

PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION



MAURICE
MERLEAU-PONTY

Phenomenology of Perception

First published in 1945, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's monumental *Phénoménologie de la perception* signaled the arrival of a major new philosophical and intellectual voice in post-war Europe. Breaking with the prevailing picture of existentialism and phenomenology at the time, it has become one of the landmark works of twentieth-century thought. This new translation, the first for over fifty years, makes this classic work of philosophy available to a new generation of readers.

Phenomenology of Perception stands in the great phenomenological tradition of Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre. Yet Merleau-Ponty's contribution is decisive, as he brings this tradition and other philosophical predecessors, particularly Descartes and Kant, to confront a neglected dimension of our experience: the lived body and the phenomenal world. Charting a bold course between the reductionism of science on the one hand and "intellectualism" on the other, Merleau-Ponty argues that we should regard the body not as a mere biological or physical unit, but as the body which structures one's situation and experience within the world.

Merleau-Ponty enriches his classic work with engaging studies of famous cases in the history of psychology and neurology as well as phenomena that continue to draw our attention, such as phantom limb syndrome, synesthesia, and hallucination.

This new translation includes many helpful features such as the reintroduction of Merleau-Ponty's discursive Table of Contents as subtitles into the body of the text, a comprehensive Translator's Introduction to its main themes, essential notes explaining key terms of translation, an extensive Index, and an important updating of Merleau-Ponty's references to now available English translations.

Also included is a new Foreword by Taylor Carman and an introduction to Merleau-Ponty by Claude Lefort.

Translated by Donald A. Landes.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was born in 1908 in Rochefort-sur-Mer, France. Drawn to philosophy from a young age, Merleau-Ponty would go on to study alongside Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Simone Weil at the famous École Normale Supérieure. He completed a *Docteur ès lettres* based on two dissertations, *La structure du comportement* (1942) and *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945). After a brief post at the University of Lyon, Merleau-Ponty returned to Paris in 1949 when he was awarded the Chair of Psychology and Pedagogy at the Sorbonne. In 1952 he became the youngest philosopher ever appointed to the prestigious Chair of Philosophy at the Collège de France. He died suddenly of a stroke in 1961 aged fifty-three, at the height of his career. He is buried in Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

Praise for this new edition:

“This is an extraordinary accomplishment that will doubtless produce new readers for the remarkable philosophy of Merleau-Ponty. This excellent translation opens up a new set of understandings of what Merleau-Ponty meant in his descriptions of the body, psychology, and the field of perception, and in this way promises to alter the horizon of Merleau-Ponty studies in the English language. The extensive index, the thoughtful annotation, and the guidance given about key problems of translation not only show us the richness of Merleau-Ponty’s language, but track the emergence of a new philosophical vocabulary. This translation gives us the text anew and will doubtless spur thoughtful new readings in English.”

Judith Butler, *University of California, Berkeley, USA*

“This lucid and compelling new translation not only brings one of the great breakthrough books in phenomenology back to life – it gives to it an entirely new life. Readers will here find original insights on perception and the lived body that will change forever their understanding of themselves and the world they inhabit.”

Edward S. Casey, *Stony Brook University, USA*

Review of the original French edition:

“It is impossible to define an object in cutting it off from the subject through which and for which it is an object; and the subject reveals itself only through the objects in which it is engaged. Such an affirmation only makes the content of naive experience explicit, but it is rich in consequences. Only in taking it as a basis will one succeed in building an ethics to which man can totally and sincerely adhere. It is therefore of extreme importance to establish it solidly and to give back to man this childish audacity that years of verbal submission have taken away: the audacity to say: ‘I am here.’ This is why *Phenomenology of Perception* by Maurice Merleau-Ponty is not only a remarkable specialist work but a book that is of interest to the whole of man and to every man; the human condition is at stake in this book.”

Simone de Beauvoir, reviewing *Phénoménologie de la perception*
on publication in French in 1945

Maurice
Merleau-Ponty

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Translated by Donald A. Landes

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FOREWORD

Taylor Carman

Phenomenology of Perception is one of the great texts of twentieth-century philosophy. Today, a half-century after his death, Merleau-Ponty's ideas are enjoying a renaissance, attracting the renewed attention of scientists and scholars from a wide range of disciplines. Philosophers in the English-speaking world have over the last fifty years been slow to recognize the significance of his work, which resists easy classification and summary. He had little familiarity or contact with what by the 1950s had come to be called "analytic" philosophy, though his ideas speak directly to the theories of perception and mind that have grown out of that tradition. Nor was he a structuralist, though he saw sooner and more deeply than his contemporaries the importance of Saussurian linguistics and the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose good friend he was and remained until his death in 1961.

Merleau-Ponty also departed sharply from his predecessors in the phenomenological tradition: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre. For whereas they proceeded at a very general level of description and argument, Merleau-Ponty regularly drew from the empirical findings and theoretical innovations of the behavioral, biological, and social sciences. He was a phenomenologist first and foremost, though, and one cannot understand *Phenomenology of Perception* without understanding phenomenology.

Phenomenology is an attempt to describe the basic structures of human experience and understanding from a first person point of view, in contrast to the reflective, third person perspective that tends to dominate scientific knowledge and common sense. Phenomenology calls us to return, as Husserl put it, “to the things themselves.” By “things” (*Sachen*) Husserl meant not real (concrete) objects, but the ideal (abstract) forms and contents of experience as we live them, not as we have learned to conceive and describe them according to the categories of science and received opinion. Phenomenology is thus a descriptive, not an explanatory or deductive enterprise, for it aims to reveal experience as such, rather than frame hypotheses or speculate beyond its bounds.

Chief among the phenomena, the “things themselves,” is what Husserl’s teacher, Franz Brentano, called *intentionality*, that is, the *directedness* of consciousness, its *of-ness* or “aboutness.” A perception or memory, for example, is not just a mental state, but a perception or memory of something. To think or dream is to think or dream *about* something. That might sound trivial, and yet (astonishingly) this humble, seemingly obvious fact managed to elude early modern (and some more recent) theories of mind thanks to the representationalism and dualism of such seminal thinkers as René Descartes and John Locke.

The Cartesian–Lockean conception of thought and experience – a conception that in many ways still figures prominently in contemporary psychology and cognitive science – tries to give an account of perception, imagination, intellect, and will in terms of the presence of “ideas,” or what Kant called “representations” (*Vorstellungen*), in the mind. Ideas or representations were thought to be something like inner mental tokens, conceived sometimes discursively on the model of thoughts or the sentences expressing them, sometimes pictorially on analogy with nondiscursive images or, as Hume said, “impressions.” But the “way of ideas,” as Locke’s version of the theory came to be known, was problematic from the outset. For ideas are meant to be *objects* of consciousness; we are aware of them; they are what our attitudes are *aimed* at. But this begs the question of intentionality, namely, *How* do we manage to be aware of *anything*? Simply positing ideas in the mind sheds no light on that question, for then our awareness of our own ideas itself remains mysterious. Do we need a further, intermediate layer of ideas in order to be aware of the ideas that afford us an awareness of the external world? But this generates an infinite regress.

Husserl's solution to this problem was to distinguish between the *objects* and the *contents* of consciousness. There is a difference between the things we are aware of and the contents of our awareness of them. An intentional attitude is therefore not a *relation*, but a mental act with *intrinsic content*. Perception is not *of something*, if the "of" in that formula indicates a causal relation to something in the external world, for there might be no such thing – indeed, as far as phenomenology is concerned, Husserl insisted, there might be no external world at all. Perception is instead *as if of something*; it identifies or describes a merely putative object, whether the object exists or not.

Husserl's distinction between the contents and the objects of consciousness parallels Frege's distinction between linguistic sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*). To use Frege's own example, the expressions "Morning Star" and "Evening Star" have different *senses*, since they involve different descriptive contents and stand in different inferential relations to other terms, but they have one and the same *referent*, namely the planet Venus. Similarly, for Husserl, my perception of an apple tree in a garden has what he calls a "perceptual sense" (*Wahrnehmungssinn*), namely the content of my sensory experience, including not just what directly meets my eye, but also a vast background of assumptions, memories, associations, and anticipations that make my experience – like the world itself – inexhaustibly rich. For example, I see the tree not just as a physical surface facing me, but as a three-dimensional object with an interior and an exterior, a back and sides, and indefinitely many hidden features, which I can examine further by looking more closely. Similarly, in addition to their apparent size, shape, and color, the trunk looks strong and solid, the branches supple, the leaves smooth, the apples ripe or unripe, and so on. The fact that I have seen trees like this many times in the past also lends my experience a sense of familiarity, which is no less part of my perceptual awareness.

That horizon of significance, which saturates every experience, distinguishing it from every other in its descriptive content, even when they pick out one and the same object, is what Husserl calls the *noema* of an intentional state, as distinct from its *noesis*, or the concrete psychological episode that has or instantiates that content. *Noesis* and *noema* are, respectively, the mental act and its content: the act of thinking and the thought as such, the act of judging and the judgment, the act of remembering and the memory itself. Similarly, on analogy with language, the *noesis* is to the

noema as a linguistic term is to its sense, and the *noema* is in turn distinct from the object of consciousness (if there is one) just as the sense of a term is distinct from what (if anything) it refers to.

Husserl's theory of intentionality is thus a paradigm case of what we might call the *semantic paradigm* in the philosophy of mind. Unlike empiricist versions of the theory of ideas, which construe mental representations on analogy with pictures or images, the semantic model conceives of mental content in general – not just the content of thought and judgment, but also that of perception, memory, and imagination – on analogy with linguistic meaning.

Empiricism and the semantic paradigm are two versions of representationalism, and Merleau-Ponty's descriptive account of intentionality in *Phenomenology of Perception* is a repudiation of both. Intentionality, he insists, is constituted neither by brute sensation nor by conceptual content, but by noncognitive – indeed often unconscious – bodily skills and dispositions. The content of experience, which Merleau-Ponty, like Husserl, often describes as a kind of “meaning” (*signification*) or “sense” (*sens*), is not semantic content, but rather the intuitive coherence things have for us when we find them and cope with them in our practical circumstances. Things “make sense” for us perceptually (or not), as they surely do for animals and preverbal children as well. Language deepens and transforms our experience, but only by expanding, refining, and varying the significance we have always already found in situations and events *before* we find it in sentences, thoughts, inferences, concepts, and conversations.

According to Merleau-Ponty, then, intentionality is not mental representation at all, but skillful bodily responsiveness and spontaneity in direct engagement with the world. To perceive is not to have inner mental states, but to be familiar with, deal with, and find our way around in an environment. Perceiving means having a body, which in turn means *inhabiting* a world. Intentional attitudes are not mere bundles of sensorimotor capacities, but modes of existence, ways of what Merleau-Ponty, following Heidegger, calls “being in the world” (*être au monde*). Indeed, what fascinates Merleau-Ponty about perception is precisely the way in which it makes manifest a world by carving out a concrete perspective “in the recesses of a body,” as he would later say.¹ By manifesting itself in our bodily capacities and dispositions, perception grounds the basic forms of all human experience and understanding, namely perspectival orientation and figure/ground contrast, focus and horizon. The phenomenon of

perspective is therefore ubiquitous – not just in sense experience, but in our intellectual, social, personal, cultural, and historical self-understanding, all of which are anchored in our bodily being in the world.

But what is perspective? Rationalist philosophers like Leibniz, who understood our place in the world in intellectual terms as the relation of a thinking subject to an object, conceived of human knowledge as at best a finite approximation, indeed a pale reflection, of divine omniscience. God's perfect and unlimited knowledge of the universe, they supposed, is the proper standard against which to measure the scope and limits of what we can know. Whereas God's perspective is the ideal "view from nowhere," ours is always a view from *somewhere* – hence, partial and imperfect. And yet the very idea of a view from nowhere is incoherent: a view from nowhere, after all, would not be a *view*. "To see is always to see from somewhere," Merleau-Ponty says. But how can we understand experience as at once anchored in a point of view and yet open out onto the world? "We must attempt to understand how vision can come about from somewhere without thereby being locked within its perspective."²

It is tempting to suppose that, while the world itself exists objectively (out there), we can know it only through private subjective experiences (in here). A perspective would then be a kind of extraneous superaddition to what there is, a mere instrument or medium, as Hegel put it, by means of which to grasp the world, or through which to discern it, however darkly.³ Skeptical problems entailed by such metaphors have fueled modern epistemology at the expense of the mystery that inspired them, namely that it is a *world* – not just images or information – that reveals itself to us in perception. Hegel was one of the first to recommend dispensing with representationalism altogether, and Merleau-Ponty follows him in wanting to overcome what he, too, regards as the crippling effects such models have on how we understand ourselves and the world.

The philosophical mystery that impressed Merleau-Ponty and guided his work, then, has two sides: that we are *open onto* the world and that we are *embedded* in it. The first side of the mystery is the astonishing fact that the world is disclosed to us at all, that our awareness reaches out into the midst of things beyond ourselves, binding us to them in a way seemingly incomparable with the mute external relations in which objects blindly stand to one another. Perception is our "absolute proximity" to things and at the same time our "irremediable distance" from them.⁴ The senses

seem to banish, as if magically, the density and obscurity of brute physical reality, opening the world up before us.

The second side of the mystery is that we ourselves are neither angels nor machines but living beings. We come to the world neither as data-crunching information processors nor as ghostly apparitions floating over the surface of the world like a fog. Perceptual perspective is not just sensory or intellectual, but *bodily* perspective. We have a world only by having a body: “the body is our anchorage in a world”; “The body is our general means of having a world.”⁵ Of course, it is misleading to say that we “have” bodies, just as it would be misleading so say that we “have” minds or selves. Better, we *are* minds, selves, bodies. It is equally misleading to say that we “have” a world, as if having a world were a kind of lucky accident, as if it might turn out that we don’t really have one, however much it *seems* as if we do. To say that we are bodily beings is to say that we *are* our bodies, just as saying that we are worldly beings is to say that worldliness is neither a property nor a relation, but our existence. Again, for human beings, to be at all is to *be in the world*.

The looming target of all Merleau-Ponty’s efforts, his abiding philosophical *bête noire*, one might say, was *rationalism*, the idea that *thought* constitutes our essential relation to the world, that for our attitudes to have *content* at all is for them to be, as Descartes said, modes of *thinking*. But perception is *not* a mode of thought; it is more basic than thought; indeed, thought rests on and presupposes perception. As children, we do not learn how to attach thoughts to a sensory world we encounter in the course of already thinking; rather, we learn *how* to think about what we already find ourselves seeing, hearing, grasping: “a child perceives before it thinks.”⁶ Moreover, the intelligible world, being fundamentally fragmentary and abstract, stands out as foreground only against the stability and plenitude of a perceptual background: “the sensible world is ‘older’ than the world of thought, for the former is visible and relatively continuous . . . the latter, invisible and sparse (*lacunaire*).”⁷

One could say, then, that thinking is more like perceiving than rationalists think it is. Why? Not because perception and judgment have the same kinds of intentional content, which just happens to be coupled to different kinds of subjective attitudes, but because thought and perception share many of the same underlying intuitive structures. Thought, like perception, for example, has its own sort of perspectival orientation: we often approach a problem from a different angle, grasp it or lose

sight of it; when we struggle to comprehend something, we try to get our minds around it, and so on. So too, like perceiving, thinking focuses on something bound in a horizon; it distinguishes figure from ground. Even very abstract ideas can be at the center or on the periphery of our attention.

Merleau-Ponty's central philosophical insight about perception, then, is that it is not just contingently but *essentially* bodily. Perception is not a private mental event, nor is our own body just one more thing in the world alongside others. We are consequently in danger of losing sight of perception altogether when we place it on either side of the distinction between inner subjective experiences and external objective facts. Interior and exterior, mental and physical, subjective and objective – these notions are too crude and misleading to capture the phenomenon. Perception is both intentional and bodily, both sensory and motor, and so neither merely subjective nor objective, inner nor outer, spiritual nor mechanical.

The middle ground between such categories is thus not just their middle but indeed their *ground*, for it is what they depend on and presuppose. There are such things as subjective sensations and sensory qualities, but only because we can sometimes conjure them up by abstracting away from our original openness onto the world and zeroing in on the isolated features of things, and on bits of experience that we suppose (rightly or wrongly) must correspond to them, just as we can abstract in the other direction away from ourselves toward a world regarded as independent of our perspective on it.

It is nevertheless possible to draw a distinction for analytical purposes in that primitive middle ground between two aspects of perception that arguably underlie and motivate all subsequent distinctions between subjective and objective, inner and outer, mental and physical. The two underlying or primal aspects of perception are the (relative) *passivity* of sense experience and the (relative) *activity* of bodily skills. The Kantian contrast between receptivity and spontaneity, though crude and abstract in its own way, comes closer than other such distinctions to capturing the two essential aspects of perception, namely its sensory and its motor dimensions. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, “The structure ‘world,’ with its double moment of sedimentation and spontaneity, is at the center of consciousness.”⁸ Those two moments are not sharply distinct, self-sufficient states, but are interwoven and inseparable aspects of a single, unified

phenomenon. They are not, like Kantian intuitions and concepts, discrete parts or ingredients of a composite product, but more like two sides of a coin or two dimensions of a figure. Perception is always both passive and active, situational and practical, conditioned and free.

Perception, then, is the *ground* of both the subjectivity and the objectivity of experience, of its inner feel and its outward “grip” (*prise*) on the world. Perception is not a “mental” event, for we experience our own sensory states not merely as states of *mind*, but as states of our bodies and our bodily behaviors. Even Descartes had to concede this point to common sense, albeit in trying to coax us out of it by means of purely rational – often strikingly counter-intuitive – arguments to the contrary. We feel pains in our bodies, he admitted, but only because we are confused, for a pain can exist only in a mind. Similarly, we imagine that we see with our eyes, but this is impossible, for seeing is not a physical but a mental event.⁹ Like many professional philosophers today, Descartes regarded experiential phenomena as mere appearances, eminently revisable, indeed supplantable, by the discoveries of pure rational inquiry. Our naïve conception of ourselves as bodies, he thought, could be accommodated simply by acknowledging a close causal relation between our physical and mental states. We do not, of course, *feel* like minds housed or lodged in our bodies, “as a sailor is present in a ship.”¹⁰ And yet, for Descartes, the metaphysical fact of the matter is that the relation between experience and the body is not an identity, but a *causal* relation between two substances.

But suppose the body and experience are not just causally connected, but identical. Is such an identity conceptually necessary, deducible *a priori*? Do concepts pertaining to perception entail concepts pertaining to the body? What purely rational inferences to bodily phenomena can be drawn from our best understanding of perception, sensation, recognition, judgment?

For Merleau-Ponty, the relation between perception and the body is neither causal nor logical, for those are not the only ways in which the coincidences and dependencies between the body and experience make sense to us. Instead, all explicit thought about perception is parasitic on a more basic understanding we have of ourselves simply in virtue of being embodied perceivers. We have a pre-reflective grasp of our own experiences, not as causally or conceptually linked to our bodies, but as coinciding with them in relations of mutual motivation. To say that perception

is essentially bodily is to say that we do not and cannot understand it in abstraction from its concrete corporeal conditions. The phenomenal field is neither caused nor defined but *constituted* by the sensorimotor structures and capacities of the body. The structure of perception just is the structure of the body: my body “is my point of view upon the world.”¹¹

Of course, from a third person point of view, the structures and capacities of the body are mere contingent, ultimately arbitrary facts about the kinds of creatures we happen to be. And yet those facts cannot manifest themselves as contingent and arbitrary for us, from our point of view, for they just *are* our perspective on the world. The body is not just one more object in the environment, for we do not – indeed *cannot* – understand our own bodies as merely accidentally occurring things. The point is not just that the boundary between my body and the environment cannot be drawn very sharply; what matters is not *where* the boundary lies, but rather *that* there is a difference in principle between myself and my world. My body cannot be understood simply as that chunk of the material world that sits in closest contact with my mind. However vague the material boundary between body and environment may be, it cannot collapse entirely, for an environment is an environment only *for* a body that cannot perceive itself as just one more object among others: “I observe external objects with my body, I handle them, inspect them, and walk around them. But when it comes to my body, I never observe it itself. I would need a second body to be able to do so, which would itself be unobservable.”¹²

My body is my perspective on the world and so constitutes a kind of background field of perceptual *necessity* against which sensorimotor contingencies show up *as* contingent. Manifestly contingent facts about perception, that is, presuppose (more or less) invariant structures of the phenomenal field, for example perspectival orientation in space and time and figure/ground contrast. This is why, for Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenal field is always a “transcendental field,”¹³ that is, a space of possibilities, impossibilities, and necessities *constitutive* of our perceptual world. The body is not just a causal but a transcendental condition of perception, which is to say that we have no understanding of perception at all in abstraction from body and world.

What Merleau-Ponty advances in *Phenomenology of Perception*, then, is in effect a new *concept* of experience. His aim is to realign our philosophical understanding of perception and the body with things we are always

already familiar with before we begin to reflect and theorize. What we can learn from Merleau-Ponty's efforts is thus something we already knew, if only tacitly, something we acquire neither from logical analysis nor from empirical inquiry. In this way, his work performs the recollective function of philosophy as Plato conceived it: to remind us in a flash of recognition what we feel we must already have comprehended, but had forgotten precisely owing to our immersion in the visible world.

“MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY”¹

Claude Lefort

Translated by Donald A. Landes

From “Cézanne’s Doubt”² to “Eye and Mind,”³ from *Phenomenology of Perception* to *The Visible and the Invisible*,⁴ Merleau-Ponty never ceased meditating upon vision. In the room where he suddenly collapsed one evening in May of 1961, an open book – a book to which he had never stopped returning – bore witness to his final work: Descartes’s *Optics*.⁵ Until the very end, his life as a philosopher nourished the question to which his writings always brought new responses: What is seeing? If ever an *œuvre* was riveted to its opening interrogation, it was surely his.

Even before deciding upon the title of his minor thesis, *The Structure of Behavior*,⁶ Merleau-Ponty had described the project – like that of his major thesis [*Phenomenology of Perception*] – in terms of a study of perception. Of course for him, perceiving already implies all of the relations of the subject to the world and, first of all, to the sensible. For example, he would never grow tired of returning to the study of the experience of touch and the experience of vision, to the point of finding in the grasp of the two hands, in the interminable reversibility of sensing, and in the imminent and yet impossible coincidence of the touching and the touched, a privileged experience of that flesh that he would make into a substitute for being. But he could only learn from this experience because he had thought through the relation between seeing and the

visible, for this relation reveals most clearly and all at once the exteriority of the world for the body that opens up to it, the distance of the things in front of this body, their absolute alterity, the body's folding back outside of everything that it captures and yet its implication in the visible, the turning back of the visible upon itself that constitutes it as seeing and that causes it to perceive from the very foundation of being to which it adheres.

As diverse as his approaches may be, Merleau-Ponty relates all of his questions to this enigma. He writes about language, but seeks its secret in the painter's vision. The “voices of silence” teach him the truth of literature and even the truth of philosophy, which believes it sacrifices everything to the utterance of sense and yet only reaches us obliquely through its power of awakening our wonder at the contact of being and sends us back to the mute experience always covered over by the mass of established opinions and ideas. For a while he believes he can structure an *Introduction to the Prose of the World* around his work on painting, in which the study of language, the literary phenomenon, and mathematical idealities would come to constitute the raw materials for a theory of expression.⁷ When he abandons this rough draft in order to devote himself to the work that was to bring out the foundations of a new ontology, he does not hesitate to shift the working title of his project from *Being and Sense* or *The Origin of Truth* to *The Visible and the Invisible*. He places a study of perceptual faith at the beginning of this great work, after having initially renounced describing the crisis within philosophy. He wants to begin anew from the brute experience of the thing and of others – such as it is given in the gaze, prior to the scientist's elaboration – in order to put philosophical discourse to the test. He refuses to begin from a position of knowledge, even one that, in its very manner of interrogating, is fully aware of everything that it owes to the history of metaphysics. When it comes to this history itself – beginning from Husserl's metaphysics, through which Merleau-Ponty seeks an opening to his own domain, or from others from which he wants to gather what they offer to thought in the present – his intention is not to submit them to the concept, to assign to them an objective status, to articulate them within an intelligible space whose law he would in the end possess. What he aims at in them, which is neither the effect of his arbitration nor their signification in itself, he assures himself of finding through a return to the truth of perceptual experience:

Just as the perceived world endures only through the reflections, shadows, levels, and horizons between things (which are not things and are not nothing, but on the contrary mark out by themselves the fields of possible variation in the same thing and the same world), so the works and thought of a philosopher are also made of certain articulations between things said. There is no dilemma of objective interpretation or arbitrariness with respect to these articulations, since they are not *objects* of thought, since (like shadow and reflection) they would be destroyed by being subjected to analytic observation or taken out of context, and since we can be faithful to and find them only by thinking again.⁸

In fact, his essays on Bergson and on Husserl, on Machiavelli and on Montaigne, and the introductions he wrote for *Les philosophes célèbres*,⁹ bear witness to an openness to thought that makes way for the unthought of the other, for a reconstruction of the past field of discourse that is at the same time the institution of his own discourse. This openness brings about – in the practice of philosophical interrogation – the turning back discovered in the visible where the subject sets himself up, testing out his attachment, his envelopment, and his dispossession.

He writes about politics and history, but always returns to the experience of perception in order to reopen their definition. As early as *Sense and Non-Sense* and *Humanism and Terror*,¹⁰ he doubts that we could ever free ourselves from the contingency of a situation and of a perspective. He shows us that the social and historical field and the world that our eyes open to are, for the same reason, inexhaustible; he shows us that perception and action are, for the same reason, never certain; and he shows us that, for the same reason, we can neither give up the notion of an historical truth nor abandon our faith in the visible. What first draws him to Marxism is precisely the idea that history is only clarified from within itself, that only one particular social formation – the proletariat – provides in its class being the power to decode the becoming of humanity, that its task cannot be entirely conceived nor its sense entirely detached from praxis, and that there is thus no objective criterion for deciding upon the revolutionary project – not in any of its moments. He turns away from Marxism because of his fidelity to his most basic demand: to uncover the illusion of converting the interiority of history into a pure negativity, of concentrating in one place and in one time all of the resources of historical creativity, of embodying in an actual collectivity the authority of the

universal, and of ultimately limiting the indetermination of knowledge and praxis to the behavior of an actor whose identity had been once and for all removed from the interrogation.

