture. Just behind her, we see part of the face of a second girl, who is also dashing in accompanying the first, although she remains rather indistinct. To the front of the painting between the girls and the captain, a boy in old-fashioned military costume strides in almost opposed to the forward movement of the militia, partially disappearing behind Banning Cocq. A musket has emitted a white puff of smoke around Van Ruytenburgh's hat, making it clear that the boy has just fired his musket, to the alarm of a man who wards off the gun with his hand. The remaining "extras" also include the partial face of a man peeking out from the rear center of the company, wearing a beret and identity unknown, perhaps a self-portrait of Rembrandt himself. All together, thirty-four figures appear in the painting, eighteen of them the officers and members of the militia of Captain Banning Cocq, their position and prominence in the work relative to the commission they paid to be included in the portrait.

All in all, this stunning group portrait participated somewhat in the tradition of militia portraits representing a civic guard wearing the regalia of their company arranged in formation or at annual banquets. Yet Rembrandt was the first to organize a group militia painting as an action painting with a pronounced theatrical character, stage-like space, and choreography organized around the captain's dramatic step and forward gesture offset by the lateral countermovement of the girl in gold and the nearly backward, counterposed movement of the boy shooting the musket. The scale of the painting is colossal at 363 cm x 438 cm ($142\frac{7}{8}$ x $172\frac{1}{2}$ inches). There had been nothing like it previously, and while its immediate reception was reserved and even critical, particularly among the sitters who expected something more traditional by way of legible and celebratory portraits, it represented a leap forward. In the assessment of Westermann, in *Nightwatch*, "Rembrandt pushed the synthesis of portrait and narrative,

first explored in *The Anatomical Demonstration of Dr. Tulp* (1632), as far as a group portrait could bear."[21] In his "Introduction to Dutch Painting," Paul Claudel writes: "All across Holland and in the center of Amsterdam, surrounded by all the paintings of the Golden Age which receives its reflection from it, this was what I had promised myself to visit a long time before."[22]

What Merleau-Ponty finds interesting in this painting is the play of light, dark, and shadow. This is not surprising, for from Claudel to Valéry and so many more, the remarkable golden light that sends its shafts through these otherwise dark, chiaroscuro figures inevitably strikes the viewer. Valéry expressed it perfectly: "For Rembrandt, flesh is so much mud redeemed by the gold of light."[23] What Merleau-Ponty says about *Nightwatch* in "Eye and Mind" is quite brief but further illuminates his philosophy of spatial depth and the incompossibility of things and persons:

> The painter's gaze asks them [the things] what they do to suddenly cause something to be and to be *this* thing, what they do to compose this talisman of a world to make us see the visible. The hand pointing toward us in *The Nightwatch* is truly there only when we see that its shadow on the captain's [sic: lieutenant's] body presents it simultaneously in profile. The spatiality of the captain lies at the intersection of the two perspectives which are incompossible and yet together. (EM, 128/29)

Merleau-Ponty points out that the viewer is presented with two incompossible perspectives rather than one fixed point of view: While the captain faces us and thrusts his hand directly forward, the shadow of his arm falls in profile on the jacket and body of his lieutenant. The source of the light on the captain's hand comes from above, but its origin is ambiguous and not shown. The light strikes directly on the captain's arm, backlighting the hand and creating the receding shadow cast on the lieutenant that establishes the depth in the front of the picture and the difference between the positions of the captain an his lieutenant. The lieutenant stands to the captain's side, but his position is clearly behind the forward thrust of the captain's arm.

Merleau-Ponty adds that a "profane" sense of the visible forgets all of this as its premises and rests upon a false sense of "total visibility." The *Nightwatch* returns us to place as sacred rather than profane. Merleau-Ponty writes

of light, lighting, shadows, reflections, and color in the work of the painter as "not altogether real objects; like ghosts. . . . In fact they exist only at the threshold of profane vision; they are not ordinarily seen" (EM, 128/29). He adds: "Everyone with eyes has at some time or other witnessed this play of shadows, or something like it, and has been made by it to see things and a space. But it worked in them without them; it hid to make the object visible. To see the object, it was necessary *not* to see the play of shadows and light around it" (128/29–30).

Shadows are a liminal space, meaning a space of transition that seems incidental, marginal, or insignificant on the way to the lighted space out in front of our gaze or movement. Merleau-Ponty and Rembrandt want us to dwell in these spaces of transition, neither dark nor light, but "on the way." Plato's allegory of the cave interpreted the space of the cave dwellers as mere appearance, unreality, and urged liberation into the clarity of light and Forms that are pure, perfect, and permanent. Merleau-Ponty stresses the porosity, pregnancy, and promise of liminal spaces and dwelling with shadows. Rather than the brightness and heat of the sun, and also rather than the darkness and coolness of moonlight, Merleau-Ponty finds the intensity of Being in that in-between space of process, promise, movement, and things becoming, what he names the dehiscence of Being. He pursues the shadows into his interpretation of the meaning of philosophy as well. What he sought in the philosophy of Husserl was its "unthought-of element," and he compared the "unthought" in a work of philosophy that creates its richness with perceptual shadows that create depth:

> Just as the perceived world endures only through the reflections, shadows, levels, and horizons between things (which are not things and are not nothing, but on the contrary mark out by themselves fields of possible variation in the same thing and the same world), so the works and thought of a philosopher . . . are not *objects* of thought, since (like shadow and reflection) they would be destroyed by being subjected to analytic observation. (S, 160/202)

Later in the essay, he adds, "The philosopher must bear his shadow, which is not simply the factual absence of light" (S, 178/225). Another philosopher in another context wrote, "Dusk is the time of philosophy."[24] Perception, like philosophy, is born from the play of light and shadow, depth and desire.

There is more that Merleau-Ponty might have developed about spatial depth and the sublime in *Nightwatch*. For one thing, he might have dwelt upon the theatricality of the work with its action, choreography, movement, and dissonances, for his philosophy of depth stresses its birth from the movement or vibration between things. In *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty had connected life with rhythm: "My life is made up of rhythms which do not have their *reason* in what I have chosen to be, but rather have their *condition* in the banal milieu that surrounds me. A margin of *almost* impersonal existence thus appears around our personal existence, which, so to speak, is taken for granted, and to which I entrust the care of keeping me alive" (86). Merleau-Ponty names this "*almost* impersonal existence" our "anonymous" body or self that keeps us alive without and beyond our choosing; it is the beating of our heart, diastole and systole, the rhythm of breathing, inhalation and exhalation. "Eye and Mind" stresses, particularly in its interpretation of cinema and the sculpture of Rodin, how movement is born from time, from the "mutual confrontation of incompossibles," meaning that arms, legs, trunk, and head are each taken at a different instant, and thus, the sculpture "portrays the body in an attitude which it never at any instant really held" (145/79). It is important to stress that this does not mean that the psychology or imagination of the viewer completes the movement of a represented moment; rather, movement is immanent to the gesture and expression. Georg Simmel's *Rembrandt: An Essay on the Philosophy of Art* complements Merleau-Ponty on this point. For the artwork of Rembrandt, Simmel writes, "perception here is distinct from the perception of real movements only through its intensity and compression, the pictorial gesture is immediately charged with movement." The viewer does not supply the movement by "adding in" time before and time after. The artist, he concludes, "brings movement to its climax by knowing how to bind movement into a factually static painting."[25]

Gilles Deleuze has taken up precisely this point about movement in terms of the rhythm we find in *Nightwatch*. In *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze argues that the painter seeks to make visible a kind of "original unity of the senses" in a multisensible Figure such as we find in Bacon's triptychs. This is possible, Deleuze argues, "only if the sensation of a particular domain (here, the visual) is in direct contact with a vital power that exceeds every domain and traverses them all. This power is Rhythm. . . . Rhythm appears as music when it invests the auditory level, and as painting when it invests the visual level."[26] Deleuze stresses the work of Bacon, Cézanne,

and Klee for their rhythmic qualities: "To put time inside the Figure—this is the force of bodies in Bacon."[27] Deleuze finds three different rhythms in the triptychs of Bacon: an "active" rhythm, which carries with it an increasing variation or amplification; a "passive" rhythm, with a decreasing variation or elimination; and an "attendant" rhythm that is something like the observer of the active and passive rhythms. Deleuze does not hesitate to extend this analysis back in time precisely to Rembrandt's *Nightwatch*. He writes: "For in Rembrandt's still lifes or genre paintings, but also in his portraits, there is first of all a disturbance or vibration: the contour is in the service of vibration." He continues: "And even more, there is what Claudel described, this amplitude of light, an immense 'stable and motionless background,' that will have a strange effect, assuring the extreme division of Figures, their distribution into active, passive, and attendant Figures, as in Rembrandt's *Nightwatch*."[28] Applying this analysis to *Nightwatch*, we might surmise that the central captain in black gestures as the active figure, adjacent to his listening, passive lieutenant, with the entire company as attendant figures, especially the remarkable, unusual figure of the little girl to the left in gold costume.

Yet, here is exactly where the analysis of rhythm, movement, and action in the picture as a triptych of captain, lieutenant, and militia runs into trouble. Who is that young girl and why is she so brilliantly illuminated? The light striking this young girl's face and costume seems even to exceed the light striking the arm and hand of the captain. Is it she who is the central subject of this work, overthrowing the centrality of the captain? Renoir has said he would discard the rest of the painting while keeping her, and though this is extreme, she is a center of light and action surprising and mysterious.[29] The central action of the painting seems to be the militia's march under the archway toward a horizon not shown, led by the captain and his lieutenant, and it is probably a mistake to search for the actual historical event and action being depicted.[30] Yet the girl in gold dashes into the scene from the left side of the painting, cutting obliquely against the grain of the march, seemingly determined to interrupt its straightforward movement. The line of the long lance of one of the actors on the right, if extended, points directly downward toward the girl in gold, and so does the pole of the flag on the left, further stressing her centrality in the scene. Mystery is heightened by the large white fowl hanging upside down by its claws and attached to her waistband. She also carries what appears to be a large drinking horn with a silver rim. There were three civic militia guilds of Amsterdam, and a common reading would be that she is a sutler who supplies provisions to the troops and that the

claws of the fowl identify the militia, for the claw of a bird of prey was the emblem of this particular marching militia, the Kloveniers.[31]

Paul Claudel, for one, remained puzzled about the significance of these two girls. Deleuze had already interjected Claudel into this discussion through Claudel's remarkable account of the gold and amplitude of light. About the girl in gold, Claudel writes: "She, too, is going up-stage and by the strange look she directs toward us while on the way—for it is evidently with us that she is angry—one would say that she has something to explain to us."[32] It is true, she looks directly out at us: Claudel sees anger; one might equally see determination and destination. As Claudel says, she cuts a "fissure" right out of the scene and the action. A critic such as Peter Greenaway has even gone so far as to argue that *Nightwatch* gives us the secret message of a murder that has been committed by a member of this militia.[33] If that be speculation that takes us beyond the surface of the work itself into the secret personal lives of its sitters, there is no denying that the girl in gold adds an element of the bizarre, unexpected, and shocking, all these features of the baroque. So does that grotesque dwarf, front and left, running away from the boy's musket fire. Claudel finds him to be a "queer gnome" (*ce gnome bizarre*) with a "remarkable costume."[34] In his definitive work, Haverkamp-Begemann concludes that the action distinguishes Rembrandt's group portrait from earlier militia portraits, and "by making those figures that are purely symbolic—the musket-shooting boy and the girls in yellow—perform their own act among the citizens, he made them their equals," thereby intensifying the symbolic and bizarre character of the scene.[35] Rembrandt's baroque work, in the sense of periodization, also shows us a baroque world filled with the grotesque, even burlesque part of the wildness of untamed nature and mind, surging forth with the mysterious and awe-inspiring feeling of the sublime.

Paul Valéry comments on the paintings of Rembrandt precisely in terms of this sublime:

> It can even happen that the poet comes late to birth in a man who, until then, was simply a great painter: Rembrandt, for instance, after attaining perfection in his early works, rises, later on, to the sublime level, to the point where art itself grows imperceptible, and is forgotten: having attained its supreme object without any apparent transition, its success absorbs, dismisses, or consumes the sense of wonder, the question of how it was done.[36]

Rembrandt's *Nightwatch* attained that sublime level of which Valéry speaks, and the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty leads us as well in the direction of a sublime and baroque world, a "modern baroque" or a "baroque reason" and "baroque space" within the modern. This is a reason and space of ambiguity and incompletion, therefore of rivalry, interruption, and dislocation rather than a reason and space of the subject, consciousness, intention, and continuity. This is a theatrical or dramatic space: whose narrative is *Nightwatch*, that of the captain and his lieutenant ordering the militia's forward movement, that of the girl in gold cutting obliquely against the grain of the march, or that of the boy striding in countermovement against the action of the militia, dangerously firing his musket? It is the theatrical narrative, space, and choreography of them all, though not harmonized, rationalized, or "well-behaved," as Merleau-Ponty wrote, a "baroque world" that is "rediscovery of that brute mind which, untamed by any culture, is asked to create culture anew" (*S*, 181/228). Though the pictorial space of *Nightwatch* is that of a regiment, it is far from regimented but in motion, odd, surprising, still "on the way," along with modern life, the modern world, and Being itself.

NOTES

Epigraph: Paul Valéry, "Degas, Dance, Drawing," in *Degas, Manet, Morisot*, trans. David Paul, Bollingen Series 45.12 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 49. Originally published as *Degas, danse, dessin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), where quotation appears on page 73.

1. I am citing first the English translation by Michael B. Smith of "L'Oeil et l'Esprit," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 121–49, followed by the French original (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

2. Cf. Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Sage, 1994). She writes of Baudelaire's "baroque scenography of desire" and "characteristically baroque perception of the world": "Permanent catastrophe and not straightforward progress, loss of any stable referent in history and not the subject as bearer of an already accomplished meaning" (155).

3. Husserl wrote the manuscript between May 7 and May 9, 1934. He had written the following comment on the envelope of the rather informal, incomplete draft: "*Overthrow of the Copernican theory* in the usual interpretation of a world view. The original ark, the earth, does not move." Edmund Husserl, "Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature," in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, trans. Fred Kersten, ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 231n1.

4. Ibid., 225.

5. Cf. Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, *Du lien des êtres aux éléments de l'être: Merleau-Ponty au tournant des années 1945–1951* (Paris: Vrin, 2004), section A: "Le lien des êtres: Naissance de l'empiètement et de la chair (1945–1951)." It is deeply troublesome to get the English translation of *empiètement* just right. The etymological root is "impiety," and its meanings range from the violence of theft and biting to milder impingements upon the space and speech of others. The standard English translation in Merleau-Ponty's oeuvre is "encroachment" or "trespass," and we certainly should separate out the meaning of this term in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of intersubjectivity from that of Sartre's account of concrete relations with others in terms of master-slave: masochism, sadism, and the impossibility of love.

6. Marie-Louise Tricaud, *Le Baroque dans le théâtre de Paul Claudel* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967), 13.

7. Ibid.

8. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (1790; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 115.

9. Ibid., 109.

10. Ibid.

11. Cf. Galen A. Johnson, "The Beautiful and the Sublime in Merleau-Ponty and Lyotard," *Chiasmi International*, n.s., 10 (2008): 207–26; Johnson, "Merleau-Ponty and Kant's *Third Critique*: The Beautiful and the Sublime," in *Merleau-Ponty at the Limits of Art, Religion, and Perception*, ed. Kascha Semonovitch and Neal DeRoo (London: Continuum, 2010), 41–59; and Johnson, "Beauty and the Sublime," chap. 7 in *The Retrieval of the Beautiful: Thinking through Merleau-Ponty's Aesthetics* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010).

12. I express my gratitude to Emmanuel de Saint Aubert for providing these *inédits* and for sharing his own thoughts on the meaning of the "baroque" in Merleau-Ponty, thoughts that are reflected in the interpretation offered here.

13. My translation. NMS [39](22)-[40](23), fin 1957. This is the notation established by Emmanuel de Saint Aubert in the chronological bibliography at the end of his first book, *Du lien des êtres aux éléments de l'être*, 321–47. The reference is to Merleau-Ponty's unpublished work, *La nature ou le monde du silence*, vol. 6, 101ff., of the *cahiers* located in the *salle des archives* at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France.

14. My translation. NTontocart [107], décembre 1960. The reference is to Merleau-Ponty's working notes accompanying the preparation of the course of 1961 on *L'ontologie cartésienne et l'ontologie d'aujourd'hui*, vol. 19, 55f., of the *cahiers* located in the *salle des archives* at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France.

15. Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason*, 68.

16. Ibid., 66.

17. Cf. ibid., 30.

18. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 257.

19. Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, *Rembrandt: The Nightwatch* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 8n12. See also https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio.

20. Mariët Westermann, *Rembrandt* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2000), 168–69.

21. Ibid., 174.

22. Paul Claudel, "Introduction to Dutch Painting," in *The Eye Listens*, trans. Elsie Pell (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 44. See also *La peinture hollandaise et autre écrits sur l'art* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 88.

23. Valéry, "Degas, Dance, Drawing," 49; *Degas, danse, dessin*, 73.

24. Erazim V. Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Sense of Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 32.

25. Georg Simmel, *Rembrandt: An Essay in the Philosophy of Art*, trans. and ed. Alan Scott and Helmut Staubmann (New York: Routledge, 2005), 39.

26. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 37.

27. Ibid., 42.

28. Ibid., 61. Deleuze has made Leibniz the emblematic baroque philosopher. Cf. Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); originally published as *Le pli: Leibniz et le baroque* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1988). In this work, Deleuze offers "six esthetic qualities of the Baroque," most prominently "the fold." The debate regarding the relationship of Merleau-Ponty's late philosophy to the monadology of Leibniz is played out between Renaud Barbaras, "Merleau-Ponty's Leibnizianism," chap. 13 in *The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, trans. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); and Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, "'Le chiasme vérité de l'harmonie préétablie'—Merleau-Ponty et Leibniz," chap. 7 in *Le scénario cartésien: Recherches sur la formation et la cohérence de l'intention philosophique de Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Vrin, 2005). Among the philosophical tools of Leibniz ill-suited to the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, Saint Aubert discusses geometrical or topological space, passage to the infinite in the calculus, the algorithm, preestablished harmony, and explicative theology and theodicy. Cf. especially Saint Aubert, *Le scénario cartésien*, chap. 7, sect. 2: "Le critique merleau-pontienne de Leibniz," 193–240.

29. Ambroise Vollard, *En écoutant Cézanne, Degas, Renoir* (1938; Paris: Grasset and Fasquelle, 2003); cited in Haverkamp-Begemann, *Rembrandt*, 93n689.

30. Haverkamp-Begemann, *Rembrandt*, 106–8.

31. Ibid., 94–95.

32. Claudel, "Introduction to Dutch Painting," 45; *La peinture hollandaise*, 90–93.

33. Peter Greenaway, film director of *Nightwatching* (2007) and *J'accuse* (2008).

34. Claudel, "Introduction to Dutch Painting," 45; *La peinture hollandaise*, 90.

35. Haverkamp-Begemann, *Rembrandt*, 109–10.

36. Paul Valéry, "The Triumph of Manet," in *Degas, Manet, Morisot*, 113.

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FINDING ARCHITECTURAL EDGE IN THE WAKE OF
MERLEAU-PONTY

Edward S. Casey

Merleau-Ponty is not usually considered a thinker of edges. Instead, he is regarded—and rightly so—as a thinker of deep continuities and seamless wholes. This is especially the case with his earlier work, in which the model of the Gestalt figure/ground relationship is exemplary. Yet this very model, despite its motif of unification of diverse parts within a shared field, warns us that the factor of edge is never far from a Merleau-Pontian approach to lived space: any given figure is perceived as such only insofar as the figure itself stands out from its surrounding ground by virtue of the edges by which it counts as *that very* figure. At the same time, the theme of "primordial spatiality" (in Merleau-Ponty's own phrase) that emerges at several points in the *Phenomenology of Perception* requires a factor of definition and delimitation for which edges are especially well suited: What would such spatiality be if it had no shape at all, and what would be a shape that had no edge? In his later work, Merleau-Ponty points quite explicitly to the formative presence of edges in linguistic signs, the folding of flesh, and the active linearity at stake in art.

Edges—felt as well as seen, heard as well as thought—have everything to do with how things and thoughts come to an end as well as with how they commence and get under way. We need only reflect on the presence of cognitive and perceptual horizons to sense the importance of edges at every level of the lived body and its immersion in the experienced lifeworld: such horizons serve as a kind of ultimate edge of a landscape scene, an external edge that encompasses all lesser edges.

As I have elsewhere traced the profile of Merleau-Ponty's evolving conception of edge, in the present essay I turn to a more focused issue in keeping with the theme of this volume: the ingredience of edges in *architecture*: that is, in the construction and inhabitation and perception of built structure.[1] I

focus on the Parthenon as a leading example, given its extraordinary employment of edges, especially those present in its external structure. I also take up issues of edges as they configure the interiors of dwellings. In my conclusion I draw mainly from the later work of Merleau-Ponty, specifically his notion of the flesh as the unifying ground in which the lived body and the environing world are brought together and enmeshed. For Merleau-Ponty, flesh is a surface, but a surface that contains depth—a thickness into which body and world are folded. Although it is the flesh of the world that gathers, envelops, and assimilates all things into itself, this flesh is not a Parmenidean plenum, for it is constituted by gaps, fissures, and borders—in short, by edges. It is to the presence of edges in the flesh of built structures that I will turn in this essay. Throughout, I am inspired more by the spirit than by the letter of Merleau-Ponty's writings on the spatial dimension of human experience, attempting to carry into a delimited domain the kind of careful descriptive focus that is the hallmark of his unmatched contributions to phenomenological philosophy.

I

Whatever its primal roots in providing shelter for inhabitation, architecture concerns more than dwelling, especially if dwelling is conceived in such terms as convenience, comfort, or utility. Making these latter properties possible is the basic fact that *architecture is all about edge.* Not just in the undeniable sense that walls and ceilings, floors and windows end in edges, but also in more subtle senses that are at stake even when a building seems to lack any obvious or conspicuous edge, as in the circular dwellings of many non-Western people or at Le Corbusier's chapel at Ronchamp (which has virtually no straight edges, everything being contoured in flowing form) or in many domed structures (from the most basic aediculae to the dome designed by Michelangelo for Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome). Even in such cases, edges are a potent presence. In order to appreciate this, we must dissociate rectilinearity from edge. The most curvaceous structures possess edges in their own way: for example, Frank Gehry's celebrated Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, which consists in highly convoluted bulbous masses, each of which is like a band with its own inherent edged structure:

FIGURE 3.1. Armiarma-spider. Photo © 2009 Mikel Rivera.
Sculpture by Louise Bourgeois, Maman, Guggenheim Bilbao.

In such a case we witness an elegant balance between mass and edge in which the latter interacts with the former in a virtual edge ballet: a pas de deux in architectural space. Edges here finish off the masses to which they belong, allowing them to reach a state of material and visual completion not otherwise possible. Still other edges are added by the sculpture placed next to the museum: animalistic and organic, "spidery" in keeping with the subject of this piece. (See the essay by Helen Fielding on this sculpture in chapter 12.)

Before proceeding further, we need to confront the more general question: How do edges accrue to constructed masses, whether rectilinear or rounded, such that they bring these masses to a stage of accomplishment not otherwise attainable?

Consider the room in which you now happen to be located as you read these words. It is awash in edges—those where the wall to your side meets the floor as well as those where the same wall meets the ceiling. Not to mention the edges of the door through which you entered the same room, or the edges of the window from which you may look out onto an adjacent courtyard. These various edges are not only material necessities, part of the physical reality of constructing a house, but they define the very space of

interiority, giving felt shape to the dwelling in which you live—or to the café or library in which you may be temporarily located. In the West, most architectural edges tend to be more or less perfectly linear, in keeping with a decided preference for building walls that rise perpendicularly from the ground. In other cultures, the passion for the perpendicular is replaced by a penchant for curving arcs, as in Navajo hogans or the conical yurts that are prominent in Japan and other parts of East Asia: in their case, the angles between walls and floor are quite different, their intersections tracing out circles and ellipses rather than straight lines and right angles. But these built structures eventuate no less in edges, however much they fall into different linear patterns and however much they induce a distinctly different sense of space lived from within.

Perceiving buildings from the outside reveals a no less edgy situation. Often it is the outer wall and roof that are most conspicuous: the same door and window through which I move or look from the inside of a building are now seen from without, and are defined by edges that, though contiguous and commensurate with their inner counterparts, may take on a very disparate form, depending on the exact architectural style at play. In Spanish and several other Mediterranean cultures, shutters are an intrinsic part of the exterior window structure, complicating its edges in often highly imaginative ways. In other cultures, less sensitive to the sun and more concerned with privacy, inner curtains may predominate, adding their softer folds to the bare interplay of otherwise unadorned edges. Very often, we perceive shutters and curtains from the outside as well as the inside, even if the former are usually attached to an external, and the latter to an internal, wall. The same is true of doors, most of which are meant to be seen from without (e.g., as welcoming or resistant to the guest or stranger), though some are also meant to be appreciated from within (as when their inner surface is painted a color that matches that of the foyer into which a guest is ushered).

You will notice that even when we are dealing mainly with the functional edgefulness of architecture as it is lived from without or from within, we are led to mention items that are not valued primarily for their practical efficiency alone. Curtains and shutters may well have originated in practical concerns such as keeping a house cool or in preserving privacy, but the way in which these concerns are carried out calls for an elaboration that encourages aesthetic discernment: What *kind* of shutters suits the texture and color of the outer wall of my house, what *sort* of curtain fabric will complement the furniture and rug in the room for which it frames the window? In such

cases, aesthetic considerations take precedence over sheer functionality; even if not required in any strict sense, they come into prominent play in the larger circumstance. Much the same thing happens when, for example, molding is added to the edges formed by walls as they meet floors and ceiling: a decorative margin enhances what would otherwise be a mere meeting of flat surfaces. The same is true for a decorative wainscot that is added to the middle space of a wall where no structurally integral edges meet: here there is no pretense to practicality, nothing but sheer display. Despite being purely ornamental, however, such structures are no less a matter of edges: indeed, a mid-wall wainscot creates its own edge instead of building on existing edges. In this way, it emphasizes edge as such, bringing it expressly to a perceptual awareness freed from functional concerns.

In this preliminary foray into architectural edge, I have been in effect drawing upon two very different yet closely related situations. In the first, that in which questions of sheer structure prevail, edges are at once necessary and (normally) unobtrusive: such is the bare edge formed when wall meets floor and ceiling, or that occurring when a door or window cuts through a wall. We may not even notice these edges, despite their being uneliminable features of any built structure: they are sine qua non but not perceived as such (at the most, they are apperceived, taken in from the corner of our eye in a bare glance). In the second situation, edges no longer figure as functional at all, yet they come forward into our perception with a saliency that is lacking in more practical settings. They are announced, or rather they announce themselves, *as such*. The inherent aesthetic attractiveness of such edges brings them to a new level of perception and appreciation beyond that found in more practical contexts.

Let us say that walls and windows *have* edges, whereas those things that decorate walls and windows (curtains, shutters, wainscoting) *are* edges. On the one hand, edges belong to things as intrinsic to their functional existence; on the other hand, they are adventitious to such existence, no longer required for it. But in *not having to be*, they are all the more accessible to our attention and potentially attractive for it. In keeping with the semantic core of the word *aesthetic*, they gain a specifically sensuous being: a being to and for our senses, a being-in-apprehension, and a being-for-appreciation. Being literally aesthetic in our perception—being *sensed* there—they become aesthetic objects for this perception.

This is not to deny that the aesthetic and the functional can coexist and collaborate intimately and creatively. Much of the impetus behind the

Bauhaus architecture and furniture of the 1920s was the effort to combine these two dimensions in one and the same design, as we see in the early work of Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius. But these instances of successful convergence of disparate directions of interest or purpose in no way undermine the validity of the distinction I am here making between two levels of consideration. The distinction remains even as it becomes complicated in given instances in which the two threads may be so densely combined as to become indistinguishable. When I draw the curtains that will give me the privacy I crave at some deep level of my personal life, I cannot help but take in their sensuous aspect as well—their palpable presence to my hands, their brightly colored surface, their fitting shape. Both of the two dimensions or levels I have been distinguishing, sensuous and practical, accrue to the same thing. Depending on the circumstance, I can thematize one dimension or level more fully than another—even to the point of holding them apart, or momentarily repressing one for the sake of the other. Nevertheless, they are two features of *one* perceived thing: the curtains themselves as I experience them.

This is just what I cannot do with the bare functional edge: say, the undecorated windowsill, the molding-free upper and lower edges of the wall of the room in which I am now standing. It would take an extraordinary act of perception—or better, apperception—to see the latter as aesthetic in its being. It is functional in itself, and is perceived as such.[2] It is as purely practical as a painting on the same wall would be sheerly sensuous, aesthetic in its very being.

In the case of curtains, shutters, or moldings on edges of ceilings (but not in mid-wall decorative panels), however, we have a circumstance in which *les extrêmes se touchent*: the practical and the aesthetic join forces. This convergence exemplifies the very logic of which Merleau-Ponty is the past master: namely, that two apparently diremptive alternatives end by reflecting, indeed requiring, each other. What Merleau-Ponty demonstrated so forcefully with regard to the pitched opposition of empiricism and intellectualism here proves true of the pair practical/aesthetic. These latter terms are not incompatible but, in the end, capable of cooperation and in certain cases require each other.

Still, the opposition remains and cannot be passed over flippantly. But just where do these extremes meet; what is their common ground? To begin to answer such questions, we will turn to a new genre of example—drawn this time from the world of the ancient Greek polis rather than from Western European domestic architecture of the last several centuries.

II

The Parthenon, situated prominently on the Acropolis, is not merely a very famous building—one of the most celebrated structures of the ancient world—but quite revealing for our purposes. In the following assessment, I will contrast its base with its pediment in an effort to cast further light on the complex relationship between those edges that are structurally necessary and those that are predominantly aesthetic in character. The Parthenon is paradigmatic in bringing together, in one coherent material mass, these two dimensions of the edge: their "edgealities," as it were.

The base of the Parthenon bears the whole load of this enormous building, yet is rarely attended to as such by visitors or even by art historians. Not only is it not ornamented; it is tucked inconspicuously under the main structure, consisting in some eight layers of carefully cut stone. These layers present themselves as if they were steps into the massive temple that they are in physical fact holding up from below. They are certainly not what first strikes the visitor to the Parthenon—much more conspicuous is the imposing facade of the temple with which one is confronted on entering the whole complex of buildings—but they are essential to the literal equipoise of the building as one approaches it on foot. Without these foundation stones, not only would the building itself collapse, but its perceptual reality would be significantly altered; it would become quite literally "baseless," as a moment's visual thought-experiment reveals.

In terms of visual dynamics, as this notion has been elaborated by Rudolf Arnheim, the base of the Parthenon operates as a sheerly horizontal axis, being contiguous with the surface of the earth on which it is set. Given that this surface is itself grasped and felt as horizontal, the base acts as its regularized and geometrized counterpart: as an epitome of the horizontality of earth in sculpted stone, its regularization, as it were. In the case of the Parthenon, the difference between the two modes of horizontality is all the more striking insofar as in the present moment the ground around the building is covered with rough stones worn smooth from many generations of citizens, worshippers, warriors, and ordinary onlookers. The irregularity of these stones, scattered pell-mell upon the earth—to which one must attend in walking, lest one fall precipitously—contrasts with the sleek sweep of the basal layers of the Parthenon itself: these layers are still quite regular after twenty-five hundred years, with the exception of slight depressions caused

FIGURE 3.2. Parthenon: west façade with foundation stones.
Photo © John Varoumas.

by the pedestrian traffic of many generations of human visitors. Materially, they come *from the earth*, embodying its stony essence; formally, they rise *up and away from the earth*, thereby realizing what Husserl considered to be the true "origin of geometry."[3]

At the same time, the deeply ensconced horizontality of the base plays against the sheer verticality of the temple itself, which seems to rise on its haunches, like a gigantic stone animal. The sense of the vertical is intensely felt when one ascends to the temple complex by climbing high onto the mesa of the Acropolis, winding upward on a footpath from the city below and catching glimpses of the buildings poised precariously far above. At the top of the path, one moves through the heavily fortified "Beulé Gate" and immediately afterward through the forbidding presence of the Propylaia. Exiting from this latter—in effect, a security gate of outsize proportions—one beholds the Parthenon quite suddenly, in a moment of visual seizure for which one is never fully prepared. Despite being stationed slightly askew and to the right as one enters the complex, the building arises dramatically from the open space of the Acropolis itself. At each of these various stages of

approach—walking up the hill, going through the two gates, being astounded at the building itself—the sensed directionality is insistently upward. A veritable *axis mundi* emerges, a dynamic verticality that asserts itself over the deeply grounded horizontality of the placement of the Parthenon itself on top of the Acropolis. As figure 3.2 makes evident, this upward thrusting axis exceeds the earth and enters the sky as if to dramatize what Heidegger has called "the Dimension."[4]

Contributing further to this verticality while at the same time capping it is the Parthenon's upper part, which consists in the fragmented band of the famous frieze, various rectangular panels ("metopes"), and the triangular pediments above these. We have to imagine what the detailed contents of all three consisted in, since they have been stripped mostly bare from millennia of war and plundering. But we know from surviving fragments in the Acropolis Museum, the National Archaeological Museum, and from the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum approximately what was there featured: the Great Panathenaic Procession in the frieze, the war of the Centaurs and the Lapiths (featured in the ninety-two metope panels)—and, in the two pediments at either end, the birth of Athena and her battle with Poseidon. Given the height at which they were perched, each set of images must have drawn the look of the citizen sharply upward. They acted to crown the already ascendant verticality of the great columns of the Parthenon—eight on each end, seventeen on the long sides, all configured to be taken in with one sweeping glance from below. Forming a potent procession of their own, these columns take the eye from the base below to the frieze just above them.

The frieze is the truly culminating part of the Parthenon. Positioned on horizontal strips of stone, the two sets of images it presents ring around the entire Parthenon, one telling a tale of ritualistic Athenian life (the Panathenaea took place only every four years, and wound its way from the Kerameikos cemetery through the agora to the Acropolis), the other depicting stories of interaction between humans and human/animal hybrids. Both were exceptional occurrences in the course of ancient Athenian life, and they are properly located high above the places of everyday concourse: elevated away from it and at a definite remove that allows them to be read spontaneously while keeping a certain dignified distance.

The pediments are something else again: each of their sculptural groupings depicts a single crucial mythical event—crucial to the founding and preservation of Athens. Athena was the patroness of Athens. Her birth and her successful confrontation with Poseidon, great god of the sea, were both

FIGURE 3.3. Parthenon, east pediment. Photo © Heidi Kontkanen.

essential mythemes of ancient Athens, especially in its Periclean golden age. As if to acknowledge the importance of these events, the obscure architect of the Parthenon set forth fully three-dimensional figures who stand out from the pediment space, breaking free from it in audacious outflung gestures. Standing below the few figures still in place on the eastern pediment, one quickly realizes that these figures (most notably the horses) do not fit into the triangular frame of the pediment but hang out over all that lies below: as if their exuberant equine energy cannot be contained by any architectural structure.

This is a moment of *exceeding the edge*—a sculpted edge that would otherwise contain and confine the sculptural figures and their interaction. And it is precisely in this bold move that the vertical thrust of the temple as a whole reaches a dynamic visual climax. My look is not only led up but *out*—out of the constrictive two-dimensionality of the double band of sculptures just below, and finally out of the temple itself and up into the sky. The movement that begins with the stone-bound earth on which the building is set and on which one ascends to the temple itself through its base, columns, and pediments culminates in a transference into another elemental region, that

of air, as if to complete the cycle of Heidegger's Dimension, thereby drawing together two members of the Fourfold (i.e., earth and sky) in the company of several others (humans, animals, and gods: the major subjects of all the sculptures taken collectively in the upper part of the Parthenon). This movement upward is dramatized by the triangular shape of the pediments, which draw their denizens skyward.

And the dialectic of the practical and the aesthetic in all this? Only the base of the Parthenon counts as materially necessary in the strict sense of bearing the weight of the building as a whole and thus serving to stabilize it on earth. As such, it exhibits what Heidegger calls "reliability" (*Verlässlichkeit*)—and must do so if the building is to stand at all and present itself as such. In comparison with the base, the columns are already a conditional necessity: required for supporting the upper part of the temple, they would not be needed at all if the latter did not exist. Moreover, their subtle shaping—their calculated convolutions—usher in the realm of the aesthetic: the aesthetic as pure form, here in an unadorned image-less state. Only with the three figurative levels at the top of the building (i.e., frieze/metopes/pediments) does the aesthetic come fully into play. Not that the aesthetic requires human (or deific) figuration, much less narration. But these levels serve as expressive vehicles that allow the aesthetic to come into its own, thanks to the exquisite elaboration of the figures in both two- and three-dimensional formats. They come to life, virtually at least—in a "life of forms" (in Henri Focillon's celebrated phrase) that releases sheer stone from its mute impassivity and allows it to speak in its own terms, while at the same time instantiating mythical entities and events.

What is most remarkable in this circumstance is the combination of the practically necessary and the aesthetic *in one work*—coherently and powerfully conjoined there. These two factors also coexisted in the domestic situations discussed in section 1 above. But in that case the two dimensions existed in comparative independence of each other: the functional was set apart from the beautiful; the window as providing air and light could not be confused with the curtains that dress it up, and the privacy provided by the latter is easily distinguished from their texture and pattern. Here function easily separates itself out from form, even if they call for each other in many respects. But in the case of the Parthenon the aesthetic merges much more completely with the necessary—as we see in the simple visual fact that the base of the building, despite its undeniable functionality, is part and parcel of the building as a whole, being taken in by the same look that apprehends

the columns and pediments above. As one stands before this extraordinary structure, one sees *one building* whose parts are so integral to the whole as to be inseparable from it. These parts are distinguishable upon analysis; but this does not alter the fact that they are inseparable parts of the Parthenon, in keeping with Husserl's distinction between "parts" (*Momente*) and "pieces" (*Stücke*). The curtains, in contrast, are readily detachable from the window they surround. I can imagine very different curtains for one and the same window; indeed, no curtains at all for it. No such easy exchangeability or subtractability obtains for the various parts of the Parthenon, not even the sculptures on the pediments: once created and put into place there, they become integral parts of the building as a whole.

The inherent belongingness of these sculptures of the pediment is not a matter of the kind of material necessity exhibited in the base or the columns. As if to demonstrate this, they have been literally detached from the Parthenon itself—either destroyed outright, as in the Turks' shelling of the Acropolis in 1687, or else taken away (to England by Lord Elgin early in the nineteenth century or, in the case of certain surviving fragments, placed in the Acropolis Museum). Nevertheless, whatever their current location, they remain *intrinsic to the identity* of the Parthenon—inherent not only to its aesthetic being but also to its public facticity and its historical bearing. Once part of the Parthenon, it is difficult to imagine them elsewhere—part of some other building. They are integral to the building as a whole; they belong *here*, just here, and nowhere else.

And if this is so, two conclusions follow forth:

1. The Parthenon as a single building brings together the practical and the aesthetic in an indissoluble, noncontingent unity: its architectural genius consists in having made these otherwise disparate terms *coeval complements* of each other. The very steadfastness of the foundation—its sturdy reliability—not only coexists with the extravagances of the pediment but makes them possible. Its (necessary) materiality is continued into the (nonnecessary but complementary) materiality of the sculptural group: it is *released* into the sculptural realm. From a position of dumb indispensability at the base, the same material (i.e., marble) becomes highly expressive in the upper reaches of the building. It is as if the solid stone of the base has been atomized into the atmosphere at the very edge of the gestures made by humans and horses as they lean out of the pediment. What is indispensable in the base is dispensed in these gestures, the muteness of the one giving way to the articulateness of the other. The relationship is not that of matter and form—the classical

hylomorphic dyad—nor even that of support and superstructure. Instead, it is that of the progressive modulation of matter as it presents itself in a complementary series of phases: base/columns/frieze/metopes/pedimental sculptures. As we move through this series, we move from the inanimate to the animated, the horizontal to the vertical. But we can also reverse course, since the members of the series are genuinely complementary in other ways: for example, the expressive (gestural, narrative, kinetic) cedes place to the compact and stolid (foundational, functional). Bearing out, we might say, gives way to bearing up.

2. A distinction between the *decorative* and the *ornamental* is also called for. Earlier, I was able to speak of such things as curtains and shutters as merely decorative—insofar as their purely practical essence is bracketed—and by this I meant embellishing the existing material structure, enhancing the physical presence of the walls of a house. This is why we say that curtains and shutters belong to the domain of "home decoration"—to the realm of the "cozy," "pretty," and "fitting." These latter name aesthetic values, and each invokes a pleasure peculiar to domestic life. Such pleasure is not to be gainsaid; it belongs to what Kant called the "enjoyable" (*angenehm*), which is too often confused with the pure formal pleasure peculiar to art. Neither the agreeable nor the pleasant is adequate to describe what the visitor to the Parthenon experiences—namely, a visceral feeling that is akin to the emotions associated with what Kant would term the "sublime."[5] The experience of this latter is expressed more as a gasp of wonderment than an impassive look; it involves the whole body, as if the spectacle were being thrust bodily into myself. But the building is not incorporated as a brute physical thing; it enters me not as decorated (decoration remains on the surface) but as *ornamented*.

To be ornamented means belonging to the building itself and not just its surface; it is to be internal to its very appearance, part of its very phenomenality. Neither structurally necessary nor merely detachable, *genuine ornament inheres in the materiality of the building*, its very stone, its marble essence. It transforms this materiality into an expressive vehicle—like a winged chariot that moves not just with speed, but with grace. Ornament is like decoration in that both complicate a given material structure beyond any factor of necessity; but ornament, unlike decoration, is related to the matter it configures by being organically tied to it. "Organic" here signifies that which belongs to something in a way that is at once indissociable and enhancing. Thanks to ornament, the basic physical structure of a building such as the Parthenon is

altered in the way it presents itself to the appreciative viewer. Not just embellishing this structure, ornament fuses with it organically and makes it into something significantly different from what it would be without it. Genuine ornament is immanent to the very being of that which it ornaments, part of its deep inner structure—not contingent or exchangeable, as is decoration.[6]

A new sense of the necessary is here suggested: not necessary in a literal or logical sense but *essential to the aesthetic identity, the presentational essence*, of that which is ornamented. We enter here the realm of necessity in art, first broached by Aristotle in his *Poetics*; Aristotle was speaking of tragedy, but his claim can be extended to the spatial arts, including architecture as well as painting. Here we need to distinguish between *necessary for* and *necessary to*. The first form of necessity implies being requisite for something to work at all (e.g., to stand up as a building)—more basically, for it to exist materially as it is: to be *this* very building in its perduring viability. The foundation of the Parthenon is an exemplary case of such necessity. For a building such as this to exist as an intact work of architecture, it has to have a material base of some considerable consistency and strength—hence the multiplication of the layers that form the foundation of the building: this foundation is necessary *for* the Parthenon's abiding physical existence. In the second form of necessity, we witness something essential to being perceived as it is presented for aesthetic delectation: the Parthenon as seen from a certain perspective and as one presentational whole. The ornament provided by the sculptures of the pediment are necessary *to* this whole. Berkeley's formula, *esse est percipi*, is here especially apt, since the being that now matters is the being-perceived of the building, the way it gives itself to us in aesthetic perception. In such perception, the material substructure, undergirding the fact that the building stands, is presumed to be intact, allowing us to focus on the sheer perceptuality of the edifice, its sensuous configurations. No wonder, then, that the role of sculptural relief is correspondingly important. Whether two- or three-dimensional, this relief is not merely diversionary, not just entertaining, not only decorative. It is necessary to our apprehension of the building as an artwork.

As ornament, the sculptural masses in the upper part of the building are necessary to the presentational being of the Parthenon, as we sense acutely from the fact that the remaining fragments call out for completion by the missing pieces. These masses are constitutive of the building, being an organic part of its architectural identity—in contrast with what is merely decorative, which can be imagined away or literally exchanged without significant

loss to such identity. The difference is that between being integral to the phenomenal identity of the work and being merely epiphenomenal to it.

Phenomenality encompasses the entire work as it is perceived: in this case, the full visual force of the Parthenon as we encounter it on the Acropolis, everything that belongs to its impact upon us as we approach it. We are not just struck by this singular phenomenon, we are embraced by it, taken into its midst. A mere epiphenomenon cannot draw our aesthetic attention to the same extent: instead of being an integral part of the architectural work, it is as easily detachable from it as curtains or shutters are from the window of a living room or bedroom. "Epi-" signifies *upon*: hence not part of the thing itself.

In all of this, the surface figures prominently. As James J. Gibson says, "The surface is where most of the action is."[7] For it is on surfaces that things come to appearance in the first place: their phenomenality becomes evident thereon, and can be taken in as such, often by a mere glance.[8] The phenomenal appearances of material things display themselves on their presented surfaces, and this is all the more true of perception in art, where the emphasis is more on appearance and its presented configurations than on thinghood as such. The pedimental figures on the Parthenon configure the upper surfaces of this part of the ancient building, endowing it with a unique aesthetic phenomenality.

The link between ornament, phenomenon, and surface goes deep—as deep as any surface can go: here, indeed, the depths are on the surface. Contrasting with this linkage are such things as decoration, epiphenomenon, and the superficial, where "superficial" means not so much trivial or inconsequential as resting *on* a surface, hovering over it, thus eliminable from it. Only in the first triad of terms do human beings attain the full appearance of something—or more exactly, its coming-to-appearance, *phainesthai* (literally, "to come into the light"). Such appearing is the proper content of *aisthésis*, the ancient Greek term for receptive "sensing." The appearing-sensing dyad is the epistemic pivot operative in the apperception of ornament, and it delivers the necessity proper to aesthetic appreciation. I say "apperception" to indicate that the perception here at stake is modulated to a degree of fine filagree commensurate with the variegated phenomenal appearings that are favored in artworks of many kinds. The eye that caresses the horses and gods in the pediment of the Parthenon is aesthetically attuned to their sculpted surfaces, with the result that their being sensed is affine with their appearing; the eye ap-perceives them, that is, takes note of the considerable convolutions

at their presented surfaces, just as it follows closely the subtle folds in the robes of the women who flank Dionysus in the east pediment.[9]

   Phenomenality/epiphenomenality, perception/apperception, decoration/ornament, necessary for/necessary to: the foregoing analysis of the Parthenon has led to the spawning of a new series of paired terms. Their discernment has arisen from a careful examination of my experiences of the Parthenon, supplemented with allusions to art history of the classical Greek period. Instead of regarding them as divisive dichotomies that would dissolve my analysis into fragments as disparate as those of the existing state of the Parthenon's pedimental sculptures, we should regard them in the same Merleau-Pontian spirit of resolution I have invoked in the case of the practical and the aesthetic. In each new instance, the terms that are so seemingly diverse in their initial state end by calling for each other—indeed, *requiring* each other. (a) There would be no phenomenality—no full-fledged appearance—without the continuing compossibility of the epiphenomenal fringes that fly off from the same surface on which the phenomenal is such an integral presence. And vice versa: to be far-flung is to be far-flung *from* something that is comparatively stable and stationary. (b) Similarly, there can be no apperception without a perceptual baseline under which apperception plays like a figured bass; conversely, every straight-arrow perception carries with it the permanent possibility of an apperceptual variation, a speleology of subtle substructures. (c) What is superficial in decoration has as its essential counterpart—*essential*, not adventitious—the inherent organicity of the ornamental, its power of configuring things from within and on their own material terms. By the same token, the ornamental carries with it the ongoing opportunity of becoming decorative, appealing to the aesthetic eye on its own terms. (d) So, too, being necessary-for is required for the effective operation of being necessary-to: the ingredients of the former are sine qua non for the presentation of the latter (e.g., the physical base for the pedimental display)—while a factor such as the ornamental, though not necessary for the standing of a building, is necessary to its full aesthetic presentation. It is like a redoubled necessity, carrying what is necessary-for to a new level in which sensuous complications become necessary to the full experience of the building; the Parthenon would not be the masterpiece it is without possessing both kinds of necessity in exquisite equipoise.

   Threading through all four dyads is the interplay of the superficial and the deep: itself a basic binary that is ingredient in all architectural works. This last dyad, seeming irresolvable at first glance, has its own center of

resolution: the surface. For "surface" as I've been employing the term in the wake of Gibson holds and presents depth, while depth ever seeks expression on some perceptible surface—as does the superficial itself, always in need of anchoring itself in something having sufficient consistency and continuity in which to be presented.

<center>III</center>

By now you may be asking yourself: *Where have all the edges gone?* Even if I have not thematized their presence in my analysis of the Parthenon, they have never left us. In truth, they are . . . *everywhere*: in the base of the building, the columns, and the upper parts. Each of these components of the temple of Athena bears its own distinctive edges, whether these are perfectly rectilinear, slightly curved, or highly variegated. *No part is edgeless*. Each part of this building ends in a characteristic kind of edge, and all but the buried portion of the foundation present internal edges as well (e.g., the fluting of the columns, the delicate but forceful in-lines of the sculpted figures). Moreover, it is precisely in the spontaneous apperception of the phenomenal surfaces of all the visible building parts that these various edges come to our cognizance. For *there is no sensed surface without its own external or internal edges*— edges that give to these surfaces their shape and limit: their literal de-finition, their very identity.

   I am not saying that we take in edges alone, but whatever we do encounter in a built structure like the Parthenon comes edged. Every part, including incomplete parts, is specifiable not just as having its own edges but also such that these edges are each an *edge of* something more inclusive—"of" in that strong partitive sense that signifies being a component part of something and not just a chunk or piece of it. When I glance at any part of the Parthenon, say, its partially obscured inner cella (i.e., the inner sanctuary where Phidias's fabled statue of Athena was housed), I see a set of edges that accrue to walls and to the decaying surfaces of columns situated in the center of the building taken as a whole. The cella presents a set of edges that define it as a temple structure—this we see at once—but the same edges also establish it as part of the Parthenon as a single building.

   These edges do not stand out in the way that the external edges of the building do; in comparison with the latter, they are recessive, barely noticed in casual looking. But they are no less definitive—no less crucial in any

Figure 3.4. Interior of Parthenon: cella. Photo © John Varoumas.

adequate accounting of the contents of this look. Every such look comes to terminate somewhere in particular, however momentarily. What I see is seen as edged in certain particular ways, both those accruing to that which I apperceive (e.g., the cella) and those that belong to the larger structure—which comes with its own complex of edges. No visual appearance goes on forever; each shows itself only within certain spatial delimitations: even the most encompassing horizon of the most sweeping vista is delimited by the land or sea that forms its "basis-place" (*Bodenstätte*) in Husserl's graphic locution.[10] In human perception and apperception, these delimitations of the visual field assume the form of edges.

   To point to the pervasiveness of edges is not to say that all edges are of equal interest or comparable importance. Of course not! Consider only the differences between the edges of the parts of the Parthenon's foundation that are visible—edges that cling tightly to shaped slabs of marble matter. Each such edge has a double function: to delimit the solid object of which it is a part, and to distinguish this same object from the others with which it is associated in the massively coordinated work of supporting the building as a whole. Any differences between these functional edges pale in comparison with their basic likeness to one another insofar as they share in a common

FIGURE 3.5. Parthenon columns. Photo © Josh Clark.

task; only for the diligent architect or engineer or art historian would such differences (e.g., in exact extent and mass) matter in ordinary perception. In their conjoint presence, the edges of the foundation stones are important for the fate of the building, but they do not compel visual attention on their own, taken either singly or together.

Things are otherwise with the edges of the outer columns of the temple. Seen from a certain distance and from an initial encounter with the temple's southwest corner, these edges concatenate in an intense group of closely aligned verticalities that sweep the visitor's vision back toward the far end of the temple—where the episode of seeing is brought to an abrupt conclusion.

