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The concept of spatiality in Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Patočka

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The Concept of Spatiality in Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Patočka

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Dedication

This Honors Thesis Project is dedicated to Professor Saulius Geniusas who been my philosophical mentor for the past 3 years as well as a provider of great support through my journey at JMU. With the completion of this project I hope to show him tremendous respect and gratitude.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In every moment of our lives we find ourselves *somewhere*; from the moment of birth to the last breath we find ourselves continuously located in space. We awake in space, sleep in space, and dream in space. Hence, any philosophical investigation of a human being necessarily involves a discussion on the problematic of space. It is impossible to conceive of the human being or of the human experience apart from the bounds of space.

This honors thesis will explore the problematic of spatiality as addressed by three continental thinkers of the last century: Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jan Patočka. For each of these thinkers spatiality is not the principle theme of investigation but a meaningful account of spatiality arises through their philosophical accounts of lived human experience.

The original question that guided me to explore the concept of spatiality was movement. When I started exploring the concept of movement, however, I was constantly faced with presupposition of space. All movement occurs in and is made possible by more primary occurrences of spatiality and orientation in the world. Thus clearly space, as the condition for movement, was a more crucial topic for me to explore if in the future I were to further investigate the problematic of movement. Throughout this analysis I will try to show that space is not only the condition for movement but for subjectivity's interaction, engagement, and livelihood with the world in general. To not fully account for subjectivity's spatiality would be to pass over subjectivity's most essential characteristics and functions.

What I am primarily interested in is the distinction between physical space and lived space; more simply put, the former is a pure theorization space while the latter is an experiential account of space. The notion of physical space determines spatial values primarily as that which can be measured. The notion of physical space is found in the natural science but can be seen as stemming from early modern philosopher as well. For instance, in the modern philosophy of Rene Descartes, the concept of spatiality is defined by substantiality, characterized by extension. The Cartesian notion of space, as the extension of substance, accounts only for a particular type of spatiality, namely an objective spatiality, which provides an exhaustive account of spatiality only for a world full of pure substance. The concept of spatiality as it is thematized within phenomenology, however, lies in critical contrast to conceptions of space presented by early modern philosophers. Humans do not merely exist as objects in space; rather, there is a constant interactive *inhabiting* of space, which is at the crux of human spatiality. The problematic of spatiality is not a matter of merely existing in space; rather, it is a question of relating to space through a sense of spatiality of the world and the body's position in the world. Moreover, lived space is able to grasp other entities in the world while still retaining their existential meaning whereas physical space would reduce these entities to mere substance. As Jan Patočka, in his text *Body, Community, Language, World,* so eloquently puts it:

> There is a fundamental difference between being in space as a part of it, alongside other things, and *living spatially,* being aware of being in space, of living in space…A merely corporeal being can exist in space, can relate to space, nonetheless the lived spatiality of our body cannot consist in objectively geometric relations as thing.[1]

The understanding of spatiality as a geometric relation doesn't suffice because as Patočka is suggesting, we are not merely substantive bodies that live in an indifferent state to our world.

[1] (*BCLW*, 31)

Rather we are embodied beings that are aware of our spatiality and can relate to it. By addressing spatiality only on the basis of extended substance, it is precisely this awareness and relation to our own spatiality that is lost.

Thus, this Honors Thesis will focus on the concepts of spatiality and orientation of the worldly human being. Through this analysis I hope to draw insights into the way we spatially understand our bodies, our environment, and the tasks we involve ourselves in. An understanding of spatiality and orientation may also grant a richer understanding of the fundamental differences between lived space and physical space. Space is no longer a plane of determinate points; rather, it is experienced as a relationship between subjectivity and the world. In other words, experiential space occurs not on the basis of absolute terms of direction but rather through a process of subjectivity's organic interaction with the world.

To elucidate these central concerns of this Thesis lets take an everyday situation as example. You are at a café having coffee with your closest friend. There are all sorts of commotion on the busy street surrounding you two, but you both are leaned slightly in towards each other listening in earnest as to not miss a single word. In that moment there are numerous things that are in your proximal environment. Measurably, you could say what is closest to you and what is farthest; your elbows are on the coffee table or your hand in on the coffee cup are what is most near and the bus turning the corner at the end the street is farthest from you. In our lived experience of this environment, however, measurement of distance is not so much the ultimatum on closeness and farness. Your friend in the conversation may seem the closest thing to you because your attention or concern is directed towards her. The table, which your elbows are touching, seems to magically recede into the farness. The beauty of lived spatiality though is that this awareness is shot through in our experience in a constant and ever changing way…Soon

the coffee spills off the table and the spilled coffee is much closer than your friend across the table. Then the bus at the corner makes a loud screech and no longer does it seem at such a distance. Our experience of the world is always shifting and re-orienting in accordance with the meaningful situations we find ourselves in; this is precisely the basis of lived spatiality. This Thesis seeks to understand these structures of nearness and farness in space, as well as orientation and directionality of our environment, and how they are phenomenologically constituted.

As lived spatiality is the concept I wish to elucidate, phenomenology will be the method used in this investigation. Phenomenology is the study of structures of experience of consciousness from the first person perspective. A central tenant in phenomenology is the notion of intentionality; consciousness is always consciousness *of something.* Consciousness is always a relation between an act of consciousness and an object of consciousness. Phenomenology as a methodology has the ability to take any experience and unfold the structure of consciousness within that experience; we can think here of anything form the experience of reading to having a conversation. The account phenomenology provides us with is that of experience from within the world and from within the self, rather than by means of abstracting into the objective. In this Thesis, what we are after is not an objective understanding of space, but rather space as we experience it in our daily lives. In an age that readily relies on science for the explanation of phenomena, phenomenology offers an alternative way of understanding experience; one that takes into account subjectivity and the world as it is given to subjectivity, rather than through a worldview that has been sterilized by the scientific method. Through phenomenology we will be able to understand the phenomenon of space as a *lived experience*.

This work will be broken into three chapters: 1) Spatiality of Dasein in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, 2) Spatiality of the Body-Subject in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, and 3) The Concept of Spatiality in the Writings of Jan Patočka.

We begin with Heidegger, because it is arguably due to Heidegger's analysis of Being that my analysis of space can take place. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger investigates the question of Being, which within the history of philosophy has been taken to be self-evident or indefinable. Heidegger doesn't try to understand different entities or beings but rather just the predicate of Being itself. In other words, he is concerned with what it means to be. Heidegger continues then to conduct a fundamental ontology of Being itself and most complexly draws an analytic of Dasein [Being-There]. Dasein is uniquely characterized as reflective and reflexive; it is able to relate to itself and takes issue with its existence. In turn, it has the potential to project concern into the world of entities, shaping its experience of them. Dasein is also a spatial Being through and through, it is always found in the world. Dasein isn't *in* the world like water is in a cup; Dasein inhabits the world as it has the ability to interact and relate to it. As will be explicated, Dasein's inhabiting of the world and its unique concern for its own existence are essential to understanding the spatiality of Dasein for it is through Dasein's own projection onto its world that nearness and farness are constituted.

However, as we will see, Heidegger's analysis hardly touches on the embodied nature of Dasein; rather, Heidegger's fundamental ontology is concerned with the existential state of Dasein's Being. Thus, the second chapter moves to Merleau-Ponty's corporeal spatiality. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is driven by a desire to return to a pre-objective world; a world prior to theorization of it, one that belongs to experience itself. The pre-objective world can only be accessed by the body; thus enters the problematic of the body. The body for Merleau-Ponty is

not an object, but rather it is a lived body. In his seminal work, *Phenomenology of Perception*, all notions of mind-body dualism are left behind as the human is conceived of as the body-subject: a pure unity of subjectivity and physicality. Hence there is a shift from Being inhabiting the world to a corporeal being in the world, though one with the same potential for care and interaction with its world. In the chapter on Merleau-Ponty we will see not only a spatial understanding of the body but of the body's orientation to the world. What is brought clear in Merleau-Ponty's writings is how orientation within a place is not determined by absolute directions; rather is it determined by a familiarity of the body to its location as inhabitable. The body seeks an orientation in which it can execute the tasks towards which it is aimed. For example, if I am faced with an image of an upside down kitchen, I orient myself, my body, within the picture according to how I would find myself using the kitchen towards my tasks. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty spatiality and orientation are concepts inseparable from embodiment. This phenomenon is the same as when you lay your head to the side; the world doesn't rotate to the side as well, rather we still maintain a sense of orientation as if we were standing up.

The third chapter presents the same themes in the writings of Jan Patočka. For Patočka the subject-body gains its orientation with respect to the tasks towards which it is aimed. For example, we lean towards the lecturer who is speaking or hunch over the table as we enjoy a good meal. For Patočka humans are guided by a dynamism from which they project their tasks; our bodies are the axis of this energy. The body becomes point zero from which our orientation projects out. With our bodies as point zero, it is also the body that is often missing in our orientation. We are rarely aware of our bodies, but rather towards something to which we aim.

I chose Patočka's writings for the third chapter because of his philosophy regarding the movements of life. Spatiality in the context of Patočka's movements shows most clearly the

importance of the topic of spatiality as it asserts orientation as the most primordial event for man; with sinking off roots into the earth, man first gets a sense of location. Patočka's final movement of true self-understanding and liberation must always be on the basis of the primordial sinking of roots and self-localization. The notion that orientation is the most rudimentary experience of man upon which life is built up from shows the importance of gaining an understanding of spatiality and orientation.

Lastly, in the conclusion I will provide a brief synopsis of the analysis undertaken in order to succinctly lay out the ways in which lived spatiality has been conceived of in Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Patočka. I will also return to my original question on movement to briefly draw implications of how movement can aid us in a bodily understanding of our spatiality.

CHAPTER 2

SPATIALITY IN HEIDEGGER'S *BEING AND TIME*

I. INTRODUCTION

From an initial glance at the title 'Being and Time', one can ascertain that the main themes under discussion for Martin Heidegger in his magnum opus is that of 'being' and its temporality, or rather the temporal framework in which Being finds itself grounded. In fact, for Heidegger, temporality serves "as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being".[2] Despite the prioritization of temporality within the text, another important theme does arise within Heidegger's ontology of Being: spatiality. While not the main issue in *Being and Time*, spatiality plays a crucial role in the understanding of Being because, as we will see, Being is itself spatial in a number of different ways and in this sense inseparable from the issue of spatiality in the same way as it is from temporality. In turn, fully understanding the spatiality of Being reveals fundamental characteristics of Being in its world. But what exactly does it mean to say that Being is spatial? First, when thinking of spatiality one tends to think of a notion of space dealing with measureable distance; the spatial distance of an object to other objects determines its spatiality. Secondly, to say that Being is spatial also implies that Being is *somewhere*; we understand this somewhere to be space, in particular the space of the world. One often thinks, however, of being in the space of the world by means of extension through space.

In *Being and Time*, however, one finds a radical reevaluation of the historical conception of space, particularly of Descartes' geometric and objective space, which leads to the aforementioned assumptions regarding space. Descartes' notion of spatiality has been

[2] (*BT*, 1)

characterized primarily in terms of extension; that which is a physical substance in the world is an extended one. The notions of extension and substance fail to grasp, however, the existential state of Being of the substance in question; substance as extension then becomes a sufficient understanding of Being though in fact it conceals the very essence of Being. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger's investigation aims to recover the essence of Being, and in turn is tied to a new understanding of spatiality, which captures the existential characteristics of spatiality. The aim of this chapter is to uncover and bring forth the theme of spatiality in *Being and Time* and in doing so, better understand Being as well. In what follows, I will first offer a description of Heidegger's general project and the notions of Being found within the text. Afterwards, I will turn to an analysis of Heidegger's critique of Descartes and why spatiality is not reducible to extension. Lastly, I will bring the analysis spatiality in Heidegger's *Being and Time* to completion by turning to Heidegger's concept of the world in order to understand in what sense Being can be characterized as spatial.

II. Heidegger's Ontology of Being: An Analytic of Dasein

The ultimate aim of *Being and Time* is to create a fundamental ontology of Being within its temporal framework. 'Being' can be an elusive term, so what exactly is an inquiry into 'Being' searching for? While 'Being', as a theme of philosophical inquiry, has been present since the time of Plato and Aristotle, Heidegger suggests that the theme has become less of explicit philosophical interest overtime. The theme of Being is one that everyone assumes to be understood or taken to be self-evident but in fact has been left unthematized. As Heidegger says, "we always conduct our activities in an understanding of Being…*But this vague understanding*

of Being is still a fact."[3] After all, Being is a theme found in the ontology of any other theme we would study as is evident by the fact that a presupposition of Being is at the core of almost any statement we make; for example, "This chair *is* comfortable" "I *am* unhappy". This fundamental ambiguity is not merely a vagueness of semantics but rather a true presupposition of the modality of existence of any such entity. All ontology presupposes the meaning of Being and in this case, all ontology leaves corners of its inquiry in shadowy darkness until the concept of 'Being' itself can be thematized.

Then in what manner should Being be thematized? Being is not to be understood as the way in which we discover entities nor is Being reducible to an entity itself:

> The being of entities 'is' not itself an entity. If we are to understand the problem of being, our first philosophical step consists…in not 'telling a story' – that is to say not defining entities by tracing them back in their origin to some other entities, as if being had the character of some possible entity [4]

We do not want to approach Being by looking at entities within the world in hopes of capturing Being as an entity itself. Being cannot be discovered through entities because Being itself is not an entity, nor does it hold properties of one. We do understand *beings* ontically as entities and we understand these entities by understanding their properties and characteristics. For example, I understand the entity of a chair as typically having the properties of four legs, a seat, and a back. Thus, when I see something with four legs, a seat, and back I understand it to be a chair. However, beings, as entities defined by their properties and characteristics are not the theme of Heidegger's work. Rather, Being, as a mode of existence, is what is sought after in Heidegger's investigation. The chair, for example, has a mode of Being, which is not equivocal to its

[3] (*BT*, 25)
[4] (*BT*, 26)

properties of chair-ness (i.e. its four legs, seat, and back). Heidegger addresses three modes of Being, which must be explicated in further detail prior to turning to the issue of spatiality.