In terms of Marx, the only criticism he will offer is of the desire to lead all of the lines of force of history to a center or to construct the entire edifice of society beginning from the productive subject. Yet this is the very criticism he addresses to the classical philosopher, occupied as he is in establishing the conditions of a general mastery of sense while forgetting the initiation to the world that organizes his perception. Thus, in one of his essays he will argue that perception, history, and expression cannot be disentangled, and in a working note he goes as far as affirming that:

the problems of knowing what is the subject of the State, of war, etc., are exactly of the same type as the problem of knowing what is the subject of perception: one will not clear up the philosophy of history except by working out the problem of perception.¹¹

To consult only the philosopher's final writings, one might judge that he left behind the pathways traced out by his two important theses. His research is no longer animated by what he had called the "new" psychology; the problems of the functioning of perception seem demoted. In particular, *Gestalttheorie* – in which he once believed he had found a way of breaking away from empiricism – is now abandoned, seeming to him to have lost its initial inspiration. And yet, if we consider precisely what is rejected along with it in the period of *The Visible and the Invisible*, for example, we find Merleau-Ponty rejecting a positive system of explanation that has no other possibility than of leading to realism or to neo-Kantianism, and not at all the notion of *Gestalt* itself that had nourished his reflection twenty years earlier. On the contrary, the notion reappears, extracted from the scientific experiments of the psychologists, and is reintroduced to take control of all of the enigmas of our relations with the world. Merleau-Ponty writes: "The figure on a ground, the simplest 'Etwas' [something] – the *Gestalt* contains the key to the problem of the mind."¹²

What can one say about pure visibility, he asks us, if not that it is born in the divergence [*l'écart*]? But the divergence is not *nothing*, nor is it *something*, nor is it that by which *there is* (in the sense of a condition of possibility). Being as transcendence, then, must be thought in terms of the *Gestalt*.

This notion gives us a principle of differentiation, beneath which we cannot go, because it is neither in the object nor provided by the subject, because it is at once a segregation of the figure and the background and a segregation of the seeing and the visible. It is the formula of a slippage of the same kind between appearing and that which remains latent, such that each visible has its invisible double and can return to itself – the line becomes a vector, the quality a dimension, the image a category, and the sign a symbol. And finally, it is the formula of our own inscription in the field that we see.

We cannot be attentive enough to the fact that Merleau-Ponty entitles his final essay “Eye and Mind.” He thereby names his entire *œuvre*. He gives voice to his desire, which was to circumscribe man’s opening to the world through the eye. Given that this desire seems to govern all of metaphysics, it is all the more important to interrogate it. Is it not Plato already (as Heidegger shows) who pushes the word *eidos* in order to make it designate essence, even though it designated the sensible appearance of the thing, and who caused that which does not appear to the body’s eyes to spring forth for a pure gaze? Did Plato not begin a movement that will sustain vision’s privilege (up until Husserl) and, despite the largest variations, conserve the link from truth to the *intuitus mentis* or to the *Wesenschau*? Let us not be too quick to reduce the mystery of this privilege. We like to believe that the eye is the organ of possession at a distance, that it provides a natural support for the spirit tempted by the capture of being, that in the exercise of its powers we find an anticipation of the withdrawal of thought and the setting up of its domain outside of the sensible. But to conceive of metaphysics as the sublimation of vision would be to forget that metaphysics interprets and modifies vision at the very moment that it subjects itself to it – and one might conclude that this interpretation is not the solitary work of philosophizing individuals. Because the interpretation springs forth at a certain time from collective techniques and from their convergence, which remains to be thought, it would remain true that it implies the institution of a language, the advent of a relation with the world that the life of the body could never justify. This would be to act as if we knew what is sublimated and to forget again that this knowledge emerges in the wake of metaphysics and that our reference to vision is burdened with the prejudices that it has placed upon it. Merleau-Ponty teaches us to return to precisely this forgetting, and thanks to him we have learned to re-interrogate the moment that the

thought about seeing destroys seeing, turns it into its object, and simultaneously becomes lodged there. But his approach does not leave us free to ignore what it owes to the conditions in which it is instituted. Whatever his approach might make us think about vision, vision only draws all of the other questions to itself in virtue of a preeminence acquired in culture. Given the status accorded by Merleau-Ponty to the eye, we must recognize that his thought is inscribed within the orbit of metaphysics. Indeed, the signs of this inscription abound in reading *Phenomenology of Perception*. Its style of argumentation, its desire to address the entire collection of questions the tradition has set out as the domain of philosophy, even the presentation of the work, arranged in such a way as to support the continuous movement of an inspection of spirit – none of this allows us to doubt the identity of the enterprise. As critical as it is of previous systems and of the very notion of system itself, the work bears witness, in the order of its discourse, to an ideal of demonstration and totalization that adheres to the reign of metaphysics.

If we wanted to ignore this adherence, we would fail to stress the audacity of our philosopher, we would preclude ourselves from being able to fully measure it, because he demonstrates this audacity through what Hegel called the patient work of the negative, a work that – from within philosophical thought itself – undermines some of its dominant categories and creates the need for a regime change. Merleau-Ponty acquires the power of decoding this necessity by remaining within metaphysics – which is different from those whose emphatic discourse about the end of metaphysics makes one suspicious that they have not understood anything about its beginning – and this remaining within metaphysics also presupposes, along with the truth of an attachment, the sign of an imprint. In fact, rather than being surprised we should learn from the difficulties and hesitations in the movement of a study that, from its very beginnings, includes the most novel advances. If the language of the "Preface" to *Signs*, "Eye and Mind," and *The Visible and the Invisible* is already spoken in some particular essay in *Sense and Non-Sense*, or in *Phenomenology of Perception*, and if this language is still not understood or intended to the point of requiring the sacrifice of all previously adopted conventions, we are tempted to chalk this up to a weakness. Yet we can only make this judgment by leaning upon the experience that Merleau-Ponty introduced us to; or again, we learn from him which were his enduring insights and which were merely his tentative first steps.

Such should be our reading of the early works: by discovering the influence of the tradition on the early writings, we must not forget that the later writings are what give us the power (at least to a large extent) to recognize this influence. And if we conclude that the status granted the eye still serves the glory of metaphysics, let us not conceal the fact that this idea comes to us from a dialogue with the philosopher who interrogates vision as no other has.

Thus, when we place *The Structure of Behavior* alongside the later works, it reveals both its audacity and its limitations. There is no doubt that we find there the questions that will animate Merleau-Ponty's research until the end (and indeed the very formula of an envelopment of the seeing by the visible). From this early work, in a sense, the stakes are set: to think the unthinkable of metaphysics: the body. But it is not enough to add that such an “unthinkable” can only be named by still situating oneself within the horizon of metaphysics; all that one says about metaphysics finds its justification in the very criticism that attacks it. The works of psychology and modern physiology are invoked in order to produce the refutation of the claims that they had consistently engendered, and whose antinomy denounces the ontological lie that the perceiving organism is a mechanical apparatus, and thus wholly subject to the laws governing the physical universe, or that it enjoys an autonomy that only the operations of consciousness can account for. By making use of their results, it necessarily follows that if the body and its surroundings cannot be defined in isolation, if every attempt to describe the constitution of one presupposes a reference to the constitution of the other, and if every relation of cause to effect or means to end can only be determined in function of a certain given meaning of “configuration,” then the classical distinction between the subject and the object is no longer viable and reflective, Cartesian, or Kantian thought is mistaken along with its adversary, empirical theory. Now from this point of view, Merleau-Ponty remains deeply subject to the philosophical tradition. He only evades the space governed by reflection by continuing to follow its lines of force. For example, he introduces the notion of behavior because it seems neutral to him, as something that cannot be assimilated to objectivist or subjectivist language, but only in order to turn behavior into the object of a pure description, as if the nature of the discourse in which this description takes place were itself unproblematic. He grounds this upon the locating of heterogeneous structures in order to reveal the physical, the vital, and the human as

three dialectically articulated orders of signification, and his interpretation of these structures opens the pathway to the critique of representation and expression that he will subsequently develop. But he does not free himself from a conception of the transcendental that binds him to the philosophy of consciousness. The most that can be denounced in this project is its ambiguity. For although he is committed to turning perception into an event and catches a glimpse of the idea of the body turning back upon itself that opens it up to the world, and although he strips consciousness of its power of construction or constitution – or rather, bankrupts the myth of a coextension of perceiving and the perceptible – he nonetheless reestablishes the unity of the phenomenal world for a transcendental vision. All of the paradoxes are brought together in the idea of a transcendental consciousness that finds itself stripped of the attributes that had until then been inseparable from its definition, that no longer bears the law of its object, that is affected, that implies a history, and that preserves itself as pure seeing.

But these difficulties do not cease with *Phenomenology of Perception* and the long meditation on Husserl that this work involves, even if the problems are now posed in different terms, given that it is now a question of installing ourselves within perceptual life to examine there the birth of our relations with the world, to wonder what the world is and what we are prior to the exercise of reflection, and to no longer deduce the necessity of a philosophical reformulation beginning from the description of behavior and the critique of the body-object. This project itself is not accomplished without some equivocation. In a sense, what Merleau-Ponty wants is to reveal the bodily infrastructure that sustains the edifice of our representations, to lead us to rediscover the shape of the perceived world through a work comparable to that of the archeologist; and yet, this descent toward the deep layers is absolutely distinct from the search for a positive foundation. The truth of the return to the pre-reflective is a result of the need to undo notions that have been constructed for organizing the objective world and the need to decipher the sense that they cover over, and this is accomplished by making contact with a certain praxis, that is, with an experience that cannot be reduced to the laws of what we call matter and mind. Thus, the critique of space, time, and movement, for example – constructions whose principle could not be linked to an activity of the mind or to the mysterious junction of a pure activity and a pure passivity – refers to the situation of a body which

alone holds the secret of the fact of its spatiality, of its temporality, and of its own motivity, refers us to our anchorage in a here and a now, and refers us to the reference the body makes to a given field, articulated according to the primordial reference points of up and down, right and left, behind and in front.

In this exploration of bodily being, Merleau-Ponty does not seek a genesis of spiritual being; he does not reduce the constitution of the intelligible world to that of the sensible one. It is hardly necessary to recall that he explicitly denies every form of psychologism. His approach is guided by the necessity of tying together, at all levels, the experience of an inside and of an outside by following an articulation of interiority and exteriority that is inconceivable for classical theory; it is guided by the necessity of rethinking our sensible life and our life of knowledge according to their encroachment, according to this continuous transgression that, from the body to the things and from the things to the body, comes about without our being able to identify its origin in a particular place. What he writes on this subject in a passage in *Phenomenology of Perception* is very close to the analyses offered in *The Visible and the Invisible*:

The thing can never be separated from someone who perceives it; nor can it ever actually be in itself because its articulations are the very ones of our existence, and because it is posited at the end of a gaze or at the conclusion of a sensory exploration that invests it with humanity. To this extent, every perception is a communication or a communion, the taking up or the achievement by us of an alien intention or inversely the accomplishment beyond our perceptual powers and as a coupling of our body with the things.¹³

Here we can see the idea (if not the formula) of the sensible as flesh, the idea of a reversibility of sensing and sensed in which the irreducible difference of the terms and their mutual implication is confirmed. And simultaneously we already hear that these relations cannot be enclosed within definite borders, that there is no domain of perception separated from the domain of knowledge leaving a pathway to be sought from one to the other via some inference, since vision is already of the order of institution, and since it is simultaneously grafted onto the visible that it announces and that shapes its advent or its expression. In a sense, then, the return to the pre-reflective – to the archeologist’s pursuit – does not

aim to lead us to an existential order that would be beneath language and thought, and from where one might see their birth. How could the opening to the world provided by vision – this opening that happens from within the world, denounces its grip and causes it to spring forth as such – how could this be limited to the boundaries of what we call nature? The symbolic dimension is already present with perception, and it is neither more nor less difficult to understand the paradoxes of perception than it is to understand how our speech both says something and yet belongs to a language it does not possess, a language it requires, and how the inscription of my speech within language is confirmed through the impossibility it has of ever being full speech. If we must return to perception, this is not because our relation with the world is defined in perception prior to our speaking or thinking, but because we find embedded in speech or in thought the forgetting of the link to the flesh that always accompanies our faith in the world. To recover the memory of this is simply to acquire the power of interrogating the movement we carry toward being in itself – a movement that we never finish discovering and correcting, since we must undergo it prior to taking it up. Again, as *Phenomenology of Perception* observes, the ideal of objective thought is not foreign to our sensible experience,

[it is] grounded upon my perception of the world as an individual in harmony with itself; and when science attempts to integrate my body into the relations of the objective world, it does so because it attempts, in its own way, to express the suturing of my phenomenal body onto the primordial world.¹⁴

But it is also true that such a project can never be completed. Although he lands such devastating blows to the image of the *Kosmotheoros* [God's eye view (from nowhere)], although he never ceases to affirm his insertion in the world and the deception of high-altitude thinking [*pensée de survol*], Merleau-Ponty never questions the phenomenologist's position; he works out this position only to establish more securely his right to meet up with the things themselves such as they are given in our experience; he does not wonder how it is that their access is governed by language, or how our installation within language conditions the movement of the description. In this sense, his interrogation never turns back upon itself; it remains unaware of itself in a spectacle of the world at the very moment

in which it challenges this very notion. Such a failure of understanding can be seen (but again, it is he himself who will later teach us this) in his effort to reach a primary truth through the definition of a tacit *cogito*: the silent *cogito* that would provide the sense of the *cogito* in the *Meditations*, but that Descartes fails to see. This tacit *cogito* is to be a *cogito* that is not alien to language, but that is prior to its actual operation, an “I think” buried in the very first perception, a pure “experience from me to myself” where no thought is yet confirmed, where the distinction between the true and the false has not yet appeared, but that sustains our entire human life and announces – beneath all of the modalities of presence and absence to self and to the world – the “indeclinable subjectivity.”

Such a *cogito*, despite the care shown elsewhere to exclude the opposition between lived experience and thought, between perception and expression, reestablishes this very opposition. This tacit *cogito* serves the intention – inherited from the tradition – to tie all of the threads of experience back to the originary point named “consciousness.”

Strange that the effort to wrest vision from the thought about vision culminates in the restoration of an even more definite I, since nothing can happen to it nor happen apart from it that could disturb it. Consider the relation between perception and imperception at this stage of his project: one always implies the other, certainly, but both are modalities of the relation to sense. What escapes me is also what guarantees my power to intend something; or better, the zone of obscurity is instituted by this intending. The surrounding landscape withdraws because the jurisdiction of perception stretches forth – and so one might say in short that I imperceive as much as I perceive. But let us note again, it is strange that the dethroned subject of metaphysics (the legislator, the founder, or the absolute spectator) is reborn in the embodied subject, stripped of the attributes that established his sovereignty, but untouched in his absolute body, indifferent to the division of the certain and the doubtful, or of the real and the imaginary.

We might ask, then, does the desire to establish man’s opening to the world through the eye not govern all of metaphysics? If one stopped at the *Phenomenology of Perception*, one would be tempted to respond that Merleau-Ponty – even better than Husserl – gives metaphysics its completed expression.

But we could only say this by forgetting the interrogation that, in this very work, already overthrows the idea that we adopt of vision, and by

forgetting the beginnings of an interrogation that Merleau-Ponty pursues in his later essays in which he learns to dismantle his own conclusions.

If we turn to these later essays, we will see that they are shaped by the same desire to break out of the framework of a philosophy of consciousness and that this desire does not only have the effect of engendering an extended critique of the claims from which he had still not freed himself, but that it also animates his language, which is demonstrated through his very practice of a new relation to knowledge. This shift should probably be identified first in "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence." Here the meditation on expression – which cannot be defined by the relation from the sign to the signified – still presupposes a given language, sets to work from within this language in the way the signs work on each other, is at once an extraction and a creation of sense – the thought of an indirect language that does not lock the signification in the thing said and does not reach the other head-on, but rather causes the reference points of his experience to shift – this meditation is also a return to the self, the use of a speech that does not demonstrate, does not teach, does not emanate from a center; it is a usage that attempts to give interrogation a certain space or to free perception, expression, and history from their usual definition.

Everything that was previously said about the insertion of the subject in a situation, about the double implication of the things in the body and the body in the things, and about the distance of the self from the self and the distance from the self to the world that accompanies perception now acquires another resonance and ceases to be measured against the demands of metaphysics.

This can, in particular, be verified by taking into account the status given, from then on, to the invisible in the ever-renewed analyses of perception. This is not a *de facto* invisible, deduced from our being subjected to the here and the now, nor is it an invisible that would merely be the lining and the reverse side of the visible. Leaving a place for the invisible does not compel one to modify the definition of consciousness; the invisible becomes the structure of the visible, or that which will never appear from any perspective – the pivots, the dimensions, the levels of the field, which are absolutely beyond our grasp; and yet there is no sense in saying that they are concealed from the seer, for they are just as much the inner framework of seeing, and they are no more on the outside than they are on the inside of seeing. This is, in short, a form of writing that

both separates and unites things and the gaze. This invisible is pointed to by what Merleau-Ponty calls “latent being,” or “flesh,” which he claims has no name in a philosophy of consciousness. And if he speaks about the body or about history, it is in order to relate all of the modalities of existence to this texture, which always remains to be deciphered in the effects that confirm it, but which no return to an original experience and no experience of a pure presence could produce. Nor is it an accident if a profound shift in attitude can be sensed in the questions that he puts to psychoanalysis and Marxism during his final years. The unconscious is no longer, as the imperceived was previously, what the self does not know that he knows or sees, nor is the social structure any longer what is inscribed in collective praxis in the world and yet remains unaware of itself; rather, both refer us back to a level of being in us from which we are irremediably excluded.

If it were not in vain to expect a glimmer of light from such simple and well-worn words, if they could merely serve as signs, then we would gladly admit that Merleau-Ponty’s meditation shifts from a question about the subject to a question about being. But again, we must take stock of the implications of such a shift: it is not the substitution of one center of thought for another, but rather a way of abandoning all assurances of any center at all, of taking up interrogation (or as he will call it, the ontological organ) for itself, of wanting to fold interrogation back upon itself in each of its moments, and of agreeing to proceed only according to the effects of its necessity; a consenting to the movement that carries it from one place to another from within the conviction that it is always in a place, within the borders of a flesh or of one of its folds, and not at a distance from every place, whether this is to establish the experience of our inscription, or whether this is to discover a history that does not come from us and yet requires our action.

What is seeing? This question sustains all other questions right to the end, but not because we see before speaking or before thinking. Rather, it is because we have always spoken about this seeing from within the forgetting that we were speaking; because interrogation is supposed to awaken the interrogation that already passes through seeing, causing the eye and the voice to vibrate simultaneously, to welcome the enigma of expression, and finally to learn that there is only an opening through a reopening, and that seeing and knowing harmonize in the limitless movement of desire.

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Donald A. Landes

The perceived world is the always presupposed foundation of all rationality, all value and all existence. This thesis does not destroy either rationality or the absolute. It only tries to bring them down to earth.

– Maurice Merleau-Ponty¹

And [all of our teachers] said: man and nature form the object of universal concepts, which was precisely what Merleau-Ponty refused to accept. Tormented by the archaic secrets of his own prehistory, he was infuriated by these well-meaning souls who, taking themselves for small airplanes, indulged in “high-altitude” thinking, and forgot that we are grounded from birth.

– Jean-Paul Sartre²

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* belongs on any list of classic texts in twentieth-century philosophy. Presented in 1945 as the major thesis toward his doctorate, this wide-ranging exploration into the nature of perception establishes embodiment at the heart of existential and phenomenological philosophy. By drawing insights from psychological and neurological studies, as well as from classical and contemporaneous philosophical reflections on perception, Merleau-Ponty explores

a series of dimensions of our experience that cannot be separated from our lived embodiment, cannot be accounted for so long as an interpretive distance removes the observer from the spectacle, and cannot be viewed from above through a high-altitude thinking (*pensée de survol*) that forgets the “exceptional relation between the subject and its body and its world.”³ Starting from the lived experience of one’s own body (*le corps propre*) – the body I live as my own and through which I have a world – this phenomenological account of the ambiguity of our being in the world (*être au monde*) offers a third way between the classical schools of empiricism and idealism, arguing that one’s own body is neither a mere object among objects, *partes extra partes*, nor an object of thought for an ultimately separable and constituting consciousness. “One’s own body,” he writes, “is in the world just as the heart is in the organism: it continuously breathes life into the visible spectacle, animates it and nourishes it from within, and forms a system with it.”⁴ As such, Merleau-Ponty will later write, “man is simultaneously subject and object, first person and third person, absolutely free and yet dependent,”⁵ and nothing short of “a new genre of reflection”⁶ is required to find a solution to the dichotomies of the history of philosophy.

This new genre of reflection is, of course, phenomenology, which for Merleau-Ponty includes all of those pursuits – as diverse as psychology and Marxism – that welcome or nourish the insights of existential analysis. And indeed, the scope of the concepts introduced or incorporated into this ambitious project is remarkable: our being in and toward the world; the role of “motivation” in the phenomenal field; horizon structures in perception and in experience more generally; operative intentionality and the structures of transition or passive synthesis; a phenomenological account of habit, gesture, and sedimentation; the concept of the body schema and its relation to motricity; a non-explicit intentional arc that sees to it that my surroundings have a sense; sexuality as a dimension of our experience; a thought *accomplished* in speech; a lived spatiality; a robust intersubjectivity; a tacit *cogito*; an originary temporality and a field of presence; a situated freedom and a sense and direction (*sens*) of history . . . and this list is far from complete. One might be tempted to fill an introduction with definitions or summaries, but as Merleau-Ponty himself once retorted to the request that he summarize his main point: understanding these concepts presupposes “the reading of the book.”⁷ Thus, hoping to facilitate the reader’s plunging into the horizons of

Phenomenology of Perception, I will here only offer a minimum of introduction by situating *Phenomenology of Perception* within Merleau-Ponty's early philosophical trajectory, providing a brief overview of some of the above concepts in the context of the movement or argument of the text itself, and offering a short discussion of some of the translation decisions of this new translation.

THE PRIMACY OF PERCEPTION: MERLEAU-PONTY'S EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL TRAJECTORY

Merleau-Ponty's philosophical research begins with the careful study of perception and is guided by the expectation that such a study will dissolve the Cartesian problem of the union of the soul and the body. *Phenomenology of Perception* is – notwithstanding so many other influences and the vast array of problems it proposes to solve – the culmination of a long commitment to these two questions. And yet, given Merleau-Ponty's adherence to phenomenological description, one might ask, following Paul Ricœur: “How could a simple description of seeing, hearing, and sensing carry such philosophical weight?”⁸ A brief return to the emergence of his project can provide the beginnings of an answer.

In a 1933 research proposal, Merleau-Ponty tentatively suggests that there may be important philosophical consequences to be discovered in the study of perception in neurology and *Gestaltpsychologie*.⁹ In this earliest trace of his project, he already emphasizes the perception of “one's own body” as the enigmatic place where the universe of perception resists being assimilated by the universe of science. After a year of research, Merleau-Ponty is hardly tentative in his application for renewal, writing in 1934 both that the “[p]sychology of perception is loaded with philosophical presuppositions” and that there is a need for a deeper study of Husserl's phenomenological reduction and Gestalt theory's figure-ground structure.¹⁰ His conviction is clear: “phenomenology and the psychology it inspires thus deserve maximum attention in that they can assist us in revising the very notions of consciousness and sensation.”¹¹ Thus, the study of perception points to his second theme – the union of the soul and the body – and one need look no further than the opening lines of Merleau-Ponty's 1936 review of Gabriel Marcel's *Being and Having* to find the connection developed explicitly. Following Marcel, Merleau-Ponty questions the classical relation between a Kantian or

Cartesian consciousness (understood as a “‘power of judging,’ a *Cogito*”) and the meaningless set of sensations delivered up for interpretation by the body, itself understood as a mere physical object among others. Merleau-Ponty embraces Marcel’s claim that “I am my body,” and the rigorous phenomenological exploration of this declaration is one of the key engines of *Phenomenology of Perception*.¹²

In fact, Merleau-Ponty’s project can be understood as a response to a particularly divisive post-Cartesian intellectual climate at the time of his philosophical formation. As Étienne Bimbenet discusses, the Cartesian tradition’s mind–body dualism had established in France “an essentially problematic field of knowledge,” since any acceptable philosophical anthropology would have to synthesize incompatible sciences: those of the human being’s physical nature and those of our thinking substance.¹³ According to Merleau-Ponty, the schism is quite a natural one, resulting from “the discordance between the view man might take of himself through reflection or consciousness, and the one he obtains by linking his behaviors to the external conditions upon which they clearly depend.”¹⁴ This discordance becomes radical when each science stakes a claim on the entire field of truth;¹⁵ for Merleau-Ponty the enigma to be explored (but not dissolved) is precisely the fact that “the world and man are accessible to two types of research, one explanatory, and the other reflective.”¹⁶

Indeed, this recognition of a dual perspective shapes one of the most prevalent methodological structures framing Merleau-Ponty’s early work, namely, the critical comparison of the shared assumptions of empiricism and intellectualism. Empiricism, for Merleau-Ponty, includes any theory that privileges reductive explanations based upon externally related causes, and thus takes the body as one object among others, as an object *partes extra partes* (parts outside of parts). Intellectualism, on the other hand, encompasses for him any naïvely reflective theory that, although recognizing the importance of internal and meaningful relations, nonetheless privileges the role of consciousness in constituting the unity of objects (including one’s own body) and of experience more generally, substituting for causes an equally “objective” understanding of *reason*. For Merleau-Ponty, this classical dilemma between a “pure exteriority” and a “pure interiority” obscures “the insertion of the mind in corporeality, the ambiguous relation we entertain with our body and, correlatively, with perceived things.”¹⁷ A simple oscillation or auxiliary connection between these two discordant views being unable to explain our being

in the world, Merleau-Ponty thus establishes the groundwork for a third or middle way. In a passage from *Phenomenology of Perception* that characterizes this style of his early work, Merleau-Ponty writes: "Not wanting to prejudge anything, we will take objective thought literally and not ask it any questions it does not ask itself. If we are led to rediscover experience behind it, this passage will only be motivated by its own difficulties."¹⁸ Each perspective must be pushed to its breaking point in order to reveal "beneath the pure subject and the pure object" a "common ground" or "third dimension where our activity and our passivity, our autonomy and our dependency, would cease to be contradictory." On the one hand, one must "follow the spontaneous development of positive science to see if it truly reduces man to the status of an object," and this is the general project of *The Structure of Behavior*; on the other hand, one must also "reexamine the reflective and philosophical attitude to discover if it truly gives us the right to define ourselves as unconditioned and non-temporal subjects,"¹⁹ which is the guiding problematic of *Phenomenology of Perception*.²⁰

Thus, Merleau-Ponty's "maximum of attention" to perception leads first to the adoption of an "external perspective," as he traces the emergence of behavior as the appearance in the world of meaningful structures. In other words, the perceiving and behaving body overflows its status as a mere physical object, it is somehow at once both physical and intentional, and the positive sciences of behavior themselves point to the need for a return to experience. He argues that, even at the level of reflex behavior, the organism is not purely passive and the behavior is not merely triggered. The most basic reflexes themselves involve a certain prospective activity and thus express a certain orientation toward the sense of the situation.²¹ But limited to the external perspective in order "to understand the relations of consciousness and nature,"²² the solution cannot follow the temptation to import intellectualist structures into the observed behavior through analogy, for "the intentionality that we discover in the organism is hardly the pure agility of the mind."²³ Thanks to Gestalt theory, meaningful "structures" can be observed and understood, and the notion of structure reveals the emergence in the universe of the "synthesis of matter and idea."²⁴ In the organism–environment relation and between the levels of behavior themselves (physical, vital, and human), there is a dialectical relation of sense not reducible to its mechanical or causal factors, a whole not reducible to its parts. Life (and consciousness) appear(s) in the world at the moment "a piece of extension [. . .]

turned back upon itself and began to express something, to manifest an interior being externally."²⁵

And yet, establishing that consciousness appears in the universe is not enough to establish what consciousness is, leaving the conclusions of the first approach open to the dangers of intellectualist presuppositions regarding the nature of the *cogito*. According to Merleau-Ponty, this first study can do no more than authorize the shift to the second part of his ambitious project, which "alone is capable of fully clarifying the nature of the perceiving subject and of demonstrating the junction between the objective perspective and the reflective perspective that we are seeking."²⁶

It would be impossible here to discuss all of the influences that shaped Merleau-Ponty's approach as he turned toward this second step.²⁷ Given their prominence as targets in *Phenomenology of Perception*, one would have to consider Merleau-Ponty's clandestine attendance of lectures at Lycée Henri IV given by Alain (Émile-Auguste Chartier), a central figure in an intellectualism named "reflective analysis," followed by his four years of study under Léon Brunschvicg, the preeminent figure in academic (Kantian and Cartesian) philosophy of science. One would also have to unpack Merleau-Ponty's (perhaps cursory) reading of Henri Bergson, his attendance of Alexandre Kojève's influential 1930s lectures on Hegel, his equivocal relation to Christian existentialism (particularly through the work of Gabriel Marcel) and later with another form of existentialism in Sartre and de Beauvoir, his reading of phenomenologist Max Scheler's work on the concept of affective intentionality,²⁸ and his initial attraction to concepts from Martin Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy. Yet it is perhaps most important to acknowledge Merleau-Ponty's deepening engagement with the late work of Edmund Husserl, particularly in the years following the completion of *The Structure of Behavior*. Indeed, Husserlian phenomenology exercises a particular influence over Merleau-Ponty's argument in *Phenomenology of Perception*.