If columnar edges move the eye back in this fashion, they also move it upward, taking our look up to the plain Doric capitals that terminate each column and allow it to be just *that* column. Thus, within one and the same constructed work, one set of edges (those of the columns proper) is capped by another (those of their own capitals). This capping from above is something that holds for the entire upper part of the temple as it encloses the open middle space of the same temple, including the cella. The top-heavy superstructure imposes its massive rectangularity upon that space—as if to

FIGURE 3.6. Parthenon stones. Photo © Koorosh Nozad Tehrani.

prevent anything in this space from vanishing into thin air. The perceived weight is such that the viewer has the sense that the scattered stones at the base of the temple may well have been thrown down onto the ground by the massive pressure of an earlier version of the building:

These intensely interactive groups of columnar and middle space edges are to be contrasted with the edges on the pedimental mass. Here, rather than continuity and cooperation, or else outright opposition, we witness a diverse group of edges that are highly individuated. Most of these serve to give to the sculpted figures their discrete identities (i.e., as Athena or Poseidon, along with lesser deities and the lively horses who are their counterparts from the animal kingdom). As I have mentioned, the outer edges of a number of these figures exceed the precisely determined limit of the perfectly triangular pediment that, at the same time, acts to include them; it is as if these figures were rebelling against the confinement and regularity of the geometric structure. We may speculate that the careful construction of the lower parts of

the Parthenon has allowed, if not invited, this gesture of excess, in which the diversely articulated force of sculpture triumphs, however momentarily, over an obdurate architectural mass. However we choose to interpret it, we have to do with a building in which animation arises from the inanimate. Lively as its contents are, however, the pediment still serves as the outer limit for the entire building—as the point where the Parthenon is profiled against the sky, thereby completing the Dimension whose other pole is the rock-bound earth of the Acropolis.

IV

Despite its iconic status in the architecture of the West, the Parthenon is only one building among countless others. I have taken it as an especially revealing example for an analysis of architectural edges—one that contrasts instructively with the edge-character of much domestic architecture in the modern Western era. Any adequate analysis would have to go on to a more complete assessment of other kinds of buildings, particularly those that are less formidably rectangular and rectilinear in their design and construction. I refer to a whole range of building types that make a virtue of curvilinear and rotund structures and spaces: for example, the baroque churches of architects like Borromini and Bernini and the contemporary works of a figure such as Frank Gehry (fig. 3.1), not to mention the domed structures of the Inuit or the Dogon peoples.[11] But in all such other cases, disparate as they are in their origins and uses, we find the pervasive presence of edges, however differently configured and variously realized.

Merleau-Ponty has acted as the patron saint of this essay, haunting it at several key places. A final way in which his thought inspires a philosophy of architecture emerges in his last work, *The Visible and the Invisible*. In that truncated text, Merleau-Ponty introduces the idea of "flesh" and especially "the flesh of the world" (*la chair du monde*). "My body," said Merleau-Ponty in a working note of 1960, "is made of the same flesh as the world . . . [and] is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world" (*VI*, 248; "reflects" is underlined). I would like to propose that these terms provide a medium for the various dichotomies that have arisen in the course of my analysis—dyads that are otherwise rootless, with no base beyond themselves. It is telling that Merleau-Ponty figured first in suggesting that each such binary has an inner coherence: an inherent

complementarity or co-necessity. Now I want to propose that he comes to our assistance a last time in projecting a ground for these same dyads, a matrix in which they in effect coexist. This ground is found in the flesh of the world, which Merleau-Ponty claimed is an unprecedented concept in Western philosophical thought.[12] Earlier, I proposed a first such base or ground in the notion of "surface," in which depth and that which seems to exceed surface (i.e., the realm of the epiphenomenal) find a common measure. It is significant that flesh is itself a kind of surface—but sense of a surface that takes us beyond my bare description. For flesh is first of all the surface of the human body. As more than mere covering, flesh cannot be reduced to skin. It is the bodily surface considered as possessing its own depth ("the surface of a depth" [*VI*, 136]) and its own density (épaisseur, in one of Merleau-Ponty's most frequently employed words) as well as its own intensity (i.e., of sensation and of affect). Only surface so understood does justice to the body's inherent fleshiness: its polysensibility, its depth of responsiveness, its capacity for habitual actions that nonetheless leave room for genuine innovation.

The bodily surface so regarded is continuous with, and integrally part of, the flesh of the world—that is, all that surrounds it that is of like character or that can be assimilated to it. This includes many things that might seem at first to be of a wholly different character, including the surfaces of nonhuman animals, of plants, of rocks—and finally, of the earth itself, its very soil. Expanding on Merleau-Ponty, we can say that all these latter possess their own manner of flesh, allowing them to connect with human flesh's distinctively polymorphous power to attract, register, and respond to what differs from it in significant ways—including the buildings in which it is housed and the cities in which it is located. So conceived, the flesh of the world is all-encompassing and indivisible, amalgamating the diverse modes of flesh of all that is situated on the earth. Taken together, these modes constitute the flesh of the world—a world that is coeval with the earth, bound up with it and inseparable from it.

What does flesh and especially the flesh of the world have to do with architecture and especially with its edges? I have just hinted that built places belong to the world's flesh, despite their origins in the particularities of human design and their often highly contrived means of construction. I would go further and say that architecture, far from being a merely artificial and conventional factor in human life, belongs intrinsically to the flesh of the world and that, still more radically, it inheres in human flesh—is inseparable from it. To be human is to live flesh in such a way as to exist in a built environment,

however minimal (a shelter, a tent) or elaborate (a skyscraper, a stadium) this environment may be. When not in such surroundings, human creatures miss them, need them, and crave them—hence are always in the process of seeking and setting up built structures of some sort. Whether made from rock or wood, steel or aluminum, such structures are not merely external but are lodged in the world's flesh—flesh of its flesh—and are part of our own flesh, too, thanks to their incorporation into the daily lifeworlds animated by moving bodies.

Edges are part of the same structures—and in many ways, only several of which have been considered in this essay. They could not be the structures they are without having surfaces that, in turn, are dependent on edges for their contour and definition. More generally, edges are present in the intercalation of the integral parts of buildings—as we saw in the cella of the Parthenon—and in the intersection of buildings themselves in entire building complexes (neighborhoods, cities); they are continuous as well with such larger dimensions as earth, sky, and world. Between all of these edge situations there is a profound "intertwining" (*entrelacs*), in Merleau-Ponty's word: an intricate enmeshment. And where there is intertwinement there is an intersection of edges—however prominent or rough, soft or subtle these may be to the human eye and hand. By the same token, the world's flesh, full of buildings as well as trees and mountains, is perforated with "gaps" (écarts) that bring their own edges. Such gaps open up between different parts of the world's flesh, thereby assuring that the latter is not a seamless whole, a Parmenidean One, in which there would be no termini, no distinctions, no discontinuities. On the contrary, everything we look at, everywhere we turn, everything we touch is riddled with unevennesses—thus comes edged at every step.

The flesh of the world is rife with crevices, rills, and precipices: these being the worldly equivalent of the wrinkles and creases we feel acutely on the surface of our flesh, which is smooth only in isolated parts. For the most part, our bodily flesh is filled with angularities and irregularities, however awkward or unbecoming these may be. The basic fact is that all these modes of corporeal discrepancy (*décalage*, in another key word from Merleau-Ponty's later writing) premonitor and effectively join forces with the discrepancies we experience in our surrounding environments, whether natural or constructed. One set of edges anticipates another, and the action is two-way: from body to world, and world to body, both together at once, *tout ensemble*.

In this interplay, buildings figure centrally as intermediaries between individuated bodies and the shared natural world: they are "inter-flesh" in this highly interactive scene. This is so whether their formal structure is directly suggestive of flesh as in Gehry's titanium sheathing of continuously curved surfaces—and as in much non-Western domestic architecture—or whether it is starkly rectilinear, as with the Parthenon and many other such four-square structures. All such works are architectures of flesh, the flesh that links human flesh with that of the environing world. In this way, they are themselves contributions to the world's flesh, indeed part of this flesh itself. But they are this only as animated by the enfleshed bodies of those who build and inhabit and remember them.

The link between body, building, and world is made through flesh, once this latter term is suitably expanded in the spirit of Merleau-Ponty. Just as flesh provides a base for otherwise divisive dualisms, so it is *le fil conducteur* of three great disparate domains, rendering them one-in-many, many-in-one: many bodies, many buildings, many landscapes, all in one continuously modulating flesh that takes in and gives out edges of every imaginable sort.[13]

NOTES

1. Edward S. Casey, "Edges of Time, Edges of Memory," in *Time, Memory, Institution: Merleau-Ponty's New Ontology of Self*, ed. David Morris and Kym Maclaren (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015).

2. On the special role of apperception in ongoing perceptual life, see Edward S. Casey, *The World at a Glance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 260–62, 362, 373, 450, 453, and 476–79.

3. Edmund Husserl, "The Origin of Geometry," in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 354–55, 376–77.

4. Martin Heidegger, ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . . ," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper, 1971), 220–21.

5. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (1790; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 82–101.

6. See Kent C. Bloomer, *The Nature of Ornament: Rhythm and Metamorphosis in Architecture* (New York: Norton, 2000). Bloomer gives a more complete discussion of ornament in distinction from decoration, especially in terms of the factor of "rhythm," which I here ignore.

7. James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1986), 23.

8. Regarding surface, see Casey, *World at a Glance*, 140–42, 263–67, and 369–74.

9. For these images, see Olga Palagia, *The Pediments of the Parthenon* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), plates 31, 39.

10. Edmund Husserl, "Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature," in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, trans. Fred Kersten, ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981), 226–27.

11. For further analysis of Gehry's work (especially the Disney Concert Hall), see the chapter titled "Architectural Edges" in Edward S. Casey, *The World on Edge*, forthcoming.

12. "One knows there is no name in traditional philosophy to designate it" (*VI*, 139).

13. I wish to thank Patricia Locke for an earlier reading of this essay. Reid Comstock has been of critical assistance in bringing the text to its final form.

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LIQUID SPACE OF MATRIXIAL FLESH: READING MERLEAU-PONTY AND BRACHA L. ETTINGER POOLSIDE

Randall Johnson

Space escapes us, forever exceeding our sensible horizons. But we do not escape space, being always already *of* space, always already inhering *as* space—except, perhaps, with the arrival-withdrawal of the never not yet of death's time or the possibly even more uncanny withdrawal-arrival of the never not yet of the time before birth. To speculate on such times-without-space, however, is to exceed liminal sensibility. And to engage in any naming of this insensible is to risk falling back into that purely ideational space of transcendental metaphysics from which phenomenology at its immanent material best has been striving to escape. We will make an effort, in this thinking liquid space, to adhere to such a phenomenological saying of the ongoingness of this spatially sensible arrival of life between these extreme, insensible temporalities—life *as* this very material arrival between its immaterial withdrawals. By virtue of this bodily arrival, life is necessarily spatiotemporal in its contingent materiality between the birth and death of its singular plural bodies.

To think the liminality of liquid space is to confound the Kantian purity of some synthetic a priori as a transcendental category with its literally sensible instantiation. This is to hold together the intelligible transcendental and the sensible immanent in lived coherence rather than to separate them in the abstractions of pure thought. By so doing, we open ourselves to an affectivity, a felt sensibility, of our very corporeal inherence *as* space. Though, as we are quickly reminded when a glass of water is accidentally tipped over, liquids are not so easily held without some *techne* of containment. After some speculations that aim to reclaim the often philosophically disavowed capacity to think-with-affect, we will briefly tour the history of one such architectural construct: the swimming pool. This invites a few Bachelardian musings on

its specific element: water. Once these flows of thought provide us a place beside which to read, we will make use of the theory of Bracha L. Ettinger, an artist, psychoanalyst, and feminist philosopher, and explore her concept of the matrixial. The matrixial is derived from *matrice* as womb, and Ettinger develops a language to speak from this borderspace as real, imaginary, and symbolic. Exemplary of what she calls her artworking, the Eurydice series is especially evocative of the haunting liminality of the matrixial—more uncannily felt than clearly known. In developing this concept, she directly references the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, and her thinking is clearly resonant with his concept of elemental flesh and its various ways of being expressed. In attempting to trace thinking from an abstract space-without-time to an intimate space-with-affect, we will explore the architecture of the swimming pool as an instance of matrixial flesh, a place-in-particular by which to read. In its autographics, this writing—and writing is also a *techne* of open containment—constitutes itself as mourning. To think origin, maternal and metaphysical, is to invite myth. And we will begin with Plato's *chora*.

MYTHIC AND ORIGINARY SPACE-WITHOUT-TIME

To question space is to evoke origin, which forever recedes into the oblivion of its never formed memory: eternal space-without-time. Plato, in the *Timaeus*, dares to name this primal formlessness, which receives the stuff of elements: *chora*—pre-elemental space become intimate place of generativity. The very naming partitions what must be shared and this dehiscing creates a liminal difference of the shared, as some mythic One and the Same before origin, forever hence divided into the intelligibility and the sensibility of the many—an *écart* that is the perpetual motion of a thinking that to this dreamy day haunts itself with its sentience. Over the history of human years, these are the various lines drawn between the truth(s) of being, the beliefs of becoming, and the spectacles of appearance of elemental stuff. The presumption that the intelligible can extricate itself from its carnality, from its lived material sense in the plenum, that it can in some manner uncreate itself to capture this space-without-time is perhaps the founding hubris of man—and here the specified gender presages the predominance of the phallogocentric discourse that has administered this transcendental space, which later becomes absolute and empty in its Cartesian and Newtonian elaborations. With such ideational purity, this space certainly seems to

be emptied of the intensities of affects. But returning to Plato's text *as* dialogue, we must recall that this telling a story of creation happens in a place of entertainment, of hospitality, of affiliation, a place for a splendid feast of reason as Socrates so sensually describes this experience of ideas: words and affects shared among sensible creatures.[1] Perhaps to return to Plato expunged of certain accrued Platonisms is to remember this creatureliness and its mortality; and to recall Timaeus's evocation of *chora* as *matrix*, as womb, is to anticipate the borderspace that Bracha Ettinger names the matrixial and, as she does, to think this space along with Merleau-Ponty's elemental flesh. Reading poolside, we will experience the architecture of liquid space as an instance of matrixial flesh.

SPACE-WITHOUT-TIME TO SPACE-WITH-AFFECT

It is important, however, not to discard too hastily the value of what I have judged as the presumption of hubris in its assumed mastery of space. By the mere fact of being creatures, we at minimum have needs for sustenance and shelter. The emphasis on separations from, rather than connections to, our environment has opened space for various epistemologies of objectivity that have increased our abilities to fabricate, continuing the legacy of *techne* in the machinic manifestations of the sciences. No one, I suspect, would disclaim that advances in engineering know-how allow for new spatial expressions by architecture in the structures designed for sheltering us from the various pains we may suffer from the elements, as well as those designed for giving ourselves over to experiences of elemental pleasures. The disentangling of the sensible from the intelligible—gradually morphing into the distinction between subjective and objective, which is a line of difference drawn in varying places—has clearly allowed for some pragmatic benefits for survival, as well as for happiness. The at times too facile conceit of a supposed overcoming of this separation seems at times naive, if not unthinking. To reclaim an understanding of belonging to space, inhering as space, while acknowledging the ongoing wish as well as need to master objectivized space, is not to disallow their differing but is to come to an experiential knowing of their intertwining liminalities. Perhaps disclaiming the subjective/objective distinction constitutes just as much a risk for a return to the ideologies of certain metaphysics as does reifying their disentanglement.

The line of historical disavowal to which I wish to bring notice by calling this phallic impulse of the "I can of man" by its emotive name hubris—that tragic and heroic, at times even joyous, pride of willful humanisms—is that line becoming abyss between intelligibility and affectivity. It has resulted in this illusory space-without-time becoming an illusory space-without-affect, which at another level of line drawing and hyphen making becomes thinking-without-affect. This is the intertwining for which I desire to reclaim liquid space, to reclaim a matrixial besidedness rather than to remain in the phallic abyss, to begin to use Ettinger's expressions. Reason in its sovereign mode commands a foreclosure of affect to make space for critical thinking in such a rarefied air that the body ceases to breathe. The true capacity for an at times useful affective neutrality, in the objective space of science, in the therapeutic space of psychoanalysis, and in the thinking space of philosophy, depends on sensibility's enticements for noticing, allowing, and enduring affects, perhaps even cherishing affects, rather than on reason's pronouncements of a supposed necessity for controlling, suppressing, perhaps even disavowing affects. And, of course, the latter presumed necessity is often accompanied by various overlayerings of moral judgments by a reason that, even with Kant's razor-sharp thinking of its limits, cannot reach its ideal of a purely critical power; and perhaps without awareness, reason clings to its former speculations of truth with their variously manifested histories of excluding the feeling body. It is in their capacity to reopen this prediscursive space-with-affect and to create this renewal without falling into a dismissive vocabulary of regression or becoming trapped in the obfuscatory risks of some mysticisms that the works of Merleau-Ponty and Ettinger will help us understand the *matrice*-like allure of the swimming pool.

SPACE-IN-GENERAL TO PLACE-IN-PARTICULAR

Any effort to *think* space-in-general, whether disciplined by philosophy or physics, is mediated by a separation; and however slight this tentative transcending may strive to be, there remains in this recursivity of thinking a metaphysical hyphen. This is the inevitable gap in any illusory purity of intelligibility. When the driving desire for an immanent spatial reunion is allowed expression, when the wish for immediacy, for experiencing the flow of life's presence without deconstructive mediation, is apprehended, then thinking reclaims its sensibility. In the inevitable recursive return marked

by language, various names from different domains have been tested for this reclamation of immediacy: be here now (for those old enough to remember); in the zone (for artists and athletes); the oceanic feeling and the death drive (for theorists and therapists); born again and nirvana (for believers and drug users); and *jouissance* (for everyone), which is an enjoyable place to end this Borgesian list without end. So we will suspend, for now, this effort to say things about space-in-general, however liquid the desire for reunion, and return to human things, the making of space into a place to dwell, which at times includes the luxury of a private swimming pool, a place beside which to read, a place-in-particular. And any place-in-particular, by having in some way been fabricated, manifests how this mediated intelligibility of our discoveries about space is both separate from and entangled with the immediate sensibility of our inherence as space.

In *The Springboard in the Pond*, the water text in a planned series that tells the story of architecture with a view toward the classical four elements, Thomas A. P. van Leeuwen traces, as his subtitle phrases it, *An Intimate History of the Swimming Pool*. This grand cultural history progresses from the ancient baths of Rome, to the floating structures for public swimming and bathing in the rivers of Europe in the eighteenth century, to the private fantasy indoor liquid spaces of the megawealthy in the nineteenth century, to the backyard swimming pools that proliferate in contemporary America. Noticing this last architectural instantiation of water lust from that high altitude view allowed by peering from the window of an airplane in the beginning years of this century, the gaze is repeatedly drawn to those shimmering specks of reflection behind the Monopoly-size houses. "The pool," van Leeuwen writes, "is the architectural outcome of man's desire to become one with the element of water, privately and free of danger." Phrasing this in the language we are developing here, the pool domesticates liquid space into human place, but only partially, as his next sentence attests: "A swim in the pool is a complex and curious activity, one that oscillates between joy and fear, between domination and submission, for the swimmer delivers himself with controlled abandonment to the forces of gravity, resulting in sensations of weight- and timelessness."[2] Since he makes masculine this imaginary swimmer—who by such masculinization may be more defended against the vulnerable emotions of his abandonment—we will give space to a woman in the water. Dara Torres, the swimmer who participated in her fifth Olympic Games in Beijing in the summer of 2008, became known through the media (which is without a doubt our current most spectacular mediation

of the drive for immediacy); and although known because of her determination and skill, she was likely so frequently televisualized at the time of the games because of her age of forty-one years. In an interesting confluence of the humanisms of science and of willpower, she writes: "I don't know exactly why I've done well, but I know I've surrounded myself with the best. I'm probably genetically gifted. I want it, and I probably want it more than other people want it."[3] Though couched in the fading origins of the science of genetics, she references the givenness of her ability as a gift. Is it unfair to suggest that van Leeuwen's hypothetical male swimmer in expressing the realm of phallic competition would be less likely to evoke the space of the gift? To again anticipate Ettinger, we exist in both the phallic realm and the matrixial sphere, whatever the biologic of our bodies, and Torres begins her statement with words that seem to give voice to the latter: "I feel like I'm one with the water, like I was meant to be in the water. It's peaceful, serene. I feel comfortable in the water. No one bothers you when you're in the water. You can think when you're in the water."[4] This is an experiencing that is excessive to, dislocated from, the drive to compete. Refraining from any interpretive comments here, which all too easily violate the fragility of the exposed sharing of the matrixial, I will instead repeat and claim (at least for myself) the experiential truth of her last line: you can think when you're in the water. This would be a thinking that is reclaiming the feelings of its wondrous sensibilities.

APOLOGIA FOR LUXURY AND MANIFESTO FOR THE MATRIXIAL

In his efforts to explore the material philosophy of water, as van Leeuwen phrases it, in tracing this history of swimming pools, the thinker who clearly most informs this aspect of his research is Gaston Bachelard, especially from the work *Water and Dreams*. The subtitle that this great elemental thinker gives his text, *An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, reminds us of our capacity for imagination, so closely tied to affectivity, which reason in its strivings to be pure has also sought to dismiss as some manner of spurious thinking that apprehends only dreamlike images that are as illusory as fleeting shadows, to return to descriptions from the story of our creation told by Timaeus. If we allow Bachelard to enter Plato's dialogue at this moment, he argues against Timaeus: "The imagination is not, as its etymology suggests,

the faculty for forming images of reality; it is the faculty for forming images which go beyond reality, which *sing* reality."[5] In Bachelard's singing reality, this imagining retains its very materiality: "Forms reach completion. Matter, never. Matter is the rough sketch for unrestricted dreams."[6] The ambiguous and ambivalent allure of water is traced through myth, art, and literature and is told in a liquid language, the origins of which he attributes to the very sounds of water's flow. In an exercise of material imagining, we will place together two passages from separate chapters of this text:

> Closed-in water takes death into its bosom. Water makes death el-emental. . . . For certain souls, *water is the matter of despair*.[7]

> Water carries us. Water rocks us. Water puts us to sleep. Water gives us back our mother.[8]

To notice and tolerate, cherish even, the simultaneous intense flows of affects that seem to rend space by putting together death and "m/Other," as Ettinger writes the word, weaving us to place while displacing us from it, is to begin to practice a thinking of matrixial flesh.

Liquid space, matrixial flesh: the phrases, especially heard together, seem to evoke that slight difference of one term defining the other between luxuri-ant and luxurious—words so enticing in the very sensuality of saying them, especially with a hint of forbiddance in the voice to express a patina of moral judgment. Luxuriant, as exuberantly productive, ornate to the point of ex-cess, and luxurious, as self-indulgently comfortable, voluptuous to the point of excess, share the Latin root *luxuria*, meaning abundance or sumptuous enjoyment, which may correspond to *luxus*, meaning dislocated, a root that maintains a presence in current medical terminology as *luxation*, used to describe a dislocated joint. Fading into the origins of this science of words, etymology reveals the original meaning of *luxus* as excess.[9] Our brief men-tion of the swimming pool as luxury-Thing and of Torres's words describing her experience of being-in-water as dislocated from and excessive to phal-lic competition were intended to foreshadow this etymological speculation of material imagining. Our initial purpose here is to safeguard the singular swimming pool both from the judgments of Judeo-Christian liberal values as some kind of ostentation, the very showing off of luxury, however much any such expenditure of wealth is endorsed by the economy of capitalist democ-racies, and from the critiques of labor exploitation by Marxisms with their

ideal of an equally distributed economy of the common as nonprivate. Both ideologies at times seem to engage in an overvaluation, in a moral and an economic sense, if the two are allowed some separability, of the time of work over the time of leisure—a leisure that may invite luxuriating in a productivity of imagination, aesthetic or otherwise, which too easily gets dismissed as useless.[10]

The other purpose of this foreshadowing is to safeguard the matrixial sphere from the retro-judgments of a phallic-centered psychoanalysis, which can align itself with either ideology. This is the story of our creation into subjects, however decentered, by the gradual mastery of our various orifices. Once use of the genitals has been mastered—a mastery that seems to have entailed an overvaluation and symbolization of one of them as manifested in singular psyches by the various envious anxieties associated with lack or loss and as institutionalized in the plural-psyche sedimentation of culture by a language that has become phallogocentric—once we become postgenital, there seems to be no looking back, as if with such a retro-gaze we will suffer the fate of Orpheus and our Eurydice, as all "m/Other" will again fade away. At this point, with the slip, sliding little letter *l* of language (which in some fonts is indistinguishable from the big *I* of the subject), the phallic drive to compete becomes the phallogocentric wish to complete, to make total in some way, to be able to say some universal truth. Here, of course, we engage in the pure play of writing as mark making, as literal trace with no pretense of a science of origin. Not dissimilar to such play in writing, the interpretive interplay in the protected space of therapy with slips of tongues and slides of dreams has the potential to be revelatory to both participants and harkens to a psychoanalysis that has as its condition a philosophy of flesh. As Merleau-Ponty dares to hope, such a psychoanalysis exceeds anthropology and, with its elaborations in the writings of Ettinger, may reopen the possibilities of psychoanalysis as a science of the matrixial-singular in its happenings, whatever its biologic, rather than as a science of the general with its wishes to complete the phallic-particular as an occurrence of the universal. Any looking back to the matrix of desires in the intertwining of incomplete becomings is typically judged by such a postgenitally instituted psychoanalysis as a regression, as a fixation, as a perversion, as a pathology. What is called prediscursive *is* such only if discourse is equated to this phallic realm and allowed to territorialize language to completion. As Ettinger says in one of the fragments on her artworking: "But the pre- is not negation. (Pre-historicity, pre-symbolical, pre- . . .) It signals an excess that takes on meaning in the matrix."[11] This is a

FIGURE 4.1. Eurydice, no. 37, 2001. Oil, photocopic dust, and Xerox on paper
mounted on canvas, 21.4 x 28.3 cm. © Bracha L. Ettinger.

space of disjointed excess that is for the fragilities of continuing to say rather
than for the completion of speech, that is for the fluid vulnerabilities of on-
going originating rather than for the solidified safety of fixed meaning; this is a
dislocated space for playful choreographies rather than for overly serious car-
tography. We wish to safeguard this space-in-general of matrixial flesh, as well

as to safeguard a place-in-particular of elemental pleasure, this architectural becoming-Thing of the matrixial.

GAZING POOLSIDE WITH ETTINGER
AND MERLEAU-PONTY

In the autographics of the writing of material phenomenology, biologic makes differences; and it is with presumption, though hopefully tempered by some humility, that *I-as-male* write about the womb. Just as we need to remember to separate phallic structures from the penis as organ, Ettinger warns against equating the matrixial with the biological. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty explains that flesh is not just the living skin of the body but is element of the world. "Yet," as Etttinger states, "anatomy makes a difference that we should open to conceptualization."[12] Inasmuch as the male is structured by this not looking back from his genital mastery, the matrixial sphere is foreclosed, at least to the *male-as-I* who often consciously keeps a very guarded distance with his *non-I*, to use Ettinger's language rather than a prediscourse that is prone to postgenital prejudgments. "The female individual has a double access to the matrixial passage-space," she writes, "since she experiences the womb in the Real from outside and from inside."[13] The liquid space of elemental matrixial flesh as materially real seems to become experienced as dislocated and excessive, as uncanny; and even though we referred to the never not yet of the withdrawal-arrival of the time before birth as uncanny, it is perhaps because of a writing bound by biologic that *I-as-male* too quickly named it a time-without-space that exceeds sensibility, seeming to forget the womb as immemorial space-becoming-time of sensible creature, as primordial space of genesis of human life.[14] "At the core of the subject," writes Merleau-Ponty, "space and perception in general mark the fact of his birth, the perpetual contribution of his corporeality, and a communication with the world more ancient than thought" (*PhP*, 265). This fact of birth and its before, unforgettable but not remembered, the "unthought known," to use the phrase of the psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas, continue to vibrate in us, as Merleau-Ponty explains:

> We are experiences, that is, thoughts that feel behind themselves the weight of the space, the time, the very Being they think, and which therefore do not hold under their gaze a serial space and time

> nor the pure idea of series, but have about themselves a time and a
> space that exist by piling up, by proliferation, by encroachment, by
> promiscuity—a perpetual pregnancy, perpetual parturition, genera-
> tivity and generality, brute essence and brute existence, which are
> the nodes and antinodes of the same ontological vibration. (*VI*, 115)

In addition to being a psychoanalyst, Ettinger is also an artist, and she ac-
knowledges her experience of painting as opening her to theoretical as well
as aesthetic expressions of the matrixial borderspace. From reading her
notes on making art, it seems clear that for her the process of creating a
singular painting bears many resemblances to that of working through be-
tween analyst and analysand in a singular psychoanalysis. Her Eurydice se-
ries of artworks opens onto the canvases the beauty of disappearance in this
trauma of absent presence, present absence, the in-between of the never not
yet arrival-withdrawal of mythic Eurydice, the never not yet temporality of
therapy's protected space. To allow the sensibility of this realm its own ex-
pression does carry risks, and Ettinger must argue in her theory with Lacan
that allowing such expression does not equal psychosis. She mentions a few
passages in Freud that allude to what she names the matrixial, and, even
though he does not pursue an exploration of this realm in his writing, he at
least does not foreclose it as Lacan at times seems to do. In explicating her
concepts and placing them within the lineage of psychoanalytic theory, she
references, among others, Winnicott and the ideas of object relations theory,
Daniel Stern and his descriptions based on infant observation, Kohut and
the language of self psychology, and Bion and the alpha-element maternal
function, in addition to Lacan and his elaborations on Freud's thinking. She
extricates this matrixial borderspace of the between, which the phallic gaze
has tended to see only as the fusion of symbiosis, and, as Merleau-Ponty, she
begins to give words to that realm that is more ancient than thought and, by
reclaiming its sensibility, to create an opening for space-with-affect.

The psychoanalyst J. B. Pontalis, who studied with Merleau-Ponty, has
described the risk of writing on his ideas as either resulting in mimicry or
seeming to become nonsense. The same, it seems to me, could be said about
writing on the theoretical work of Ettinger, so it may reveal more sense to
share words of her own "wit(h)nessing," her term that I understand as the
being-with of a witnessing with *com-passion*, a passion that is always al-
ready shared. It is my hope that the anticipatory tracings of her work that we
have interlaced with ideas of Merleau-Ponty, even if from the biologic of an

I-as-male, however tempered by a certain queerness of writing,[15] can allow this longish passage in which she summarizes her thinking to be heard with an ear already opened to perceive the matrixial:

> The matrixial is modeled on a certain conception of feminine/ prebirth psychic intimate sharing, where the womb is conceived of as a shared psychic borderspace in which differentiation-in- co-emergence, separation-in-jointness, and distance-in-proximity are continuously reattuned by metramorphosis created by, and further creating—together with matrixial affects—relations-without-relating on the borders of appearing and disappearing, subject and object, among subjects and partial-subjects, between me and the stranger, and between partial-subjects and part-objects, transitional objects and relational subjective-objects. Co-emerging and co-fading *I*(s) and *non-I*(s) interlace their borderlinks in metramorphosis. . . . Through metramorphosis, each matrixial encounter engenders *jouissance*, traumas, pictograms, phantasies, and affects, and channels death-drive oscillations, libidinal-erotic flow, their imprints and affected traces in several partners, in com-passion, conjointly but differently.[16]

The intensities of both elemental pleasures and psychic pains, shared among singular plural bodies, have the possibility to be overwhelming in their transformations, and experiences that overwhelm us in the plenum of life's spatial arrival may be experienced as revelatory *and* as traumatic. It is with ever-reawakened practices of matrixial thinking that we learn to endure and cherish this affective ongoingness rather than to disclaim this borderspace as phallically mastered, as foreclosed by a reason become sovereign. Ettinger opens and renews such spaces for therapy, for art, for thinking-with-affect.

We return to the swimming pool for one last look at this liquid space, this architecture of *chora—matrice*—luxury. And this singular gaze is that of Merleau-Ponty, a gaze that already harkens to elements of the matrixial and that perhaps allows us to see more intently with an increasing intensity of affect by reading his words poolside along with Ettinger's:

> When through the water's thickness I see the tiled bottom of the pool, I do not see it *despite* the water and the reflections; I see it through them and because of them. If there were no distortions, no ripples of
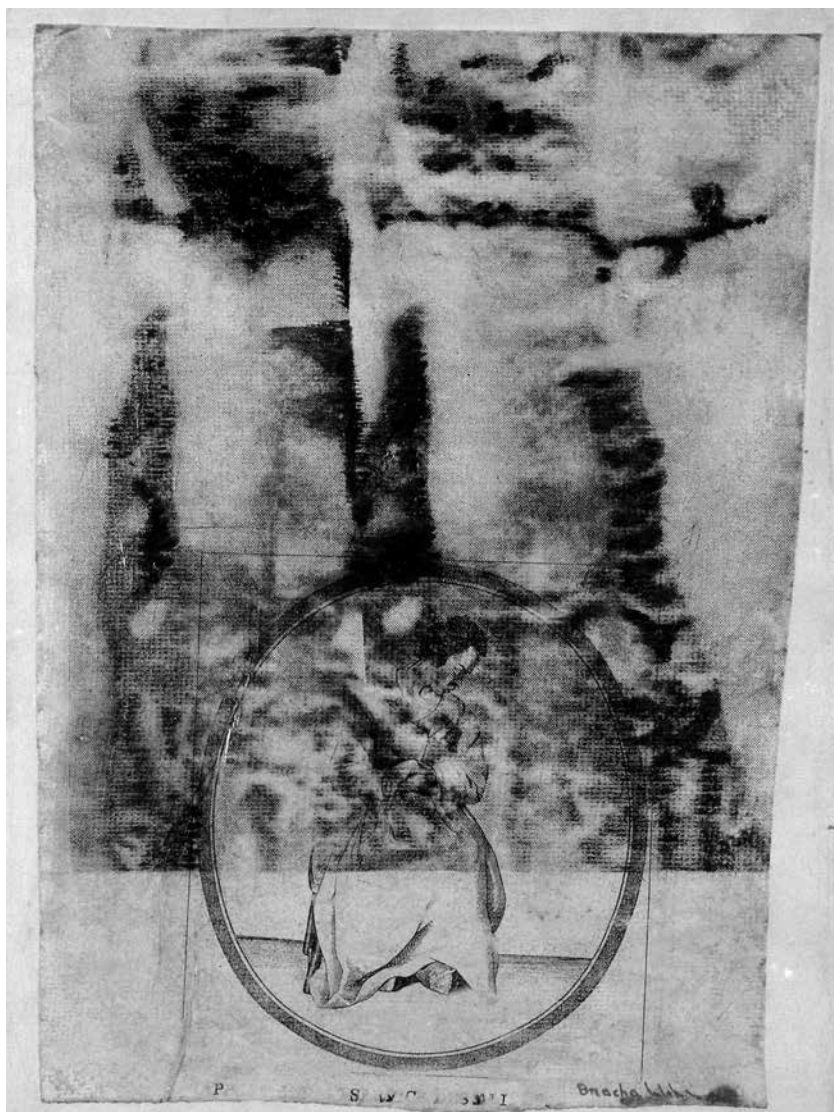
FIGURE 4.2. Eurydice, no. 20, 1994–1996. Oil, photocopic dust, and Xerox on paper mounted on canvas, 38.5 x 27 cm. © Bracha L. Ettinger.

sunlight, if I saw, without this flesh, the geometry of the tiles, then I would stop seeing the tiled bottom as it is, where it is, namely, further away than any identical place. I cannot say that the water itself—the aqueous power, the syrupy and shimmering element—is *in* space, all this is not somewhere else either, but it is not in the pool. It dwells

in it, is materialized there, yet it is not contained there; and if I lift my eyes toward the screen of cypresses where the web of reflections plays, I must recognize that the water visits it as well, or at least sends out to it its active and living essence.[17]

This is a place-in-particular beside which to read, a place-in-particular beside which to mourn the arrival-withdrawal of all Eurydices. In one of the fragments of *Artworking*, Ettinger states: "Even if one has renounced the idea of the soul, one works with it."[18] And in one of her psychoanalytic essays, she writes: "Since *I* cannot fully handle events that profoundly concern me, they fade-in-transformation while my *non-I* becomes wit(h)ness to them."[19] Mourning death's time necessitates working with this idea of soul and invites sharing words from matrixial writing that came before: tears are drops of flesh; tears are drops of the soul's exposure.

<center>* * *</center>

Life bares pools of liquid space in places impossible not to share.

<center>NOTES</center>

1. Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 1151–1211.

2. Thomas A. P. van Leeuwen, *The Springboard in the Pond: An Intimate History of the Swimming Pool*, ed. Helen Searing (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 2.

3. Dara Torres, "An Overwhelming Drive to Win Again and Again," *Newsweek*, October 13, 2008, 56.

4. Ibid.

5. Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, trans. Edith R. Farrell (Dallas, TX: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1983), 16.

6. Ibid., 113.

7. Ibid., 92.

8. Ibid., 131.

9. Definitions and etymologies are from: *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Lesley Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); and *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. E. T. Onions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

10. While van Leeuwen for the most part explores the history of swimming pools in a neutral manner, there are a few instances in his text when such judgments come

suddenly to the forefront, as evidenced by these two quotes, the first of which seems to stem from the more economic critique of Marxism and the second from a moral-weighted analysis that we will allow to exemplify the Judeo-Christian critique of too much pleasure: "The development and distribution of the private bath and pool house is an intricate part of the social transition from public to private and from *ancien régime* to capitalist society. The transition from aristocratic eccentricity to bourgeois dissipation and conspicuous waste can be best explored in that fascinating laboratory of privatization, the *fin-de-siècle* United States of America, where lingering memories of feudal bliss are mixed with a new sense of equality and plutocratic independence" (*Springboard in the Pond*, 52). Further: "Sprinkling lawns, wetting sidewalks, washing cars, or filling up swimming pools are all part of the same ideology of making the desert bloom. Southern California is the epitomic perversion of the elements. The dry should be made wet; the hot should be made cold. The ultimate luxury is to turn the world into what it is not" (224).

My effort to safeguard the space of the singular swimming pool is not to deny that there may be accuracy in these critiques, but is to bring attention to what seems to be a so quick judgment by (phallic) culture of any-Thing which can be interpreted as a manifestation of the matrixial sphere, including woman herself, of course.

In a passage in his water text that seems uncharacteristically tinged with affects accompanying judgment and in which he even references morality, Bachelard dismisses the swimming pool as a possible space in which to experience elemental access. Based on van Leeuwen's history, it seems likely that most pools in France at the time of his writing would have been for public swimming, and the main point of Bachelard's critique is that the swimming pool is not private enough rather than excessively so: "That is why only swimming in natural waters, in the middle of a lake or river, can awaken complexual forces. The swimming pool, with its ridiculous name, will never give its true setting to the working out of a complex. It will also fail to provide the ideal of solitude, so necessary for the psychology of a cosmic challenge. In order to *project* our will successfully, we must be alone. Poems about voluntary swimming are poems about solitude. The swimming pool will always lack the fundamental psychological element that makes swimming healthy from a moral point of view" (*Water and Dreams*, 168). That this ridiculously named place of elemental perversion and dissipating waste, to sum up these critiques, can be attacked with equal vehemence for opposite reasons does seem to underscore the need to deconstruct the judgment of this architecture of liquid space, and this brief section of the essay can only begin such an effort.

This deconstruction would also need to address the tropes of athleticism (legitimation by exercise, but not by pleasure) and of environmentalism (delegitimation because of the lack of water conservation, at least for private swimming pools). The various crusades in their names at times seem to become morally weighted to the point of judgmental oppression toward any activity that does not adhere to their visions of reality. Again, this is not to deny that there are important issues to address in these critiques. Without a doubt, many Americans need to lose weight, and swimming, even if just for pleasure, may help in this current crusade. Reclaiming a more matrixial relation within ecological understandings and using a language that speaks directly from the midst of this sharing realm may help to express the need to care for our earth and help to prevent environmentalism from becoming fixed into yet another phallogocentric ideology. A number of approaches in ecology already seem to speak

from the matrixial sphere and to allow for our taking pleasure in elemental existence as well as for protecting it.

And we have not even raised the issue of the landscape architecture of some giant Reflecting Pool for national gazing. Deconstruction has no end.

11. Bracha L. Ettinger, *Artworking, 1985–1999* (Ghent-Amsterdam: Ludion, 2000), 72.

12. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 181.

13. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Diotima and the Matrixial Transference: Psychoanalytical Encounter-Event as Pregnancy in Beauty," in *Beyond the Threshold: Explorations of Liminality in Literature*, ed. Hein Viljoen and Chris N. van der Merwe (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 126.

14. The womb as a material site of generativity is a politically contested space and Ettinger makes clear her position: "My hypothesis that evokes the womb should not in any way be understood as calling for a limitation on a woman's right over her body. On the contrary. I acknowledge I am in dangerous territory—as a feminist in support of women's reproductive rights and aware of the uses of essentialist ideology—and for that reason I take every possible precaution when I theorize this prenatal zone of relation. Yet to avoid it is to surrender it to the dominant phallic symbolic." Bracha L. Ettinger, "Matrixial Gaze and Screen: Other Than Phallic and Beyond the Late Lacan," in *Bodies of Resistance: New Phenomenologies of Politics, Agency, and Culture*, ed. Laura A. Doyle (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 109.

15. Perhaps we could also describe the matrixial as a queer space in the sense that Sara Ahmed gives this concept. In her text *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), which often refers to Merleau-Ponty in exploring this realm, she states: "Queer becomes a matter of how things appear, how they gather, how they perform, to create the edges of space and worlds" (167). The Eros that Freud characterizes lusciously as polymorphous perverse, a naming that he, at least, did not intend with prejudice, is often forgotten after the normative fixing on the other gender of the postgenital phase. However, while the access may be more difficult, some straights do retain openness to the spaces of this queer Eros of becoming. And of course, some gay and lesbian folk also seem to foreclose this queer space. Ahmed writes: "A queer phenomenology might involve an orientation toward what slips, which allows what slips to pass through, in the unknowable length of its duration. In other words, a queer phenomenology would function as a disorientation device. . . . Queer would become a matter of how one approaches the object that slips away—as a way of inhabiting the world at the point in which things fleet" (172). Perhaps *writing-as-queer* (whatever one's orientation), as well as *writing-as-female* (whatever one's biologic), may allow a privileged access to the presubjective, preobjective, prepredicative, to demonstrate various uses by Merleau-Ponty of this prefix, so that this space of being can create its own more direct phenomenological saying and become unfixed.

16. Ettinger, *Matrixial Borderspace*, 140–41.

17. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, ed. and trans. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 371.

18. Ettinger, *Artworking*, 97.

19. Ettinger, *Matrixial Borderspace*, 141.

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....

Temporal Space

SPATIALITY, TEMPORALITY, AND ARCHITECTURE
AS A PLACE OF MEMORY

David Morris

Memory is not simply inside us, but abides in places, buildings, and things beyond us, especially familiar natural places, but also built or designed environments. This intimacy of place and memory has been long known to practitioners of the art of memory and is central to their "method of loci," in which a list of items is memorized by imagining each as located in a particular spot in a memory walk-through of a well-remembered place or building. It is also central to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, which very much proceeds as a search for lost places, since the being and remembrance of such places turns out to be key to remembering the past.

Philosophers and phenomenologists such as Gaston Bachelard, Edward Casey, and John Russon have also traced this powerful connection between memory and place, and recent advocates of the "extended mind" have pointed out how external things and situations play a role in memory.[1]

Finally, psychologists also note various intersections between space and memory. Their results show how the exceptional ability of taxi drivers to memorize sequences of street names is aided when the sequences follow the spatial ordering of the actual streets they navigate;[2] that we more easily forget things when we leave them behind in another room and that our forgetting of a thing as we move farther from it correlates not to our Euclidean, geometrical distance from it, but to the number of rooms between it and us;[3] that the topology of remembered places is not Euclidean, but hierarchically organized in the manner of places nested within one another.[4]

Altogether this suggests not only an overall deep connection between spatiality and memory, but that memory is especially harbored by place as articulated into meaningful regions such as rooms. I should note that I am in fact operating here with a distinction between space and place,[5] and my ultimate concern is memory's relation to place, not space. Basically, in my distinction (to

use Bergsonian terminology), space is extensive while place is intensive: space is defined by a universal and isotropic metric and organization that divides up space in advance, whereas the metric and organization of place springs from the processional sweep of various regions as endogenously generative of the identity of determinate places. Place thus stands to space as intensive duration or ecstatic temporality stands to extensive clock time. However, as discussed below, in MerleauPonty's ontology, space is ultimately also intensive, which is what lets me here approach the nexus of place and memory through Merleau-Ponty's ontology of spatiality and temporality.

The chapter's central question is how place and memory connect so intimately and how the architecture of buildings and rooms can play such a powerful role in memory. I develop an initial answer in two steps. First, I explicate Merleau-Ponty's argument in the passivity lectures (*IP*)[6] that, contra classical concepts of memory as purely passive recording or purely active construction, memory entails a peculiar passivity that is not, however, wholly passive. Merleau-Ponty's argument entails some deep conceptual points about the ontology of temporality and spatiality that I briefly tackle. In the second step I flesh out these ontological points in terms of a passivity granted by bodily levels and habits. This lets me show how place, as that through which we move and as intrinsic to movement, also grants a passivity crucial to memory, such that our memorial activity is fringed with and draws on a passivity that is beyond us in the places we inhabit.[7] I make sense of this by conceptualizing such passivity, specifically as granted by places through which we move, as an "I already can" that is kin to a habit—but outside us. We thus find ourselves fringed with a peculiar habit through which we find our movements already passively woven into surrounding places. I suggest that architecture works to actively articulate this fringing habit, and that, like bodily habits, this fringing habit opens our future by keeping our past going—and thus garbs our movement with our past. To move in architectural places is thus to move to one's future through the garb of one's past and is thence to be fringed with memory. The key to this linkage between memory and place is the passivity of memory, to which I now turn.

1. MEMORY, PASSIVITY, AND PLACE

Merleau-Ponty's central concern in the passivity lectures is to show how perceptual experience entails processes that are less than purely active yet

more than purely passive, processes between what he calls activism and passivism.[8] Sleep gives a classic illustration. As he writes in the *Phenomenology*, by breathing "deeply and slowly" I actively seek "to call forth sleep," yet I do not thereby actively achieve sleep. I must passively wait, slipping to sleep only when my mouth suddenly, as it were, "communicates with some immense external lung that calls my breath forth and forces it back" (219/245).[9] Falling asleep is neither wholly active nor wholly passive.

Remembering is strikingly like sleep in this respect. I can actively invoke memory-summoning practices, yet at bottom I must passively wait for remembering to happen.[10] In fact, I think the passivity lectures study memory precisely because memory is so exemplary in demanding a passivity between activism and passivism, a passivity alien to traditional ontology.

To see why memory entails passivity, let us briefly consider Merleau-Ponty's dialectical critique of classic memory doctrines in his discussion of "The Problem of Memory" in the passivity lectures (*IP*, 191–98/249–58). As is typical, he targets an all too activist intellectualism and all too passivist empiricism. The activist, intellectualist doctrine is exemplified by Freud and Sartre, who conceive the unconscious and, correlatively, memory, as an "I think behind the I think" (*IP*, 191/249), as an active faculty present but hidden behind active consciousness. What I remember is thus something that an unconscious "I think" already actively knows. Remembering merely transfers a known from an active "I think," of which I am unconscious, to the active "I think," of which I am conscious. Remembering is thus based in an active present and amounts to construction of my present as having the significance of the past. We do not really get to or live the past, we only think it, in a manner determined by already and spontaneously active present linkages. So to remember the past "is to pass back through routes already travelled," thus "copying" an already given but heretofore unconscious past; or, remembering "crush[es] . . . the past by the future," it forwardly concocts the past within the present, rather actually getting back to it (*IP*, 191/249). This active construction of the past in the present rules out being genuinely surprised by suddenly remembering something for the first time (which does indeed, oddly, happen) or being overwhelmed by (and thence passive to) the past—which is a powerful phenomenon, as Proust shows.

Merleau-Ponty's criticism here is kin to his criticism, in the *Phenomenology*, of intellectualism's problem accounting for the child's learning new colors (32–33/38–39). All the contents necessary for activist learning must already be there from the start if the new color categories are ever to

be derived. So how, prior to learning, is there a failure to deploy these categories? And why does learning have a temporal contour that depends on perceptual experience? A past already known by a hidden "I think," yet not consciously grasped or remembered as such, is like a color already given but not yet discriminated as such, and it entails a similar split in consciousness. Intellectualism accounts for passivity in learning or remembering by doubling activity into conscious and unconscious active processes, rather than admitting genuine passivity. And just as the activist learning doctrine implies that we never actually learn anything new, since we already had to know it if we were ever to learn it, in the activist memory doctrine we never actually remember anything anew, because the past already has to actively (albeit unconsciously) be there if it is ever to be remembered. That is, on the activist account, remembering is just a different way of actively spinning the present: in the act of remembering, a past that is in fact at work in and constructed in the present is taken up as a past that is temporally behind and disjoint from the present. For the activist, then, remembering can surprise us only by a kind of bad faith in which we forget that it is we who are doing the constructing that remembers the past; the past could not really surprise us because, in the activist account, the past is not coming back in its own terms, but only in our actively constructing it as past. And if remembering is spontaneous construction, how can we account for its determinate temporal contour and dependence on experience, as in a memory that arises only on entering the office? Similarly, if things in the office somehow themselves actively spurred remembering, why would we have to wait to remember what they recall for us?

The opposite, passivist doctrine claims an "in-itself of memory," conceiving memory as a passive receptacle of events and/or a mechanism for bringing about recollections at the right moment. Here the problem is kin to those the *Phenomenology* traces in the empiricist account of learning. If passively given contents drive learning and remembering, then why do we have to work and wait to see the color or remember the past, and what determines the contour of this process? And if the past is passively given in a present receptacle, then, once again, isn't the past reduced to the present? If we correct this reduction by claiming that remembering adds something over passive givens, then doesn't remembering revert to active construction?

It is no accident that Merleau-Ponty's critique of memory in the passivity lectures parallels his critique of learning doctrines in the *Phenomenology*, for the latter echoes the seeker's paradox in Plato's *Meno*, which famously

leads Socrates to claim—anticipating the activist position—that learning is recalling what we already know. But Merleau-Ponty's critique of the seeker's paradox challenges the prejudice of presence that underpins it and the recollection doctrine.[11] That is, Merleau-Ponty challenges the prejudice that either we completely know or we are completely ignorant. He likewise challenges the prejudice that something is either fully present in memory or fully absent in forgetfulness. The prejudice of presence underpins the common problems of activist and passivist accounts of memory, namely: how a fully present memory could ever really stand as past (a problem already flagged in the *Phenomenology*, especially the temporality chapter); and how a past that is either already fully present or fully absent could determine gradual contours of remembering.

Against this dualism of presence and absence, the passivity lectures argue that memory entails "a presence of the past which is absence" (*IP*, 193/252). And in general these lectures show how the presence-absence dualism is counterpart to an activepassive dualism. If accounting for memory entails "a presence of the past which is absence," it also entails an activity that is passivity. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, memory shows us that "there is passivity right there in activity" and "there is activity right there in passivity" (192/250).

Merleau-Ponty's analysis of memory thus turns on linking the past and passivity, in light of his ongoing critique of the presence-absence dualism. What I think underlies this linkage is ontologically difficult. But I touch on it briefly, because it lets us glimpse a critique of traditional conceptions of space and time, one that crucially opens memory to spatiality and thence place—rather than leaving memory a merely temporal matter.

The ontological issue erupts within Merleau-Ponty's remark in the passivity lectures that the phenomenon of memory not only demands a new analysis of the past, but of the present as well (*IP*, 193/252). Why does he say this? Doesn't memory hinge on our relation to the past, not the present? Our tradition, though, tends to conceptualize space and time as already present dimensions. And time is a peculiar dimension in that it is present only as inherently flowing into absence. So only the present is present, active, in time.[12] The past, then, can be present only as another present spatially alongside the active present, for example, as a passive recording of the past in a present spatial receptacle, or as a past actively constructed in a faculty spatially alongside other faculties. The activist/presentist conception of the present thus spatializes memory and entails that the past have a space-like relation to

the present. There is no "room" in time for the past to be here now—which leads to all the traditional problems.

This is precisely why Merleau-Ponty seeks to relate the past to the present in a temporal way, and why memory demands a new concept of the present. The traditional problems follow from locating the past-present difference in space and time as all present, as a sort of already given turning point "in" time. Merleau-Ponty undermines the presence of this past-present difference, dislocating it from an already given present. The past-present difference is itself not entirely present, not already given in a timeline, dimension, or being that is a fully self-coincident plenum. The past-present difference is itself temporal, always in genesis, a difference arising in the present, but a present that is never yet fully given. In *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty writes that "time is not an absolute series of events, a tempo—not even the tempo of the consciousness—it is an institution" (184/238); and in the institution lectures, he writes that "time is the very model of institution: [it is] passivity-activity . . . it is total because it is partial" (*IP*, 7/36). Temporality is what it is precisely by not already being present as what it is, by being hollow; it is more by being less, it "comes together" through the lapsing time of institution. And like all institution, this depends on the weight of the past ballasting the present. To anticipate the next step, the past is the forgotten motor at work in and weighing the ongoing present. This new concept of a present weighted with the past is what enables a properly temporal, not merely spatialized, relation between the past and the present.