Firstly, Heidegger is concerned with one particular type of Being: Being-There [Da-Sein]. Dasein is essentially characterized self-relation; it has the ability to relate itself to itself. Dasein is arguably the Being that is at the center of Heidegger's ontology as the two other modes of Being, ready-to-hand and present-at-hand are modes of being which are contingent upon Dasein's understanding of them. Furthermore, the concept of spatiality in *Being and Time* is expanded upon with Dasein at its core. In the opening paragraph of §9, Heidegger reveals the fundamental characteristics of Dasein:

> We are ourselves the entities to be analyzed. The being of any such entity is *in each case mine*. These entities, in their being, comport themselves towards their being. As entities with such being, they are delivered over to their own being. *Being* is that which is an issue for every such entity.[5]

From this one paragraph we can understand three key traits of Dasein. Firstly, Dasein is the mode of being which is characteristic of the human being. Heidegger begins his statement "we are ourselves…" to elucidate this point. Secondly, Dasein comports itself towards its own being. This claim points to the reflexive character of Dasein. Dasein has the ability to relate itself *to itself*; meaning that Dasein has a self-awareness of its own existence. So, unlike a chair, that has no awareness of its own existence, Dasein can relate to itself and through this reflexivity, give rise to a realization of its own mode of Being. We also learn that through this self-awareness, Dasein exists not only reflexively but also that Dasein *cares* about its own Being, its own Being is at 'issue' for Dasein. A chair on the other hand does not have the ability to even be indifferent to its existence, as it remain wholly unaware of its Being. The characteristic of Care is distinctive to Dasein and fundamentally sets it apart from other modes of Being. 'Care' [Sorge] is not to be

[5] (*BT*, 68)

understood as an emotional state rather, it is an existential character of Dasein's Being. Our lives matter to us and we are who we are in so far as we project this existential Care towards our world. Furthermore, Care is projected as concern towards other entities in the world or as solicitude towards other Dasein. Through Care, Dasein can relate not only to itself, but also to those entities in its world. A chair, on the other hand, cannot relate itself in any way to the desk next to it, but through concern, Dasein has the capability to relate to both of those entities in terms of how they are an issue for Dasein's own Being. Through this capacity of relation and reflection, we can understand Dasein as its own possibility. As Heidegger says, "it *can*, in its very Being, 'choose' itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself… [6] This possibility of my own life relates me in a distinct way to my life that other entities cannot relate in that I am consumed in an inescapable awareness of my own existence.

In regards to the effort of this Thesis, one major characteristic of Dasein remains to be clarified: Dasein itself is spatial through and through and in this regard it is inseparable from spatiality. Prior to introducing the problematic of temporality Heidegger makes clear that Dasein always exists spatially. Heidegger says, "Dasein itself has a 'being-in-space of its own but this in turn is possible only on the basis of being-in-the-world in general."[7] With this important claim two key insights are made evident; first, that Dasein has an intrinsic spatial characteristic that is unique to Dasein alone and second, that this unique spatiality has a worldly character. In other words, Dasein's spatiality is constituted on the basis of Dasein as being-in-the-world. Therefore in order to understand the spatiality of Dasein, we must start first by clarifying the concept of the 'world' and more specifically, Dasein's being-in-the-world.

[6] (*BT*, 68)
[7] (*BT*, 68)

Prior to turning to the problematic of the world, I want to take a brief detour to indicate the two other types of Being that Heidegger presents in *Being and Time* – though these two concepts will be explicated in much greater detail later. Entities in the world exist as objects ready-to-hand for Dasein. Objects ready-to-hand are not merely present in the world but they hold significance for Dasein as objects of equipment, which can be oriented towards tasks. When the function of an object ready-to-hand breaks down, the object takes the mode of being as present-at-hand. The object becomes estranged from the meaningful structure of equipment and is objectively present in the world as an entity among other entities. Vorhandenheit or presence-at-hand, as we will see, is also the mode of Being that entities are problematically reduced to in not only the natural sciences but also in other philosophical accounts of Being.

To further understand Dasein's spatiality, we have to first clarify the way in which Dasein is 'being-in-the-world'. Heidegger in fact devotes Chapter III of *Being and Time* to the very task of the thematization of Dasein's being-in-the-world. While the term 'being-in-the-world' is a unitary term that must be understood in its totality, Heidegger breaks this concept down into three parts in order to give a clearer understanding of the term: being-in-the-world can be broken down into a understanding of 1) 'world' 2) the entities which constitute the very 'being' of being-in-the-world 3) 'being-*in*' as such of being-in-the-world. First, we will start with the concept of 'being-in' as it elucidates the notion of space Heidegger is arguing against, namely that of Descartes' objective or geometric space. Then we will turn to the notion of the world and being-in-the-world in order to grasp Heidegger's notion of existential space.

III. Spatiality of 'Being-in'

'Being-in' seems at first glance to be a spatial theme merely by the presence of the word 'in'. But in what sense is this concept spatial? The most apparent is to think of it as being-in-

something as "water" is in a glass or garments are in the cupboard. This sense of Being presents a spatial containment, as if space were a vessel in which things could be held, like all the entities of the world. This understanding of being-in however presents us with only an objective spatiality, which is unable to account for the true nature of the world. Heidegger's critique of Descartes' understanding of space is helpful in understanding this notion of being-in. For Descartes the Being of an entity is 'substantia'. This itself is problematic because it can either imply that Being holds the characteristic of substantiality or is itself a substance. We grasp the Being as a substantive entity primarily through its attribute of extension. All entities are given through extension though this attribute can be distributed differently among various objects, i.e. shape and size can vary. The spatial understanding of these objects then becomes reduced to a mathematical measurement of its length, depth, breath, etc. To understand the world, however, as a totality of extended objects entirely misses the phenomenon of the world and the worldly characteristics of the objects in the world. The notion of measurability can only suffice to account for the spatiality of objects merely present in the world, but all value and practical interaction with that object must be suspended to grasp it as merely present.

Thus, for Heidegger, being-in conceived of as spatial containment pertains only to a certain type of Being: "All entities whose Being 'in' one another can thus be described have the same kind of Being- that of being-present-at-hand *[Vorhanden]*…We might say that grasping things as spatial in this sense…is to grasp those things as 'objects' and so as 'objective'[8]. The sense of being-in brings forth the idea of an objective spatiality because it pertains to entities present-at-hand.

[8] (*BT, 80)*

Now, let us examine a different way in which 'Being-in' can be interpreted. For Dasein, Being-in is not a matter of spatial containment. As Heidegger explains through etymology, Dasein is in the world in a state of dwelling and familiarity:

> 'In' is derived from '*innan'* –'to reside', '*habitre'* , 'to dwell' [sich auf halten]. *'An'* signifies 'I am accustomed', ' I am familiar with', 'I look after something'…'*ich bin'* ['I am'] means in its turn 'I reside' or 'dwell alongside' the world, as that which is familiar to me in such and such a way[9]

For Dasein, being-in is understood as Being inhabiting the world rather than being contained in it. We inhabit this world in so far as we are familiar with it. This has already been stated in so many words in the earlier discussion of the spatiality of equipment. As was stated the spatiality of equipment is not reducible to measurement because Dasein interprets the spatiality according to its concernful relation to the object. Consider what happens when Heidegger talks about the dimensionality of the spatial structure of equipment: "The 'above' is what is 'on the ceiling'; the 'below' is what is 'on the floor'; the 'behind' in what is 'at the door'; all 'wheres' are discovered and circumspectively interpreted as we go our ways in everyday dealing; they are not ascertained and catalogued by the observational measurements of space".[10] In this case, we see Dasein's familiarity with the world in that dimensions as such are understood for Dasein in a way as dictated by its own dwelling in or relation to the world. Dasein's familiar being-in constitutes the totality of equipment as well, so that I am not just in a room with furniture that all references the same 'place' but rather, I find myself in my living room. Thus far we have understood the spatiality of 'Being-in' but what we have presupposed thus far is the world of Dasein itself. We must now further clarify the world, which Dasein inhabits and the spatiality of the world.

[9] (*BT*, 80)
[10] (*BT*,137)

Space as understood, as the spatial containment of entities present-at-hand is ultimately an impoverished sense of spatiality for one main reason: it is not the spatiality that belongs to Dasein. These entities present-at-hand have no real value in themselves as entities alone, but rather only through an encounter along with Dasein:

> "when two things are present-at-hand together alongside on another, we are accustomed to express this by saying something like 'the table stands 'by' they door or the 'the chair 'touches' the wall'. Taken strictly, 'touching' is never what we are talking about in such cases… If the chair could touch the wall, this would presuppose that the wall is the sort of things 'for' which a chair would be *encouterable*…When two entities are present-at-hand within the world, and furthermore are *worldless* in themselves, they can never touch each other nor can either of them *'be' 'alongside'* the other…An entity present-at-hand within the world can be touched by another entity only if by its very nature the latter entity has Being-in as its own kind of Being- only if with its Being-There [*Da-sein*], something like the world is revealed to it.[11]

Entities present-at-hand as Heidegger suggests are "worldless" meaning they hold no weight as entities on their own. Heidegger even harkens to this idea in his initial explanation of different sense of the world: "The derivative form 'worldly' will then apply terminologically to a kind of Being which belongs to Dasein, never to a kind which belongs to entities present-at-hand 'in' the world".[12] Even if it is a terminological determination, the fact Heidegger assigns this term to Dasein still holds weight in understanding Dasein's relation to entities present-at-hand. It is Dasein, through its encounter and relation to the world, which realizes entities present-at-hand and constitutes entities ready-to-hand. Therefore, entities present-at-hand have their own spatiality, which belongs to them, but in a sense this spatiality remains limited until Dasein itself brings a relation to that structure of equipment. We can now see the necessity to understand the spatiality of Dasein: spatiality and Dasein are inseparable, and it is only through spatiality of

[11] (*BT, 81)*
[12] (*BT*, 93)

Dasein that we can have a complete understanding of Dasein itself. In turn, Dasein's relation to worldhood is what gives meaning to our lives, more accurately; Dasein's case in relation to itself is what constitutes our worldhood. Thus, to understand the totality of worldhood, including its spatial structures, we must understand Dasein and its respective spatiality.

IV. Spatiality of Entities Ready-to-Hand

At the beginning of Chapter III, which is devoted to uncovering the phenomena of the world and worldhood, Heidegger first gives four notions in which we can understand 'world'. First, the world can be conceived of as an ontical concept: the totality of entities present-at-hand. Second, world can be considered as an ontological concept: the world as the Being of the totality of entities present-at-hand. The third understanding is another ontical concept, but one that is not concerned with entities whose Being is not likened to Dasein. Rather, this concept is an existential sense of world wherein Dasein dwells. Fourth, there is the world understood as the concept of *worldhood*, a ontologico-existential concept.

The environment or the surrounding world [Umwelt] is what composes our immediate surroundings with which our dealings [Umgang] or interaction is concerned. Our surroundings in this sense do not constitute a physical environment as such but rather an existential environment; our surrounding is composed of that with which we are engaged and absorbed. The way in which we see this environment is through circumspection, which translates into 'around-sight'. In our average everydayness, our dealings take form in a practical way, by our ability to manipulate and use objects as some means of production. Entities ready-to-hand in our environment are not just things, but rather they are objects invested with practical value. This value, given through Dasein's projection of concern towards the world, constitutes entities as ready-to-hand rather

than being understood as present-at-hand. For example, without Dasein's concern, a hammer becomes a piece of wood and steel; it is through Dasein's concern, in relation to its dealings in the world, that constitutes the unity of steel and wood as a hammer. 'Hammer', understood as an object ready-to-hand, is a tool with which I perform the act of hammering in order to complete such and such task. In this sense, the Being of an entity ready-to-hand is inseparable from its essential equipmental functionality for Dasein. Objects ready-to-hand are thus most readily understood as equipment. The 'in-order-to' is another specific characterization of equipment: all equipment is structured with an 'in-order-to' achieve a task (i.e. a pen is for writing, a broom is for sweeping). Moreover, it is not with equipment itself that we direct most of our attention; rather it is to the task '*towards-which'* the equipment is aimed. So, in painting a wall, my attention is not directed straightforwardly to the brush as an object in my hand but rather, to the paintbrush *insofar as* it is being used to complete the task of painting the wall.

All entities ready-to-hand within my environment are not salient in my experience at all times but rather they remain ready-to-hand for my use. Through my need and concern various equipment become salient in my experience, while others remain hidden. Entities ready-to-hand compose our most proximate environment or Umwelt, yet this proximity is to be understood in a peculiar way; entities ready-to-hand, as along as they are function properly, are hardly noticeable at all. Heidegger makes the claim that it is the very nature of entities ready-to-hand to remain hidden until they are needed in some way or are malfunctioning. The breakdown of equipment brings to our attention the very nature of this structure of equipment, though typically this structure remains underneath our explicit awareness. For example, while the doorknob is functioning properly, I hardly notice it at all; I simply turn the knob and walk through the door. When the doorknob gets jammed however, the doorknob is made more explicit in my

experience. The totality of the structure of equipment is what composes our immediate environment. Our dealings within the environment allow us to realization of and relation to these entities ready-to-hand.

Within the worldhood of the world, entities ready-to-hand have a particular spatial structure, which is laid out very clearly by Heidegger in §22. Saying that the structure of equipment composes our immediate environment already connotes a certain type of spatiality: the structure of equipment is what is *proximally closest* to us through its characteristic Being of ready-to-hand. However, this closeness is not a matter of measureable extension such as 'the pen is one foot away from me'. Rather, "what is close this way get established by the circumspection of concern".[13] For example, when building a bookshelf what comes close to me to are the planks of wood, the nails, and the hammer; other entities, which are not relevant to my concern, find a mode of remoteness or distancing. To further understand the concept of closeness of entities ready-to-hand, one must draw a distinction between closeness and measureable distance. Closeness is an existential spatial relation determined by Dasein's concern, whereas measureable distance is an objective determination, which lacks consideration of an object's meaningfulness for Dasein. The distinction between closeness and measureable distance points to the existential spatiality of Dasein that will receive more elaboration later in this chapter.

In the same way that closeness is not reducible to measureable distance, the location of entities ready-to-hand in the world is not determined by spatial location. Each ready-to-hand entity has a 'place' [Platz] to which it belongs. The notion of place is more compressive than the spatial positions because the latter carries with it no sense of the meaningfulness of location whereas the former presents the entity ready-to-hand within the totality of the structure of

[13] (*BT*, 135)

equipment. To understand this simply think of the placement of various entities ready-to-hand within a house – there is a meaningful organization to the home. Objects are not randomly strewn about but rather everything has a place. This organization becomes most evident when something is out of place; to a find a blender in the bath tub would make clear the blender is not in the correct location and also that such a proper place for the blender does exist. All equipment belongs somewhere, in some place; this belonging-to is an essential part of the Being of entities ready-to-hand.