Having attended Husserl's lectures in Paris in 1929²⁹ and having alluded to some of the central tenets of Husserl's work in his 1934 proposal, Merleau-Ponty was certainly familiar with phenomenology prior to setting to work on *Phenomenology of Perception* after 1938.³⁰ And yet, as Théodore Geraets observes, this familiarity would significantly deepen thanks to two events in the pivotal year of 1939. First, a special edition of the *Revue internationale de philosophie* was published in honor of Husserl, who

had passed away the previous year, and Merleau-Ponty was particularly struck by two articles from it: Husserl's late fragment on the "Origin of Geometry" and an article written by Eugen Fink on Husserl's late work.³¹ Second, in April of 1939 Merleau-Ponty was able to visit the newly established Husserl Archives in Louvain, where he had the opportunity to consult several then unpublished dossiers, including the second volume of *Ideas* and the unpublished parts of Husserl's final work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*.³² This exposure to Husserl's late work – that is, the shift from static and transcendental phenomenology to something of a genetic phenomenology – is clearly influential in *Phenomenology of Perception*. But despite this new immersion in Husserlian phenomenology, World War II and the Occupation prevented Merleau-Ponty from giving these materials the "maximum of attention" he had intended. Indeed, his major thesis provides no direct exegetical study of Husserl's texts and, notwithstanding the Preface (written after the project had been completed), it contains no systematization of phenomenological doctrine. Beginning from a glimpse at the richness of Husserl's late and unpublished work, Merleau-Ponty presents his own study of perception and his own insights into the centrality of embodiment toward an original contribution to the phenomenological tradition. *Phenomenology of Perception* is thus not an examination of the phenomenological tradition's theory of perception; it is a fascinating example of phenomenological reflection at work.

But what is at stake in Merleau-Ponty's defense of "the primacy of perception"?³³ In his 1933 research proposal, he tentatively suggests that his study will "perhaps recast certain psychological and philosophical notions currently in use."³⁴ By his 1946 presentation of the main themes of his thesis, he has reached the radical position that in fact: "all consciousness is perceptual" and that "the perceived world is the always presupposed foundation of all rationality, all value, and all existence."³⁵ Such a dramatic claim emerges from his attempt to rethink the concepts of perception from the fundamental fact that the perceiving mind is an embodied mind.³⁶ Our body is our perspective on the world, and the incomplete intentional and horizontal structure of perception is not a limitation to our access to the world and truth; it is the very possibility of this access. The perceiving subject, then, is not detached from the perceived through an interpretive distance, and the object of perception is not the determinate object of science: it is a "totality open to a horizon

of an indefinite number of perspectival views which blend with one another according to a given style.”³⁷ But this is not to reduce “science, reflection, and philosophy” to sensations. As Merleau-Ponty writes:

By these words, the “primacy of perception,” we mean that the experience of perception is our presence at the moment when things, truths, values are constituted for us; that perception is a nascent *logos*; that it teaches us, outside of all dogmatism, the true conditions of objectivity itself; that it summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action.³⁸

PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION

Now that the emergence of Merleau-Ponty's research on perception and the place of *Phenomenology of Perception* in his ambitious philosophical project have been established, I will turn to examine how this second step is accomplished. If a philosophical anthropology is precluded by the essentially problematic field of knowledge resulting from the dual perspective one might adopt of a “pure interiority” and a “pure exteriority,” then it is now clear what is at stake when Merleau-Ponty declares that: “Phenomenology's most important accomplishment is, it would seem, to have joined an extreme subjectivism with an extreme objectivism through its concept of the world or of rationality.”³⁹ Of course, any summary or synopsis would necessarily fail to do justice to the richness and scope of Merleau-Ponty's investigation, but the reader may nonetheless find it helpful to have a brief discussion of the major sections and moments of this complex text before plunging into the thickness of the book itself. In addition to the justly famous Preface, the book consists of a long Introduction and three major parts, each divided into several chapters. I turn now to offer a brief and selective glimpse of each of these main divisions, which necessarily involves leaving far too much to the side.

Preface

Written after the completion of his thesis, Merleau-Ponty's Preface has become a classic text of the phenomenological tradition. It consists of his answer to the fundamental question: “What is phenomenology?” In fact, phenomenology eludes the attempt to assign it a definitive position in the history of philosophy: it examines essences *and* existence, it embraces

transcendence and immanence, it is an “exact science” and yet it takes the “lived” world as its point of departure. Phenomenology, as the return to the things themselves, is precisely the making explicit of our own experience, and so “[w]e will find the unity of phenomenology and its true sense [sens] in ourselves.”⁴⁰ The phenomenological reduction brackets our positive knowledge and returns us to a description of lived experience, but we must not assume that this necessitates a withdrawal “from the world toward the unity of consciousness as the foundation of the world.”⁴¹ For Merleau-Ponty, perhaps radically, “[t]he most important lesson of the [phenomenological] reduction is the impossibility of a complete reduction,”⁴² and “[t]he unfinished nature of phenomenology and the inchoate style in which it proceeds are not the sign of failure; they were inevitable because phenomenology’s task was to reveal the mystery of the world and the mystery of reason.”⁴³ Through a discussion of some of the key tenets of phenomenology – the emphasis on *description*, the phenomenological reduction versus transcendental idealism, the role of essences in Husserl, the non-thetic understanding of intentionality, and Heidegger’s notion of being-in-the-world – Merleau-Ponty prepares the ground for the essentially embodied and perspectival nature of perception and consciousness that *Phenomenology of Perception* invokes to rethink the world and rationality.

Introduction: Classical Prejudices and the Return to Phenomena

Across four relatively short chapters, this first major division of *Phenomenology of Perception* establishes the shortcomings of classical theories of perception and the necessity of returning to the “phenomenal field.” The argument of the book opens with an analysis of the “seemingly clear and straightforward notion of sensation,” understood to provide the building blocks of our perceptual experience. Merleau-Ponty quickly shows that the move to assume the existence of an imperceptible layer of punctual impressions or detachable “qualities” in fact reveals the dominance of an “unquestioned belief in the world.” Rather than examining our perceptual experience, classical empiricism attempts to build perception from what we know about the perceived, and this leads to the “constancy hypothesis,” the belief in a constant connection between points of stimuli on the sensory organs and our elementary perceptions. Gestalt theory, however, has shown that our most basic perceptual experience is not of

an “undifferentiated, instantaneous, and punctual ‘jolt,’”⁴⁴ but is always a figure against a background, always charged with a *sense*, and, unlike the determinate world described by science, perception requires that we “recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon.”⁴⁵

Empiricism may attempt to take account of the apparent discord between the constancy hypothesis and our experience by introducing notions such as association or the projection of memories, yet, “if we hold ourselves to phenomena,” we find the sense of the perceived is not the result of such auxiliary intellectual acts, but emerges from an intuitive response to the solicitation of the spectacle. As I approach an indeterminate spectacle, such as a boat whose mast merges with the forest flanking the beach, a moment will arrive when the mast “locks” to the hull and my gaze gets a “hold” on the scene. This is hardly an experience of a progressive association or interpretation of punctual impressions; rather, “I merely felt that the appearance of the object was about to change, that something was imminent in this tension, as the storm is imminent in the clouds.” From above passive reception, but from below intellectual decision, my gaze discovers the attitude that responds to the “questions that are merely latent in the landscape.”⁴⁶

Turning to intellectualist psychology, Merleau-Ponty again uncovers the unquestioned belief in the world in itself. Accepting the basic tenets of the constancy hypothesis, these psychologists adopt concepts such as “attention” or “judgment” in order to explain how subjective experience might fail to match the predictions of physiological explanations. The mind thus becomes a spotlight, free to turn its attention to the contents of our experience or free to impose a sense by pronouncing a judgment upon the sensory givens, and perception is thus identified with scientific consciousness. Following again Gestalt theory’s critique of the constancy hypothesis, we can see that intellectualism misses attention itself, which is “the primordial operation that impregnates the sensible with a sense,”⁴⁷ and fails to recognize that judgment presupposes an already accomplished recognition in the structure of the field of perception itself.

Although Gestalt theory ultimately falls prey to an underlying naturalism, it offers Merleau-Ponty a conceptual tool that helps to make sense of the structuring of the “phenomenal field,” namely, “motivation.” The movements of the body or the apparent sizes of objects do not cause the structures of the visual field, but they motivate them; they are “understood” there. The “phenomenal field” is the place of our “living

communication with the world that makes it present to us as the familiar place of our life.”⁴⁸ And since consciousness can “never completely cease being what it is in perception,” the critique of the constancy hypothesis requires nothing short of a new theory of reflection and a “new cogito.”⁴⁹ The “fundamental philosophical act would thus be to return to the lived world beneath the objective world.”⁵⁰

Part One: The Body

If objective thought breaks down when confronted with the phenomenal field, it is nonetheless the intentional structure of perception itself that condemns us to the illusions of objective thought. Indeed, “[o]ur perception ends in objects, and the object, once constituted, appears as the reason for all the experiences of it that we have had or that we could have.”⁵¹ Phenomenology may well reveal that perception cannot be limited to its explicit content, that my gaze only presumptively intends the object in its fullness and unity through spatial and temporal horizons, but it cannot stem the tendency of this presumptive synthesis that leads to an absolute positing of the object in itself, the seed that grows into objective thought. And yet there is an object that resists this thrust, opens up the possibility for a new form of reflection, and promises to establish “for-us an in-itself” – this enigmatic object is none other than “one’s own body,” which forever belies the attempt to take it as a mere object in the world. As Merleau-Ponty writes, “the body, by withdrawing from the objective world, will carry with it the intentional threads that unite it to its surroundings and that, in the end, will reveal to us the perceiving subject as well as the perceived world.”⁵²

To begin rethinking embodiment, Merleau-Ponty begins by outlining the shortcomings of mechanistic physiology and classical psychology. Consider, for example, his discussion of phantom limb syndrome, which he argues can be explained by neither a reductive physiological explanation nor an irreducible psychological account, nor even an artificial juxtaposition of the two. For Merleau-Ponty, the phantom limb is the result of a fundamental ambiguity of our being in the world in which our field of experience is structured according to a tacit set of sedimentations and possibilities. As he writes: “To have a phantom limb is to remain open to all of the actions of which the arm alone is capable and to stay within the practical field that one had prior to the mutilation.”⁵³ My “habitual body”

structures the very appearance of the objects in my world and, from a pre-personal or anonymous level, animates a field of objects that *appear* as manipulable in themselves. After the amputation, objects simply continue to appeal to “a hand that I no longer have.”⁵⁴ Now, the psychologist may indeed claim to recognize the special status of one's own body, identifying for example the body's peculiar “permanence” in our experience. And yet this *de facto* permanence does not go far enough. If I touch my right hand with my left hand while my right hand is touching an object, there is only one hand, strictly speaking, that *touches*. Always escaping totalization, my body is not merely a permanent object; it is “that by which there are objects” – its permanence is a metaphysical one, not a factual one.⁵⁵

Even if the object is not merely an object in space, it is nonetheless irrecusably *spatial*, and in a long third chapter Merleau-Ponty shifts to consider the relation between spatiality and motricity. More than a mere juxtaposition of parts, “I hold my body as an indivisible possession and I know the position of each of my limbs through a *body schema*.”⁵⁶ This non-thetic knowledge of the orientations and powers of my body expresses my manner of being in the world. Merleau-Ponty here introduces Gelb and Goldstein's patient Schneider to clarify the original intentionality of motricity in normal experience. For normal subjects, a requested “abstract” gesture unfolds in the phenomenal world without having to pass through explicit consciousness, whereas, for Schneider, abstract instructions may well have an “intellectual signification” to guide Schneider's painstaking reconstruction of a semblance of the requested gesture, but they somehow lack a “*motor signification*, they do not speak to him as a motor subject.”⁵⁷ The normal subject sustains the meaningful world thanks to a non-thetic “intentional arc” that “projects around us our past, our future, our human milieu, our physical situation, our ideological situation, and our moral situation; or rather, that ensures that we are situated within all of these relationships,”⁵⁸ whereas Schneider only engages with things through “a genuine act of interpretation.”⁵⁹ Motricity, then, must be seen as an originary intentionality, experienced as an “I can”⁶⁰ and closely related to the manner in which habits structure our perceived world by situating us within a new configuration of possible action. By incorporating objects into the body schema, bringing them to this side of any interpretative distance, the body itself carries forward the sedimentation of its past by restructuring the perceived world as soliciting the reconfigured body schema.

If the analysis of motricity and habit reveals a rich understanding of spatiality that emerges through the concrete manner in which the body is in and toward the world, then this analysis already anticipates the “unity” of this lived body. The body’s unity (among its parts or among its regions of experience) is a lived integration in which the parts are understood in relation to the meaningful whole, and in this sense the body’s unity is comparable to the unity of a work of art. The body, then, “is a knot of living significations” and its parts are synthesized not through an intellectual act, but because together they “perform a single gesture.”⁶¹

Returning to the case of Schneider, Merleau-Ponty considers an existential account of sexuality that is irreducible to the elementary functions of pleasure and pain or the thetic representation of erotic ideas. Schneider’s world, it seems, lacks sexual possibilities; he “can no longer place himself in a sexual situation.” For the normal subject, sexuality is a dimension of experience, such that no act is strictly speaking simply sexual and yet no act is strictly speaking free of the sexual. This existential structure by which the body “expresses” its existence thus leads Merleau-Ponty to begin a reflection on the paradoxical logic of expression. The body expresses sexuality just as “speech expresses thought,” not as an “external accompaniment of it, but because existence accomplishes itself in the body.”⁶²

In the final chapter of Part One, Merleau-Ponty turns to speech and expression itself, suggesting that an analysis of speech and the body as expression offers nothing less than the opportunity to “leave behind, once and for all, the classical subject–object dichotomy.”⁶³ A phenomenological account of language reveals that speech *accomplishes* thought or, better, that the expressed cannot be separated from its expression. Prior to its expression, thought is nothing but a vaguely sensed direction, and its expression is made possible because I am situated within a linguistic world, just as I am situated within the perceptual world. The words I am about to use “constitute a certain field of action held around me.”⁶⁴ In fact, all of these existential modalities (motricity, habit, sexuality, speech) are possible “because the body is a natural power of expression.”⁶⁵

Part Two: The Perceived World

And yet the world that this body takes up is not itself an object or neutral pole of experience, nor is the ambiguity discovered in one’s own body an

isolated phenomenon – “obscurity spreads to the perceived world in its entirety.”⁶⁶ Discovering the world as perceived is the task of Part Two, and Merleau-Ponty suggests we return “to sensation and examine it closely enough such that it teaches us the living relation of the one who perceives with both his body and his world.”⁶⁷ In a rich and lengthy study, Merleau-Ponty suggests that the relation between the perceived world and the perceiving subject is like the relation between a question and its response, or between a solicitation and a gearing into. Consider his description of sensing, now free of the problematic layer of impressions or qualities critiqued above:

Blue is what solicits a certain way of looking from me, it is what allows itself to be palpated by a specific movement of my gaze. It is a certain field or a certain atmosphere offered to the power of my eyes and of my entire body.⁶⁸

Seeing blue involves responding to the spectacle in a certain way, and the world is sustained by our taking it up as our motive, and yet is also the motive for our taking it up:

Thus, a sensible that is about to be sensed poses to my body a sort of confused problem. I must find the attitude that *will* provide it with the means to become determinate and to become blue; I must find the response to a poorly formulated question. And yet, I only do this in response to its solicitation.⁶⁹

Although this emphasis on response certainly precludes an idle subject, Merleau-Ponty also stresses that perception is not accomplished as athetic or intellectual decision. “Seeing blue” is not something that “I” do; it happens in an anonymous field in which “one” perceives blue or in which *there is* blue. And indeed, “the senses communicate.”⁷⁰ Thanks to the existential structure of the field of experience, there is no contradiction in saying that synesthetic perception is not the exception, but is rather the rule.⁷¹

Even if the “matter of knowledge” provided by sensing is reconceived in this way, might one hope to resist the phenomenological position by retreating to the *a priori* contribution of a Kantian-styled constituting consciousness in terms of a “form of knowledge” structuring this sensing

according to “space”? In the second phase of Part Two, Merleau-Ponty thus offers an analysis of the experience of space that in fact requires not a Kantian synthesis, but “a synthesis of an entirely different type.”⁷² Through the study of orientation, depth, and movement, he establishes that the experience of space cannot be captured through the “spatiality of things in space,” nor by a spatiality that results from “a pure activity of connecting.” Rather, “we must seek the originary experience of space prior to the distinction between form and content.”⁷³ The spatial level that orients my experience is, for instance, a certain way that my body takes up the world, a “gearing of the subject into his world,”⁷⁴ and this spatial level is never accomplished by a subject indifferent to space – being is forever “oriented being.”⁷⁵ These analyses already point toward the manner in which this experience expresses our being situated in the world, and the fundamental character of lived spatiality can be glimpsed in regions of experience not necessarily predicated upon a world of objects, such as the spatiality of the night, or mythical space.

Space, then, as existentially structured through the gearing of my body to things and to the world, points us to the subsequent chapters, in which Merleau-Ponty examines the appearance of things and others in the natural world and cultural world according to the structure of solicitation and gearing into. Given this essential structure, the real must forever be burdened with anthropological predicates and the natural world itself is not independent of our life: “nature must be our interlocutor in a sort of dialogue.”⁷⁶ This is why “things” need not be objects; my perceived world embraces all that I must “reckon” with: absences, movements, orientations, others, or even a “friendship” after whose destruction “I am left off-balance.”⁷⁷ And beyond things and the natural world, each behavior, habit, or human object “emits an atmosphere of humanity”⁷⁸ that is both spatial and temporal. I do not experience others through an analogy, but rather by the fact that my potential action gears into these tools and these landscapes, and this emerges first thanks to the overlapping of embodied perceptual consciousness. The other person’s body is not an object for me; it is a behavior whose sense I understand from within, virtually, allowing for a certain gestural communication through the sedimentations and possibilities of my own body schema. Moreover, when I perceive behavior, the world immediately becomes the world intended by this behavior; it is no longer my world alone. This shared being in the world is the fundamental structure of all communication.

The social world, as a “permanent field or dimension of existence,”⁷⁹ reveals the general problem of “transcendence”: “how I can be open to phenomena that transcend me and that, nevertheless, only exist to the extent that I take them up and live them.”⁸⁰ There is an “ambiguous life” from which all of the existential transcendences spring, and the attempt to understand the fundamental paradoxes of lived and embodied subjectivity can only be completed if we “uncover time beneath the subject, and if we reconnect the paradox of time to the paradoxes of the body, the world, the thing, and others.”⁸¹

Part Three: Being-for-Itself and Being-in-the-World

As I suggested at the beginning, Merleau-Ponty had long believed that the study of perception would eventually dissolve the Cartesian problem of the union of the soul and the body, and indeed the concluding chapters of *Phenomenology of Perception* set out from a study of the implications the preceding analyses have for the *cogito*, both in terms of Descartes's argument and in terms of “the Cartesian *Cogito*” as a cultural object. Merleau-Ponty writes, “I am thinking of the Cartesian *Cogito*, wanting to finish this work, sensing the coolness of the paper under my hand, and perceiving the trees of the boulevard through the window.”⁸² An idea is not a thing; it is a field that includes a depth of latent intentions and sedimentations that immediately orient me and give it its sense. But the type of *cogito* that could take up this thickness is hardly an absolutely free and pure consciousness standing outside of time and destined to consider clear and distinct ideas from the safe dominion of a rigorous solipsism. On the contrary, argues Merleau-Ponty, my perceptual engagement in the real, by means of my embodied and anonymous being in the world, must come before and ground any “doubt” or “certainty” derived from a personal “I think.” My existence is neither transparently self-possessed nor wholly alien to itself. I can read the *Meditations* and understand them because they point me toward this non-transparent *cogito*, but the *cogito* of the *Meditations* remains a second-hand *cogito*, a spoken *cogito* because the language we use interposes between our experience and its expression “the entire thickness of cultural acquisitions.”⁸³ This tacit *cogito* is an experience of myself by myself and is prior to every philosophy, but it is also, strictly speaking, nothing. It is impersonal and indeclinable; it has but a “fleeting hold upon itself and upon the world.” The “tacit *Cogito* is only a *Cogito*

when it has expressed itself,"⁸⁴ and yet its expression never exhausts it, no more than does reflection exhaust the unreflected. The "primordial 'I'" is not wholly unaware of itself in not being wholly transparent to itself, for this would turn it into a mere thing. What is absent is merely the illusory transparency of objective thought. For Merleau-Ponty, subjectivity is essentially inseparable from its being in the world, which is to say all consciousness is perceptual.

This tacit *cogito*, then, is neither eternal nor absolutely free, and the two essential aspects of this new *cogito* are explored in the final two chapters of the book, namely, temporality and situated freedom. The possibility of the subject being in the world in the manner just described involves a reconsideration of time as the fundamental dimension of my field of presence – I am neither outside of time nor merely subject to it. Drawing on Husserl's understanding of time and Heidegger's concept of transcendence, Merleau-Ponty develops the notions of operative intentionality and passive synthesis by which "[m]y present transcends itself toward an imminent future and a recent past, and touches them there."⁸⁵ And indeed freedom too must be understood as a field, and thus as located in existential rather than intellectual decisions. Merleau-Ponty argues that the classical distinction between determinism and absolute freedom fails to capture our conditioned and situated freedom, which is required given our being as the taking up of the past and present toward a future. Our actions, then, certainly give our own lives and history a sense, but this is a sense that precludes our understanding it either as an intellectual imposition of form onto chaos or as the necessary unfolding of a pre-determined logic.

But all of this is simply to evoke some of the themes and ideas of a rich and internally structured text, and the concepts discussed above will have to be considered again in the context in which they emerge in Merleau-Ponty's own presentation below. Moreover, it is worth noting that the limitations of the above discussion required remaining silent on so many other important themes examined by Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception* is indeed a classic text, as in a text that can be returned to again and again, that upon a first reading reveals to us what we had been waiting for, and upon a later reading surprises us with new insights and unexpected reverberations. My hope is that this new translation will encourage this continued reading and this perpetual return.

NOTES ON THIS TRANSLATION

For readers already familiar with *Phénoménologie de la perception*, the most visually striking aspect of this new translation will be the addition of section titles that do not appear in the body of the text of the original French publication, and this perhaps requires a note of caution. Merleau-Ponty wrote this book in very long paragraphs, some of which run several pages long. Upon publication, he provided an analytical Table of Contents, listing *en bloc* a series of phrases or themes to guide the reader. Although he did not paginate the resulting list of “sections,” the section titles that he established roughly correspond to his paragraph breaks. In the spirit of providing some air to the otherwise intimidating blocks of prose, I have decided – following Rudolf Boehm, the German translator of this book – to insert these section titles into the body of the text. It should, however, be noted that the section titles indicated with an asterisk do not correspond to an original paragraph break. In the same spirit, I have also added some paragraph breaks when a natural pause or textual marker justifies the insertion. Despite the utility of these titles and new paragraph breaks, they do risk disrupting some of the fluid character of Merleau-Ponty’s original prose, and so readers are encouraged to see these titles and breaks as bridges rather than interruptions between Merleau-Ponty’s thoughts.

For the reader interested in Merleau-Ponty’s original French expression, this edition introduces two new components: a bilingual presentation of the full Table of Contents from which the section titles are drawn and the inclusion of the French pagination in the margins. In fact, the section titles contain many of the key concepts essential to any close reading of this text, and through the inclusion of this feature in both French and English the reader is given something of a working glossary of my translation decisions for these key terms. Every effort has been made to translate terms in a consistent manner, or to indicate where the context has required straying from the dominant translation decisions. In terms of the French pagination, a difficult decision had to be made. There are now three editions in French: the original 1945 version (reprinted through 2004); a new version (2005–present) that introduces several small corrections and a new pagination; and finally, the complete text also appears in the 2010 collection, *Œuvres*. The pagination that appears in the margins of this current translation corresponds to the 2005 French edition.