Regarding time, this sort of ontology is familiar from phenomenology's shift from time as present, linear dimension, to ecstatic temporality. But I think that Merleau-Ponty's move of emptying temporality of presence also entails emptying spatiality of presence.[13] This is crucial because I argued above that we betray memory if we locate it in a spatialized receptacle or faculty. But the next step is to argue that memory extends into place, which would seem to contradict this criticism of spatializing memory. But there is no contradiction if we realize that Merleau-Ponty has us shift from conceiving space as locative, as an extensive, all-present, and active container, to conceiving spatiality as intensive and not all-present. It is not locative space, but what I call "processional place" that harbors memory, and it does so by way of the sort of ontological characteristics that Merleau-Ponty detects in spatiality as not all-present. Place is processional in the way that temporality is ecstatic. Processional place is more because it is less:[14] not yet together as a dimension, it gathers determinacy in the process of proceeding, advancing

from itself. Put another way, temporality and place are two aspects of our experience of ourselves as passive to being exceeding us. But crucially, for Merleau-Ponty, we experience ourselves as being exceeded not because being is an already given excess. Rather, even being exceeds itself (but not by already containing more than now appears, but rather by a sort of passivity that weights the present).[15] Merleau-Ponty's study of passivity entails an ontology in which being itself is passive, so far as it is not coincident with itself. Ecstatic temporality and processional place are two expressions of this ontological passivity, of being as not altogether there, here and now.

These points echo the *Phenomenology*'s demonstration that we experience space not as a locative container but as a spatiality of situation that turns on bodily movement.[16] But the point above is that the spatiality of situation expresses a deeper ontology in which spatiality itself is rooted in place as a processional nongivenness. This is difficult to think about. This is because Cartesian concepts of space, movement, and navigation are so obvious to us that we think that space just is that exteriority we map out as already given via a "view from above."[17]

Consider, though, the Puluwatan who navigates by a "situated seeing," who experiences destination islands as moving relative to one another and toward a boat that is experienced as obviously stationary (like Husserl's earth-ark). Such a navigator experiences the determinacy of place only by being in it, not by abstract calculation, as Edwin Hutchins argues.[18] In making this point Hutchins is not claiming a hierarchical relation between the modern Western and Puluwatan ways of navigating, with the former being superior. Navigation in both cases entails a computation that solves a problem with certain inherent constraints. Briefly (to put it in my terms), the modern Westerner does the computation by converting the determinacy of intensive place into the extensive terms of a space given in advance, namely the coordinate system of a map that charts land and water. One computes where one is and where one is going by taking certain bearings that let one coordinate with the chart, and then one uses the chart to perform a calculation that resolves one's position (i.e., charts are designed so that drawing intersecting bearing lines on them calculates one's position). In contrast, for the Puluwatan, place itself is the computer and chart: the place one is in, if "read" in the right way, itself computes where you are, because, seen for what it is—an intensively unique region—a place already inherently is where it is.[19] Just as a person's temporal identity already is and tells her age, a place's processional identity already is and tells its position.

This gives us an insight into place as processional, as having to do with the ways places accrue determinacy by intensively sweeping out and into one another in a moving process to which we are interior. It gives an insight into places that we navigate by waiting for things to move relative to one another, as we "navigate" ecstatic temporality by waiting—quite different from extensive Cartesian space as already actively mapped and mastered. Architects who conceive buildings as moving our "situated seeing" through processions of vistas, openings, and affordances may have this insight, too.

And as we will see, this need to wait to navigate processional place means that moving through place is inherently burdened by the weight of the past—which is where memory comes into place.[20]

2. MEMORY, HABIT, AND PLACE

Let us now turn from these difficult ontological points that follow from Merleau-Ponty's analysis of memory—and that echo in the nature lectures[21]—to see how, experientially, passivity and place figure in memory, in expressing the past in the present. In the passivity lectures, Merleau-Ponty fleshes out his points about "passivity in activity" and the "presence of the past which is absence" in terms of levels, a concept drawn from the *Phenomenology*'s spatiality chapter. He even refers back to his discussion in the *Phenomenology* of Wertheimer's experiment, in which a subject's view of the world is skewed via mirrors (see *IP*, 191–92/250; and *PhP*, 259–62/287–91). In Wertheimer's experiment, the subject first sees things as off-kilter, but then, by moving in this skewed world, a new level is established. That is, a new form of habitual engagement with the world arises that sets things to rights. This phenomenon notably mixes the spatial and temporal: the level is based in the temporality of habit, but what changes the level is this temporality as open to the spatiality of situation. Further, levels would never change if only the present were present in the present: levels change because levels weigh the present with an orienting past. It's in virtue of now experiencing a past-present difference that I sense the present as out of whack with my orienting past. After all, someone used to seeing things atilt would not see Wertheimer's setup as skewed. But this means that in seeing things askew or not, I implicitly see my past, even if I do not thereby explicitly remember it: the subject who quickly sees the skewed scene snap to upright implicitly sees she's already used to Wertheimer's wacky world. To perceive things as transparently oriented by

a level is thus to *forget* the past that weighs the present. This is why in the institution lectures Merleau-Ponty can say, most paradoxically, that recollection "emerges from forgetfulness," from a past that is there in forgetfulness, from a "forgetfulness which preserves" (*IP*, 197/256). I forget the past that (in fact) orients and levels me—and that is at work in the expression of the past in remembrance.

To better understand these points, let us note that as with sleep, learning, and memory, I have to passively wait for a new habit or level to take hold, even if I actively repeat the movements that turn out to become habitual. But in the case of habit what I have to wait for is me: I wait for my own active, bodily ability to catch up with my present bodily situation. The passivity of habit manifests the passivity of memory discussed above, but it lets us articulate this passivity in terms of body and situation: in habit, the ontological noncoincidence of the present with itself (which vests the past—and being itself—with passivity) is manifest in the noncoincidence of the body with itself, in the two layers of habit body and the body-at-this-moment.

In this non-self-coincident body, the level is like a weight balancing the present:[22] if I lacked weight or if my movement did not have a momentum that carries over from the past to the present toward the future, I could not balance. As weight allows me to balance in the present, the level lets me orient in it. But for the level to do this, its activity, like that of the weight, cannot be wholly in the present. For the level to do its work in the present, it must precisely not coincide with the present: if one's present can be out of whack or not, this is only because the present is encountered in its divergence from its past. We encounter balance not by being at some fully present and active balancing point, but by swaying through it; the tightrope walker is ever so slowly strumming her rope, tuning herself to its swinging by overhanging her past. So, too, to grasp the sense of the present is to thrum with the present's divergence from the past.[23] The level is thus a past that is operative in the present while different from it. In several places Merleau-Ponty speaks of the past as a *volant* in the present;[24] this French word means both steering wheel and flywheel, the latter being a huge spinning mass used to store momentum and also regulate present systems by keeping this momentum going as a message from the past. Perception and memory require a momentum of the past that spins in the present and thus steers it, lends it sense.

But the past loans sense precisely by not being all-active in the present, by being a weight that passively carries on past activity in the present. If my

habits were wholly active in the present, if they had no weighty passivity, I would be wholly sunk in and bowled over by the present.[25] But precisely in encountering this weight in the present, to which I am now passive, I experience the past. Usually I do not explicitly encounter this weight, it just ballasts me: I forget this weight (as I forget the weight of my body). This is how the body, as harboring the weight of the past, is a forgetfulness that preserves, and there is a "presence of the past which is absence."

The body weighs us with the past because to be bodily is to not be fully active or self-coincident: we are active bodies only by being inherently passive in waiting for birth, movement, habits, breath, sleep. Being a purely active spontaneous body would undermine experience and sense just as much as being a purely active intellectualist consciousness; purely active mind and purely active body are equally godlike and fictitious. But the wellspring of bodily passivity, of noncoincidence, is not in the body merely: it is in the body as situated, as moving through a processional place, amid things and places with which we are yet to be coincident, in a world that, as noncoincident in being spread out, is never fully present, as temporality is never fully present. Not being everywhere at once in place is counterpart to not being all-present now in habit. Habit is thus counterpart to inhabitation, a point Ed Casey has approached from several different directions.[26] The habitual depths of the body ballast us with passive noncoincidence, but so, too, do the depths of processional place.

We can make sense of this habit-inhabitation, body-place connection via the "I can." Above we saw that habits weigh the present with an "I can" that is different from the present, by being either in line or out of whack with it. I encounter my past via this "I can." As Merleau-Ponty puts it in the passivity lectures:

> Remembering something is remembering the manner in which we gained access to that something. And we have seen that [this access] is through the body, thus remembering is a certain manner of being body.
>
> However, how do we remember a former embodiment? We remember it as a possible of the actual body, which in principle could not happen in the present . . . ; it is eminently a possible, because it has been a real. (*IP*, 194/253)[27]

I can ride the bike. This means I already can ride the bike, and this means that something has already gone on such that it is now possible for me to ride it. But the learning-to-ride that made this possible cannot happen in the present; it already has to have happened. To encounter the bike as something I can ride is to implicitly encounter (in my bodily attitudes) the fact that I can no longer learn to ride it, and thus the fact that I already have learned to ride it, something we typically forget in hopping on the bike. But this forgetting preserves the past, as when, catching my cuff in the chain, I remember my cuff catching some thirty-five years ago on my green bike curving round Meadowbrook Avenue. The underlying point here is already implicit in the *Phenomenology*: Perception is not a matter of fully recognizing things through some wholly active process and then having the already recognized thing recall something from a passive store or active faculty. To perceive is to move with things in a passive-active bodily dialogue already shaped by past "I cans." To remember is not to go back to a past that was already explicitly there, only waiting to be represented. Rather, it is to find one's present perception and movements expressively articulating and separating out a past that still inhabits and haunts them, thus bringing a past to light for the first time.[28]

By keeping an "I can" going, by keeping certain future possibilities open, bodily habits let us forget we already can do something—and thereby preserve the past. Endogenous bodily habits thus institute a memory repertoire, via flywheel movements that ballast present activity with passive orienting weight. But we augment this flywheel and bodily passivity with things like bikes that weigh us down in new ways precisely in extending our activity. Just as endogenous body memory disperses in the temporality of habit, our memory of bike riding is not already there purely inside us, to be recalled by the bike as a thing independent of that memory; our memory disperses across, englobes, and is harbored in the things that we move with and that keep an "I can" going. We cannot keep this "I can" going in our body on its own. To ride the bike or remember one's bike-riding past, you first of all need, at some level, to move with something like the bike.[29] I call such external things, whose movement keeps an "I can" and thence memory going, keepsakes.

Places do this, too. I can enter the door. This is partly because of my bodily "I can," but also because someone has built the door's threshold as already crossable. My body is thus fringed with further passivities, things that I can already accomplish without having actively achieved them now or

perhaps ever. Architecture—in my very broad construal of it here—is precisely concerned with articulating this placial passivity that already fringes our body. In building buildings; in designing rooms, office furniture, or organizers; in laying out cities and landscaping parks; in singing lines of movement through the landscape, architecture articulates an "I can" outside our bodies that passively weighs us with a past already accomplished. We can think of this exterior "I can" as an "it keeps": it, this place, in virtue of building, designing, laying out, singing, evolution, geology, keeps inviting me to proceed through it like this, to go this way, to see this view, to distribute things in these cubbies. In this way it invokes an "I already can proceed" that keeps at work in me a past engagement with these places, an orienting level local to this place or conglomeration of things. In seeing the world oriented by habit or in riding a bike, I deploy an already operative level, and the past is preserved in my forgetting this level. But to proceed through this door or move in this office is just as much to encounter an already operative level: it is just that this level is kept in operation not by my body or a thing, but by place and especially my architectural (or ritual[30]) relation to it as a built place inviting of determinate, rote movements.

If bikes and things are keepsakes, the articulate places in which I move are what I'll call keep-places. Keep-places keep the past as forgotten: it is not that this place recalls a memory stored inside me; rather, the past is there in this place, in moving in it in this way. To remember is to move in ways that reanimate and expressively articulate this "past in present."

Keep-places, structured and articulated to call for moving, dwelling, orientation, and so on, are in fact coarticulated by their architects and inhabitants: the architect lays out the building, city, or park, but it is the people living and moving through it who activate and modify the prospective "I can proceed" imagined by the architect. In fact, our relation to architectural place is much like our relation to our own body: the general "I can" of our body is articulated and refined in our learning new habits, and this is why habit preserves a past that is singular, my own past. So, too, we learn the "I can proceed" kept going by buildings and cities: it is in our learning to live in them that keep-places keep a singular past, rather than a general past of people who walk or rule this way. Places that don't encourage such learning, or that can be interchangeably lived in by anyone, or that oppressively render their inhabitants uniform by making them proceed in rote ways, can erase rather than keep memory (which might be healthy in places whose anonymity helps heal place-based trauma). It is the house or city well lived

in that is the preserve of memory—and typically not (for example) airport hotels that approach or invite interchangeability (except insofar as we make them our own in our ways of moving in or coming back to them). And this is because houses and places, like our bodies, are ontologically singular and intensive—the house rebuilt or moved is not the same house, and a city or place is obviously singular.[31] Singular places proceed to other singular places in meaningful ways; interchangeable rooms, corridors, lounges do not. My body preserves my past in my forgetting how I learned to move it. So, too, my house or city preserves my past in my forgetting how I learned to move in it. Thus houses and cities fringe us with memory by instituting, in relation to us, and keeping open, a processional "I can move, I can proceed." My body is not just ballasted by habit but by inhabitation, and both habit and inhabitation accrue a past in the present, a past that can become express in movement.

In general, to be a bodily, moving being, is to have to live and perceive the future, by being liberated and weighed by past momentum. In architecture, we build and perceive a future, an "I can move, I can proceed." We thence forget and preserve a past that can move toward this future. This suggests that architecture is not merely an art of distributing matter in space, but of articulating temporality in place, thus memorializing living movement. In architecture, temporality takes place by weighing in on how we move.

The above also suggests a distinction between two architectural inclinations: to plan from above and to build from within. A key ontological point behind this chapter is that place identity is not quite local to places themselves individually, but rather emerges in places sweeping into one another. Place identity could be localized only if each place had a unique coordinate in and of itself. This localized identity is what Cartesian space as already given seeks, grants, and presupposes, by coordinating all possible places in advance—and thus in abstraction. Indeed, the Western navigator solves the problem of the nonlocalism of place identity by charting relations between places in advance. In contrast, the Puluwatan solves the problem by a situated seeing that sweeps through places from within to glean their identity. An architecture inclined to plan from above may identify and order places by a grid or other coordinate system, and while the identity of places may be clear in the grid-plan, it may not be so as you move through it. In contrast, architecture that builds from within, by modulating moving processions between places, may help tell us where we are and may encourage memory by keeping

the modulation of our movement at work, alive and integral to our weighty habits of inhabiting built places.[32]

NOTES

1. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Orion Press, 1964); Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); John Russon, *Human Experience: Philosophy, Neurosis, and the Elements of Everyday Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003). For the points about extended mind, see, for example, Andy Clark, *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Alva Noë, *Out of Our Heads: Why You Are Not Your Brain, and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness*, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009).

2. Virpi Kalakoski and Pertti Saariluoma, "Taxi Drivers' Exceptional Memory of Street Names," *Memory and Cognition* 29, no. 4 (2001): 634–38.

3. Gabriel A. Radvansky and David E. Copeland, "Walking through Doorways Causes Forgetting: Situation Models and Experienced Space," *Memory and Cognition* 34, no. 5 (2006): 1150–56; Mike Rinck, Andrea Hähnel, Gordon H. Bower, and Ulrich Glowalla, "The Metrics of Spatial Situation Models," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 23, no. 3 (1997): 622–37.

4. Timothy P. McNamara, "Memory's View of Space," in *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation: Advances in Research and Theory*, vol. 27, ed. Gordon H. Bower (San Diego: Academic Press, 1991), 147–86.

5. See Casey, *Getting Back into Place*; Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

6. Robert Vallier, "Institution: The Significance of Merleau-Ponty's 1954 Course at the Collège de France," *Chiasmi International* 7 (2005): 281–302, gives helpful background to *IP*. Also see Renaud Barbaras, "Merleau-Ponty and Nature," *Research in Phenomenology* 31, no. 1 (2001): 22–38.

7. This usage of the word *fringe* is inspired by Edward S. Casey's recent work on borders.

8. MerleauPonty writes that we need "a) a passivity, b) without passivism" (*IP*, 118/159); and he criticizes Sartrean "activism" (150/199) or "actualism" and writes that the "binary dialectic" that posits activity and passivity as polar opposites is "madness: madness of activism, madness of passivism" (119/160).

9. Also see *PhP*, 197/163; and *IP*, 138–45/184–92.

10. Sleep and memory come together in *IP* (195–96/254–56) via Merleau-Ponty's reference to the overture of *In Search of Lost Time*, with its image of the sleeping body remembering past rooms—a process in which the body is notably passive in remembering.

11. For more on this connection to *Meno*, see M. C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

12. Or alternatively, time is all given, as passive. The underlying problem remains: the distinction and interrelation between activity and passivity at issue in memory do not fit traditional ontology.

13. See, for example, *N*, 125–26/170, which shows how Cartesianism entails a view of extension in which "each part is a plenitude of being" with its own locality, such that in extension there is "neither more nor less." Merleau-Ponty develops a critique of this view (e.g., in his study of embryogenesis as dependent on feedbacks in a spatial matrix whose operation does not reduce to purely localized determinations). On this issue, see David Morris, "The Time and Place of the Organism: Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy in Embryo," *Alter* 16 (2008): 69–86.

14. On this point, see also David Morris, "Casey's Subliminal Phenomenology: On Edging Things Back into Place," in *Exploring the Work of Edward S. Casey: Giving Voice to Place, Memory, and Imagination*, ed. Azucena Cruz-Pierre and Donald A. Landes (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 53–61.

15. This point emerges, for example, in Merleau-Ponty's critique of Cartesianism in *N*. The cogito entails appeal to a God as a given infinity that founds certainty by already containing/specifying all that can appear. By hypothesis, the excess specified by such an infinite god cannot now appear in finite appearances. Cartesianism (as Merleau-Ponty argues [*N*, 125–34/169–80]) thus entails a dualism between essence and appearance, God and world, and also dualisms of finality and causality, soul and body, and so on. Merleau-Ponty responds to Descartes's problem (of showing how being can change and appear in ways that make sense and that can be known) by developing a philosophy and ontology in which we take seriously that appearance can never let an immediate infinity appear, yet we realize that appearances do not therefore turn out to be finite and fully given (as if the options are either the finite given appearances of object, or the infinite nonappearance of essence—options governed by the presence/absence dualism). Rather, appearance is hollow, always waiting to be filled in, and this is why appearance and being are excessive: they are not excessive because they *already* contain more than is given, but excessive precisely because they are not yet fully there. In terms of this chapter, Merleau-Ponty is saying that there is an excess in being through a weight that overburdens and thence orients the present. But this weight is not that of a God (or reason) that would already contain all reality. Rather, the weight is a kind of *deficit* that appears as a burden in the present. That is, something *more* appears in the present by the present being *less* than it is, less active than it might be were it constituted by a wholly transcendent God or reason. This passivity weighs on us and on things. This is behind Merleau-Ponty's remark about "the weight that I sense behind me in becoming a project," where we must perceive this weight "not as presence, but as absence" (*N*, 134/180). This echoes the above point that memory entails a past that is present via absence and the point below that this operates as a weight in the present.

16. See David Morris, *The Sense of Space* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

17. See Colin Ellard, *Where Am I? Why We Can Find Our Way to the Moon but Get Lost in the Mall* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2009). A central theme of this book is that humans tend to navigate via cognitive maps that locate us as if we are seen from above, whereas other animals navigate by a more situated relation to their environment.

18. Edwin Hutchins, *Cognition in the Wild* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), esp. 73–93.

19. Also see David Morris, "The Place of Animal Being: Following Animal Embryogenesis and Navigation to the Hollow of Being in Merleau-Ponty," *Research in Phenomenology* 40, no. 2 (2010): 188–218.

20. My thanks to Helen Fielding for drawing my attention to the homophony of "wait" and "weight"—and thanks for her other comments on a version of this paper presented at the 2010 conference of the Canadian Philosophical Association.

21. See Morris, "Casey's Subliminal Phenomenology"; and Morris, *Sense of Space*.

22. I would like to thank Don Landes for drawing my attention to the theme of weight in Merleau-Ponty (see his *Merleau-Ponty and the Paradoxes of Expression* [London: Routledge, 2013]); and Don Beith for drawing my attention to the significance of the phenomenon of balance.

23. Note, though, that this divergence and the past it diverges from cannot be located "in" the present (this would once again spatialize memory and the past). Nor is the past already given as something that was fully present, but no longer is present. Rather, the divergence emerges in the present, and the past emerges in this divergence, where the past and present are engendered and change with respect to their determinacy, by a process of divergence that both crosses and creates the diverging terms.

24. See *IP*, 206/267, 185/242, 188/246, 134/179.

25. Indeed, note that the phenomenon of a weight in the present precisely has to do with a passivity in the present, and it is by way of being less than wholly active that something "more," something that can also orient me, can appear in the present—an excess by absence or "hollow." See also Morris, *Sense of Space*.

26. Edward S. Casey, "Habitual Body and Memory in Merleau-Ponty," *Man and World* 17 (1984): 279–97; Casey, *Getting Back into Place*.

27. Note that the view expressed here by Merleau-Ponty and developed below is supported by empirical results such as Katinka Dijkstra, Michael P. Kaschak, and Rolf A. Zwaan, "Body Posture Facilitates Retrieval of Autobiographical Memories," *Cognition* 102, no. 1 (2007): 139–49. This shows that recall of biographical episodes is faster when body position during recall is congruent (vs. incongruent) with body position during the original episode—what might be called the "Proust effect.'" Also see the psychological studies cited at the beginning of this chapter.

28. It is crucial here that it is not *the* past, which comes to light, but *a* past, a version of the past. This is the truth of the empiricist claim that the past vanishes, and of the intellectualist claim that remembering is active construction. But these claims are only partly true. They forget the way that the present and remembering depend on a forgotten past in the present. On this point, compare note 23 about the divergence between the past and the present. The view here is not that the past is stored in material deposits, but that the past *expressively* figures or arises in movement constrained by ongoing dynamics of materials. Indeed, the logic of temporal divergence traced above *is the very logic of expression*. The past comes to view when its operation in the present becomes express, but it is only the weighty operation of the past that can harbor such expression. Thus remembering is not the reactivation of something forgotten (in the sense of not at all being present), but the highlighting of a weight that *is so much present* that it is forgotten, hence the "forgetfulness which preserves."

29. This is not to say that it is impossible to recall such episodes through images and independent of actually being on a bike. The point is rather that this is a secondary way of recalling, and if one never had primary episodes of recall that depend on

body memory and one's interrelation with things and places, one would never experience pastness or be motivated to acquire the language and practices that allow for imagistic memory.

30. I am thinking here of places that have rituals attached to them and in virtue of that stand as architectural in my broad sense. We can make some already given cave a temple or dwelling by adopting a ritual relation to it—and then we can materialize this by moving matter around, building—if we like (as in making a cairn). But we need not do so. Conversely, some places that appear natural are in fact built to be moved through in ritual ways (e.g., Mont Royal park for strolling).

31. Michael Guggenheim, "Building Memory: Architecture, Networks and Users," *Memory Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 39–53, is helpful in pointing out this singularity and linking it to memory. Also see the works by Casey referenced above.

32. I would like to thank Shiloh Whitney, Noah Moss Brender, and Lisa Guenther for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper, together with Donald Beith and Tristana Martin Rubio for contributions to my understanding of Merleau-Ponty on passivity.

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IN SEARCH OF LOST TIME: MERLEAU-PONTY, BERGSON, AND THE TIME OF OBJECTS

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1. THE INNER NECESSITY OF TEMPORALITY

"The subject is temporal by means of an inner necessity" (*PhP*, 432). So says Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his introduction to the chapter on temporality in *Phenomenology of Perception*, a chapter that appears in part 3 of *Phenomenology* after the chapter on the cogito and just before the chapter on freedom, which together make up the entire section, whose overall title is "Being-for-Itself and Being-in-the-World." Given this placement, there is some reason to think that these three issues, the cogito, temporality, and freedom, were and ought to be thought together, that they intertwine with one another, and that together they flesh out the relation of conjunction, that relation between being-for-itself *and* being-in-the-world.[1]

The first of these concepts, as originated by Jean-Paul Sartre, does indeed describe the phenomena of the prereflective cogito, of temporality, and of freedom. Being-for-itself is consciousness understood as the dimension of transphenomenal being in the subject, whereby the knowing being in its capacity as being transcends itself, transcends its own being-in-itself, its unconscious, object-like state in which it would simply be. As for-itself, being temporalizes itself, and exhausts itself, negating the in-itself to reach an object while maintaining an immediate noncognitive relation of self to self, a nonthetic consciousness of consciousness.[2] Conversely, being-in-the-world is a distinctly Heideggerian concept, an a priori *existentiale*, that is the basic state of *Dasein*, from which every mode of its being is codetermined, thus, being-in-the-world is being with Others, Dasein is for the sake of Others, regardless

of what particular factical Daseins do or say.[3] Moreover, being-in-the-world implies that Dasein both has a vague grasp of its own being and is concerned with the world, that it knows entities in the manner of dwelling alongside rather than objectifying them, that the manner in which it knows, in care and dread, reveals that it has an awareness of its own freedom and of its own temporal finitude.[4] The problem of temporality, then, as it is situated between the cogito and freedom, seems to be to bring these two together and to bring together the concerns of being-for-itself and being-in-the-world.

To bring these concerns together, to articulate the manner in which time conjoins the cogito with freedom, Merleau-Ponty begins the chapter on the cogito with a critique of realism. As he contemplates his own contemplation of the cogito, realism is the first issue that arises in the mind of the philosopher. He asks, what is the relation of his thinking and his ideas to the sensible forms that surround him? Realism attempts to answer this question "by affirming the actual transcendence and the existence in themselves of the world and of ideas" (*PhP*, 387/423). This assertion immediately invokes the ancient aporia with respect to knowledge. How can we possibly assert the bare existence of things independently of our own existence? In other words, "how could the mind know the sense of a sign which it has not itself constituted as a sign," how do we look for something whose nature is completely unknown to us (388, 389/424, 425)? A reality truly independent of us would at best appear as a confusion of unrelated and alien elements. Additionally, realism is unable to account for the coherence of ideas because, lacking even the contours of perceptual norms, we could not hope to begin to name our perceptions. Perhaps surprisingly, Merleau-Ponty maintains that the power of thinking lies not in the perception of things existing independently of mind, but in temporality. Being-for-itself, thought, or consciousness must be able to launch itself out of itself and into things and insofar as it is capable of launching itself, to create itself as autonomous with respect to the world. In other words, the cogito cannot be merely the effect of things and ideas that transcend it, leaving factual traces of themselves.[5] Without something like an indivisible intention, reasoning and perception would be disjointed (*se disloquer*) (389/424–25). That is, rather than distributing and dispersing themselves, each in its proper place, the ideas of reason and perception would be dislocated, broken up and incomprehensible.

If the problem of coherence leads us away from straightforward realism, it might be useful for us to think carefully about the temporality of being-for-itself: how it is structured and how it structures our cognition and

perception—all the more so because the autonomy that comes with tempo-rality can also produce idealized structures that do not seem to reflect human existence. Descartes's own notion of time, manifest in the so-called Cartesian coordinates, the x, y, z axes upon which the motions in space of all phe-nomena can be plotted and eventually predicted, implies a view of space and time as ideal.[6] Objects and matter are conceived of as space, as geometrical, and are describable through the geometry of space, the instants of time that follow one another like numbers on the geometrical grid.[7] Although the in-finitesimal calculus, the notion that events causally follow one another in geometrically uniform instants of time, may have arisen to compensate for the limitations of human sense perception, this conception of time and space remains powerful in philosophy and science due to its predictive power. This is because, although sensation and reasoning from senses can be understood to proceed stepwise, mathematically, in the mathematical manifold of space and time, all phenomena may also be conceptualized as coexisting simulta-neously in one grand mathematical structure.[8] It is precisely this structure, the objective conception of time that Descartes recommends we intuit when he warns against the use of memory, insofar as the *MA thesis universalism*, the general science of order and measurement, eliminates past and future and represents all times as copresent.[9] However, as Merleau-Ponty concludes, in philosophy, this conception results in atomistic empiricism, the reduction of experience to nothing more than a collection of psychological events for which the "I" is a hypothetical cause or convenient name. It returns us to the associated problem of realism, the threat that our perceptual existence will be dissociated from its external counterpart. Alternatively, the objective con-ception of time may lead to the contrary position, that of the "I think" that lacks an "I am," since it has "the power to embrace and to anticipate tempo-ral developments within a single intention," the single intellectual intuition of the *mathesis universalis* (PhP, 390/426).

Unsatisfied with these alternatives, alternatives that reflect neither being-for-itself nor being-in-the-world, neither a subject that transcends its own in-itself by temporalizing itself nor a subject that is temporally dwelling *alongside* rather than objectifying entities, Merleau-Ponty proposes a sub-ject located at the conjunction of the for-itself and the in-itself. Situating the subject at the conjunction of the for-itself and the in-itself reflects the thermodynamic concept that a mind closed off from the world and others, a mind existing as an isolated system lacking new flows of matter and energy, would necessarily be subject to entropic forces, losing high-quality energy to

lower- and lower-quality energy, until it reaches an impasse.[10] The very possibility of receptivity, of development, learning, or change would be blocked. This *closed self* (*moi bien fermé)* could persist nonentropically only in union with God, who would have to guarantee its thoughts and experiences (*PhP*, 392/428).[11] To bypass this outcome, we must ask what kind of subject would have an exterior that makes it possible for others to have an interior, and why is it the case that without this, "none of these mechanisms called 'other bodies' will ever come to life" (390–91/426–27)? Perhaps the most important criterion here is an open system, open to new flows of energy and matter, and this means that the cogito could be newly conceptualized in terms of our *existential experience*, which does not remove us from temporality but rather is the living expression of that inner necessity. Existential experience is temporal, it is that *blind act* by which we take up our destiny as a thinking self and still find a way to bring the I think to the transcendence of the I am, to bring consciousness to existence.[12] But the subject and time, Merleau-Ponty insists, communicate from *within*, and, like sexuality, and, perhaps surprisingly, like spatiality, too, temporality is neither external nor contingent. Rather than an external force in a system of spatial coordinates, the temporality of being-for-itself is an attribute that becomes a dimension of the subject's being, such that any analysis of temporality necessarily touches on subjectivity itself.[13]

2. BERGSON'S CONCEPT OF DURATION

Merleau-Ponty readily acknowledges that the spatiotemporal totality of the *objective* world is of a particular sort. Within things, in the world of objects, future and past do compose an external state of preexistence and survival. The snow I will ski tomorrow is, today, objectively in its place on the mountain; thus, in the objective realm, my future, like my past, is current and present, and every present is infinitesimally divisible. Leibniz defined this objective measure as *mens momentanea*, a mind without memory, existing in the so-called specious present as defined by the infinitesimal interval of differential calculus (*PhP*, 434/471). The time of the objective world consists of a possibly infinite number of instances of the now, instances present to no one, for which reason they cannot even appear sequentially because succession, it is claimed, requires at least an observer. The objective conception of the world that Merleau-Ponty refers to may be traced from the invention of modern astronomy by Kepler—who sought to determine the relation between the

trajectories of orbits and the time a planet takes to circumscribe them—to classical physics, which sought the link between space covered by a falling body and the time of this fall, to modern geometry, which worked out the equation for determining the position of a point on a moving straight line at any moment in its course, and, finally, by differential and integral calculus, examining sections of space brought infinitely close together.[14] However, the special theory of relativity does away with the absolute reference of space and time, eliminating any privileged point of view and introducing the concepts of time dilation and space contraction. This is the idea that time passes more slowly for people and objects in motion as distances shrink for people and objects in motion, and, also, that events that are simultaneous from a moving point of view are not simultaneous from a stationary point of view.[15] Thus time and space came to be understood as existing in relation to each other.

Nevertheless, the speed of light remains an invariant governing motion, and relativity theory maintains a fundamental role for observation and measurement. "Time is relative in Einstein's special theory of relativity, but this relativity is expressed by equations which are always valid. Time is not, therefore, chaotically relative, but . . . relative in an ordered way."[16] In spite of the profound changes in physics's conception of space and time, Merleau-Ponty notes that his precursor Henri Bergson had argued that the scientific conception of time "surreptitiously bring[s] in the idea of space" by successively setting states side by side, whereas the time Bergson calls duration is succession *without the mutual externality* of temporal states.[17] This conception appears to be the point where Bergson and Merleau-Ponty part ways, although their differences may be less dramatic than at first it appears. Bergson goes on to attribute to the world, not an objective time that can be brought to life only through the being-in-the-world of a fundamental being-for-itself, but a *creative evolution* for all phenomena of the world. Bergson argued that evolution did have first to overcome the resistance of seemingly inert matter, which changes only under the influence of external forces, where such change is no more than the displacement of parts.[18] However, his position is that life does not develop linearly, in accordance with a geometrical, formal model, and that for life, change is not the displacement of parts that themselves do not change except to split into smaller and smaller parts, molecules, atoms, corpuscles, all of which may return to their original position, and that are, therefore, time reversible. This is the position of classical physics, for which all physical systems are closed to outside influences, deterministic in that the position of each particle or entity is specifiable and predictable, reversible in

that the motion of particles can be calculated in either direction, and made up of atomistic entities.[19] Indeed, as Merleau-Ponty indicates, any state of such a system may be repeated as often as desired, the system has no history, and nothing is created. Thus what it will be is already there in what it is, and what it is includes all the points of the universe to which it is related.[20]

In order to make the transition from mere matter to life, phenomena had first to participate in the behavior of matter, insofar as it is influenced causally by external forces. This behavior can be said to follow the laws that external forces prescribe. How, then, was matter able to evolve into life? From the point of view of contemporary evolutionary biology, life arose as a phenomenon of energy flow; it is inseparable from energy flow, the process of material exchange in a cosmos *bathing* in the energy of the stars. Stars provide the energy for life and the basic operation of life is to trap, store, and *convert starlight into energy*. So, for example, carbon, so essential to living matter, was formed out of the lighter elements baked by the nuclear fission of exploding stars following the initial "singularity," the explosion from an immensely hot, infinitely dense point 13.5 billion years ago; or, another example, in photosynthesis, photons are incorporated, building up bodies and food.[21] Thermodynamics developed as the science that studies these energy flows from which life emerges, as living matter internalizes, with ever-increasing variation, the material cyclicity of its cosmic surroundings. For evolutionary biology, the science of nonequilibrium thermodynamics supports the idea that energy flows through structures and organizes them to be more complex than their surroundings, and that organized and structured patterns appear out of seemingly random collisions of atoms.[22] From this point of view there is no purely inert matter except for purposes of analysis; in other words, there is no *mens momentanea*.

All the more reason to consider the possibility that the simplest forms of matter were initially both physical and chemical *and* alive, and that life is simply a tendency, a tendency that diverges over and over, sometimes preserved by nature and sometimes disappearing. Bergson clearly contrasted this view of evolution as tendencies to an understanding of evolution as causal mechanism, a theory he rejects.[23] A mechanistic evolutionary theory "means to show us the gradual building up of the machine under the influence of external circumstances [forces] intervening either directly by action on the tissues or indirectly by the selection of better adapted ones."[24] But mechanism and finalism are both constructed in the same manner as the *mens momentanea*, which Bergson formulates in terms of what he calls cinematographic

knowledge.[25] As the film of the cinematograph unrolls, different immobile photographs of the same scene follow one another so that the film apparatus operates as a geometrical deduction. *Extracting* or deducing from each individual figure, these immobilities yield impersonal abstract and simple movement in general, a homogeneous movement of externally related entities. The movement particular to each figure, the so-called *temporal inner necessity* of Merleau-Ponty's conception, never develops, and we are left with the artificial, abstract, uniform movement connecting the singular, individual attitudes, in place of real, evolutionary change. Association and conjunction link being-for-itself to being-in-the-world, the association and addition of homogeneous units under the influence of external circumstances. Thus certain aspects of human behavior, those that require association and conjunction, notably perception, intellection, language, and, especially, action, appear to reflect the motions of externally related entities; that is, our acts would reflect no more than the insertion of our will into reality whereby we perceive and know only that upon which we can act.

3. TIME AND TEMPORALITY

For his part Merleau-Ponty appears initially to retain this conception, not only to characterize the time of the objective world, the time that belongs to things (even when it appears as a datum of consciousness), but also to articulate the time that is the subject. Merleau-Ponty states that he wishes to situate the subject at the junction of the for-itself and the in-itself. This would mean at the junction of consciousness and unconscious thing-like existence. How will it be possible for time to be, not time, but *temporality*, thus coextensive with the for-itself as it negates and surpasses the in-itself in a process of self-production so as never to be completely constituted, never to exist in the manner of objects (*PhP*, 438/474)? However, this conception of the subject conjoining the for-itself and the in-itself (for which there is no remote past) seems to be somewhat at odds with the concept of temporality conjoining "Being-for-Itself and Being-in-the-World." As Merleau-Ponty acknowledges elsewhere, the problem with the in-itself is that space is the in-itself par excellence, "its definition is to *be* in-itself. Every point of space is and is thought to be right where it is—one here, another there; space is the evidence of the where" (EM, 173). Meaning, space is absolutely in-itself, and the in-itself is absolutely identified with the equality, homogeneity, and

interchangeability of space, and so, with the reversibility of time. Thus the scientist continues to look on the world from above, and the world remains in-itself, while the philosopher attempts to go to the side of being-in-the-world. This is difficult because of the expectation that she must take a stand and take up responsibility. And yet it appears that at least some humans, notably artists, have an alternative view of the conjunction of the for-itself and the in-itself (EM, 161).

In privileging the vision of the artist, someone who is "penetrated by the universe," someone for whom action and passion are indiscernible, it appears that Merleau-Ponty will make the same claims he has made elsewhere with respect to the intertwining of self and world, that is, that "my body," as he puts it, "simultaneously sees and is seen" (EM, 167, 162). What matters here, as I have pointed elsewhere, is the word *simultaneously*.[26] That is, can we truly, simultaneously perceive the world and apprehend the look fastened onto us? Or, is it not the case that either one or the other is actually possible at any given time? Moreover, must there not be a temporal interval between perception, feeling, and action in order for the subject to "be temporal by means of an inner necessity"? For if to perceive is to look at or to see something in a deliberate manner, like looking in the mirror to see oneself, and if to apprehend the look is to be looked at and to become conscious of being looked at, then active perception and receptive sensibility are not simultaneous and indistinguishable for consciousness.[27] If they were, where would temporality be? The mirror, we are told, anticipates the painter's prehuman vision of things. But if the self we see in the mirror translates and reproduces the simultaneity of seeing and being seen, then is this any different from what the Cartesian sees, is this not just the "dummy," the "outside" (168, 170)? Thus, can it be true that "things encroach upon one another *because each is outside of the others*" (173)?[28] Does this not simply reinforce the notion of the *mens momentanea*? If we note that it is also said that a self caught up in things has a front and a back, in other words, a past and a future, how can this body, with a past and future, be a thing among things, an in-itself? Is it only the artist, as Merleau-Ponty states, for whom to see is to have something at a distance and for whom action and passion are at least slightly discernible (166–67)? Let us attempt to answer these questions by looking more closely at Merleau-Ponty's conception of space. In so doing, we may discover in what manner the body and the in-itself can be temporal, but only if things do not have the existence of inert objects, only if things and the self are not versions of

the in-itself, but rather participate in some version of creative evolution in place of the static time of matter or objects.

4. PERCEPTION OR EXPERIENCE?

The opening pages of Merleau-Ponty's account of space in the *Phenomenology of Perception* focus almost entirely on the *perception* of space, which is identified there as the study of the spatial relations between objects and the geometrical characteristics of objects. In other words, it is an investigation of the nature of human perception for a disinterested observer.[29] This analysis of the perception of space initially brought forth questions about the structure of perception that are, for Merleau-Ponty, an aspect of the theory of comportment he set forth previously in the *Structure of Behavior*. As Merleau-Ponty argues there, humans exhibit symbolic behavior; they are able to vary their relations to objects in the world because they can both remember the past and imagine the future.[30] This analysis leads Merleau-Ponty to the conclusion that human symbolic behavior is neither a thing nor a mode of consciousness, but rather a form or structure, the integration of matter, life, and mind. Specifically, with respect to the human form of behavior, called "existence," symbolic behavior is initiated when a person inhabits a point of view on the world and projects it upon the world as one of its own possibilities for action. It is, as we will see, intimately connected to temporality. Because all behavior consists of relations, the world is transformed, through symbolic behavior, from the physical and material plenum of the in-itself and the for-itself, to a staging ground for behavior (*SB*, 125).[31]

Following from this, in the *Phenomenology*, the perception of space is said to consist in spatial relationships. The existence of spatial relationships presupposes that there is a subject in a setting, one who inheres in a world, where the world is understood to be a spatial field in which the subject is anchored. Yet, like Husserl, Merleau-Ponty argues that this subject is still in the "natural attitude," and so does not yet actually have *perceptions*, the positing of objects; rather, the subject undergoes a flow of experiences that imply and explain one another simultaneously and successively (*PhP*, 293, 294/324, 325). And it will be the same for the analysis of movement. The objective conception of movement defines it in terms of relations within the world, the changing relations between an object and its surroundings (280/309).[32] This view takes the *experience* of the subject for granted, but corresponds neatly

to the calculations of mathematics. Differential calculus, we have noted, measures precisely the rate of change of one variable quantity in relation to another on which it depends. For calculus, objective movement appears as an accidental attribute of a moving body, a system of relations external to the object in motion. Of course, further reflection may lead us to a different view of motion, the view that "the identity of the moving object bursts forth directly from 'experience,'" that is, from the experience of some*one* who lives through the object's motions, synthesizing them (285/315).[33] From this point of view, movements take their significance from the natural attitude of the perceiver, whose hold on the world never ceases to orient her movements (279–80/309–10).

It is significant that here, in the chapter on space, Merleau-Ponty does not dismiss either position, but instead argues that each contains an element of truth, that perception involves both the positing of objects and the experience of a subject. Thinking this through, it seems that the objective view situates an object in terms of its relations with surroundings; thus "movement does not work without an external reference point, and, in short, there is no means of attributing movement exclusively to the 'moving object' rather than to the reference point" (*PhP*, 280/310).[34] Objectively, there must be a moving object and a course through which it moves. Conversely, the perception of movement is not derived solely from the perception of a moving object, for the successive positions require no transcendental unity to hold them together and identify movement (285/315).[35] This is where Husserl's concept of the natural attitude comes into play. The natural attitude allows a non-Kantian subject to unify her experience without positing either an objective manifold of space-time or the unity of consciousness, the I think that otherwise must accompany all representations. Unity may here follow a principle of *synopsis* rather than that of Kantian synthesis; it is an outline of the multiplicity rather than the unity of what is originally many or diverse (288n60/319).[36] At the same time, the natural attitude also underlies the calculations of the mathematician who thinks of the unity of the moving object in terms of a collection of determinate properties (286/317).[37]

So it appears that the natural attitude anchors both the moving object and the perceiver in the world, yet it is not clear what this means. Merleau-Ponty claims explicitly that "we do not clarify space, movement, and time by discovering an 'inner' layer of experience where their multiplicity is *truly* erased and abolished," insofar as *external* experience, sensible perception, is the condition of the possibility of any sort of *internal* experience and the

latter, that is, internal experience, is "ineffable, but only because it is mean-
ingless (*elle ne veut rien dire*)" (*PhP*, 288n60/319). This would appear to pose
a problem for the concept of a subject who is temporal by an inner neces-
sity. Any pure inner experience would have no language, insofar as language
is an external, cultural product.[38] And, as Kant states repeatedly, intuitions
of space or time take place only insofar as the object of experience is given
to us by means of sensibility. What is important for the conception of the
inner necessity of time is that, for Merleau-Ponty, the structure that accounts
for the unity of perception will be laid at the feet of his conception, not of
space and spatial relations, but at the feet of time and temporal relations.
Yet the precise nature of these temporal relations is difficult to discern. Like
Kant, Merleau-Ponty claims that inner experience is ineffable and meaning-
less because the temporality supporting it, a temporality that he attributes
to Henri Bergson, is a temporality in which multiplicity is erased and totally,
really abolished. However, if we are willing to set aside Merleau-Ponty's dis-
missal of Bergson and allow ourselves to think together Bergson's conception
of inner experience, Husserl's notion of the natural attitude, and Merleau-
Ponty's phenomenology of perception, something interesting and new may
well emerge, the temporal basis of spatial relations and the reformulation of
the conjunction of "Being-for-Itself and Being-in-the-World."

5. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL SUBJECT

It is well known and understood that Kant posited an a priori *intuition* of
space and time. This means that our concepts of space and time must be both
free of contradiction and able to be constructed mathematically.[39] Time, in
particular, is transcendentally ideal because it is not only the formal a priori
condition of all appearances, but also the pure form of all sensible intuition.[40]
But for Merleau-Ponty, the temporal horizons of objects come to our atten-
tion, not through an idea or concept intuited by a unifying subject, but first
through the preobjective hold that our body has upon the world. Parts of
space can be said to coexist insofar as they are temporally present to the same
perceiving subject, but also and prior to this, because they are "enveloped in a
single *temporal wave*," each one of which gains both unity and individuation
because it is "squeezed (*pressée*) between the preceding one and the follow-
ing one" (*PhP*, 288/318).[41] Let us begin by asking, what is a temporal wave?
Merleau-Ponty does not elucidate this concept here, but an obvious analogy

might be sound waves. A sound wave is a disturbance that travels through a medium such as a series of interconnected and interacting particles.[42] Sound waves originate with some vibrating object creating a disturbance that is transported through the air, particle to particle, thus sound waves are said to be mechanical. Mechanical waves require a medium in which to transport their energy, unlike electromagnetic waves that can travel through a vacuum devoid of particles. Sound waves are a useful model for time because in wave phenomenon, the wave transports only its energy without transporting matter. Individual particles are displaced only temporarily; then they return to their original equilibrium.[43]

In *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, Husserl's analysis of immanent temporal objects is articulated almost entirely in terms of sound and sound waves.[44] The immanent temporal object appears in a continuous flux, which could be called a wave; the sound is continually different, but only with respect to *the way in which it appears* (*PIT*, 45). In other words, Husserl is careful to distinguish between the sound that is actually heard and the duration in which the hearing takes place, thus between matter and energy. Of particular importance to the analysis of immanent temporal objects are the "running-off phenomena," which are modes of temporal orientation such as "now" and "past," so that "we know that it [running-off phenomena] is a continuity of constant transformations which form an inseparable unit" (48). No running off can reoccur, each begins as *now*; every subsequent phase of running off is also a constantly expanding continuity of pasts; each now changes into a past, each of which sinks deeper into the past; each now passes over into retention, and *every now changes continuously* from retention to retention, such that every now point is a retention for every earlier point and every retention forms a continuum (46–52). The continuum of temporal consciousness is not the waning reverberation of the musical note that has just sounded. What occurs is an ongoing transition and transformation of its mode of appearing, but as the temporal object itself moves into the past, it simply becomes more and more obscure (47).

What is crucial in Husserl's account of running-off is that the phases of running-off form a continuum that unifies the experience of temporality without the necessity of positing a transcendental subject to unify temporal experience. Husserl's concept of retention distinguishes between the real sensation of a sound, a sensation that could be objectively measured, and the tonal moment in retention, which is *not actually present* but is *primarily remembered in the now*. "The intuition of the past itself . . . is an originary

consciousness. . . . It is consciousness of *what has just been* and not mere consciousness of the now-point of the objective thing appearing as having duration" (*PIT*, 53–54). Of equal importance is the clear distinction Husserl draws between the temporal now that sinks back in retention and the mathematical conception of a *limit*. For modern science, time is an independent variable, a parameter of the spatial manifold useful for calculating the positions of real elements of matter at any moment whatever if their current positions are given. From this point of view, each now seeks to found itself moment to moment through the limit or negation of what has come before so as to remain absolutely free of the past. "If there were such a boundary point, there would correspond to it a now which nothing preceded, and this is obviously impossible" (95). Yes, a now is an edge-point, but it is an edge-point of an *interval* of time, all of which sinks back. And yet, Husserl does still situate the interval within "the one and unique Objective time," "an *a priori* essence," a sort of *mens momentanea* that guarantees identifiable temporal positions (for example transitivity, that if B follows A, A must precede B) (96, 97).

As for any sound wave, Husserl distinguishes between the matter, the primal sensations or primal data through which the wave travels, and the energy, the wave itself, that is, objectified absolute time, which is identified with a continuity of temporal positions and also with the changing objectivities that fill it. And, ultimately, Husserl differentiates at least three levels of temporality, three components of every temporal wave: (1) the experiential thing of the individual subject in Objective time; (2) the immanent unities of preempirical time; and (3) the absolute, temporally constitutive flux of consciousness (*PIT*, 98). In addition, in a move that Merleau-Ponty will embrace, Husserl accepts that it is "pre-objectified time, which pertains to sensation, which necessarily *founds* the unique possibility of an objectification of temporal positions" (97). When bells begin to sound at some objectified temporal point, the sound always corresponds to the temporal point of the sensation. Nevertheless, even though this now is the *creative* source-*point* of all temporal positions, and even though the modification of sensations *founds* the objectivation of temporal positions, such an internal time-consciousness does not seem to be a possibility for conjoining being-for-itself *and* being-in-the-world. Recalling Merleau-Ponty's concern that internal experience is "ineffable, but only because it is meaningless (*elle ne veut rien dire*)," we should not be surprised that he does not concur with the aspect of the temporal wave defined as the intuition of the absolute, temporally constitutive flux of

consciousness (*PhP*, 288n60/319).[45] The problem seems to be that Husserl's consciousness provides too much unity, and, as becomes clear, Bergson's provides too little.

First demurring with respect to what he calls a "transcendental Ego freely positing itself before itself a multiplicity in itself and constituting it," Merleau-Ponty posits an I that is never conscious of being the creator of time, a more empiricist I that has the *impression* of mobile entities effecting the passage from one instant to an other, an I that is relative and prepersonal and that nonetheless exists as the basis for space and time (*PhP*, 288n60/319). Perhaps it is possible to hypothesize that this relative and prepersonal I lies somewhere between Bergson's internal flux of duration and Husserl's transcendental Ego, but always in the context of a structure that is a network of relations. In other words, the supposition is that there must be for space, just as for behavior, a general field within which the perception of spatial entities takes place, a field that will orient our perception and give *meaning* to spatial phenomena. What Merleau-Ponty learns from Bergson and Husserl is that that general field is time. It is, he maintains, the time within which we act in alignment with the network of relationships that define our acts, acts that are also our abode, the place within which we dwell; and the place in which we dwell is, we will see, also the place from which we form our commitments and assert our freedom (483/520).[46]

6. MOTION, THE MOVING OBJECT, AND THE VISUAL FIELD

Motion begins in a moving object, but it spreads from there into the visual field, and insofar as it takes place in a *field of relations*, motion is structural and not relative. This is why, as we reach the end of the visual field, our sight does not pass into nothingness, for the visual field is a stage in the organization of the world of a particular type, that is, it is lived. We live this organization as the relation between the home in which we dwell, the place that is our abode, and the environment in which our dwelling exists. We live this relation also, insofar as it passes through our body, but it passes through our body only insofar as we have a past. I am at home; to the north, I see the bluffs and the highway passing between them on its way up to the high plateau, the stormy pass that finally drops down into the valley that is the site of the city of Denver. When I gaze north, searching for the horizon, this is my "march toward the real," my temporal approach to the city that lies

beyond the pass (*PhP*, 291/323).[47] To the west, the green wall of the front range of the Rockies bars the way, and, still snowy, Pikes Peak lurches above it all, sheltered by the fast-moving storm clouds. To the south, there stands the garden wall buffered by tall grasses and aspen, shaking in the harsh wind; the native conifers stand nearby, stable and sturdy. To the east, the interstate streaming with vehicles heading down to Pueblo, Trinidad, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque, and on the far side of the highway, the plains opening empty and wide, toward Kansas and beyond.