The determination of places themselves are not a fixed notion, rather they are based upon different regions of the world: "Something like region must first be discovered if there is to be any possibility of allotting or coming across…"[14] Regions [Gegend] are primary to the places which are found within them. Hence it is region that makes possible the aforementioned belonging-to of equipment, as within a region equipment finds its place. There is the region of the kitchen and the region of the bathroom, in which various entities ready-to-hand find their place. These regions of 'bathroom' and 'kitchen' are derived from the projection of Dasein's concern. It is not the case that there is an absolute region, rather regions insofar as Dasein's concern organizes it as such. Furthermore, to speak of different regions in the world is not to suggest that equipment finds itself entirely compartmentalized in separate spaces that "has been split up into places".[15] Various regions and places are unified under the totality of the structure of equipment – which ultimately is the worldhood of the world. Thus, in understanding the spatiality of entities ready-to-hand the difference between objective and existential spatiality is once again made evident. The concept of closeness, place, and region of entities ready-to-hand hardly find themselves involved with any notion of measureable distance or determined spatial

[14] (*BT*, 136)
[15] (*BT*, 138)

position. Rather, the spatiality of entities ready-to-hand is fundamentally based on the richer basis of the worldhood of the world. Furthermore, we see that the spatiality of entities ready-to-hand fundamentally presuppose the spatiality of Dasein itself. It is only through Dasein's concern towards the world that the spatiality of equipment can be thematized and understood. Therefore, in the next section we will turn to an analysis of the spatiality of Dasein in hopes that it will further clarify Heidegger's notion of spatiality.

V. SPATIALITY OF DASEIN

Now that we have clarified both being-in and being-in-the-world, we can now move onto clarifying the spatiality particular to Dasein. As we noted earlier, in so far as Dasein is a being-in-the-world it has its own spatiality. Now that we understand the sense in which Dasein is a being-in-the-world, let us clarify the structure of its own spatiality.

As we have discussed thus far, Dasein is not a mode of Being which is reducible to substance and in turn is not something that finds a place or location in the world as other entities do; Dasein finds itself in the world through a familiar engagement with the world. We already began to speak of Dasein's spatiality with the discussion on 'Being-in'. Dasein has the spatiality of being-in insofar as it dwells in the world. Being 'in' the world is not characterized by containment, as it is for objects present-at-hand, but rather by Dasein's engagement with the world. This world involves not an assortment of entities present-at-hand: it is composed of entities ready-to-hand within a meaningful structure of equipment. Thus, we know that Dasein's spatiality of being-in in characterized by a projection of concern towards the structure of equipment but there is still more to be said about the particular aspects of engagement, which essentially characterize Dasein's existential spatiality.

Heidegger mentions two essential aspects of Dasein's spatiality: de-severance and directionality. De-severance is the bringing close of equipment, or making the remoteness of equipment disappear. Again, to bring close is not measured by distance but to bring an entity within the scope of Dasein's circumspection of concern. 'Closeness' is a notion brought forth earlier in the discussion of spatiality of equipment; it was said that entities ready-to-hand inherently have a spatial element because it is what is most proximate or close to Dasein in its environment. The proximity of equipment in Dasein's immediate surrounding too was determined by concern. Interestingly, Heidegger notes that Dasein has an essential tendency towards closeness. This claim can be understood by revisiting the notion of Dasein's spatiality of being-in. Being-in is characterized by Dasein's projection of concern towards worldhood. Insofar as Dasein is concerned with certain equipment, that equipment constitutes the most proximate environment of Dasein. Hence, Dasein has an essential tendency towards closeness because closeness occurs through concern.

Since de-severance is related to concern and not a result of measureable extension, what is close and what is far in relation to Dasein has nothing to do with distance. Even our seeing and hearing are de-serverant and bring close what is measurably farther away. To elucidate this point, Heidegger gives an example of walking on the sidewalk. When walking down the street, what is measurably closest to you is the sidewalk itself. With every step, the sidewalk is brought so close that your shoe is actually touching it. Yet, while walking down the street one hardly thinks of the ground beneath their feet. Circumspectively I'm hardly concerned with it at all, unless the sidewalk starts to malfunction for instance due to a bump or a crack in which my foot gets caught. At the end of the block I see my friend walking towards me. Because of my concern for my friend, my environment is reorganized and my friend is then much closer to me than even the

sidewalk, which is touching me. My circumspective concern brings my friend close, makes the distance between us disappear.

The measureable distance which becomes reoriented doesn't have to be the distance of a sidewalk, or rather within sight; hearing has the same capacity to bring close through de-severance. With our modern technology, I can talk to my friend on the other side of the world, a distance almost too great to cognize. Yet, when I'm on the phone and hearing their voice, all of a sudden they are closer to me than the very receiver pressed up against my ear. As we have said, this happens through our circumspective concern but we can also see how the very structure of equipment aids in this 'bringing close'. As long as the telephone is functioning, the telephone recedes and becomes unnoticeable. What becomes salient in my experience is the voice of a friend, and in turn she is closer it me. Thus, what is 'close' to us is not reducible to measurability but rather is it is a matter for Dasein to realize, as it is its own possibility.

Along with de-severance, directionality is another important characteristic of Dasein's spatiality. When something is brought close through de-severance, directionality constitutes "a direction towards a region out of which what is de-severed brings itself close, so that one can come across it with regards to its place".[16] Directionality can be thought of as an orientation of Dasein's concern; that which makes explicit the region and place of those entities brought close through de-severance. For example, Heidegger talks about left and right. Certain entities ready-to-hand are oriented to the left and right in relation to our "bodily nature".[17] For example, a glove is oriented for either your left or right hand. Overall, both de-severance and directionality together constitute the spatial structure of Dasein, and on the basis of which the spatiality of entities within the world are also revealed.

[16] (*BT*, 143)
[17] (*BT*, 143)

From this discussion of de- severance and directionality another key trait of Dasein's spatiality is clear; the spatiality of Dasein is the most primordial sense of spatiality. It is only on the basis of de-severance and directionality that notions of remoteness or closeness of objects can be understood: "Only to the extent that entities are revealed for Dasein in their deseveredness [Entferntheit], do remotenesses ["Entfernungen"] and distances with regard to other things become accessible in entities within-the-world themselves."[18] Furthermore, to consider distance as a measurement of space rather than de-severance and directionality conceals the primordial spatiality of Being-in as de-severance and directionality are existentiales of 'Being-in'. It may be argued that it is only measureable distance that can reveal the true space of the world. Even if de-severance were to provide some 'estimation' of distance in a measureable sense, it would remain imprecise by scientific standards. This does not mean that the spatiality brought through de-severance is not *accurate*, rather is has its own "*definiteness* which is thoroughly intelligible".[19] As long as Dasein's Being is an issue for itself, then its own concern will establish a rightful spatiality of our own world in which we dwell – the "*true world"*.[20]

VI. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have tried to show how in *Being and Time*, Heidegger presents a new understanding of spatiality. *Being and Time* itself was an entirely novel work, which reconstituted the methodology of an inquiry into the question of Being. Heidegger's conception of Dasein as its own possibility, as an entity, which can relate to itself and to other entities in a

[18] (*BT*, 139)
[19] (*BT*, 140)
[20] (*BT*, 141)

meaningful way, already constitutes an entirely new sense of spatiality because Dasein is itself spatial and in turn, inseparable from spatiality.

Thus, with the development of the conception of Dasein arises along with it a new conception of space. A traditional understanding of geometric space characterized by measurability and extension is not the space in which Dasein resides. Measureable extension is the spatiality of entities present-at-hand. In Dasein's everyday averageness, however, what we encounter are entities ready-to-hand-- things readily available to our manipulation and use. For Heidegger, entities ready-to-hand are primary while entities present-to-hand are only made present through a malfunctioning in the structure of equipment. Entities ready-to-hand have a different spatiality, one of regions and places, but ultimately their spatiality is determined by the spatiality of Dasein, which is the most primary of all.

CHAPTER 3

SPATIALITY OF THE BODY-SUBJECT IN MERLEAU-PONTY'S *PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION*

I. INTRODUCTION

In Phenomenology of Perception (*PhP)*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty aims to provide an alternative to philosophical discourse concerning perception; that is to say, Merleau-Ponty's project aims to move away from traditional empiricism and transcendental idealism to understanding the world and the human subject via a fundamental phenomenology of perception. Merleau-Ponty's main objectives in *PhP* are to purport the importance for a return to the pre-objective world in philosophical thought, which would grant a new understanding of the human subject as a body-subject and as being-in-the-world. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, the human subject is undeniably tied to the world in a reciprocal and communicative relationship defined through the mind and body, together as one entity – the body-subject.

Though not the central theme in *PhP*, space comes back again in this work as an inextricable aspect of the human subject. Merleau-Ponty uses spatiality and orientation to explicate the notion of the human subject as being-in-the-world. The aim of this chapter will be to clarify the concept of space as it affects the human subject who lives through a reciprocal relationship of the body subject and the perceived world. In what follows, I will first explicate Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the return to the pre-objective world, as it brings forth the concepts of the body-subject and being-in-the-world. Following, I will turn to an analysis of spatiality of the perceived world and of one's own body.

II. The Pre-Objective World

Merleau-Ponty's return to the pre-objective world arises from discontent with the stronghold scientific laws and objective values have on the world. This is to see the world in our natural attitude – understanding which is guided and biased by the natural sciences. Adherence to the natural attitude is to inadequately equate objective values as *experiential* values when in fact the latter precedes the former. Merleau-Ponty's deep criticism of a scientific picture of the world stems from the work of Edmund Husserl, such as the *Crisis of the European Sciences*, which addresses the incompleteness of a world view classified solely by scientific values and methods. There is nothing fallacious about science itself and there is no denying the contributions of scientific inquiry to our knowledge. The dilemma can be seen more precisely as this: the questions of science arise from our firsthand experience of the world with the goal of clarifying this experience. Yet, the truths of science not only purport to clarify our originary experience of the world but our idealization of objectivity leads to the negation of our originary experience of the world. The problem comes in disregarding and discrediting our firsthand perceptual experience of the world as merely subjective and unfruitful, while glorifying an objective and scientific picture of the world as complete and absolute.

Our idealization of science leads us to believe that it presents us with the absolute reality of the world upon a unified objective basis of experience. To perceive the world in an objective manner requires one to be removed from the world itself, as if peering in from outside the world to make objective observations. How is it possible, however, to remove oneself from the world to look in from the outside so to speak? Our 'view' of the world is always from *somewhere* within the world. A view from outside the world is ultimately a view from nowhere; it is an abstraction

of various views from somewhere.[21] That is to say, an objective view of the world cannot exist independently, nor is it originary; it is based on, or presupposes, our subjective and primal experience in the world. A unified objective picture of the world is founded upon an individual perspective. This 'pre-objective' world is where objective claims stem from, where the meaning of objective claims is founded.

The pre-objective world can be accessed and studied through phenomenological reduction. In the present context, a brief characterization of the reduction will have to suffice: it requires that the natural attitude, in which we are immersed via a scientific and objective analysis of the world, must be suspended. That is to say, the truth indicators of these scientific and objective claims must be bracketed; this does not regard the claims as false, rather judgments of truth and falsity are suspended all together. For Merleau-Ponty, this pre-objective world is primary; it is the basis for the objective worldview presented by the natural sciences. If science abstracts from this pre-objective world, then what is need is a return back to the pre-objective world in order to obtain a more exhaustive understanding of the world. It is through our relation to this pre-objective world that we come to know the world in general. Our experience of pre-reflective inhabiting of the world is perception in general--this is why perception is primary to Merleau-Ponty. If we are to understand our most rudimentary experience of the world, we must conduct a phenomenology of perception. Perception, however, is not to be understood in the traditional ways of empiricism and intellectualism, rather Merleau-Ponty aims to show a novel way of understanding perception, one that is married to the idea of human subjects as body-

[21] (Matthews, 45)

subjects and as being-in-the-world.[22] To do so, Merleau-Ponty first provides a critique of two traditional pillars of thought: empiricism and transcendentalism idealism (or intellectualism).

The first section of Phenomenology of Perception entitled 'Introduction: Traditional Prejudices and the Return to Phenomena' is hardly an introduction at all. Rather, in the first section Merleau-Ponty aims to show why traditional ideas of perception found within empiricism and intellectualism are inadequate. Empiricism is a sense data theorem; it reduces perception to causal relations between sense data and sense organs that process the data to create perceptions. For example, sight can be explained as the culmination of lights waves interacting with the eyes and hearing explained by vibrations in the air playing with the eardrums. Perception then becomes a linear one-way causal path, with a clear start and end point; the external world, separate from me, impacts me and causes a sensation.[23] Perception for Merleau-Ponty does not follow a causal pathway from the exterior to the interior where the subject is provoked by her environment to have a perceptual experience.

To understand perception as purely causal, we ourselves have to be understood merely as objects that are passively affected in a certain structure of causality in the same manner as other objects. We are not, however, in the world only as objects. Evident is the influence of Heidegger's fundamental ontology on Merleau-Ponty. In his threefold distinction of Being, Heidegger exposes the ontological mistake of equating Dasein to an entity present-at-hand. In the same manner, Merleau-Ponty shows through his critique of an empiricist notion of perception that humans are not objects within the world. Rather, we are subjects who inhabit the world, that

[22] Merleau-Ponty uses the term intellectualists to refer to transcendental idealism. While he does not mention specific names, it is safe to assume that he is writing in reference to transcendental philosophy as of Immanuel Kant.

[23] The empiricist theory finds strong defense in Locke and other British empiricists. Locke's simplistic causal theory of perception leads to a seemingly inescapable skepticism and solipsism.

live in an intimate relationship with the world. A relationship which has no clear start and end, but one in which the world and the subject work in synthesis to form meaningful experiences. In so far as we are active beings in the world, perception is a reciprocal act between the subject and the world rather than a product of causality. To reduce our perception to a causal process is to deny that our perception is a situated perception; as was mentioned earlier, our view of the world is not a view from nowhere. Likewise, our perception is not an abstracted one but always provides us with a view from somewhere within the world. Moreover, this world is not one comprised of atoms and molecules but of cultural objects, historical traditions, and predicates of value.