In addition to these components, I have also included a series of translator's endnotes to help explain translation decisions or to provide additional bibliographic information to complete or amend Merleau-Ponty's references. I have made every effort to update Merleau-Ponty's citations, cross-referencing French and German publications with available English translations whenever possible. Apart from minor adjustments, my additions to this text are enclosed within square brackets.

TRANSLATION DECISIONS

A translation of a text of this size and complexity involves a countless number of translation decisions, and it would be impossible to list all of the important ones here. And yet, in addition to the translator's endnotes and the Bilingual Table of Contents, it may be worth discussing a few of the key decisions.

One of the first motivations for a new translation was the previous translator's non-systematic treatment of Merleau-Ponty's use of *sens* and *signification*. *Sens* is a difficult term to translate, as it means "meaning," "sense," and "direction." Wherever the context has allowed, I have translated it as "sense," which in English preserves the richness of the French term, while reserving "meaning" for Merleau-Ponty's occasional use of the construction *vouloir dire* (to "mean" or, literally, to "want to say"). *Signification* has been rendered as "signification" unless otherwise noted. I have also resisted the previous translator's use of "sense experience" for *le sentir*, opting instead for the more active "sensing." When *sentir* or *se sentir* have been used as verbs, I have chosen "to sense" or "to feel" respectively.

Merleau-Ponty's quasi-technical use of *le corps propre* is as difficult to translate as it is central to the text. The phrase, which literally means "one's own body," has often been interpreted as "the lived body," but an equivalent French term (such as *le corps vécu*) does not appear in *Phenomenology of Perception*. The use of *propre* in the phrase stresses that this body – which Merleau-Ponty contrasts with the body considered as an object in the world among other objects – is my body, the body that is lived as my own. And yet this sense of "own" is not to suggest that *le corps propre* is something I possess as an object that is separable from my being, and Merleau-Ponty devotes considerable time in *Phenomenology of Perception* to demonstrate just this point. Rather than importing an overly interpretive translation, I have followed Merleau-Ponty's style here by using the natural turn of phrase

“one’s own body,” asking the reader to keep in mind the richness of this term and to resist interpreting this “own” as a relation of possession.

Merleau-Ponty makes use of two ways of saying what has been rendered here in English as “experience,” namely, formations using the noun *l’expérience* or phrases around the verb *éprouver* (most commonly *l’épreuve de*). The latter set of terms is often meant in a more passive sense, such as “undergoing” or “suffering,” and I have included the French where this sense might be lost by the more neutral English word “experience.” In a related decision, Merleau-Ponty’s use of the adjective *vécu* (the past-participle adjectival form of the verb *vivre*) has been rendered “lived” or “experienced,” depending on the context. Indeed, Merleau-Ponty indicates that a nuance in *vivre* is made explicit in German with the verbs *leben* and *erleben*.⁸⁶

This relates to a similar difficulty, namely, Merleau-Ponty’s appropriation of a Heideggerian formulation in his use of *être au monde*. The original translation of Heidegger’s *In-der-Welt-sein* into French was *être dans le monde*, yet Merleau-Ponty recognized that the French *dans* (“in”) perhaps covered over some of the important richness of Heidegger’s insight. His shift of the phrase to *à* (in the contraction *au*) introduces a rich set of relations, since this preposition can be translated variously as “in,” “to,” “of,” “at,” “toward,” and “belonging to.” For the various occurrences, I have chosen between “being in the world” and “being in and toward the world,” based on context, while occasionally emphasizing the “belonging to” side of the phrase where necessary. In fact, Merleau-Ponty’s use of *à* in other contexts is also often impossible to translate; readers are asked to keep in mind the above list of English prepositions when they see such formulations as “presence to,” “being of,” “being at,” and so on.

Merleau-Ponty’s use of the term *le schéma corporel* introduces both historical and conceptual difficulties. The term is drawn from early neurological studies by Head, Lhermitte, and Schilder on the non-thetic postural awareness of the position of one’s own body. Merleau-Ponty specifically rejects the interpretation of *le schéma corporel* as a representation or image, and yet when Schilder himself translates his own German term, *das Körperschema*, into English he writes: “body image.”⁸⁷ Rather than following Schilder by writing *image* in French – or rather than adopting Lhermitte’s phrase *l’image de notre corps* (“the image of our body”) – Merleau-Ponty maintains *schéma*. Thus, I have decided to write “body schema” for this term, asking the reader to bear in mind the complex history of this notion in the sciences from which Merleau-Ponty is drawing.

I TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the discussion of Schneider, Merleau-Ponty makes use of the physiological term *motricité* ["motricity"]. The term indicates motor function, motor activity, and the power or faculty of movement. All of these senses can be found in the English equivalent, "motricity," so I have resisted introducing more common terms (such as motility or motivity), which tend toward over-translation.

Although Merleau-Ponty discusses our being with "others" at length, he does not overly thematize the difficult term *autrui*, which can be translated as "an other," "another person," or "others." I have thus chosen the most natural translation based on context, and only capitalized the term when he does. In addition, the relations between *je*, *moi*, *soi*, and *Égo* are central to various parts of the text, although they are not always rigorously distinguished. I have generally followed "I," "me" or "myself," "self," and "Ego" respectively. This has resulted occasionally in slightly awkward formulations when Merleau-Ponty speaks of a plurality of myselfs (*des moi*), which has been unavoidable given that in these cases he seems intent on distinguishing a personal, empirical myself from a "self" in a more philosophical sense.

Another important decision has been to render Merleau-Ponty's translation of Husserl's concept of *Evidenz* (which he translates into French as *évidence*) by "evidentness." *Évidence* literally means "obviousness" or "obvious fact," and in phenomenology has to do with appearances, not so much with "proof," which is the more common sense of "evidence" in English. To preserve the connection to Husserl and to emphasize the sense of "obviousness," I have chosen to use "evidentness" or "evident facts" whenever possible.⁸⁸ It is also worth noting that Merleau-Ponty does not rigorously distinguish between *pouvoir* and *puissance*, and these have been rendered as "power" wherever possible.⁸⁹ Finally, I would like to note that I have tried to preserve Merleau-Ponty's punctuation style whenever possible.

TRANSLATOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like first to acknowledge a very sincere debt of gratitude to the *Phenomenology of Perception* "Translation Advisory Board." In deciding to pursue the daunting project of establishing a new translation for a difficult and well-known classic in the history of philosophy, I hoped to find a way of soliciting the help and expertise of members of the community of Merleau-Ponty scholars and translators. I thus formed an advisory board of scholars

from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Canada, representing a diversity of approaches to Merleau-Ponty's work. These advisors were kind enough to read and respond to detailed newsletters outlining my translation decisions and my approach to the scholarly apparatus, as well as to read and comment upon sample translations. Although there was rarely a consensus among this group on any controversial decision, their contributions to this project were invaluable and have shaped the final version in many ways. In recognition and appreciation of their many contributions, I list them here: Alia Al-Saji, Thomas Baldwin, Renaud Barbaras, Taylor Carman, Edward S. Casey, Françoise Dastur, Sebastian Gardner, Leonard Lawlor, David Morris, Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, Hugh J. Silverman, Michael B. Smith, Anthony J. Steinbock, and Forrest Williams. I would also like to recognize the four reviewers of the penultimate draft of this translation: Ronald Bruzina, Taylor Carman, Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, and Anthony J. Steinbock. Their careful reading and insightful comments greatly improved this translation, but of course I am alone responsible for all final decisions and any remaining errors.

Although there is also a long list of others who have offered advice or help along the way, in addition to the above names I would like to mention in particular Galen Johnson, Gail Weiss, and Benjamin Trémoulet, as well as the graduate and undergraduate students from my Philosophy 475 section at McGill University (Winter 2011) who read an abridged draft of this translation. I also thank Tony Bruce and Adam Johnson at Routledge for their assistance (and patience) in this long project, as well as Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Kelly for initiating the project. I would like to express my gratitude to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their support as well as the French Embassy in Washington, DC for a one-year Bourse Chateaubriand. I would finally like to acknowledge the Philosophy departments at Stony Brook University and McGill University, as well as the generous access granted by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France to their collection.

On a personal note, I sincerely thank my family. This translation would never have been completed without their unwavering support. And finally, my deepest debt of gratitude must be acknowledged to my partner, Kathleen Hulley. Beyond her patience, sacrifice, and moral support, her expertise was invaluable through her several readings of this translation. She is also to be thanked for her contribution to the arduous project of correcting, updating, and cross-referencing Merleau-Ponty's citations.

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PREFACE

- 7 What is phenomenology? It may seem strange that we must continue to ask this question half a century after Husserl's first works. Nonetheless, it is far from being resolved. Phenomenology is the study of essences, and it holds that all problems amount to defining essences, such as the essence of perception or the essence of consciousness. And yet phenomenology is also a philosophy that places essences back within existence and thinks that the only way to understand man¹ and the world is by beginning from their "facticity." Although it is a transcendental philosophy that suspends the affirmations of the natural attitude in order to understand them, it is also a philosophy for which the world is always "already there" prior to reflection – like an inalienable presence – and whose entire effort is to rediscover this naïve contact with the world in order to finally raise it to a philosophical status. It is the goal of a philosophy that aspires to be an "exact science," but it is also an account of "lived" space, "lived" time, and the "lived" world.² It is the attempt to provide a direct description of our experience such as it is, and without any consideration of its psychological genesis or of the causal explanations that the scientist, historian, or sociologist might offer of that experience; and yet in his final works Husserl mentions a "genetic phenomenology,"³ and even a "constructive phenomenology."⁴ Might one hope to remove these contradictions by distinguishing between the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger? But all of *Sein und Zeit*⁵ emerges from Husserl's suggestion, and in

the end is nothing more than a making explicit⁶ of the “*natürlichen Weltbegriff*” [natural concept of the world]⁷ or the “*Lebenswelt*” [life-world]⁸ that Husserl, toward the end of his life, presented as the fundamental theme of phenomenology, and so the contradiction reappears in Husserl’s philosophy itself. The hurried reader will give up trying to pin down a doctrine that has said everything and will wonder if a philosophy unable to define itself merits all the commotion made around it and is anything but a myth or a fad.

Even if this were the case, it would remain for us to understand the prestige of this myth and the origin of this fad, and the responsible philosopher will interpret this situation by saying that *phenomenology allows itself to be practiced and recognized as a manner or as a style, or that it exists as a movement, prior to having reached a full philosophical consciousness*. It has been en route for a long time, and its disciples find it everywhere, in Hegel and in Kierkegaard of course, but also in Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. But a philological commentary on texts would offer nothing, for we only find in texts what we have put into them, and if ever a history has called for our interpretation, it is surely the history of philosophy. We will find the unity of phenomenology and its true sense [*sens*] in ourselves.⁹ It is less a question of counting up citations than of determining and expressing this *phenomenology* for us, which has caused – upon their reading of Husserl or Heidegger – many of our contemporaries to have had the feeling much less of encountering a new philosophy than of recognizing what they had been waiting for. Phenomenology is only accessible to a phenomenological method. Thus, let us carefully attempt to tie together the famous phenomenological themes as they are spontaneously tied together in life. Perhaps then we will understand why phenomenology has remained for so long in a nascent state, as a problem and as a promise.¹⁰

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Phenomenology involves describing, and not explaining or analyzing. This first rule – to be a “descriptive psychology”¹¹ or to return “to the things themselves,” which Husserl set for an emerging phenomenology – is first and foremost the disavowal of science. I am not the result or the intertwining of multiple causalities that determine my body or my “psyche”;¹² I cannot think of myself as a part of the world, like the simple

9 object of biology, psychology, and sociology; I cannot enclose myself within the universe of science. Everything that I know about the world, even through science, I know from a perspective that is my own or from an experience of the world without which scientific symbols would be meaningless. The entire universe of science is constructed upon the lived world, and if we wish to think science rigorously, to appreciate precisely its sense and its scope, we must first awaken that experience of the world of which science is the second-order expression. Science neither has, nor ever will have the same ontological sense as the perceived world for the simple reason that science is a determination or an explanation of that world. I am not a “living being,” a “man,” nor even a “consciousness,” possessing all of the characteristics that zoology, social anatomy, and inductive psychology acknowledge in these products of nature or history. Rather, I am the absolute source. My existence does not come from my antecedents, nor from my physical and social surroundings; it moves out toward them and sustains them. For I am the one who brings into being for myself – and thus into being in the only sense that the word could have for me – this tradition that I choose to take up or this horizon whose distance from me would collapse were I not there to sustain it with my gaze (since this distance does not belong to the horizon as one of its properties). Scientific perspectives according to which I am a moment of the world are always naïve and hypocritical because they always imply, without mentioning it, that other perspective – the perspective of consciousness – by which a world first arranges itself around me and begins to exist for me. To return to the things themselves is to return to this world prior to knowledge, this world of which knowledge always *speaks*, and this world with regard to which every scientific determination is abstract, signitive,¹³ and dependent, just like geography with regard to the landscape where we first learned what a forest, a meadow, or a river is.

This movement is absolutely distinct from the idealist return to consciousness, and the demand for a pure description excludes the process of reflective analysis just as much as it excludes the process of scientific explanation. Descartes, and above all Kant, *freed* the subject or consciousness by establishing that I could not grasp anything as existing if I did not first experience myself [*m'éprouvais*]¹⁴ as existing in the act of grasping; they revealed consciousness – the absolute certainty of myself for myself¹⁵ – as the condition without which there would be nothing at

all and the act of unifying as the foundation of the unified. Of course, the act of unifying is nothing without the spectacle of the world that it unites. For Kant, the unity of consciousness is precisely contemporary with the unity of the world; and for Descartes, methodical doubt deprives us of nothing, since the entire world – at least insofar as we experience it – is reintegrated into the *Cogito*,¹⁶ sharing in its certainty, and is merely assigned the indication “thought about . . .” [*pensée de . . .*].¹⁷ But the relations between subject and world are not strictly bilateral, for if they were, then for Descartes the certainty of the world would be immediately given along with the certainty of the *Cogito* and Kant could not speak of a “Copernican Revolution.” Beginning from our experience of the world, reflective analysis works back toward the subject as if toward a condition of possibility distinct from our experience and presents universal synthesis as that without which there would be no world. To this extent, reflective analysis ceases to adhere to our experience and substitutes a reconstruction for a description. From this we can understand how Husserl could criticize Kant for a “psychologism of the faculties of the soul,”¹⁸ and oppose to a noetic analysis, which bases the world upon the synthetic activity of the subject, his own “noematic reflection,” which, rather than generating the unity of the object, remains within it and makes its primordial unity explicit.

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The world is there prior to every analysis that I could give of it, and it would be artificial to derive it from a series of syntheses that would first link sensations and then perspectival appearances of the object together, whereas both of these are in fact products of the analysis and must not have existed prior to it. Reflective analysis believes it moves in the reverse direction along the path of a previous constitution and meets up with – in the “inner man,” as Saint Augustine says – a constituting power that it itself has always been. Thus, reflection carries itself along and places itself back within an invulnerable subjectivity, prior to [*en deçà de*]¹⁹ being and time. Yet this is a naïveté, or, if one prefers, an incomplete reflection that loses an awareness of its own beginning. I began to reflect, my reflection is a reflection upon an unreflected;²⁰ it cannot be unaware of itself as an event; henceforth it appears as a genuine creation, as a change in the structure of consciousness, and yet this involves recognizing, prior to its own operations, the world that is given to the subject because the subject is given to himself. The real is to be described, and neither constructed nor constituted. This means that I cannot assimilate perception to

syntheses that belong to the order of judgment, acts, or predication. At each moment, my perceptual field is filled with reflections, sudden noises, and fleeting tactile impressions that I am unable to link to the perceived context and that, nevertheless, I immediately place in the world without ever confusing them with my daydreams. At each instant, I weave dreams around the things, I imagine objects or people whose presence here is not incompatible with the context, and yet they are not confused with
 11 the world, they are out in front of the world, on the stage of the imaginary. If the reality of my perception were based solely on the intrinsic coherence of “representations,” then it should always be hesitant, and, delivered over to my probable conjectures, I ought to be continuously dismantling illusory syntheses and reintegrating into the real aberrant phenomena that I may have at first excluded. But this is never the case. The real is a tightly woven fabric; it does not wait for our judgments in order to incorporate the most surprising of phenomena, nor to reject the most convincing of our imaginings. Perception is not a science of the world, nor even an act or a deliberate taking of a stand; it is the background against which all acts stand out and is thus presupposed by them. The world is not an object whose law of constitution I have in my possession; it is the natural milieu and the field of all my thoughts and of all my explicit perceptions. Truth does not merely “dwell” in the “inner man”;²¹ or rather, there is no “inner man,” man is in and toward the world, and it is in the world that he knows himself.²² When I return to myself from the dogmatism of common sense or of science, I do not find a source of intrinsic truth, but rather a subject destined to the world.²³

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From this we can see the true sense of the famous “phenomenological reduction.” There is probably no other question upon which Husserl himself spent more time attempting to come to an understanding, nor one to which he returned more often, since the “problematic of the reduction” occupies a significant place in the unpublished materials.²⁴ For a long time, and even in his final writings, the reduction is presented as the return to a transcendental consciousness in front of which the world is spread out in an absolute transparency, animated throughout by a series of apperceptions whose reconstitution, beginning from their

results, is the task of the philosopher. Thus, my sensation of red is *appereived* as a manifestation of a certain sensed red, which is in turn sensed as a manifestation of a red surface, which is in turn sensed as the manifestation of a red box, which is, in the end, sensed as a manifestation or as a profile²⁵ of a red thing, namely, this book. Thus, this would be the apprehension of a certain *hylè* [matter] as signifying a phenomenon of a higher degree, the *Sinn-gebung* [sense-giving],²⁶ the active signifying operation that might be the definition of consciousness, and the world would be nothing other than the “signification: world.” The phenomenological reduction would thus be idealist, in the sense of a transcendental idealism that treats the world as a unity of value that is not divided between, say, Paul and Pierre; that is, a unity in which their perspectives intersect and that causes “Pierre’s consciousness” and “Paul’s consciousness” to communicate. This is because the perception of the world “by Pierre” is not Pierre’s doing, nor is the perception “by Paul” Paul’s doing; rather, in both cases it is the doing or the work of pre-personal consciousnesses whose communication raises no problems, since this very communication is in fact required by the definition of consciousness, sense, and truth. Insofar as I am conscious, that is, insofar as something has a sense for me, I am neither here nor there, neither Pierre nor Paul; in no way do I distinguish myself from “another” consciousness, since we are all immediate presences in the world, and since this world, being the system of truths, is unique by definition. A consistent transcendental idealism strips the world of its opacity and its transcendence. The world is precisely the one that we represent to ourselves, not insofar as we are men or empirical subjects, but insofar as we are all one single light and insofar as we all participate in the One without dividing it. Reflective analysis is unaware of the problem of others [*autrui*],²⁷ just as it is unaware of the problem of the world, because from the first flicker of consciousness it grants me the power to go toward a truth that is universal by right, and since the other is himself without *haecceity* [thisness], without place, and without a body, the Alter and the Ego are one and the same in the true world, which is the unifier of minds. There is no difficulty in understanding how “I” can think the Other [*l’Autrui*] because the “I,” and consequently the Other [*l’Autre*], are not trapped in the fabric of phenomena and have a value rather than an existence. Nothing is hidden behind these faces or these gestures, and there are no landscapes that remain inaccessible to me; there is but a touch of shadow that owes its existence to the light.

For Husserl, however, we know that there is indeed a problem of others, and the *alter ego* [the other myself] is a paradox. If another person is truly for-himself, beyond his being for-me, and if we are for-each-other and not separately for-God, then we must appear to each other, we both must have an exterior, and there must be, besides the perspective of the For-Oneself (my view upon myself and the other's view upon himself), also a perspective of the For-Others (my view upon others and the view of others upon me). Of course, these two perspectives cannot be in each of us merely juxtaposed, for then others would not see me and I would not see others. I must be my exterior, and the other's body must be the other person himself. This paradox and this dialectic between the Ego and the Alter are only possible if the Ego and the Alter Ego are defined by their situation and are not set free from all inherence; that is, only if philosophy is not completed with the return to myself, and only if, through reflection, I do not discover merely my presence to myself, but also the possibility of an "outside spectator." Or again, this is possible only if – at the very moment I experience my existence, and even at that extreme point of reflection – I am still lacking the absolute density that would draw me outside of time; and only if I discover in myself a sort of inner weakness that prevents me from being absolutely individual and that exposes me to the gazes of others as one man among men or, at the very least, as one consciousness among consciousnesses. The *Cogito* has, up until our present day, devalued the perception of others; it has taught me that the I is only accessible to itself, since it has defined me through the thought that I have of myself, which I am clearly alone in having, at least in this ultimate sense. In order for the word "other" not to be meaningless, my existence must never reduce itself to the consciousness that I have of existing; it must in fact encompass the consciousness that one might have of it, and so also encompass my embodiment in a nature and at least the possibility of an historical situation. The *Cogito* must find me in a situation, and it is on this condition alone that transcendental subjectivity will, as Husserl says,²⁸ be an intersubjectivity.²⁹ As a meditating Ego, I can of course distinguish the world and things from myself, since I clearly do not exist in the manner of things. I must even separate myself from my body insofar as it is understood as a thing among things, or as a sum of physico-chemical processes. But even if the *cogitatio* [thinking] that I thus discover has no place in either objective time or objective space, it is not without a place in the phenomenological world. I rediscover the

world – which I had distinguished from myself as a sum of things or of processes tied together through causal relations – “in myself” as the permanent horizon of all of my *cogitationes* [thoughts] and as a dimension in relation to which I never cease situating myself. The true *Cogito* does not define the existence of the subject through the thought that the subject has of existing, does not convert the certainty of the world into a certainty of the thought about the world, and finally, does not replace the world itself with the signification “world.” Rather, it recognizes my thought as an inalienable fact and it eliminates all forms of idealism by revealing me as “being in the world.”

Because we are through and through related to the world, the only way for us to catch sight of ourselves is by suspending this movement, by refusing to be complicit with it (or as Husserl often says, to see it *ohne mitzumachen* [without taking part]), or again, to put it out of play. This is not because we renounce the certainties of common sense and of the natural attitude – on the contrary, these are the constant theme of philosophy – but rather because, precisely as the presuppositions of every thought, they are “taken for granted” and they pass by unnoticed, and because we must abstain from them for a moment in order to awaken them and to make them appear. Perhaps the best formulation of the reduction is the one offered by Husserl’s assistant Eugen Fink when he spoke of a “wonder” before the world.³⁰ Reflection does not withdraw from the world toward the unity of consciousness as the foundation of the world; rather, it steps back in order to see transcendences spring forth and it loosens the intentional threads that connect us to the world in order to make them appear; it alone is conscious of the world because it reveals the world as strange and paradoxical. Husserl’s transcendental is not Kant’s, and Husserl criticizes Kantian philosophy for being a “worldly” philosophy because it makes use of our relation to the world, which is the engine of the Transcendental Deduction, and makes the world immanent to the subject, rather than *standing in wonder* before the world and conceiving the subject as a transcendence toward the world. Husserl’s entire misunderstanding with his interpreters, with the existential “dissidents,” and ultimately with himself, comes from the fact that we must – precisely in order to see the world and to grasp it as a paradox – rupture our familiarity with it, and this rupture can teach us nothing except the unmotivated springing forth of the world. The most important lesson of the reduction is the impossibility of a complete reduction. This is why Husserl always wonders anew about the possibility

of the reduction. If we were absolute spirit, the reduction would not be problematic. But since, on the contrary, we are in and toward the world, and since even our reflections take place in the temporal flow that they are attempting to capture (since they *sich einströmen* [flow along therein], as Husserl says), there is no thought that encompasses all of our thought. Or again, as the unpublished³¹ materials say, the philosopher is a perpetual beginner.³² This means that he accepts nothing as established from what men or scientists believe they know. This also means that philosophy itself must not take itself as established in the truths it has managed to utter, that philosophy is an ever-renewed experiment of its own beginning, that it consists entirely in describing this beginning, and finally, that radical reflection is conscious of its own dependence on an unreflected life that is its initial, constant, and final situation. Far from being, as was believed, the formula for an idealist philosophy, the phenomenological reduction is in fact the formula for an existential philosophy: Heidegger's "In-der-Welt-Sein" [being-in-the-world] only appears against the background of the phenomenological reduction.

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Husserl's concept of "essences" becomes muddled through a similar misunderstanding. He declares that every reduction, at the same time as being transcendental, is also necessarily eidetic. In other words, we cannot bring our perception of the world before the philosophical gaze without ceasing to be identical with that thesis about the world or with that interest for the world that defines us, without stepping back to this side of our commitment in order to make it itself appear as a spectacle, or without passing over from the fact of our existence to the nature of our existence, that is, from *Dasein* [existence] to *Wesen* [essence]. But here the essence is clearly not the goal, but rather a means; and our actual commitment in the world is precisely what must be understood and raised to the concept, and this is what polarizes all of our conceptual fixations. The necessity of passing through essences does not signify that philosophy takes them as an object, but rather that our existence is too tightly caught in the world in order to know itself as such at the moment when it is thrown into the world, and that our existence needs the field of ideality in order to know and to conquer its facticity.

The Vienna Circle, as we know, claims categorically that we can only relate to significations. For example, “consciousness” is not, for them, precisely what we are. Rather, it is a recent and complicated signification that we should employ carefully, and only after having made explicit the numerous significations that have contributed to determining it through the course of the word’s semantic evolution. This logical positivism is the antithesis of Husserl’s thought. Whatever shifts of meaning may have ultimately delivered this word and this concept of consciousness to us as a linguistic acquisition, we have a direct means of reaching what it designates: we have the experience of ourselves and of this consciousness that we are. In fact, all the significations of language are measured against this experience and it ensures that language means something for us. “It is the (. . .) still-mute experience that must be brought to the pure expression of its own sense.”³³ Husserl’s essences must bring with them all of the living relations of experience, like the net that draws up both quivering fish and seaweed from the seabed. Thus, we must not follow Jean Wahl in saying that “Husserl separates essences from existence.”³⁴ Separated essences are the essences of language. It is the very function of language to make essences exist in a separation that is merely apparent, since through language they still rely upon the pre-predicative life of consciousness. What appears in the silence of originary consciousness is not only what these words mean, but also what these things mean, that is, the core of primary signification around which acts of naming and of expression are organized.