This, for Merleau-Ponty, is not a static field but a field of temporal relations that pass through the body of *someone*, someone who dwells in the house on the promontory and in the field of relations contoured by time. It is precisely the temporality of the field of relations that corresponds to Husserl's running-off phenomena, that takes the place of Husserl's Objective time, the absolute, temporally constitutive flux of consciousness, and that gives definition to the heterogeneous duration of Bergson's inner life. As such, perception is never arbitrary. It is thoroughly committed insofar as our perception takes place in a context, which is a set of relations invoking a past in which we gave ourselves a world. This means that without the past I lived through, that is, experienced and perceived, the past in which I inhabited that city to the north, I would have much less or even no interest in placing my desk there, in front of the north-facing window from where the room that surrounds me and the flames in the fireplace burning beside me, envelop and warm me against the intense and violent spring storm passing over house and town. And so I move from window to window peering into my past and committing myself, by the act of writing and the act of planting the garden, to some future. An abode or dwelling with few windows or little of visual interest, with nothing to look at or sealed off from its geography or environment, might be, in this manner, sealing off its occupants from their own network of temporal relations, from the personal past and from commitments to future. It would be a reality independent of the people who live there, ambiguous and incoherent, for, as we noted at the beginning of this essay, a reality truly independent of us would at best appear as a confusion of unrelated and alien elements.

This, it seems, is the point of Merleau-Ponty's claim that "we had to acknowledge that spatial perception is a structural phenomenon and is only understood from a perceptual field," a field in which we are anchored through our commitments past, present, and future (*PhP*, 293/325).[48] I anchor myself in what I have already seen and lived, and in a space where I cannot affirm

my own anchorage, it is impossible for me to make any commitments, to act in a manner that relieves the ambiguity of my perception and allows me to be the temporal wave that moves, particle to particle, through the matter of the world. This is why the question of spatial relations and their properties is a second-order question. A visit to an unknown place where I have no specific plans produces only highly ambiguous perceptions. I have no commitments past or future. I desperately need a map. Then, I must walk through the streets in order to gather behind me, at each step, even the beginnings of what will be a past and to formulate possible future commitments. Where will I find coffee? Where is a friendly café? What is there to see or do? All of this will influence my experience of the city. The past I bring with me will decide for me if I am comfortable with the architecture and plan of this city or if it leaves me feeling isolated and alone. My choices, will, of course, depend on the past I bring with me, the past that I am, but less so than if I were at home or busy with a particular task. Merleau-Ponty points out that under the influence of a drug such as mescaline, or for the schizophrenic, the past passing through the body is precisely what is missing. For the former, the person is alone and forlorn in empty space, while the schizophrenic can make no connection between a bird in the garden and the sound of its song. When the body's perceptions are no longer able to be the passage between the network of relations that constitute space, this is due to the *collapse of time*, specifically, the loss of any sense of time passing and the inability to orient oneself toward a specific future, thus the loss of the ability to act at all (295–96/326–27). Lacking anchorage in the past and commitment to a future, the individual is alienated from spatial relations and from action, and even the daytime becomes an eternal night, contingent and unreal.

7. THE SPACE OF COMMITMENT

So it seems that it would be folly to claim, as some cognitive theorists with realist tendencies have done, that a conceptual structure is meaningful merely because it is tied to preconceptual spatial experiences, that is, that there is a projection from the physical and spatial domain to that of abstract conceptual structures, and that meaning is grounded purely in spatial experience.[49] What is it that makes this seemingly reasonable assertion so mistaken? Looking to the experience of primitive peoples for whom mythical space counts as much as perception, it appears that directions and positions are not a matter

of empirical experience, a continual conceptual mapping between, say, the experience of "up" and that of "more" established through neural connections, so that "experiencing the More is Up correlations over and over should lead to the establishment of connections between . . . quantity . . . [and] verticality."[50] Rather, what lies at the heart of mythical space is the "placement [in it] of great affective entities," so, rather than searching for landmarks to ascertain the proximity of home, the tribal member "tend[s] toward it as if toward the natural place of a certain peace or a certain joy" (*PhP*, 298/330). And it is no different for so-called civilized human beings. We learn where something is, we get its spatial location, only insofar as it is the site of our temporal and affective life. It is a question of our past and future commitments, "what our desire moves toward, what strikes fear in our hearts, [or] upon what our life depends" (298/330). I will always love the northern view, its enormous, sheltering clouds and unrestricted visibility enticing me to think, to travel, to try something new, but gradually and also, after planting the garden, and feeling the violent storm clouds hovering over the peak with their sharpened lightning flashes and explosive thunder, after learning to make my way through the woods and up the steep paths visible from my windows, gradually, my heart goes there, too, and I cease to feel that I am far away from what I love, far away and out of touch with real life, the life I used to live, the life of the past (299/331). An abode or dwelling that did not allow me to bring my past with me while establishing a new future would be a place in which I could not live, at least not happily. Is it not the case that often people stay in the same town, on the same street, in the same house, for all their lives because they cannot imagine a dwelling that would allow them to bring their past along even as they make new commitments to the future? Or, they find new homes that resemble some past they never inhabited, and they take up the life of the country squire or the urban hipster, but lacking any affective tie, any desire for such a place, any past or future temporal wave, they live there as if on a TV or movie set, a carefully designed but sterile life, acting out the role that the space calls for without ever loving it.

   In this acknowledgment of the constitutive relation of time and affect to space, Merleau-Ponty is not so far from the thought of Bergson. Let us not forget Bergson's distinction between the duration in which we act, in which our states melt into one another, and the duration in which we *see ourselves acting*, a duration whose elements are dissociated and juxtaposed. Understood as sound waves, the former is the energy and the latter the matter, and what unifies duration is our temporality.[51] Our past remains part of the

present as desire, will, and action, and although only what is useful enters consciousness in any one perception, the entire past that remains is felt; it is always felt as a tendency.[52] On hikes, I tend toward the forest and ponds, without thinking that these are the very images of my childhood escapades. Thus, Bergson has stated unequivocally, "Questions relating to subject and object, to their distinction and their union, should be put in terms of time, rather than space."[53] So Kant is taken to task for making space the a priori form belonging to a unifying Ego, a form that must then mysteriously adapt to our felt and sensuous existence. Instead, Bergson argues that whatever sense we make of our present perception relies on memory images selectively chosen in attentive perception.[54]

Nevertheless, it is truly Merleau-Ponty who, taking into account both Husserl and Bergson, brings time to space and articulates how it is that our acts are our abode, our dwelling. For Bergson, one acts by choosing which image-interpretation of the past to bring forth; for Husserl, an act is an intentional lived experience in a flux in which an immanent temporal unity—this is a wish, this is a regret—is constituted (*PIT*, sect. 37, 101). But for Merleau-Ponty, a body is in space only to the degree that it is an expression of the network of temporal relations of a subject, the conjoining of being-for-itself *and* being-in-the-world, "the *energy* with which he [she] *tends* toward a future through his [her] body and his [her] world" (*PhP*, 296/327; emphases added). This is why dreams express our temporality, that toward which we tend, that which we desire. The dreamer knows no objective space; the dreamer possesses only emotions, desires and bodily attitudes, tendencies, and so the dream is haunted by life and sexuality, and the dreamer feels that toward which her desire goes out, whether past or future (297, 298, 299/329, 330, 331). Dreaming or awake, we seek a space in which we can feel in touch with our temporality, meaning, the great affective entities of our lives. Not to do so, to exist so as to be sensitive to any and all spaces, is to be consumed and trapped by mania, with no past or future in relation to space. Contrariwise, we see the necessity of lived distance, the moment of perception, that which, according to Bergson, separates the falling-off of retentions from the effects of the acts of intentional consciousness, separating memory from matter. Without this moment of hesitation, freedom would not exist. We would be caught up in an unbreakable causal chain of physical or psychical events; we would be deprived of our own desire, our tendencies arising from our past choices and our tendencies toward the future (299/331). Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, asserts that no existence founds itself only from

moment to moment by negating the past, that moral freedom requires a past and a future, a past and a future that belong to the temporal unity of one's current projects, projects that, in turn, may become the starting point for other projects to be carried out by other people, on and on into the infinite future.[55] Merleau-Ponty repeats this claim in the chapter on "Freedom" in the *Phenomenology*, where he agrees, "I can no longer pretend to be a nothingness (*néant*) and to choose myself continuously from nothing," for our choices and acts take place in a field of relations (478/517, 518). This is indeed the sense in which time and the subject communicate, as Merleau-Ponty claims, from within, that is, in virtue of an inner, interior necessity. This is the manner in which your abode is your act; it is where you dwell. It does not relieve you of the past, but allows you to live in a space where you may commit to a new future (432/469).

NOTES

1. See, for example, M. C. Dillon, "'Eye and Mind': The Intertwining of Vision and Thought," *Man and World* 13, no. 2 (June 1980): 155–71. See also EM, 159–90.

2. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 9–16. Originally published in French as *L'Être et néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943).

3. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 153–61.

4. Ibid., 82–87.

5. This is the empiricist position of David Hume in *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (1738; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 251–62.

6. For a basic explanation, see "Hyperphysics," http://hyperphysics.phy-astr.gsu.edu/hbase/hframe.html. The ability to make predictions arises with the development of differential calculus, generally attributed to Leibniz and Newton.

7. Morris Klein, *Mathematics in Western Culture* (New York: Galaxy Books, 1964), 106.

8. Klein, *Mathematics*, 107.

9. Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and George R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), Meditation II, 149. See also Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, in ibid., 13.

10. Eric D. Schneider and Dorion Sagan, *Into the Cool: Energy Flow, Thermodynamics, and Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 26–28.

11. Translation altered. The translation "hermetically sealed" is not literal and does not reflect the thermodynamic idea of a closed or isolated system.

12. "'Je pense, je suis,' les deux affirmations sont bien équivalentes. . . . C'est . . . le Je pense qui est réintégré au mouvement *de transcendance du Je suis et la conscience*

á l'existence" (*PhP*, 439; emphasis added). Possibly this means simply "to" existence rather than "into" (403/439).

13. It is fascinating to see how much of the chapter on the cogito in the *Phenomenology* discusses sexuality and love. Following this up is unfortunately outside the scope of this essay.

14. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 4. Originally published as *Cinéma 1: L'image-mouvement* (Paris: Minuit, 1983). Certainly this progression is part of Deleuze's general methodology. In departing from the Greek notions of Form and Substance, and by embracing the concept of the differentiable instant on a plane of immanence developed by calculus, as well as the notion of time as an independent variable, Deleuze is simply formulating a metaphysics compatible with modern science.

15. Richard DeWitt, *Worldviews: An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 209.

16. Robin Durie, introduction to *Duration and Simultaneity*, by Henri Bergson, trans. Mark Lewis and Robin Durie (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 1999), xvii.

17. Ibid., vii. Merleau-Ponty credits Bergson with rejecting physiological causal theories of memory but maintains that Bergson posits a theory of psychological preservation of memory (*PhP*, 435–36).

18. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (Lantham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 8. It seems to me that Bergson is proposing a new image for science, but as he was a philosopher and not a physicist, he was and remains widely misunderstood.

19. David J. Depew and Bruce H. Weber, *Darwinism Evolving: Systems Dynamics and the Genealogy of Natural Selection* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 92.

20. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 6–7. This corresponds to the static view of classical dynamics set forth by Stengers and Prigogine.

21. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 99. Photons are a quantum of electromagnetic radiation. Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, "A Universe in Heat: Sexual Energy," in *What is Sex?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 8, 24.

22. Margulis and Sagan, "Universe in Heat," 28. Margulis is a well-known evolutionary biologist; Sagan is a science writer. Life is only one example of thermodynamic systems, but as the authors admit, it is among the most interesting.

23. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 102. Margulis and Sagan seem to evade mechanism as well as finalism altogether.

24. Ibid., 88. This corresponds to what Deleuze calls "force." See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 141.

25. For this reason, *Creative Evolution* is a thorough critique of empiricism and empirical principles as well as of Kantianism and Kantian principles.

26. Dorothea E. Olkowski, "Merleau-Ponty: Intertwining and Objectification," *PhaenEx* 1, no. 1 (November 2006): 113–39. The relevant argument from this essay is that without a temporal interval of sensibility and reflection on feeling between active perception and action, between perception and objectification, there is no reference to oneself and there is no reflection on how to respond. Such reference is here provided by feeling, and insofar as this is the case, feeling must be a necessary though not sufficient condition of objectivity.

27. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 258.

28. This is Merleau-Ponty's definition of depth. Merleau-Ponty is critical of Descartes for eliminating acting at a distance, but not to do so is to reinforce the model of magical relations between things that are purely external to one another. See also Edward S. Casey, "'The Element of Voluminousness': Depth and Place Re-examined," in *Merleau-Ponty Vivant*, ed. M. C. Dillon (Albany: State University of NewYork Press, 1991), 1–30.

29. I have addressed this "normative" perception in "A Psychoanalysis of Nature?" *Chiasmi International* 2 (2000): 185–204.

30. "Behavior . . . does not unfold in objective time and space like a series of physical events; each moment does not occupy one and only one point of time; rather, at the decisive moment of learning, a 'now' stands out from the series of 'nows,' acquires a particular value and summarizes the groupings which have preceded it as it engages and anticipates the future of behavior; this 'now' transforms the singular situation of the experience into a typical situation and the effective reaction into an aptitude. From this moment on, behavior is detached from the order of the in-itself (*en-soi*) and becomes the projection outside the organism of a *possibility* that is internal to it. The world, inasmuch as it harbors living beings, ceases to be a material plenum consisting of juxtaposed parts; it opens up at the place where behavior appears" (*SB*, 125).

31. "I am aware of perceiving the world as well as behavior which, caught in it, intends numerically one and the same world, which is to say that, in the experience of behavior, I effectively surpass the alternative of the for-itself (*pour-soi*) and the in-itself (*en-soi*)" (126).

32. "We will have to rediscover beneath the objective thought of movement a preobjective experience from which it borrows its sense and where movement still tied to the person who perceives, is a variation of the subject's hold upon his world."

33. Merleau-Ponty's text reads, "The perception of movement is not secondary in relation to the perception of the moving object."

34. The limit of this point of view is that once a *strict* distinction is made between the identical body in motion and movement, the implication is that there are spatial and temporal positions identifiable in themselves (*PhP*, 279–80/311).

35. These are not, it seems to me, Merleau-Ponty's most lucid pages.

36. Thus, "the unity of movement is not a real unity. But no more is multiplicity . . . a real multiplicity that it must overcome."

37. "It is the circle as a thing of the world that possesses, in advance and in itself, all of the properties that analysis (*la pensée thétique)* will discover there."

38. Vladimir Tasi , *Mathematics and the Roots of Postmodern Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 55. Phenomenological reduction of experiences of the external world "could potentially be problematic when it comes to language. It is not immediately clear how the evidence of anything could be collected in a cognizant manner if language were finally bracketed off" (54–55). Even if it turns out that there are universal "deep" language structures, no one speaks without being spoken to.

39. See Gottfried Martin, *Kant's Metaphysics and Theory of Science*, trans. P. G. Lucas (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 22–23. This explains why Kant's explanation of time is modeled on space.

40. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A26, B42; A34, B50. Cited in Martin, *Kant's Metaphysics*, 39.

41. Only objective time is made up of successive moments.

42. This useful and clear account of wave behavior can be found at one of the many excellent websites for students: The Physics Classroom, http://www.physics classroom.com/Class/.

43. Physics Classroom, http://www.physicsclassroom.com/Class/waves/u10l1b .cfm. Additionally, when two waves meet, the medium changes shape resulting from the net effect of the two individual waves; however, the waves themselves continue unabated on their path. http://www.physicsclassroom.com/Class/waves/U10L3a.cfm.

44. Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 40–46 (hereafter cited in text as *PIT*).

45. The positive references to Kant in the text here are striking since Kant is often the recipient of a great deal of Merleau-Ponty's criticism. The bulk of these comments are directed against Henri Bergson, whom Merleau-Ponty reads as a realist with a dualist notion of matter and memory, and who is criticized as "ambiguous" (*l'équivoque*)!

46. The text reads, "You reside in your very act. You are your act. . . . You give yourself in exchange. . . . Your signification shines forth, dazzlingly."

47. "C'est une marche au réel."

48. In part, the idea that we are temporally committed to the spaces we inhabit implies that the network of temporal relations that constitute human spatiality are also the basis of our ethical commitments.

49. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 268. I have addressed cognitive theories more fully in Olkowski, "Immersed in an Illusion: Realism, Language and the Actions and Passions of the Body," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 34, no. 1 (January 2003): 4–21.

50. Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 54.

51. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy M. Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 186. What makes Bergson's concept of memory so complex is that the whole of psychical life is reinterpreted with each new perception (161–62).

52. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 5.

53. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 71. In the real, perception and recollection interpenetrate.

54. Ibid., 102.

55. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: Citadel Press, 1976), 27. For this view of Beauvoir's ethics, see my forthcoming essay, "Letting Go the Weight of the Past, Beauvoir and the Joy of Existence," in a volume being edited by Sylvia Stoller.

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. . . .

INHABITING THE HOUSE THAT HERMAN BUILT:
MERLEAU-PONTY AND THE PATHOLOGICAL SPACE OF
SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Lisa Guenther

> The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon. We are
> never tired, so long as we can see far enough.
> <div align="right">—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature</div>

> To be a body is to be tied to a certain world. . . . Our body is
> not primarily in space, but is rather of space.
> <div align="right">—Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception</div>

> Solitary confinement in prison can alter the ontological
> makeup of a stone.
> <div align="right">—Jack Henry Abbott, In the Belly of the Beast</div>

Since the mid-1980s, supermax prisons have multiplied across the United States, with at least 57 supermax facilities in current operation and approximately 80,000 prisoners held in extreme isolation for 22–24 hours a day.[1] The rapid growth of the supermax prison industry both reflects and helps to accomplish a shift in US penal policy from the goal of rehabilitation to the task of perpetual control. Critics call supermax prisons control prisons,[2] warehouse prisons,[3] and even "cold storage" for prisoners.[4] Advocates of supermax prisons portray inmates as "the worst of the worst": serial killers, rapists, and terrorists who pose an incontrovertible threat to society at large, and even to other inmates. But in practice, many people who are convicted of nonviolent crimes end up in control units as a result of breaking prison rules or because they are presumed to be members of a gang. A disproportionate

number of these prisoners are people of color, and many are labeled as "security threats" because they are politically active or perceived as "leaders" within the general prison population.[5] Once an inmate has landed in a supermax unit, it can be extremely difficult to get out; even minor infringements or perceived infringements of prison rules can set back one's date of release into the "mainline" or general prison population. Decisions about so-called "administrative segregation" are made internally within the prison, without the presence of judges or lawyers, and so the prisoner is at the mercy of prison officials who may or may not be sympathetic to her case.[6]

What is it like to be confined in a supermax unit? A typical control unit or security housing unit (SHU) ranges from 6 x 8 feet to 8 x 12 feet. It is usually painted white or pale gray to reduce visual stimulus. Furnishings consist of a bed, a table and seat, a toilet, and a sink—all bolted into place. There is a slot in the door, called a trayport or cuffport, through which food trays are exchanged and the prisoner's hands are cuffed or uncuffed. There are either no windows at all or just a small, high window that lets in light but does not afford any view of the outside. Fluorescent lights are kept on twenty-four hours a day, and surveillance cameras are continuously running. In many supermax prisons, inmates communicate with guards through intercoms; some even employ "tele-medicine" and "tele-psychiatry" sessions to minimize direct contact between inmates and staff.[7] Prisoners are confined in solitude for 22 to 23.5 hours a day, with the remaining time spent—again, in solitude—in an outdoor exercise yard, surrounded by concrete or tightly woven security mesh walls that offer little or no view of the outside and only a small glimpse of sky. These yards are often called "dog runs" because of their resemblance to an outdoor kennel. Depending on prisoners' level of good behavior, they may be given access to books, radio, television, and/or videoconference visits with loved ones. Often, the only "television" available in a supermax prison is a closed-circuit broadcast of training videos and religious programming.

Craig Haney describes the sort of daily bodily interaction that supermax prisoners have with correctional officers: "When prisoners in these units are escorted outside their cells or beyond their housing units, they typically are first placed in restraints, chained while still inside their cells (through a food port or tray slot on the cell door), and sometimes tethered to a leash that is held by an escort officer. They are rarely if ever in the presence of another person (including physicians and psychotherapists) without being in multiple forms of physical restraints (e.g., ankle chains, belly or waist chains, handcuffs)."[8]

When prisoners refuse to present their hands to the cuffport for restraint, they may be forcibly "extracted" from their cells and pepper-sprayed if they continue to resist; they may be put in four-point restraints (with both hands and arms fastened to the ground) or in a restraint chair (in which arms, legs, and chest are strapped to the chair). Officers are entitled to perform strip searches of inmates—including cavity searches—if they suspect them of possessing contraband items. Often, these searches are conducted as a matter of routine.

What would it be like to have one's bodily contact with others reduced to the fastening and unfastening of restraints through a slot in the door, punctuated with the most intimate probing of the surface and depths of one's body?[9] Not to be able to speak to anyone except through an intercom, or by yelling through a slot in the door? To be kept in solitude, and yet exposed to constant surveillance and to the echoing noise of other prisoners?[10] What would it be like to be prevented from having a concrete experience of open, unrestricted space? Not to see the sky or the horizon for days, weeks, even years on end? Not to know if it's day or night apart from the schedule of one's feedings and allotted exercise times?[11]

Many prisoners speak of their experience in supermax prison as a form of living death.[12] On one hand, their bodies still live and breathe, wake and sleep (often with difficulty). On the other hand, a meaningful sense of living embodiment has for the most part drained out of their lives; they've become unhinged from the world, confined to a space in which all they can do is turn around or pace back and forth, blocked from an open-ended perception of the world as a space of mutual belonging and interaction with others. Stephen Tillich, a Washington state inmate, says of his experience in the control unit: "It's like being in a tomb."[13] Angela Tucker, confined in the SHU at Valley State Prison for Women (VSPW), says: "It's like living in a black hole."[14] Another Washington state inmate says: "It's pretty much like not living."[15] While many prisoners feel like they are treated like animals rather than human beings, others do not even feel like they are treated as well as animals; they feel more like "baggage" or "inventory" in a warehouse.[16] Even the prison staff often relate to prisoners as things rather than living beings. One officer describes his work receiving inmates into a Washington state prison this way: "We are just like the guys who work loading docks—we're trying to *move* stuff."[17]

In clinical terms, the effects of prolonged solitary confinement are known collectively as "isolation sickness," reduced environmental stimulation (RES),

or the brutally frank SHU (security housing unit) syndrome.[18] Symptoms include intense anxiety, paranoia, insomnia, hallucinations and other perceptual distortions, cognitive impairment, and physical ailments such as headaches, digestive problems, and bodily aches and pains.[19] Prisoners themselves describe this pathology in less clinical terms. Raymond Luc Levasseur, held in solitary confinement for thirteen years with the exception of eleven hours a week, writes: "The purpose of a boxcar cell [a cement cube perforated on one side by steel bars, which look out onto another cement wall with a solid steel door] is to gouge the prisoners' senses by suppressing human sound, putting blinders about our eyes and forbidding touch."[20] Jack H. Abbott, who estimates that he spent fourteen to fifteen years in solitary confinement, writes:

> Something happens down there in the hole, something like an event, but this event can only occur over a span of years. It cannot take place in time and space the way we ordinarily know them. . . . My body communicates with the cell. We exchange temperatures and air currents, smells and leavings on the floor and walls. I try to keep it clean, to wash away my evidence, for the first year or so, then let it go at that. . . . If you are in that cell for weeks that add up to months [Abbott is referring to a strip-cell consisting of nothing but an open toilet in the center, sprayed around with urine and feces], you do not ignore all this and live "with it"; you *enter* it and become a part of it.[21]

Stuart Grassian, a psychiatrist and expert witness in many class action suits on behalf of prisoners across the United States, recorded the testimony of prisoners held in prolonged solitary confinement at Walpole State Penitentiary in 1982. Many of the prisoners experienced profound distortions in their perception of objects in space:

> The cell walls start wavering. . . . Melting, everything in the cell starts moving; everything gets darker, you feel you are losing your vision. . . . They come by [for breakfast] with four trays; the first has big pancakes—I think I'm going to get them. Then someone comes up and gives me tiny ones—they get real small, like silver dollars. I seem to see movements—real fast motions in front of me. Then seems like they're doing things behind your back—can't quite see them. Did someone just hit me? I dwell on it for hours.[22]

Already in 1842, Charles Dickens noticed the profound effect of isolation on prisoners at Eastern State Penitentiary. They trembled, they had difficulty making eye contact, and they even seemed to be losing their capacity to see and to hear, as if the absence of something new and interesting to perceive—the absence of a horizon beyond these four walls—was eroding their sensory awareness.[23] Almost 170 years later, Robert King made a similar observation of his own experience of twenty-nine years in solitary confinement in Louisiana's Angola prison: "When I walked out of Angola, I didn't realise how permanently the experience of solitary would mark me. Even now my sight is impaired. I find it very difficult to judge long distances—a result of living in such a small space."[24]

Why does prolonged solitary confinement bring about such dramatic perceptual and even ontological effects, not in just one or two prisoners, but in 70 to 90 percent of all prisoners?[25] In what follows, I look to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's account of embodied perception, in particular his account of the perception of spatial depth, in order to develop a phenomenological explanation of the absolutely fundamental importance of a concrete experience of an open space shared with other embodied beings—space with spatial and social depth—for subjectivity, and of how devastating the effects can be for someone deprived of this experience. I will conclude with some reflections on the way one prisoner, Herman Wallace, managed to resist and refigure the pathological space of solitary confinement, even as the institutional violence of the prison system eroded his health and eventually took his life.

DEPTH AND PURE DEPTH

"Experience reveals, beneath objective space in which the body eventually finds its place, a primordial spatiality of which objective space is but the envelope and which merges with the very being of the body. As we have seen, to be a body is to be tied to a certain world, and our body is not primarily in space, but is rather of space" (*PhP*, 149). What does Merleau-Ponty mean when he says that the body is not merely *in* space but *of* it? The body is a material thing; it takes up space, it can bump into things, it has objective being. But the body is also the site of lived experience; I feel things not just *in* my body but *as* a body. In this sense, the body is not merely inserted into objective grid space; rather, it is the perspective from which my experience of space, and even of my own body as a spatial being, unfolds. I perceive

the world not as a god hovering above the world, nor as a robot passively recording raw data, but as a being who is wholly intervolved with a world in which I am partially constituted, partially constituting: an organism subject to the laws of physics, but also an active participant in the unfolding of the world and its significance. I do not indiscriminately take everything in at the same level or to the same degree; rather, I am drawn to certain things rather than others, picking out some things as objects in the foreground and placing others in the background. These levels shift according to what concerns me most at this or that moment, and I am not always the one who determines my own concerns; the relation between body and world unfolds as a conversation, in a dynamic tension between passive givenness and active constitution.

My body is the primordial "here" from which I encounter every "there"; it is the root of my intentional consciousness and of my existence as a living being. The "here" of my bodily perspective is both utterly inescapable and utterly mobile; it is both a root and a vehicle for my open-ended exploration of the world. Movement is a vital component of this experience: "My body is geared into the world when my perception provides me with the most varied and the most clearly articulated spectacle possible, and when my motor intentions, as they unfold, receive the responses they anticipate from the world" (*PhP*, 261).

This "gearing of the subject into his world . . . is the origin of space" (*PhP*, 262). As I move through the world, interacting with objects and other subjects, a constantly changing but consistently patterned series of profiles or glimpses of the world unfolds from the perspective of my embodied consciousness. Each of these profiles is partial, revealing some aspects of the world while concealing others; I can never see the front and the back of an object simultaneously, but as I move around, my body "gears into" the heterogeneous texture of the world, and I gain a sense of the object as a whole that exceeds what I can experience in any given moment, but that nevertheless has a coherence or wholeness of its own. Precisely because perception is partial and perspectival, it is also inexhaustible; I can never "complete" my perception of even a simple object like a cup or a table, since it is accessible to me only through a blend of presence and absence.

The experience of what Merleau-Ponty calls "primordial" or "primary spatiality" unfolds from this bodily perspective. In every mundane perception, there is not only the encounter with an object, but also the opening of a dimension of depth that marks my distance and proximity to things. While length and width can be perceived as belonging solely to objects located in

grid space, depth unfolds in phenomenological space, as part of the lived experience of a subject who is embedded in the very world that she perceives. From a Cartesian perspective, where space is understood as extension, depth is not meaningfully different from width; what appears as depth to me (and is therefore invisible, since it merely passes through a segment of empty space), is clearly visible and measurable from a third-person perspective perpendicular to the line between myself and the object. In other words: the experience of depth at point A on the grid is (more clearly expressed as) the experience of width at point B. But Merleau-Ponty rejects such a "solution" to the problem of depth, first because the conversion of depth-for-me into width-for-the-other does not explain anything about our experience of depth as such, and second because the primary experience of space is not open to measurement, but rather unfolds through the qualitative, and even affective, opening of a *dimension*.

For Merleau-Ponty, the "lived distance" of depth perception "links me to things that count and exist for me, and links them to each other. At each moment, this distance measures the 'scope' of my life."[26] In this sense, the experience of depth is not merely perceptual in a cognitive sense, but also affective or emotional. I am *moved* by things, and not everything moves me in the same way. Affective depth marks the emergence and unfolding of meaningful space, space that matters to what Heidegger would call my Being-in-the-world. To care about things—to be structured *as* care—is to be open to the way some aspects of the world leap out at me and seize me, while others recede into the background or even escape my notice.

In his discussion of depth, Merleau-Ponty raises the possibility of an experience of "pure depth": depth without a determinate object, "a spatiality without things" (*PhP*, 296). Following Eugène Minkowski,[27] Merleau-Ponty calls this experience of pure depth "night":

> Night is not an object in front of me; rather, it envelops me, it penetrates me through all my senses, it suffocates my memories, and it all but effaces my personal identity. I am no longer withdrawn into my observation post in order to see the profiles of objects flowing by in the distance. The night is without profiles, it itself touches me and its unity is the mystical unity of the *mana*. Even cries, or a distant light, only populate it vaguely; it becomes entirely animated; it is pure depth without planes, without surfaces, and without any distance from it to me. (*PhP*, 296)

While Merleau-Ponty himself does not develop this account of night into a distinct category of experience, his account of night in this passage helps to name an experience of space unhinged from determinate objects and from the limits or outlines that distinguish self from non-self. Recall the experience of prisoners in prolonged solitary confinement: the strange feeling of death in life, in which one's body begins to "communicate" with the cell, the outlines around things seem to melt, and the cell walls themselves begin to waver. Could the experience of endless day, as in the twenty-four-hour illumination of the supermax cell, be tantamount to an experience of night? Is supermax confinement an experience of pure depth, or is it an experience of space deprived of depth? And how exactly could we determine the difference?

For Merleau-Ponty, the experience of night seems fecund and generative; it exposes us to the prepersonal matrix from which our bodies individuate and to which they remain attached by a mystical umbilical cord. But even here, the experience of night is highly ambivalent; it stifles my reflections and threatens to destroy my personal identity just as much as it connects me to the *mana* of pure depth: "Sometimes between me and events . . . the lived distance is at once too short and too wide: the majority of events cease to count for me, whereas the nearest ones consume me. They envelop me like the night, and they rob me of individuality and freedom. I can literally no longer breathe. I am possessed" (*PhP*, 299).

The experience of pure depth can be suffocating as well as liberating; affective depth, the site of mattering, can invert into a radical loss of meaning where nothing counts anymore. Supermax daylight, no less than the experience of night, threatens to destroy the prisoner's sense of personal identity—not because it is free from limits, but because it is confined to such strict limits that the open-ended field of experience that defines the world, and defines both self and other as coinhabitants of a shared world, begins to disintegrate.

What anchors and stabilizes the experience of pure depth is the correlation of an individuated, embodied perspective—a "here"—with a world of stable, determinate object—a "there." Merleau-Ponty calls this "clear space"—"that impartial space where all objects have the same importance and the same right to exist" (*PhP*, 300). Clear space is not opposed to night; it remains connected to pure depth, "wholly penetrated by another spatiality that morbid variations reveal" (300). Nor is it drained of affective significance. Clear space is the sane, rational space of a world shared in common with others, a world in which things matter, but where their precise meaning is subject to constant mediation and negotiation. It is a sense

of space maintained by both an engagement with the world and a capacity to sleep or withdraw from the world. Merleau-Ponty writes: "During sleep . . . I only keep the world present to me in order to hold it at a distance, I turn toward the subjective sources of my existence" (297). Sleep is the escape that both reconnects me to the experience of primary spatiality—to the night—and also allows me to retain and even recover my sense of personal identity, my distinction from the night, the root of my own subjective existence. The temporal rhythm of alternating night and day, sleep and waking, release and return, sustains the fabric of embodied subjectivity in a world that is experienced in depth, somewhere between the extremes of pure depth and objective space.

SUPERMAX CONFINEMENT AS SPATIAL PATHOLOGY

In articulating his concept of pure depth, Merleau-Ponty cites schizophrenia as an example of those "morbid deviations from the normal" produced by an exposure to the night. He presents schizophrenia less as a mental illness than a phenomenological disorder of Being-in-the-world rooted in a pathological experience of space: "The schizophrenic patient no longer lives in the common world, but in a private world; he does not go all the way to geographical space. . . . The world is no longer self-evident" (*PhP*, 300). For one reason or another—Merleau-Ponty does not speculate on the aetiology of the disease—schizophrenia unhinges the patient from a common world, afflicting him with an experience of the world not shared with other people. We could say that schizophrenia removes the patient from "clear space" and plunges him headlong into the pure depth of night:

> What protects the healthy man against delirium or hallucinating is not his reason, but rather the structure of his space: objects remain in front of him, they keep their distance and, as Malebranche said about Adam, they only touch him with respect. What brings about both hallucination and the myth is the contraction of lived space, the rooting of things in our body [rather than in a shared world], the overwhelming proximity of the object, the solidarity between man and the world, which is not abolished but repressed by everyday perception or by objective thought, and which philosophical consciousness rediscovers. (*PhP*, 304)

The schizophrenic is exposed to an "experience" that unravels the meaning of experience, understood phenomenologically as the subjective basis for knowledge of the objective (i.e., intersubjective or intercorporeal) world. Clear space, with its consistent correlations between self and other, body and world, keeps the night at bay; it carves "places" out of the pure depth of spatiality, and it institutes stable but flexible limits on the proximity and distance of things. In so doing, it preserves a hollow within the world for the reception of a body, and a hollow within the body for the reception of a world. Of course, clear space can also be reified into objective or grid space when the rationalist subject attempts to deny or overcome the lived experience of depth, in which case rationality also becomes a source of pathology. But there is a place (quite literally) for an experience of clear space somewhere between night and the grid of objective space.

Merleau-Ponty's analysis of schizophrenia in *Phenomenology of Perception* sheds light on the phenomenological dimensions of SHU syndrome as a pathological experience of space and of embodied subjectivity. If schizophrenia is a pathology of space in which the world shrinks to the limits of my own private experience, and so destabilizes my sense of reality to the point where "the world is no longer self-evident," then prolonged solitary confinement amounts to a production of something like schizophrenia in the prisoner (*PhP*, 300). But if this is the case, then supermax confinement is not a solution to the problem of finding a place to keep "the worst of the worst" from harming others. It is—among other things—a technology for producing what one could call mental illness, if "mental" were not too narrow a term to express the complex intertwining of body, mind, and world that I have just undertaken to describe. Prolonged solitary confinement in a supermax prison threatens to exhaust the otherwise inexhaustible horizons of perceptual experience by blocking the prisoner's concrete experience of depth in its spatial, affective, and social dimensions. It leaves the prisoner feeling like her life has been drained of meaning, like she is dead within life, no longer *of* space but merely *in* it.

The prisoner who is locked inside an isolation unit and monitored from a distance by video camera twenty-four hours a day is rendered anonymous in the sense of being reduced to a nameless, faceless existence in which one is constantly reminded that one does not matter to anyone. But he is also denied access to anonymity in the sense of being able to slip out of place or to "sleep," withdrawing from the fixity of his 8 x 10 cell, and withdrawing from the meanings attached to that cell: "the worst of the worst," "beyond

rehabilitation," "a hopeless case," and so on. To put this another way: The prisoner in solitary confinement is denied the *incompleteness* of perceptual Being-in-the-world, the double incompleteness of the body-thing system and the self-other system, both of which sustain the sense of a world with inexhaustible horizons. He is confined to his own side of the otherwise open circuit between his own perceiving body and the heterogeneous field of the world, understood as "the field of all fields," the one world shared in common (*PhP*, 366). Cut off from an open-ended experience of space and a noncoercive experience of others, the supermax prisoner risks losing a sense of himself as someone who matters and to whom the world matters, on his own terms, as a self-organizing and auto-affective Being-in-the-world. He risks getting stuffed inside the theoretical position of the Cartesian cogito, the absolute individual that is shut up within itself, forced into a position that Merleau-Ponty argues does not exist except as a fiction devised by the intellectualist philosophers of cognition. In other words, the supermax prisoner is forced into an ideal(ist) position in which nonincarcerated subjects never actually find themselves, but that the prisoner is forced to adopt through a coercive reorganization of his space. This is the position of a solitary, solipsistic individual made to bear the full weight of his own existence, made "accountable" for everything he does, says, and is, and bound to the "choices" he makes in a situation that is structured from top to bottom by domination and control.[28]

And yet, some prisoners held in solitary confinement have managed to resist this pathological (re)structuring of space and subjectivity, and to sustain a meaningful sense of Being-in-the-world and Being-with Others. One of the most extraordinary examples of such resistance is the decade-long collaboration between Herman Wallace and Jackie Sumell.

FROM ANGOLA PRISON TO *HERMAN'S HOUSE*

Herman Wallace spent almost forty-two years in solitary confinement in Louisiana for a crime he did not commit; he died in 2013, just three days after being released from prison after his conviction and sentence were found to be unconstitutional. Herman Wallace, Robert King, and Albert Woodfox are known collectively as the Angola 3; together, they spent more than a century in extreme isolation. In the 1960s, each man found himself imprisoned for petty crimes at the Angola prison, a former slave plantation and current

maximum-security state prison in Louisiana.[29] Once in prison, they became politically active, and together they organized the first prison chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1971. They began by educating themselves and other prisoners on their legal rights, organizing for better prison conditions, and working toward desegregation of the prison population. In 1972, Wallace and Woodfox were accused and convicted of murdering a prison guard; King was later associated with the crime, even though he was at another prison when the murder took place. All three men have denied involvement in the murder, and the case against them is riddled with inconsistencies.[30] Eventually, King was released from prison in 2001, after twenty-nine years in solitary confinement, but Wallace and Woodfox remained in solitary confinement for more than forty-two years, and Woodfox is still in isolation, despite the fact that his conviction has been overturned three times.

In 2003, artist Jackie Sumell began corresponding with Herman Wallace during his two-year confinement in the part of Angola prison called "the Dungeon," where even prisoners who are already in solitary confinement are subject to further restrictions on their access to spatial and social depth. After attending a lecture on the political struggle of the Angola 3, Sumell sent a letter to Wallace, asking: "What kind of a house does a man who has lived in a six-foot-by-nine-foot cell for over 30 years dream of?" This question opened up a virtual space of conversation, imagination, and collaboration that continued to unfold for more than ten years until Herman's untimely death. Following upon this initial exchange, Wallace and Sumell began working together to imagine, draft, and build models of Herman's dream home. Their collaboration generated numerous gallery exhibitions, a website, a book,[31] a documentary film,[32] and ongoing activist projects in the New Orleans area and beyond.

Wallace's plans for his dream home are quite modest: a house built of natural materials like wood and stone, surrounded by trees, grass, and gardens, with an additional rooftop greenhouse. The house has many windows, but also differentiated rooms or "places" in which someone who has grown used to living in small spaces could find comfort, while still having a view to the outside and multiple ways out. In a letter read by Robert King on the website, Wallace explains his priorities: a well-stocked pantry with easy access from the garage for unloading groceries; a bedroom with a fireplace, African art, mirrored ceilings, soft blue light, and a fake fur bearskin on the king-sized bed; a 6 foot by 9 foot hot tub—the same size as his current cell; an underground bunker accessible through a trapdoor in the fireplace; and,

finally, a swimming pool with a large black panther insignia on the bottom.[33] Perhaps what is most remarkable about Herman's dream home is that it is not very remarkable at all: not particularly extravagant or large, not unusual or fantastical, just a pleasant and comfortable middle-class house with a large hot tub, a striking swimming pool, and a trapdoor to a bunker. Call the bunker a fallout shelter or a panic room, and drain the black panther image of its political significance, and this could be any number of ordinary US homes built since the 1980s. What is extraordinary about this project is not the shape of the house but rather the web of relationships that the project created, sustained, and elaborated: Wallace's relation to Sumell and to the wider public that followed his story online, in galleries, and through the film; his relation to the spatial, social, and affective depths of perceptual and psychic space; and his orientation toward a possible future of justice and liberation for the Angola 3 and for everyone who is a prisoner of poverty, racism, and other forms of structural domination. There is nothing guaranteed about this future, but a relation to even the contingent possibility of a future that is otherwise than the present may help to sustain the depth of the world within the exhausted and exhausting space of prolonged solitary confinement.

The film *Herman's House* illustrates the challenge of sustaining a collaborative relationship across prison walls, as well as the challenge of representing such a relationship on film, given that one of the collaborators has been "disappeared" by the US prison system. We never see Herman, except in faded and crumbling photographs, and yet we do hear his voice on the telephone, regularly interrupted by a message reminding callers that their conversation may be recorded or monitored. In these conversations, Herman motivates and supports the people he loves, both pushing them to their limits and pulling them out of frustration and despair. He reflects on the way decades of isolation have shaped his body and his mind, and on the vital roots of solidarity in resistance to this isolation. In this sense, *Herman's House* does make Herman Wallace visible, in spite of the layers of concrete, Plexiglas, wire mesh, and razor wire that separate him from the rest of the world. Herman becomes visible both in the sound of his voice on the telephone and in the responses of people who listen to him. He becomes visible in the renewed relationship between a mother and a son whom he mentored in prison. His *absence* becomes visible in the art gallery where his house and his cell are displayed, as counterpoints and as echoes of each other. And Herman even becomes visible in the house itself, both in the hot tub that was bigger than

his cell and in the small, segmented rooms that resemble prison day areas. As Herman says, "You look at the house, you're looking at me." You're looking at the vision and strength of a man who has survived and resisted forty years of isolation. And you're looking at the scars that this isolation has left on his mind and his body. "I'm used to it," says Herman, "and that's one of the bad things about it." *Herman's House* provokes us to ask: What are the conditions that *we* have grown used to? And how might we learn to resist them?

I have argued that a concrete experience of depth, and of a shared space with other embodied subjects, is constitutive of one's own embodied subjectivity. Depth has many layers—spatial, affective, corporeal, intercorporeal, and even imaginative. In the words of Renaud Barbaras, "Depth is what 'makes room' [*donne lieu*] for things, that by which they 'take place' [*ont lieu*]. For things, taking (a) place [*avoir (une) lieu*] cannot mean occupying room but only adventing."[34] As we have seen, extreme isolation threatens to become a space without depth and without place or taking-place, without advent, without emergence. It is structured as a dead space rather than a space of birth: an exhausted space with no elsewhere, no beyond. The experience of such a space is fundamentally *boring*: drained of significance and differentiation, stuck in the same routine within the same rigid walls, dislocated from one's own corporeal and intercorporeal Being-in-the-world as a site of mattering and care. Many prisoners in this situation come unhinged; they develop habits of pacing, throwing themselves at walls, throwing their own bodily wastes, creating disturbances that draw out the violence of guards, and even taking pleasure in the ambivalent agency of *making* someone react in violence. But even in this dead space, some prisoners are able to sustain a sense of "elsewhere," of a place beyond the control unit, and of a future that could be otherwise. What the testimony of prisoners and the work of Merleau-Ponty help us to see is that SHU syndrome is more than a mental illness afflicting individual subjects; it is a social, phenomenological, and ontological pathology that implicates both those who are confined in extreme isolation and those for whose apparent protection they are confined. As long as our own freedom is secured through the punitive isolation of others—even, or especially, if these others remain invisible to us—it is a sham and shameful kind of freedom, and it diminishes our own capacities for critical awareness.

NOTES

1. For more detailed accounts of the emergence and normalization of supermax prisons, see Stephen F. Eisenman, "The Resistible Rise and Predictable Fall of the U.S. Supermax," *Monthly Review* 61, no. 6 (November 2009), http://www.monthlyreview .org/091116eisenman.php#fn18b; Alan E. Gomez, "Resisting Living Death at Marion Federal Penitentiary, 1972," *Radical History Review* 96 (Fall 2006): 58–86; Keramet A. Reiter, "The Origins of and Need to Control Supermax Prisons," *California Journal of Politics and Policy* 5, no. 2 (2013): 146–67; as well as Reiter's "The Most Restrictive Alternative: A Litigation History of Solitary Confinement in U.S. Prisons, 1960–2006," in *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society*, vol. 57, ed. Austin Sarat (Bingley: Emerald Group, 2012), 71–124.

2. Lorna A. Rhodes, *Total Confinement: Madness and Reason in the Maximum Security Prison* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

3. John Irwin, *The Warehouse Prison: Disposal of the New Dangerous Class* (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2005).

4. Human Rights Watch, "Cold Storage: Super-Maximum Security Confinement in Indiana," in *A Human Rights Watch Report* (New York: Human Rights Watch, October 1997).

5. See Craig Haney, "Mental Health Issues in Long-Term Solitary and 'Supermax' Confinement," *Crime and Delinquency* 49, no 1 (2003): 124–56. Haney writes: "In fact, many prisoners are placed in supermax not specifically for what they have done but rather on the basis of who someone in authority has judged them to be (e.g., 'dangerous,' 'a threat,' or a member of a 'disruptive' group). In many states, the majority of supermax prisoners have been given so-called indeterminate terms, usually on the basis of having been officially labeled by prison officials as gang members. An indeterminate supermax term often means that these prisoners will serve their entire prison term in isolation (unless they debrief by providing incriminating information about other alleged gang members)" (27). See also Bruce A. Arrigo and Jennifer L. Bullock, "The Psychological Effects of Solitary Confinement on Prisoners in Supermax Units: Reviewing What We Know and Recommending What Should Change," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 52, no. 6 (December 2008): 622–40. See as well Cassandra Shaylor, "It's Like Living in a Black Hole: Women of Color and Solitary Confinement in the Prison Industrial Complex," *New England Journal on Criminal and Civil Confinement* 24 (1998): 385–416. As quoted in Shaylor, the former warden of Marion Penitentiary, Ralph Arons, admitted that "the purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in the society at large" (398). For interviews and narratives by US political prisoners such as George Jackson, Assata Shakur, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Susan Rosenberg, Marilyn Buck, Laura Whitehorn, and Alan Berkman, all of whom have been held in maximum- or supermax-level prisons, see Joy James, ed., *Imprisoned Intellectuals*: *America's Political Prisoners Write on Life, Liberation, and Rebellion* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); and her *New Abolitionists: (Neo)Slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005); as well as H. Bruce Franklin, *Prison Writings in 20th-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1988).

6. I will switch back and forth between male and female pronouns throughout this paper. While most supermax prisoners are men, women are both present in supermax units and underrepresented in the literature.

7. Haney, "Mental Health Issues," 126.

8. Ibid., 126.

9. Prisoner: "I've got some people out there I know from the streets and I know they're going to give me a hug. But I won't be able to because it's embedded in my mind that when people touch me it has a negative effect, you know, that every time somebody touches me it's a cop" (Rhodes, *Total Confinement*, 34).

10. Anthropologist Lorna Rhodes says of her own experience visiting a control unit: "Echoing in their hard-edged interior, their shouts are a blur of rage-saturated sound" (ibid., 22). One of the prisoners interviewed by Rhodes says: "They put you in an environment where you can't talk to anybody else, you can't have any contact . . . unless you yell or scream. . . . The only thing you hear is the keys jingling" (31).

11. Prisoner: "Your lights are on all day . . . it really kind of dulls all your senses. . . . It makes you numb. You get easily mad. You feel that everything they do is just to make you mad" (ibid., 30).

12. Gomez writes: "The CU—and its more recent progeny, Special Housing Units (SHU)—collapsed the legal and physical space between life and politics—and between punishment and death" ("Resisting Living Death," 60). "Designed as a breathing coffin, the CU was/is a space of permanent living death" (61). See also Caleb Smith, *The Prison and the American Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009). Smith describes the early US penitentiary as "a 'living tomb' of servitude and degradation as well as the space of the citizen-subject's dramatic reanimation. Its legal codes divested the convict of rights; its ritualized disciplinary practices stripped away his identity; it exposed him to arbitrary and discretionary violence at the hands of his keepers; it buried him alive in his solitary cell. But it also promised him a glorious return to citizenship and humanity. It mortified the body, but it also claimed to renovate the soul. Its ideal subject was one who, in the words of one great Philadelphia reformer [Benjamin Rush], 'was dead and is alive'" (6).

13. Rhodes, *Total Confinement*, 113.

14. Shaylor, "Black Hole," 386. Shaylor comments further that "the 'blackness' of the SHU is reflected in both its racialized nature and the darkness of the cells themselves; the degree of force within the SHU is experienced by the women through physical brutality and sexual violence; the space of the SHU is oppressively small; mental stability is warped; the experience of passage of time is transformed; and communication flowing both into and out of the SHU is severely restricted" (415).

15. Rhodes, *Total Confinement*, 29.

16. Denise Jones, an inmate at Valley State Prison for Women, argues: "They treat us like animals. No, you wouldn't treat an animal the way they do us here. I am sure they don't treat their dogs the way they treat us" (Shaylor, "Black Hole," 395–96). See also Charles Baxter, Wayne Brown, Tony Chatman-Bey, H. B. Johnson Jr., Mark Medley, Donals Thompson, Selvyn Tillett, and John Woodland Jr. (with Drew Leder), "Live From the Panopticon: Architecture and Power Revisited," in *The New Abolitionists: (Neo) Slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings*, ed. Joy James (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 205–16. Mark Medley, a maximum security inmate at Maryland State Prison, argues that prisoners are moved into different cells as part of a managerial plan rather than for the sake of

rehabilitation or even security: "It's just that they have to liquidate their inventory as a matter of storage space" (215).

17. Ibid., 101.

18. Haney, "Mental Health Issues," 137.

19. See Haney, "Mental Health Issues"; as well as Stuart Grassian, "Psychopathological Effects of Solitary Confinement," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 140, no. 11 (1983): 1450–54; and Grassian's "Psychiatric Effects of Solitary Confinement," *Journal of Law and Policy* 22 (2006): 325–83.

20. Raymond Luc Levasseur, "Trouble Coming Every Day: ADX—The First Year," in James, *New Abolitionists*, 47.

21. Jack H. Abbott, *In the Belly of the Beast: Letters from Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 45, 46, 29. Abbott called himself a "state-raised convict" (3). The son of a Chinese prostitute and an Irish sailor, he had already spent time in juvenile detention at age nine, was sent to an industrial school at age twelve, and was sentenced for up to five years at age eighteen for cashing a check for insufficient funds. While in prison, he killed a fellow inmate and received an indeterminate sentence of three to twenty years.

22. Grassian, "Psychopathological Effects," 1452.

23. Charles Dickens, *American Notes and Pictures from Italy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 99–109.

24. Robert King, "Experience: I Spent 29 Years in Solitary Confinement," 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2010/aug/28/29-years-solitary-confinement-robert-king.

25. See Grassian, "Psychopathological Effects"; and Haney, "Mental Health Issues."

26. Haney, "Mental Health Issues," 299. For a further discussion of distance and depth, see Shiloh Whitney, "Affective Orientation, Difference, and 'Overwhelming Proximity' in Merleau-Ponty's Account of Pure Depth," *Chiasmi International* 14 (2012): 415–38.

27. Eugène Minkowski, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

28. See Rhodes's *Total Confinement* on the neoliberal logic of choice in supermax prisons and the double bind produced for prisoners who have almost no control over their situation, and yet must bear full accountability for their actions.

29. Angola prison, or Louisiana State Prison, is also known as "the Farm." Agricultural labor is mandatory for the general prison population; they grow cotton, wheat, soybeans, corn, and vegetables, in addition to hosting an annual rodeo. A total of 77.85 percent of the inmates are black. They make between 2 cents and 20 cents an hour and are required to work a minimum of 40 hours a week. For more information on Angola prison, see http://www.hermanshouse.org/angola.php. On the connections between plantation slavery, the convict lease system, and the current prison industrial complex, see Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003); David M. Oshinsky, *"Worse Than Slavery": Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press, 1996); and Matthew J. Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866–1928* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996).