Our perception not only shows us the way the world *is* in an objective sense, but allows us to add meaning to the world itself, to make it *my* world. Precisely as such, the empiricist cannot take into account the existential weight and meaning of our world. The sky may look gray in the morning, which can be explained by the empiricist by an analysis of clouds, color, etc. But how can we explain why the sky looks sad? The empiricist cannot in this sense account for the existential value of our perceptual experiences. Our world is not only scientific, but it is emotional and aesthetic (among other things) – a culmination of our engagement to and from the world. Moreover, our perception of an object reveals more than just the physicality of the object in general; it brings to our awareness the horizon of the object as well as its relation to other objects. In essence any perception of one object points beyond the object itself to a horizon of possibilities of that object and to its place in a unified whole that is the lived world.

Thus, the empiricist understands the world as a composition of elements, all separate, and causally relating to each other to form our experiences and perceptions. For Merleau-Ponty, however, the world is a unified whole in which elements are inseparable from each other,

because each element is only constituted in its relation to the whole. Again, a parallel can be drawn here to Heidegger's structure of worldhood to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the structure of perception. In Heidegger's structure of equipment each piece of equipment's meaning is contingent upon the unified structure of signs and references. It is only because objects find themselves a part of a meaningful structure – the Worldhood of the world—that we can speak of individuated meaning.

Furthermore, empiricist notions of perception explicate not what we see, but what we ought to see. What we ought to see or perceive then becomes an objective standard, which we place on perception.[24] An objective standard of perception, say a perception of a table, is there to help unify human perception, so that we can engage in conversation about the table starting from a base perspective.[25] This notion of a standard, however, causes problems. First, it deems any perception not fitting within the standard as perhaps abnormal. Second, it may alter the way we reflect on perception so that we may see what we feel we ought to see. Either way, Merleau-Ponty would argue that an objective notion of perception, paralleling an objective notion of the world in general, would take us farther away from each individuated subjective perceptual experience of the world, which underlies the unified objectivist picture of the world.

Intellectualism comes one step closer to understanding perception more adequately in that it recognizes the subject as unique from and thus irreducibly different from other objects in the world. In intellectualism the subject is not a passive subject that is consumed in the same structure of causality as other objects in the world. The subject is an active agent and it is recognized that certain structures of the world stem from the subject. However, in intellectualism

[24] (Kullman Carman, 109)
[25] This also becomes the basis of determining 'normal' and 'abnormal' perceptual behaviors.

the subject is not situated in the world; it is a transcendental subject. Transcendental subjectivity imposes structure on the world while the situated subject finds and interprets meaning in the world. While intellectualism can strengthen the hold of the subject to its world, it soon loses sight of the grounding power of the world on the subject. This again results in a view of perception that is determined by a linear path, this time form the subject to the world. For Merleau-Ponty however, this view is still not adequate as it ignores the concept that we are in fact situated beings. Perception is not just an expositional cognitive act, but it involves engagement with a situated being – a bodily engagement – in so far as we are incarnate minds within the world.

Intellectualism and empiricism provide two accounts of the human subject; either as a universal consciousness which imposes onto the world or as an object alongside other objects in with world. Empiricism conceives of the world as independent and external of the mind while intellectualism conceives of it as a construct of a universal consciousness. Though these two theories seem radically opposed to each other, there is still an identifiable assumption that they both share; they both presuppose the world as fixed and determinate.[26] This is what gives rise to the dogmatic clutch of the objectivist attitude on how the world is conceived and hides from us the primal structure of the subject and how the subject truly exists in the world. Both of these conceptions of the human subject and the world fail to capture the existential essence of man, as one of *engagement* and *reciprocity* with the world, rather than only transcendentally imposing upon it or being causally affected by it. Perception gives us direct access to a pre-reflective world and involves the reciprocal engagement between embodied subject and the world. Heidegger purposely chose not to deal with the issue of embodiment of Dasein, where as for Merleau-Ponty

[26] (Shengli, 133)

we can only speak of perception by accounting for embodiment, as perception is a bodily phenomenon through and through.

The subject for Merleau-Ponty must be distinguished as the body-subject. Perception is inextricably tied to the body: Merleau-Ponty asks us to imagine how we would understand the world if our eyes were on the sides of our head. We would then have an entirely different understanding of the world, as our perception would be entirely different. Our bodies as they are define the manner in which we do interact and experience the world. Therefore, the body cannot be categorized as an object among others, since it participates directly in our perception and understanding of the world. Nor can the subject be disengaged with the world as a transcendental subject, since it is through a bodily experience that we gain access to the pre-reflective world. Through this communicative relationship between the body-subject and the world, humans are being-in-the-world. The body-subject is not in the world in the manner that water is in a glass but rather, in so far as we *inhabit* the world; we engage and interact with the world and both effect and are affected by the world.

III. Spatiality of the World

Merleau-Ponty's critique of empiricism and intellectualism points to an understanding of perception characterized by a meaningful engagement with the world. This new understanding of how humans engage in the world thus grants a new understanding of spatiality as compared to the model provided by empiricism and intellectualism. In the chapter entitled 'Space', Merleau-Ponty's goal is to explicate the spatial structure of the perceptual world. He shows that both empiricism and intellectualism hold inadequate views as they fail to capture the spatiality of the world as is experienced by the human subject. He then provides an alternative understanding of

space based on experience; one that is anchored in the world while still maintaining a determination rooted in subjectivity. In the chapter, Merleau-Ponty turns again to various psychological experiments for support.

First, Merleau-Ponty makes the distinction between spatialized and spatializing space.[27] Spatialized (or physical) space characterizes space as externally independent of the mind, either as a container for objects or an intrinsic property of objects. The first notion of physical space can be understood as an object to container relation; space acts as a container, which holds the objects within the world. Merleau-Ponty argues this cannot be the case because "this relationship only exists between objects".[28] The same issue is raised in *Being and Time;* Dasein cannot be thought of as in the world the same way water is in a glass. This understanding commits the ontological mistake of reducing Dasein to an object present-at-hand. Dasein, and the body-subject for Merleau-Ponty cannot be purely contained in space because they have a richer commitment with the world than objects do.

Stephen Priest also points out an essential category mistake in conceiving of space as a container. In this understanding of space, space must be a thing itself over and above regular physical things. After all, we assume here that only a thing can be a container for objects. Space, however, is not a *thing* and therefore cannot be a container for other things.[29] Substantiating his initial argument, Merleau-Ponty further denies the idea that the object/containment relation could be thought of as a logical inclusion of an object in space "like the one existing between the individual and the class" because "space is anterior to its alleged parts".[30] Presumably, Merleau-

[27] (*PhP*, 244)
[28] (*PhP*, 283)
[29] (Priest 102)
[30] (*PhP* 243)

Ponty here means that a spatial part, understood as the spatial region of an object, is only conceivable after an understanding of space in its entirety since a spatial region is that which is carved out of a context of space as a whole.

A second conception of spatialized space is space as an intrinsic property of an object. If space were a property of objects, however, then each distinct object would construct a distinct space within and for itself. This seems experientially to not be the case, as we understand objects as sharing one unified space. While it is true that objects have their own distinct object oriented spatiality, it is not to say they don't participate in a unified and shared spatiality as well. For example, a vase has its own spatiality; it is circular, hollow, wide, etc. Yet it also participates in the wider spatial structure of the room, the house, the street, … and the world. Thus, understanding space only as a characteristic of an object is not a sufficient understanding of space.

Merleau-Ponty then draws a second category for space: spatializing space (or geometrical space). This second category is associated with rationalist and transcendental idealists (intellectualists). In this understanding, space acts as the unifying basis of experience and is constructed by our own sensibility. Kant, for example, claims that space is an a priori product of our sensibility (or intuition). Space then is a purely mental perception, which arranges and organizes our world. Kant claims that even arithmetic and geometry are only apprehendable though sensibility's construction of space/time. In this context, Merleau-Ponty speaks of the 'pure position' of geometrical space.[31] That is to say it is a position that is abstracted from the need for an object to occupy it, as it is a space that is homogenous and isotropic. This is in

[31] $(PhP, 244)$

contrast to physical space, which is understood as particular to an object, or the situation of an object.

Merleau-Ponty does suggest that spatializing space is more encompassing than spatialized space because the former grasps the source of space: the subject. Though it is on the right path, there are still problems with spatializing space. Geometrical space is constructed upon reflection because it is a product of the mind's intuition. It is upon reflection of space that we move from spatialized to spatializing space.[32] Space as it is understood through an a priori reflection does not, however, reveal to us space as we experience it, rather only how we can cognize space. So far in Merleau-Ponty's analysis, we are presented with two conceptions for space: the first, which is unreflective and leaves us living in purely measureable spatial relation among things and only insofar as we understand ourselves as things as well. The second, a homogenous and unified space that also does not present to us our lived situation and but only an abstract pure position.

Merleau-Ponty then asks if these are the only two ways to understand space:

> Is it true that we are faced with the alternative either of perceiving things in space, or […] of conceiving space as the indivisible system governing the acts of unification performed by a constituting mind? Does not experience of space provide basis for its unity by means of an entirely different kind of synthesis?[33]

To present his positive thesis of this 'different kind of synthesis' Merleau-Ponty believes that we must turn to experience itself. Merleau-Ponty turns to a series of psychological experiments that exhibit the peculiar nature of space, in which space "disintegrates and re-forms before our eyes",

[32] (*PhP*, 284)
[33] (*PhP*, 284)

in hopes that it might reveal to us the true nature of space.[34] The first is an experiment conducted by Stratton, in which the subject puts on glasses that invert his entire visual world, though tactile and auditory stimuli remain unaffected. After the second day, the subject visually adjusts to this newly inverted world but his body remains to feel peculiar as if it is upside down. In the following few days the subject's body also becomes adjusted to his new visual world. The use of motor actions aids the subject to a faster acclimation to her new visual world. At the end of the experiment when the glasses are taken off, the world does not seem inverted again but does remain 'queer' and motor actions remain reversed.

Empiricist psychology would provide an explanation for the experiment as follows: In the experiment, the subject's visual world has been turned upside down, while his tactile world remains 'the right way'. Consequently, the subject is left with conflicting sensations from his perceptual field. The subject then uses movement to bridge the discord between her visual and tactile representations; soon she can associate the inverted visual world with the tactile world, which is still familiar, and translate the new visual world accordingly to her tactile world. So for example, she becomes aware that the movement once needed to reach to her toes was a movement downwards, but now what is needed it a movement upwards.[35] Once the glasses are taken off, the once normal world seems strange to the subject who had just readjusted to the 'topsy turviness' of the visual world provided by the glasses.

Prima facie, the empiricist explanation seems like a plausible explanation of the experiment, however, the mistake of the empiricist explanation is that it relies on a presupposition of an absolute orientation of top and bottom; what remains unclear is the way in

[34] (*PhP*, 284)
[35] (*PhP*, 286)

which such absolute orientation is constituted. The empiricist bases his 'top' and 'bottom' by the placement of the head and feet, as it is given in content of the visual image.[36] Merleau-Ponty's objection is precisely that no such absolute orientation exists within the landscape of sensations itself. The content of the field does not have an inherent orientation of its own, "'inverted' or 'upright', in themselves, obviously have no meaning".[37] It is even not fully explanatory to say that the new visual field is 'upside down' in relation to the visual field prior to putting on the glasses. To say that is to presuppose an absolute orientation of the old field as well. Empiricism can only account for what the subject perceives in accordance with pure sensations, but fails to give a contextual clarification as to the subject's orientation: "the objective relationships as ordered on the retina through the position of the physical image do not govern our experience of 'up' and 'down'".[38] The real question the empiricist should be considering in order to understand this experiment is, how an object can appear to us as inverted in the first place, and what does this mean when it does? The problem with empiricism was the assumption of orientation, when it is not yet clear where this orientation stems from. By answering this question, Merleau-Ponty wants to reveal to us the nature of space, a nature that both empiricist and also intellectualist accounts of space have yet to capture.

Merleau-Ponty argues in the case of intellectualism that its notion of space cannot account for an inverted world in the subject's experience at all. If space is a construction of the subject's sensibility, which is apprehended through reflection, how then could the subject ever come to feel disoriented in the first place? There would be nothing, Merleau-Ponty claims, which enables the constituting mind to distinguish between the spatial arrangement prior and after to

[36] (Kockelmans, 283)
[37] (*PhP*, 287)
[38] (*PhP*, 288)

putting on the glasses. An intellectualist account of space finds itself stuck within a purely subjective scope that it cannot stand outside of, and in turn cannot provide an accurate account of space as it is experienced.[39] Furthermore, geometric space as it is characterized as homogenous and isotropic, extends out in all directions. At the same time, Merleau-Ponty claims that at any moment, it has no direction because it lacks "an actual starting-point, an absolute 'here' which can gradually confer a significance on all spatial determinations".[40] Merleau-Ponty's aim in the development of his positive thesis can be understood as determining what the 'starting point' of space is.

For Merleau-Ponty both accounts of space are inadequate for explaining the subject of the experiment's transition from spatial disorientation to a newly acclimated sense of space. There is a third sense of spatiality that must be accounted for; one that accounts for an 'anchor' within the world and pays an adherence to appearances, yet acknowledges the role of the body-subject in the determination of space. Merleau-Ponty wants to show that space is neither purely objective nor n intuition of consciousness; there must be a notion of space that can account for the consistency of the world as well as our understanding of the world as determined by our goals and tasks. Thus, the 'wholly new synthesis', which Merleau-Ponty is after, has not yet been reached. To introduce this new conception of space Merleau-Ponty now turns to a different experiment by Wertheimer. In the experiment a subject occupies a room that he perceives only through a titled mirror; as a result the entire room, including the walls and other things in the room, fall obliquely resulting in the entire room appearing slanted. With time, the subject becomes adjusted so the room appears vertical again. Unlike the Stratton experiment, the subject does not need any motor involvement for his visual world to become vertical.