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Seeking the essence of consciousness will thus not consist in working out the *Wortbedeutung* [the meaning of the word] consciousness and in fleeing from existence into the universe of things-said; rather, it will be rediscovering that actual presence of myself to myself, the fact of my consciousness which is what the word and concept “consciousness” ultimately mean. Seeking the essence of the world is not to seek what it is as an idea, after having reduced it to a theme of discourse; rather, it is to seek what it in fact is for us, prior to every thematization. Sensualism “reduces” the world by saying that ultimately we have nothing but states of ourselves. Transcendental idealism also “reduces” the world since, even if it makes the world certain, this is only in the name of the thought or the consciousness of the world, and as the mere correlate of our knowledge, such that the world becomes immanent to consciousness and the *aseity* [independent existence] of things is thereby suppressed. On

the contrary, the eidetic reduction is the commitment to make the world appear such as it is prior to every return to ourselves; it is the attempt to match reflection to the unreflective life of consciousness. I aim at and perceive a world. If I were to follow sensualism in saying that there is nothing here but “states of consciousness,” and if I sought to distinguish my perceptions from my dreams through some set of “criteria,” then I would miss the phenomenon of the world. For if I am able to speak about “dreams” and “reality,” to wonder about the distinction between the imaginary and the real, and to throw the “real” into doubt, this is because I have in fact drawn this distinction prior to the analysis, because I have an experience of the real as well as one of the imaginary. The problem, then, is not to attempt to understand how critical thought can give itself secondary equivalents to this distinction; the problem is to make explicit our primordial knowledge of the “real” and to describe the perception of the world as what establishes, once and for all, our idea of the truth. Thus, we must not wonder if we truly perceive a world; rather, we

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must say: the world is what we perceive.

More generally, we must not wonder if our evident truths [*nos évidences*] are really truths, or if, by some defect of our mind, what is evident for us would actually be revealed as illusory when measured against some truth in itself. For if we speak of illusion, this is because we have previously recognized illusions, and we could only do so in the name of some perception that, at that very moment, vouched for itself as true, such that doubt, or the fear of being mistaken, simultaneously affirms our power of unmasking error and could thus not uproot us from the truth. We are in the truth, and evidentness is “the experience of truth.”³⁵ To seek the essence of perception is not to declare that perception is presumed to be true, but rather that perception is defined as our access to the truth. If I now wanted to follow idealism in basing this actual evidentness, this irresistible belief, upon an absolute evidentness, that is, upon the absolute clarity of my thoughts for myself; or, if I wanted to uncover in myself a creative thought [*une pensée naturante*] that would establish the framework of the world or illuminate it throughout, then I would again be unfaithful to my experience of the world. I would, then, be seeking what makes this world possible rather than seeking what this world actually is. The evidentness of perception is neither adequate thought nor apodictic evidentness.³⁶ The world is not what I think, but what I live [*ce que je vis*]; I am open to the world, I unquestionably communicate with it, but I do not

possess it, it is inexhaustible. I can never fully justify the permanent thesis of my life that “there is a world,” or rather, “there is the world.” This facticity of the world is what establishes the *Weltlichkeit der Welt* [worldliness of the world],³⁷ what makes it such that the world is a world, just as the facticity of the *cogito* is not an imperfection in it, but rather what assures me of my existence. The eidetic method is that of a phenomenological positivism grounding the possible upon the real.

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We can now approach the question of intentionality, too often cited as the principal discovery of phenomenology, even though intentionality can only be understood through the reduction. There is hardly anything new in the claim that “all consciousness is consciousness of something.” In his “Refutation of Idealism,” Kant showed that inner perception is impossible without external perception, that the world as the connection of phenomena is anticipated in the consciousness of my own unity, and is the means I have of coming into being as consciousness.³⁸ What distinguishes intentionality from the Kantian relation to a possible object is that the unity of the world, prior to being posited by knowledge through an explicit act of identification, is lived as already accomplished or as already there. In the *Critique of Judgment*,³⁹ Kant himself demonstrated that there is a unity of the imagination and of the understanding, and a unity of subjects prior to the object, and that, in an experience of beauty, for example, I undergo the experience of a harmony between the sensible and the concept, between myself and another, which is itself without any concept. Here the subject is no longer the universal thinker of a system of rigorously connected objects, no longer the subject who is, if he is to be able to [*pouvoir*] form a world, the positing power [*puissance*]⁴⁰ that imposes the law of the understanding upon the manifold; rather, he discovers himself and appreciates himself as a nature spontaneously conforming to the law of the understanding. But if the subject has a nature, then the hidden art⁴¹ of the imagination must condition the categorial activity; it is no longer merely aesthetic judgment that rests upon this hidden art, but also knowledge, and this art also grounds the unity of consciousness and of consciousnesses.

Husserl takes up the *Critique of Judgment* when he speaks of a teleology of consciousness. This is not to double human consciousness with

an absolute thought that would assign consciousness its ends from the outside. Rather, it is to recognize consciousness itself as a project of the world,⁴² as destined to a world that it neither encompasses nor possesses, but toward which it never ceases to be directed – and to recognize the world as that pre-objective individual whose imperious unity prescribes knowledge its goal. This is why Husserl distinguishes between act intentionality – which is the intentionality of our judgments and of our voluntary decisions (and is the only intentionality discussed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*) – and operative intentionality (*fungierende Intentionalität*),⁴³ the intentionality that establishes the natural and pre-predicative unity of the world and of our life, the intentionality that appears in our desires, our evaluations, and our landscape more clearly than it does in objective knowledge. Operative intentionality is the one that provides the text that our various forms of knowledge attempt to translate into precise language. The relation to the world, such as it tirelessly announces itself within us, is not something that analysis might clarify: philosophy can simply place it before our eyes and invite us to take notice.

19 Through this enlarged notion of intentionality, phenomenological “understanding” is distinguished from classical “intellection,” which is limited to considering “true and immutable natures,”⁴⁴ and so phenomenology can become a phenomenology of genesis. Whether it is a question of a perceived thing, an historical event, or a doctrine, “to understand” is to grasp the total intention – not merely what these things are for representation, namely, the “properties” of the perceived thing, the myriad of “historical events,” and the “ideas” introduced by the doctrine – but rather the unique manner of existing expressed in the properties of the pebble, the glass, or the piece of wax, in all of the events of a revolution, and in all of the thoughts of a philosopher. For each civilization, it is a question of uncovering the Idea in the Hegelian sense, not something like a physico-mathematical law, accessible to objective thought, but rather the unique formula of behavior toward others, Nature, time, and death; that is, a certain manner of articulating the world that the historian must be able to take up and adopt. These are the dimensions of history. And in relation to them, there is not a single word or human gesture – not even those habitual or distracted ones – that does not have a signification. I believed I was keeping quiet due to fatigue, or some politician believed he had merely uttered a platitude, and just like that

my silence or his utterance take on a sense, because my weariness or his recourse to some ready-made formula are not accidental; they express a certain disinterest and thus are still a certain taking up of a position with regard to the situation.

If we examine an event up close, then everything appears to happen by accident at the moment it is lived: that person's ambition, some lucky encounter, or some isolated circumstance seems to have been decisive. But accidents cancel each other out, and that is how this myriad of facts comes together and sketches out a certain manner of taking a position toward the human condition, or an event whose contours are definite and of which one can speak. Must history be understood through ideology, through politics, through religion, or through the economy? Must we understand a doctrine through its manifest content or through the psychology of the author and the events of his life? We must in fact understand in all of these ways at once; everything has a sense, and we uncover the same ontological structure beneath all of these relations. All of these views are true, so long as they are not isolated, so long as we go right to the very foundation of history, and so long as we meet up with the existential core of signification that is made explicit in each of these perspectives. As Marx said, history does not walk on its head; but neither does it think with its feet. Or better, it is not for us to worry about either its "head" or its "feet," but rather its body. All economical and psychological explanations of a doctrine are true, since the thinker only ever thinks beginning from what he is. Reflection upon a doctrine will itself only be complete when it succeeds in connecting with the history of the doctrine and with external explanations, and in putting the causes and the sense of a doctrine back into an existential structure. There is, says Husserl, a "genesis of sense" (*Sinn genesis*)⁴⁵ that alone teaches us, in the final analysis, what the doctrine "means" [*veut dire*]. Like understanding, critique too will have to be pursued on all levels. And of course, the identification of some accident in an author's life can hardly be satisfactory as a refutation of a doctrine: for the doctrine signifies beyond this life; and there are no pure accidents in existence or in coexistence, since both assimilate accidents in order to construct reason from them. And finally, since it is indivisible in the present, history is also indivisible in succession. In relation to its fundamental dimensions, all periods of history appear as manifestations of a single existence or as episodes of a single drama – but we do not know if this drama will have an ending. Because we are in the

world, we are *condemned to sense*,⁴⁶ and there is nothing we can do or say that does not acquire a name in history.

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Phenomenology's most important accomplishment is, it would seem, to have joined an extreme subjectivism with an extreme objectivism through its concept of the world or of rationality. Rationality fits precisely to the experiences in which it is revealed. There is rationality – that is, perspectives intersect, perceptions confirm each other, and a sense appears. But this sense must not be separated, transformed into an absolute Spirit, or transformed into a world in the realist sense. The phenomenological world is not pure being, but rather the sense that shines forth at the intersection of my experiences and at the intersection of my experiences with those of others through a sort of gearing into each other.⁴⁷ The phenomenological world is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which establish their unity through the taking up [la reprise] of my past experiences into my present experiences, or of the other person's experience into my own. For the first time, the philosopher's meditation is lucid enough to avoid endowing its own products with a concrete reality in the world that is prior to that meditation. The philosopher attempts to think the world, others, and himself, and to conceive of their relations. But the meditating Ego and the "disinterested onlooker" (*uninteressierter Zuschauer*)⁴⁸ do not meet up with an already given rationality; rather, they "establish each other"⁴⁹ and establish rationality through an initiative that has no ontological guarantee, and whose justification rests entirely upon the actual power that it gives us for taking up our history.

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The phenomenological world is not the making explicit of a prior being, but rather the founding of being; philosophy is not the reflection of a prior truth, but rather, like art, the actualization of a truth. One might ask how this actualization is possible and if it does not in fact link up, in the things, with a preexisting Reason. But the only *Logos* that preexists is the world itself, and the philosophy that brings the world to a manifest existence does not begin by first being possible: it is present or real, just like the world of which it is a part, and no explanatory hypothesis is more clear than the very act by which we take up this incomplete

world in order to attempt to totalize it and to think it. Rationality is not a problem; there is no unknown behind it that we would have to determine deductively or prove inductively beginning from it. We witness, at each moment, this marvel that is the connection of experiences, and no one knows how it is accomplished better than we do, since we are this very knot of relations.⁵⁰ The world and reason are not problems; and though we might call them mysterious, this mystery is essential to them, there can be no question of dissolving it through some “solution,” it is beneath the level of solutions.⁵¹ True philosophy entails learning to see the world anew, and in this sense, an historical account might signify the world with as much “depth” as a philosophical treatise. We take our fate into our own hands and through reflection we become responsible for our own history, but this responsibility also comes from a decision to which we commit our lives; and in both cases it is a violent act whose truth is confirmed through its being performed.

As the disclosure of the world, phenomenology rests upon itself, or rather, founds itself.⁵² All forms of knowledge are supported by a “ground” of postulations, and ultimately upon our communication with the world as the first establishing of rationality. Philosophy, as radical reflection, abstains in principle from this resource. Since philosophy is itself within history, it too draws upon the world and upon constituted reason. Thus, it will be necessary that philosophy direct toward itself the very same interrogation that it directs toward all forms of knowledge. It will thus be indefinitely doubled; it will be, as Husserl says, an infinite dialogue or meditation, and, to the very extent that it remains loyal to its intention, it will never know just where it is going. The unfinished nature of phenomenology and the inchoate style in which it proceeds are not the sign of failure; they were inevitable because phenomenology’s task was to reveal the mystery of the world and the mystery of reason.⁵³ If phenomenology was a movement prior to having been a doctrine or a system, this is neither accidental nor a deception. Phenomenology is as painstaking as the works of Balzac, Proust, Valéry, or Cézanne – through the same kind of attention and wonder, the same demand for awareness, the same will to grasp the sense of the world or of history in its nascent state. As such, phenomenology merges with the effort of modern thought.

Introduction

Classical Prejudices
and the Return to
Phenomena



“SENSATION”

In beginning the study of perception, we find in language the seemingly clear and straightforward notion of sensation: I sense red or blue, hot or cold. We will see, however, that this is the most confused notion there is, and that, for having accepted it, classical analyses have missed the phenomenon of perception. 25

[a. *Sensation as impression.*]¹

I might first understand sensation to be the manner in which I am affected and the undergoing [l'expérience] of a state of myself. Perhaps the gray that immediately envelops me when I close my eyes or the sounds that vibrate “in my head” when I am half-asleep indicate what pure sensing might be. I would sense precisely insofar as I coincide with the sensed, insofar as this latter ceases to have a place in the objective world, and insofar as it signifies nothing to me. This is to acknowledge that sensation must be sought beneath all qualitative content, since in order to be distinguished as two colors, red and green – even if lacking a precise location – must already form some scene before me and thus cease to be part of myself. Pure sensation will be the undergoing of an undifferentiated, instantaneous, and punctual “jolt.” Since these authors readily concede the point, it is unnecessary to show that this notion corresponds to

nothing in our experience, and that for animals such as the chimpanzee or the chicken, the most simple *factual perceptions* that we know have to do with relationships and not with absolute terms.² But we must still wonder why they believe themselves authorized by right to mark off a layer of “impressions” in perceptual experience.

26 Consider a white patch against a homogeneous background. All points on the patch have a certain common “function” that makes them into a “figure.” The figure’s color is denser and somehow more resistant than the background’s color. The borders of the white patch “belong” to the patch and, despite being contiguous with it, do not join with the background. The patch seems to be placed upon the background and does not interrupt it. Each part announces more than it contains, and thus this elementary perception is already charged with a *sense*. The objection will be raised that if the figure and the background are not sensed as a whole, then they must surely be sensed in each of their points. This would be to forget that each point in turn can only be perceived as a figure on a background. When Gestalt theory tells us that a figure against a background is the most basic sensible given we can have, this is not a contingent characteristic of factual perception that would, in an ideal analysis, leave us free to introduce the notion of impression. Rather, this is the very definition of the perceptual phenomenon, or that without which a phenomenon cannot be called perception. The perceptual “something” is always in the middle of some other thing, it always belongs to a “field.” A truly homogeneous area, offering nothing to perceive, cannot be given to any perception. The structure of actual perception alone can teach us what it is to perceive. Pure impression is thus not merely undiscoverable, but imperceptible, and therefore is inconceivable as a moment of perception. If it is introduced, this is because, rather than being attentive to perceptual experience, this experience is neglected in favor of the perceived object. A visual field is not made up of isolated visions. But the viewed object is made up of material fragments, and spatial points are external to each other. An isolated perceptual given is inconceivable, so long as we perform the mental experiment of trying to perceive it. Yet in the world there are isolated objects or a physical void.

[b. Sensation as quality.]

I will thus give up the attempt to define sensation as pure impression. But to see is to have colors or lights, to hear is to have sounds, to sense is

to have qualities; is it not sufficient to have seen red or to have heard an A in order to know what sensing is? Red and green are not sensations, they are the sensibles, and quality is not an element of consciousness, but a property of the object. Rather than providing a simple means of delimiting sensations, the quality, if we consider it in the very experience in which it is revealed, is just as rich and obscure as the object or as the entire perceptual spectacle. The red patch I see on the rug is only red if the shadow that lies across it is taken into account; its quality only appears in relation to the play of light, and thus only as an element in a spatial configuration. Moreover, the color is only determinate if it spreads across a certain surface; a surface too small would be unqualifiable. Finally, this red would literally not be the same if it were not the “wooly red” of a carpet.³ Analysis thus discovers the significations that reside in each quality. Might the objection be raised that only the qualities of our actual experience are at issue here, overlaid with an entire body of knowledge, and that we still have the right to conceive of a “pure quality” that might define “pure sensing”? And yet, as we have just seen, this pure sensing would amount to not sensing anything and thus to not sensing at all. The supposed evidence of sensing is not grounded upon the testimony of consciousness, but rather upon the unquestioned belief in the world [*le préjugé du monde*].⁴ We believe we know perfectly well what it is “to see,” “to hear,” or “to sense,” because perception has long given us colored or sonorous objects. When we want to analyze perception, we transport these objects into consciousness. We commit what psychologists call “the experience error,”⁵ that is, we immediately assume that what we know to exist among things is also in our consciousness of them. We build perception out of the perceived. And since the perceived is obviously only accessible through perception, in the end we understand neither.

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We are caught up in the world and we do not succeed in detaching ourselves from it in order to shift to the consciousness of the world. If we were to do so, we would see that the quality is never directly experienced and that all consciousness is consciousness of something. This “something,” moreover, is not necessarily an identifiable object. There are two ways of being mistaken regarding quality: the first is to turn it into an element of consciousness when it is in fact an object for consciousness, to treat it as a mute impression when it in fact always has a sense; the second is to believe that this sense and this object, at the level of quality, are full and determinate. And this second error, just like the first, results from

the unquestioned belief in the world. Through optics and geometry we construct the fragment of the world whose image can, at any moment, form upon our retina. Anything outside of this perimeter – not reflecting upon any sensitive surface – no more acts upon our vision than does light falling upon our closed eyes. We ought to thus perceive a sharply delimited segment of the world, surrounded by a black zone, filled with qualities without any lacunae, and subtended by determinate size relations like those existing upon the retina. But experience offers nothing of the sort, and we will never understand what a visual field is by beginning from the world. Even if it is possible to trace a perimeter around vision by beginning at the center and gradually approaching lateral stimuli, the results of such a measurement nonetheless vary from one moment to the next, and the precise moment at which a previously seen stimulus ceases to be seen can never be identified. The region surrounding the visual field is not easy to describe, but it is certainly neither black nor gray. In this region there is an *indeterminate vision*, a vision of something or other, and, if taken to the extreme, that which is behind my back is not without visual presence. The two straight lines in the Müller-Lyer illusion (see Figure 1) are neither equal nor unequal, this is only an essential alternative in the objective world.⁶ The visual field is this strange milieu in which contradictory notions intertwine because the objects (the straight lines of Müller-Lyer's illusion) are not here placed in the domain of being where a comparison would be possible, but are rather each grasped in its own private context, as if they did not belong to the same universe.

Psychologists have for a long time gone to great lengths to ignore these phenomena. In the world taken in itself, everything is determinate. There are of course confused spectacles, such as a landscape in the fog, but even so, one still admits that no real landscape is in itself confused – it is only confused for us. Psychologists will contend that the object is

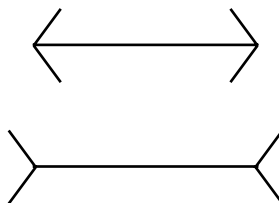


Figure 1

never ambiguous, that it only becomes so through inattention. The limits of the visual field are not themselves variable, and there is an absolute moment in which the approaching object objectively begins to be seen; quite simply, we fail to “notice.”⁷ But the notion of attention, as we will show more fully below, has for itself no evidence from consciousness. It is but an auxiliary hypothesis concocted to preserve the unquestioned belief in the objective world. We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon. Quality appears within this atmosphere. The sense that it contains is an equivocal sense, and more a question of an expressive value than a logical signification. The determinate quality by which empiricism wanted to define sensation is an object for, not an element of consciousness, and it is the recently introduced object of scientific consciousness. For these two reasons, the notion of quality conceals rather than reveals subjectivity. 29

[c. *Sensation as the immediate consequence of a stimulation.*]

The two definitions of sensation that we have just tried out were in fact direct definitions in appearance only. As we have just seen, they were modeled upon the perceived object. They were thereby in agreement with common sense, which also defines the sensible through the objective conditions on which it depends. The visible is what we grasp with our eyes; the sensible is what we grasp *through* our senses. Let us follow the idea of sensation on this terrain⁸ and see what becomes of this “through,” this “with,” and the notion of sense organs at the first level of reflection, namely, at the level of science. Although we have no experience of sensation, do we at least find some reasons in its causes and in its objective genesis to maintain it as an explanatory concept? Physiology, to which the psychologist turns as if to a higher authority, is in the same predicament as psychology. It too begins by situating its object in the world and by treating it as a fragment of extension. They lose sight of *behavior* by focusing on the reflex, that is, the elaboration and the formulation of stimuli; behavior is hidden by a longitudinal theory of nervous functioning that makes each element of the reaction correspond in principle to an element of the situation.⁹ As in reflex-arc theory, the physiology of perception begins by assuming an anatomical trajectory that leads from a determinate *receiver* through a definite *transmitter* to a recording post,¹⁰ which is itself specialized. The objective world being given, it is 30

assumed that the world confides messages to the sense organs that thus must be carried, then decoded in such a way as to reproduce in us the original text. From this it follows that there is, in principle, a point-by-point correspondence and a constant connection between the stimulus and the elementary perception. But this “constancy hypothesis”¹¹ enters into conflict with the givens of consciousness, and the same psychologists who posit it also acknowledge its theoretical character.¹²

For example, the intensity of a sound is made to lose its pitch under certain conditions; the addition of auxiliary lines renders two objectively equal shapes unequal;¹³ and a colored area appears uniformly colored even though the chromatic thresholds of the different regions of the retina ought to make it red here and orange there, and in certain cases even achromatic.¹⁴ Should these cases in which the phenomenon does not adhere to the stimulus be kept within the frame of the law of constancy through additional factors – attention and judgment – or should the law itself be rejected? When red and green presented together give a resulting gray, it is conceded that the central combination of stimuli may immediately give rise to a sensation different from what the objective stimuli would require. When the apparent size of an object varies with its apparent distance, or when its apparent color varies with the memories that we have of it, it is conceded that “sensorial processes are not impervious to central influences.”¹⁵ In this case, then, the “sensible” can no longer be defined as the immediate effect of an external stimulus. Is not the same conclusion applicable to the first three examples that we cited? If attention, more precise instructions, rest, and extended practice finally bring perception into conformity with the law of constancy, this does
 31 not prove its general validity, for, in the examples cited, the first appearance had just as much of a sensorial character as the results obtained in the end. The question is whether the attentive perception, the concentration of a subject on a point in the visual field (such as the “analytical perception” of the two principal lines in the Müller-Lyer illusion), rather than revealing “normal sensation,” does not substitute an exceptional arrangement for the original phenomenon.¹⁶ The law of constancy cannot, against the evidence of consciousness, make use of a single critical experiment in which it itself is not already implied, and it is already presupposed wherever it is believed to be established.¹⁷

If we return to phenomena, they show us that the apprehension of a quality – exactly like the apprehension of size – is tied to an entire

perceptual context, and the stimuli no longer give us the indirect means that we sought for delimiting a layer of direct impressions. But not only does the physical stimulus elude us when we seek an “objective” definition of sensation. The sensory apparatus itself, as modern physiology imagines it, is no longer appropriate to the role of “transmitter” that it was made to play by classical science. Non-cortical lesions on tactile organs certainly dilute the concentration of points sensitive to hot, to cold, or to pressure, and also diminish the sensitivity of the points that remain. But if an extended enough stimulation is applied to the damaged organ, detailed sensations reappear; a more energetic exploration by the hand compensates for the increased threshold.¹⁸ At the elementary level of sensibility, we catch sight of a collaboration among partial stimuli and between the sensorial system and the motor system that, through a variable physiological constellation, keeps the sensation constant, and thus rules out any definition of the nervous process as the simple transmission of a given message. The destruction of the visual function, regardless of the location of the lesions, abides by the same law: at first, all colors are affected¹⁹ and lose their saturation. Next the spectrum becomes simplified, being reduced to four colors and shortly thereafter to two. In the end, a gray monochrome is reached, without the pathological color for that matter ever being equated with any normal color at all. Thus, in central lesions just as in peripheral ones, “the loss of nervous substance results not merely in a deficiency of certain qualities, but rather in the transition to a less differentiated and more primitive structure.”²⁰ Conversely, normal functioning must be understood as a process of integration in which the text of the external world is not copied, but constituted. And if we try to grasp “sensation” from the perspective of its preparatory bodily phenomena, we do not discover a psychical individual, a function of certain known variables, but rather a formation already tied to an ensemble and already endowed with a sense, which is only different in degree from more complex perceptions and which thus does not move us forward in our delimitation of the pure sensible.

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There is no physiological definition of sensation and, more generally, there is no autonomous physiological psychology because the physiological event itself obeys biological and psychological laws. It was long believed that peripheral conditioning provided a reliable way of identifying the “elementary” mental functions and of distinguishing them from the “higher-level” functions less strictly tied to the bodily infrastructure.

A more precise analysis discovers that the two types of functions intertwine. The elementary is no longer that which, when added together, will constitute the whole, nor is it a mere occasion for the whole to constitute itself. The elementary event is already invested with a sense, and the higher-level function will only achieve a more integrated mode of existence or a more valuable adaptation by utilizing and by sublimating the subordinate operations. Reciprocally, “sensory experience is a vital process, as much as procreation, breathing, or growth.”²¹ Psychology and physiology are thus no longer two parallel sciences, but rather two characterizations of behavior, the first concrete and the second abstract.²²

- 33 When the psychologist asks the physiologist to provide a definition of sensation “through its causes,” we said that he rediscovers on this terrain his own problems, and now we see why. For his part, the physiologist must rid himself of the realist prejudice that all of the sciences borrow from common sense and that hinders them in their development. The change in the sense of the words “elementary” and “higher-level” in modern physiology announces a change in philosophy.²³ The scientist must also learn to offer a critique of the idea of an external world in itself, since the facts themselves suggest to him that he must give up the idea of the body as a transmitter of messages. We grasp the sensible with the senses, but we know now that this “with” is not merely instrumental, that the sensory apparatus is not a conductor, and that even at the periphery, the physiological impression is engaged in relations that were previously considered to be central.