30. See, for example, Laura Sullivan, "Doubts Arise about 1972 Prison Murder," NPR.org, October 27, 2008, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php

?storyId=96030547; Gwen Filosa, "Lawyers Call for Release of 'Angola 3,' Nearly 36 Years after Guard's Murder," *Times Picayune*, March 17, 2008, http://www.nola .com/news/index.ssf/2008/03/lawyers_call_for_release_of_an.html; and "The Angola 3 Case: What You Need to Know," Angola3.org, http://www.angola3.org/the-case.

31. The House That Herman Built, http://hermanshouse.org/.

32. Angad Singh Bhalla, *Herman's House*, film (West Hollywood, CA: Storyline Entertainment, 2012).

33. The House That Herman Built, http://hermanshouse.org/.

34. Renaud Barbaras, *The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, trans. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 213.

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STOLEN SPACE: THE PERVERSE ARCHITECTURE
OF TORTURE

D. R. Koukal

Architecture involves both the experience and the expression of space, but for Merleau-Ponty every human subject is already a shaper of space by virtue of his or her being-in-the-world. The architect who reads Merleau-Ponty carefully on this point might be expected to practice his or her art in a way that shapes space as a field of possibilities for embodied subjects already immersed in it. When practiced in this way, architecture is a more grand and elaborate expression of what we already do at a primordial, pretheoretical level. This is why architecture has the possibility of resonating with us so deeply, if we only bother to attend more carefully to its relationship to us and to the world. In short, Merleau-Ponty provides the architect with an ontological foundation—perhaps even an ontological imperative—to spatially enrich the world we inhabit. When practiced with an eye fixed on this imperative, architecture reveals to us the spatiality of the world we are commingled with. Such architecture makes us see that space shouldn't be taken for granted.

But there is another, less celebratory kind of architecture that also emphasizes our fundamental relationship to lived space in a significantly different way. This kind of architecture functions by impoverishing our sense of space and erasing our field of possibilities as embodied subjects. I call this the architecture of torture. The body is also central to this kind of architecture, but as presently practiced it is no longer about brutally shaping the body through wounding or dismemberment; gone are the racks and red-hot pokers, the flaying of the flesh, the needles beneath the nails. Those are medieval practices, when torture had the sanction of sovereign power, if not the law itself. Today, in purportedly more sophisticated democracies such as our own, where torture is officially illegal, we practice hooding, enforced nakedness, stress positions, exposure to extreme temperatures or constant light or

intense noise, sleep deprivation, sexual humiliation, and "waterboarding." All of these techniques have the advantage of leaving no permanent and incriminating scars, and are banally referred to as "enhanced interrogation techniques."

My claim is that the architecture of torture also involves an experience and expression of space, and in what follows I offer a phenomenological description of this practice that delves beneath its mere physical effect on the human body. This is not to dismiss or diminish the pain of torture. Many of the less physically traumatic methods of torture endorsed by the US government are still intensely painful. But I would suggest that bodily pain is only one dimension of the experiential structure of torture. In fact, what I claim here is that torture is better understood as a dismantling of a lived world by radically despatializing the subject. I will support this claim through Merleau-Ponty's comments about spatiality, which are closely interwoven with his theories of the embodied subject and perception. This phenomenological analysis will underscore, albeit in a negative way, what space means to us as the spatial and spatializing beings that we are, and show that no matter how "unscarred" survivors of torture may be, their lived world remains irretrievably damaged at the ontological level, due to the living spatiality stolen from them during their ordeal. This analysis will also point to how the practice of torture distorts the intersubjective social fabric of which we are an intimate part.

1. FIRST PREMISE: THE TORTURED BODY IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A LIVED BODY

On the conventional view, pain is thought of as a physiological state grounded in the body. And because each of us can experience only the sensations of our own bodies, it is thought that the pain of another can never be fully manifest to us, even if we are standing in close proximity to that person. Indeed, even if this afflicted person is vividly describing their pain or shrieking in agony, she or he would still be unable to fully evoke in us their bodily experience.[1] As Jean Améry puts it, in order to communicate this pain one would have to inflict it, and therefore become a torturer oneself.[2]

On these grounds it might be thought that torture is unsharable and therefore cannot be known in any rigorous way. But this is to assume that bodily pain is central to torture, and this may be a hasty assumption. Philip Hallie makes a distinction between "episodic cruelty," which violates the flesh, and

"institutional cruelty," which takes aim at the psyche.[3] But I would suggest that when Hallie talks about institutional cruelty, he is still speaking of the body. For even on his account, the cruelty that maims the dignity of a person does so, more often than not, by regarding the body in a certain way, that is, by humiliating the body rather than (or in addition to) physically harming it. This suggests how the degradation of a human body can transform it into a source of such pronounced psychological pain as to radically alter the sense of one's way of being present in the world. This points to the body's unique ontological status. Before the body can be conceived of as physical or psychological, it is first and foremost something lived as an opening onto a world.

Phenomenology, starting with Husserl, tells us that the lived body (*Leib*) is not just any other thing in physical space, and much more than the bearer of felt sensations. It is a co-given center of orientation that can move into a world to grasp things within its kinesthetic horizon. This motility is at the root of all action, perception, and expression.[4] Merleau-Ponty, elaborating on these basic insights, sees the lived body (or "body-subject") as the way a subject is present in the world.[5] It is a synthesized, indivisible, reciprocal, and intentional unity of sensory powers and experiential modalities that is dynamically oriented toward the world, and endowed with a spatiotemporal order that provides us with both a sedimented past for dealing with the present and a situated present that guides us into a beckoning future.[6] This corporeal consciousness is the site of human agency; in its various modalities it communicates with this beckoning world through mute gesture, opening itself to new kinds of conduct, while at the same time reorganizing and transforming that aspect of its world through a particular manner of taking up that world, which it shares with other embodied subjects. The lived body and the world are thus correlatives, with the body constituting an inseparable "fold" that allows a space for dialogue with the world (*PhP*, 211, 244). For Merleau-Ponty, the body is our "living bond with the world," our ownmost site for moving freely into the world to discover and create meaning.[7]

2. THE CONSTRAINT OF MOTILITY AND RESTRICTED HORIZONS

What follows, then, in the context of this reflection on torture, is that a violation of this body must also be a violation of a lived world, because

it cuts to the very experiential source of this world. On these grounds, "violation" must be understood in a broader sense. Starting at an obvious point, a body under torture is always deprived of freedom of movement to one degree or another. This means that, as a subject, it is no longer free to move into and shape the space of the world it inhabits. On Merleau-Ponty's view, the space experienced by a lived body is not "objective" space for the very reason that a lived body is not an object in any pure sense. On the contrary, to the extent that objective space exists, it is founded on and shaped by bodies living in the world (*PhP*, 104). We do not typically experience a world in objective space, but a world of receding and never-ending series of horizons configured by a "living" spatiality, a world where different things are made to stand out from other things as either "here" or "there," by virtue of the shifting orientation of our body. It is this orientation that gives structure to the world, and it is this structure that testifies to the "hold" our body takes upon the world (260–62, 288). The spatiality of the world thus constitutes a reply to the body's dimensions and its possibilities for action.[8]

These possibilities are severely undermined in the torture situation, because the living spatiality of the body-subject is radically diminished. In the first instance, the lived body in this situation has been removed from a spatiality of his or her own making—that is, a lived world of orientations, projects, structures, and so on. It has been cut off from intersubjective relationships and the realm of human institutions—such as the public world, and the world of law—of which it was a part. Instead, the body-subject has had imposed on it a circumscribed horizon it has not chosen for itself. In the torture situation, the body-subject finds himself or herself isolated in a space that it experiences as objective, or at least alien—alien because it is a living spatiality shaped by others. As such, this space—the prison, the cell, the torture table—imposes a meaning on the body-subject by making his or her body central to an environment utterly foreign to it. Here, the spatiality of this alien world demands a reply from the newly situated body-subject, which tries to resist this new world in a bid to preserve its subjectivity. The body may stretch its muscles, or attempt to regulate its breathing; efforts are made to peer outside the space of confinement; the dimensions of the cell may be surveyed by pacing to and fro; its walls, floor, and ceiling may be inspected by sight and touch; messages may be inscribed on surfaces, et cetera. Even on the torture table, the body-subject may shift its weight against its hardness, test its bindings, or concentrate its attention on the

corner where walls meet ceiling, as the interrogator prepares to "work on" the body. However, despite these efforts to preserve its subjectivity, the body-subject remains largely severed from its spatialized world of lived meaning, and rendered vulnerable, like an object, to the world that has been spatially organized by the interrogator. This world is not experienced as one with horizons that can be shaped and altered by the body-subject. Rather, its horizons, already experienced simultaneously as rigid and arbitrarily imposed, tend toward pressing relentlessly in on the consciousness of the subject. A helpless and isolating claustrophobia ensues; this fear of close spaces should not be conceived of in a strictly clinical way, but rather in a deeply existential sense.

3. DEGRADED PERCEPTION AND ONTOLOGICAL DESOLATION

This existential claustrophobia can also be produced by impeding perception. Adding much nuance to Sartre's analysis of the Look,[9] Merleau-Ponty essentially claims that we organize our world by moving through it, continually guided by our perception of that world. At a fundamental level, perception is an expression of our freedom to transcend old situations and create new ones, and in our freedom we are caught up in this act prereflectively, immersed in the act of perception, which takes measure of our horizons and guides our motility as we take hold of the space around us. In short, perception is an expression of our subjectivity at a fundamental level.

Following this line of thought, the denial of perception is a way of radically undermining one's subjectivity. For example, in placing a hood over a person's head, freedom is transcended at an ontological level, over and beyond any bonds that might fetter the body. Under the hood there is virtually no world to organize, and one's status as an object in the world of another is dramatically reinforced. In the severely circumscribed "world" beneath the hood, consciousness turns inward on itself to passively dwell on its new situation, a situation it did not choose for itself. It is through the body that we become oriented in the world, but the introduction of the hood disorients us, and the body is no longer able to shape its world. The longer the hood remains in place, the more eroded our living sense of space and time becomes. This is not a lived world in the full sense, because it is one in which

the body-subject can play no substantially meaningful role. In a lived world, something is happening and no one knows exactly what is going to happen, but the body-subject in its freedom can move into its horizons to become a shaping force in unfolding events. However, the hooded body-subject is not free but vulnerable, and this vulnerability is experienced in a very acute way. It is reduced to a virtual object standing inert in a space shaped by another. She or he is conscious that something is happening, something will happen—but when will it happen?—and where will it happen?—what will it be?—and will it happen to me?[10]

Torture, then, begins before the torturer even touches the body in any substantial way. It begins with constricted motility, degraded perception, and restrictive horizons,[11] all of which are parasitic on the subject's sense of living spatiality. This renders the subject existentially vulnerable by transforming the meaning of his or her world to that of a relatively passive object, which results in a kind of ontological desolation. This takes us far from the conventional view of torture—or, perhaps more accurately, more deeply beneath it. It is commonly thought that the body is the sole object of the torturer's attention, the thing he or she "works on," analogous to wood in the world of the carpenter. Just as the carpenter uses his or her tools to extract shape and form from wood, the torturer applies his or her instruments to the body of the "heretic," the "apostate," the "traitor," the "spy," or some other designated "enemy," such as a "terrorist." The purpose of bodily torture is the extraction of information from the subject: a recantation, a conversion, a confession, or "actionable intelligence."

But what I have shown so far is that torture broadly construed works not just on the body, but on the subject through the body, by denying it motility, perception, and horizons—in short, living spatiality. This denial isolates the subject from its lived world, exposing it to the actions of others that are experienced as arbitrary. This arbitrariness reinforces the subject's isolation, which sometimes is enough to compel the surrender of the information sought. The threat of physical torture simply adds another layer of arbitrariness to the situation, which may also prompt the subject's capitulation to the torturer's demands. At other times the pain of torture must be suffered, which further exposes the subject to the caprice of the strange world it finds itself in. But in what follows I want to demonstrate that even in the infliction of pain, the torturer still assaults a subject as well as a body. This is a central feature of the profane architecture I am attempting to describe.

4. PHYSICAL TORTURE AND THE TERRIBLE DOUBLE-SIDEDNESS OF THE LIVED BODY

Both the threat of physical torture and physical torture itself are founded on the notion of the body as a bearer of felt sensation. Merleau-Ponty describes sensation as a kind of communion between the body and the things in the world, and he speaks of this communion in terms of a coexistence and a "natural exchange" (*PhP*, 235). It is not the case that the thing is making a physical impression on the body, or that consciousness is constituting the thing; rather, the body-subject shares a life with things in a kind of circular cohabitation. For example, the subject "plunges" into a thing through touch, touch "pairs off" with hardness and softness (221–22), and in this coexchange the thing and body correlatively come to be as sensed object and sensing subject. In a lived world, the embodied, perceiving subject is the occasion for a dialogue between consciousness and thing (223).[12]

Sensation, then, very much like motility and perception, is another dimension of living spatiality that gives meaning to the lived body, even as it gives meaning to things by drawing them together to form a lived, meaningful world (*PhP*, 222). Yet the lived body is ambiguous in that it is a conjunction of both subject and object (205, 391). This is revealed through the phenomenon of reversibility, wherein while touching an object with our left hand our right hand touches the left. In this moment the body ceases to be a sensing subject and becomes a sensed object (i.e., the body momentarily takes itself as its own object). A similar phenomenon occurs when a friend unexpectedly approaches us from behind and places her hands on our shoulders; in that flash of an instant we experience our body as an object. The lived body therefore has two sides: at one moment it is a subject existing for itself, at another an object existing in itself, which means that the lived body is never completely a subject nor completely an object (95–96).[13]

Bearing Merleau-Ponty's analysis of sensation in mind, we should be able to see how the torturer, knowingly or not, exploits this ambiguity. We should begin with the observation that the involuntary experience of bodily pain is not uncommon in our lived world. Examples would include injuries of various kinds, passing a kidney stone, defending oneself in a fistfight, or simply stubbing one's toe. In such instances our lived body may typically react by reorienting itself in relation to the pain: to rub the toe, flee the beating, or, if the passing of the stone is painful enough, seek medical management of the pain.[14]

What distinguishes the torture situation from these more typical situations is that one cannot reorient oneself within this world of inflicted pain. Due to the body-subject's alien situation—its circumscribed motility, perception, and horizons—it cannot flee the beating, seek medical attention, or otherwise act to relieve its pain. It cannot act freely in fight or flight, but must instead suffer the free actions of another. The fists or clubs or instruments of the torturer "plunge" into the body-subject. The torturer feels the relative softness of the flesh yield to the hardness of his or her assault, and in this coexchange the torturer as body-subject and tortured as body-subject correlatively come to be, as sensed object and sensing subject. But the tortured always and forever remains not just an object but also a sensing subject. In his account of his torture at the hands of the SS, Jean Améry says again and again that he was reduced to a body only.[15] If only this were true! To risk extreme presumption, no matter how reduced to an object the victim might become in his or her own eyes, is it not clear that she or he will always remain a consciousness, too? To even think, *I am being reduced to a body only*, is sufficient to prove the point.

This, in turn, points to a startling ontological drama taking place beneath the pain of physical torture. In the torture situation, the point of attempting to make a lived body less a subject and more a mere object is to render it vulnerable in an alien world. The purpose of this vulnerability is to make the tortured dependent on the good graces of the torturer, who is the author of this world. Literally cleaving the body from the subject by killing it is to go too far, as it leaves the torturer with an inanimate physical body and no subject from which to acquire information. But short of death, and no matter how "object-like" the tortured body might become—rendered motionless in an alien space, hooded, weak and unresponsive, and passively receiving the blows—this refers only to the physical state of the body, which, so long as it is conscious, remains irreducibly a body-subject. One's body may be nearly reduced to an object, but the "nearly" here is a vitally important qualification. So long as victims remain conscious of their "objectness" they retain their subjectivity, since objects do not possess consciousness.

This "double-sidedness" works to the advantage of the competent torturer, who uses the body as a bearer of sensations against the body-subject. And it matters not a whit whether the pain is administered by extreme temperatures, or incessantly loud noise, or relentlessly bright light instead of fists or clubs; our own experience tells us of the body's physical response to excessive light, sound, heat, or cold. No less so than fists or clubs, these

are physical assaults via sensation, sensations that, due to the impoverished spatiality of the torture situation, cannot be averted or ablated by the body-subject.[16] In short, the ontological situation of the tortured body-subject remains the same, even under these "less invasive" techniques of torture: the tortured has not chosen its situation and is no longer capable of transcending it.

Since the body-subject cannot spatially transcend the situation, it may desire to transcend the body. How often in the testimony of torture survivors do we hear that they regarded death or unconsciousness as relief from the incessant pain? To desire death or unconsciousness is to seek relief by in effect accepting and in fact embracing one's "object-side." When experiencing extreme pain, being reduced to an object would indeed be merciful, but from the viewpoint of the interrogator, torture is not about mercy, unconsciousness is only a temporary interruption, and death is contrary to his or her goals.[17] She or he must keep the tortured awake and alive, and short of death, subjectivity can never be obliterated. The subject is trapped in something akin to Plato's bodily prison,[18] but here, in the hands of a competent torturer, there is little chance of escape. The tortured is condemned to live his or her "double-sidedness," at once object and consciousness. The only lived spatiality left to the victim lies within his or her own skin, which amounts to no lived spatiality at all. Physical torture thus not only constitutes the breaking down of the body, but more fundamentally, of subjectivity itself, and with it a lived world. The assault is not just physical but ontological, and the subject, through the body, is in effect a correlative source of his or her own torment. It is this that makes the ontological drama of torture a tragedy of the most perverse kind.

5. THE BETRAYAL OF THE SUBJECT AND THE EROSION OF TRANSCENDENCE

This reduction of lived spatiality to within the confines of the skin of the tortured points to an even deeper ontological perversity to be found in the "stress positions" that defenders of the US torture policy have found so benign. In an institutional environment where torture had been redefined as pain "equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death," such stress positions cannot possibly make the grade.[19] Still photographs of

detainees in such positions look completely innocuous, as if they had been caught doing calisthenics.

But what the torturer is doing here is again cunningly deploying the subject's own body against itself. The body is no longer a mere prison in the Platonic sense, but is forced to be actively complicit in its own torture. "I stand for 8–10 hours a day. Why is standing limited to four hours?" Donald Rumsfeld blithely scribbled at the bottom of a memo advocating harsher "interrogation techniques."[20] What is utterly lost on Rumsfeld is that he chooses to stand for eight to ten hours a day while he constructs his bureaucratic world of torture, and remains free to choose to sit or stretch or stride across the room if he so desires. Rumsfeld enjoys a living spatiality, while for those who are ensnared in his bureaucracy, where body-subjects are compelled to hold these apparently "harmless" positions for hours at a time, the body's mass and musculature comes to insidiously conspire against itself. The body thus becomes complicit in its own demise, with the net effect being the betrayal of the subject by his or her own body. This is clearly not a choice the body-subject makes, and it is this choice that makes all the difference.

This lack of choice, this lack of possibilities, is also operative beneath the seemingly most benign tactic of the new torture regimen—that of sexual and other kinds of humiliation. After all, no physical pain is inflicted in this situation. This is likely why Rush Limbaugh and a listener felt they could claim that the stacking of naked men in the Abu Ghraib photographs was akin to a fraternity initiation.[21] Everyone here will "fully recover," so where is the harm? How could this possibly constitute torture?

What Limbaugh and his listener were completely oblivious to is that the fraternity pledge voluntarily submits to such a ritual. He is transcending his old situation and entering a new one by his own choice. For him this choice is meaningful, in that he sees that through the ritual he is opening up a larger world of possibilities, one of which is gaining entrance into an intersubjective relationship where he may coconstitute meaning with his "brothers for life." The fraternity pledge is anything but helpless; with his future brothers, he is the coauthor of a meaningful, lived space. But the torture situation is defined by helplessness.[22] In other words, it is another thing altogether to experience one's body being placed in a stack of naked men (or to be draped with an American flag or to dance a jig or to witness the defilement of one's holy book) against one's will. This is the very opposite of transcendence. To be toyed with in this manner is to be placed in a sinister space created by others—sinister because you are forcibly subjected to frightening possibilities

that others may have for you. The point in such a situation is not what is happening to you now (as you dance manic and naked like a puppet on a string); the question foremost in one's mind is *What else can they do to me?* Ontologically speaking, this is part and parcel of the dismantling of the lived spatiality of the victim. And as I have tried to show throughout this essay, this dismantling of this lived spatiality amounts to the unmaking of a lived world, which is the occasion for a remaking of this world—but on the terms of another.

CONCLUSION: HOLES IN THE WORLD AND DISTORTION OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC

In Jean Améry's words, "Whoever was tortured, stays tortured. . . . Whoever has succumbed to torture can no longer feel at home in the world."[23] What I take Améry to be saying is that under torture, one's flesh may be wounded and fully heal without a mark or lasting damage, but that after the fact, one's lived world is always experienced as being "on loan," and this is a loan that can always be "called in," arbitrarily, by another. In other words, no matter what techniques are employed, or how much time has passed since the torment, torture entails nothing less than the unmaking of a world, because one's living spatiality is experienced as being permanently unstable. There will always be a hole in one's world through which one may fall again.

But it is important to stress that torture reaches out to ontologically touch the lives of those outside the torture chamber. What is clear from the start of Merleau-Ponty's account of embodied subjectivity is that the bodies of others already possess a place within our living spatiality, which is always already shared and shaped with these embodied others. When the body of an other is removed from this living spatiality, it is experienced as a kind of wrinkle that disturbs the fabric of our intersubjective world. Anyone who has ever lost a loved one to death has experienced this disturbance. We turn to speak or face this other, only to be confronted with a manifest absence. Even thinking of this other is strange, a memory no longer animated by a living and embodied presence. In the finely woven and coconstituted fabric of our life, this wrinkle will be smoothed out only over time.

The absence of the tortured body differs, however, in that it leaves behind not a wrinkle but a persistent breach of our lived world. Typically, some kind of ritual surrounds the deceased body, even in its absence—a wake, a

funeral, an obituary, a memorial service—which begins the process of recon-stituting the meaning of our life in light of this lack of living presence. But no such ritual can surround the tortured body, which has been arbitrarily snatched from the larger public world—off the street, out of airport termi-nals or bedrooms, or any of the various other places it makes meaning with others—and brought to play its part in the secret tableau created by the tor-turer. There is no corpse or grave or eulogy to gather around, or even a tomb of an unknown soldier. What surrounds the absence of the tortured body is an impenetrable aura of ambiguity. A phrase coined in the course of the in-numerable "dirty wars" of the last century may be applied in this connection: these bodies are not dead or alive, but "disappeared." No one knows with certainty the fate of such bodies, and so those left behind navigate gingerly around this breach, never able to fill this "gap" of meaning in their lives, never sure of the fate of these bodies. And even if this hole belches the tor-tured body back up into a lived world, it is a world in which it can no longer truly live, because it will always be experienced by the tortured as a world no longer truly its own. If we recall that Merleau-Ponty regards the lived body and the world as correlatives, we should be able to appreciate how the tortured body can no longer regard this world as a mutuality; it can relate to this "borrowed" world only in a crabbed and tentative way, edging back into it sideways. Such faltering gestures mark the tortured body as not fully "at home" in the world, and these gestures would signal to us—if we could liberate ourselves from the unexamined notion that the bodies that disap-pear into the torture hole must have done something to "deserve" it—that in principle our bodies could also be sucked down into the dark vortex of this unaccountable rupture, thereby rendering our own worlds vulnerable to the reach of the torture situation.

The architects of this perverse spatiality—the Bushes, Cheneys, Rums-felds, and Yoos of the world, not to mention, sadly, Barack Obama, who still endorses the rendition of terrorism suspects to other countries that practice torture[24]—thus distort far more than the worlds of the tortured. But archi-tects do not shape space by themselves; in order to bring their conceptions into actuality, they require the services of specialized craftspeople. The ar-chitects of torture are no different, and this essay would be lacking if it did not at least allude to the lived world of the torturers themselves. In creating institutions of torture, torturers are created. The architects of torture are thus not only responsible for the holes in the lived worlds of others; they are also responsible for those who make those holes. Once given sanction

for their actions, the torturers are free to integrate them into the meaningful whole of their lives. But how does one come to regard the body of another as something that one meaningfully "works on"? What does it mean to have another embodied subject delivered into one's hands so that one can deploy its embodiment against its subjectivity? Though torturers typically work in secrecy, how does this work affect the way they comport themselves in the larger world? As they move among us, do they regard themselves as the potential remakers of our worlds? Do they view us as prospective centerpieces in a torture situation of their design?

Though these disturbing questions invite much deeper analysis than space allows here, what should be plain is that the architecture of torture reaches far beyond the bodies and subjectivities of the tortured. Far from being an architecture that spatially enriches the world we inhabit, through a terrifying ontological violation of living spatiality it steals space at the level of the individual and puts the intersubjective dynamic into which we are all thrown on tenuous ground, which can only endanger the social fabric into which we are all woven. As the country moves into the second decade of its embrace of this dark institution, we would do well to fully understand the effects of what we so casually call "enhanced interrogation techniques."

NOTES

1. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1985), 3–6.

2. Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits*, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 33.

3. Philip Hallie, "From Cruelty to Goodness," in *Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life*, ed. Christina Hoff Sommers and Fred Sommers, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Thompson-Wadsworth, 2004), 5–6.

4. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Second Book: *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 159–60, 165–67.

5. Gary B. Madison, *The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 23.

6. Henry Pietersma, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty," in *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology*, ed. Lester Embree et al. (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), 458.

7. Madison, *Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty*, 21.

8. Ibid., 29.

9. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. E. Hazel Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 254–65.

10. Susan Sontag, "The Image World," in *A Susan Sontag Reader*, ed. Elizabeth Hardwick (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982), 359.

11. I would argue that the most insidious form of torture undergone by Winston Smith in Orwell's *1984* was not the abuse of his body but his confrontation with a starving rat in a double-sided face cage. The rat constituted the whole of his horizon—and hence the whole of his world, at that moment. See George Orwell, *1984* (New York: Signet, 1981), 232–36.

12. See also Madison, *Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty*, 28.

13. Ibid., 25.

14. One may also voluntarily submit to a certain level of pain imposed on one's own body: in athletic or military training, playing certain sports, childbirth, masochistic pleasure, undergoing certain medical procedures without anesthetic, and so on.

15. Améry, *Mind's Limits*, 38–39.

16. But, make no mistake, according to the Army's own Taguba Report, detainees in American custody have also been severely beaten, sodomized with foreign objects, denied adequate medical attention, and so on. See Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," *New Yorker*, May 10, 2004, http://www.newyorker.com /archive/2004/05/10/040510fa_fact?currentPage=all.

17. Améry, *Mind's Limits*, 36.

18. Plato, *Phaedo*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 82b.

19. Dana Priest and R. Jeffrey Smith, "Memo Offered Justification for Use of Torture," *Washington Post*, June 28, 2004, A01.

20. John Diamond, "Rumsfeld OK'd Harsh Treatment," *USA Today*, June 22, 2004, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/washington/2004-06-22-rumsfeld-abuse-usat_x.htm.

21. Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others," *New York Times Magazine*, May 23, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/23/magazine/regarding-the-torture-of-others.html.

22. Améry, *Mind's Limits*, 27.

23. Ibid., 34, 40.

24. Greg Miller, "Obama Preserves Renditions as Counter-Terrorism Tool," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 2009, http://articles.latimes.com/2009/feb/01/nation/na-rendition1. See also David Johnston, "U.S. Says Rendition to Continue, but with More Oversight," *New York Times*, August 24, 2009, http://www.nytimes .com/2009/08/25/us/politics/25rendition.html?_r=0; and Craig Whitlock, "Renditions Continue under Obama, Despite Due-Process Concerns," *Washington Post*, January 1, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/renditions-continue-under-obama-despite-due-process-concerns/2013/01/01/4e593aa0-5102-1 1e2-984e-f1de82a7c98a_story.html. After a review of US interrogation and transfer policies in 2009, the Obama administration decided to continue renditions to other countries but would seek assurances from the receiving country that the suspect would not be tortured. It is impossible to determine independently whether these assurances are being honored, since any information pertaining to rendition and interrogation is considered classified under the veil of "national security." However, the US military base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, remains open, and Amnesty International has labeled it a site of human rights abuses that include indefinite detention and torture. See Amnesty International, "Guantánamo: A Decade

of Damage to Human Rights," January 11, 2012, http://www.amnesty.org/en/news
/guantanamo-decade-damage-human-rights-2012-01-11.

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Shared Space

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: THE SPATIAL EXPERIENCE
OF MERLEAU-PONTY'S METAPHORS

Rachel McCann

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is inherently and fundamentally spatial. This observation is not surprising, since he repeatedly describes the Flesh in terms of the myriad interrelationships between our sensing, motile bodies and the sensuous, spatial world. He writes of the world and the body as fundamentally reciprocal, each complementing the other and allowing the other to realize its fullest relational potential. Our reading of Merleau-Ponty is enriched by his many metaphors and analogies describing the body-world interrelationship, all of which draw upon our rich, ambiguous, and constantly shifting spatial experience. Merleau-Ponty uses spatial analogies throughout his work, and it is easy to appreciate his struggle to find terms adequate to describe existence within the Flesh. In a series of descriptions that leave us cognizant of their falling short, Merleau-Ponty describes phenomenological experience as a "straits gaping between interior and exterior horizons," of chiasm or crisscrossing, of intercalation or folds lapping over each other. Even the look palpates and explores in a spatial quest for relationship.

This chapter explores the spatial potential of Merleau-Ponty's metaphors of the Flesh (taken mostly from "The Intertwining—The Chiasm" in *The Visible and the Invisible*) beyond the confines of their brief descriptions. If Merleau-Ponty provided these images as signposts of the character of the Flesh, where do they eventually lead? What are the further spatial implications of these ideas, and how do these further implications advance our understanding of the Flesh? Examining each image more fully to tease out its corporeal potential allows us imaginatively to inhabit Merleau-Ponty's physical descriptions of intersubjective or intercorporeal experience within the Flesh. As we step through thresholds opened up by his descriptive phrases and begin imaginatively to experience their extended spatial character, we

understand more fully—because we are experiencing it bodily—the charac-
ter of the Flesh.

SPATIAL IMAGES OF INTERTWINING—FOLDING, PADDING, SEA'S EDGE, REFLECTED LIGHT

One category of descriptions characterizes the interwovenness of the Flesh.
The Flesh weaves together the sentient body, the sensed body, the perceived
thing, and the ontic thing, and Merleau-Ponty explores these various con-
nections with various images of intertwinement. Sometimes he writes of
the intertwining of the body sensed and the body sentient, as when he says,
"Vision and the body are tangled up in one another" (*VI*, 152); or "Our
body is a being of two leaves, from one side a thing among things and
otherwise what sees them and touches them" (137). Sometimes he writes of
the entwinement and kinship of the sensed body with perceived things, or
the visible with the visible, as when he says, "A relation of the visible with
itself, a coiling over of visible upon visible, forms a circle that forms me as
a seer" (140). And sometimes he writes of the entwinement of perceived
thing and ontic thing—the visible and the invisible, as when he says, "The
surface of the visible is doubled up over its whole extension with an in-
visible reserve. In our flesh as in the flesh of things, the ontic visible exhibits
a visibility by a sort of folding back, invagination, or padding" (152). These
references all suggest spaces within spaces, surfaces behind surfaces, Car-
tesian space collapsing on itself to accommodate the Fleshly connections
between perceiver and perceived.

   Imagine a piece of fabric hanging so that it stretches out flat. The distance
from one part of it to another is stable, Cartesian, measurable. The front is
completely exposed, the back completely hidden, and the entire cloth laid
out in a conceptually clear manner, where we can measure between the vari-
ous points on the surface. Now imagine that the fabric begins to blow in the
wind. The hem lifts and the fabric begins to billow, pulsing with the fluid
currents, folding in on itself to form an ever-shifting choreography of bulges
and hollows. A snap in the wind, and for a fleeting instant the fabric touches
itself in a thousand curving folds, making connections between areas that
a moment before were separated by a linear expanse of cloth. In the next
instant the folds disappear, only to spring up again and again, each time in a
thousand new places.

Each time the folds spring up, they close in over newly formed hollows be-
hind the wrinkled surface. Merleau-Ponty likens the fronts of these folds—
which form only a small percentage of the whole cloth—to the thin surface
of the visible and compares the hidden spaces and surfaces behind to the
"invisible reserve" that forms the depth of things. Thus he fumbles toward
an exploration of the world's "wild being," in which each sensuous thing
both reveals and conceals its connections to other elements within the Flesh.
As Alphonso Lingis phrases it, "Every point is a pivot, every line a vector"[1]
to the larger Flesh, and each sensuous thing—like the fronts of the fabric
folds—forms unanticipated connections with a host of others. The flux-
ing character of the Flesh, where dynamic and shifting relationships among
Fleshly elements replace clear and static distinctions between subject and
object, is underscored by the image of the cloth's dynamic shape-changing
effected by the unseen wind.

Merleau-Ponty did not explore the unseen spaces within the folds, but
they have rich spatial potential as different manifestations of the ontic field
that disappear, morph, and appear anew in relation to perceivers' changing
intentions and tasks. We may also view these hidden spaces as additional
qualities of the perceived thing that can be accessed through movement.
Merleau-Ponty explores the relationship between vision and movement at
length in his later writings and contends that it is only through movement
that vision finds its completion, as we truly come to comprehend a thing's
full spatiality. Imagine that we were able to occupy the hollows behind the
folds, finding there not a static thing, but the further aspects of a thing's
perceptual qualities that unfold to us as we ourselves move and change in
relationship to it. The hollows are all different sizes, different shapes, and
each one by itself yields a multitude of different spatial experiences depend-
ing on where we move within it. By entering and moving within the space of
the cloth's folds rather than standing passively back and watching it dance in
the breeze, we may discover some of the depths of Merleau-Ponty's assertion
that movement is central to Fleshly communion.

Moving within the territory of the fabric allows our other senses to aug-
ment our vision, as the texture and smell of the fabric become integral parts
of the experience. It also allows us to further experience the kinship we share
with other sensuous elements of the Flesh, as our own bodies fold back and
lap over in a way similar to the fabric. In another metaphor, Merleau-Ponty
offers the idea that "the body sensed and the body sentient" are two leaves
that overlap—a single sheet of paper that has folded in on itself like the

billowing fabric we have just experienced (*VI*, 137). The folded paper, like the fabric, creates spaces between its folds, and, within these spaces, as we perceive both ourselves and other sensuous things, we experience the larger Flesh, of which we are a part, folding over on itself.

In a third metaphor of intertwinement, Merleau-Ponty writes of the coiling over of the visible upon the visible. This metaphor brings to mind an image of wire or string coiling over on itself as it spools onto the ground. There is little or no space captured as there is within the fabric or paper folds of the previous images, but simply the short-circuiting of a linear thread into heaps of looping connections that form at unpredictable intervals. This looping is a form of *chiasm*, the dynamic, relational act of crossing or transgressing traditional subjective boundaries in intersubjective or intercorporeal experience. His descriptions of two hands touching, where it is never clear which hand is subject and which is object, are descriptions of chiasm, as is his evocation of touching with its tangible crisscrossing in the hand.

Chiasm, which continually crosses subject and object, vision and the visible, touching and the tangible to illustrate the complete interdependence of sensed and sensible within the Flesh, is the antithesis of Cartesian subject/object distinction. Merleau-Ponty tries again and again to characterize it in terms of things that overlap, entwine, weave together, and fold back on one another. Each image brings us a little closer to understanding something impossible to understand, as fabric, wire, and intertwined hands help us to envision the pliable fabric of existence as the world folds and collapses on itself through our encounters with other things.

A second set of images discusses the relationship among perceiver and perceived in terms of padding. The Flesh itself is a type of padding, "the tissue that lines . . . , sustains . . . , [and] nourishes . . . the alleged colors and visibles" (*VI*, 132–33). The perceived thing pads our "looks and . . . hands inside and outside" (137), thus mediating between the sensing body, the (exterior) thing, and our (interior) conscious apprehension of it. Merleau-Ponty further explores the perceived thing in terms of padding in describing it as the thin film over the surface of the thing itself that our perception subtends (152). In all these descriptions, the perceived thing or perception itself mediates between body and world and between body and consciousness. Perception thickens things, makes the air between body and world and between mind and world thick with relationship.

Padding performs its mediating function only if it has a certain depth along with a certain lack of density. It needs to have enough thickness to

cushion one thing from another, yet it needs its own collapsible spaces—areas where the spaces between its fibers can collapse to absorb an impact. Furthermore, its shape molds constantly to mediate between the shape of the thing and that of other things. If we enter this metaphor—whether it is the padding that nests a thing within its container or the padding that supports us in the act of sitting or lying on a cushion, we enter a surrounding where every inch of our body's surface is touched by a medium that molds to its contours, a reciprocating medium that senses and responds to our movements and communicates back to us the contours and forces of the outside world. The fibrous layers of the padding form a seemingly disorderly thicket, where fibers move apart and then together, expanding and contracting the hollows in between as they mediate between toucher and touched.

A thicket is a place of immersion, of total envelopment within the milieu—a place where Merleau-Ponty's "wild being" takes on a literal aspect. Merleau-Ponty elsewhere describes our entanglement within "thickets of meaning" (*VI*, 130), illustrating the ability of the world always to surpass our interpretive schemes. In the disorderly "wild being" of phenomenological experience, we often find ourselves sinking into an environment that exceeds conceptualization and transgresses the Cartesian divide as experiences "offer us all at once, pell-mell, both 'subject' and 'object.'"[2]

If we should find ourselves immersed in a thicket, we are overtaken by the surrounding medium to the point where heedless or unmindful sensing and movement are impossible. Made up of (to us) chaotically intertwined elements, it subjects our being—particularly our orientation—to its unfathomable depths and complexity. The things we encounter confront us as incontrovertible things and refuse to be relegated to the perceptual background. It is from such a state of immersion and mindful encountering that the painter paints, as Merleau-Ponty asserts in "Eye and Mind," and that we open our subjective boundaries to the point of disappearing as a discrete subject and *becoming* a relationship. Here the subject/object relationship, the conceptual shell constructed around our intercorporeal existence, shatters to reveal a deeper perceiver-perceived intertwining in which it becomes, as Merleau-Ponty phrases it, "impossible to distinguish between who sees and who is seen" (EM, 129, 147). In this milieu, it is also impossible to separate the world from the human body, the body sensed from the body sentient, as they integrate—fold back, coil over, and crisscross—within the phenomenal unfolding of the Flesh.

In the nonlocal geography of the Flesh, the perceiver is at once in his or her body and ecstatically in the midst of things. Merleau-Ponty writes, "We see the things themselves, in their places, where they are," and goes on to say, "At the same time we are separated from them by all the thickness of the look and of the body." But far from being an obstacle to our congress with things, it is the obscure, unthematizable body—and not the grasping, conscious mind—that forms "the sole means I have to go unto the heart of things, by making myself a world and by making them flesh" (*VI*, 135).

The unmappable thickness of the body, like padding, separates us from the perceived thing—yet, in sensing, the Flesh coils over on itself and we are transported to the place where the things are. In this place, we do not possess a thing as much as we are dispossessed by it, lost within it. Perception chiasmically attracts us to the things and the things to us. The relational thickness of the air—like a dense thicket—holds us in relationship to other things,[3] and the Flesh is our "means of communication." Its thickness may separate perceiver and perceived thing, but it also brings them together (*VI*, 135).[4] Merleau-Ponty's metaphorical thicket makes our spatial experience relational, immerses us in the midst of a host of other Fleshly elements, and constrains us to progress attentively and responsively to them.

What about the boundary between body and world? Merleau-Ponty writes, "It is as though our vision were formed in the heart of the visible, or as though there were between it and us an intimacy as close as between the sea and the strand. And yet it is not possible that we blend into it, nor that it passes into us" (*VI*, 130–31). The metaphor of the sea and the strand powerfully illustrates the porous, shifting, and interdependent character of boundaries within the Flesh. The sea's edge is a constantly shifting zone where water and sand merge. As the water washes in and then pulls back out, it sucks a layer of sand away with it and leaves water behind to fill the gap. The resultant boundary is a drawn-out zone that merges the qualities of both. The foam residue is a new creation, the issue of this merging. It, too, changes constantly, slowly dissolving yet ever renewed by the arrival of fresh waves. Merleau-Ponty describes the relationship between sea and strand as "intimacy," a state where boundaries remain open to mutual influence.

Merleau-Ponty explores these boundaries further in describing the interwoven landscapes of sensed and sensing. This metaphor complements his characterization of vision and the body being tangled up in each other, and both have commonalities with his image of the sea's edge. "Interwoven landscapes," of which the meeting of sea and strand is one example, suggests

crisscrossing strands of color or texture as two ecosystems meet or a single landscape differentiates. At the points of intersection, one landscape intrudes on the order of the other, or the two landscapes each transform to negotiate an order that springs from their intersection. In like manner, where our body intersects with the sensuous, we intersect like two landscapes. We feel a surface touching us as we touch the surface, and our fingertips mold to the surface as much as it molds to our fingertips.

When we sense another thing, another element of the Flesh, we are self meeting self at the same time that we encounter an other. This layering of opposites effects a short circuit of Cartesian reality, and Merleau-Ponty's folds of fabric, coils of wire, thickets, and interwoven landscapes, with their unexpected spatial hollows and unpredictable spatial collapses, give us glimpses into the corporeal realities of this experience.

These metaphors tell us the most when we explore them not as things in themselves but as indicators of relationships. The space in the metaphors is dynamic and interactive, and I will end this section with one final example. In "Eye and Mind," Merleau-Ponty illustrates the "inner animation" of space with a description of sunlight reflecting off tiles beneath the surface of a pool to sparkle and dance upon a nearby stand of cypress trees (142). He describes the tiles on the pool floor shimmering through the medium of water and the water's constantly changing reflection of light onto the nearby trees.

In what is possibly his most architectural description of space, it is not surprising that Merleau-Ponty is interested in the play of light and shadow across surfaces rather than in the static shapes and proportional relationships of architectural form. Light and shadow dance and mingle actively in his description, and even the surfaces that receive the light are alive. He writes of trees with their highly textured surfaces and deep pockets of space and shadow, their position and proportion changing constantly in response to movements of sun and wind. And he writes of reflective tiles, seen through a medium constantly in motion. The shifting matrix of water molecules directs sunlight and reflected images first one place and then another, broken into innumerable bits of light and color. His description stresses the active qualities of the spatial elements; the water is not "*in* space . . . it inhabits it." It is not contained in the pool, but it "visits" the screen of cypress trees, "or at least sends out to it its active, living essence" (EM, 142).

Merleau-Ponty's description also captures the fundamentally intertwined nature—and the wild being—of elements within the Flesh, for all the elements in his architectural space are interlinked, and we notice one element

primarily as it acts on another. As Lingis points out, "The water of the pool is there by sending the streaks of light it has captured across the screen of cypresses at the back of the garden."[5] Like sunlight reflecting off tiles to dance upon a nearby stand of trees, the folding fabric Merleau-Ponty describes resembles the Flesh only when it is moving, animated by relationship with another thing. Padding collapses and molds in response to movement and weight, the thicket immerses us, and the sea's edge constantly shifts to model the intertwinement of the Flesh.

SPATIAL IMAGES OF SEPARATION——THE STRAITS, THE ABYSS, DEHISCENCE, MIRRORS

Not all Merleau-Ponty's metaphors are about interweaving. In "The Intertwining," he also introduces a set of metaphors to express the offset, the *décalage*, the noncoincidence of relationships within the Flesh. Merleau-Ponty describes the Flesh as "a straits ever gaping open between interior and exterior horizons." What are the spatial implications of this metaphor for more fully understanding the Flesh? A straits is a narrow divide between two strips of land—two stable, opposing sides mediated by a body of water.[6] Just as the two opposing boundaries of a straits are meaningless when considered separately, so are the two opposing horizons of our own sensing and thinking selves and the sensuous world with which we interact and from which we take our measure. We can draw understanding from considering two strips of land that have both commonalities and differences (paralleling our relationships with other elements of the Flesh), that draw out a fuller meaning when considered in relationship with each other, and that are mediated by an entity constantly in motion. Furthermore, this mediating entity slowly and constantly chips away at the boundaries of the two relational horizons.

Merleau-Ponty describes the straits as "gaping" (*béant*), which could also be translated as wide open, even to the point of engulfing or swallowing whole. The adjective further implies a tendency for the borders beyond the openness to separate further. We use the term "gaping" to describe things such as wounds, which gape obscenely, in a manner that threatens our corporeal integrity and our fundamental well-being. The gaping of a wound threatens our bodily existence and runs counter to an essential element of our existence, our corporeal integrity. Is the gaping of Merleau-Ponty's straits

similarly threatening? Does it subvert corporeal order? Or does it simply subvert philosophical divisions between mind and body, self and other?

The straits metaphor suggests many questions. What is it like to corporeally occupy a straits, and what can that experience tell us further about the nature of the Flesh? From which vantage point can we most effectively understand this metaphor? Should our imaginative presence at the straits be limited to the perspective of standing on one side of the straits and viewing toward the other, as one member of the Flesh might relate to another? Or should it be split to occupy both sides, as the body is split into sentient and sensible? What if we position ourselves within the body of water that rushes between the two horizons? Can we approach either side from this position of immersion, or will the rush of water moving between the two horizons carry us ever away from them?

Merleau-Ponty refers to the abyss between two sides of the body—the "in-itself" and the "for-itself," or the conscious-sensing body and the unconscious-sensuous body. It is this abyss that Cartesianism cannot cross, leaving us trapped on one side of the straits. In such an abyss, there is no way to cross through thin air to the other side, and the bottom is bottomless. The bottom's obscurity is kin to the obscurity of the body, the means by which we illumine the surrounding world but the depth of which remains ever out of our experiential reach (*VI*, 130).

In Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the Flesh's relational thickness bridges the two sides of the abyss. Our own bodies occupy both sides of the straits, as we are both sentient and sensible. Yet, as thinking beings, we do not cross the abyss as much as we rend it further apart through the dehiscent process of phenomenological experience. The gaping straits and the abyss both suggest an inescapable pulling apart. No matter what sort of bridging we may effect, it is overwhelmed by the remaining separation of the opposing sides. An abyss is not an abyss unless it possesses an immensity of scale that confounds any effort to negate it. The motion of a straits or an abyss is primarily centrifugal. Merleau-Ponty writes of the visible provisionally partitioning our interior and exterior horizons as each visible thing opens indefinitely only on other visible things. As visible things ourselves, we are part of this indefinite opening, but our conscious minds are always separated—partitioned—from the unself-conscious communion of the Flesh's wild being. We do not have to imagine a great, solid partition down the middle of the abyss—the thin Cartesian air we access through reflective thought is partition enough to keep us as conscious beings ever separate from sensuous things.

If our thinking and sensible selves are always held separate and the motion of an abyss is always centrifugal, let us go with this pulling apart and draw from the straits and the abyss a kinship with Merleau-Ponty's descriptions of dehiscence or *écart*,[7] both processes of bursting forth. Dehiscence involves the splitting apart of a fruit or seedpod in order to release its contents,[8] and Merleau-Ponty uses the term to characterize the fruitful opening of seeing into the visible and the visible into seeing. It calls forth the image of seeds bursting out of a pod to be taken up and scattered by the wind. Now the stable landmasses of the straits, which are only very slowly eaten away, are replaced by a reproductive pod that splits as part of its growth process. And the water rushing along the bottom is replaced by a thick atmosphere filled to bursting with regenerative seeds. Thus we recover the void middle within the straits and abyss metaphors. Like David Abram's description of the night air completely filled with stars, fireflies, and their reflections in a pool of water,[9] envisioning the air filled with seeds or spores allows us to corporeally engage the distance between sentient and sensed to replace this distance with relational thickness.

Merleau-Ponty relates "the body sensed and the body sentient" with a number of descriptions. First, they are the two sides of a straits (*VI*, 132), then two overlapping leaves (137), then "two segments of one sole circular course" (138). But it is his description of the sensed and sentient body as "two mirrors facing one another" (139) that begins truly to get at the relationship of these two aspects of the body. He describes the spatial experience of standing between two facing mirrors, "where two indefinite series of images set in one another arise." We have all experienced this phenomenon in places like department store dressing rooms, where the space on either side seems to form an endless tunnel. Each tunnel must borrow again and again from the space of the other one to construct its own layered interior space. If there is a chair in the dressing room, it is replicated into an endless succession of ever more distant chairs occupying the receding space of the tunnels. Merleau-Ponty observes that the tunnel-like spaces extending back from each mirror surface "belong really to neither of the two surfaces, since each is only the rejoinder of the other." He concludes that the two mirrors act in tandem to "form . . . a couple more real than either of them" (139).

In reaching this conclusion, Merleau-Ponty arrives at last at a metaphor that reflects the overwhelming importance of the very real space created by "the body sensed and the body sentient" (*VI*, 152). The mirror metaphor

causes us to reinterpret the space contained in the straits as borrowing from both sides, yet more real than either of them. Now, as with the image of dehiscence, we are able to occupy the rushing waters of the middle, where before we had access only to the banks. But where the dehiscence metaphor allows us to experience the space in the middle by perceiving its thickness as it is filled with sensuous things, the image of the mirrors makes us understand that the middle space we experience is formed by borrowing space from each bank. Thus, in the reality of phenomenological experience, we do not abandon the space of the sensed and sentient body, but we find and continue to dwell in their full depths.

"A RAY OF GENERALITY AND OF LIGHT"

It is not one side opposed to the other, the body opposed to the world, the thing itself opposed to the perceived thing, or the body sensed opposed to the body sentient, but the alchemical Fleshly space of their joining at which Merleau-Ponty seeks to arrive through his metaphors. He writes, "At the joints of the opaque body and the opaque world there is a ray of generality and of light" (*VI*, 146). In architecture, tolerance is the extra space designed into a joint that allows the human body the space it needs to set materials in place, and it accommodates any subsequent movement or settlement of materials. The "ray of generality and of light" that Merleau-Ponty perceives in the joint between the body and the world sets up the generosity of the Flesh—a state of openness and tolerance that allows the other to lead us outside the boundaries of conceptually clear Cartesian space and into a world whose fundamental state is one of dynamic joining.

We can learn more about the nature of Merleau-Ponty's Flesh by stepping more fully into his metaphors, experiencing them corporeally through imagined spatial experience. The layered meanings within Merleau-Ponty's metaphors are further uncovered when explored spatially, for the fundamental meaning of any encounter, to Merleau-Ponty, is not the reflective, layered, personal-cultural meaning that we ultimately assign to it, but the simple and profound fact *that we have encountered*. We experience such encounters not as much in the linguistic alleys of our mind as in the corporeal depths of our embodied existence.

NOTES

1. Alphonso Lingis, "Translator's Preface," in *VI*, l.

2. *Pell-mell* calls up other descriptors of disorderly movement: helter-skelter, willy-nilly, harum-scarum. The chaos and wild recklessness of pell-mell experience also calls to mind the rush of electrons or the instantaneous relational relocations of quarks. The unpredictability of these particles, based in probability, exceeds our ability to conceptualize, yet their energy and movement form the basis of our dynamic existence.

3. We are closest to things when we live among them "naively" or unselfconsciously, a state Merleau-Ponty compares to concentric circles, vortices, or spheres; reflection causes these concentric spaces to be offset (*VI*, 138).

4. Here is a new kind of space wherein distance equals proximity, similar to the curled-up dimensions of superstring theory. The Flesh, which lines body and things, also serves as a conduit between them.

5. Alphonso Lingis, "Phantom Equator," in *Merleau-Ponty, Hermeneutics, and Postmodernism*, ed. Thomas W. Busch and Shaun Gallagher (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 231.

6. The intense spatial character of a strait has engendered, in English, related meanings; it can also be a position of difficulty, perplexity, distress, or need; narrowness, constriction, or a tight fit.

7. The opening outward this term implies relates to other Merleau-Pontian images, the hidden face of a cube radiating forth (*VI*, 143) and our body opening onto a tactile world (133).

8. *Dehiscence* is not always positive; it also refers to the bursting open of a surgical wound.

9. David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996), 3–4.

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SHELTERING SPACES, DYNAMICS OF RETREAT, AND OTHER HIDING PLACES IN MERLEAU-PONTY'S THOUGHT

Suzanne Cataldi Laba

> Already the mere presence of a living being transforms the physical world, makes "food" appear over here and a "hiding place" over there.
>
> —Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*

> Physically, the creature endowed with a sense of refuge, huddles up to itself, takes to cover, hides away, lies snug, concealed.
>
> —Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*

Shelters are ubiquitous, commonplace. We do not seek, understand, or appreciate these common places with disembodied minds or for purely visual pleasure or reasons. Offering, as they do, sites for bodily preservation, restoration, and privacy, sheltering spaces are affective, "living" places infused with evocative, ethical, and political significance. Appealing to deeply felt bodily needs for rest, repair, concealment, and containment, and related as they are to our physical, social, and emotional security, sheltering spaces exist for us as pervasively as moods. Through a light in the window or in the dark shading of a leafy tree, in the seclusion of an abandoned railway tunnel or tucked into the bulky warmth of a favorite sweater, senses of shelter are conveyed, "secreted," back and forth, between the world's flesh and our own.