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[39] (*PhP*, 289)
[40] (*PhP*, 288)

What becomes crucial to understanding the significance of the Wertheimer experiment is the concept of a 'spatial level' – an engagement with our subjective experience of spatial organization, as it affects the human subject, in so far as he is being-in-the-world. A spatial level is composed of our preferential planes of space that enable our bodies to be towards action or to support the possibility of action. In other words, it is "the way that we find ourselves as 'anchored' within an *optimal* spatial relationship to the environment around us".[41] The spatial level does not, however, stem from the body itself; the body as an object cannot be thought of as the ultimatum for spatial orientation. Hence, the vertical cannot be thought of—as posited by the empiricist explanation—as "the direction represented by the symmetry axis of our body as a synergic system",[42] Rather, a spatial level derives from the notion of the body as an open field of possible corporeal actions-- the virtual body: the template for our possible actions towards the world. In this sense, "my body is wherever there is something to be done".[43]

In the Wertheimer experiment, the subject is first involved with a spatial level of the surrounding room (rather than the image of the room presented in the mirror). The surrounding room itself contains the subject's preferential planes of space and that spatial level he inhabits is in accordance with the surrounding room. This spatial level provides the subject with stability; in so far as the subject engages this spatial level, he finds himself in a room of habituation, one where his virtual body can carry out actions—" such as walking, opening a cupboard, using a table, sitting down".[44] The image in the mirror, however, carries with it no such stability; the spatial level of the surrounding room in relation to the image in the mirror is what makes the visual in the mirror seem tilted, resulting in a room that is uninhabitable and unfamiliar. This

[41] (Talero, 445)
[42] (*PhP*, 291).
[43] (*PhP*, 291)
[44] (*PhP*, 291)

understanding seems vulnerable to objection that Merleau-Ponty just raised to the empiricist: how can it be the case that the room shown through the mirror is titled because of its relation to the room as the surrounding environment? This understanding seems to depend on absolute notions of orientation, such as 'vertical' or 'up' and 'down', which Merleau-Ponty said could not be determined through the image or content of a landscape. Merleau-Ponty, however, is not suggesting that a spatial level provides an absolute orientation. The spatial levels *does* use 'anchorage points' from the world, to provide a basis for spatiality, but they are not objective points that hold any orientation as necessarily true. Rather they are "touchstones for a corporeal spatiality that inhabits its surroundings as an arena of potential action".[45] So, for the subject the room in the mirror does seem tilted in relation to the surrounding room, but not based on an absolute axis, but because the surrounding room is engaged with a spatial level which is constituted by the virtual body, and its gearing towards the world.[46]

For the subject in the experiment, the room seen through the mirror appears tilted not in relation to a sense of vertical in its absolute, but only in so far as the sense of vertical corresponds with the subject's habitual engagement with and towards the world. The habitual nature carries with it an essential familiarity with the world, which for the subject in the experiment is disrupted by the tilted room. The room shown through the mirror becomes vertical because the subject constitutes a new spatial level in accordance with the image of the room through the mirror. The image of the room provides the subject with 'anchoring points' with which the subject can establish cardinal directions.[47] The new spatial level is constituted on top off the old, in turn the image in the mirror becomes for the subject a 'vertical' room; it becomes a

[45] (Talero, 444)
[46] (*PhP*, 293)
[47] (*PhP*, 290)

room in which the subject is once more able to inhabit— a composition of preferential spatial planes which support the virtual bodies needs. It is a result of "a certain possession of the world by my body, a certain gearing of my body to the world".[48] In both experiments, the virtual body acclimates the subject to its 'abnormal' space so that it can inhabit the space. When the room becomes vertical, it becomes recognizable again to the subject as an area in which he can live and carry out meaningful actions. In a sense the subject is motivated to orient himself by his potential actions and involvement with the world. Fundamentally, by uncovering the constitutive nature of spatial levels, we can see what Merleau-Ponty feels is the origin of space:

> "Everything throws us back on to the organic relations between subject and space, to that gearing of the subject onto his world which is the origin of space"[49]

Space is not, as we started out refuting, a container, nor an intrinsic property of an object. Neither is it a construction of intuition. What Merleau-Ponty wants to ultimately show is that space is a pact between the subject and the world, a notion that is only possible on the basis of intentionality. The pact is a synthesis between the subject, as an agent who takes purposeful actions towards the world, and the world, which offers anchorage points of stability and motivates our gearing towards the world. This relation between the world and the subject is what gives rise to the origin of space.

Merleau-Ponty presents a problem to his thesis of spatial levels, which he quickly resolves as not a problem at all. As we have seen, each spatial level is founded upon the basis of a prior spatial level –each spatial level presupposes an already constituted level. In this sense,

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[48] (*PhP*, 291)
[49] (*PhP*, 293)

each spatial level is "already ahead of itself".[50] Though, if a new spatial level is constituted upon the former, it leads to an infinite regress of spatial levels where each is explained as stemming from another. There is no way of speaking about the origin of a spatial level other than a previous spatial level; where does our originary experience of space stem from? For Merleau-Ponty however, what seems to be an infinite regress of spatial levels is not an irresolvable issue--he argues the constitutional chain of spatial levels reveals a fundamental characteristic of space or the essence of spatiality itself: "It is of the essence of space to be always 'already constituted'".[51] We are not able to find the "level of all levels" or the originally spatial level because it is in the essence of space to always already be constituted, it always precedes itself.

Moreover, as space is constituted as a pact between the subject and the world, this essential characteristic of space again points back to an essence of the subject – 'to be' is synonymous with 'being –situated'. Merleau-Ponty's develops his arguments as such:

> "Thus, since every conceivable being is related either directly or indirectly to the perceived world, and since the perceived world is grasped only in terms of directions, we cannot dissociate being from oriented being, and there is no occasion to 'find a basis for space or to ask what is the level of all levels"[52]

We cannot dissociate from our orientation as beings because to be is to be situated in the world. To be is not to be nowhere, but rather somewhere within the world. This world is also inseparable from spatiality, as it gains its significance from our spatial and oriented habituation in it. Therefore, it is impossible to extract our selves from space and as this space is always already constituted, it is impossible to speak of our original experience of space. Though we are

[50] (*PhP*, 290)
[51] (*PhP*, 293)
[52] (*PhP*, 295)

unable to thematize this original experience of space, it does not entirely escape us. This 'primordial level' is on the horizon of all our present, past, and future perceptions.[53]

Even our original experience of space, however, does need to be founded upon something. Its anchorage is not found within the world, since in order for that to be the case an anterior level would still presuppose it. Merleau-Ponty argues that our original experience of space must be a pact between the world and a pre-personal subject, "in accordance with an earlier agreement between x and the world in general".[54] Here Merleau-Ponty turns to a pre-personal subject who carries a 'prepersonal tradition' between a primordial subject and the world. The prepersonal subject is not our embodied being as an agent of our subjective choices and intentions, but rather a body of 'anonymous functions' – a primordial body that captures the natural spirit of man abstracted from a subject's personal gearing toward the world. This is anonymity is not present only in our first grasping of the world, but "it endows every subsequent perception, of space with its meaning, and it is resumed at every instant".[55] Our initial situatedness in the world presents itself in every situation there after.

IV. Spatiality of the Lived Body

Intellectualism and empiricism – the two dominant philosophical traditions – have reduced the body to an object, among other things in the world. The body as an object is an unengaged entity. Most famously conceived of as such in Descartes thesis of mind and body dualism. The mind is responsible for the cognitive and reflective capacities of the human, while the body is mere extension in space. The spatiality of the body for Descartes is simply the

[53] (*PhP*, 295)
[54] (*PhP*, 296).
[55] (*PhP*, 296)

geometrical measurements used to define the body to other things in space. This system of spatiality only works if the body is thought of simply as a corporeal body, one that is an object and simply is there in space. In Husserl's work, which greatly influenced Merleau-Ponty, Husserl makes the distinction between the corporeal body [Körper] or the objective body, and the lived body [Leib], akin to Merleau-Ponty's body-subject. The lived body is one that is purposeful; it interacts with the world and assigns it meaning. As we saw in the previous section, the body in its meaningful relationship with the world constitutes the experiential space of the world itself. In the same way, Merleau-Ponty also shows how the body-subject experiences the spatial position of its own body: the spatial organization of our body is understood not through objective points, rather it is interpreted through our purposeful existence towards the world.

The concept of the lived body, rather than the body as an object, brings for itself its own sense of spatiality unique to it than that of other objects. So, for Merleau-Ponty we are not next to the ashtray, the same way in which the ashtray is next to the lamp: "the outline of my body is a frontier which ordinary spatial relations do not cross".[56] While the spatial position of other objects may be determined by geometrical measurements, the pretense of objectivity is not sufficient to thematize the experiential spatiality of the lived body. I am not beside the ashtray in the same way that the ashtray is next to other objects, simply because the ashtray is there for me as I relate to it, as I find my purposiveness geared towards it whereas the ashtray does not have the same potential for engagement. As will be shown, the spatial orientation of my body towards the ashtray is determined through how I, as an embodied subject, grasp and interact with the world.

[56] (*PhP*, 112)

The spatial understanding of one's own body brings forth a unique sense of interior space of the body, as parallel to the exterior relations of the body to the external world. Merleau-Ponty suggests that the lived body is not a juxtaposition of limbs and organs in space. The body is a unified whole rather than an accumulation of parts. The spatial positions of each of the body parts envelop each other, rather than being laid out side by side. To elucidate this notion, Merleau-Ponty gives the example of a patient with allocheiria.[57] If it is the case that the patient feels the sensations applied to the right hand in the left hand, this shows that the body is not a "mosaic of spatial values" but rather, it is a unified whole. Moreover, I have an understanding of my body as a unified organ through the 'body schema'. The body schema is more than just a sketch of the kinesthetic possibilities of my body. Nor is it merely a survey of the position of all my body parts. For Merleau-Ponty there is another layer of dynamism added to this body schema: "my body appears to me as an attitude directed towards a certain existing or possible task".[58] The body schema then not only encompasses an outline of my body as such, but my body as it is constantly geared towards the world. With an understanding of the dynamic body schema it becomes clear that spatiality of the body cannot be reduced to the spatiality of an object. An object only has one facet to its being and its experience of its world is determinate at best. The body-subject, however, is dynamic; it experiences its world through possibility rather than determinacy.

In trying to understand the spatiality of the body, considering the spatiality of a particular position of the body is no longer adequate. What must be sought after is, in Merleau-Ponty's words, a *spatiality of situation*—essentially, to understand orientation as inseparable from the

[57] With this disease, a tactile experience is felt on the opposite side of the body from which the physical contact with the subject was made. If I touched the subject's right hand, the touch would be experience on the left hand.
[58] (*PhP*, 114)

way we inhabit the world and in particular moments, the tasks we are involved in. To elucidate this notion, Merleau-Ponty gives an example:

> If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both hands, only my hands are stressed and the whole of my body trails behind them like the tail of a comet. It is not that I am unaware of the whereabouts of my shoulders or back, but they are simply swallowed up in the position of my hands, and my whole posture can be read so to speak in the pressure they exert on the table.[59]

In this example, the spatiality of the body could be analyzed as the position of each of the separate body parts: the hands are on the table, the shoulder blades pressing into the back, the legs are with less pressure as they are aided by the hands. For Merleau-Ponty this description would not be adequate because it is merely describing the position of the body at various points. What it fails to include in its description is the significance of the body's relation to the table; in that particular moment the body is geared towards the table in a perpetual movement, and the rest of the body is associated with this gearing towards. The rest of the body does not simply exist in juxtaposition to the hands on the table; rather the rest of the body is enveloped into the situation of the hands. One could even imply that the body is geared towards the *task* off the hands, of leaning on the table.

To take another example, if I'm holding a glass of water, the position of my hand is not determined by its relation to my arm, the arm's relation to the shoulders, the shoulders to the back, etc. Experientially a person determines the position of her hands as it relates to the glass itself, in so far as she is geared towards the task of taking a sip of water. The rest of the body seems to cohere to the set task as well, we sense the legs not as separate and distant from the

[59] (*PhP*, 115)

arms but as enveloped in the same task-geared spatial relation. The glass of water acts as an 'anchoring point' for the person onto her world, an object that orients the body towards its task.[60] The way, in which we determine 'here' for the body, then is derived from these anchoring points, or rather, the tasks we are involved in. Thus my body is spatially determined not by co-ordinates of space or determinate positions of external objects. Rather, the body becomes spatially situated in so far as it is anchored to a world of meaningful tasks. Bodily space is also personal; in that it is determined by the movements and direction a person takes in her own life.

V. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have shown that Merleau-Ponty's conception of spatiality marks a shift from Heidegger's articulation of existential spatiality of Dasein. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the lived-body as the origin of spatiality in contrast to the 'bodyless' spatiality of Heidegger. Though Heidegger does not ignore the body in his analysis, it is not explicitly discussed. As we have seen, for Merleau-Ponty to be in the world equates to a bodily existence. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty spatiality is projected as a bodily spatiality through and through. Through an intense critique of empiricism and intellectualism Merleau-Ponty presents a conception of spatiality that is grounded both in the body and the body-subject's essential engagement with the world. He shows that both empiricism and intellectualism hold inadequate views as they fail to capture the spatiality of the world as experienced by the human subject. An empiricist account of orientation presupposes absolute directions in space as pre-established while intellectualism does account for the meaningful world in which the body-subject resides. Merleau-Ponty then provides an alternative understanding of space, one that is anchored in the world while still finding its origins within the body.

[60] (*PhP,* 115)

To expose this relationship between body and world, Merleau-Ponty introduces the concept of spatial levels as preferential planes of space that enable our bodies to be towards action or to support the possibility of action. Spatial levels allow us an engagement with our subjective experience of spatial organization in that our spatial levels shift in order to provide us with a inhabitable environment. This environment is one that we are familiar with and one where we can carry out our tasks and goals. The body determines these preferential planes of space; the environment becomes familiar insofar as *the body* is able to relate to environment. If not my actual body, at least the virtual body as a template for our possible actions towards the world must find familiarity within the environment.

The body also finds its own particular spatiality within Merleau-Ponty's work. The body has a particular interior spatiality that is unlike the spatiality of other objects. The parts of the body envelop each other rather than being laid out side by side. The body is constantly geared towards the world and towards my tasks. As such, the spatiality of the body is not determined by position but by situation. The body as inseparable from an engagement with the world while simultaneously the world is spatiality organized to satisfy the body; the duality is precisely the 'different kind of synthesis' that space provides, which Merleau-Ponty sought to present.

However in Merleau-Ponty's schema the question of how spatiality transforms or develops Being is not explicitly addressed. Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, in their discussion of spatiality alone do not elaborate the temporal dynamics of the interaction between spatiality and Being in the world, leaving us with an abstract and static understanding of

spatiality.[61] How does our understanding of spatiality shift as the lived body or Being evolves over time? To address this gap in the schemas of both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, we turn in the next chapter to the argument of Jan Patočka.

[61] Of course, Heidegger explores temporality as one of the most central issues within *Being and Time*. My concern is that within the sections dealing explicitly with space and spatiality, this relationship is not explored.