[d. *What is sensing?*]

Once again, reflection – even the second-order reflection of science – obscures what was believed clear. We thought we knew what sensing, seeing, and hearing are, but now these words pose problems. We are led back to the very experiences that these words designate in order to define them anew. The classical notion of sensation was not itself a concept derived from reflection, but rather a recently developed product of thought turned toward objects; it was the final term in the representation of the world, the furthest removed from the constitutive source, and thereby the least clear. In its general effort toward objectification, science inevitably comes to a conception of the human organism as a physical system in the presence of stimuli themselves defined by their

physico-chemical properties, seeks to reconstruct actual perception²⁴ upon this basis and to close the cycle of scientific knowledge by discovering the laws according to which knowledge itself is produced, that is, by establishing an objective science of subjectivity.²⁵ It is, however, also inevitable that this attempt should fail. If we think back to the objective investigations themselves, we discover first that the exterior conditions of the sensory field do not determine it part for part and only intervene by making an autochthonous organization possible – this is what Gestalt theory shows – and second, that structure in the organism depends on variables such as the biological *sense* of the situation, which are no longer physical variables, such that the whole escapes the well-known instruments of physico-mathematical analysis to open onto another type of intelligibility.²⁶

34

If we now turn back, as is done here, toward perceptual experience, we observe that science only succeeds in constructing a semblance of subjectivity: it introduces sensations, as things, precisely where experience shows there to already be meaningful wholes; it imposes categories upon the phenomenal universe that only make sense within the scientific universe. Science requires that two perceived lines, like two real lines, be either equal or unequal, and that a perceived crystal have a determinate number of sides,²⁷ without noticing that the nature of the perceived is to tolerate ambiguity, a certain “shifting” or “haziness” [*bougé*],²⁸ and to allow itself to be shaped by the context. The lines in Müller-Lyer’s illusion cease to be equal without thereby becoming “unequal” – they become “different.” That is, an isolated objective line and the same line considered in a figure cease to be, for perception, “the same.” The line is only identifiable in these two functions by an analytical perception that is not natural. Likewise, the perceived is composed of lacunae that are not merely “non-perceptions.” I can know that a crystal that I see or touch has a “uniform” shape without having, even tacitly, counted its sides. I can become familiar with a person’s face without ever having perceived, for itself, the color of the eyes. The theory of sensation, which composes all knowledge out of determinate qualities, constructs objects for us that are cleansed of all equivocation, that are pure, absolute, and that are the ideal of knowledge rather than its actual themes. This theory only works for the recently developed superstructure of consciousness. This is where “the idea of sensation is more or less fulfilled.”²⁹ The images that instinct projects before itself, the images that tradition recreates in each

generation, or even mere dreams, appear at first as if on equal footing with
35 perceptions properly so called, and true, actual, and explicit perception is
gradually distinguished from phantasms through a work of critique. The
word “perception” indicates a *direction* more than a primitive function.³⁰
We know that the constancy of the apparent size of objects for variable
distances, or the constancy of their color in different lightings, is more
perfect in children than in adults.³¹ That is, perception is more strictly
tied to the local stimulus in its mature state than in its early state, and it
conforms to the theory of sensation more for the adult than it does for
the child. Perception is like a net whose knots progressively appear more
clearly.³² A depiction of “primitive thought” has been given that can only
be understood if we relate the responses of primitive people, their utter-
ances, and the sociologist’s interpretations back to the fund of perceptual
experience that they all attempt to express.³³ What prevents spatial, tem-
poral, and numerical wholes from being articulated in manipulable, dis-
tinct, and identifiable terms is sometimes the adherence of the perceived
to its context and as if to its viscosity, and sometimes the presence in the
perceived of a positive indeterminacy. We must explore this pre-objective
domain within ourselves if we wish to understand sensing.

II

“ASSOCIATION” AND THE “PROJECTION OF MEMORIES”

[a. If I have sensations, then all experience is sensation.]

Once introduced, the notion of sensation distorts the entire analysis of perception. As we have said, a “figure” on a “background” already contains much more than the currently given qualities. It has “contours” that do not “belong” to the background and that “stand out” from it; it is “stable” and of a “dense” color, while the background is limitless and of an uncertain color; and the background “continues” beneath the figure. The different parts of the whole – such as the parts of the figure closest to the background – thus possess, beyond a color and some qualities, a particular *sense*. The question is what makes up this sense, what do the words “border” and “contour” mean, and what happens when a collection of qualities is apprehended as a figure on a background? And yet once sensation is introduced as an element of knowledge, it leaves us no choice in our response. A being who could sense – that is, coincide absolutely with an impression or with a quality – could have no other mode of knowledge. That a quality, such as a red area, signifies something, that it is, for example, grasped as a patch on a background, means that the red is no longer merely this warm, expe-

rienced, and lived color in which I lose myself;¹ rather, it announces some other thing without containing that thing, it sets an epistemic function to work, and its parts together make up a whole to which each is related without leaving its place. The red is, from now on, no longer merely present to me, but rather represents something for me, and what it represents is not possessed as a “real part” of my perception, but is merely aimed at as an “intentional part.”² My gaze does not merge into the contour or the patch in the same way it merges into the red taken materially; rather, it glances over them or dominates them. For the punctual sensation to receive a signification into itself that truly penetrates it, to integrate itself into a “contour” linked to the group of the “figure” and independent of the “background,” it would have to cease being an absolute coincidence and, consequently, cease being a sensation at all. If we accept a classical understanding of “sensing,” then the signification of the sensible can no longer consist in anything other than present or virtual sensations. Seeing a figure can be nothing other than the simultaneous possession of its component punctual sensations. Each punctual sensation always remains what it is: a blind contact, an impression. The group makes itself into a “vision” and forms a scene before us because we learn to shift more quickly from one impression to the next. A contour is nothing but a sum of isolated visions and the consciousness of a contour is a collective being. The sensible elements that make up this collective being cannot lose the opacity that defines them as sensible in order to open themselves up to an intrinsic connection or to a common law of constitution.

Let there be three points A, B, C, on the contour of a figure. Their order in space is both their manner of coexisting before our eyes and this coexistence – no matter how close together the points I choose are – is the sum of their separate existences: the position of A, plus the position of B, plus the position of C. Empiricism could, of course, leave behind this atomistic

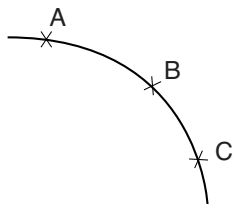


Figure 2

language and speak of blocks of space or blocks of duration, or add an experience of relations to the experience of qualities. But this changes nothing in the empiricist doctrine. Either the block of space is glanced over and inspected by a mind, but then we have left empiricism behind since consciousness is no longer defined by the impression, or the block of space is itself given in the manner of an impression, but is then just as closed off to a more extended coordination as was the punctual impression discussed above. And yet a contour is not merely the collection of the present givens; the present givens evoke still others that come to complete them. When I say that I have before me a red patch, the sense of the word “patch” is provided by previous experiences through which I learned how to employ the word. The distribution in space of the three points A, B, and C evokes other analogous distributions, and I say that I see a circle. This appeal to acquired experience again changes nothing in the empiricist thesis. The “association of ideas” that brings back past experience can only restore extrinsic connections and can only itself be such a connection because the originary experience did not contain any other kinds of connections. Once consciousness has been defined as sensation, every mode of consciousness will have to borrow its clarity from sensation. In previous experiences to which I think back, the word *circle* or the word *order* could only designate the concrete manner in which our sensations were distributed before us, a certain factual arrangement, a manner of sensing. If the three points A, B, and C are on a circle, then the trajectory AB “resembles” the trajectory BC, but this resemblance only means that the one reminds us of the other. The trajectory A, B, C resembles other circular trajectories that my gaze has followed, but this only means that it arouses the memory of them and makes their image appear. Never can two terms be identified, perceived, or understood as the same, for this would be to presuppose that their *haecceity* were overcome – they can at best be indissolubly associated and everywhere substituted for each other. Knowledge appears as a system of substitutions in which one impression announces others without ever providing a justification, in which words evoke an expectation of sensations as the evening evokes the expectation of the night. The signification of the perceived is nothing but a constellation of images that begin to reappear for no reason. The most simple images or sensations are ultimately all there is to be understood through words; concepts are but a complicated manner of designating them, and like images and sensations, they are themselves

inexpressible impressions; understanding is a deception or an illusion, knowledge never gets a hold on its objects, which drag each other along, and the mind functions like a calculating machine³ that does not know why its results are true. The notion of sensation precludes every philosophy other than nominalism, that is, the reduction of sense to either the error [*contre-sens*] of confused resemblance or the non-sense of association through contiguity.

[b. *The segregation of the field.*]

39 And yet sensations and images, which were to begin and end all knowledge, only ever appear within an horizon of sense, and the signification of the perceived, far from resulting from an association, is in fact presupposed in all associations – whether it has to do with the synopsis of a present figure or the evocation of previous experiences. Our perceptual field is made of “things” and “gaps between things.”⁴ The parts of a thing are not linked together by a simple external association that would be the result of their interdependence having been noticed during the movements of the object. For a start, I see as things certain wholes that I have never seen move: such as houses, the sun, or mountains. If one wanted to say that I extend to the immobile object a notion acquired in the experience of moving objects, then the mountain must present, in its actual appearance, some characteristic that grounds its recognition as a thing and justifies this transfer. But then this characteristic suffices, without any transfer, to explain the segregation of the field. Even the unity of everyday objects that can be handled and moved about by the child cannot be reduced to the taking notice of their solidity. Were we to attempt to see the intervals between things as themselves things, the appearance of the world would be just as noticeably changed as that of the visual puzzle at the moment when I discover in it “the rabbit” or “the hunter.” This would not involve the same elements differently linked, the same sensations differently associated, the same text invested with a different sense, or the same matter in a different form, but truly a different world.

There are no indifferent givens that together set about forming a thing because some factual contiguities or resemblances associate them. Rather, because we first perceive a whole as a thing, the analytic attitude can later discern resemblances or contiguities there. This does not only mean that, without the perception of the whole we would not imagine observing the

resemblance or the contiguity of its elements, but rather, literally, that the elements would not be a part of the same world and that resemblance and contiguity could not exist at all. The psychologist, who always conceives of consciousness in the world, places the resemblance and the contiguity of stimuli among the objective conditions that determine the constitution of a whole. The stimuli closest together or most similar, he says,⁵ or those stimuli that, once assembled, provide the best equilibrium to the spectacle, tend to join together in the same configuration for perception. But this language is deceptive, for it opposes objective stimuli (which belong to the perceived world and even to the second-order world constructed by scientific consciousness) to the perceptual consciousness, which psychology must describe according to direct experience. The psychologist’s “amphibious” or hybrid thought always risks reintroducing relations that belong to the objective world into his description. Thus it was possible to believe that Wertheimer’s law of contiguity and law of resemblance brought back the objective contiguity and resemblance of the associationists as constitutive principles of perception. But in fact, for pure description – and Gestalt theory aims to be such a description – the contiguity and the resemblance of stimuli are not prior to the constitution of the whole. “Good form” is not achieved because it would be good in itself in some metaphysical heaven; rather, it is good because it is realized in our experience. The supposed conditions of perception become anterior to perception itself only when, rather than describing the perceptual phenomenon as a primary opening up to an object, we presuppose around it a milieu in which all of the developments and all of the cross-checking that will be performed by analytical perception are already inscribed, and in which all of the norms of actual perception will be justified – a realm of truth, a world. By presupposing this realm, we strip perception of its essential function, which is to establish or to inaugurate knowledge, and we view perception through the lens of its results.

40

If we hold ourselves to phenomena, then the unity of the thing in perception is not constructed through association, but rather, being the condition of association, this unity precedes the cross-checkings that verify and determine it, this unity precedes itself. If I am walking on a beach toward a boat that has run aground, and if the funnel or the mast merges with the forest that borders the dune, then there will be a moment in which these details suddenly reunite with the boat and become welded to it. As I approached, I did not perceive the resemblances or the

proximities that were, in the end, about to reunite with the superstructure of the ship in an unbroken picture. I merely felt that the appearance of the object was about to change, that something was imminent in this tension, as the storm is imminent in the clouds. The spectacle was suddenly reorganized, satisfying my vague expectation. Afterward I recognized, as justifications for the change, the resemblance and the contiguity of what I call “stimuli,” that is, the most determinate phenomena obtained from up close and with which I compose the “true” world. “How did I not see that these pieces of wood were part of the boat? They were after all the same color as the boat, and they match its superstructure perfectly.”
 41 But these reasons, drawn from having properly perceived the boat, were not given as reasons prior to correct perception. The unity of the object is established upon the presentiment of an imminent order that will, suddenly, respond to questions that are merely latent in the landscape. It will resolve a problem only posed in the form of a vague uneasiness; it organizes elements that until then did not belong to the same universe and which, for that reason, as Kant said insightfully, could not have been associated. By placing these elements on the same playing field, that of the unique object, the synopsis makes possible the contiguity and the resemblance among them, and one impression can never, by itself, be associated with another impression.

[c. There is no “associative force.”]

Nor does an impression have the power to awaken other impressions. It does so only on condition of first being *understood* from the perspective of the past experience where it coexisted with the impressions to be awakened. Consider a series of coupled syllables⁶ in which the second is a softened rhyme of the first (*dak-tak*), and a second series in which the second syllable is obtained by reversing the first (*ged-deg*). If the two series have been learned by heart, and if in a critical experiment the consistent instruction to “find the softened rhyme” is given, it is clearly observed that the subject has more difficulty in finding a soft rhyme for *ged* than for a neutral syllable. If, however, the instruction is to change the vowel in the given syllables, no delay occurs. Thus, there are no associative forces at play in the first critical experiment, for if they existed they would have played a role in the second as well. The truth is that, when placed before the syllables often associated with softened rhymes, the subject, rather than

actually rhyming, draws upon his acquired experience and puts to work a “reproductive intention,”⁷ such that when he arrives at the second series of syllables, in which the present instructions no longer match with the patterns produced in the preparatory experiments, the reproduction intention can only result in errors. When the subject is asked in the second critical experiment to change the vowel of the prompting syllable, since this is a task that never figured in the preparatory experiments, he cannot use the bypass of reproduction and under these conditions the preparatory experiments remain without influence. Association thus never works as an autonomous force; the proposed word never “induces” the response like an efficient cause. Association only acts by making a reproduction intention probable or tempting; it only operates in virtue of the sense that it caught in the context of the previous experiment and by suggesting the recourse to that experience; it is efficacious to the extent that the subject recognizes it, and grasps it in the appearance or the physiognomy of the past.

42

Finally, if we wanted to introduce association through resemblance rather than through mere contiguity, we would see again that in order to evoke a previous image that in fact resembles the present perception, this perception must be *formulated* in such a way that it becomes capable of bearing this resemblance. A subject will just as easily recognize Figure 3 in Figure 4, where is it “camouflaged,” whether he has seen Figure 4

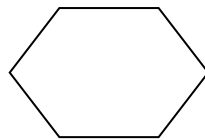


Figure 3

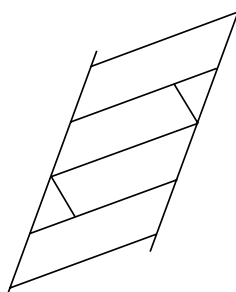


Figure 4

just five times or 540 times;⁸ and moreover, he will never constantly recognize it there. By contrast, a subject looking for another figure hidden in Figure 4 (without, for that matter, knowing which one) discovers it there faster and more often than a purely passive subject who has the same experience with the figures. Resemblance then, like coexistence, is not an impersonal force directing the circulation of images or “states of consciousness.” Figure 3 is not evoked by Figure 4, or rather, it is only aroused by it if we have first seen a “possible Figure 3” in Figure 4. This comes down to saying that actual resemblance does not free us from having to look for how it is first made possible by the present organization of Figure 4, that the “prompting” figure must take on the same sense as the prompted figure prior to recalling its memory, and that, in short, the actual past is not imported into the present perception through an association mechanism, but is rather deployed by present consciousness itself.

[d. There is no “projection of memories.”]

We can now see the value of the usual formulas concerning the “role of memory in perception.” There is talk even outside of empiricism of “memory’s contributions.”⁹ The claim that “to perceive is to remember” is repeated everywhere. In reading a text, the speed of the gaze is shown to necessarily leave the retinal images incomplete, and the sensible givens must *therefore* be completed by a projection of memories.¹⁰ A landscape or a newspaper seen upside down would reveal ordinary vision, the landscape or the newspaper seen normally only being more clear thanks to what is added to them by memory. “Because of the non-habitual arrangement of the impressions, the influence of psychic causes can no longer be exerted.”¹¹ The question is not asked as to why the impressions, when arranged differently, render the newspaper illegible or the landscape unrecognizable. The answer is that the memories need to be made possible by the physiognomy of the givens in order for them to come to complete the perception. Prior to any contribution by memory, that which is seen must currently be organized in such a way as to offer me a scene in which I can recognize my previous experiences. Thus, the appeal to memory presupposes what it is meant to explain, namely, the articulation of the givens, the imposing of a sense onto the sensible chaos. The evocation of memory becomes superfluous the moment that it is made possible, since the work that we expect from it has thus already been accomplished.

The same could be said about “memory-color” (*Gedächtnisfarbe*), which according to other psychologists ends up being substituted for the present color of the objects, such that we see present colors “through the spectacles” of memory.¹² The question is: what at present awakens the “memory-color”? Hering claims that it is evoked each time we see again, “or believe we see again,” an object that we already know. But on what grounds do we believe this? What in the current perception teaches us that it has to do with an object we already know, given that its properties are, *ex hypothesi*, modified. If we want to hold that the recognition of the form or of the size brings with it that of the color, then we are in a circle, since the apparent size and form are themselves modified and since the recognition here again cannot result from the evocation of memories, but must in fact precede it. Nowhere, then, does it go from the past to the present, and the “projection of memories” is but an unfortunate metaphor that covers over a deeper and already accomplished recognition.

Finally, the same holds for the proofreader’s illusion, which cannot be understood as the fusion of some actually read elements with memories that come to mingle with them to the point of being indistinguishable. How could the evocation of memories be accomplished if it were not guided by the appearance of the actually sensible givens; and if it is so directed, what use is it, since then the word already has its structure or its physiognomy before drawing anything out of the treasure-trove of memory? Clearly it is the analysis of illusions that has lent credence to the “projection of memories,” following a cursory reasoning that is more or less the following: illusory perception cannot be based upon the “present givens,” since I read “deduction” where the paper bears the word “destruction.” The letter *d*, which is substituted in for the group *str*, not being provided by vision, must then come from elsewhere; thus, it comes from memory. Some shadows and lights in a flat painting are thus sufficient to give it relief, some tree branches in a visual puzzle suggest a cat, and some faint lines in the clouds suggest a horse. But past experience can only appear as the cause of the illusion *après coup*; it was necessary that the present experience first took on a form and a sense in order to recall precisely this memory and not others. The horse, the cat, the substituted word, and the relief are thus all born under my present gaze. The painting’s shadows and lights give relief by mimicking “the original phenomenon of relief,”¹³ where they were invested with an autochthonous

spatial signification. In order that I find a cat in the puzzle, the “unity of the meaning ‘cat’ must in some way already prescribe which elements of the given the synthesizing activity should take and which it should leave alone.”¹⁴

The illusion tricks us precisely by passing itself off as an authentic perception in which signification is born in the sensible and does not come from elsewhere. The illusion imitates this privileged experience in which the sense fits over the sensible perfectly, is visibly articulated or enunciated in it. The illusion presupposes this perceptual norm; it thus cannot be born of an encounter between memories and the sensible, and this is even more the case for perception. The “projection of memories” renders both illusions and perceptions incomprehensible. Because a perceived thing, if it were composed of sensations and memories, could only be determined through the contribution of memories, it would thus have nothing in itself that could limit the invasion of memories; it would not merely have what we have called that halo of “indeterminacy” [*bougé*] that it always has, but rather, it would be ungraspable, fleeting, and always bordering on illusion. The illusion
45 could never offer, *a fortiori*, the firm and definitive appearance that the thing, in the end, assumes, since this appearance would be missing in the perception itself; the illusion would thus never trick us. Finally, if it is admitted that memories do not project themselves over the sensations, but rather that consciousness compares them with the present given in order to retain only those that fit with it, then an original text is acknowledged that in itself bears its own sense and contrasts it with the sense of the memories: this text is perception itself. In short, believing that the “projection of memories” introduces a mental activity into perception and that empiricism is thereby reversed is a mistake. The theory is but a consequence, a recent and futile correction of empiricism. It accepts its premises, it shares its difficulties, and like empiricism it conceals phenomena rather than clarifying them.

The premise, as always, involves *deducing* the given from what can be provided by the sense organs. In the proofreader’s illusion, for example, the elements actually seen are reconstituted according to eye movements, the reading speed, and the time necessary for the retinal impression. Then, the “evoked elements” are obtained by subtracting those theoretically determined givens from the total perception, and the “evoked elements” are in turn treated as mental things. Perception is thereby

constructed with states of consciousness as a house is built with stones, and a mental chemistry is imagined that could fuse these materials into a compact whole. Just like every empiricist theory, this one describes nothing but blind processes that can never be equal to knowledge, because there is *no one who sees* at the center of this mass of sensations and memories, no one who could experience the harmony between the given and the evoked – and, correlatively, no solid object protected by a sense against the swarm of memories. The premise that obscures everything must thus be rejected. The division between the given and the evoked according to objective causes is arbitrary. By returning to phenomena, we find, as a fundamental layer, a whole already pregnant with an irreducible sense. This is not a series of incomplete sensations between which memories would have to be embedded, but rather the physiognomy – the structure of the landscape or of the word – spontaneously in accordance with our present intentions and with our previous experience. Here the true problem of memory’s role in perception appears, and it is tied to the general problem of perceptual consciousness. It is a question of understanding how consciousness – by its own energy [*vie*] and without bringing along any additional materials in a mythical unconsciousness – can, with time, alter the structure of its landscapes; how, at each instant, its previous experience is present to it in the form of an horizon that it can reopen, if it takes that horizon as a theme for knowledge in an act of remembering, but that it can also leave “on the margins” and that thus immediately provides the perceived with a present atmosphere and signification. A field always available to consciousness that, for this very reason, surrounds and envelops all of its perceptions; it is an atmosphere, an horizon, or even the “settings” that assign consciousness a temporal situation – such is the presence of the past that makes distinct acts of perception and remembering possible. To perceive is not to experience a multitude of impressions that bring along with them some memories capable of completing them, it is to see an immanent sense bursting forth from a constellation of givens without which no call to memory is possible. To remember is not to bring back before the gaze of consciousness a self-subsistent picture of the past, it is to plunge into the horizon of the past and gradually to unfold tightly packed perspectives until the experiences that it summarizes are as if lived anew in their own temporal place. To perceive is not to remember.

[e. Empiricism and reflection.]

The relations “figure” and “background,” “thing” and “non-thing,” and the horizon of the past would thus be structures of consciousness irreducible to the qualities that appear in consciousness. Empiricism will forever hold onto the possibility of treating this *a priori* as the result of some mental chemistry. It will concede that every thing is presented against a background that is not itself a thing, or that the present is between two horizons of absence, the past and the future. It will go on, however, to claim that these significations are derived. The words “figure” and “background,” “thing” and its “surroundings,” and “present” and “past,” summarize the experience of a spatial and temporal perspective, which in the end amounts to the effacement of either memory or marginal impressions. Even if these structures, once formed in actual perception, have more sense than could be offered by a quality, I must not limit myself to this evidence from consciousness, and I must rather reconstruct them theoretically with the aid of the impressions whose actual relations they express. On this level, empiricism is irrefutable. Since it refuses the evidence of reflection and since it engenders, by bringing together external impressions, the structures that we are aware of understanding by going from the whole to the parts, there is no phenomenon that could be held up as a definitive proof against empiricism. In general, a manner of thinking that is unaware of itself and that is at home in the things cannot be refuted by describing phenomena. The physicist’s atoms will always seem more real than the historical and qualitative picture of this world; the physico-chemical processes more real than organic forms; empiricism’s psychic atoms more real than perceived phenomena; and the intellectual atoms (namely, the Vienna Circle’s “significations”) more real than consciousness, so long as one seeks to construct the picture of this world, life, perception, or mind, rather than recognizing the experience we have of them as the immediate source and as the final authority of our knowledge. This conversion of the gaze, which inverts the relations between the clear and the obscure, must be accomplished by each person, and it is only later that it is justified by the abundance of phenomena that it renders understandable. But prior to the conversion, these phenomena were inaccessible, and empiricism can always respond that it does not *understand* the descriptions given of them. Reflection, in this sense, is just as closed a system of thought as madness, with the differ-

ence that it understands itself and the madman, whereas the madman does not understand it. But if the phenomenal field really is a new world, then it is never absolutely unknown to natural thought; it is present to it as an horizon, and the empiricist doctrine is itself clearly an attempt at analyzing consciousness.

In the name of “*paramythia*” [exhortation], it is useful to indicate all that the empiricist constructions render incomprehensible and all of the originary phenomena that they mask. First, they conceal from us the “cultural world” or the “human world” in which almost our entire life nonetheless happens. For the majority of us, nature is but a vague and far-off being, driven back by the towns, roads, houses, and above all by the presence of other men. But for empiricism, “cultural” objects and faces owe their physiognomy, their magical power, to the transfers and the projections of memories; the human world only has sense accidentally. There is nothing in the sensible appearance of a landscape, an object, or a body that predestines it to have the air of being “gay” or “sad,” “lively” or “gloomy,” “elegant” or “crude.” Empiricism, by once again defining what we perceive through the physical and chemical properties of the stimuli able to act upon our sense organs, excludes from perception the anger or the sadness that I nevertheless read on someone’s face, the religion whose essence I nevertheless grasp in a hesitation or a reticence, the city whose structure I nevertheless know in the attitude of an officer or in the style of a monument. [For empiricism,] there can no longer be an *objective spirit*: mental life withdraws into consciousnesses that are isolated and given over solely to introspection, rather than taking place, as appears to be the case, in the human space made up of those with whom I discuss or of those with whom I live, the place where I work or the place of my happiness. Joy and sadness, liveliness and stupor are the givens of introspection, and if we adorn the landscape or other humans with them, this would only be because we have observed in ourselves the coincidence of these interior perceptions with the exterior signs that are associated with them through the accidents of our own organization. Perception, impoverished in this way, becomes a pure knowledge operation, a progressive recording of qualities and of their most customary development, and the perceiving subject stands before the world in the same way the scientist stands before his experiments. If, however, we admit that all of these “projections,” all of these “associations,” all of these “transfers,” are based upon some intrinsic characteristic of the object, then the “human

world” ceases to be a metaphor in order to become again what it in fact is, the milieu and, as it were, the *homeland* of our thoughts. The perceiving subject ceases being an “acosmic” thinking subject, and action, feeling, and desire remain to be explored as original ways of intending [poser]¹⁵ an object, since “an object appears to be attractive or repulsive before it appears to be black or blue, circular or square.”¹⁶

But empiricism does not merely deform experience by turning the cultural world, which in fact nourishes our existence, into an illusion. The natural world in turn is also distorted, and for the same reasons. We do not reproach empiricism for having taken the natural world as the primary theme of analysis. Every cultural object certainly refers back to a natural background against which it appears and that can, for that matter, be confused and distant. Our perception senses the near presence of the canvas beneath the painting, the crumbling cement beneath the monument, or the tiring actor beneath the character. But the nature that empiricism speaks of is a sum of stimuli and qualities. It is absurd to claim that this nature is the primary object of our perception, even if only intentionally: such a nature is clearly posterior to the experience of cultural objects, or rather, it itself is a cultural object. We will thus also have to rediscover the natural world and its mode of existence, which does not merge with the mode of existence of the scientific object. The background continues beneath the figure, is *seen* beneath the figure even though it is covered over by it. This phenomenon (which encompasses the entire problem of the *presence* of the object) is itself also concealed by empiricist philosophy, which treats this part of the background as invisible in accordance with a physiological definition of vision and reduces it to the status of a simple sensible quality by supposing that it is presented through an image, that is, through a weakened sensation. More generally, real objects that do not make up part of our visual field can only be present to us through images, and this is why objects are nothing but the “permanent possibilities of sensations.” If we abandon the empiricist premise that prioritizes the content of perception, we are free to acknowledge the strange mode of existence of the object behind us. The hysterical child who turns around “to see if the world is still there behind him”¹⁷ is not missing images; rather, the perceived world has lost for him the original structure that, for the normal subject, makes the hidden aspects of the world just as certain as the visible ones. Once again, the empiricist can always construct some approximate equivalencies to

all of these structures by assembling psychic atoms. But the inventory of the perceived world in the upcoming chapters will make empiricism more and more appear as a sort of mental blindness and as the system the least capable of giving an exhaustive account of revealed experience, whereas reflection includes empiricism's subordinate truth by putting it in its proper place.