There are many different kinds of sheltering spaces,[1] and ours unlike, for example, the bird's nest for the bird, may appear to us "under a plurality of aspects" (*SB*, 75). This essay relates this plurality to various "movements of withdrawal" and protective hiding places in Merleau-Ponty's thought, as

well as to issues concerning homelessness, bodily privacy, and public space. Given its concern to develop a viable account of how living spaces and embodiment intertwine behind or beneath their more abstract or objective (geometric or physiological) renderings, and thinking of shelter metaphorically as a second "skin" or layer of protection, his philosophy would appear to provide a felicitous setting for a discussion of shelters as we live or experience them.

Like Merleau-Ponty's notion of flesh, shelter is a reversible, two-sided medium, defining spaces or "straits" between the outside and the in. Enveloping and partially occluding us in their "folds," shelters are hideaways. Closing us off (from view, from the elements, from one another), they make it possible for us to open ourselves to certain sense experiences—to a sense of security, for example, or comfort or privacy. We can be sheltered in ways we may fail to realize, or imagine ourselves sheltered in ways that we are not, in fantasy worlds (for example, at least until these bubbles burst). Depending on whether they are looking after, through, or past us; harassing, respecting, or loving us, we can feel sheltered and protected or stranded and defenseless (i.e., too "wide open"). We are sheltered or not in our relatedness to others.

Conceptually, shelters are places of safety, where we, others, and possessions are removed and insulated from threats of danger, exposure, or extinction. Shelters secure cover. They help to keep us sane by helping us keep our distance from some of the natural and social forces in which we are immersed and with which we are intermingled. Ca(r)ved out from the depths of our perceptual fields and etched through movements into the establishment of correlative bodily habits, sheltering spaces provide zones of comfort or stability, an inner sanctum, relief from what Merleau-Ponty described as "the rooting of things in our body, the overwhelming proximity of the object, the solidarity between man and the world, which is not abolished but repressed by everyday perception or by objective thought" (*PhP*, 304). Feeling sheltered is an emotional lining of security, an intimate "padding" of protection that is felt, on the "inside" as an "outside" and as an "inside" on the outside. Sheltering spaces affect our well-being-in-the-world by muffling, tamping down the anxiety of being over-exposed, preyed, or excessively encroached upon, broken into, or violated.

Experiences of being sheltered can radically surpass or fall dramatically short of the ways we imagine or conceive of shelters. Shelters may, in other words, fail to provide protection of the right sort or amount connoted by their literary or conceptual sense. One has only to think of the (well-founded) fears people have of actually going to sleep in a homeless shelter, which is,

strangely and sadly enough, a primary reason for their being. Or consider the experiences of those "sheltered" at the Superdome and Convention Center in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. But even when differences are not so stark between mental and material reality, between our thoughts and feelings, some gaps remain. These gaps in Merleau-Ponty's ontology can be sites of creativity, where slippages of sense and reversibilities of meaning take place. He connects their in-between ontological status to his construal of embodiment as a "formative medium" of expression, to new styles of thinking, being, and relating.

This essay articulates phenomenological senses of shelter from the fluctuating "standpoint" of this in-between spatial situation. Shelters can but need not be or involve physical structures. (We may be sheltered by somebody "having their eye on" us or "watching our backs," for example.) The idea of shelter calls to mind a cluster of primarily ethical relations as well, including nurture, safety, privacy, comfort. While I question, for reasons indicated below, whether there is enough ontological "room" on the worldly or interworldly side of Merleau-Ponty's Flesh to adequately accommodate them, strategic senses I have settled on and will try to elaborate here—shelter as safe removal, as caring capacity or extension of protection, as hiding place— are attempts to connect its spatial and material aspects to some of its ethical and political dimensions.

If we think of shelter as a caring capacity, a facility with a certain spatial scope or dimension, perhaps we can devise a sense of shelter, apart from its sense as a right, along Aristotelian lines in the sense of a capacity that one could have or experience not enough or too much of.[2] Excesses and deficiencies of private or protective space can be oppressive or isolating,[3] and marking off some reasonable amount of spatial experiences we might want to call "sheltering" (that is, without the scare quotes) can help to mark some important differences: between protection and coddling or isolationist protectionism, and between hiding places that protect space for intimacy, for example, from "living in the shadows" or being thrust outside of a moral or legal system and subject to abuse and exploitation. Belonging to this capacity would be a willingness to make, create, or leave room, on the side of the world, for the development and flourishing of some private life to take place. In isolation and oppression, we are removed from a sense of safety key to a fleshed-out sense of shelter.

Shelter as safe removal establishes some interactive or dynamic distance between the sheltered and the sheltering. To begin with this sense, let us

consider Merleau-Ponty's description of how, in accustoming ourselves to certain objects, "places in space are not defined as objective positions in relation to the objective position of our body, but rather they inscribe around us the variable reach of our intentions and our gestures. To habituate oneself to a hat, an automobile, or a cane is to take up residence in them, or inversely, to make them participate within the voluminosity of one's own body" (*PhP*, 144–45). "A woman may, without any calculation, keep a safe distance between the feather in her hat and things which might break it off. She feels where the feather is, just as we feel where our hand is." Just as the "blind man's cane has ceased to be an object for him, it is no longer perceived for itself," the hat ceases to be an object "whose size and volume would be determined through a comparison with other objects" but has become a "voluminous" power and "the necessity of a certain free space" (144–45).

Now let us vary and supplement these examples with an example of manipulating an umbrella against the rain. As I aim to stay dry, I do not think about how I have to move the umbrella against the rain. Like the point of the blind man's stick, the area under the umbrella's canopy "is transformed into a sensitive zone" (*PhP*, 144–45). But we do not just feel (into) where the umbrella itself physically is, for there is also an extension of my sensitivity out into its *capacity* to function as a shelter. That is, I am sensitive, through the umbrella and the protective space it creates between me and the water pouring down on it, to a feeling of being removed. I feel sheltered from the storm, protected from the rain through a feeling of being intermingled with or caught up on the inside in the outside of the umbrella's protective capacity, and, to reverse this, on my outside in its inside, which makes the outside dryness possible and experientially enjoyable (literally) "under" the circumstances.

That is not all. Reconsider the blind man's stick. It is not just an extension of sensitivity. It is also the creation of a path—in "clearing" a path to walk, he is making room for his body to move unimpeded through space. To experience a space as sheltering, however, our bodies require something more than simply "the necessity of a certain free space" in which to manipulate or maneuver or extend our sensitivity—there must be that special pleasure, that felt sense of enjoyment or enrichment as we take in whatever shelters, in their special capacity as sheltering spaces, afford us—dryness or respite from a blazing sun in the case of an umbrella; trust in another; refuge, if I am being hounded or hunted, and so on. The contrast, I think, must be there. The "coolness of the shade is most precious," as Simone de Beauvoir

observed, at "the side of the sunny road."[4] The sense that some worry or danger is removed or remote from me means that it still exists, but in a way that falls on the fringes, outside the compass of my immediate concern. Not in a way that attracts my attention, but through its intertwined but slackened connection to my body, it facilitates a certain sense of comfort or relief in its/ my removal.

Sheltering space is not just free space but space that is set apart or reserved and attached to a sense of belonging safely or securely within it. As Michael Maltzan, a socially conscious architect who has designed shelters for homeless people, points out: "One of the first things people do when they live on the street is put up walls around themselves to try to create some feeling of safety. You need to provide those walls before you can start to open things back up."[5] The shopping carts of the chronically homeless also create sheltering space. Like the blind man's cane, they clear a way for them to move about with portable possessions while extending their sensitivity, in this case watchfulness, over personal belongings.

Safety is a vital value, and shelters are existential territory, living spaces serving basic bodily and psychological needs. Often they are sought as a last resort, making or marking the difference between life and death. Hence shelters figure prominently in ethics; when, for example, they are conceived to be spaces to which humans have some (natural or universal) right.[6] Essential to our "security as persons" (UN Declaration), they are related to our flourishing and our interanimality. "The well-being I feel, seated in front of my fire, while bad weather rages out-of-doors, is entirely animal. A rat in his hole, a rabbit in its burrow, cows in the stable, must all feel the same contentment that I feel."[7] We can experience deep physical pleasures in a bodily consciousness of being sheltered, in what Bachelard describes in *Poetics of Space* as these "animal movements of withdrawal . . . engraved in our muscles."[8]

These deeply engraved muscular movements have, in Merleau-Ponty's view of nature, both utilitarian and expressive functions (*N*, 188). Although most frequently associated with his later thesis of the reversibility of Flesh, Merleau-Ponty's interest in formative movements of withdrawal is noticeable in his early *Structure of Behavior*, where he introduces the living body, a notion that "could not be grasped without [a consciousness of life,] this internal unity of signification which distinguishes a gesture from a sum of movements. The phenomenon of life appeared . . . at the moment when a piece of extension, by the dispositions of its movements and by the allusion that each movement makes to all the others, turned back upon itself and

began to express something, to manifest an interior being externally" (*SB*, 162). So the beginning of expression is an extensional turning back, into intentionality. The prototypical expression of life is thus that of a quasi-hidden, private "interior."[9]

Spaces defined by these movements of withdrawal cannot be thought without their openings into/onto sensitivity, a communication, for Merleau-Ponty, which is deeper than thought. The expression of life = a life of expression. Communicative space as a dynamic ensemble or assemblage of relations requires some sheltering to take (its) place. Expression needs some corporeal backup to settle itself into/to settle into itself, some intimate, partially hidden (nonsensical) surrounding "in" which to live or reside.

When existence is tied up (in refusals of speech / refusals of others / a break with coexistence or communication), the body may become "life's hiding place."[10] But "even when the subject is normal and engaged in inter-human situations, insofar as he has a body, he continuously preserves the power to withdraw from it. At the very moment when I live in the world and am directed toward my projects, . . . I can close my eyes, lie down, listen to my blood pulsing in my ears . . . and lock myself up in this anonymous life that underpins my personal life. But precisely because it can shut itself off from the world, my body is also what opens me up to the world and puts me into a situation there" (*PhP*, 167–68).

As a "partial whole" or life-form, *sens* is incomprehensible apart from its surrounding. This surrounding includes other dynamic structures, other living arrangements that organisms bring, or sing, into the world. Merleau-Ponty borrows from Buytendjik the notion of an adaptive space "bound up with the animal's own body as part of its flesh" (*SB*, 30). Behavioral gestures trace intentions in the space around animals; they institute forms of behavior and are directed to "a milieu characteristic of the species" (125). Shelters construct for "the animal organism . . . a stable milieu . . . corresponding to the monotonous *a prioris* of need" (162).

Human beings construct shelters, too, but not in so monotonous or determined a fashion and not only to preserve biological life. "The word 'life' does not have the same meaning in animality and humanity."[11] "Doubtless, clothing and houses serve to protect us from the cold. . . . But the act of dressing becomes the act of adornment or also of modesty and thus reveals a new attitude toward oneself and others. In the house that he builds for himself, man [sic] projects and realizes his preferred values" (*SB*, 174). So we might

add to the vital value of shelters the value of choosing among values, the opportunities they afford us of exhibiting new attitudes and realizing preferences for freedom.

We have, as the basis of our freedom, an ability to vary and choose—mediate—among different points of view, and to orient and reorient ourselves toward the indefinite times and spaces of a possible future milieu. Animals live in a more limited "immediate reality." They fabricate "under the pressure of a de facto situation" (*SB*, 175–76). Humanity's use-objects and cultural-objects, Merleau-Ponty says, "*would not be what they are if the activity which brings about their appearance did not also have as its meaning to reject them and to surpass them*" (176; italics in original). We can (at least imagine ourselves) backing away from cultural "structures" and strictures when they become too constraining, when they start to imprison rather than shelter us and we need to grow, out of them—or, as discussed later—when they function covertly to disguise and institutionalize certain forms of violence and exclusionary practices.

We could not feel exposed or have need of shelter in the first place without belonging to, or being "of" (*l'en être*), as Merleau-Ponty would put it, worldly perceptible Flesh. "The animal sees according to whether it is visible" (*N*, 189). Belonging to visibility makes mimicry, disguise, and subterfuge possible. Depending on where and who we are, some of us can "blend" in ways that others cannot. An animal's appearance, as a language or "showing," can shelter through camouflage or expose one to harm (186–88).[12]

Shelters, in establishing boundaries, both let in and keep out. Methodologically and politically, we can interrogate the dangers of exposure in a particular circumstance or instance, question who or what is and is not being sheltered, from and for what and whom. Some shelters, including legal and criminal justice systems, are less like umbrellas and more like facades. Laws ostensibly designed to "protect the public" or "protect public space," for example, often exclude individuals who are homeless from their purview. Depending on socially constructed stereotypes and prejudices concerning certain types of bodies, we may be more or less exposed and exposed in different ways to harm. Some people's shelters may isolate them to the point of feeling trapped or cooped up. Other people's shelters may offer them no protection from violence or humiliating intrusions on their privacy.[13] Some people may need sheltering from their shelters, as they did at the Dome during Katrina, for example, where "to protect people from the slick and infectious wash of blood and feces and urine and floodwater coating the floor, the social workers

stretched latex gloves and slid them onto their charges' feet to make long-toed slippers."[14]

Shelters, as living space, became interesting to me through an apparent tension between their capacity to "contain" and Merleau-Ponty's tendency to favor the language of envelopment over that of containment in writing about space. To be sure, the notion of containment is politically charged, used against "unruly" and even unsheltered bodies. I am nevertheless concerned that social critiques of containment are so "wide open" that little (psychophysical or political) room is left for protecting the value of personal privacy. In Merleau-Ponty's view, we are and can be ourselves only through our relationships with others, and of course we need to rely on others to care for and about us. Still, we need and want breaks from our social lives and public performances. Being with others can be stressful, tiring exercise. The uncomfortable feeling of being "out of place" at a social gathering or function, for example, "inhibited and limited in our freedom to be who we are most fully," can be expressed or experienced as relief or gratefulness when it is (finally!) time to leave and we return to some relatively stable and enduring place where we feel we belong.[15] That space is not a container, or that human beings are intrinsically relational rather than hermetically sealed subjectivities, does not mean that containing/ed spaces are not significant to our lives in deep, ethical, and ontological respects.

While a Merleau-Pontian enfleshed and living body open to and entangled in the world is much more than "housing" for a disembodied mind, some of its opening and entanglement may need, at least ethically speaking, to be qualified or tempered. Movements of withdrawal, accorded or afforded by gestures of restraint, respect, or material allowances of privacy, may bring us more closely and empathically together, personally and politically, than we may be when they do not take place—"between two," for example, as Luce Irigaray might say. Whether or not we are explicitly aware of it, we spend a lot of our "quality" time contained in spaces, real or imaginary, designed to afford privacy, and we value the access we are privileged to enjoy to them. The philosopher in his study who is never really alone, a favorite example of Merleau-Ponty's with respect to the encroachment of others, is a very far cry from having to sleep on the subway, on the floor of a crowded shelter, or being unjustly harassed and arrested on the porch of your own home, "for loud and tumultuous behavior, in a public place."[16] So I began to wonder: How does our apparent desire for privacy as sheltering space or intimacy (with others or ourselves) "fit" or have trouble fitting into a Merleau-Pontian

spatiotemporal scheme of things? In his concern to blur or cross over the body-world boundary with his notion of Flesh, has Merleau-Ponty left any philosophical room for a domain of the private intrinsic to the liberal freedom he defended? Or is it the case that his philosophy does such a good job of demonstrating the need for privacy—through delivering such a persuasive account of our vulnerability to unwanted contact or publicity—that it is difficult to see where within it we might locate or accommodate a living sense of privacy? Are openings created by the reversibility of Flesh enough of a "holding environment"?[17] Is it possible (and if so how is it possible?) to think (of) chiasms, those insensible folds of flesh, as (enveloping) shelters of sorts?

Bodily privacy needs some place to be. Shelters are shelters *for* someone or something. Shelters invite us into *their* interiors, into the safety or personal enjoyment of some circumscribed, protective space where our "guard" is let down and we can feel relaxed, at home. Shelters are (indeed, they must be) as "open" to us in providing some private protective space as our bodies are affectively "open/ed" to or desirous of them, through a feeling of being exposed or "marginalized," positioned "outside" some zone of comfort, safety, or privacy. The sheltered "opening" of which I want to make existential sense is that of finding "room" for human existence, or what Merleau-Ponty calls "properly human relations," in an inhospitable world.

Shelters are of course also open in a (sensibly transcendent) sense Merleau-Ponty frequently intends, one that describes an essential explorability, perceptual ambiguity, and hidden spatiotemporal horizons found in the world and in any perceived object; an openness that sends us "beyond their determinate manifestations, to promise us always 'something more [*autre chose*] to see'" (*PhP*, 348). This promise provides a basis for open communication; it ensures that our interpretations of phenomena cannot in good faith be "the last word," closed off, complete; that there is always something more to be learned, disclosed, or said about them. Dogmatic insistence on a particular meaning: on the one and only use of a public space—for example, that sidewalks are for walking only and not for sitting, or that a cardboard box used when sleeping on that sidewalk is "essentially" litter—would be a form of (regressive) violence in Merleau-Ponty's view.

It is clear that Merleau-Ponty considers bodily subjectivity or perceptual capacities as openings or "folds" in the Flesh of the world. One might, however, still wonder how accommodating his phenomenology is to the existence of natural or constructed "openings" or "room-making" capacities that exist for us (earthly animals) on the side of the world, or the worldly side of Flesh.

While he is aware in *The Visible and the Invisible* of the "atmospheric exis-
tence" of "quale," we also see him questioning whether a particular form
(redness in this case) can be "bound up with a . . . porous [?] configuration"
(132). In an earlier text we see him change his mind about where precisely to
situate worldly openings when he says: "The world, in the full sense of the
word,[18] is not an object, it is wrapped in objective determinations, but also
has fissures and lacunae through which [*par où*] subjectivities become lodged
in it [*se logent en lui*], or, rather, which are subjectivities themselves" (*PhP*,
349).

We can start an inquiry or begin to appreciate a difficulty here by asking:
Why the "rather"? Why can't subjectivity, conceived as a gap or opening of
some interior space, "lodge itself" into worldly lacunae or "porous configu-
rations" with which they are not entirely identified or identifiable? Where,
except in communication with those very "fissures" (whose meaning or *sens*
we are already slipped into), would we get that sense of being (or needing to
be) sheltered—as differentiated from being stifled, suffocated, abandoned,
or over-exposed? This sense seems to be as important phenomenologically
as the sense of being "enveloped" or surrounded. The situation of sheltering
space relative to embodied flesh seems to me to occupy some area between
juxtaposition (too far apart to protect) and envelopment (too close for com-
fort). The worldly room the first part of Merleau-Ponty's sentence begins to
hollow out, so embodied or perceptual subjectivity can lodge (or put itself
up into), is filled back in by the end of the sentence. "Openings" remain on
the side of percipient, as differentiated from perceptible, flesh. How/Is it pos-
sible for Flesh to fold back and create openings in the perceptible that are not
entirely on the "side" of subjectivity?

I think Merleau-Ponty had it right the first time. The (phenomenological)
problem I have with his change of mind and subjective rendering of fissures
and gaps, even apparently in his later work with its notions of *l'écart* and de-
hiscence, is that shelters open or invite us into *their* interiors, into the safety
or personal enjoyment of space that they predefine or circumscribe for us.
Body-objects can lodge in worldly crevices, of course, and subjectivities can
"slip" (invisible meanings or by way of invisible meanings) into "the world."
I am trying to find (and not finding in Merleau-Ponty) something different:
A worldly spatial[19] interior that is not, although it may be "related" to our
own, necessarily of our own "making." Sheltering interiors p/reserve space
for us, for our p/reservation, for our be-ing to be t/here, open to a world we
are in or of but must still keep "at bay." There is (some) room-making aspect

that is always already there, before we are, to "slip" that spatial or other meaning(s) into.

We can think of the hidden dimensions of worldly interior, sheltering spaces as tapping into Merleau-Ponty's ontological understanding of pure depth or dark space, described in the *Phenomenology* as precession/recession. That initially orienting space, the space that is always already there and the grounding of perceived depth in Merleau-Ponty, is a sense of shelter that may be related to our sensing of need for private hiding places but not the sheltering sense of space as worldly interior I would also like to find but do not sense in his philosophy. This interior space is not just dark depth or the phenomenological background of a figure, but the provision of an accommodating receptivity, a hospitable vacancy or protective space where we may let down our guard; space where we may be or feel ourselves at home. Psychoanalysis has much to say here, of course, but beyond nostalgic yearning for womb-like sheltering, can there be some deeper ontological root for the peculiarity or particularity of its expression in our lives?

One promising ontological root/route to supplement what I regard as a deficiency in Merleau-Ponty's thought about space may be Heidegger's notion of the "ab-ground," a dynamic of retreat whose "open" "is not, like groundlessness, the no to every ground but rather the yes to the ground in its hidden expanse and remoteness."[20] As a lodging or context for space and time, the "originary onefold . . . that lets them go apart in their separateness," and "a 'not' that belongs to being itself," Heidegger's ab-ground is not an abyss or nonground because it stays away.[21] "A ground that stays away and in staying away somehow is."[22]

"As staying away of ground ["of letting be unfulfilled; letting be empty"], ab-ground is the primary clearing for what is open as 'emptiness.'" Empty space is second-order for Heidegger; the "being," so to speak, of neglect or desertion; "not a mere emptiness of not-being-occupied, but rather . . . the fulfilled distress of the abandonment by being, but this already shift into what is open and thereby related to the uniqueness of be-ing and its inexhaustibility."[23]

Related to the ab-ground in Heidegger's ontology is his own notion of "sheltering" with resonances of a sense of seclusion as well as (and particularly in its mode of preserving or "caring for") the sense "of a 'keeping' that protects and lets be what it keeps."[24] Translators of this later work of Heidegger's note the critically important but "subtle difference" and "phenomenological kinship" between "*bergen* as sheltering-preserving and *verbergen*

as sheltering-concealing."[25] "In German, 'sheltering,' *Bergung*, has the sense of 'rescuing' and 'bringing something to safety' into a secure and possibly also concealed place."[26]

Care, for Heidegger, as a basic trait is not a "capacity of the soul" or "one 'attunement' or 'attitude' among others," but a fundamental attunement or receptivity, something like "providing for" or taking care of.[27] Heidegger speaks of "Reservedness" (*Verhaltenheit*) as "the ground for care." Reservedness, the creative sustaining in ab-ground, is also related to concealment, or self-concealment, a fundamental trait of be-ing; the mysterious sense of our coming uniquely to be-ing and passing away. Exposure is ultimately exposure to death, to the passing and passing away of time, so time must be implicated in any "deep" or ontological sense of sheltering space. If "be-ing in its temporality hides itself, so to speak, behind the presence of things,"[28] we might add, to the Heraclitean statement "Nature loves to hide," the Heideggerian proviso: the truth of its passing away from itself.

The *sens* of any embodied life extends beyond its natural bodily bounds, even beyond its own life. Merleau-Ponty describes this latter sense as "the feeling of my contingency, the anxiety of being transcended [*dépassé*] such that, even if I do not think of death, I still live within an atmosphere of death in general, there is something of an essence of death that is always on the horizon of my thoughts" (*PhP*, 382). By "keeping" our bodily be-ing "open" or in existence, shelters shelter our mortality as well as our humanity, as the "hidden" nature of consciousness comes mysteriously into be-ing, in creative expressions and embodiments of truth, the historical life of the mind.

"Inceptively, creating and preserving [two modes of sheltering] are not something human subjects do. They occur . . . through a fundamental attunement in which humans respond to . . . a call which is heard *as* creating or preserving occur."[29] As a protective space of safekeeping, particularly for the emergent or inceptual,[30] sheltering space is receptive and evocative, an emotional grounding or *protective medium*, "the sheltered atmosphere of the parental home" (*PhP*, 346), that calls pregnant embodiment or maternal space to mind. Merleau-Ponty's citation of Melanie Klein describes it: the mother not as an individual, "but a category (a Mama-ness, Mamaité)," a re-source that appears on the side of the world (*N*, 279).

While pregnant or maternal embodiment may exemplify protective or sheltering space,[31] all bodies are shelters of sorts, delimiting and opening a particular time-space,[32] and safeguarding a certain degree of privacy or space to oneself, a psychophysical sense of "keeping" [some sense of one's self

alive] to our selves. Genuinely empathic relations do not, in my view, deprive us of this space.

To be sheltered is to feel secure about one's belonging (and one's valuable and personal possessions belonging) somewhere. Room is made, especially reserved. We (and they) are "accommodated." Because of the memories hidden away in them, parts of our identity are embedded, or stored, in our belongings. Deprived of keepsake reminders of people we have known and mementos of where and who we've been, we lose a certain touch with ourselves.

Homeless women who are labeled or marked out as "bag ladies" exist only because safe storage spaces for their possessions may not. Dealing with the contents of bags of belongings (the number inversely proportional to the amount of time one is homeless) and the patronizing amusement of others concerning one's protectiveness over them, is part and parcel of living in a homeless shelter.[33] Without a safe place and adequate room to store especially meaningful or memorable belongings, including important documents like birth certificates used to establish legal rights, one's existence is reduced. "To lose one's stuff, or to have to jettison some of it, was to lose connections to one's past, and even the past itself."[34]

Shelters are chiasmatically "in-between" spaces. *Intentional* blind spots. Materially, they have the capacity to serve as a second skin, intermingling with by covering our own to furnish it with an extra layer of resistance against dangerous or destructive "outside" elements and unwanted intrusions into personal space. As Bachelard noted, we "take" to cover. Clothing, as artificial skin, is another sort of shelter. Modesty, as an expression of individual or bashful reserve, as a "keeping back" or "keeping from view," is another movement of withdrawal. Like "Reservedness," with its connotations of shyness, modesty may also be related to a grounding of Care.

Modesty has, in Merleau-Ponty's view, a metaphysical significance; it "concerns man [sic] as consciousness and as free" (*PhP*, 170). "Only men see that they are nude" (*SB*, 174). A chameleon's skin is its own hiding place, whereas blushing or burning sensations in ours call us out, draw social/ethical attention to our selves, to our "reserves" of bashfulness or embarrassments. "Man does not ordinarily show his body, and, when he does, it is either nervously or with the intention to fascinate." Shame and immodesty express, for Merleau-Ponty, a bodily ambiguity, "the [master-slave] dialectic of the plurality of consciousnesses." "To say that I have a body is . . . a way of saying that I can be seen as an object and that I seek to be seen as a subject" (*PhP*, 170).

However, modesty may mean something more for Merleau-Ponty than it does, for example, for Sartre, who claims in *Being and Nothingness* that modesty symbolizes "our defenseless state as objects" and that the point of clothing is "to hide one's object state."[35] We are, in Merleau-Ponty's view, intrinsically relational; "My life has a social atmosphere just as it has a flavor of mortality" (*PhP*, 382). It is precisely because we are so intimately and intercorporeally interwoven with the flesh of others through perceptual experience that others, who play a role in our own self-constitution,[36] may be experienced as "overwhelmingly proximate"—displacing us in our own self-regard, which is dependent, to a certain extent, on their view of us. Hence the need, in Merleau-Ponty's view, for "keeping" to ourselves or for keeping (ourselves) under wraps. Our concerns with bodily privacy, as well as nervousness with sex, do not explain "embarrassments and anxieties of human behavior," since these concerns contain them already (170).

In *Hiddenness and Alterity*, James Mensch reflects on the privacy of flesh, "our selfhood in its nonsubstitutable, irreplaceable character," and clothing as "a boundary of the private, marking what should be seen and what kept private. This boundary marks one's place."[37] Forced nakedness violates this boundary (and bodily shame as the "guardian of the private"), displacing "the other in the most literal sense by abolishing the most intimate sense of his or her place."[38] This most intimate sense of one's place is precisely what sheltering fundamentally p/reserves—and what we can be forced "out" of; that is, our innermost sense of belonging, within our "own" skin. At the limit, one might experience this "as the other making me homeless."[39]

Mensch exposes the dislocations of forced nakedness, rape, and intentional shaming as forms of state violence,[40] whose "result is the explicit, conscious denial of that empathy by which we recognize one another as embodied subjects."[41] I would add that such dislocations can take the form of violent "modesty squads" as well, where standards of conduct and dress are forced or imposed on unwilling "others."[42]

Unlike many of our public actions, the performance of certain basic bodily functions is irredeemably private. Because bodily particularity, the "flesh that incarnates me," is unspeakable, nonsubstitutable, and "essentially hidden," "it is difficult to describe its violation." "In shame I experience the internalized other as displacing me in my regard of myself. Before him, I am . . . displaced from the society whose witness he is."[43]

In a film inspired by the life story of Chris Gardner, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, we witness this sort of displacement. The film, with Will Smith and

his own son in the starring roles, focuses on Gardner's successful pursuit of his dream of becoming a stockbroker at the same time he and his son were homeless. The most poignant scene in the movie for me is his seeking refuge with his young son in a public bathroom. Evicted from their apartment, with no safe place to go to sleep that evening, the scene commences with father and son sitting on a bench in a desolate subway station. Gardner/Smith strikes up a game with his son, where they pretend to "see" dinosaurs surrounding them and imagine themselves as cavemen needing to go in "search" of a sheltering "cave."

The "dinosaurs," which are everywhere, can be read as the invisible threats to the existence of people who are homeless and also as marking out a time frame before "civilized society." They wind up in a bathroom (another state of nature reminder), a room equipped with what is lacking in the lives of many if not most homeless people: a lock, a focal point for both the camera and Gardner's memoir, and a relatively private space to carry out private bodily functions. As they settle into the individual bathroom, using it as a room to sleep in for the night, the outside "dinosaurs" turn real, in the form of violent banging on the door. T/his moving situation, from sitting on a bench in San Francisco's BART station to the floor of one of its public bathrooms, is the/his low point in the movie. It is where, like the banging on the door, the fact that he is homeless really "hits" home/him; there really is no place else for him and his son to stay the night, to experience bodily privacy. Father and son *keep* very quiet; the knocking stops. Silent tears flow down his face as his son falls to sleep on his lap.[44] His lack of voice and his suffering are palpable as he holes up there for the night.

The film version of this scene differs somewhat from Gardner's own account.[45] He did make up a game for his son, but it was "called 'Shhh'—I tell him that no matter how loud someone knocks on the door, the object is not to say a word. No matter what." They must pretend they are not really there,[46] as we who witness individuals who are homeless so often do, turning a blind eye to their plight. (A young homeless woman observes: "We're invisible. You ever watch anybody watch a homeless person and they don't see them?"[47]) Locked out of an apartment and into hiding in a public bathroom on a screen in a public movie theater, private bodily aspects of the lives of people who are homeless are forced into public view, where they are, and where they are perceived and felt on the part of the audience-witnesses as being, out of place.

The public toilet scene in the film version of Gardner's life makes use of a stereotypical alignment of homelessness with abject imagery—stench,

filth, and bodily waste products. (This differs from and covers up, by the way, Gardner's appreciative focus on that space in his memoir as "needed shelter" that he used as a rest room and a place to wash up.) As Merleau-Ponty understood quite well, stereotypes and oppositional dichotomies are hiding places, too, disguising complex material realities. "Homelessness is marked by a doubleness; a recurring set of oppositions. . . . The most typical opposition is between a vision of the homeless as dangerously and profanely free (justifying criminalization) and a vision of the homeless as sacralized, helpless sufferers (justifying shelter)"—dangerous outsiders or pathetically disaffiliated; free-spirited or helpless.[48]

Merleau-Ponty often related the perceptual to the political.[49] Perceptual *in*stabilities are fundamental to what he calls "properly human" or intersubjective relationships. As Jorella Andrews has argued, while his views of visual perception help us to understand objectifying and denigrating gazes as enactments of a refusal to see, his claim that visual perception does not fix in place or objectify (*PhP*, 378–79) did not engage very much with the issue that "much that is available to sight has, in effect, *already been* fixed in place for us" through reductive representational and authoritarian strategies.[50]

There are no shortages of these strategies with respect to homeless populations and individuals, concealing the complexity and diversity of their circumstances, histories, activities, and differential treatment.[51] There are definitional exclusions, of the homeless from the public or disembodied "citizenry," for example, facilitating views of the homeless as usurpers of public space and underwriting violent forms of exclusion in the name of "the public's interest."[52] Places with "fixed" meanings or "proper" functions are easier to police, making it possible to ban behaviors and activities that do not correspond to them. Together with "quality of life" (!) offenses, which criminalize the performance of bodily private behaviors in public ("cities crack down on sleeping and sharing food in public"[53]), and technologies designed to repel them (sprinklers to prevent sleeping, but no water to wash with; "ornate enclosures to protect restaurant garbage"), "there is no place in the contemporary urban landscape for the homeless to *be*."[54] They appear paradoxically with and without a place, "positioned simultaneously as excluded and present."[55]

The symbolic force of public or dominant interpretations of "proper" conduct and use of public spaces may be legally enforceable. Violence can be installed on the "backbone" of order in a legal framework or system of rules (against "disorderly" and out-of-place conduct, for instance) that may

be difficult to perceive *as* a form of violence. In other words, *its* offensiveness may be masked. Meanwhile, homeless individuals, particularly in urban settings, who may be forced to violate social norms concerning bodily privacy, conduct, control, and appearance (because they lack the means or have been locked out of places that would allow them to adapt to them), may be shunned and ostracized for *their* violation, their "offensiveness."

With their lack of privacy and strictly enforced regimentation of behavior, some places where homeless and other individuals seeking emergency shelter are "warehoused" may be compared to prisons or juvenile detention centers. Unlike these disciplinary institutions, however, these shelters "rely on a threat of expulsion as the ultimate sanction."[56]

Even if physically sheltered for the evening, the simultaneously tedious and stressful dilemma of "how to pass the time without any space" may re-emerge come morning.[57] Raymond, a homeless individual reflecting on his situation for an oral history on street life, observes: "The main fact of being homeless is being displaced. I'm a displaced person. I don't really live here, in this shelter. This—how do you say, this level of existence is not my habitat. It's a nonexistence. I don't really live anywhere."[58]

The sense of not really living because not really lodged[59] may be related not only to the loss of a place to be, but also to the loss of a place to "be yourself"—the loss of an "escape valve" for relief of tensions created through the burden of social adaptations.[60] This burden can be particularly onerous when one must adapt not just socially but also physically to places designed to exclude you.

Places and bodies intertwine in Merleau-Ponty's view, and cultural practices leave their mark on the movements and historical-social life of the body. In this context, Samira Kawash's depiction of homelessness as a specific mode of embodiment, "a contingent condition that occludes socially defined particularities and distinctive individual identities," is especially apt and interesting.[61]

Kawash illustrates her view of homeless embodiment through an analysis of the uniform response of subway riders to a homeless person, curled up in a corner, asleep on "their" train. Calling attention to the specific mode of embodiment and its constrained emplacement, the way "the body as homeless . . . inhabits the car: sleeping, cramped and dirty . . . figured in advance by its exclusion from other places," she suggests that "places made by the homeless may not challenge their status as excluded but rather come to function as the sign and embodiment of exclusion."[62]

Underscoring the wide berth left around the sleeper and the way the sub-way riders cringe, veer, and studiously look away, she says it is "as though as a body, they have joined to close ranks" against this "lone body" who is "immobile, absolutely nonthreatening."[63] These movements of withdrawal, a reaction to "the pressure of its presence" produced by its being perceptibly and forcibly "squeezed out" of other places, re-creates and reinforces the so-cial distance between the housed and the homeless. In Kawash's analysis, by the way homelessness unmasks hidden processes of violence and exclusions lodged in their lives, bodies of homeless individuals threaten to expose "the violent underside of public safety and security" and "the public to its own perpetual violence."[64]

Stepping back and taking up a defensive position vis à vis homeless in-dividuals, particularly when they are sleeping and "absolutely nonthreat-ening," what else can I be defending against? A threat to the use of public space? Even when there are plenty of other seats on the subway or in a public library and room enough in parks or on sidewalks for us to share the space? Perhaps, as I believe Merleau-Ponty might say about these kinds of cases, I am defending against the fearsome possibility of slipping into the same situa-tion. For if, indeed and as Kawash contends,[65] what is really being threatened or challenged in this instance is the sense of the disembodied public citizen as the phantom nature of a unified public sphere is exposed,[66] then I (myself) am (also) really endangered, vulnerable to violence. I might assume this de-fensive posture, then, in an attempt to establish myself at some safe remove from that position of being homeless because on some level I recognize in another's tenuous situation the precarious nature of my own; that I, too, may be deprived of my comfortable place in society, a place where I "fit in" and believe I inhabit "by right."

> At the very heart of my perspective, I realize that my private world is already being used . . . and that the other's place in it is already prepared, because I find other historical situations to be occupiable by me. . . . Neither in private nor in public history is the formula of these relations "either him or me," the alternative of solipsism or pure abnegation, because these relationships are no longer the encounter of two For-Itselfs but are the meshing of two experiences, which, without ever coinciding, belong to a single world. (*AD*, 199–200)

Envelopment means an envelopment of perspectives and the possibility of their "linking" together, even if this possibility is seen only "out of the corner" of one's eye, even if the possibility is only "remote." Given the meshing of experiences fleshed out in Merleau-Ponty's notion of chiasmic intertwining, we can offer another interpretation of what might be happening on that subway. In their coordinated movements of withdrawal, the riders may not be closing ranks against the sleeper, so much as they may be expressing, in their collective creation of a wide "berth" around him, precisely what his cramped body needs: more room to spread out, to sleep more comfortably.

We save, reserve, or *set* places for one another throughout the day all the time, on buses, in lines, at tables. Making room in a crowded elevator for one additional person to enter is another instance of Merleau-Ponty's chiasmic intertwining in action: someone's bodily intention to enter the space is nonthetically "grasped" or apprehended in the overlapping and collective makeshift movements on the part of others who settle themselves, temporarily, into different spots so as to create more space. We make room for what we value. By creating more space in the elevator, we "signify the value of the person to be a worthy recipient of that shared space. We particularize the anonymous and dispersed space for him or her and it becomes a place ready for his or her presence."[67]

Social space is *not*, for Merleau-Ponty, a substantial or harmonious "unity that must be protected from conflict, heterogeneity, and particularity."[68] His view of democratic pluralism could therefore accommodate the existence of alternative dwelling places like tents in cities or other creative living arrangements for those in need of some personal private living place. How deeply felt and organic a need the need for shelter is can perhaps best be appreciated and illustrated by Merleau-Ponty's discussion of comparisons between "the physiological activity of tissue repair [in the formation of scar tissue] and the behavioral activity of the animal that repairs its dwelling" (*N*, 179).

"To understand and judge a society one has to penetrate its basic structure to the human bond upon which it is built" (*HT*, xiv). This human bond, a commitment to responsible action, humane contact and solicitous connectedness to others, is not simply a matter of good intentions or reducible to "a showing of compassion" in Merleau-Ponty's view.[69] Good intentions do not "soften the cement under fragile bones,"[70] and "there is more to dealing with homelessness than empathy . . . blankets, not understanding, take the edge off the chill under a highway bridge."[71]

Sheltering space as a covering or padding of protection appears in the slang expression of a residential "pad" and in the description of access to health and other forms of care as a type of "coverage." I believe that we are attuned sometimes, through bodily moods and relations, to worldly "reserves" of sheltering spaces. With its affinities to a sheltering p/reservedness that lets be while keeping itself under wraps, Heidegger's ab-ground seems to me very well suited to cover this particular sense of sheltering. His notion of a hidden grounding of care or nurturance that *is* only by staying away and that is, paradoxically, exposed only in being covered by nothing but empty space, partly addresses Merleau-Ponty's criticism that we need the "ground" of worldly experience "in order to think nothingness in any way whatever" (*VI*, 162).[72] As the primary clearing ground for moments when the affective sense of our enjoyment of a hospitable vacancy is removed or withdrawn—exposing the "fulfilled distress" of being abandoned—Heidegger's ab-ground ontology provides deep albeit obscure sense for feelings of dereliction, of being stranded without aid, or of "slipping" and falling through the cracks; times when that sheltering "wall" or supportive ground gives way.[73]

Merleau-Ponty's sense of (a) spatial reservation is built into his notion of chiasmic overlapping, the (necessarily insensible) space between the sensing and the sensible where "dehiscence," openings of perceptions, take place on the bodily side of Flesh. As the "bonding agent" between our embodied relatedness to the world and one another at the heart of his Flesh ontology, this imperceptible overlap underpins our obligations toward one another. Because this binding and these relations are so closely knit in Merleau-Ponty's ontology, they can help make sense, not only of the wounding of families and individuals left stranded and suffering after events such as Hurricane Katrina, but also of the tearing of the social fabric that also takes place. In that breach of faith before the sudden awareness that our social "safety net" is nonexistent or failing to protect us, the security "blanket" of belonging is exposed as an illusion.[74]

Tucked away and out of sight in its more extreme and violent versions, poverty places barriers everywhere to a sense of belonging anywhere, pushing and driving people out and farther away from one another and from social and material supports necessary for freedom to flourish. Masked behind liberal illusions and "disguises with the name of misfortune," one can grow accustomed to violence and its institutionalization (*HT*, xlv, 107). Institutionalized homelessness leaves one with a "right" but few resources to care for oneself.[75] If, as

Merleau-Ponty observed, a criterion for social action is "the 'becoming-true of society'" (*AD*, 204), it may be, as he says, that "a regime which acknowledges its violence might have in it more genuine humanity" than one that is nominally liberal but "oppressive in reality" (*HT*, xiv–xv).

"The curse of politics is precisely that it must translate values into the order of facts" (*HT*, xxxv). Sheltering spaces provide an intimate sense of safety, a sense of protection and belonging, relief and relaxation. If we value bodily privacy, a *choice* of solitude and its connection to personal identity and autonomy, then we ought to reserve sheltering spaces for it to take place.[76]

NOTES

1. Along with our own "home bases," there are museums that shelter art and history; emergency shelters—for men, women, children, families, animals, homeless persons, and persons displaced by political, economic, and natural disasters; refugee and homeless encampments, tent cities. There are tax shelters and legal loopholes.

2. I have in mind here some combination of Sara Ruddick's notion of maternal in *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); and Luce Irigaray's notion of being or remaining two in *To Be Two* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 11, where each safeguards life "for him or herself and for the other. . . . Distanced by our difference, but present to each other." Also see Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notes (*N*, 279) on Melanie Klein's notion of the mother as a category, "mamaness," discussed below.

3. Controversies over full-body veiling seem relevant here. Obviously, in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of ambiguity there could be no one view of veiling, and to insist on one would be oppressive. Nevertheless, one way to view full-body veiling is as an isolating mode of dress, not only maintaining personal privacy by preventing veiled women's bodies and faces from being seen, but also, in blocking their view and covering up the full range of their sight, preventing them from seeing as well. Forced nakedness (discussed below), as well as forced veiling, may both have oppressive dimensions in common, involving a certain displacement of one's bodily subjectivity and its perceptual-communicative abilities. A different view of course might emphasize the value of veiling in providing a desired and desirable form of privacy and safety in public as well as a sense of belonging through the garment to a certain community with its own symbolic interworld and modes of expression. Alia Al-Saji has worked on the issue of Western perceptions and representations of veiled Muslim women from a Merleau-Pontian perspective. See Al-Saji, "The Racialization of Muslim Veils: A Philosophical Analysis," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 36, no. 8 (October 2010): 875–902.

4. Simone de Beauvoir, *Pyrrhus and Cineas*, trans. Mary Beth Timmerman, in *Simone de Beauvoir: Philosophical Writings*, ed. Margaret A. Simons (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 96.

5. Quoted in Nicolai Ouroussoff, "Designed to Help Uplift the Poor," *New York Times*, February 21, 2010, AR 31.

6. A compelling argument for existential rights is made by Patricia A. Murphy, "The Rights of the Homeless: An Examination of the Phenomenology of Place," in *The Ethics of Homelessness: Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. G. John M. Abbarno (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 55–61.

7. The painter Maurice de Vlaminck, quoted in Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 91.

8. Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, 91.

9. "We must criticize the assimilation of the notion of life to the notion of the pursuit of utility, or of an intentional purpose. The form of the animal is not the manifestation of a finality, but rather of an existential value of manifestation, of presentation" (*N*, 188).

10. Merleau-Ponty borrows this expression from Ludwig Binswanger, "Über Psychotherapie," *Nervenarzt* 8 (1935): 182.

11. *SB*, 174. "The famous preservation instinct, which probably appears in man only in case of illness or fatigue, has been abused. The healthy man proposes to live . . . and not to preserve himself" (*SB*, 245n97). Here we have a sense of "live" at play other than the biological.

12. "What mimicry seems to establish is that behavior can be defined only by a perceptual relation and that Being cannot be defined outside of perceived being" (*N*, 189).

13. One might think here of Tyler Clementi, a first-year gay student at Rutgers, who took his own life after his roommate used a webcam in their dorm room to spy on him kissing another male and then invited other people to watch. William Glaberson, "Rutgers Verdict Repudiates Notion of Youth as Defense," *New York Times*, March 18, 2012, A20.

14. Jed Horne, *Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City* (New York: Random House, 2006), 57.

15. Murphy, "Rights of the Homeless," 60–61.

16. The Cambridge Police Report's description of Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. at the time of his arrest on July 16, 2009. The case was dropped. Bonnie Rochman, "The Gates Case: When Disorderly Conduct Is a Cop's Judgment Call," *Time*, July 25, 2009, http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1912777,00.html.

17. I thank Robert Fleischman for calling my attention to this expression in the work of the British psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott, *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965).

18. *Flesh* as an "element" of Being tries to capture this full sense, "world" as subject-object.

19. This qualification is necessary to distinguish what I am seeking from temporal openings or presencing.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 271.

21. Ibid., 264, 271.

22. Ibid., xxxi.

23. Ibid., 265, 266. This is analogous to the way that errancy and mystery both occur together in his view; the former as a secondary and the latter as an original mode of concealment. See Daniela Vallega-Neu, *The Bodily Dimension in Thinking* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 96.

24. Ibid., 90. Shelter has two modes: creating, concerning activities of production; and preserving, "modes of being in which we attend to what is already there; for instance, listening is a major form of preservation" (94). Also see note 3 on page 81 and page 96 of Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy: An Introduction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

25. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, xxxii.

26. Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Contributions*, 92.

27. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 25.

28. Vallega-Neu, *Bodily Dimension*, 87.

29. Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Contributions*, 96.

30. Cf. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 132: "The shelteredness of the inceptual must be preserved above all." In this book, Heidegger refers readers to his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" for more on his notion of sheltering (272).

31. Merleau-Ponty's and Heidegger's appropriation of female imagery and embodiment have been well discussed, particularly by Luce Irigaray.

32. Vallega-Neu, *Bodily Dimension*, 95. Vallega-Neu, whose discerning commentary I am indebted to in this section, discusses differences in Merleau-Ponty's and Heidegger's conceptions of embodiment: "In both cases bodily being is thought as an opening, articulating event, although in different ways. A significant difference is found in that fact that Merleau-Ponty arrives at the bodily dimension of being through an analysis of perception, whereas in Heidegger we arrive at it through the disclosure power of an attunement to the withdrawing aspect of being. Further, Merleau-Ponty's focus always remains on the plentitude of being/s, and the negativity of being is thought only as passage, as an invisible that belongs to the visible, whereas in Heidegger the withdrawal of abysmal [ab-ground] opening of be-ing functions like an origin out of which a world and earth disclose" (100).

33. Elliot Liebow, *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 33–34.

34. Ibid., 34.

35. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).

36. "The self's vulnerability [to exposure] is something more than that of a pure gaze that can be undone by the gaze of another. Its source is the intimacy of the other—that is, his being inherent in my self-constitution. . . . Given the intersubjective nature of my selfhood, this is an intimacy that I cannot evade." James R. Mensch, *Hiddenness and Alterity: Philosophical and Literary Sightings of the Unseen* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 113, 112.

37. Ibid., 114.

38. In Mensch's view, bodily shame is distinguished from and hidden behind social or conventional shame (ibid., 113–14).

39. Ibid., 111.

40. "By exposing the flesh of the unwilling other, those in power indicate that the other's shame means nothing. They provoke it precisely NOT to recognize it" (ibid., 114).

41. Ibid., 114. He develops Merleau-Ponty's and Husserl's notion of the fluctuations of reciprocity expressed in touched and touching hands to get at the "empathy underlying a reciprocal sense of shame": "the same sort of return ["a similar sort of back and forth"] can occur in shame. I feel from within the other's regard of me" (111).

42. These violent "squads" are depicted in a review of the Israeli film *Eyes Wide Open*, written by Marev Doster. See A. O. Scott, "Passion and Identity Crisis in a Pious Community," *New York Times*, February 5, 2010.

43. Mensch, *Hiddenness and Alterity*, 111.

44. Chris Gardner, *The Pursuit of Happyness* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006). Throughout their ordeal the boy is sheltered by his father, who stands between him and the harm that might come to children who are not so protected. Gardner's memoir illustrates both sheltering space and the "fulfilled distress" of abandonment through a scene where Gardner observes his own father, who abandoned him as a child, walking with Gardner's own son as a toddler. The image of his father holding his son's "little fingers protectively, proudly, . . . hurt like hell"—stirring up a "reservoir that stored all those years of abandonment. *How come that couldn't have been me? How come I never got a chance to do that?*" (190–91). This is also an example of what Merleau-Ponty calls the "envelopment of perspectives," discussed below.

45. Although Gardner states that he would rather be "anywhere else but in that BART-station bathroom," he nonetheless did consider that public facility "a blessed mercy . . . during the darkest part of homelessness" (*Pursuit of Happyness*, 245). "As soon as we're in there I realize that we don't have to leave immediately. We can rest, wash up, take our time, even sleep" (244).

46. This emphasizes the hidden aspects of homelessness generally and Gardner's specifically. The scene is also a reflection or reversal of the fact of his "hiding" his homelessness in his "outside" life as he studies to become a stockbroker.

47. She thinks this is consciously deciding not to look. She goes on: "You have people who volunteer, they genuinely want to help, but they look at you differently than they would one of their friends. I don't think they do it consciously." Quoted in Michael Rowe, *Crossing the Border: Encounters between Homeless People and Outreach Workers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 44.

48. Feldman also points out how these oppositions underlie "policy polarities between punishment and sanctuary." Leonard C. Feldman, *Citizens without Shelter: Homelessness, Democracy, and Political Exclusion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 7–14.

49. Politically, Merleau-Ponty admired Weber's "new" liberalism, which "does not try to avoid confronting" adversaries, and, in order to refute them, relies only upon their own contradictions and upon discussions which expose these" (*AD*, 26). See Rosalyn Deutsche's *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996); and Samira Kawash, "The Homeless Body," *Public Culture* 10, no. 2 (1998): 319–39, for brilliant work in exposing contradictions related to issues regarding homelessness.

50. Jorella Andrews, "Vision, Violence, and the Other: A Merleau-Pontean Ethics," in *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Dorothea E. Olkowski and Gail Weiss (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 169–70.

51. Barbara Ehrenreich observes in her August 9, 2009, *New York Times* op-ed, "Is It Now a Crime to Be Poor?": "By far the most reliable way to be criminalized by poverty is to have the wrong-color skin" (WK9).

52. A definitional exclusion also makes it possible, as Deutsche noted, to equate the protection of public space "with evicting homeless people from city parks" (*Evictions*, 276).

53. Ehrenreich, "Is It Now a Crime," WK9.

54. Kawash, "Homeless Body," 326.

55. Ibid., 329.

56. Feldman, *Citizens without Shelter*, 97–98.

57. Kawash, "Homeless Body," 328; cf. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*: "Only when something extant is held onto and fixed does the flow of time that flows by the extant arise, only then does the 'space' that encompasses the extant arise" (267).

58. Steven VanderStaay, *Street Lives: An Oral History of Homeless Americans* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1992), 70. Quoted in Kawash, "Homeless Body," 328.

59. In French, to live and to lodge are both expressed by the same word (*loger*); the singularity of our life and its "styling" can be thought as a finite lodging in time.

60. Shyli Karin-Frank, "Homelessness, the Right to Privacy, and the Obligation to Provide a Home," in Abbarno, *Ethics of Homelessness*, 206.

61. Kawash, "Homeless Body," 324.

62. Ibid., 336.

63. Ibid., 319–20.

64. The phrase continues, "of containment, constriction, and compression that seek not simply to exclude or control the homeless but rather to efface their presence altogether" (ibid., 330).