CHAPTER 4

SPATIALITY OF THE BODY-SUBJECT IN THE WRITING OF JAN PATOČKA

I. INTRODUCTION

Jan Patočka, a Czech phenomenologist, was a student of Husserl and Heidegger and a contemporary of Merleau-Ponty. Patočka's phenomenology explores themes of the world, the self and the body, among other things, which culminates into a philosophy of three essential movements of life. The first movement is one of an intuitive orientation; of 'sinking roots' into our world and finding our self as located somewhere. Then is the continuance of our existence in this location; this movement is oriented towards a self-sustenance. The first two are both natural movements that aid in the realization of the third movement of freedom – of true self-understanding. Patočka is speaking of not only the way we exist in the world, but the progression or movement that occurs in life. In this sense, his philosophy is not focused on Being but rather on becoming – the process of moving through the world to reach a freedom which comes through self-understanding.

Similar to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Patočka is also writing in response to a mechanistic world view, which has permeated and affected our understanding of the world, our bodies, and in turn, the spatiality of the world and our own personal spatiality. As Erazim Kohák, Patočka's translator to English, articulates, a mechanistic world view presents two problems: "the 'true-reality' it depicted was a construct, intrinsically inaccessible to experience, while experience was presented in it as mere appearance".[62] Thus, already present is the problematic between reality in itself and reality as it is experienced. As we see from Patočka's writings, there

[62] (Kohák ,98)

is a relation between experiential and objective: the objective derives from the experiential. In the scientific worldview however, objective reality is portrayed as if it were our experiential reality. This approach is problematic because the two are not reducible to each other. Understanding personal and impersonal being can elucidate this notion. As an impersonal being, the object appears in isolation and from a third person perspective. An objectified understanding of it does not take into account its affective and relational qualities to other things. Rather, "all its impetus, to be sure, aims at grasping being as it is in itself, as a substanvial being, existing autonomously, devoid of further relations […] what can be grasped at a distance, as an object".[63] It is only through our personal experience of these objects, however, that their meaning or significance can be grasped. In this sense, Patočka asserts that the impersonal derives from the personal. What the mechanistic world view denies in its strive for objectivity is the importance of the personal, though the world we live in is a personal one. Moreover, it not only undervalues the personal world, but also believes that science can be done from the impersonal perspective alone. This cannot be the case, however, because if the impersonal is derived from the personal then the former necessarily involves the latter. For Patočka, science, in its pursuit to objectify and methodologically analyze the world, presupposes the 'natural' world, which is the subject of its scrutiny. In other words, the same world which science tries to objectively describe is a world that exists prior to scientific descriptions—a pre-objective world as Merleau-Ponty speaks of it. What is needed is a re-examination of the natural world, as it is given in experience.

Another central problem to Patočka is the notion of the body; this is of crucial significance to this Thesis. Patočka shows that in earlier Western philosophy has treated the problematic of the body primarily from the third person perspective. The dialogue is never about

[63] (*BCLW*, 31).

self-localization or the self-experience of corporeality. Rather the body is always spoken of as a objective body, the body of another. Conceiving of the body as a distant object leads to an understanding of the body as an impersonal extension in space. The contributions of contemporary thinkers have changed the way the body is perceived from the body-object to the body-subject. Patočka references Main de Biran as one of the first of these thinkers, as he conceives the body as a certain effort that is put forth to the world. The body is no longer thought of as an object—an impersonal being "devoid of all autonomy".[64] Rather, the body is introduced as an embodied subject—the body is no longer just extension, but rather an effective agent.

Most importantly, the body as body-subject brings forth a crucial re-evaluation of the spatiality of the body and of the world. The spatiality of the body can no longer be thought of only in terms of extension, but as we will see in Patočka, spatiality is produced by an effort that is projected towards the world from the body as zero-ground. This may seem to be a repetition of points made by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty but there is an important philosophical difference between the three thinkers that is critical to the argument of this Thesis. The critical difference is that for Patočka, spatiality of the body leads to a primal orientation in the world, only on the basis of which is it possible to engage in what he calls the movements of life, or as I would put it stages of growth in life.

This chapter then, will explore the theme of spatiality in Patočka's writings, primarily from the lectures comprised in *Body, Community, Language, World* and Patočka's paper 'The 'Natural' World and Phenomenology'. First will be an investigation into how the body-subject comes to self-localization and orientation in the world. Subsequent will be an explanation of how the individual orients himself on earth, rather than the contextual world.

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[64] (*BCLW*, 29)

II. Lived Spatiality

From this new understanding of the body, which first arises from Maine de Biran, is an implicit need for a new conceptualization of spatiality. Due to this shift in attitude, the body can no longer be conceived of as purely an objective entity arbitrarily placed in space; in consequence, what is needed is an understanding of spatiality that accounts also for the way we exist in the world. With this at the forefront of his inquiry, Patočka's question then becomes what is the personal spatiality of the body and what does it mean to live spatially? One distinction Patočka draws between objective space and lived space is that the latter carries with it an *awareness* of being spatial: "the awareness that we are in space, in the contexts of extension, assumes a special structure which has nothing in common with objective extension in space".[65] The body in objective space finds itself not even in a state of indifference in regards to its spatiality but rather it is completely oblivious to the fact. With the outlook of objective extension the body is merely an object among other objects with no meaningful relation to them. It makes no sense to say that I am beside the table in the same way that the table is beside the chair. I have a relation to the table: I can touch it and feel it; I have flexibility of distance from the table. The chair alongside the table has none of these opportunities. Thus, the body cannot be conceived of in the same spatial schema as objects. This of course further justifies the need for a reconceptualization of the body as a body-subject, rather than a body-object.

The characteristic of awareness as essential to lived spatiality is highly reminiscent of Heidegger's analysis of the spatiality:

> when two things are present-at-hand together alongside one another, we are accustomed to express this by saying something

[65] (*BCLW*, 31)

> like ‘the table stands ‘by’ they door or the ‘the chair ‘touches’ the wall’. Taken strictly, ‘touching’ is never what we are talking about in such cases… (Heidegger, 51)

This excerpt exemplifies the non-relational state in which objective entities find themselves. The table is alongside the chair but neither is in any meaningful relation to one another, precisely because they do not belong to any world as such. For Heidegger, it is Dasein’s concern towards them that projects a relational spatiality. Therefore Dasein is alongside the table in a wholly different sense than the table is alongside the chair.

Although Patočka is dealing with a similar schema to Heidegger, one crucial difference is obvious: Heidegger essentially ignores the problematic of the body in his analysis of Dasein. For Patočka, it is through our corporeity and only through it that we can exist in a relational spatiality and experience self-localization. As Dasein was for Heidegger the core agent in constituting spatiality, the body for Patočka acts as a zero ground which produces its location in space. The body is an autonomous agent since it, “is a life which is spatial itself and of itself”.[66] The body for Patočka—similar to Dasein for Heidegger—is understood fundamentally as a self-relation. This self-relation is tied inextricably to the subject body, as one of its basic activities is to localize itself in the world through corporeity; it determines, “that we are somewhere and where we are”.[67] The notion of the body producing its location may *prima facie* seem puzzling, though only when the body is considered in a purely objective manner. If the body were only an object among other objects, then Patočka’s account of personal space would be rendered nonsensical, but precisely because there is an understanding of the body as a body subject can we come to understand its unique constitutive nature of personal space.

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[66] (*BCLW*, 31)
[67] *ibid.*

There is particular importance of the subject body as the localizer of orientation, as orientation cannot be determined through a mental or spiritual 'I'. As Patočka suggests, the mental I has the ability for self-reflection, but what else can it grasp but itself? The body is needed for orientation because, as we will see in more detail, orientation is determined through a dynamic effort, which stems from our body as zero ground. One cannot deny, however, the objective body. There is a sense in which we can understand our bodies as merely corporeal entities. Though to conceive of the body in such a way misses fundamental existential characteristic of the human.

III. Spatiality of the Body as Correlated to the World

Thus far, we have talked about the body as a self-relating entity, which is responsible for self-localization. What we have presupposed until now, however, is the very world in which the body experiences self-localization. Through Patočka's writings there are two notions of the world that are available. First, there is the world as the horizon of horizons, in which we localize ourselves through a flow of dynamic effort from the body. There is also the world as an earthly substance, which orients us through the constant presence of the ground and sky. Both of these notions of the world must be further explored along with the spatial implications they carry.

First, let us discuss the notion of the world as the horizon of horizons. A horizon is a presentation of what is given, and yet also what is absent. It, "circumscribes all the particulars of a given landscape, its visual part, but transcends it".[68] There is the internal and external horizon of any given object. Through the internal horizon, what is absent is given as present. I see my copy of *Body, Community, Language, World* on my study table. All I visually see is the front

[68] (*BCLW*, 34)

cover but the internal horizon of the book fills in the gaps missing, and what is experientially given to me is not only the front cover, but also the back cover and even the pages of text filled in between the two. The book also has an external horizon, which acts as a localizing and stabling perspective. The book is located on my desk, which is located in my study, my study is located in my house, and my house is located in Virginia, and so on and so forth.

In the same way that the book has its internal and external horizons, for Patočka, the world too is comprised of horizons. Rather, the world is not an object at all, it is conceived of as the horizon of all horizons. The various regions of the world are differentiated by the world's internal horizons. The internal horizon provides individuated variety from the unity of the world. These partial horizons are not only in reference to objects in the world but also the horizon of dreams, imagination, the past and the future, etc. The internal horizons of the world are the way in which the varying perspectives of the world are given to us in a meaningful organization. Yet the world as the horizon from which the varying horizons emerge, does bring a unity and stability to the world. While our perspective in the world shifts and changes, the horizon of the world "remains constant, always here, changeless".[69] By saying unity of the world, one is not limited to what is present in actuality but the horizon of the world brings forth what is absent as if it were present. Our perspective of the world is never fulfilled only by what is visually present; rather the gaps in our visual perspective are filled by the horizon. As Patočka says, "we always see a segment but we always fill it into a full circle" (BCLW, 34). Ultimately, the horizon necessitates possibility: "A horizon shows that the absent is nonetheless here and *can* be reached".[70] Thus, the absent which is given to me as present within the horizon is not an actuality, but rather, a possibility. To think of experience as only half actuality and completed by

[69] (*BCLW*, 34)
[70] (*BCLW*, 34 emphasis added)

mere possibility seems to present a shallow sense of experience. A negative view of possibility should be discarded however, as for Patočka, humans essentially live in possibilities as if they were actuality.

To understand this claim further a distinction must be drawn between the immediately relevant and what is experienced as the present. Animals, according to Patočka, are concerned only with the immediately relevant: the direct context of the present. They are concerned only with things as they are affecting them directly. For humans, the now is constituted by the placing of direct content into a greater *context* of experience:

> humans by the attitudes they assume, are constantly placing themselves into situations other than the directly present ones, into the past, into the future, with all their quasi-structures—quasi-present, quasi-past, etc. […] going into imaginary worlds, into the world of reading, of thought sequences, […] of duties that place us into a special space which is and yet is not[71]

Essentially, the context in which we exist in the now is a reflection of the same horizonal structure of the world. Our present is an unfolding of the variety of horizons of our world. As such, we are affected by the present in terms of its direct content but also all the possibilities that lay within that context. To put it more forcibly, we live these possibilities as if they were actualities. Patočka emphasizes the fact that we live in this horizonal structure without much consciousness of it. This shows that this structure is embedded within in us, its who we are and how we essentially function.

IV. Spatiality of the Horizonal World

Thus far, we have discussed the horizonal structure of the world and the modes of actuality and possibility in which we experience this world. Now, the focus will turn to the

[71] (*BCLW*, 32)

particular spatiality that is necessitated by the understanding of the world we have thus reached. For both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty the use of objective spatiality to account for the spatiality of Dasein and the body-subject was inadequate because objective spatiality is not able to grasp the ontological essence of the Being of man. For both, their conception of space became formed on the basis of the subject's engagement with the world. Likewise for Patočka, space is to be understood on the basis of the horizonal structure of the world as just laid out. We will now have to turn to understanding this spatiality in more detail.

For Patočka, the aforementioned transference of possibilities into actualities of our world is characterized by a certain dynamism, or effort; Patočka also speaks of it as a 'stream of centrifugal energy'. We can understand our bodies as the center of this stream. It projects outward from the body and towards the world. Thus, "we have turned away from ourselves, we have always already transcended ourselves in the direction of the world, of its ever remote regions".[72] This energy projects out to the world and the possibilities it holds. In turn, our sense of spatiality will be determined by this effort of dynamism. As a result, we are often unaware of ourselves in so far as we are concerned with our world. We never live in ourselves, rather we live through our dealings with the world. In turning away from ourselves and towards the world, we are not losing our sense of subjectivity, rather our turning to the world is a continuation of ourselves in so far as we interact with the other: "the fullness of the I, the personal I, is always the correlate of a Thou".[73] Another way to understand this is that though there is a turning away from the self, our energy projects towards the world in directions subjectivity itself proposes. Thus, I turn away from myself but always towards the other; the pathway of this energy reflects me back upon my own subjectivity.

[72] (*BCLW*, 36)
[73] (*BCLW*, 36)

Dynamism then can be thought of as projection of effort into the world, directed at a particular, whether it be a task, an event, or a possibility. Patočka emphasizes that this energy is directed towards things that interest us or that concern us. This of course can be likened to the characteristics of Dasein. Dasein is at issue for itself and projects an element of concern towards the world; in turn Dasein's concern determines the nearness and farness of objects in the world. In the same way, Patočka is also presenting concern but through embodiment. This dynamism is projected toward our interest but only insofar as it is a dynamism, which finds its stream of energy projecting from the axis of the body. Dynamism manifests itself in the fact that we are active and moving body-subjects. In turn, our interests affect our movements and posture – and ultimately our spatiality through orientation. For example, in writing this paper, the position of my hand clutching the pen and my arm as it moves across the paper are in respect to the overall task of writing the paper. In driving a car, again my posture and all my movements are directed by my primary interest in driving the car. These examples show how dynamism also has a motivational character in that our movements are motivated by our effort towards something. As Patočka puts it, by understanding dynamism, "we are simply articulating the initiative experience in carrying out movements".[74] This is precisely what it means to conceive of the body as zero-ground of spatiality; it is point zero and thus, remains unpresented in our experience. Dynamism then, is that which orients us in our movements; our movement is always oriented towards the object of our dynamism.