“ATTENTION” AND “JUDGMENT”

50 The discussion of classical prejudices has thus far been carried out against empiricism. In fact, empiricism has not been our sole target. It must now be shown that intellectualism, its antithesis, stands on the same ground. Both take the objective world as their object for analysis, which comes first neither in time nor according to its sense; both are incapable of expressing the particular manner in which perceptual consciousness constitutes its object. When it comes to perception, rather than sticking closely to it, they both keep their distance.

[a. *Attention and the unquestioned belief in the world in itself.*]

A study of the history of the concept of attention can reveal this shared ground. As we have shown, empiricism deduces the concept of attention from the “constancy hypothesis,” that is, from the priority of the objective world. Even if what we perceive does not correspond to the objective properties of the stimulus, the constancy hypothesis requires the assumption that the “normal sensations” are already there. They must, then, go by unnoticed, and “attention” will be the function that reveals them, like a spotlight illuminating preexisting objects hidden in the shadows. Thus,

the act of attention creates nothing, and nothing less than a natural miracle (as Malebranche more or less said)¹ can make spring forth precisely these perceptions or these ideas that are capable of responding to the questions I ask myself. Since the act of “Bemerken,” or of “taking notice,”² is not the efficient cause of the ideas to which it gives rise, it is the same throughout all acts of attention, just as the searchlight’s beam is the same regardless of what landscape it illuminates. Attention, then, is a general and unconditioned power in the sense that it can at any moment indifferently cast its light upon any of the contents of consciousness. Everywhere barren, nowhere can attention be interested.³ In order to relate attention to the life of consciousness, it would be necessary to show how a perception awakens attention, and then how attention develops and enriches this perception. An internal connection would need to be described, but empiricism has only external connections at its disposal, it can merely juxtapose states of consciousness. From the moment empiricism grants its subject some initiative – and this is the *raison d’être* of a theory of attention – this subject can receive nothing less than an absolute freedom.

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Intellectualism, on the other hand, begins from the fecundity of attention. Since I am conscious of obtaining the truth of the object through it, attention must not haphazardly make one scene follow another. The new appearance of the object subordinates the previous one and expresses everything that the previous one meant. The wax is, from the beginning, a pliable and mutable fragment of extension; but I know this either clearly or confusedly, “depending on how closely I pay attention to the things in which the wax consists.”⁴ Since I experience a clarification of the object through attention, the perceived object must already contain the intelligible structure that attention draws out. If consciousness finds the geometrical circle in the circular physiognomy of a plate, this is because consciousness already put it there. In order to take possession of attentive knowledge, consciousness need only return to itself, in the sense intended when we say that a man who has fainted “comes to.” Reciprocally, inattentive or delirious perception is perception that is half-asleep. It can only be described through negations; its object has no consistency; the only objects that we can speak of are those of waking or alert consciousness. Of course, we have with us a constant source of distraction and vertigo, namely, our body. But our body does not have the power to make us see something that does not exist; it can only make us believe that we see it. The moon on the horizon is neither actually

larger, nor seen as larger than at its zenith: if we gaze attentively, such as through a cardboard tube or a telescope, we will see that its apparent diameter remains constant.⁵ Inattentive perception contains nothing more and indeed nothing other than attentive perception. So philosophy must not get caught up accounting for the illusions of appearances. Pure consciousness, freed of the obstacles that it had consented to create, and the real world without any reveries mixed in, are available to everyone. We must not analyze the act of attention as the passage from confusion to clarity, for confusion is nothing. Consciousness only begins to exist by
 52 determining an object, and the phantoms of an “internal experience” are only themselves possible by borrowing from external experience. Thus, consciousness has no private life and its only obstacle is chaos, which is nothing. But attention – from within a consciousness that constitutes everything, or rather, that eternally possesses the intelligible structure of all of its objects, just as in the empiricist understanding of a consciousness that constitutes nothing – remains an abstract and ineffective power, for here again it has no role to play. Consciousness is no less intimately connected to the objects with which it distracts itself than it is to the ones in which it takes an interest, and the surplus of clarity in the act of attention inaugurates no new relationship. Attention again becomes a light that does not itself change with the objects illuminated, and once again “the specific modes and directions of intention” are replaced by empty acts of attention.⁶

In short, the act of attention is unconditioned because all objects are equally available to it, just as the empiricist’s act of *Bemerken* was unconditioned because all objects transcended it. How could one real object among all objects be able to arouse an act of attention, given that consciousness already possesses them all? What was lacking for empiricism was an internal connection between the object and the act it triggers. What intellectualism lacks is the contingency of the opportunities for thought. Consciousness is too poor in the first case and too rich in the second for any phenomenon to be able to solicit it. Empiricism does not see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not go looking for it; intellectualism does not see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for, or again we would not go looking for it. They are in accord in that neither grasps consciousness in the act of learning, neither accounts for this “circumscribed ignorance,” for this still “empty” though already determinate intention that is attention itself.

Whether attention obtains what it seeks through an ever-renewed miracle or whether it possesses it in advance, in either case the constitution of the object is passed over in silence. Whether the object is a sum of qualities or a system of relations, from the moment it exists it must be pure, transparent, impersonal, and not imperfect; it must be the truth for a moment of my life and of my knowledge, such as it emerges in consciousness. Perceptual consciousness is mistakenly identified with the precise forms of scientific consciousness, and the indeterminate is not allowed into the definition of the mind. Despite intellectualism’s intentions, the two doctrines thus share the idea that attention creates nothing, since either a world of impressions in itself or a universe of determinate thought is equally shielded from the action of the mind.⁷

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Against this conception of an idle subject, the psychologists’ analysis of attention acquires the value of a moment of realization, and the critique of the “constancy hypothesis” will deepen into a critique of the dogmatic belief in the “world” taken as a reality in itself in empiricism and as the immanent term of knowledge in intellectualism. Attention first presupposes a transformation of the mental field, a new way for consciousness to be present toward its objects. Consider the act of attention by which I determine the location of a point on my body that is being touched. The analysis of certain centrally originating disorders, which render such a localization impossible, reveals the deep operation of consciousness. Head spoke summarily of a “local weakening of attention.”⁸ In fact, it was neither a question of the destruction of one or many “local signs,” nor the breakdown of a secondary power of apprehension. The primary condition of the disorder is a disintegration of the sensorial field which no longer remains fixed when the subject perceives, shifts in response to his exploratory movements, and contracts when it is interrogated.⁹ The contradictory phenomenon of a *vague location* reveals a pre-objective space where there is surely extension – since the subject does not confuse several points of the body touched at the same time – but where nevertheless there is still no univocal position, because no fixed spatial frame persists from one perception to the next. The primary operation of attention, then, is to create for itself a perceptual or a mental field that can be “surveyed” or “dominated” (*Überschauen*),¹⁰ in which the movements of the exploratory organ and in which the evolutions of thought are possible without consciousness proportionally losing its acquisitions, and without losing itself in the transformations that it itself

provokes. The precise position of the touched point will be the invariant of the diverse feelings that I have of it according to the orientation of my limbs and of my body; the act of attention can fix and objectify this invariant because it has taken a step back with regard to changes in the appearance. Attention, then, does not exist as a general and formal activity.¹¹ There is in each case a particular freedom to gain and a particular
54 mental space to keep in order.

The object of attention itself must still be brought to light. Here it is literally a question of a creation. For example, it has long been known that children, during the first nine months of life, only distinguish globally between the colored and the achromatic; subsequently, colored areas become articulated into “warm” and “cool” shades, and eventually detailed colors are obtained. But psychologists¹² assumed that what prevents the child from distinguishing colors is merely an ignorance of or a confusion over color names. Where *there is green*, the child must surely have seen green; he just failed to pay attention to it and to apprehend his own phenomena. On the contrary, psychologists themselves were simply not yet able to imagine a world in which colors are indeterminate, or a color that is not a precise quality. The critique of these prejudices, however, allows us to perceive the world of colors as a second-order formation, established upon a series of “physiognomic” distinctions, such as between “warm” shades and “cool” shades, or between the “colored” and the “non-colored.” We cannot compare these phenomena occupying the place of color for the child to any determinate quality, and likewise the patient’s “strange” colors cannot be identified with any colors of the spectrum.¹³ The first perception of colors, properly so called, is thus a change in the structure of consciousness,¹⁴ the institution of a new dimension of experience, and the deployment of an *a priori*. Attention, then, must be conceived on the model of these originary acts, since a second-order attention that limited itself to recalling an already acquired knowledge would refer us back to the acquisition itself. To pay attention is not merely to further clarify some preexisting givens; rather, it is to realize in them a new articulation by taking them as *figures*.¹⁵ They are only pre-formed as *horizons*, they truly constitute new regions in the total world. The original structure that they introduce is precisely what makes the identity of the object before and after the act of attention appear. Once the quality “color” is acquired, and only thanks to it, the previous givens appear as preparations for this quality. Once the idea of

an equation is acquired, arithmetical identities appear as varieties of the same equation. The act of attention is linked to previous acts precisely by overthrowing the givens, and the unity of consciousness is gradually constructed in this way through a “transition synthesis.”¹⁶ The miracle of consciousness is to make phenomena appear through attention that reestablish the object’s unity in a new dimension at the very moment they destroy that unity. Attention, then, is neither an association of ideas nor the return to itself of a thought that is already the master of its objects; rather, attention is the active constitution of a new object that develops and thematizes what was until then only offered as an indeterminate horizon. At the same time that it sets attention to work, the object is continuously recaptured by attention, and reestablished as subordinate to it. The object only gives rise to the “knowing event” that will transform it through the still ambiguous sense that it offers to attention as needing-to-be-determined, such that the object is the “motive” [motif]¹⁷ of and not the cause of this event.

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The act of attention is, however, at least rooted in the life of consciousness, and we can finally understand that it emerges from its indifferent freedom to give itself a present object. This passage from the indeterminate to the determinate, this continuous taking up again of its own history in the unity of a new sense, is thought itself. “The work of the mind exists only in act.”¹⁸ The result of the act of attention does not exist in its beginnings. If the moon viewed through a telescope or a cardboard tube appears no larger at the horizon than at its zenith, it cannot be concluded from this¹⁹ that the appearance is also invariable in free vision. Empiricism believes this because it does not concern itself with what is seen, but rather with what ought to be seen according to the retinal image. Intellectualism believes it because it describes actual perception according to the givens of “analytic” and attentive perception in which the moon in fact regains its true apparent diameter. The precise and completely determinate world is again first presupposed, certainly no longer as the cause of our perceptions, but rather as their immanent end. If the world is to be possible, it must be implied in the first outline made by consciousness, as the “Transcendental Deduction” argues so convincingly.²⁰ And this is why the moon at the horizon must never appear larger than it is. Psychological reflection, however, obliges us to place the precise world back into its cradle of consciousness, to ask ourselves how the very idea of the precise world or of precise truth is possible, and to seek out its

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first springing forth into consciousness. When I look about freely, in the natural attitude, the parts of the field act upon each other and motivate this enormous moon on the horizon, this measureless size that is nevertheless a size. Consciousness must be brought face to face with its unreflective life in things and must awaken to its own, forgotten, history – this is the true role of philosophical reflection and this is how a true theory of attention is established.

[b. *Judgment and reflective analysis.*]

Intellectualism certainly set out to discover the structure of perception through reflection, rather than explaining it through the combined play of associative forces and attention, but its access to perception remains indirect. This will be seen more clearly by examining the role that the notion of judgment plays in its analysis. Judgment is often introduced as *what sensation is missing in order to make a perception possible*. Sensation is no longer presupposed as a real element of consciousness. But when they want to sketch out the structure of perception, they go back to the individual points of sensation. The analysis is dominated by this empiricist notion, even though it is only accepted as the limit of consciousness and only serves to manifest a power for connecting that is the opposite of sensation. Intellectualism lives on the refutation of empiricism, and in this refutation it is judgment that serves the function of overcoming the possible scattering of sensations.²¹ Reflective analysis establishes itself by pushing the realist and empiricist theses to their logical consequences and by demonstrating their antithesis through their absurdity. But nothing in this *reductio ad absurdum* guarantees that contact with the actual operations of consciousness is made. It remains possible that the theory of perception, if it begins ideally from a blind intuition, would compensate for this by leading to an empty concept, and that judgment, the counterpart of pure sensation, would fall back into a general function of connecting that is indifferent to its objects, or even once more become a psychic force detectable by its effects. The famous analysis of the piece of wax jumps from qualities, such as odor, color, and taste, to the potential for an infinity of forms and positions, a potential that is beyond the perceived object and defines only the physicist's wax. For perception, when all of the sensible properties have disappeared, there is no longer any wax, but science here assumes some matter that is conserved. The "perceived"

wax itself, with its original manner of existing, its permanence (which is not yet science’s notion of precise identity), its “interior horizon”²² of possible variation according to form or size, its matte color that suggests softness, and its softness that in turn suggests that I will hear a muffled sound when I strike it – in short, the perceptual structure of the object – all of this slips out of sight, because in order to link objective and self-enclosed qualities completely, determinations of the predicative order are required. The men that I see through a window are hidden by their hats and coats, their image cannot be imprinted upon my retina. Thus, I do not see them, I judge that they are there.²³ Once vision has been defined in the empiricist manner as the possession of a quality inscribed upon the body by the stimulus,²⁴ the slightest illusion, since it invests the object with properties it does not have on my retina, suffices to establish that perception is a judgment.²⁵ Since I have two eyes, I should see the object in double, and if I only perceive one object, this is because I construct the idea of a single object at a distance with the help of the two images.²⁶ Perception becomes an “interpretation” of the signs that sensibility provides in accordance with bodily stimuli;²⁷ it becomes an “hypothesis” made by the mind in order to “explain to itself its own impressions.”²⁸ And yet, rather than being the act of perceiving itself grasped from the inside by an authentic reflection, judgment – which was introduced in order to explain the excess of perception over the retinal impressions – itself becomes a mere “factor” of perception charged with the task of providing what is not provided by the body; rather than being a transcendental activity, it becomes a mere logical activity of reaching a conclusion.²⁹

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We are thus drawn outside of reflection, and we construct perception rather than revealing its proper functioning; we once again miss the primordial operation that impregnates the sensible with a sense and that is presupposed by every logical mediation and every psychological causality. As a result, intellectualist analysis ends up making incomprehensible the very perceptual phenomena it was designed to clarify. While judgment loses its constituting function and becomes an explanatory principle, the words “seeing,” “hearing,” and “sensing” lose all signification, since the slightest glance goes beyond the pure impression and thereby falls under the general rubric of “judgment.” Between sensing and judging, ordinary experience draws a very clear distinction. It understands judgment to be a position-taking; judgment aims at knowing something valid for me across all the moments of my life and valid for other existing

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or possible minds. It takes sensing, on the contrary, to be the giving of oneself over to the appearance without seeking to possess it or to know its truth. This distinction disappears in intellectualism because judgment is everywhere that pure sensation is not, which is to say that judgment is everywhere. The evidence of phenomena will thus be everywhere denied. A large cardboard box appears heavier to me than a small box made of the same cardboard and, limiting myself to phenomena, I would say that in advance I *sense* it as heavier in my hand. But intellectualism defines sensing as the action of a real stimulus upon my body. Since there is no real stimulus here, it will thus be necessary to say that the box is not sensed, but judged to be heavier, and this example that appeared ready-made for showing the sensible appearance of the illusion serves, on the contrary, to show that there is no sensible knowledge and that one senses insofar as one judges.³⁰ A cube drawn on a piece of paper changes its appearance accordingly as it is seen from one side and from above or from the other side and from below. Even if I know that it can be seen in two ways, the figure sometimes refuses to change structure, and my knowledge must wait for its intuitive realization. Here again it must be concluded that judging is not perceiving. But the alternative between sensation and judgment forces the conclusion that the change in the figure – since it does not depend upon the “sensible elements” that remain constant in accordance with the stimuli – can only depend upon a change in the interpretation, and that in the end “the mind’s conception modifies the perception itself”³¹ and “the appearance takes on form and sense upon command.”³²

But if we see what we judge, how can we distinguish true perception from false perception? And after such a conclusion, how will we continue to say that the person suffering from hallucinations or the madman “believes they see what they do not see”?³³ Where will the difference be between “seeing” and “believing that one sees”? If one answers that the sane man only judges according to sufficient signs and upon a total subject, this must be because there is a difference between the motivated judgment of true perception and the empty judgment of false perception.

60 And since the difference is not in the form of the judgment, but rather in the sensible text that it articulates, to perceive in the full sense of the word (as the antithesis of imagining) is not to judge, but rather to grasp, prior to all judgment, a sense immanent in the sensible. The phenomenon of true perception thus offers a signification that is inherent in the

signs and of which the judgment is but the optional expression. Intellectualism can explain neither this phenomenon nor, for that matter, the imitation of it given by illusion. More generally, it is blind to the mode of existence and of coexistence of perceived objects and blind to the life that flashes across the visual field and secretly ties its parts together. In Zöllner’s illusion, I “see” the principal lines converging. Intellectualism reduces this phenomenon to a simple error: it all comes from my including the auxiliary lines and their relation to the principal lines, rather than comparing the principal lines themselves. Basically, I commit an error in following the instructions and I compare the two wholes rather than comparing their principal elements.³⁴ The question might still be asked as to why I commit an error in following the instructions?

The question should arise: How does it happen that it is so difficult in Zöllner’s illusion to compare in isolation the very same straight lines that must be compared according to the given instructions? What is the origin of their refusal to allow themselves to be thus separated from the auxiliary lines?³⁵

We must recognize that in taking on the auxiliary lines, the principal lines have ceased to be parallel, that they have lost this sense in order to acquire another, and that the auxiliary lines import into the figure a new signification that henceforth clings to it and that can no longer be detached from it.³⁶ This signification adhering to the figure, this transformation of the phenomenon motivates and is, so to speak, *behind* the false judgment. This signification at once gives a sense to the word “seeing” that is prior to judgment but also beyond the quality or the impression, and again brings to light the problem of perception.

If we agree to call any perception of a relation a “judgment,” and to reserve the name “vision” for the punctual impression, then clearly illusion is a judgment. But this analysis, at least ideally, presupposes a layer of impressions where the principal lines would be parallel just as they are in the world – that is, in the environment that we constitute through measurements – and a second-order operation that modifies the impressions by bringing the auxiliary lines to bear and thereby falsifying the relation between the principal lines. Now, the first phase of the analysis is purely conjectural, and with it so too is the judgment that gives the second phase. The illusion is constructed, not understood. Judgment, in this very

general and wholly formal sense, only explains true or false perception if it follows the spontaneous organization and the particular configuration of the phenomena. The illusion surely consists in inserting the figure's principal elements among auxiliary relations that break up the parallelism. But why do the auxiliary relations break up the parallelism? Why do two straight lines, until then parallel, cease to be a pair, and why are they dragged into an oblique position by the immediate surroundings they are given? Everything happens as if they were no longer part of the same world. Two truly oblique lines are situated in the same space, namely, objective space. But these lines do not actually converge, it is impossible to *see* them as oblique if we focus on them. It is when we glance away that they silently tend toward this new relation. Here there is, prior to objective relations, a perceptual syntax that is articulated according to its own rules: the breaking up of previous relations and the establishing of new ones – judgment – only express the outcome of this deep operation and are its final report.

Whether we consider true or false perception, it must first be constituted in this way in order for predication to be possible. It is true, of course, that our distance from an object or its depth are not properties of the object like its color or its weight. It is also true that they are relations inserted into a configuration of the whole that includes, for that matter, weight and color themselves. But it is not true that this configuration is constructed through a “mental inspection.” That would be to say that the mind glances over the isolated impressions and gradually discovers the sense of the whole, like the scientist who determines the unknowns according to the givens of the problem. But here the givens of the problem do not exist prior to its solution, and perception is precisely this act that creates, all at once, out of the constellation of givens, the sense that ties them together. Perception does not merely discover the sense *they have*, but rather, sees to it *that they have a sense*.

[*c. Reflective analysis and phenomenological reflection.*]

- 62 These criticisms are only valid against the first stages of reflective analysis, and intellectualism could respond that one must surely begin by speaking the language of common sense. The conception of judgment as a psychological force or as a logical mediation, and the theory of perception as “interpretation” – that is, the intellectualism of the psychologists

– is in fact but a compensation for empiricism, but it does clear the way for a true moment of insight. We must begin in the natural attitude, along with its assumptions, until their own internal dialectic destroys them. Once perception is understood as interpretation, sensation, which served as the point of departure, is definitively left behind – every perceptual consciousness being already beyond sensation. Sensation is not sensed³⁷ and consciousness is always consciousness of an object. We hit upon sensation when, while reflecting upon our perceptions, we want to express that they are not absolutely our doing. Pure sensation, defined as the action of stimuli upon our body, is the “most recent product” of knowledge, and particularly of scientific knowledge, and through an illusion, albeit a natural one, we place pure sensation at the beginning and believe it to be anterior to knowledge. It is the necessary, and necessarily erroneous way that a mind must imagine its own history.³⁸ Pure sensation belongs to the domain of the constituted, and not to the constituting mind. According to the world or to opinion, perception may seem like an interpretation. But for consciousness itself, how could perception be a process of reasoning when there are no sensations that could serve as premises; how could it be an interpretation when there is nothing prior to it to be interpreted?

At the moment we thus discard both the idea of sensation and the notion of a merely logical activity, the above objections seem to disappear. We asked what seeing and sensing are, and what distinguishes this knowledge – still absorbed in its object and still inherent to a point of time and space – from the concept. But reflection shows that there is nothing here to understand. At first, I believe I am surrounded by my body, caught up in the world, and situated here and now. But when I reflect upon this situation, each of these words is stripped of its sense and thus poses no problem: could I perceive myself as “surrounded by my body” if I were not in my body as much as I am in myself, if I did not myself conceive of this spatial relation and did not thereby escape from inherence at the very moment that I represent it to myself? Could I know that I am caught up in the world and situated there if I were truly caught up and situated? I would, then, restrict myself to *being* where I am as a thing, and since I know where I am and see myself in the midst of things, this must be because I am a consciousness, a singular being who resides nowhere and can make itself present everywhere through intention. Everything that exists, exists as either thing or as

consciousness, and there is no in between. The thing is in a place, but perception is nowhere, for if it were situated it could not make other things exist for itself, since it would remain in itself in the manner of things. Perception, then, is the thought that one is perceiving [*la pensée de percevoir*]. The embodiment of perception offers no positive characteristic that would need to be accounted for and its *haecceity* is simply its own ignorance of itself.

Reflective analysis thus becomes a purely regressive doctrine according to which every perception is a confused intellection and every determination a negation. It suppresses in this way all problems except for one: the problem of its own beginning. The finitude of a perception that gives me, as Spinoza said, “conclusions without premises,”³⁹ and the inherence of consciousness in a point of view comes down to my ignorance of myself, to my entirely negative power of not reflecting. But how, in turn, is this ignorance possible? To respond that it never is would be to eliminate myself as an inquiring philosopher. No philosophy can be ignorant of the problem of finitude without thereby being ignorant of itself as a philosophy; no analysis of perception can be ignorant of perception as an original phenomenon without thereby being ignorant of itself as analysis; and the infinite thought that one would discover immanent to perception would not be the highest level of consciousness, but rather a form of unconsciousness. The act of reflection would overshoot the goal: it would transport us from a fixed and determined world to a seamless consciousness, while in fact the perceived object is animated by a secret life and perception as a whole disintegrates and is rebuilt endlessly. We will have but an abstract essence of consciousness so long as we have not followed the actual movement by which consciousness continuously recovers possession of its own operations, condenses and focuses them in an identifiable object, gradually shifts from “seeing” to “knowing,” and obtains the unity of its own life. We will not have reached this constitutive dimension if we replace the full unity of consciousness with an absolutely transparent subject, and the “hidden art” that causes a sense to spring up from the “depths of nature” with an eternal thought.⁴⁰

The intellectualist insight does not reach this living cluster of perception because rather than unveiling the operation that makes it actual or by which it is constituted, it seeks the conditions that make it possible or without which it would not exist. In actual perception, taken in its nascent state and prior to all speech, the sensible sign and its signification

are not even ideally separable. An object is an organism of colors, odors, sounds, and tactile appearances that symbolize and modify each other, and that harmonize with each other according to a real logic – science’s function is to make this logic explicit and it is far from having completed the analysis. Intellectualism falls short when it comes to this perceptual life, either by lack or by excess: it evokes, as a limit, the multiple qualities that are but the envelope of the object, and from there it passes to a consciousness of the object that would possess its law or its secret, and that as a result strips the development of experience of its contingency and the object of its perceptual style. This passage from thesis to antithesis, the reversal of the arguments for and against, which is the constant procedure of intellectualism, leaves the point of departure of the analysis unchanged. We began from a world in itself that acted upon our eyes in order to make itself seen by us; we have arrived now at a consciousness or a thought about the world, but the very nature of this world is unchanged. It is still defined by the absolute exteriority of its parts and is merely doubled across its extension by a thought that sustains it. We pass from an absolute objectivity to an absolute subjectivity, but this second idea is worth only as much as the first, and only finds support in contrast to the first, which is to say, through it. The kinship of intellectualism and empiricism is in this way much less visible and much more profound than is believed. It does not merely stem from their common use of the anthropological definition of sensation, but rather from the fact that both maintain the natural or dogmatic attitude, and the survival of the notion of sensation in intellectualism is but a sign of this dogmatism. Intellectualism accepts, as absolutely established, the idea of truth and the idea of being in which the constitutive work of consciousness culminates and is summed up, and its so-called reflection consists in positing, as powers of the subject, everything that is necessary in order to reach these ideas. By throwing me toward the world of things, the natural attitude assures me of grasping a “real” beyond appearances and the “true” beyond illusions. Intellectualism does not question the value of these notions: it merely confers upon a universal creativity [*naturant universel*] the power of recognizing the very same absolute truth that realism naïvely locates in a given nature [*nature donnée*].