65. Kawash interprets the "closing of ranks" as an attempt "to close the circle of the social," that is, to maintain the image of an impossibly unitary, harmonious, and homogeneous society.

66. See Bruce Robbins, ed., *The Phantom Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

67. Murphy, "Rights of the Homeless," 58.

68. Quotation from Kawash, "Homeless Body," 323.

69. Discussing the French experience during the war with "rationing, bread lines and poverty," Merleau-Ponty talks about how the Americans gawked at impoverished French: "Some of the American soldiers faced with the spectacle of our sordid life did not show any compassion, but a kind of contempt and shock, probably imagining that no one who has not sinned greatly can be so miserable. . . . By the same token, among many continentals there is a kind of sympathy for those people who go hungry and have experienced need. But appeals to feelings don't contribute much or go very far in answering the question of whether 'Western humanism' or 'humanistic socialism' is 'not just another name for imperialist politics'" (*HT*, 170–71).

70. Lisa Ferrill, *A Far Cry from Home: Life in a Shelter for Homeless Women* (Chicago: Noble Press, 1991), 163.

71. Rowe, *Crossing the Border*, 101.

72. It may be worth noting here that "grounds," as Irigaray in particular has helped us appreciate, may not be so solid; they may also be fluid, amniotic, atmospheric.

73. Although my articulation of sheltering space as a worldly and interior caring capacity touches on them, the philosophical complexities of nothingness or negativity are beyond the scope of this paper. For a discussion of Merleau-Ponty's notes on Heidegger's example of "where" the "is" of the wall behind him is, see Jacques Taminiaux, "Was Merleau-Ponty on the Way from Husserl to Heidegger?" *Chiasmi International* 11 (2009): 28.

74. Cf. Merleau-Ponty's description of a sense of being "left off-balance" when respect or "a loyal friendship that I no longer even noticed" is withdrawn (*PhP*, 335).

His references in this section are to value phenomena and Max Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 140, 149–50.

75. As Lisa Ferrill so clearly puts it, needy adults are "locked out of society, by society" (*Far Cry from Home*, 36).

76. I wish to thank the editors of this collection and my colleague, Bryan Lueck, for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this essay.

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DIMENSIONS OF THE FLESH IN A CASE OF TWINS WITH
WHICH I AM FAMILIAR: ACTUALIZING THE POTENTIAL FOR
SHARED INTENTIONAL SPACE

Nancy A. Barta-Smith

> The shared space instantiated by mirror neurons simply
> blends the interactive individuals within a shared implicit se-
> mantic content. The self-other identity parallels the self-other
> dichotomy.
>
> —Gallese

> Before others are or can be subjected to my conditions of pos-
> sibility and reconstructed in my image, they must already exist
> as outlines, deviations, and variants of a single Vision in which
> I too participate. For they are not fictions with which I might
> people my desert—offspring of my spirit and forever unac-
> tualized possibilities—but my twins or the flesh of my flesh.
> Certainly I do not live their life; they are definitively absent
> from me and I from them. But that distance becomes a strange
> proximity as soon as one comes back to the perceptible world.
>
> —Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*

IMITATION AND THE "PROBLEM" OF "ADUALISM"

Below I develop a phenomenology of the experience of a set of identical twins
as a case study through which to explore the implications of shared space and
argue that such an appreciation of spatial copresence is obscured in more re-
cent lines of thought regarding Merleau-Ponty's work that privilege temporal/
process frameworks (defined by desire, distance, and movement), in contrast to
depth and spatial proximity (implied by affect, sensation, and perception).[1] My
argument has been influenced not only by Merleau-Ponty's work, but by recon-
sideration of Jean Piaget's developmental psychology by comparative biolo-
gists, and by George Lakoff's recent discussion of the biology of empathy and

prospects for a progressive moral and political philosophy framed on a model of nurturance based on the capacity to empathize—to feel with others and to act on that feeling.[2] Elsewhere, Lakoff describes what he considers a "new Enlightenment" or a "new consciousness."[3] While I by no means think such a consciousness is new, Lakoff explains how "framing" influences the power of arguments in moral and political thought. My concern is that reframing of Merleau-Ponty's insights obscures important spatial implications of his work with which my experience as an identical twin profoundly resonates and, without which, the words of his epigraph above will not be taken seriously—hampering the potential for mutual flourishing.[4]

To perceptual ways of thinking based in sensation, what solicits our attention must always already be spatially present within range of the body, although that range varies according to which senses are invoked. If my body is my anchor with/in the world of which I am a part, perception and the senses are directed outward implicitly, oblivious of "self." We reexperience this "other fullness" whenever responsiveness is drawn outward affectively away from the solitude of reflective thought or planned action that subordinates the present world to future possibility.[5] We are always placed within a spatial context to which we may attend and respond.

In discussing the chiasm of reversibility in perception and the flesh, in the working notes to *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty notes that "there is passage from the 'For Itself' to the For the Other—In reality there is neither me nor the other as . . . positive subjectivities. There are two caverns, two opennesses, two stages where something will take place. . . . There is not the For Itself and the For the Other. They are each the other side of the other. This is why they incorporate one another: projection-introjection" (263). Although I do not see a Freudian framework as essential to discussing such a capacity, Merleau-Ponty's language gestures toward a bond between subjects that avoids dualism. Imitative action, our first learning, seems to me to be the image of this reciprocity, where action begins responsively, unreflectively, and attentively, attuned to our social and ecological ties.

If by "definitively absent" in the epigraph above, Merleau-Ponty meant to invoke the landscape of categorical thought by which we meet face-to-face only as separate Boolean categories (divided by race, nationality, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.), then "self" and "other" do seem irrevocably distant poles. However, by invoking the way that perception paradoxically opens us up to the proximity of depth and our holistic field of vision, Merleau-Ponty

returns us to the experience of life as it is lived before it becomes Hegelian struggle.[6] We learn independence and individuation—the distinction between subject and object—gradually, and the case of identical twins may be just one situation in which we may learn them less than "definitively." We have thought individual or collective self-assertion essential to democratic values, but such assertion would be less necessary were we more empathetically attuned to the experience of others and less hasty in reducing emotional response to the irrational—anger, lust, or fear. Imitative action becomes a model not for mechanical repetition but for actions that begin outside ourselves and are attentive to world and others—an alternative model for survival to Tennyson's "Nature, red in tooth and claw," which has come to stand for selection processes.[7]

Merleau-Ponty knew that we need not forget our connection to others, one that is at first literally physical and biological through the umbilical bond and the body.[8] For Piaget, systematic imitation "progressed" toward individual goal-directed behavior. He privileged "true imitation" or "deferred" imitation, imitation in the *absence* of a model, because he thought it facilitated discovery of causality, helped to construct object permanence, separated subject from object, subordinated means to ends in concrete and formal operations, and allowed for creative adaptation to new circumstances, thereby separating human action from the mimicry of animal learning.[9] To this way of thinking, imitation in the presence of another was "mere" copying based on visual stimuli. In adulthood social relations were achieved through voluntary consent to rational principles governing social solidarity rather than through similarity.[10]

However, Merleau-Ponty defended the child's perspective. In *The Visible and the Invisible* he asserted that what Piaget called the child's adualism, solipsism, narcissism, or egocentrism (since the child seemed to assume that everyone saw from her own perspective) was named badly. He equated the child's presubjective awareness ("egocentrism") with "monumental life, *Stiftung*, initiation."[11] Merleau-Ponty notes, "It [egocentrism] is a state of lack of differentiation between the exterior world and me. Thus, far from signifying an excess of self consciousness, this concept provides evidence of the absence of self consciousness."[12] A recent article by Emmanuel de Saint Aubert recognizes how Merleau-Ponty situates his philosophy both with and against Piaget's developmental psychology not only in his early work but also in the innovative concept of the reversibility of the flesh in his last days.[13] Ironically, inverting Piaget's theory of development, Merleau-Ponty asserts that

solipsism occurs "to the whole extent that I am a thought, a consciousness," since if "I am compelled to enter into the world only through it," others' thoughts become "but the doubles or the younger sisters of my own," rather than a relation to another. He adds, however, that this model of relationship with another is not the only one, or even most "essential," anticipating recent research and my argument about the lives of twins.[14]

As I discuss below, while Piaget sought to differentiate human from animal behavior, more recently evolutionary and comparative biologists have shown renewed interest in Piaget's discussion of imitation in works such as *Biology and Knowledge*, *Behavior and Evolution*, and *Adaptation and Intelligence* in order to connect humans and animals.[15] In addition, Vittorio Gallese shows how discoveries regarding animal behavior shed positive light on human empathy, invoking terms that also appear in Merleau-Ponty's elaboration of the implicit consciousness that inhabits the body in *La nature*.[16] The latter formulation goes beyond Merleau-Ponty's understanding of virtual space in "An Unpublished Text," where a pointing gesture implies virtuality,[17] to imply that what we attend to becomes present within us.

Rather than lamenting "adualism" as a failure of differentiation, Gallese draws on discovery of mirror neurons to show how both perceived action and imitation of action might expand the horizons of identity. The neurological system constantly breaches the interior/exterior dichotomy. For Gallese, observing action creates an unreflected, shared, "we-centric" space.[18] Perhaps identical twins, constantly in each other's presence because of their similar age and frequent physical proximity, can develop such shared space more freely. I do not believe, however, that this fact precludes its development in others as well. Since such shared space is both neurologically encoded and behaviorally achieved, it is a dimension of shared flesh.

At present we are taught to eschew imitation, to prize originality, and to seek self-actualization. Most trajectories of cognitive development have assumed a "progress" to individuation that makes it seem impossible for the insights of imitative experience to persist in the adult. Because development occurs with the *passage* of time—space becomes reframed as merely points surpassed along time's vector. Helsten notes that research in cognitive linguistics and psychology has investigated how historically we have metaphorized time as "movement in space."[19] But, as Lakoff and Johnson note, metaphors highlight and *hide*.[20] Speaking of movement makes it easy to lose sight of the time and the space of depth, the "piling up, by proliferation, by

encroachment, by promiscuity—a perpetual pregnancy, perpetual parturi-
tion, generativity . . . brute essence and brute existence" that Merleau-Ponty
sees as "the nodes and antinodes of the same ontological vibration" (*VI*,
115). It may seem, especially in the case of misperceptions, that my sense of
space is structured by "anticipations," so that it comes from me,[21] but rather
it arises from my immersion in a world, coexistent with others.

Perhaps it is the case that certain possibilities within the neurological sys-
tem can be developmentally curtailed.[22] But I propose that the case of twins
can be construed as what comparative evolutionary biology would call a
niche construction—a genetic *and epigenetic* (behavioral) adaptation. This
niche construction may have the potential to facilitate mutual flourishing
and preserve, in an individualistic culture, the insights of the child's early
perceptions—as if lying in wait for conditions that would allow the culture
at large to synchronize its behavioral style—in a kind of reverse Baldwin
effect.[23]

THE EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSION OF SHARED INTENTIONAL SPACE

One answer to what it means to be twins is certainly the we-centric inten-
tional space Gallese describes. Though each experience of twins occurs in
a specific time and place, and so cannot be considered normative, I speak as
one whose experience resonates with Gallese's work, since I was raised as
an identical twin before twins were a common occurrence, and before it was
deemed advisable to rear identical twins as separate individuals. I reempha-
size that shared intentional space can be established only through copresence
in physical space.[24] During all the years of childhood, adolescence, and young
adulthood, we shared living quarters and classes, even majoring in the same
subject—immersed in a shared world. We appear juxtaposed in countless
photographs—sunning naked on a shared blanket in infancy; dangling our
legs through the slats of a common crib; standing arm in arm in the drive-
way wearing matching poodle skirts and ponytails; peering into a common
mirror at a double vision of identical girls with bangs and small twin braids
wound at the temples and secured at the crown of the head, or poised behind
the twin birthday cakes (one angel food, one devil) that my grandmother
insisted on making in lieu of the single one she faithfully produced each year,
in the end, for twenty grandchildren.[25] We walked hand in hand or beside

FIGURE 11.1. Mirror images. Photo courtesy of Nancy A. Barta-Smith.

each other to school or while singing songs on the way to piano lessons. We played duets side by side at one, or back-to-back at two, pianos. We danced in recitals to "Me and My Shadow," one in silver and one in black, sequined leotards. My youngest brother would have to drag the old 3-D slides that my mother took on such occasions out of his attic to remember who was real, who mere specter.

In their shared physical space, twins respond through gestures and the body to the rhythms of each other's actions. In fact, our twinness was probably first understood in this patterning of each other's behavior long before we recognized how closely each other's image resembled our own in the mirror. Of course, from an early age others frequently remarked on us collectively, as they do to this day if we are together. But I would claim that mutuality of interaction is by no means restricted to identical twins. We all share physical spaces, but we may or may not attend to others. As a brief example, consider Margaret Homans's analysis of a passage in Elizabeth Gaskell's diary. Homans makes note of "apparently accidental juxtapositions of pronouns" that to her illustrate the struggle of women writers to identify as authors if they are also mothers. Gaskell writes of her daughter: "She lies down on the floor a good deal, and kicks about; a practice I began very early," which Homans reads as a kind of Freudian slip revealing Gaskell's blurred sense of identity.[26] However, having raised children full-time for many years myself, I read Gaskell's words intuitively and seamlessly not as a verbal lapse but as completely unnoteworthy—illustrating my latent knowledge of the experiential reality Gaskell described—an infant does not lie down on the floor without being put on the floor. In fact it took me awhile to realize what Homans had expected Gaskell to say: "a practice *she* began early." Such an example demonstrates not Freud's theory, but how much we know latently from embodied experience without conscious reflection or direct articulation and how entwined lives can be.[27] As Merleau-Ponty would say, such knowledge is like the "nervure" that "bears the leaf from within, from the depths of the flesh, the ideas are the texture of experience, its style, first mute, then uttered" (*VI*, 119).

   Considering the number of photographs in which my sister and I are posed looking into a common mirror, we may have first understood the reflective power of mirrors (seen as a signal moment in individual, and more broadly, human development) while looking simultaneously at a doubled image of ourselves. Though our visual similarity may have seemed confusing to others,[28] Gallese affirms that we have more than enough proprioception to maintain shared empathetic and intentional space at the same time as we maintain

FIGURE 11.2. Twins holding hands. Photo courtesy of Nancy A. Barta-Smith.

the sense of our own bodies at either the reflective or the presubjective level. Even though our parents told us apart initially only because of a small birthmark on the back of my sister's neck, we experienced both similarities and differences—connection and distinctness. Unconsciously we ceded to each other different roles—one of us more effective at managing details, the other more comfortable in social contexts. Self-other identity paralleled self-other dichotomy, as Gallese notes in the epigraph above,[29] though the term seems too full of the logic of Cartesian philosophy. Gallese hypothesizes that mirror neurons play an important role in how we all establish common ground with others, feel their grief and joy, especially, I might add, in the face of our culture's individualistic legacy.

As my sister and I studied, we faced each other across an equally halved and doubled space. We had matching dressing tables, arranged back-to-back, that doubled as desks, so that whether we looked up while engrossed in homework or opened the spring hinge to braid our hair in front of the mirror inside, we saw a reflection that passed reciprocally between self and other. For us, looking at ourselves in the mirror was not so different from looking at each other across the room through the chiasm of reversal that mirroring creates. The development of this shared intersubjective space persisted even though our sense of time sometimes differed—my sister often studying late, with me more likely to rise early. Still mirroring each other, we learned to sleep easily with the lights on.

In spite of Renaud Barbaras's emphasis in *Desire and Distance* on the movement of life and on attention as a mostly brief "stopping point" in a restless dynamism based on individual exploration and need,[30] things catch our eye with their *presence*. If we are in motion, we must *stop* to attend to them. When we do, "now" opens up to "here." We need to dwell a while if we wish a sense of shared experience to develop. In fact, if such an attentiveness is habitual, we are struck by the inexhaustible presence of the world and others, one that motricity, for all its searching, never escapes—one that relations of power or force have little time for.[31]

Barbaras defines living movement as having a desirable "volubility or inconstancy" whose essence is to "attain an effective position only on the condition of abandoning it" for future realizations of our abilities,[32] but we develop the sense of others as part of our lives through their presence. If our attention is on another or the surrounding terrain, space—and so place more than time—becomes ground. One loses track of distance through depth. Merleau-Ponty warrants the importance of perceptual presence when he

notes that it is not geometric truths but presences that perception gives us and that it is through a "practical synthesis" of vision and touch that the unseen sides of objects are seen.[33] Drawing on Gestalt theory's figure/ground framework, he notes that the far side of an object is neither "simply a possible perception" nor the conclusion of a kind of "geometrical reasoning" since my body is a single "field of *perception and action*" (*PrP*, 14, 16; my emphasis). Hass agrees with some critics that Merleau-Ponty's early claims to the "primacy" of perception or its greater fundamentality may be a "nostalgia for origins" betraying a latent transcendentalism.[34] However, I believe Merleau-Ponty's thinking is rather influenced by his understanding of cognitive development where "primacy" and "fundamental" mean literally first or early, not "metaphysical." They reflect the fact that our first engagement with (and movement in) the world is imitative and affect-driven.

Twins reared as twins are frequently together due to not only their similar abilities and appearances but also their similar ages (one way to facilitate opportunities to be in the same place) and the way that others identify them as conjoined. It is the experience of constantly being in the presence of another that can shift focus outside oneself, in the same way one feels the subtle pull of another, if one is absorbed in some solitary activity and someone enters the room—or the way that a parent's constant attention turns outward in the Copernican Revolution that occurs while caring full-time for young children. An alter ego lay before each of us in the visible world that made it less possible—or even necessary—to be absorbed in our own thoughts. Even when engaged in solitary activities like reading, the other was often present and available to consult. Since focus was always convertible to another present beside us, attention was more often directed toward each other than lost in thought. Even studying was often accomplished collaboratively or in the same room. Although there is no denying that class privilege influenced our experience, and that the response to twin births, like the response to any birth, is different under bleak conditions of survival, I wish to chronicle the experience of twins whose conditions of existence allowed for mutual flourishing. I see such flourishing as Merleau-Ponty's hope for a world threatened by the clash of consciousnesses as much as by dwindling resources.[35] I think of the experience of this intertwining of lives as a kind of living embodiment of Merleau-Ponty's "chiasm," which seems to connote the reciprocity established through depth more than divergence.[36]

Perhaps the experience of fraternal twins—or identical twins in today's environment—may differ, but as monozygotic twins we were close in ability

and a mutual spur and encouragement to each other when exhaustion set in regarding our studies or activities—first and second, second and first; president and treasurer, vice president and secretary; prize and distinction in studies or distinction and prize. We appreciated each other's achievements and shared anxieties over looming final exams together. Questions such as "Are you twins?" or "Which one's the oldest?" broke the ice in new situations even as we could enter social situations with a level of comfort created by a companion. Neither of us can be unduly unsettled by arriving at a social engagement attired like another guest, since even when not in school uniforms we dressed alike (though sometimes in varying colors or at different times). When we graduated from college, the Spirit of Creighton award, given to one senior man and woman, was conferred on us jointly. As is the case in many of the family photos with our four brothers, we appeared in the *Omaha World Herald* the next day, flanking the male recipient to "balance" and diffuse the optical weight that our doubling created. Today parents of twins might be warned that such togetherness is a cause for concern, but we did not find it a burden. Such counsel by psychiatrists (and our father was a psychiatrist) may in fact be threatening the preservation of a dimension of the flesh with survival value. Even if we currently describe sensation in terms of continual integration and change, in terms of dynamic neural interactions rather than specific neural location or connectivity, these conceptions are abstractions compared to live experience where sensation and movement are localized in our bodies here as well as now.

From the age of eight to twenty-two, my sister and I slept in twin beds that were actually hinged to a single headboard, making it easy to swing them apart to straighten the covers and to swing them back to their mutual starting point. Like Donne's twin poles of a compass in "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," we were never without our point of attachment but still free to move. Confounding contemporary definitions of freedom as demanding independence, we were connected while distinct, alternately foreground and background for each other in mutual reciprocity.

Demonstrating this likeness and difference, a monograph my father wrote on his theory of behavior referred—not too opaquely—to a set of twins with which he was familiar. Raised Catholic, each came to their mother perplexed by the hurdle of first confession preceding first communion. One could think of no sins to confess, the other had lots of them![37] In this respect identical twins do not differ so much from conjoined twins as one might think:

> You don't know the forest of two minds bound by weeds grown
> from one to the other, the synapses like bees, cross pollinating our
> honeyed brain.[38]

Nor do twins differ from us all, if we take the time to focus our attention on others and establish the common space of mutual ground at least as avidly as we pursue realizations of our own abilities.

Our mother's weekly letters to our father during the war years tell a frustrating and ironic tale of seeing us sitting side by side on the front steps commiserating that "we have no one to play with." To others this exchange must have seemed proof of blurred identity. For me it seems rather a testament to our heightened sense of sociality as twins and as beneficiaries of others' affection for twins. Though we have lived on separate continents now far longer than we lived under the same roof, a common neural landscape still maps familiar patterns of interaction developed from infancy through our college years. When together we often finish each other's sentences or defer to our differing levels of comfort with detail or social situations. We know the forest of not only two minds grown from one to the other but of two embodiments moving in a kind of crisscrossing circular causality, each an example *for* the other.[39]

With Hass, I agree that reversibility does not necessarily imply perfectly symmetrical exchange but "overlapping" and "divergence."[40] As noted above, even during the years we lived together we developed our own personalities, attitudes, and preferences—shaped by parents, friends, other siblings, and the social surroundings in which we were raised. For example, we discovered in adulthood that we had had different dating strategies—one of us determined not to lead a date on by accepting an invitation or continuing to date if the relationship was unlikely to become serious, the other likely to date anyone with the nerve to ask, empathizing with the courage it took! For years I felt guilty for winning a citywide contest for fire-prevention slogans after my sister, churning out one slogan after another, took pity on my writer's block and let me choose one of her discards. Recently, I discovered, however, that true to her more serious nature, she had always blamed herself for not knowing which slogan to pick! Nonetheless, I believe it is dangerous to focus *too* much on temporal schemas that emphasize distance, difference, and such divergence. As Merleau-Ponty notes, in perception, here and there have a strange proximity. It is unwise to think of Merleau-Ponty's "encroachment" too negatively, calling it "resistance" as Alloa stresses (as if to naturalize

others as resistant to our movements), or to use desire as metaphor for movement.[41] Process models favor "becoming" by attempting to evade a metaphysics of Being in order to restore relationality by dispelling stable distinctions between species, subject and object, individual and environment. But they also obscure lived relationality.

In *La nature*, Merleau-Ponty asks "Quel est le 'Je' du désire?" and answers that it is the body (*N*, 272). But he adds that it is not a body that treats the body as handmaiden of consciousness, an effort to substitute teleonomy for teleology to avoid subject/object dichotomy. I appreciate Merleau-Ponty's retention of the body here, not because it signals his allegiance to a latent dualism, as Barbaras would assert,[42] but because doing so retains a sense of sentience and carnality—the dimension of the flesh that allows for the spatiality necessary for a sense of relationship's affective ground and for the volume and thickness of phenomena exceeding mere appearances or qualia.[43] Merleau-Ponty's own use of "Je" signals the difficulty of thinking "I" as "we" and the hazard of substituting desire for affect, even as de Saint Aubert notes, to capture the imminence of consciousness within the body schema.[44] When movement begins on one side of the subject/object dualism, the other too easily becomes only the tool of actualization, functionally an object rather than an opening of the "for another." When it begins with the other, we too easily simply reverse this solitary trajectory rather than finding common circular ground. With Levinas, I understand the importance of respecting difference and of not making assumptions about others' experiences as identical to our own; nonetheless, it seems a shame to experience the other mostly as "other than" or "not me," as it is when either motricity or the self possession of my body in relation to the "*not me*" is emphasized.[45]

Such a description of our relationship to others seems at odds with the appreciation and recognition Hass has for Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach to perception as holistic, "relational," and "meaning laden."[46] Alloa notes that we have a feeling of an inside in the sense of possessing a sensible, living, motor body, but that this same body can become "exterior" when "we feel the look of the other": "For an instant we are not quite in ourselves and imagine our body perceived by others, like an object exposed to the look of a stranger."[47] This formulation seems to echo Piaget's developmental trajectory, but Piaget acknowledged an earlier stage of development associated with hand-eye *coordination* in which objects seem less objectified.[48]

Merleau-Ponty emphasized vision and touch, as well. It is true that our gaze can split the visual field into figure and ground, anchoring an object so

firmly in view that the background and even our own body seem to fall away during analysis and observation, as they do as well when we close our eyes and manage to quiet the mental stream that seems to engulf us as we plunge into the dark. But most people do not live lost in analysis, or with their eyes closed. If we are not lost in thought or on our cell phones, we live in the company of other animate creatures. Even things have the capacity to solicit us as if they were animated others, as Merleau-Ponty must have recognized from his reading of Piaget's interviews with children as yet unindoctrinated into our adult distinctions and so able to see any moving object as alive. If we are not using others to actualize our potential, we allow them to solicit our affective capabilities—a circular exchange hard to fathom when a single actor is ground. An object is not in essence a dead mechanism.[49] It is our ab/use that makes it so.

Clearly Merleau-Ponty used Freud's language of desire to think his way back into the body as "subject," producing a kind of adualism. He sought to assert our capacity for affect and empathy as a form of intersubjectivity when he qualified his use of "Eros" as "not understood as effect or oriented force" (cause). If mirror neurons allow the "not me" to enter us, we feel with one flesh. Merleau-Ponty notes that the Euclidean conception of space has been surpassed to have an ontological significance of which we are a part (*N*, 272, 275, 279). In reality, of course, this ontological significance surpassing Euclid in the history of ideas exists primordially. In the introduction to his edited anthology, Emmanuel de Saint Aubert echoes Merleau-Ponty's effort to articulate the "cavern" of a less "positive" subjectivity, saying that if we "consent" to be "carried in the circuit of the seeing-seen . . . it unites our two depths in a common negativity, our two destinies in a common life."[50] Though I would substitute the word *response* for "consent" to distinguish it from Piaget's conception of social solidarity, this description of "desire" recognizes the *mutual* ground of responsiveness to others, affirming spatiality within the body and world. When Merleau-Ponty describes his philosophy as searching "*beneath* science," but not "'deeper' than passions, politics, and life," his effort is to affirm his allegiance to embodiment, to sensory and affective capacities, and so to our spatial coexistence (*S*, 22).

In his tribute to Merleau-Ponty, Claude Imbert notes that "it is incontestable that nothing will remain untouched by the short and long-term effects of the writings of Merleau-Ponty," but he concludes by discussing Deleuze's reformulation of terms found in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy to give them different valences such as nonpredicative syntax, body without organs,

becoming, and desubjectification.[51] Though I appreciate that the effort is to undo subject/object opposition, the challenge is how to preserve insights from perceptual experience while using movement as frame.[52]

Since the '60s, we have taught tolerance of the different other as obligation, turning it into "negative virtue."[53] Tolerance of others pales in comparison to the mutual flourishing possible through shared intentional and physical spaces. The idea that others mainly resist, impede, or threaten requires us to frame experience as that of separate individuals competing for survival, a view that discounts much of perceptual experience and nurturing labor, working contrary to empathy. One of the worst tragedies for progressive movements is how oppression seems to confirm what explanatory discourses have taught about perception and the body.

Victims of oppression feel very real circumstances to be "false," as if perceptions were really merely apparent. Limiting the range of affective response mainly to negative emotions seems to validate a body determined by instinct. Lived experience confirms no one cares; to believe otherwise appears naive. To defend themselves, the oppressed must conceive solidarity, and so revolution, as properly engaged in taking up mostly one's own causes.[54] Yet sympathies enjoined through shared perceptual encounter suggest we live contextualized lives. Consistent with immersion in the visible, Piaget's studies revealed that the child's moral judgment was shaped by damage victims suffered, and only later by degree of intent.[55] Attentive work, too often hidden in the private sphere, validates the body's affective capabilities, though it appears only as service, servile, or selfless when framed in the context of the West's instrumental paradigm.[56]

EXPANDING THE POTENTIAL FOR A SHARED MANIFOLD

The understanding of twins as sharing a fundamentally we-centric space appears repeatedly and is projected onto other sets of two. Towns are named for twin oaks. The World Trade Center's twin towers will forever draw out feelings of compassion for the victims. In "Everywhere and Nowhere," Merleau-Ponty speaks of the twin myths of pure philosophy or pure history (*S*, 130). Twin bolts (of lightning) strike or anchor parts when assembling toys, twin points are made in speeches, or twin assumptions implied in argumentation, as if any shared set implies twins. I applaud this expansion of the term. Today, research on mirror neurons suggests we all share the imitative

potentials of a conjoined equilibrium because of our similar embodiment and empathetic behavioral capacities.

As noted above, Gallese thinks "far from being exclusively dependent on mentalistic/linguistic abilities, the capacity to understand others as intentional agents is deeply grounded in our bodies and the relational nature of our interactions with others."[57] This "self-other identity and shared multimodal content" goes "beyond the domain of action to include a range of implicit certitudes we entertain about other [sic] individuals." He calls this "the shared manifold of intersubjectivity," which, while requiring shared physical encounter, also establishes shared intentional space, which blends subjects "within a shared implicit semantic content."[58] Even Barbaras observes that since perception and movement are closely linked, for Von Weizsäcker, "in certain cases, particularly with the perception of a movement, one can take on the role of the other" in what Von Weizsäcker calls a "principle of equivalence."[59]

Gallese concludes that the connection "between action and intersubjective, empathetic relations is even more evident" in Edith Stein's *On the Problem of Empathy* and Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. Of Stein, who was a pupil of Husserl, Gallese notes that empathy means more than understanding another's experience; it connotes experiencing another "as oneself." In other words, according to Gallese, affect and behavior more than genetics or visual similarity establish connection to others. He quotes Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* to show that Merleau-Ponty, too, claimed that "it is as if the other person's intention inhabited my body and mine his," a truly chiasmic formulation. For Gallese, both Stein and Merleau-Ponty seem prescient. They understood that an expanded notion of empathy, covering all aspects of intersubjective, expressive behavior, was based in sensorimotor life even before the discovery of mirror neurons provided a resonance mechanism at the neurological level.[60] In *The Visible and the Invisible* and *La nature*, Merleau-Ponty also urged us to see the body in a circuit with the world, things, animals, and other perceiving bodies in the concept of the flesh.[61]

Gallese notes that "sympathy" is a term used by Scottish moral philosophers to describe "our capacity to interpret the feelings of others." Citing Husserl's emphasis on intersubjectivity as experience of a shared world that allows us to constitute objectivity through mutual agreement, and establishing a historical framework for development of the term "empathy," Gallese notes in contrast that this empathy is "deeply grounded in embodiment." It "enables us to directly recognize others, not as bodies endowed with a mind,

but as persons like us," a description that seems fragile under the sign of either Merleau-Ponty's "Je peux" or Barbaras's "Je désire."[62]

In Gallese's neurological account of sensation, the "shared manifold" hypothesis operates on three levels: the phenomenological level provides a "sense of similarity" and can also be described as "empathetic" if the term is meant in his expanded sense; the functional level deals with understanding behavior as coherent, regular, and predictable; the subpersonal is "instantiated as the level of activity of a series of mirror matching neural circuits" that create shared intentional, as well as emotional and sensitive spaces that "allow us to implicitly appreciate, experience, and understand the emotions and the sensations we take others to experience."[63]

DIMENSIONS OF THE FLESH OF THE WORLD

Merleau-Ponty was clearly reaching for an understanding of desire divorced from a goal-oriented paradigm. In contrast, in Durkheim, the most effective solidarity and coalition was "organic" because fully causal—built upon a kind of generalized sense of individual identity and self-interest—a cause to be jointly taken up. Durkheim saw "mechanical" solidarity as born in mere similarity. He reflects cultural disparagement of imitation still present today. However, when Merleau-Ponty notes, "It's necessary to study the libidinal body," he adds that this is so because, as Portman notes, the body is "an organ for others," and mimeticism is a form of identification that inscribes species not only in generativity but intercorporeality. The body passes into the world and the world into the body because the body is a "power to be outside oneself as an organ of mobile *sense*" (*N*, 272–73; my emphasis and translation). By use of terms such as "body" and "flesh," Merleau-Ponty acknowledges the space in the space-time continuum of the body's *presence*, and so *place*, as well as the *sensory* in the sensorimotor.[64] It is true that Lakoff and Johnson see the idealized prototype of action where both means and ends are ours as deeply rooted in our embodiment. Because the eyes face forward, we move forward even in retreat. When we use passive voice, we put ourselves in the subject position even though we suffer. We interpret even transitive sentences as prototypically intransitive, refusing to acknowledge obstacles as if we were fully in charge of our destinies.[65] Most of the West's ideas of action are framed on this linear and instrumental path, rather than acknowledging the body and other efficacies of perceptual and affective life.

However, Lakoff and Johnson see the schema of containment as an equally important example of the way that "central aspects of language arise evolutionarily from sensory, motor and other neural systems that are present in 'lower' animals."[66] When we acknowledge our place, we encircle the body's motor capacity (we may be headed somewhere) within the perceptual field (we are irrevocably always already with others in a world). We open the door to understanding action that begins in affective response (with and for others) more than only our own needs.[67]

When Renaud Barbaras chastised Merleau-Ponty for not thematizing movement and the "living *subject*" instead of the body, the latter of which Barbaras associates with a latent dualism,[68] he failed to realize that it was from Baldwin and Piaget that Merleau-Ponty adopted the idea of *the body* as "project"—perception *and* movement at a *subpersonal* level to avoid dualism.[69] In contrast, it seems clear that the prototype underlying Barbaras's elaboration of movement is goal-oriented predation: "[Movement] is exploration in the sense that, as the most cursory observation of animal behavior shows, its only aim is to gain what can nourish its quest, each pause being satisfying and providing rest only to the degree that it gives new impetus to the movement of exploration." The world he portrays is far from nonpredicative.[70] It is no more our movement that "make[s] the object appear" than it is the existence of an object that makes us move in embodied experience.[71] The world is always already there. If the other is within range of our bodies, we may respond.[72]

The naturalness of connection to others seems to me to be the most persistent lesson the experience of being a twin offers and fundamental to all that our rights rhetoric hopes to effect. If twins have been called upon by scientists when they wish to sift out the *difference* between nature and nurture, for twins themselves nature and nurture blend into a single coordination of genetics and environment, perception and movement, space and time, self and other. Like Piaget's subjects who rely on perceptual more than causal knowledge, I found it difficult to remember that others did not share my latent awareness of my doubled experience or even that my sister was not present when we began to live separately. I often encountered puzzled looks when I almost uniformly answered in the plural to questions directed toward me. "Where were you born?" "We were born in Chicago and raised in Omaha." "We went to Creighton and majored in French." It took almost two years for me to suppress (most of the time) the need to state that I was a twin before answering such questions in the plural or to simply answer in the

singular—to adjust to the changed circumstances in which I now live, where only close friends know I'm a twin.

Still, insights from the experience of being an identical twin color my understanding of nearly every issue, and they are the backdrop against which I interpret lived experience. I gravitate toward or initiate collaborative styles of work. Assumptions about human individuality and self-interest evoke a deep visceral dissonance since I see them not as natural but as possible only by ignoring how others move us affectively. Is my experience so different from that of spouses who must learn individuation after the loss of their loved one or siblings recalling their childhood, or even lifelong friends? Recent studies of cultural differences in language practices between children in the United States and more communal cultures demonstrate that speaking simultaneously and finishing each other's sentences are characteristic of less individualistic societies (Jean Piaget Society 2004). How different is our Western interpretation of such activities as "interrupting."

When Merleau-Ponty spoke of the eyes following light in a dark room as a kind of imitation or "circular causality" similar to a biofeedback loop (*SB*, 7), he prefigured his concepts of chiasm and flesh as variants of a single vision and clearly harkened back to Baldwin's and Piaget's work (*S*, 15). If we share ethnicity, race, or nationality, are we destined to see eye-to-eye? Such ways of thinking seem to me part of analytical thought, not face-to-face experience where affect enlivens our encounters.

Though others may have trouble telling one twin from another, twins know "which is which." I move easily between "we" and "me" in talking about us. Moreover, others knew us by name only when we were together. Otherwise, we became "one of the Barta twins" or "Nancy Carol," or "Which one are you?" Together are we all most fully ourselves? Merleau-Ponty sees that one intersubjective flesh makes twins of us all.

NOTES

1. Understanding evolution would seem to require analysis of such temporal frameworks. According to Barbaras, motricity is the condition of possibility of perception as if we were not already immersed in a world with others. See Renaud Barbaras's "Motricité et phénoménalité chez le dernier Merleau-Ponty," in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Sous la direction d'Emmanuel de Saint Aubert* (Paris: Hermann, 2008), 191–216, for a fuller explanation of Barbaras's interpretation of motricity in Merleau-Ponty's work. See also Leonard Lawlor's "Auto-Affection and Becoming (Part I): Who

Are We?" *Environmental Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (2009): 1–19; and Richard Evanoff's "A Coevolutionary Framework for Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (2009): 57–76. I appreciate Isabelle Stengers and Taylor S. Hammer's "Toward a Speculative Approach to Biological Evolution," *Environmental Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (2009): 77–112, for the way it shows that evolutionary frameworks have not succeeded in removing our subordination of world in a rhetoric of self-interest transposed to the level of genes in writers like Richard Dawkins. Their alternative—the "radical immanence" of an "eco-ethology," such that "my being depends on the world 'for' which I am," figures those processes as inhering in entities, though it relies on a singular conception of intentional space and emphasizes self (112).

2. George Lakoff, *Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 53.

3. George Lakoff, *The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century American Politics with an 18th-Century Brain* (New York: Viking, 2008), 117–23.

4. The leap from a metaphysics of space/form to one of time/change/motion within discourse repeats the one Merleau-Ponty thinks Piaget mistakenly made when he left perception behind and saw child development as a "progress" from perceptual ways of seeing and thinking to causal and temporal operations (means/ends subordination/instrumentality). Movement does not seem to me a fertile ground on which to promote responsiveness, which inherently requires us to share places in order to pay attention, to awaken our sympathies, and to respond to/mirror those who are not limited to persons "like" us, but to those actually near, or with, us in lived places as opposed to those sharing abstract, intellectual categories. Even when we now encounter others through technologies of virtuality, those technologies must share places with us for the sensorimotor encounter to happen.

5. I do not wish to deny the existence of fight-or-flight responses, but such responses react to perceived threat and should not stand for all of experience.

6. One example is the painter. See EM, 164. See also "Introduction," in *S*, 15. In fact, toward the end of his life Merleau-Ponty was reconceiving not only perception but also philosophy itself in the image of coexistence and intersubjective experience: "Philosophy does not hold the world supine at its feet. It is not a 'higher point of view' from which one embraces all local perspectives. It seeks contact with brute being, and in any case informs itself in the company of those who have never lost that contact" (*S*, 22).

7. Alfred Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, Canto 56.

8. *PhP*, 115. For other analyses of our fundamental connection to others, see Beata Stawarska's "Dialogue at the Limit of Phenomenology,"*Chiasmi International* 11 (2009): 145–56; and Martha Albertson Fineman's *The Autonomy Myth: A Theory of Dependency* (New York: New Press, 2004); and Nancy Folbre's *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (New York: New Press, 2001).

9. Ann E. Russon, Robert W. Mitchell, Louis Lefebvre, and Eugene Abravanel, "The Comparative Evolution of Imitation," in *Piaget, Evolution, and Development*, ed. Jonas Langer and Melanie Killen (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1998), 103–44.

10. For Piaget, sensorimotor accommodation to the environment and assimilation of the environment to the "subject" were forms of imitation situated midway between autism and sociality. The "gesture" and "mimicry" of imitation served as the "beginning of action" and allowed children to understand one another by "example." See Jean Piaget, *Judgement and Reasoning in the Child*, trans. Marjorie Warden

(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 207. Piaget was much more appreciative when imaginative play performed in the absence of a model—that is, consciously directed "operational" thought—emerged in "real" action that divided subject from world as objects become properly subordinated and arrayed in objective space. For a fuller explanation of the distinction between "mechanical" (based in resemblance) and "organic" (based in functional interdependence) solidarity taken up by Piaget and others, see Emile Durkheim's *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. George Simpson (1893; Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1947). Jean Bethke Elshtain, in *Democracy on Trial* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), follows Durkheim's ideas when she privileges the work of forged civic alliances as lively and energetic over solidarity based merely in identity, which appears inert like the body (85).

11. *VI*, 243. James M. Baldwin, an early twentieth-century psychologist whose work greatly influenced Piaget and those who came after him, provided a list of equivalent phrases for the child's first "pre-logical" awareness: "The stage or mode of experience in which there is no . . . contrast between subjective and objective—that is, in which there is no reference to object and subject as such, and which does not oppose these to each other—has been variously called 'pure,' 'projective,' 'protoplasmic,' 'A-dualistic,' 'presentative,' etc." (39). See James M. Baldwin, *Thought and Things: A Study of the Development and Meaning of Thought or Genetic Logic*, vol. 1, *Functional Logic* (New York: Macmillan, 1906). The term "adualism" is also invoked in the working notes of *VI*, as indicated.

12. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Merleau-Ponty à la Sorbonne: Résumé de cours 1949– 1952* (Paris: Cynara, 1988), 184, my translation.

13. Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, "De la réversibilité logique à la réversibilité charnelle: Merleau-Ponty aux prise avec l'épistémologie génétique de Piaget," *Alter 16* (2008): 110. Consult as well Miklos Vetö's elaboration of Merleau-Ponty's understanding of anthropological space in "L'eidétique de l'espace chez Merleau-Ponty," *Archives de Philosophie 71*, no. 3 (2008): 407–38.

14. *VI*, 71. I wish to thank Galen Johnson for bringing this passage to my attention.

15. Jean Piaget, *Biology and Knowledge*, trans. Beatrix Walsh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971); Piaget, *Behavior and Evolution*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Piaget, *Adaptation and Intelligence*: *Organic Selection and Phenocopy*, trans. Steward Eames (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Langer and Killen, *Piaget, Evolution, and Development*.

16. Vittorio Gallese, "From Mirror Neurons to the Shared Manifold Hypothesis: A Neurophysiological Account of Intersubjectivity," in *Biology and Knowledge Revisited: From Neurogenesis to Psychogenesis*, ed. Sue Taylor Parker, Jonas Langer, and Constance Milbrath (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2005), 179–205; *N*, 272–73.

17. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "An Unpublished Text," in *PrP*, 7.

18. Gallese, "Mirror Neurons," 191.

19. Lina Helsten, "Popular Metaphors of Biosciences: Bridges over Time?" *Configurations 16*, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 15.

20. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 10.

21. Jean Petitot, Francisco J. Varela, Bernard Pachoud, and Jean-Michel Roy, eds., *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 386.

22. Terrence W. Deacon, "Beyond Piaget's Phenocopy: The Baby in the Lamarckian Bath," in Parker, Langer, and Milbrath, *Biology and Knowledge Revisited*, 87–122. Deacon notes that "intra-selection" activity-dependent "selection-like" processes occur during development in which "axons compete for synaptic contacts in a given brain region." The "relative synchrony and asynchrony of converging signals," according to Deacon, will then cause the axons to eliminate some signals and incorporate others depending on the character of correlated signals (106). See also Sue Taylor Parker, "Piaget's Legacy in Cognitive Constructivism, Niche Construction, and Phenotype Development and Evolution," in Parker, Langer, and Milbrath, *Biology and Knowledge Revisited*, 1–33. Parker concludes that a broad body of research suggests that "brain development is driven by the assimilation of stimuli to developing schemes, whether these stimuli are produced solely by direct proprioceptive feedback from the child's actions during prenatal life or by feedback from social and physical objects (2). Piaget was uniquely placed through his training as a biologist to synthesize the genetic and behavioral fields.

23. James M. Baldwin, *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development* (1897; Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1998). Baldwin hypothesized an alternative to the inheritance of acquired characteristics in the possibility that social forms could allow survival of what might otherwise be nonadaptive variations until adaptive variations could arise. In the case of twins, a genetic and behavioral form is preserved until a social form can catch up. In *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, Baldwin called this process "organic selection" (547). In "Beyond Piaget's Phenocopy," Terrence Deacon discusses at length influences on Piaget's work by Waddington and Baldwin. See also Sue Taylor Parker's "Piaget's Phenocopy Model Revisited: A Brief History of Ideas about the Origins of Adaptive Genetic Variations," in Parker, Langer, and Milbrath, *Biology and Knowledge Revisited*, 33–87. Parker cites recent work by Mary Jane West-Eberhard that sees development as the "missing link" between phenotype and genotype. Parker sees this work as consistent with both Baldwin and Piaget insofar as development and behavior have pivotal roles in acquisition of new adaptations without recourse to Lamarckian mechanisms latent in Piaget's theory of "phenocopy" (75).

24. In contrast, space is erased in the privileging of temporal processes endemic in both scientific and philosophical discourses where doubt of perception is the starting point and causal explanation the destination. Alfred North Whitehead admits that "it is the task of philosophical speculation to conceive the *happenings* of the universe so as to render understandable the outlook of physical science" (94; emphasis added). He states, "Sight at any instant merely provides the passive fact of regions variously coloured" (91). The body dissolves into imperceptible processes: "Our knowledge of the body places it as a complex unity of happenings within the larger field of nature. But its demarcation from the rest of nature is vague in the extreme" (88). Since the body is constantly losing and gaining molecules, "there is no definite boundary to determine where the body begins and external nature ends" (93). Whitehead, "Nature Alive," in *The Age of Analysis: 20th Century Philosophers*, ed. Morton G. White (New York: Mentor Books, 1964), 81–100. While molecular life certainly provides an explanation for bodily processes, it is imperceptible, as abstracted from lived experience as the view from everywhere and nowhere. Edward Tolman used the word *molar* to refer to emergent conduct to distinguish it from Watson's behaviorism. Though the effort here is to speak of molecular processes in other than deterministic ways, it still

does not do justice to lived experience. See Robert I. Watson, *Basic Writings in the History of Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 368. In contrast, Vetö affirms that for Merleau-Ponty, philosophical interest is focused on space more than time ("L'eidétique," 438).

25. I use the term "juxtaposition" here to imply presence and proximity, next to and with each other (side by side), in resistance to distinctions in Merleau-Ponty's work reserving its use to imply the "pure exteriority" and objectifications of geometric space where things are arrayed without depth and as if we had an unobscured, bird's-eye view from above. See Vetö, "L'eidétique," 417, 427.

26. Margaret Homans, *Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 162.

27. Dorothy Smith calls such moments, in which we "discover" what we know, "fault lines" in experience that appear when the assumptions of others reveal to us our own latent knowledge. Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 49–60. Such moments can also reveal to us that discursive, social constructions have supplanted experiential realities.

28. This difficulty in telling us apart is also evident in early photographs where the first letter of our names often appears at the margin or on the back of photographs.

29. Gallese, "Mirror Neurons," 191.

30. Renaud Barbaras, *Desire and Distance: Introduction to a Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Paul B. Milan (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 90, 94.

31. The importance of the presence of others to acknowledging the role of perception in action cannot be overstated. As Saint Aubert notes in discussing Merleau-Ponty's transformation of Piaget's idea of reversibility, Piaget saw the child's acquisition of the permanence of the object (its persistence even when absent) as crucial to the developmental trajectory toward abstract, mathematical operations ("De la réversibilité logique," 112). Saint Aubert notes that the expression "object permanence" is almost redundant since both "by construction and definition the object is permanent (temporally stable)." What is not said except in so far as the word *object* is used, he notes, is that "to become such, to arrive at the status of what is thrown in front of us, the thing must also be spatially detached" (113; my emphasis). To call the other a prolongation of my body attempts to acknowledge adualism, but does not fully capture the shared affective dimension Gallese suggests.

32. Barbaras, *Desire and Distance*, 95.

33. In elaborating on what he sees as the neglected investigation of "expression" in Merleau-Ponty's work, Lawrence Hass cites Merleau-Ponty's "Unpublished Text," agreeing with Merleau-Ponty that knowledge and the communication with others it assumes "sublimate" rather than "suppress" our incarnation. Hass, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 155. However, the transcendental cogito and the mobile cogito both would seem to rely on a transcendental metaphysics if lived experience is figured only as temporal. Merleau-Ponty shows this tradition himself in *Signs* when he notes, "The philosophy which lays bare this chiasma of the visible is the exact opposite of a philosophy of God-like survey. It plunges into the perceptible, into time and history, toward their articulations" (21). Leaving aside the question of whether imitative processes themselves would be seen as representational in the context of modern neural biology (a recent book by Murray

on nondiscursive rhetoric argues that all neural traces of sensory experience should be seen as images in an expanded nonrepresentation sense), I do not believe Merleau-Ponty would espouse prioritizing movement over the sensory. See Joddy Murray, *Non-Discursive Rhetoric: Image and Affect in Multimodal Composition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009).

34. Hass, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*, 168–69.

35. Richard Evanoff notes that a dynamic, process approach to ecological change is "more consistent with Darwinism" and "offers an alternative to the Aristotelian view of flourishing and integrity" that sees them in terms of normative characteristics of a species. In a Darwinian view abnormal conditions can have an adaptive advantage. Not all increases in adaptive advantage result in greater flourishing. Adaptation and maladaptation can occur. Nor can flourishing be considered a kind of order or balance in nature since complexity of interaction implies chaotic and self-organizing systems, as well as "open-ended processes" in a "constant state of flux" ("Coevolutionary Framework," 61–62). It is easy to see how a focus on process does not match lived experience anchored in a body's *sensori*motor capacities. The idea of flourishing I wish to espouse here is more functional than definitive, but it includes affective capacities. Mutual flourishing means organisms are attentive to the well-being of world and others. It is broadly conceived as sheltering from selective pressures through nurturance and care, mutual preservation, and avoidance or alleviation of suffering.

36. In elaborating on Merleau-Ponty's contrast between the lived experience of depth and the representation of juxtaposition of objects in objective space, Vetö does speak of the perspective of depth as that of separate individuals and autonomous objects. He acknowledges, however, that Merleau-Ponty's effort is to recover a sense of our coexistence among others in perceptual depth, as opposed to the distortions of a supposed view from nowhere ("L'eidétique," 430–31).

37. Frank R. Barta, *The Moral Theory of Behavior: A New Answer to the Enigma of Mental Illness* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1952), 16.

38. Julianna Baggott, "Lori Schappell, a Conjoined Twin, Addresses the Kmart Cashier Who Eyes Her with Too Much Sympathy," *Virginia Quarterly Review* 80, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 174.

39. See Piaget's *The Psychology of Intelligence*, trans. Malcolm Piercy (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1976), 101, where Piaget mentions his debt to Baldwin for the term "circular reaction"; and *The Construction of Reality in the Child*, trans. Margaret Cook (New York: Basic Books, 1954), 25. This concept is derived from the reciprocal action and reaction of assimilation and accommodation Piaget and Merleau-Ponty found in Baldwin's *Thought and Things* (212). Howard E. Gruber and James J. Vonèche's *The Essential Piaget* (New York: Basic Books, 1977) mentions Piaget's reliance on the term "circular reaction" from his American contemporary Baldwin as well (198). Baldwin was a rich resource for Piaget's work. The tale of James Mark Baldwin's arrival in Paris in time to make a mark on the circle of psychologists whose work Piaget would also know is an interesting one. First of all, a reviewer of Baldwin's *Social and Ethical Interpretations* suggested that Baldwin had generalized work on imitation by Gabriel Tarde without sufficiently acknowledging his source. Then a sexual scandal arose. Baldwin lost his tenured position at Johns Hopkins in 1908 and taught briefly at the University of Mexico before permanently taking up residence in France among the coterie for whom he had been the principal American translator. Among his associates was Janet—Piaget's mentor. In 1910 Baldwin succeeded John

Stuart Mill and William James as correspondent of the Academy of Moral and Political Science in the Institute of France. See Robert J. Richards's *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

40. Hass, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*, 133–34.

41. Emmanuel Alloa, *La Résistance du Sensible: Merleau-Ponty, critique de la transparence* (Paris: Kimé, 2008).

42. Renaud Barbaras, *Le Tournant de l'expérience: Recherches sur la philosophie de Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Vrin, 1998), 263.