All that is not the center of our efforts recedes in the background. Interestingly as a result, my own body also fades into a 'demi-phenomenon'. In our experiences, though the body is present, it does not originally appear to us. What do appear to us are the objects of interest, those

[74] (*BCLW*, 41)

towards which my movement (and body) are directed. As we turn away from ourselves in the centrifugal stream of energy, we lose a sense of our bodies for the sake of absorption into the aim of dynamism. Thus, "We are aware of ourselves as something that is here but is not a phenomenon in the true sense of the word, only presenting things to us, causing things to appear to us".[75] The body is conceived of here as the ultimate selfless agent: it recedes into the background in order to bring forth things for itself as a body-subject. Furthermore, this peculiar agency affects the world though it does not present itself among the things it affects.

We have seen how dynamism shapes the spatiality of the body and orientation in movement. There is a way in which dynamism also has an effect on the spatiality of our external space. Only a small passage directly discusses this issue in *Body, Community, Language, World* directly, part of which is available below:

> The primordial dynamism, as we experience it, characterizes the spatiality of our physical presence. That becomes apparent in the orientation of space around us, our orientation in space as we live it, with its up and its down, right and left, forward and back. Up and down make sense insofar as the primordial dynamism of our corporeal existence represents a certain effort, that our posture is an effort of a kind, overcoming resistance, defying gravity; right and left are the original symmetry of our active corporeity, of hands and feet, the symmetry of our body, of our movements; forward and back is the direction of our activity; of the dynamics of work, of a force that sees. Our dynamism does not present itself to us in the way that things do, and yet it is always an orientation among things.[76]

Directions of space are categories by which our dynamism can be meaningful and productive in external space. Up and down manifest with regard to an effort insofar as our posture overcomes resistance or defies gravity. In this instance, what is also present is the affective nature of

[75] (*BCLW*, 41)
[76] (*BCLW*, 42)

dynamism that was mentioned earlier; my effort affects the external space as it resists and defies it. Left and right are constituted by the symmetry of our body and movement. Forward and backward are directions of the movement of our activities. All these words of direction are not significant in that they provide an absolute determination of direction of up and down or right and left. Rather, they provide pathways that guide the movement of our effortful and affective activities. Merleau-Ponty also speaks in regards to directions of space in the same manner. He asserts that up and down are not objective and universal values but that they are determined by a relative sense of familiarity that is felt by the individual. This familiarity is representative of external space transforming into an inhabitable environment, where one feels an at-homemess, as it were. In other words, an environment where one is able to complete his tasks and goals. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, and likewise for Patočka, these directional pathways are not pre-determined. Rather they are relative to dynamism's projection into the world.

To summarize, dynamism is an essential force from the subject out towards the world. Dynamism does not have a physical characteristic but insofar as it has an effective characteristic, it also has the characteristic of corporeity – the body, as such. Dynamism is not given as other objects are given in the world, rather it manifests itself in the movements and orientations of the body. The body situates itself in the world with regard to the effort that is being projected from it. The tasks at hand influence the way my body is situated and its spatial relation to other things. The spatial perspective of external space is also determined by dynamism in that direction of up and down or left and right associate with the possibilities of my corporeity. For example, left and right are determined by my body's symmetry. Ultimately, self-localization in the world— a grasp of ones own spatiality and spatial placement— is interwoven with self-relatedness; as the

body is essentially self-relatedness, dynamism projects out towards the world, but in its turning away from the body, it simultaneously invokes a self-relation through the other.

In this regard, a comparison can be drawn to Heidegger, which Patočka himself speaks of. For Heidegger, Being [Dasein] is characterized by a self-relatedness, or self-understanding; Dasein is an issue for itself and Dasein always finds itself in the world, somewhere. In this sense, self-relatedness intrinsically encompasses a self-localization. For Heidegger, Dasein falls into a world by which it inescapably objectifies itself, primarily through its relation to the other. The significance of Dasein's existence is a struggle for autonomy from within this fall. For Patočka, self-relatedness only comes by a projection of the self towards the world. As we have said, it is through the other that self-relatedness, and in turn self-localization occurs: not a liberation from the world—for Patočka we are drawn closer to the world. The term agency was mentioned earlier in reference to the body. Here we can see that both Heidegger's and Patočka's sense of self is reliant on a concept of agency. Dasein is in a struggle to articulate its agency within the world in order to gain self-understanding. For Patočka, agency is the necessary characteristic the body-subject must have in order to project itself towards the world, and yet return to itself through its relation to the other.

V. The Body as Grounded on the Earth World

Thus far, we have discussed the concept of the world, the horizon of horizons, and how we spatially exist in such a world. Central was the concept of the body as zero ground. The body is the axis from which dynamism is projected and at the same time the body is what is hidden from us in our relation to the world. The spatial perspective of the world is brought forth in relation to the body as an active and moving being. For Patočka, however, there is a more

primordial way in which we are localized on the earth, rather than the world.[77] In what follows, our primordial localization between the ground and the sky is a notion that will be further explored.

To begin, consider this passage from Patočka's paper 'The "Natural" World and Phenomenology':[78]

> Thus the oriented posture comes about *through the body* in the subjective sense, the body as agent, but that does not yet mean that it is throughout an orientation *to the body.* The center of reference of bodily orientation lies outside the body as my own: every orientation is an orientation of our act, of our active, corporeal intervention, and that requires a *referent*.[79]

In our previous understanding of spatiality, spatiality was determined by our active corporeity. We can now see, however, that this spatial determination comes through the fact that we are corporeal beings with the potential for movement and activity; this being said, a more primordial reference is needed in the orientation of my body, which in fact lies outside of my body. Since all the activities are targeted towards the world, there must be a referent to which my bodily activities orient themselves because though they emerge from the body as zero-ground they do not orient *to* the body. Essentially what Patočka is saying is that the body does indeed orient itself on the basis of a dynamic effort it puts forth to the world. But insofar as this activity corresponds with the world as such, there must also be a referent to this orientation, which lies outside of the body.

[77] I am assuming here that there is a distinction between the earth and the world Patočka seems to have made the distinctive terminological choice.
[78] From here on, to be abbreviated as *NWP*.
[79] (*NWP*, 255)

The most primordial referent Patočka speaks of is the earth itself as a constant and unmoving substrate.[80] It is the unmovingness of the earth that is emphasized in its role as the most primordial referent of orientation: "The immobility of the earth belongs to the primordial orientedness of the world" (*NWP*, 355). Thus interpreted, the immobility of the earth allows for a constant and unchanging ground upon which the actions of the world are possible. At the same time, the immobility of the earth makes possible the easy disappearance of the earth when we are caught up in the dealings of our world. In turn, the earth, and its role as a primordial referent, is easily presupposed in our understanding of the world as the horizon of possibilities. For anyone who has experienced an earthquake, they know all too well the life altering feeling that is accompanied by experiencing the earth as an unstable ground. All that is presupposed in every movement, every action, and ever step we take, comes to startling clarity in the moments of an earthquake. Thus, the earth is the cradle upon which rests all the actions and possibilities of the world. The very instance of spatial orientation relies on the earth as a referent. As Patočka beautifully puts it: "in every arising, every step, every movement the earth is what is presupposed, simultaneously energizing and wearying, as well as sustaining and offering rest" (*NWP*, 255). In terms of spatiality, there is also the essential characteristic of the *nearness* of the earth. Though at times inaccessible, it is often the ground upon which I build by vertical posture and execute my movements. The ground is constantly underneath us, though at the same time often made inaccessible by either physical constraints or it is simply not at the focus of our attention.

[80] (*NWP*, 255)

The earth as a stable ground, characterized by nearness, is not the only referent for bodily orientation. Patočka also speaks of an *essentially distant* referent for the body – the sky.[81] While the earth is *essentially near* and accessible to us by kinesthesis and tactile sensations, the sky is intangible: "a referent to which all that is essentially beyond reach belongs".[82] The sky holds a unique characteristic of enclosement. It exposes us to the outside, yet limits us and encloses us in an interior. On the other hand, it encloses our horizon but does not limit it. It helps to determine our 'where' in that there are unchanging markings in the sky. One can assume an example would be the North Star or other constellations that exist in the night sky. Interestingly, Patočka says, "one can become lost on earth, not in the sky",[83]

The earth is also a sustaining entity, the sustenance of our lives depend of the generosity of the earth and our bodily rhythms are determined in part by the rhythms of the earth. The earth, thus, can be conceived of as a force or power. For example, the deep physics of the earth reveals its powers of magnetic push and pull. Rivers flow in a natural direction, the atmosphere is pulled towards the earth, etc. Even the understanding of the earth as a force speaks of its orientating abilities in the same way earth conceived as a referent does. This is because the force and power rules over me and which I never escape. The earth as a power determines the way in which I, and all other things together move. As Patočka says, even the bird flying in the air or a cloud floating in the atmosphere do not escape the powers of the earth. In turn, the earth as a power or force affects the spatiality of all beings.

The earth and the sky never fully enter into the bounds of our practical dealings in the world. Hence, there is a distinction between the earth, as a constant referent of my body and the

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[81] (*NWP*, 256)
[82] (*NWP*, 256)
[83] (*NWP*, 256-257)

world, a context of practical actualities and possibilities of my life. For Patočka, the human is constantly absorbed in practical dealings in the world and these practical dealings are always with purpose, focused on our needs and wants. In turn, we are not aware of the primordial orientation we have to the earth because life for us is a goal, the fulfillment of which leads to an absorption into the practical. Just as our corporeity too fades into the background in our movements within the world, the earth too fades in our earthly orientation in order of us to live practical lives. Both corporeity and the world are constantly presupposed, or at least not at the forefront of our awareness in everyday life. Yet, it is only through their recession that we may exist functionally as spatial beings in the world.

VI. Conclusion

For Patočka, the spatiality of one's own body as well as our spatial perspective of the world is both enabled and influenced by the concept of dynamism. There is a stream of effort and energy that is projected from the body towards the world, which influences spatial determinations. Often we are spatially oriented in the manner that is appropriate for the dynamic task at hand. In our orientation towards the task we are turned away from our bodies. The body is point zero of the centrifugal stream of energy but is not presented to us, it remains hidden. Patočka quotes Merleau-Ponty in his metaphor that the body is the darkness of the cinema needed to make the image on the screen visible. Orientation in the world, and in our dealings, presupposes a referent to which our activities orient themselves. This primordial referent is the constant and unchanging ground of the earth. For Patočka, one should not naïvely dismiss the earth as a fundamental aspect of our orientation. There is a difference between the earth and the world in that the world is comprised of our practical dealings, while the earth respectfully has its autonomy, it has a deeper significance than that of practicality. Into our absorption of

practicality, and essentially our state of becoming, the primordial powers of the earth are presupposed and fade into the background.

Patočka's understanding of spatiality is primarily centered on his understanding of becoming. In both the natural movements of sinking roots and self-sustenance, we see the spatial qualifications that have been laid out in this chapter. First, there is the most fundamental grasping of location that is at the root of all human activity. One can go no further till there has been a sinking of roots into the world. Primordially, we find ourselves located on the earth always, as it is the referent to our orientation in all activity. But we also sink roots into our contextual world, by which our activities of self-sustenance can be carried out. The final movement, which Patočka speaks of, liberation through self-understanding, is only possible on the basis of a self-localization in the world as well because as we have said it is through our projection into the world that we come to understand ourselves better. Hence, we see the importance of articulate the problematic of spatiality thoroughly and accurately.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of space is one that has been discussed since the beginning of the philosophical tradition. To an extent, the philosophy of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Patočka, can be seen as a continuation of Kant's efforts. Space, after Kant, is no longer a determinate factor of the external world; space is a fundamental intuition of consciousness. As we have seen, however, space for the philosophers addressed in the previous chapters is not thought of as constitutive of transcendental subjectivity, but rather of a worldly human subject. As a general structure in all three philosophers, there is a push away from an understanding of space as determinate and absolute to an understating of space that is directly correlated to a human being that is involved in the world. For Heidegger this Being is characterized in terms of Dasein while for Merleau-Ponty and Patočka Being is a body-subject or embodied subjectivity. Similarities and differences can be seen between these three philosophers, though differences can mainly be seen as an addition or continuation of a similar lineage of thought. In this conclusion, I will first provide a brief synopsis of the major themes addressed in the previous chapters. Then, I will return to the problematic of movement to further understand and derive implications from the issue of spatiality.

II. BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

In their understanding of space, all three philosophers under analysis deny the reducibility of human spatiality to a geometric understanding of space; space as defined by determinate points, mainly distinguishable by measurement. With the dominance of the natural

sciences there is an urge to measure and define location by positions and points. Our lives must be made rational and articulated through a method—by which our understanding of space is greatly influenced. This does give science a base starting pointing from which people can be involved in discussion, but it also places a veil on the way we understand experience. There is an essential difference between the pure measurements of a shape and the way we experience the spatiality of that shape. In the same manner, there is a distinction to be drawn between our numeric distance from an object and its salience within our experience.

Hopefully now turning back to the presented notions of lived space, it is more evident why a scientific understanding of space is found to be inadequate. First, scientific questions and truths are derived from our first hand experience of the world. The natural science aims to present itself from the third person perspective, but our primary grasp of the world is always from the first person perspective. For Merleau-Ponty this is precisely the problematic of the pre-objective world, our world prior to theorization of it. Patočka also presents this issue with his discussion of the personal and the impersonal; even if natural sciences present their truths from the impersonal perspective it must always be understood as an abstraction from the personal. Hence, in an effort to be accurate and objective as possible, scientific space presents itself as abstracted from lived space rendering it an inadequate understanding of the true nature of spatiality. Secondly, the scientific notion of space fails to grasp the existential value of the world. As Heidegger's fundamental ontology shows, the world is not an arbitrary conglomeration of substance. The world is *my world*, one that is full of objects imbued with importance and meaning for my life. A scientific notion of spatiality is not able to account for the meaningfulness of the objects in my world; moreover it passes over the phenomenon of the world entirely. Lived spatiality on the other hand, is inextricably tied to the notion of the world

as a meaningful habitat for humans and is able to shed light on this unique relationship between humans and their world.

Hence, in the first chapter we turned to Heidegger whose analysis of Dasein provides a fundamental understanding of experiential space. For Heidegger, or better, a return to our pre-theoretical understanding of space goes hand-in-hand with the articulation of the pre-theoretical understanding of Being; a concept he contends has been passed over or presumed as known though it still lies within great ambiguity. Heidegger draws a distinction between the Being of an object merely present-at-hand in the world—estranged from its existential meaning— and Being understood as Dasein, a Being with the possibility of constituting meaning to its environment. This distinction between different modes of Being is the first step to showing that geometric spatiality is not applicable to the human subject. Dasein does not exist in the world the same way that an object present-at-hand does. Dasein relates to itself and holds its own existence as an issue for itself. It holds things in the world with concern insofar as it is involved in tasks. Thus, Dasein's concern impacts the nearness and farness of objects in the world. As I am concerned with different aspects of the world, different objects become salient in my experience. My concern molds and shifts my experience of the world, including my spatial relation to other objects.

Curiously, Heidegger conducts his fundamental ontology of Being with bringing forth the problematic of the body only in passing within the pages of *Being and Time*. Dasein holds all the essential characteristics of a human being but its embodied nature is not given an explicit analysis. Therefore in the second chapter we turned to Merleau-Ponty who contributes greatly to understanding the spatiality of the body. Merleau-Ponty is driven by a desire to reject both empiricism and intellectualism and return to a pre-objective world; a world prior to theorization

of it, one that belongs to experience itself. The pre-objective world can only be accessed by the body, thus enters the problematic of the body. The body for Merleau-Ponty is not an object, but rather it is a lived body. In his seminal work, *Phenomenology of Perception*, all notions of mind-body dualism are left behind as the human is conceived of as the body-subject: a pure unity of subjectivity and physicality.

Embodied subjectivity is not a unique characteristic of the human, rather it is an essential requirement of subjectivity and the only way it can access the world. It is only because of the structure of our bodies that we do experience the world in our unique perspective. Our forward facing eyes give us a different perspective from that of a fish whose eyes are on the side of its head. Our spine allows us to twist and see behind us, whereas a horse is confined only to forward vision. Furthermore, for Merleau-Ponty the lived body is the origin of space. Subjectivity's existence in the world is not randomly associated with a physical body that it manipulates. Rather, the body and subjectivity—the body-subject—is one independent agent within the world. Thus, the spatiality of the body is not objectifiable, it is beyond being reducible to mere extension in space. The body exists spatially in so far as it relates to its world through the tasks and involvement it sets for itself.

The body-subject also denies an understanding of space as a containment relationship. The body isn't *in* space the way water is in a glass. Rather the body dwells in or inhabits the space of the world. The world and environment are a familiar habitat for the body, orientation and directionality become contingent on the body finding itself within a familiar environment. In the Wertheimer experiment that Merleau-Ponty discusses in *Phenomenology of Perception*, the subject adjusts to a visually slanted room because he re-appropriates the room in order to make it familiar and inhabitable. The body-subject always craves an orientation in which it can

function towards its tasks and goals. Thus, understanding the body-subject as one that inhabits the world rather than merely placed in it, changes the way we think of the spatiality of the body-subject in relation to the external world. This spatiality is not absolute in orientation or determinate in direction, but again it is contingent upon the body-subject's gearing towards the world.

In the third chapter we turned to the lectures of Jan Patočka for whom, similarly to Merleau-Ponty, spatiality of the body is determined through the way in which the body involves itself in the world. The concept of dynamism in central for Patočka, as an energy projected from the human towards the world. Dynamism directs the projection of effort a human places into its worldly tasks and goals. The body acts as a zero-point from which this stream of energy is projected towards the world. In turn, our orientation is influenced by the tasks that we are involved in. For example, in eating my breakfast, the position of my body is centered around and towards my plate of food. With our bodies as zero-point, it is also the body that is often missing in our orientation. We are rarely aware of our bodies, but rather towards something to which we aim. For Patočka, the other is precisely what enables the self to understand itself with greater clarity. Its projection towards the world is always to the other. Thus in the body's projection towards the world, it loses itself into the other causing the body it disappear from my immediate awareness.

By the understanding of the human being that is offered, there is a new way of understanding space. In all three philosophers we no longer see space as the physical space of the surrounding environment. Nor is space reduced to concepts of distance or determinate points of direction. This new understanding of space is enabled, however, not only by the conception of Dasein or the human as the body-subject, but also by a new re-understanding of the world which

the subject inhabits; all three philosophers have an understanding of the horizonal world within which humans live, which greatly broadens the scope of spatial orientation. As Patočka speaks of, there is a difference between the content of the present and what is immediately relevant to us. The human always finds himself in a moment that goes beyond the content of what physically surrounds him. Not only do the internal horizons of every object enable possibilities that lay beyond what is merely given of the object but the world as the horizon of horizons presents an endless possibilities of experience. Moreover, these possibilities are not phantasy; rather they are an essential component of the world we live in and how we experience life. We live in possibilities as if they were actualities. Walking around campus, my present moment is not only comprised of my walk but also the possibility of going to class. When cooking, I'm not only concerned with my current actions but am also pre-occupied by the soon to come action of eating. This understanding of the world changes our conception of experiential space because it points to how our awareness changes as certain elements of our surroundings become salient and other recede; it prioritizes our environment.

The understanding of our world as a horizonal world and of the human being as an active agent within that world is the most essential element in pointing towards an experiential spatiality. For all three philosophers Being or the body-subject has agency and volition by which it commands its life. This agency of Being within the horizonal world is undeniably what restricts an understanding of space merely as geometric evaluations or containment. Our agency within the horizonal world allows for constant change in our experience of the world. There is, or at least can be, a constant shift in what is near and what is far or what is up and what is down. As Merleau-Ponty would phrase it, what we are concerned with is the spatiality of situation, not the spatiality of position.

Thus far, we have discussed the turn away from a determinate understanding of space to one that incorporates and molds with the subject. This is not to say, however, that spatiality for Being is entirely relative. It is not the case that space is an intuition of the mind imposed on the world by the subject, nor that our adapted understanding of space denies the possibility for many subjects to inhabit the same space. For all three philosophers spatiality of the subject molds to the activity with which the subject is involved, *but always in reference to the external world*. This is most obvious in Patočka when he speaks of the earth and the sky as being the constant referents for the body; for the body does not orient itself in relation to itself, but it refers out towards the world in which it is involved. The ground is always the cradle upon which we act, even if we are at times distanced from it. For example, when on an airplane flying high above the clouds, one's feet still long for the ground. The ground provides an unchanging consistency into which we can sink our roots. For Patočka, spatiality is determined by one's tasks and involvement in the world; one that is determined by the subjects agency. Yet, it is not the body to which the subject references its orientation, rather the body references its orientation to the earth.

For Merleau-Ponty also spatiality of the body is in reference to the world, as is shown through the determination of spatial levels. A spatial level derives from the notion of the body as an open field of possible corporeal actions—the virtual body: the template for our possible actions towards the world. It provides a preferential organization of space that will allow our body to participate in its tasks. The goal in establishing a new spatial level is to create an environment that is familiar and inhabitable for the subject. To do this however, does not mean the subject changes his environment to feel comfortable. It means that he changes his approach to the environment, via his bodily spatiality, to regain a sense of familiarity. In fact, the spatial

level provides ‘anchorage points’ within the world that allow for a re-orientation of the subject to its new environment.

Heidegger stays far from the problem of relativism with his initial analysis of Dasein. Dasein’s spatiality is most forcefully affected by its dealings in the world. Its experience of the world changes as its concern is projected into different regions and tasks. The spatiality of Dasein, however, does not change solely based on the concern of Dasein: as we have seen already, spatiality still is in reference to the world. In Dasein’s case, there exists a large world full of equipment both present-at-hand and ready-at-hand, with which Dasein involves itself. The equipment of the world is encased within a large system of references; a system that is not determined by Dasein alone, but one that exists intersubjectively. Therefore, Dasein’s spatiality is not purely its own. It is always tied to the world that it shares with others. Thus, there is an integral sense of agency that the subject must have in order to live spatially. Yet, this agency is not entirely determinative of spatiality, it merely acts as a liaison between the self and the world to which it is tied. The interweaving of both elements allows the human to live in a world in which he is spatially orientated towards his actions and at the same time in space that he occupies with others.

III. Implications of Movement within Spatiality

Thus far, the analysis on spatiality has been geared towards orientation as distinguished by tasks and goals of human life. In my concluding remarks, I would like to turn to the problematic of movement. What has been assumed in our analysis of spatiality towards our tasks is that the body is involved in a kinesthetic experience of orientation. Spatiality is gearing of the body-subject towards its world, and in turn what is involved in every experience of orientation is

the body's mobility. Take Patočka's example of leaning towards the lecturer as the student is engaged in what is being said; even this simple orientation of the body involves a movement which orients the body. What then is the relationship between spatiality and movement? More specifically, how does movement help us to gain a sense of spatiality of the body?

A good way to gain a phenomenological understanding of movement in and of itself would be to examine *dance*. How is it that through movement the dancer is oriented in space? At first thought it seems sufficient enough to say that within the studio or theatre space, the movement of the dance is oriented by the front of the room which is usually distinguished by audience seating, or a mirror in the case of a studio. The movement then has distinguished directionality coordinating with an absolute fixed direction; 'front', 'forward', 'upstage' all become the point of reference to which the movement is geared. The dancers can move to the left or to the right, further upstage or downstage within a common reference point for all as the axis of orientation. In cases of some contemporary performance art, however, an issue of growing exploration is 'stage space'; exploring these issues re-evaluates what are the place of the audience and the place of the performer. In such instances, an absolute point of direction towards which the movement is directed is no longer available as the dance becomes more meaningfully involved with its surroundings.

To understand how a sense of orientation arises in movement, we must turn away from dance as a performative activity to analyzing the movement alone within dance. For as long as we analyze dance as performance, orientation always arises through the task of performance. The dancer orients herself, whether in a classroom or performance space, in accordance with the task of performing. We must return to the more immediate issue at hand; how is it through movement alone that bodily spatiality may be granted? I think Merleau-Ponty presents a key insight into

understanding this issue. For Merleau-Ponty the body-subject is an integrated whole; the body is not a composite of different body parts at various points in space, rather it is a unity. The spatial positions of body parts envelop each other rather than being laid out side by side. Likewise, what is essential in dance is moving from an integrated body. A dancer does not swing her arm without an integration of her torso and pelvis as well; the dancer's arms are not moving in isolation from the rest of her body but there is sensitivity to the connection of the arms to the rest of the body while in motion. To invoke imagery from Merleau-Ponty, the dancer moves her arm and the rest of her body follows behind like the tail of a comet. Her arm gives her an understanding of the spatiality of her body; and as her arm moves continues to move the comet morphs, her spatiality shifts and morphs as well. In modern dance the concept of 'initiation' is important within many techniques. It is the initiating body part's movement that determines an organic pathway for the rest of the body; it is also from this point of initiating movement that I understand where the rest of my body is in space. Sometimes, movements create moments of tension within the body, rather than an organic following. There may be two initiating points pulling the body in a twist or stretch. But the tension itself creates an awareness of where those two initiating points are, like two ends of a clothesline pulled taut, and where everything in between is placed.

Thus, movement brings forth a primordial sense of spatiality of the body; moreover, it is just as much a disclosure of the origins of spatiality. These origins are derived from the movements of the human body, as it provides a primary self-localization of the body itself. An internal self-localization of the body is primary because arguably, there must be an awareness of the body prior to an orientedness towards the world. This must be so for Merleau-Ponty as spatiality is a bodily phenomenon. Likewise for Patočka the body is zero-ground for orientation

in the world. Yet, one cannot deny that even the dancer has a *habitual* body. Certain movements and patterns become familiar and comfortable in the body. The virtual body of the dancer is constantly adapting new movement into a scheme of familiar movement to in order to regain a familiar spatial understanding of her body. This is exemplified when a dancer is asked to reverse, invert, or retrograde a movement pattern she has just been given. The movement, along with the body, feels thrown out of familiarity; the movement becomes 'topsy turvy' until the dancer is able to re-establish a sense of spatiality of the body with the new movement. Soon, the new movement becomes just as familiar or habitual as the original movement pattern.

Returning to the notion of internal self-localization, an interesting insight arises when we consider the body as zero-ground of spatiality. The body as a zero-point disappears in the face of its tasks. The dynamism of the human is geared towards the tasks to which she aims while the body remains hidden from awareness. When considering tasks in our everyday lives, the body-subject gears his body to the task at hand, consequently the spatiality of the body is determined by his tasks. For the dancer, however, the task at hand is movement alone. When the task at hand is movement of the body alone, I would argue that it is not possible for the body to disappear, rather *the body is made more explicit.* Hence, movement alone is able to bring forth a primordial sense of spatiality of the body as it brings the phenomenon of the body and its spatial organization into hyper awareness. In our everyday lives however, this acute orientation to our own bodies is diluted as the body becomes geared towards our tasks. Still, one can argue for movement as an essential enabler for understanding the spatiality of our bodies. As Merleau-Ponty asserts, the body-subject provides the very origins of space. The origins remain hidden, however, precisely because the body acts as zero-ground for orientation. The phenomenological value of dance is that dance brings into the open what for the most part remains concealed; dance

makes explicit the body as the origins of space while in most experience this understanding remains implicit.

Through the history of philosophy, the concept of space has been of marginal importance, or at least only side notes for most philosophers. In *Being and Time* there are only a few sections devoted to spatiality because for Heidegger, as is for others, the problematic of space is a part of a larger philosophical conversation. Yet, it is one of the most important aspects of a rich philosophical understanding of human life because it is the most intrinsic and unavoidable aspect of humans. To be human is to be located spatially in a world; it is impossible to imagine it otherwise. Moreover, as we have seen in Heidegger's, Merleau-Ponty's, and Patočka's schemas, the human is an active agent in the world. He is always involved in tasks and activities that are of his concern. This is the state of life of man: to be in the world, working towards our tasks—from the everyday dealing and chores of life to our eternal struggle for freedom and true self-understanding. In Patočka's third and final movement of life – that of self liberation through self understanding—what is necessary from the start is a self localization in the world in order to carry out tasks and achievements, only through which there can be access to self-understanding. Spatiality then becomes a philosophical concept that cannot be overlooked; to brush over it would be to jeopardize everything that is a consequence of it.

Lastly, the phenomenological understanding of space expressed in these pages is something that once realized, is undeniable in our experience. Just as the body disappears in order for us to engage in our dealings with the world, the concept of space and our spatial relation to the world is one that is hardly at the forefront of our awareness. It is a nuanced phenomenological observation that gives us a richer philosophical understanding of human experience.

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