43. Vetö, "L'eidétique," 437.

44. Saint Aubert, "Conscience et expression chez Merleau-Ponty," *Chiasmi International* 10 (2008): 100–101.

45. Hass, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*, 127.

46. Ibid., 29–32.

47. Alloa, *La Résistance du sensible*, 31.

48. In his article on reversibility, Saint Aubert remarks how without access to the unedited works, philosophers who may not have known the literature of cognitive psychology have had a tendency to interpret Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the reversibility of the flesh, inversion of inside and outside, active and passive, self and other only in terms of Husserl's discussion of touch, not the perceptual stages of Piaget's cognitive development. Instead, these descriptions are much more strongly related to what the archives show as Merleau-Ponty's rereading of Piaget some ten years after he first taught courses on Piaget at the Sorbonne ("De la réversibilité logique," 123). See also Barta-Smith, "When Time Is Not a River: Landscape, Memory, History, and Merleau-Ponty," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (December 1997): 423–40.

49. For Baldwin, the child's perceptual understanding of the distinction between people and things is functionally established as animate and inanimate forms, the moving and the at-rest-unless-moved (*Thought and Things*, 56).

50. Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, ed., introduction to *Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Hermann, 2008), 38–39, my translation.

51. Claude Imbert, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Association pour la diffusion de la pensée française, 2005), 72, 74.

52. Hass also comments on Merleau-Ponty's philosophy in the context of Deleuze (*Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*, 168).

53. Inverting Piaget's preference for moral judgment based in consent to rational principles, Mary Wollstonecraft uses this term to distinguish actions performed merely from a sense of duty or obligation, distinguishing them from the liveliness of those performed through passion or love, in *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* (New York: Norton, 1975), 101.

54. I have explored this topic more fully in "From Mere Solidarity to Mirror Solidarity: Building Alliances on Perceptual Ground," in *Forging Radical Alliances across Difference: Coalition Politics for the New Millennium*, ed. Jill M. Bystydzienski and Steven P. Schacht (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 49–60.

55. Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, trans. Marjorie Gabain (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1997); in the chapter titled "Adult Constraint and Moral Realism," the child finds more blame in damage than motive (104–94). I partially elaborated the relationship of this way of thinking to Carol Gilligan's moral theory of a "different

voice" or moral orientation in *Mind's I / Eye's Mind: From Causal Thinking to Thinking Context* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1993).

56. In "Coevolutionary Framework," Evanoff states, "A coevolutionary perspective is consistent with the contention of both pragmatists and process philosophers that it is better to think of reality in terms of events than in terms of objects" (57). He notes that such a move allows causality to be thought complexly and not linearly—and world to be thought as event rather than substance, avoiding mechanistic ways of thinking "where relations between things are external and do not affect the essential nature of the object itself" (58). James J. Bono, in "Perception, Living Matter, Cognitive Systems, Immune Networks: A Whiteheadian Future for Science Studies," *Configurations* 13, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 135–81, also discusses the origin of Whitehead's philosophy in a critique of a mechanistic theory of matter based in the abstraction and isolation of entities from each other in space (144, 166). For Bono, too, the "rich world of things" is transformed into a rich world of events. Objects like genes are folded into processes, leaving us with only temporal relations ("Perception," 153). However, this dissolving of objects does not guarantee overcoming instrumentalism on the level of behavior since it has no time or place for attentive encounter, reducing it to imperceptible molecular exchanges.

57. Gallese, "Mirror Neurons," 185, 189.

58. Ibid., 189–191.

59. Barbaras, *Desire and Distance*, 89.

60. Gallese, "Mirror Neurons," 193, 194, 197; *PhP*, 215. Hass also offers an appreciative analysis of Merleau-Ponty's understanding of our capacity to overcome the supposed epistemological problem of other minds (*Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*, 102–12).

61. In his chapter on the "ontology of the visible," Alloa cites Merleau-Ponty's acknowledgment of his dissatisfaction in *The Visible and the Invisible* with the problems posed by *Phenomenology of Perception*'s starting point in the consciousness/object distinction represented by intellectualism and empiricism and asks whether or not this dissatisfaction is excessive ("La Résistance," 67). Although Merleau-Ponty may have been attempting to overcome this dichotomy, apparently he could not convince himself he had succeeded, because the body as mine remained in the realm of consciousness and the world remained in relation to the objects it contained. For Alloa, as for Barbaras, it is Merleau-Ponty's investigation of the ideality of language that led him to rethink this division. The gaps between signs were filled in as a common ground of cohesion and co-belonging in "noncoincidence" that is without conceptual reconstruction (68–69, 83). Such a formulation emphasizing "flesh" and "chiasm" seems to recognize coexistence more fully than Barbaras's discussion of motricity, but having to establish experience on the basis of a theory of signs gives too little credit to experience. Alloa notes that Merleau-Ponty says in *VI* that "the body is no longer a 'means' in a milieu-world; body and world proceed from a common tissue, arise from a formative milieu" (77). Merleau-Ponty already asserted that the body was not an instrument or means as early as "An Unpublished Text" (*PrP*, 5).

62. Gallese, "Mirror Neurons," 192–93. According to Gallese, "empathy" originates with Robert Vischer, who used it to "account for our capacity to symbolize the inanimate objects of nature and art." Vischer had in turn been influenced by Lotze, who, in 1858, hypothesized a "mechanism by means of which humans are capable of understanding inanimate objects and other species of animals by 'placing ourselves

into them'" (192). In 1903, Lipps subsequently extended the term to the discussion of intersubjectivity, which he described as "inner imitation of the perceived movements of others." Gallese notes the latter is the first instance of a suggested relation between imitation, albeit inner imitation, and the ability to understand others' "feelings, emotions, and thoughts" (192).

63. Ibid., 194–95. Though he has not yet attempted experimental validation or falsification of his hypothesis, Gallese sees evidence suggesting validation in the study of mirror-matching neurons for pain and in evidence that once stroke victims have lost the ability to experience and express an emotion, they also do not seem able to observe it in others or represent it. He is currently testing for "somatosensory mirror neurons," allowing us to map body locations in observing others and match them to "equivalent locations of our body" (195–96).

64. It is significant that in the "Primacy of Perception and Its Philosophical Consequences," in *PrP,* Merleau-Ponty, emphasizing the difference between positing consciousness and perception, notes that "every perception takes place within a certain horizon and ultimately in the 'world'" and that we experience that perception and horizon "in action [*practiquement*]," emphasizing perception as well as action (12–13). The "subject" is "my body as the field of perception and/action [*practique*]" (16).

65. I refer here to Lakoff's discussion of "prototypical causality" in *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), where transitive action places control in the subject whose actions are suffered by the patient, without any acknowledgment that the force of contact works both ways, as if "John hit Joe" were the same as "John runs" (54–55).

66. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 6.

67. I am, of course, aware of the discourse disparaging containment as an image of objectivized Cartesian extension, subject to the gaze of those presumably outside, as if to justify a transcendental idealism. But I interpret Merleau-Ponty's "être à" as "with/in," to imply our belonging and participation both with and in the world.

68. Barbaras, *Le Tournant de l'expérience*, 262–64.

69. Baldwin, *Thought and Things*, 56. Baldwin refers to the child's prepersonal understanding as perception of "person projects" and "thing projects" to recognize the child's noncategorical distinction between persons and things and equation of movement, inanimate and animate, as life.

70. Murray, *Non-Discursive Rhetoric*. As Murray's discussions of will and neural process in affect show, both "will" and "process" are detrimental to recognizing external "motives" of action. As events, they are actions having initiating moments in the subject. Moreover, pure process and will signal movement and temporality, not a spatial context or location beyond subject/object. The term "praxis" is supposed to recover the concrete and experiential as opposed to the abstract, but will and process remain on the trajectory of operations and movement. Merleau-Ponty was always trying to work against this in recovering the perceptual stages of development Piaget left behind. The theory/praxis split is a by-product of the mind/body split and the supposed fixity of eternal truths compared to the change and motion of history and our aging bodies.

71. Barbaras, *Desire and Distance*, 94.

72. I substitute "other" here for "object," in solidarity with perceptual ways of seeing where the distinction between people and things is empathetically established.

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DWELLING AND PUBLIC ART: SERRA
AND BOURGEOIS

Helen A. Fielding

I. INTRODUCTION

Permanent artworks installed in public places can set to work as structures that shape a space and cultivate the relations that take place within and between them. Human bodies align themselves to architectural structures; they take up the lines and ways of moving that these structures make possible— thereby instituting a kind of corporeal objectivity as an alternative to either the view from nowhere or the assumption that objectivity is not possible at all. Indeed, structures provide the in-between, the limits and pivots around which our bodies turn and engage in the world. Two public artworks that set to work in this way are Richard Serra's *Tilted Spheres* (2002–2004) and a bronze casting of Louise Bourgeois's *Maman* (1999).[1] Each sculpture stands in a significant public space, the former in Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport, the latter in front of Ottawa's National Art Gallery. These sculptures both install a location and work to open up embodied being, to creatively reveal how we encounter our world and others.

Drawing upon Maurice Merleau-Ponty, I describe how Serra's sculpture shows up an important aspect of public space, the ways in which we are shaped by these spaces because we are embodied and because our bodies have an anonymous capacity to move into and take them up. Indeed, Serra's sculpture provides a level or a way of perceiving according to the sculpture that cannot itself be perceived. Nonetheless, *Tilted Spheres* also reveals how public sculpture can remind us that we are embodied, and that, as such, we objectively share the same relational world with others with whom we dwell. Alternatively, Bourgeois's sculpture reveals another aspect of dwelling, the interiority that exceeds our experience of a material world. Luce Irigaray's

Figures 12.1 and 12.2. Richard Serra, Tilted Spheres, 2002–2004. Lester B. Pearson International Airport, Toronto. © 2014 Richard Serra / SODRAC.

insights into the primordial mother-infant relation help us to understand how *Maman* shows us that objectivity relies upon parental relations that introduce the infant to the perceptible world, even as these relations, like the levels exposed by Serra's sculpture, themselves remain imperceptible, and thus publicly unacknowledged. Taking into account this forgotten primordial difference allows us to recognize differences inherent to objectivity in public space. The sculpture provides for the experience of what it might mean to share the same world even as we dwell in different interior worlds, in space-times that we cultivate as our own.

II. *TILTED SPHERES*

Tilted Spheres phenomenally brings to attention our embodied and hence shared world through providing an opening for what Merleau-Ponty calls vertical being, or engaged being, in the midst of the representational flow of the airport terminal.[2] It consists of four 50 mm thick spherical sections made of weatherproof Cor-Ten steel, standing 4.35 meters high. One sphere is 13.86 meters long and the other runs parallel to it at 12.11 meters long. Built for the Terminal Hammerhead of Pier F in the international departures lounge of the new Terminal 1, *Tilted Spheres* cannot but be encountered by passengers and airport staff and crew entering the Hammerhead; they must choose to walk either around or through it. Alternatively, those flying either domestically or to the United States have no access. Artists whose works were commissioned for the new terminal were allowed to choose the sites of their works in advance of construction. Indeed, in the end, the Hammerhead was built around Serra's work.

The new terminal, whose principal architect is Moshe Safdie (with Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill), is a light, airy, and spacious structure. It was designed to efficiently move great numbers of people through the terminal intuitively along the flow paths of what Melissa Laing calls the "Transit Zone."[3] Indeed, in total, around thirty-one million people from around the world pass through this airport each year. Though an airport terminal is generally considered to be a public space, it is one in which it is difficult to encounter anyone because movement is reduced to the objective transit of people from place to place. Heidegger's account of the public as *das Man*, the leveled-down world of beliefs and thoughts that belongs to everyone in general but is attributable to no one in particular, would seem fitting.[4] For

Arendt, for whom the public provides an important political space of speaking and acting before others, humans would appear in airports as a mere multitude. Despite their sheer numbers, people tend not to interrelate with one another in any way that could count in terms of appearance; individuals in multitudes are, in fact, quite isolated. Moreover, no one can stand out as an individual since, in the manner of statistics, it does not "matter how disordered, incoherent and confused" the multitude is, it will nevertheless still "fall into certain patterns and configurations possessing the same validity."[5] In airports in general, the main points of human contact belong to checking in luggage, going through security checkpoints where "who" you are has no bearing—it is only "what" you are that counts. Origin and citizenship, skin color, weight, and contents of luggage are assessed in terms of danger and the capacity to slow down the efficient passage of bodies. In fact, in order to encourage the smooth flow of people in and out of planes, no encounters beyond the brief, if friendly but mostly banal, can be tolerated. There is always a risk of being removed from the flow, expelled from the system, and interrogated in the in-between zone of the border crossing that turns travelers into illegal aliens or potential terrorists.

Serra's piece works both with and against this flow, instituting the place in which it is situated. It is a space of transit and transition to be sure, but it is one that is reached once travelers have gone through security and are waiting to board. Unlike the light and airy space of the airport terminal that is visually impressive and encourages smooth passage, *Tilted Spheres*, drawing upon sound and touch, as well as vision, can stop one short, calling the passerby, for a moment, to corporeally encounter what is actually there, for the work beckons to bodies.

Indeed, Serra's sculptures are known for the ways in which they are mostly site-specific, and insistently draw attention to our embodied being. Serra's claim, that to change the ways we see is to change the ways we think,[6] reflects the way his work has been understood by art historians as a response to modernist idealism, which privileged the creator/artist as the "sole generator of the artwork's formal relationships."[7] As Crimp explains, Serra took this critique further than minimalist artists who understood the importance of space, since works that expand beyond the one dimension of the pictorial canvas allow the spectator to create meaning through interacting with and moving around the nonrepresentational object. But Serra's works, as site-specific, also draw attention to the ways in which the work interacts with its surroundings.[8]

Importantly, this critique of idealism focuses on the ways in which meaning is not projected from an interior space but rather is created through a response to an external world, an inherently embodied response. Rosalind Krauss appropriately describes this response in terms of Merleau-Ponty's accounts of the anonymous body, which is, for Merleau-Ponty, "the system of anonymous 'functions,'" "an atmosphere of generality," that underlies all our particular actions.[9] We could understand the anonymous body further as our corporeal capacities that allow us to encounter the world at all. Thus, I can see the blue of the sky "because I am *sensitive* to colors." This sensitivity precedes situations that are created through our personal actions (*PhP*, 224/249). What is important here is that it is neither what is sensed nor the body sensing that takes priority: "It cannot be said that one acts while the other suffers the action." It is an exchange between the sensing and the sensible, whereby bodies respond to the solicitation of the work, and "must find the attitude" that will allow what is sensed "to become determinate," that is, perceived (222/248). The sensible poses a question that is barely recognizable and yet to which bodies find their ways of responding.

Nevertheless, the anonymous body is not merely a set of corporeal capacities because these capacities also have a "historical thickness" and a "perceptual tradition," and this tradition also belongs to the objects so that "we are directed toward" Serra's artwork, and "we merge with this body that knows more than we do about the world" (*PhP*, 248/275). We take up a perceptual tradition that underlies our personal choices and experiences and is given to us because we are always already in a world that precedes us with a certain shared corporeal logic or way of understanding space and movement to which Serra is attuned. We are, as Merleau-Ponty points out, "gathered together in a single world in which we all participate as anonymous subjects of perception" (369/406). In other words, it is as anonymous subjects of perception that we share one world.

Merleau-Ponty further works through this idea of a shared perceptual tradition in his 1954–1955 lectures on institution at the Collège de France. In particular, he was interested in the ways perception has come to be governed by the cognitive—that is, the ways in which we think space rather than experience it. Well aware of the ways in which artworks institute new ways of thinking and seeing that become further specified in a culture, he observes that institution opens up a field that has no "precise limits" (*IP*, 42/79). Nevertheless, because we share a world, we come to perceive according to certain fields. So, for example, the creation of "Renaissance planimetric perspective"

instituted and sedimented a new way of painting according to which the world could be reduced to a plane. Drawing on Panofsky, Merleau-Ponty observes that this move toward a rational expression of the world allowed for the abandoning of the "spherical visual field" that relates to the curvature of the retina and hence angles; but spheres cannot be collapsed onto planes, which was the goal instituted by planimetric perspective (42/80). Importantly, the introduction of perspective both instituted the distance of objectifying reality according to mathematically precise rules and destroyed distance by tying the plane to the individual eye, a "distance-denying human struggle for control."[10] Distance is both established and destroyed simultaneously—a move that installs not only a different way of seeing but also a different way of relating to things and others.

Tilted Spheres, like other of Serra's sculptures, brings to the fore the planimetric perspective that belongs to this age, yet works to upset it. It installs a place that not only opens up embodied perception but also reveals the ways in which a field, along with its new ways of seeing and hence thinking, is instituted. Planimetric perspective, which has become so institutionalized that we rarely question whether or not we actually encounter the world according to its lines, corresponds more closely to the rational and mathematical that allow for the collapse of the world onto one plane. The problem with such a conceptualization of space according to perspectival vision that simultaneously introduces and destroys distance is that the difference between distance and nearness disappears—we lose any sense of embodied situation and of the relations that take place within that situation.

But *Tilted Spheres*, in its sensual contradiction, works to bring planimetric perspective into appearance through the fleshy weightiness of the steel when one stands in front of a sphere and its almost paper-thin lines that are seen from the side. Samuel Mallin, writing before the terminal was built, points out that Serra's works juxtapose the smooth and thin mathematically calculated geometric lines to the weighty gravity of the phenomenal experience of being drawn into the work's orbit.[11] These incompossibles belong both to the same structure and to the same place; as Mallin points out, in a strong work such as this, incompossibles point toward the artwork's meaning, which, as a first entry, is the possibility of encountering the actual in the midst of representational flows.[12]

Incompossibles in the piece include the phenomenal experience of walking nearby the spheres that does not match the cognitive understanding of them. For example, the bowls of fruit in Cézanne's still lifes, when considered

representationally according to planimetrics, seem to oddly bulge; nevertheless, the strangeness of the everyday that Cézanne provides calls on viewers to look anew at these objects, to perceive them differently, that is, phenomenally, and in so doing to reflect upon how they actually perceive, rather than on how they think they do. As Merleau-Ponty explains it, Cézanne "did not want to separate the stable things which we see and the shifting way in which they appear; he wanted to depict matter as it takes on form, the birth of order through spontaneous organization."[13] Accordingly, Serra's piece works to expose this interval between the things and the ways we encounter them. If I walk between Serra's spheres, they do not seem parallel even though I know them to be so; one sphere leans more acutely into the other at an odd angle. Yet, seen from above, the view from the escalators that one normally takes on approach, or even from arrivals one floor up, the lines match our cognitive understanding; the spheres are in perfectly symmetrical lines. The third incompossible emerges in the material itself. These pieces of Cor-Ten steel, which altogether weigh 120 tons, chiasmically respond to the light and airy curving steel lines of the vaulted ceiling of the terminal, tracing out a resonating line. The work shows up the space of the airport through its incompossibles, both by providing a vertical space that reminds the passerby of her corporeality and by showing up the experience of air travel as one that is an organized functioning.

For *Tilted Spheres*, created for and situated as it is in this airport, addresses questions concerning what it means for humans, who walk the earth beneath the sky, to fly. Flying is, after all, precisely not to be situated, or to be situated within horizons in which humans cannot act and thus are not easily grasped. In his earlier works, Serra admits that he wanted to work in "unencumbered expanses of 'neutral,' 'anonymous' terrain." It wasn't so much that he didn't think place was important but rather that he wanted to create places with his works. But, as Lynne Cooke points out, he came to realize that no spaces are neutral.[14] Indeed, at the public hearing organized to determine the fate of *Tilted Arc* (1981), Serra asserted, "To remove the work is to destroy the work."[15] *Tilted Spheres* was designed accordingly for a specific place in a specific airport. Though the work is nonrepresentational, from within the work, the slope of the facing spheres resembles the shape of an airplane's nose. As I walk beside and between the spheres, I am at first reminded of the experience of circling the earth from above. And yet here I encounter my vertical and upright existence even as I am drawn into the roundness of the spheres by the gravity of the steel, for it is through moving our bodies that we move into new levels and take them up.

Merleau-Ponty describes the ways in which our bodies move into levels in terms of being as "synonymous with being situated." In order to perceive, that is, to make sense of sensations, we find ourselves moving into and becoming oriented within spatial situations. We perceive something when we "have a certain hold on it," when we are "able to follow a certain perceptual itinerary along its surface, with its ups and its downs." And that hold is given to us against the background of a level. Levels set up the logic of a situation, the background, the lighting, according to which the things and people appear in relation with one another; accordingly, it is difficult to turn levels themselves into the objects of study (*PhP*, 263–65/292–94). Moreover, we move into a new level from one that is prior and already particularized. For this reason, with the institution of the planimetric perspective that still prevails, we tend to move into the level of Serra's works from this previously sedimented, and particularized, dominant level. Accordingly, the space of Serra's spheres seems at first strange. For Merleau-Ponty, moving into new levels can even remind us of the contingency of our existence (265/294). Nevertheless, after spending a couple of hours with the work, I find that my body has begun to lean into the roundness, and I no longer feel so at odds with it. Our bodies are able to move into new spaces because they are a "system of anonymous 'functions' that wraps each particular focusing into a general project" (265/294). My body has moved into the level of the work and taken up the actuality it provides for experiencing the possibilities of my own vertical existence. In fact, afterward, walking along the vertically straight though sometimes horizontally curving lines of the terminal's hallways, I sense the bending of my body, revealing its capacity to take up the lines of the structures it inhabits, to be conditioned by the things.[16]

In establishing a new level, *Tilted Spheres* also institutes a different spacetime into that of the airport. Rather than the swift-moving, distance- and time-defying representational and, thus, one-dimensional space-time of flying, walking through *Tilted Spheres* can stop one short. Giorgio Agamben claims that the space-time dimension of the work of art is epochal. Reflecting upon the ancient Greek word *epoch*, he describes it as having three aspects: it is that which holds back, or suspends; it is that which hands over, presents or offers; and finally, it also means "'to be,' in the sense of 'to be present, to be there, to dominate, to hold.'" The epoch thus reveals "a more original dimension of time," even as it simultaneously "conceals it in the one-dimensional flights of instants."[17] The artwork reduced to aesthetic object is subject to removed critique. The artwork that sets to work as epochal opens up an

original ecstatic union of past, present, and future. It institutes a space-time, a shared world.[18] *Tilted Spheres* is such a work. Rather than an aesthetic object that can be contemplated, it instead seems to institute a space-time where moving and thinking are intertwined. As Serra describes it, "Walking-and-looking becomes a form of 'thinking on your feet.'"[19]

This epochal rhythm is also furthered in the ways that the work sets to work not solely on the visual level, the one favored by representational thinking. The curved spheres allow for sounds to echo in the between spaces. Passengers often stop, sometimes embarrassed, because they suddenly hear their own voices loudly echoing back to them. The work encourages them to hear themselves speak, to hear the sound of their footsteps echoing. In other words, engaging with the work allows for a kind of "boomerang effect" whereby the engagement itself reflects back to the subject moving from the outside in. This boomerang effect is explored in the appropriately named 1974 short film *Boomerang*, which Serra produced with Nancy Holt. In the video, Holt describes the experience of having her words boomerang back to her ear, creating a distance between the words and their apprehension or comprehension. The process, she reflects, slows down her thinking, creating a space that seems removed from reality. The words themselves take on a materiality that she plays with in allowing them to echo off themselves; she observes that her mind "goes out into the world and then comes back inside of" her.[20] This gap between speaking and hearing opens up a space of self-affection, of hearing one's self speak, or walk, of affecting one's self. But it also, as Krauss observes, presents the subject as emerging in relation to what is external to the self, that is, spatial, rather than an interior expression.[21]

To extend this observation further, I found that the vibrations of my echoing voice also had a perceptibly material effect, resonating with the spheres and causing very slight vibrations in the spheres themselves. The vibrations thus reveal yet another interlacing of the flesh of the world, the ways that things and people themselves resonate with other bodies. Thus, if visual perception of the spheres does not remind travelers of their own corporeal interlacing with the flesh of the world, then hearing their own voices, or the sound of their footsteps, reflected back to them perhaps accomplishes this goal. But adults are so deeply entrenched in this planimetric perspective that relies on the rational that they often do not consciously respond to the work, though their prereflective bodies will still begin to bend into its lines. Nevertheless, children, who are still open to embodied perception, respond invariably to

the spheres, running between them over and over again, round and round, laughing and screaming.[22]

Conversely, although voices echo from within the space, if one person speaks in a normal voice at one end of a sphere, the words can be heard by someone standing at the other end—not as echoes, but as though the person were standing nearby. If walking around the spheres is reminiscent of flying around the earth, then this phenomenon reminds us of the ease with which we can speak to someone on another continent. Rather than the heightened awareness of the echo, what is here revealed is the mundane as astonishing. As Arendt points out, humans "now live in an earth-wide continuous whole where even the notion of distance, still inherent in the most perfectly unbroken contiguity of parts, has yielded before the onslaught of speed."[23]

This loss of distance as distance alerts us to what is ultimately at stake in this work: what it means to dwell on the earth. Dwelling is inherently relational. But what happens to our corporeal and hence spatial relations if there is no longer distance, for then neither is there proximity? Proximity, Merleau-Ponty tells us, requires depth. We know what proximal vision is because we perceive the world, and we know the best vantage from which to see the things (*VI*, 37/60). Indeed, neither an infinite distance nor absolute proximity takes into account our relationship with being. The proximal requires distance and distance requires the proximal. Merleau-Ponty provides an example of proximity; he points out that we do not gaze upon an artwork (in his example, Cézanne's watercolors) in the same way as we do an object. Although we gaze at a work in order to explain it, the work in fact works not by "offering us an in itself to be observed, but by acting laterally upon the gaze, by sketching a meaning that the gaze validates." The painting "resides in a carnal space between us and the *things themselves*," which is why it is not a question of resemblance.[24] We see according to the work (*EM*, 164/23). The Serra work is interesting because it ultimately defies representation as such; it brings to the foreground the space between us, the space that provides "near-bys," "far-offs," and "horizons" (*VI*, 231/284). As Pallasmaa points out, peripheral vision "integrates us with space, while focused vision pushes out of the space, making us mere spectators."[25] The meaning is not so much cognitively comprehended, but rather is given to the body that takes up and responds to the enveloping lines of the work.

Tilted Spheres, in its site specificity, reveals the spatial aspects of dwelling as relational—a human intertwining with sky, earth, and the divine.[26] Normally airports do not reveal these aspects of dwelling. Our relation to

sky, for example, is generally revealed in terms of calculation according to the system of planes waiting on the tarmac to efficiently move us from place to place at heights that mean nothing to earth-dwelling beings. Yet one of the lovely features of this terminal is its openness to the outside light. Where possible it relies on natural light that comes through high windows and sky-lights. In the interior space that the Serra work provides, patches of light suddenly appear as the sun emerges from a cloud, lighting up the floor or even bouncing off the steel. One sliver of light takes on not only the window's lines, but also the curve of the sphere, making the shadow/light play somewhat reminiscent of a church interior. Even light within the spheres finds a place and is no longer ubiquitous and diffuse but reconnects earth to sky. Such subtle reminders both of sky and the divine, which I understand here in terms of wonder in the face of that which is beyond human control, are strange in an airport terminal, even though what is accomplished in the moving of bodies is extraordinary. The spheres, however, remind us of what we know phenomenally about movement: that the earth is the ground of our experience; that we do not feel its movement, though we know cognitively that it moves in space; and that, similarly, we feel kinesthetic movement in our bodies, but we do not feel our bodies as moving through space as such; and finally, that our bodies are the ground, the *null-punkt*, against which the phenomenal, vertical world appears. They are pulled into other bodies—the gravitational pull of the steel; and the ways that our bodies move into and take up this force reminds us of the pull of the earth beneath our feet, one de-fied when we step into an airplane. In fact, the very materiality of the work, the Cor-Ten steel, reminds us of the earth from which the material was first mined. In short the work reveals that because we are embodied, we share the same world together.

III. BOURGEOIS'S *MAMAN*

Like *Tilted Spheres*, Louise Bourgeois's sculpture *Maman* also installs a location in a shared world, but her work also reminds us that we dwell in different worlds. *Maman* is at once a sculpture and an architectural struc-ture, with her towering height (9.25 meters) and the reach of her arched legs (10 meters) that allow for people to walk both beneath and between them. This bronze spider, with its eight legs and an egg sack of twenty-six white marble eggs, belongs to the National Art Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and

Figure 12.3 and 12.4. Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, 1999, cast 2003. National Art Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © 2014 Louise Bourgeois Trust / SOCRAC, Montreal / VAGA, New York.

is situated on its front plaza. The original *Maman*, made of steel and marble, was commissioned by the Tate Modern, London, in 1999. Six bronzes were subsequently cast; this one, cast in 2003, was installed in Ottawa in 2005.[27] Though one of six castings—the placing of *Maman*, like *Tilted Spheres*, is significant. East of the plaza stands St. Patrick's Cathedral, and if one looks out toward the southwest, the Hotel Laurier, and the buildings of Parliament Hill, the seat of the Canadian federal government, can be seen on the cliff overlooking the Rideau River. The sculpture also mirrors the octagonal arches of the glass structure of the National Art Gallery, also designed by Moshe Safdie, which stands to the north. The gallery itself echoes the lines of the buildings on Parliament Hill as well as the octagonal towers of the cathedral. These lines have been picked up in the American embassy to the south. Situated close by, halfway between the gallery and the American embassy, is a war monument—the three figures are easily recognizable as soldiers; it is placed so that vehicles and people must move around its circumference. *Maman*, however, is more an anti-monument that does not impede the flow of people, but nevertheless draws them into her range.

This sculpture installs a site where people gather around, within and beneath her, a site of dwelling since it is relational: it is a meeting place for blind dates; for couples, families, friends, and strangers; a place where passersby linger for a while; and she intertwines with her environment. Balanced on the very tips of her eight legs, the joints provide an arch that meets the sky. The eggs suspended beneath her belly are oriented toward the ground. Light moves through the legs, and when the sun shines, they seem to dance as the shadows shift with the sunlight. Indeed, on a sunny afternoon these legs seem themselves to create—weaving and spinning, drawing lines on the pavement that disappear with the first clouds. The materiality of the legs, the bronze, responds to the sky, reflecting light from its surfaces. Joints that are repeatedly touched bear a polished sheen.

Indeed, like *Tilted Spheres*, *Maman* is an interesting combination of sinuous lines and holding voids, from the lines of her legs, and the spiraling line of her body that seems to gather her together in this open space. Yet, these lines are different from those of *Tilted Spheres*, which direct movement so that while it is possible to walk or run between the spheres, through the center, or around them, it is difficult to avoid them altogether. With *Maman*, however, one need not change one's route at all—one can walk or run through her from any angle, and many, like most joggers, do not alter their course as they cross the plaza. Some children dash around her touching each leg, one after

another; a couple of youths with skateboards weave around her legs. Unlike the straight lines of the nearby flagpoles, these sinewy bronze lines echo those of bodies, and bodies are thus drawn to their measure. Indeed, an adult body can nestle into the crook of a leg, for the legs bend the ways that bodies bend. Passersby photograph *Maman* and ask to be photographed standing with her; they seem not to pose in the void in her center, but prefer, much as small children often do, to cling to one of *Maman*'s legs. The legs seem so light and thin, yet they are in fact quite solid in the way that spiderwebs seem so ephemeral and yet are not. Some passersby even try to climb her, and of course this is the pleasure of an outdoor sculpture that we can touch and be touched by.

The fact that *Maman* is explicitly feminine reminds passersby of the sexuate nature of embodied existence. When I first started to write about her, I unsuccessfully tried to use the neutral pronoun *it* to refer to this inanimate object. But *Maman* is sexed; from her name to the eggs she carries, she is a sculpture in the feminine. Of course, Western sculpture historically relies on the shape of the female form. But this one is different: she defies the reductive gaze. Only from a distance can she be taken in all at once. In order to actually encounter *Maman*, one must stand nearby, and to stand nearby makes it virtually impossible, due to her sheer size and shape, to take her in all at once. She affects those she surrounds who stand under her, or nearby, or who caress her legs with their hands and eyes. Indeed, standing under *Maman*'s belly, one can look out at a world framed by her legs, even as one cannot really see her at the same time. Or, one can choose to look up at her belly and the sky and not see the world. Of course, *Maman* does not truly offer shelter from the sun or the rain. She is porous and open; her shelter and holding are more phenomenal and psychic than physical.

Similarly to Serra's *Tilted Spheres*, which works to upset the passenger's orientation within the space of passage of the airport, Bourgeois's sculpture also installs a level. While *Tilted Spheres* shows up the level of the airport through instituting a new one that draws the traveler's attention back to her embodied being (which is not the level predominant in our age), *Maman* reminds us of the primordial. As already mentioned, it is through the contrast of levels that both come into appearance. We always enter one level from that of the one that precedes it. But, as Merleau-Ponty points out, one cannot go back infinitely. Ultimately, he concludes that there must be a "pre-history," a "pre-personal" tradition, that is the body itself, and it is this anonymous body that precedes the particularizing of the individual and

provides the first level (*PhP*, 265/293). It is because we are embodied that we can inhabit space at all.

Drawing on Irigaray, I want to suggest another possibility, that this primordial level is one provided first by the mother's body during gestation, and then from birth by the mother's introduction of the baby to the world, which is the orientation toward objects this first parenting provides.[28] As Irigaray points out, there is now evidence that the fetus perceives at both the proprioceptive and the auditory levels.[29] She concludes that "the objectivity of the world that is mediated by the mother has been neglected, indeed forgotten," even, or perhaps especially, in existential accounts of being in the world.[30] Irigaray's point is that the first public, the first world into which we enter into existence as a "we" is not that of Merleau-Ponty's anonymous body, nor that of Heidegger's "*das Man*." Rather, it is the world of the mother, a "'who' irreducible to another."[31] This first relation with the mother is instead the one that shows me and brings me into the surrounding world.[32] It is this first relation that is internalized as the other within. Irigaray's claim is that in order to discover our own sense of self that is not absorbed into the general anonymous public described by existential phenomenologists, it is necessary to recognize this first public relation, which was not anonymous, but was also not yet differentiated. Differentiation can occur only after the fact, through a recognition of this first proximal relation that precedes difference, that takes place before the child can actively respond, that provides for the possibility of subsequent relations, for difference, and for an insertion in the world. The public "one" becomes a "we" where a recognition of difference can inhere in average everydayness.[33]

Maman draws attention to this first public relation. First, she installs a public place as a sculpture in the maternal-feminine, reminding viewers on an embodied level of this first primordial proximity that occurs even before relations, or perception as such, can actually take place.[34] Second, she reminds us that embodiment is sexed and particular, not merely anonymous and neutral. And third, she reconnects passersby in this public space to embodied yet interior psychic memories of the private aspects we bring with us into the public sphere: our first homes, the incorporation of embodied gestures, our primordial relations with our mothers and parents, and the inherence of the other within in our average everyday perception, which, like levels themselves, cannot be represented as such. The point is not to return to a past but rather to creatively cultivate the self and relations with others. As Mieke Bal points out, Bourgeois draws on pivotal images and objects from

her early life in order to build and create new works—the works that stand before us in the present.[35] This does not mean that she is caught up in the past but rather that she acknowledges the ways in which the past can creatively structure and shape what we build in the present.[36]

If *Tilted Spheres* allows for the perceptual experience of incompossibles, of mathematically calculable lines that coexist with the bulging spheres that do not align one with the other, *Maman*'s incompossibles are affective.[37] *Maman* evokes simultaneously the feelings of both fear and expansion. Unlike *Tilted Spheres*, which, as a sculpture, is nonrepresentational, *Maman* is easily recognizable as the spider she is. We have all encountered spiders— some people harbor an intense fear of them. Yet even for those who are not normally afraid of spiders, she reminds them of some residual dread perhaps merely through the menacing scope of her arched legs and hovering belly. Her magnitude takes on the phenomenal weight of significance rather than measuring against any cognitive assessment of the size of spiders. This is not a spider that can be crushed with the heel of a boot. Or, as one child remarked, "what if the spider fell?"

Indeed, children respond immediately to this fear. Eva Simms explains how children depict the world in their drawings not according to some notion of a precise representational account, but rather in terms of the phenomenal world of gestural meaning. In her descriptions of children's drawings she describes the ways in which, for example, hands, or toys, or certain people are drawn larger or in the forefront because they are phenomenally more significant. Simms's point is that children are, in fact, more in touch with the world, not less.[38] Accordingly, mothers loom huge in children's psychic as well as physical space. Elizabeth Manchester further points out that the viewer is made childlike in looking up at a mother who is "powerful and terrifying, beautiful and, without eyes to look or a head to think, curiously indifferent."[39] Thus it is that some children were at first afraid to approach *Maman*. Another child commented on how scary she was. And yet, there is a delight for them to be had in this fear. Because, on the one hand, one encounters it: *Maman* sets it in motion; on the other hand, one knows that she cannot really crush. Similar to the pleasure some take in watching horror films, *Maman* allows for an encounter with fear, but provides the distance that makes it possible to not simply react but instead to actively contemplate the fear, to be in touch with it, and to creatively respond to it. In contradistinction to this response—with her high arched legs that provide a kind of shelter, however ephemeral and fleeting, she also allows for a feeling

of expansive exhilaration. I expand in her presence, upward and outward. My point is that these incompossibles are some of the affective possibilities that a mother, or indeed, a parent, might provide: shelter, the delight in new possibilities, as well as the fear of being crushed. Moreover, her body shelters the marble eggs under her belly, and yet the egg sac looks more like an industrial cage. Shelter can be both claustrophobic and confining, as well as impersonal.

I want to argue, then, that this sculpture draws our attention to, and allows for, a moment of self-affection that reminds us of our indebtedness to our mothers, and to the perceptual world that mothers, indeed parents, open up for their children, the world of objectivity and of objects. *Maman* is herself an object, but she is one that reminds us of our early affective relational life, when we were two, without being sufficiently differentiated from our mothers to recognize them as subjects in their own right. Moreover, it is usually parents who give to the child her objective world, though sometimes this showing can fail: it must to some extent correspond with a reality.[40] One child who was afraid of the spider, for example, was reassured by her mother, who touched the spider to show her that she did not have to be afraid. While her mother showed her through touch, her father reassured her that the spider was just a toy. But it seems to me that this spider is not a toy, and the child knew that.

While *Maman* suggests an architectural structure, Mieke Bal proposes that Bourgeois's structures are often reminiscent of homes.[41] And these homes (here she is thinking of works such as the cells) are filled with objects, with "memories as found objects." These found objects are ones, she argues, that become integrated into the self, unless, of course they are traumatic objects that defy integration.[42] Homes are the places of our first memories, where we integrate objects, where the self is formed. There is thus a contiguity between the private sphere of the home and interiority as a psychic place of retreat; *Maman* is suggestive of both. For spiders, too, inhabit houses—we have all lived with them. Thus, when we encounter *Maman* and her sinewy supple legs that appear so delicate and light, as though they would pick up at any moment and carry *Maman* away, this encounter overlaps with early embodied memories of the movements of spiders. We know how spiders move. Indeed, *Maman* appears to be only at momentary rest from movement. As Merleau-Ponty describes, we embody the structures, and the movements of the things, and bodies around us providing a "certain schema of the tactile 'world'" (*PhP*, 331/366). He writes: "I can only effectively touch if the phenomenon

encounters an echo in me, if it is in accord with a certain nature of my consciousness, and if the organ that comes to encounter it is synchronized with it" (330/366). Moreover, because our senses overlap synesthetically, I do not actually have to touch *Maman*; I can feel the movement of the spider in my body through a visual encounter (243/270–71). Accordingly, our bodies know the fast and nimble walk of the spider. *Maman* echoes that walk in the materiality of her bronze, and we, in the materiality of our bodies. Moreover, the word *Maman* also has the potential to reverberate through bodies. *Maman* as the first home, the first dwelling, introduces the objects and objectivity of a world—a world that we integrate, and a relation that becomes the other within. It is worth noting here that standing above the plaza, perched on the center apex of the adjacent cathedral's roof, is a gold-painted statue of another mother, Mary. Holding the infant Jesus, she watches attentively over the square, reminding us of the weight of culture and history that interlaces with psyche and nature. Indeed, when the cathedral bells rang on the Sunday morning I was there, most bodies in the square turned toward the cathedral in the direction of Mary, momentarily obeying the summons. One child ran to the center, called out Mama, looked around for her, and then, reassured by his mother's observing gaze, started to dance to the music of the cathedral chimes.

Thus, *Maman* works to connect us to our primordial psychic past, and rather than seeing it as something to overcome, she encourages those who encounter her to work creatively, to reinvent and cultivate new relations and perceptions. Like *Tilted Spheres*, she institutes a space-time. Whereas *Tilted Spheres* is epochal, calling viewers to corporeally engage in a different space-time that nevertheless belongs to the same world, the space-time that *Maman* evokes is at once particular and shared: it concerns the back-and-forth passage between interiority and exteriority that is specific to each individual. It works to reconnect an individual primordial archaic time with a shared present—the encounter with the sculpture. It is to bring a past with us, not one we must overcome or leave behind, but rather one to which we return with a difference, with the gap or interval of the active and passive. We create by weaving the past into the present, to, as Irigaray describes it, cultivate our selves, by going back to the self, affecting the self before returning to the other. This personal psychic creativity is also reconnected in *Maman* to a generational and hence cultural creativity. The eggs that *Maman* holds remind us of a generational future, of a natality, of a new beginning that cannot be predicted in advance, but whose potential existence nevertheless guides us in

the present, because we have the capacity to begin again. These lines are thus horizontal and vertical, as Irigaray points out.

Accordingly, Irigaray suggests that the path toward becoming ourselves requires recognizing that primordial unity of two, but this time with its relational difference. We belong to the same world as our mothers, but we dwell in different relational worlds. The question then becomes how are we to relate to others who also dwell in other worlds, which is the challenge that *Maman* poses for public space. To the extent that public space is relational, communal, and potentially political, Irigaray reminds us that we can share in a public world only if we distinguish ourselves from "*das Man*," or the anonymous body, through becoming aware of the ways in which we become ourselves in relation to others. And this, Irigaray argues, can take place only if we, as adults, come to recognize that first public world, that first unity of two, a proximal relation that precedes difference and is yet necessary to the eventual recognition of a difference that is not indifferent but actually takes difference into account.

Maman, as already mentioned, is one of six. I would suggest that this multiplicity emphasizes the uniqueness not so much of the place itself as of the unique ways in which individual selves take up shared spaces. As Irigaray frames it, we live in the same world, but we dwell in different worlds. How, then, are we to understand such dwelling in terms of public space? I would argue that the objectivity essential to public space is thus given to us first through an intersubjective free space that allows us to be. Merleau-Ponty refers once to free space in *The Visible and the Invisible* in his discussion of the philosopher who takes up an object of study. For Merleau-Ponty, the philosopher can never exhaust the question directed toward the object because this would be to collapse the depth and distance required by the object under study. There is no privileged perspective from above that can give us the things once and for all. Instead, the things offer themselves to the philosopher who does not wish "to have them but to see them, not to hold them as with forceps, or to immobilize them as under the objective of a microscope, but to let them be and to witness their continued being—to someone who therefore limits himself to giving them the hollow, the free space they ask for in return, the resonance they require, who follows their own movement" (*VI*, 101–2/138). Such a perception belongs to interrogative thought that encounters the things with "astonishment" by letting them be rather than positing them (102/138).

For Irigaray, this is not quite sufficient. It is also necessary to acknowledge the first public world that provides for objectivity, that first proximal relation

of mother to child, that phenomenally gives the child a world, that is, the other within. In order to be ourselves, to exceed the anonymous body, or Heidegger's "*das Man*," it is necessary to recognize this primordial relationality, the perception of the other within that shapes the ways we encounter or relate to the thing or to others. It is not sufficient, she claims, to perceive the thing or the other through letting be. To understand perception as always entailing the active and the passive, she writes, the reversibility that is inherent to the chiasm, is to forget a time when the infant, even the "pre-infant," to use Wynn's term,[43] was actively touched by a touch she could not herself actively return.[44] That is to say, becoming oneself is to recognize this first touch, this proximity that precedes the difference and differentiating inherent to the chiasm, which we could understand here as the holding of the held (*VI*, 266/319). To not recognize this first touch is to remain embedded in a unity, a public that does not individuate—that asserts one perspective, rather than recognizing multiple worlds, and multiple dwellings. This means that one can no longer recognize oneself as the "centre of a unique world, even if this world has been inhabited before me," a shared world of perceptions and levels into which we move.[45] To reflect upon perception, upon what affects me and upon how I affect others is to create an interiority; it is to not rely simply upon an engagement with that which is beyond me, an engagement in the world. This means that there is not simply one orientation to the world, but that orientations are multiple. As Irigaray argues, to claim that "we are with one another in the same way" and that we share a common world is to annul "this first existence" that has shaped the ways in which we perceive and in which we situate ourselves within the world.[46] In relating to the other as other and not as belonging to a common world is to allow the other his or her freedom, even if this freedom requires "a certain terror" as "the condition for an authentic meeting between two subjects."[47]

The public world relies on a measure of objectivity. Problems arise when it is assumed either that objectivity relies upon one single perspective—the god's-eye view—or that objectivity is not possible at all. Serra addresses this issue with *Tilted Spheres* by showing us how we share the same world—different people who come from different places can be beckoned by his sculpture and can experience it because they are embodied; they are motile, perceptive, and hence necessarily situated. While this sharing is temporal and spatial, both the god's-eye perspective and the multiple views from everywhere collapse time and space, and hence distance and the passage of time. Serra's sculpture instead requires space and time in order to be encountered. It thus installs a kind

of dwelling that relies on the proximity of being situated, of perceiving according to the sculpture. This proximity cannot itself be perceived because it is that which allows us to experience the sculpture. It is a proximity that is, moreover, largely denied in the level of this age. I would suggest that *Maman* reveals another aspect of the relational space-time that belongs to the proximity of dwelling. She shows how objectivity is not merely external, but also requires a recognition of the other within. Our mothers/parents provide the first public world, giving us the first objective world that is the one we internalize. Thus, recognizing the objectivity of the public world requires recognizing that we dwell in different worlds. Irigaray's point is that if this first objective relationship is not taken into account, then the difference inherent to objectivity in public space will not be recognized, and the danger of falling back on one perspective remains. Or, equally problematic, a shared and communal world remains out of reach. A shared world, grounded in embodied perception, also requires recognizing this first relation, and thereby acknowledging the proximity that precedes difference and that allows us to recognize difference at all. Cultivating the self suggests that, in our average everydayness, we will be more likely to recognize difference. This means that the public world need not be a reduction or a leveling down, but rather can be a place of coexistence, a public world that takes difference into account.

NOTES

1. Richard Serra, *Tilted Spheres*, Cor-Ten steel, 4.35 x 13.86 m and 4.35 x 12.11 m. Installed Lester B. Pearson International Airport, Toronto, 2002–2004; Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, steel and marble, 365 x 351 x 403 inches (927.1 x 891.5 x 1023.6 cm). National Art Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1999, cast 2003. Thanks are due to Lee Petrie, art collection curator at the Lester B. Pearson Airport, for generously taking considerable time to provide me with access to *Tilted Spheres*.

2. I take this understanding of "flows" from Dorothea E. Olkowski, *The Universal (in the Realm of the Sensible)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 138–72.

3. Melissa Laing, "Liminal Art in the Transit Zone," *Philament* 9 (2006): 1–7.

4. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 107–22. Originally published as *Sein und Zeit* (1927; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993).

5. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 250, 264.

6. Kynaston McShine, "A Conversation about Work with Richard Serra," in *Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years*, ed. Kynaston McShine and Lynne Cooke (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 36.

7. Douglas Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site Specificity," in *Richard Serra / Sculpture*, ed. Rosalind E. Krauss (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 43.

8. Ibid.

9. Rosalind Krauss, "Richard Serra / Sculpture," in *Richard Serra / Sculpture*, 34; *PhP*, 265, 223/294, 249.

10. Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 67. Quoted in *IP*, 98n27/141n83.

11. Samuel B. Mallin, *Art Line Thought* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1996), 333. My reading of *Tilted Spheres* is indebted to Mallin's phenomenological analysis of Serra as well as to his body hermeneutics methodology.

12. Ibid., 316–17.

13. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *SNS*, 13.

14. Lynne Cooke, "Thinking on Your Feet: Richard Serra's Sculptures in Landscape," in McShine and Cooke, *Richard Serra Sculpture*, 89–90.

15. Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, Cor-Ten steel, 12 x 120 ft. x 2.5 in., installed 1981 Federal Plaza, New York. General Services Administration, Washington, DC (dismantled 1989). Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture," 41.

16. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 9.

17. Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 100–101.

18. Ibid., 102.

19. Cooke, "Thinking on Your Feet," 97.

20. Richard Serra and Nancy Holt, *Boomerang*, 10:28 min. color, sound, 1974, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z32JTnRrHc.

21. Krauss, "Richard Serra / Sculpture," 23.

22. For a discussion of children and phenomenal embodiment, see Eva M. Simms, *The Child in the World: Embodiment, Time, and Language in Early Childhood* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2008).

23. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 250.

24. Merleau-Ponty, "New Working Notes from the Period of *The Visible and the Invisible*," in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, ed. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 439–40.

25. Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: Wiley, 2005), 13.

26. See Martin Heidegger's discussion of dwelling in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 145–61. Originally published as "Bauen Wohnen Denken," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, GA 7 (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), 139–56.

27. Tate Press Office, "Tate Acquires Louise Bourgeois' Giant Spider, *Maman*," *Tate Online* 2008, http://www.tate.org.uk/about/pressoffice/pressreleases/2008/13904.htm.

28. After birth this "mothering" does not have to come from the gestational mother; in fact, it could be from any parent. Nevertheless, it seems that this first gestational proximity with the birth mother cannot be overlooked.

29. Luce Irigaray, *Sharing the World* (London: Continuum, 2008), 106. See also Michael Cole, Sheila R. Cole, and Cynthia Lightfoot, *The Development of Children* (New York: Worth, 2005).

30. Irigaray, *Sharing the World*, 106. See also Francine Wynn, "The Early Relationship of Mother and Pre-Infant: Merleau-Ponty and Pregnancy," *Nursing Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2002): 4–14.

31. Irigaray, *Sharing the World*, 111.

32. Irigaray refers to Heidegger's discussion of the "surrounding world [*umweltlich*]." Heidegger writes: "The actual place is defined as the place of this useful thing for . . . in terms of a totality of the interconnected places of the context of useful things at hand in surrounding world" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 95/102).

33. Irigaray, *Sharing the World*, 112. Irigaray draws on Heidegger's analysis of "*das Man*" in her discussion of everydayness. Heidegger writes: "It could be the case that the who of every *Da-sein* is precisely not I myself" (*Being and Time*, 108/115).

34. For an excellent discussion of Irigaray and Heidegger on proximity, see Krzysztof Ziarek, "Proximities: Irigaray and Heidegger on Difference," *Continental Philosophy Review* 33, no. 2 (2000): 133–58.

35. Mieke Bal, "Narrative Inside Out: Louise Bourgeois' 'Spider' as Theoretical Object," *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 2 (1999): 121.

36. Psychoanalytic interpretations of Bourgeois's childhood provide a common analytic perspective for accounting for her artworks. We know that Bourgeois's mother mended tapestries; she was, like the spider, a weaver. We are told that Bourgeois experienced her childhood as psychically difficult—her father had a series of lovers, her nurses, and she felt that her mother was both betrayed by her father and in turn betrayed her children by allowing these affairs to continue. My position, however, is that these biographical details have little leverage in the encounter of a work of art set up in a public space where passersby with no knowledge of the artist encounter the work in their phenomenal average everydayness. Moreover, while these details provide background information, they do not account for the work's phenomenal impact.

37. This is not to say that there is not an affective element to Serra's works. Indeed, walking between the two spheres induces an element of fear. The spheres in some ways seem so precarious, and yet so weighty, even oppressive, for one senses the potential of their collapse. As well, one can sense out the affective gravity of belonging to the earth that cannot be escaped by merely boarding a plane. We are earth-dwellers. Finally, as I've pointed out, *Tilted Spheres* reminds us of our ability to affect ourselves through hearing our own voices, the sound of our feet.

38. Simms, *Child in the World*, 59–79.

39. Elizabeth Manchester, "*Maman, 1999*," *Tate Online*, 2009, http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=69085&searchid=21244&tabview=text.

40. Susan Bredlau describes the ways in which parents show the child how to perceive the world, and how to incorporate the world that is there. Bredlau, "Perceiving through Another: Incorporation and the Child Perceiver" (paper presented at the Thirtieth International Merleau-Ponty Circle Conference, Eugene, Oregon, September 29–October 1, 2005).

41. Bal, "Narrative Inside Out," 122.

42. Ibid., 110.

43. Wynn, *Early Relationship*, 5.

44. Luce Irigaray, "To Paint the Invisible," trans. Helen A. Fielding, *Continental Philosophy Review* 37, no. 4 (2004): 396–97.

45. Irigaray, *Sharing the World*, 100.

46. Ibid., 107.

47. Ibid., 109.

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