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Of course, intellectualism is commonly presented as a doctrine of science, not a doctrine of perception, it believes it establishes its analysis upon the proof of mathematical truth and not upon the naïve evidentness

of the world: *habemus ideam veram*.⁴¹ But in reality, I would not know that I possess a true idea were I unable to link the present evidentness to the evidentness of the previous moment through memory, or were I unable to link what is evident for me to what is evident for others through the linguistic encounter – such that Spinozist self-evidence presupposes the evidentness of memory and of perception. If, on the other hand, we want to base the constitution of the past and of others on my power of recognizing the intrinsic truth of the idea, this would certainly suppress the problem of others and of the world, but only because we remain in the natural attitude that takes them as given and because we make use of the forces of naïve certainty. For as Descartes and Pascal saw, I can never completely coincide with the pure thought that constitutes even a simple idea; my clear and distinct thought always makes use of thoughts previously formed by myself or by others, and relies upon my memory, that is, upon the nature of my mind, or upon the memory of the community of thinkers, that is, upon objective spirit. To take for granted that we have a true idea is to believe in perception uncritically. Empiricism remained within the absolute belief in the world as the totality of spatio-temporal events, and treated consciousness as a region of that world. Reflective analysis certainly breaks with the world in itself, since it constitutes it through the operation of consciousness, but this constituting consciousness, rather than being grasped directly, is constructed in such a way as to make possible the idea of an absolutely determinate being. This constituting consciousness is the correlative of a universe, the subject who possesses, as fully realized, all of the knowledge of which our actual knowledge is merely the first approach. This follows because they assume that what exists for us only in intention is actually realized somewhere; namely, a system of absolutely true thoughts capable of coordinating all phenomena, a geometrical plan⁴² that makes sense of all perspectives, and a pure object onto which all subjectivities open. Nothing less than this absolute object and this divine subject could rule out the threat of the evil genius and assure us of the possession of the true idea.

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Yet there is indeed a human act that, in a single stroke, cuts through all possible doubt in order to install itself in the fullness of truth: this act is perception, in the broad sense of the knowledge of existences. When I begin to perceive this table, I resolutely contract the thickness of the duration gone by since I first saw it, I leave behind my individual life by grasping the object as an object for everyone, and I thus reunite, in a

single stroke, the corroborating though disjointed experiences that are distributed across several points of time and several temporalities. We do not criticize intellectualism for making use of this decisive act that fulfills, within time, the function of a Spinozist eternity, of this “originary doxa,”⁴³ we criticize it for making use of it tacitly. In the act of perception there is a *de facto* power, as Descartes said, an evidentness that is simply irresistible, that reunites the separate phenomena of my past and my present, or of my duration and that of others, beneath the invocation of an absolute truth, but this evidentness must not be cut off from its perceptual origins or detached from its “facticity.” Philosophy’s function is to put this power back into the private field of experience from which it surges forth and to clarify its birth. If, however, we exercise this power without thematizing it, we become incapable of seeing through the violent divisions between separate experiences to the phenomenon of perception and the world born therein, we dissolve the perceived world in a universe that is nothing but this world itself now cut off from its constitutive origins and become evident because these origins are forgotten.

Intellectualism thus leaves consciousness in a relation of familiarity with absolute being, and the very idea of a world in itself persists as an horizon or guiding thread of reflective analysis. “Doubt,” of course, put an end to intellectualism’s explicit affirmations touching upon the world, but this changes nothing of the world’s silent presence that is sublimated in the ideal of absolute truth. Reflection thus offers an essence of consciousness that is accepted dogmatically, without wondering what an essence is, nor whether the essence of thought exhausts the fact of thought. Reflection loses the character of a taking notice and henceforth it can no longer be a question of describing phenomena: the perceptual appearance of illusions is dismissed as the illusion of illusions, we can only see what exists, and vision itself and experience are no longer distinguished from conception. This results in a divided philosophy, which can be observed in every doctrine of the understanding: the leap is made from a naturalist point of view, which expresses our actual condition, to a transcendental dimension in which all constraints are in principle removed and one never has to wonder just how the same subject is both part of the world and the principle of the world, because the constituted only ever exists for the constituting. In fact, the image of a constituted world, where I would exist as merely one object among others, and the idea of an absolute constituting consciousness are only apparently

antithetical: they both express the unquestioned belief in a universe perfectly explicit in itself. Rather than making them alternate as both true, in the manner of the philosophy of the understanding, an authentic reflection rejects them as both false.

Perhaps we are distorting intellectualism a second time. When we say that reflective analysis makes all possible knowledge above and beyond our current knowledge actual through anticipation, encloses reflection within its own results, and cancels out the phenomenon of finitude, perhaps this is still nothing but a caricature of intellectualism, reflection according to popular opinion, and truth as seen by the prisoner in the cave who prefers the familiar shadows and does not understand that they derive from the light. Perhaps we have not yet understood the true function of judgment in perception. The analysis of the piece of wax does not mean that there is a reason hidden behind nature, but rather that reason is rooted in nature; the “inspection of the mind” would not be the concept descending into nature, but rather nature raising itself up to the concept. Perception is a judgment, but one that is unaware of its own reasons,⁴⁴ which comes down to saying that the perceived object gives itself as a whole and as a unity before we have grasped its intelligible law and that the wax is not originally a flexible and mutable piece of extension. By saying that natural judgment does not have “the leisure of conceiving and considering any reasons,”⁴⁵ Descartes makes it clear that by the name “judgment” he intends the constitution of a sense of the perceived that is not anterior to the perception itself and that seems to emerge from it.⁴⁶ It seems contradictory to guarantee this living knowledge or “natural inclination” that teaches us the union of the soul and the body (whereas the natural light teaches us the distinction between the two) through the divine truth that is nothing other than the intrinsic clarity of the idea or that can, in any case, only authenticate evident thoughts. But perhaps Descartes’s philosophy consists in taking up this contradiction.⁴⁷ When Descartes says that the understanding knows itself to be incapable of knowing the union of the soul and the body, leaving the task of knowing this union to life,⁴⁸ this signifies that the act of understanding is given as a reflection upon an unreflected that it absorbs neither in fact nor in principle. When I discover the intelligible structure of the piece of wax, I do not place myself back within an absolute thought with regard to which the wax is merely a result, I do not constitute the wax, I reconstitute it. “Natural judgment” is nothing other than the phenomenon of passivity.

The task of knowing perception will always belong to perception. Reflection never transports itself outside of all situations, nor does the analysis of perception remove the fact of perception, the *haecceity* of the perceived, or the inherence of the perceptual consciousness in a temporality and a locality. Reflection is not absolutely transparent for itself, it is always given to itself in an *experience* (in the sense in which Kant will use this word), it always springs forth without itself knowing from whence it springs, and always offers itself to me as a gift of nature. But if the description of the unreflected remains valid after reflection, and if the “Sixth Meditation” remains valid after the “Second Meditation,” then, reciprocally, we know this unreflected itself only through reflection and it must not be placed outside of reflection like an unknowable term. Between myself, who is analyzing perception, and the self who is actually perceiving, there is always a distance. But in the concrete act of reflection, I cross this distance; I prove, by doing it, that I am capable of knowing what I was perceiving; I overcome in practice the discontinuity of these two I’s; and in the end, the *cogito* would have the sense not of revealing a universal constituting power or of reducing perception to intellection, but rather of observing this *fact* of reflection that simultaneously overcomes and maintains the opacity of perception. Identifying reason and the human condition in this way would certainly harmonize with the Cartesian commitment, and it might be held that the ultimate significance [*signification*] of Cartesianism is to be found here.

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Intellectualism’s “natural judgment” thus anticipates that Kantian judgment that, in the individual object, gives birth to its sense and does not supply that sense as ready-made.⁴⁹ Cartesianism, like Kantianism, would have fully seen the problem of perception, namely, that perception is an *originary* knowledge. There is an empirical or second-order perception – the one that we exercise at each moment – that, because it is chock-full of previous acquisitions and plays out, so to speak, on the surface of being, hides this fundamental phenomenon from us. When I quickly glance over the objects that surround me to get my bearings and to orient myself among them, I hardly gain access to the instantaneous appearance of the world, identify the door over here, the window there, and my table over there. These latter are only the supports and guides for a practical intention that is directed elsewhere, and which are thus only given to me as *significations*. But when I contemplate an object with no other worry than to see it exist and to display before me its riches, it

ceases to be an allusion to a general type and I realize that each perception – and not merely perceptions of scenes that I discover for the first time – begins anew for itself the birth of intelligence and has something of an inspired invention to it. If I am to recognize this tree as a tree, then beneath this acquired signification, the momentary arrangement of the sensible spectacle must begin afresh – as if at the origin of the vegetal world – to sketch out the individual idea of this tree. Such would be this natural judgment that cannot yet know its reasons, since it creates them.

But even if we grant that existence, individuality, and “facticity” are on the horizon of Cartesian thought, it remains questionable whether it has taken them as themes for investigation. And it must be recognized that it could only have done so by transforming itself quite radically. In order to turn perception into an originary knowledge, it would have been necessary to grant finitude a positive signification and to take seriously that strange phrase in the *Fourth Meditation* that turns me into “something intermediate between God and nothingness.”⁵⁰ But if nothingness has no properties (as the *Fifth Meditation* makes clear), and as Malebranche will say, if it is *nothing*, then this definition of the human subject is only a manner of speaking and the finite possesses nothing positive. In order to see reflection as a creative event, that is, as a reconstitution of the past thought that was not pre-formed in that thought and that nevertheless legitimately determines that thought (because only it can give us an idea of it, and because the past in itself exists for us as if it never existed) – for this it would have been necessary [for Cartesian thought] to develop an intuition of time to which the *Meditations* only provides a brief allusion:

. . . let whoever can do so deceive me, he will never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I continue to think I am something; *or make it true at some future time that I have never existed, since it is now true that I exist.*⁵¹

The experience of the present is the experience of a being who is established once and for all, and who nothing could ever prevent from having existed. In the certainty of the present, there is an intention that goes beyond its presence, that intends it in advance as an indubitable “previous present” in the series of recollections, and perception, like the knowledge of the present, is the central phenomenon that makes the unity of the “I” possible and with it the idea of objectivity and of truth.

But in the *Meditations*, this is only given as one of those evident truths that are merely irresistible in fact and that remain subject to doubt.⁵² The Cartesian solution is thus not to take human thought in its factual condition as its own guarantor, but to support it by a thought that possesses itself absolutely. The connection between essence and existence is not found in experience, but rather in the idea of the infinite. Thus, reflective analysis ultimately rests entirely upon a dogmatic idea of being and, in this sense, is not a fully realized insight.⁵³

[d. “Motivation.”]

A certain philosophy was implied when intellectualism took up the naturalistic notion of sensation. Reciprocally, when psychology definitively eliminates this notion, we can expect to find in this reformulation the beginnings of a new type of reflection. At the level of psychology, the critique of the “constancy hypothesis” merely signifies that judgment is abandoned as an explanatory factor in the theory of perception. How could we claim that the perception of distance is derived from the apparent size of objects, from the disparity of the retinal images, from the adaptation of the lens, or from the convergence of the eyes, and how could we claim that the perception of depth is derived from the difference between the images provided by the right eye and left eye respectively since, if we hold ourselves to the phenomena, not one of these “signs” is clearly given to consciousness and since there can be no reasoning where premises are lacking? But this critique of intellectualism only touches upon its popularization among psychologists. And, like intellectualism itself, this popularization must be transported to the level of reflection, where the philosopher no longer seeks to explain perception, but rather to coincide with the perceptual operation and to understand it. On this level, the critique of the constancy hypothesis reveals that perception is not an act of the understanding. I need only look at an upside-down landscape in order to no longer recognize anything there. But for the understanding, “up” and “down”⁵⁴ have but a relative sense, and the understanding could not encounter the orientation of the landscape as if encountering an absolute obstacle. In front of the understanding, a square is always a square, whether it rests on one of its sides or on one of its corners. In the latter case, however, perception hardly even recognizes the square.

The *paradox of symmetrical objects*⁵⁵ confronts logicism with the originality of perceptual experience. This idea must again be taken up and generalized: there is a perceived signification that has no equivalent in the universe of the understanding, a perceptual milieu that is not yet the objective world, and a perceptual being that is not yet determinate being. It's just that the psychologists who practice the description of phenomena are normally unaware of the philosophical weight of their method. They do not see that the return to perceptual experience, if this reformulation is consistent and radical, condemns all forms of realism, that is, all philosophies that leave consciousness behind and take as given one of its results – they do not see that intellectualism's true flaw is precisely in having taken the determinate universe of science as given, that this criticism applies *a fortiori* to psychological thought (since it places perceptual consciousness in the midst of a ready-made world), or that the critique of the constancy hypothesis, if carried to its conclusion, takes on the value of a true "phenomenological reduction."⁵⁶

Gestalt theory has, of course, shown that the supposed signs of distance – the object's apparent size, the number of objects interposed between us and the object in question, the disparity of the retinal images, and the degree of accommodation and convergence – are only explicitly known in an analytical or reflective perception that turns away from the object itself and rather bears upon the object's mode of presentation, and that we thus do not pass through these intermediaries in order to know distance. It's just that Gestalt theory concludes from this that, since the bodily impressions or the interposed objects of the field are not *signs* or *reasons* in our perception of distance, they can only be *causes* of this perception.⁵⁷ They thereby return to an explanatory psychology whose ideal Gestalt theory never abandoned⁵⁸ because, like psychology, it never broke with naturalism. But in the same stroke, Gestalt theory betrays its own descriptions. A subject whose oculomotor muscles are paralyzed sees the objects move toward the left when he believes himself to be turning his eyes toward the left. Classical psychology explains that perception reasons as follows: the eye is assumed to be swinging toward the left, and yet, since the retinal images have not moved, the landscape must have slid toward the left such that the images maintain their place upon the eye. Gestalt theory makes it clear that the perception of the position of the objects does not pass through the detour of an express consciousness of the body: I do not know at any moment that the images

have remained immobile upon my retina; rather, I immediately see the landscape move toward the left. But consciousness does not restrict itself to receiving a ready-made illusory phenomenon produced outside of itself by some physiological causes. For the illusion to be produced, the subject must have had the intention of looking toward the left and must have thought he was moving his eyes. The illusion with regard to one's own body brings with it the appearance of movement in the object. The movements of one's own body are naturally invested with a certain perceptual signification, they form a system with external phenomena so tightly woven that external perception "takes account" of the movements of the perceptual organs, and it finds in them, if not the *explicit explanation*, then at least the *motive* for the intervening changes in the spectacle and can thereby understand these changes immediately. When I have the intention of looking to the left, the movement of the gaze quite naturally translates as an oscillation of the visual field: the objects remain in place, but only after a momentary vibration. This consequence is not learned, it is a part of the natural arrangements of the psycho-physical subject, it is, we will see, an annex of our "body schema" and the immanent signification of a movement of the "gaze." When it happens to be missing, when we are conscious of moving our eyes without the spectacle being affected by this movement, this phenomenon finds expression – without any explicit deduction – in an apparent movement of the object toward the left. The gaze and the landscape remain as if glued to each other, no sudden twitching dissociates them, the gaze, in its illusory movement, brings along with it the landscape and the sliding of the landscape is ultimately nothing other than its fixity at the end of a gaze that is believed to be in movement. Thus, the immobility of the images upon the retina and the paralysis of the oculomotor muscles are not objective causes that determine the illusion and carry it ready-made into consciousness. The intention to move the eye and the docility of the landscape to this movement are not, moreover, the premises or the reasons for the illusion. But they are its motives. In the same manner, objects interposed between me and the one I am focusing upon are not perceived for themselves. But they are, nevertheless, perceived, and we have no reason to deny this marginal perception a role in the vision of distance since the apparent distance shrinks the moment a screen hides the interposed objects. The objects that fill the field do not act on the apparent distance like a cause on its effect. When the screen is moved aside, we see the distance being

born from the interposed objects. This is the silent language perception speaks to us: the interposed objects, in this natural text, “mean” a larger distance. It is, nevertheless, not a question of the logic of constituted truth (one of the connections that objective logic knows), for there is *no reason* for the bell tower to appear to me as smaller and farther away the moment that I can see more clearly the details of the hills and the fields that separate me from it. There is no reason, but there is a *motive*.

It is precisely Gestalt theory that made us aware of these tensions that steal across the visual field and the system “one’s own body–world” like lines of force, and that animate it with a silent and magical life by imposing here and there some torsions, contractions, and inflations. The disparity of the retinal images and the number of objects interposed act neither as objective causes that could produce my perception of distance from the outside, nor as reasons that would demonstrate it. They are tacitly known by my perception under veiled forms, they justify my perception through an unspoken logic. But Gestalt theory lacks the overhaul of its categories required to sufficiently express these perceptual relations: it acknowledged the principle [of returning to phenomena], and it applied this principle in some specific cases, but it did not notice that an entire reformulation of the understanding is necessary if one wants to accurately express phenomena, or that in order to reach this goal one must question logic and classical philosophy’s “objective thought,” suspend the categories of the world, doubt (in the Cartesian sense) the supposed facts of realism, and proceed to a genuine “phenomenological reduction.” Objective thought, or thought applied to the universe and not to phenomena, knows only dichotomies; beginning from actual experience, it defines pure concepts that are mutually exclusive: the notion of *extension* (which is that of an absolute exteriority of parts) and the notion of *thought* (which is that of a being gathered together into itself); the notion of the *vocal sign* (as a physical phenomenon arbitrarily linked to certain thoughts) and that of *signification* (as a thought entirely clear to itself); the notion of *cause* (as a determining factor external to its effect) and that of *reason* (as a law of the phenomenon’s intrinsic constitution).

Now as we have just seen, the perception of one’s own body and external perception offer us the example of a *non-thetic* consciousness, that is, of a consciousness that does not possess the full determination of its objects, the example of a *lived logic* that does not give an account of itself, and the example of an *immanent signification* that is clear for itself and

only knows itself through the experience of certain natural signs. Objective thought cannot assimilate these phenomena, and this is why Gestalt theory (which, like every psychology, is a prisoner of the “facts” of science and of the world) can only choose between reason and cause, and why every critique of intellectualism ends up (in the hands of objective thought) in a restoration of realism and of causal thinking. On the contrary, the phenomenological notion of motivation is one of those “fluid”⁵⁹ concepts that must be formulated if we want to return to phenomena. One phenomenon triggers another, not through some objective causality, such as the one linking together the events of nature, but rather through the sense it offers – there is a sort of operative reason, or a *raison d’être* that orients the flow of phenomena without being explicitly posited in any of them. This is how the intention of looking to the left and the adherence of the landscape to the gaze motivates the illusion of a movement in the object. To the extent that the motivated phenomenon is brought about, its internal relation with the motivating phenomenon appears, and rather than merely succeeding it, the motivated phenomenon makes the motivating one explicit and clarifies it, such that the motivated seems to have preexisted its own motive. Thus, the object at a distance and its physical projection upon the retina explain the disparity of the images and, through a retrospective illusion, we end up following Malebranche in speaking of a natural geometry of projection. Or again, we prematurely locate in perception a science that is in fact constructed upon perception and we thus lose sight of the original relation of motivation in which distance springs forth prior to all science. This distance does not spring forth from a judgment about “the two images,” for they are not numerically distinct, but rather from the phenomenon of “indeterminacy” [*bougé*], from the forces that inhabit this scene, seek equilibrium, and carry it toward the more determinate. For a Cartesian doctrine, these descriptions will have no philosophical weight: they will be treated as allusions to unreflective experience [*l’irréfléchi*], which in principle can never become utterances and which, like every psychology, are without truth when standing before the understanding. To fully warrant these descriptions, it would have to be shown that consciousness can never completely cease being what it is in perception, that is, a fact, nor fully take possession of its own operations. Thus, the acknowledgment of phenomena implies, in short, an entire theory of reflection and a new *cogito*.⁶⁰

IV

THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

- 78 The direction of inquiry for the following chapters can now be seen. “Sensing” has again become a question for us. Empiricism had emptied sensing of all mystery by reducing it to the possession of a quality, which it could only do by moving away from its normal meaning. Common experience establishes a difference between sensing and knowing that is not the difference between the quality and the concept. This rich notion of sensing is also found in Romantic usage and, for example, in Herder. It points to an experience in which we are not given “dead” qualities, but rather active properties. A wooden wheel lying on the ground is not, for vision, the same as a wheel bearing a weight. A body at rest because no force is being exerted upon it is not, for vision, the same as a body in which opposing forces are being held in equilibrium.¹ The light of a candle changes appearance for the child when, after having burned him,
- 79 it ceases to attract the child’s hand and becomes literally repulsive.² Vision is already inhabited by a sense that gives it a function in the spectacle of the world and in our existence. The pure *qualé* would only be given to us if the world were a spectacle and one’s own body a mechanism with which an impartial mind could become acquainted.³ Sensing, however, invests the quality with a living value, grasps it first in its signification for us, for this weighty mass that is our body, and as a result sensing always includes a reference to the body. The problem is to understand these strange

relations woven between the parts of the landscape, or from the landscape to me as an embodied subject, relations by which a perceived object can condense within itself an entire scene or become the *imago* of an entire segment of life. Sensing is this living communication with the world that makes it present to us as the familiar place of our life. The perceived object and the perceiving subject owe their thickness to sensing. It is the intentional fabric that the work of knowledge will seek to decompose.

– With the problem of sensing, we rediscover the problems of association and of passivity. They had ceased causing difficulties because classical philosophers placed themselves either below or above them, granting all or nothing to them: sometimes “association” was understood as a mere actual coexistence, and sometimes it was derived from an intellectual construction; sometimes “passivity” was imported from the things into the mind, and sometimes reflective analysis discovered in passivity an activity of understanding. These notions, however, take on their full sense if sensing is distinguished from quality, in which case association, or rather “affinity” in the Kantian sense, is the central phenomenon of perceptual life, since it is the constitution (without an ideal model) of a meaningful whole, and the distinction between perceptual life and the concept or between passivity and spontaneity is no longer effaced by reflective analysis, since the atomism of sensation no longer obliges us to seek the origin of any coordination whatsoever in some linking activity.

– Finally, after sensing, the understanding also needs to be defined anew, since the general function of linking ultimately attributed to it by Kantianism is now shared across intentional life in its entirety and thus no longer suffices to define the understanding. We will attempt to reveal the instinctual infrastructure of perception and, simultaneously, the superstructures that are built upon it through the exercise of intelligence. As Cassirer says, by distorting perception from above, empiricism also distorts it from below: the impression lacks instinctive and affective sense as much as it lacks ideal signification.⁴ It could also be added that to distort perception from below, that is, to treat it straightaway as knowledge and to forget its existential resources, is also to distort it from above, since this is to take it as acquired and to pass over in silence the decisive moment of perception: the springing forth of a true and precise world. When reflection is equally capable of clarifying both its living inherence and its rational intention, it will be assured of having found the center of the phenomenon.

Thus, “sensation” and “judgment” have together lost their apparent clarity: we have now realized that they were only clear thanks to the unquestioned belief in the world. As soon as we attempted to use them to imagine consciousness in the act of perceiving, to define them as moments of perception, to awaken the forgotten perceptual experience and to compare them to this experience, we found “sensation” and “judgment” to be unthinkable. By elaborating upon these difficulties, we were implicitly referring to a new genre of analysis, to a new dimension in which they were bound to disappear. The criticism of the constancy hypothesis and, more generally, of the reductive understanding of the idea of the “world,” opened up a *phenomenal field* that we must now better circumscribe and led us to rediscover a direct experience that must be situated, at least provisionally, in relation to scientific knowledge, psychological reflection, and philosophical reflection.

[a. *The phenomenal field and science.*]

81 Science and philosophy have for centuries been carried along by the originary faith of perception. Perception opens onto things. This means that perception is oriented – as if toward its own end – toward a truth in itself in which the reason for all appearances is found. Perception’s silent thesis is that experience, at each moment, can be coordinated with the experience of the preceding moment and with that of the following one, that my perspective can be coordinated with the perspectives of other consciousnesses – that all contradictions can be removed, that monadic and intersubjective experience is a single continuous text – and that what is indeterminate for me at this moment could become determinate for a more complete knowledge, which is seemingly realized in advance in the thing, or rather which is the thing itself. At first, science had been nothing but the continuation or the amplification of the movement that is constitutive of perceived things. Just as the thing is the invariant of all the sensory fields and of all individual perceptual fields, the scientific concept is the means of fixing and objectifying phenomena. Science defined a theoretical state of bodies not subject to the action of any force, defined force in the same way, and reconstituted, with the help of these ideal components, the movements actually observed. It established the chemical properties of pure bodies statistically, deduced from them the chemical properties of empirical bodies, and in this way seemed

to possess the very blueprint of creation or, in any case, to rediscover an immanent reason in the world. The notion of a geometrical space indifferent to what it contains, or the notion of a pure movement that does not by itself alter the properties of the object, provided phenomena with an inert milieu of existence where each event could be linked to the physical conditions responsible for the intervening changes and where each event thus contributed to this determination of being that appeared to be the task of physics. By developing the concept of the "thing" in this way, scientific knowledge was unaware that its work was based upon a presupposition. Precisely because perception, in its living implications and prior to all theoretical thought, presents itself as the perception of a being, reflection did not believe it had to produce a genealogy of being and was satisfied to seek merely the conditions that make being possible. Even when the transformations of determining consciousness were taken into account,⁵ and even when it was admitted that the constitution of the object is never complete, there was still nothing to say about the object beyond what science says about it. The natural object remained for us an ideal unity and, according to Lachelier's famous phrase, an intertwining of general properties. Despite stripping the principles of science of all ontological value and leaving them but a methodological value,⁶ this restriction changed nothing essential in philosophy, since the only thinkable being remained defined through scientific method.

Given these requirements, the living body could not escape the determinations that alone made the object into an object, and without which it could not have had a place in the system of experience. The value predicates conferred upon the living body by reflecting judgment had to be brought into being through a foundation of physico-chemical properties. Common experience finds an affinity and a meaningful relation among a speaker's gesture, smile, and tone of voice. But this reciprocal relation of expression, which reveals the human body as the outward manifestation of a certain manner of being in the world, must, for a mechanistic physiology, be reduced to a series of causal relations. The centrifugal phenomenon of expression had to be tied to centripetal conditions, that particular manner of treating the world we call "behavior" had to be reduced to third person processes, experience had to be brought down to the level of physical nature, and the living body had to be converted into a thing without an interior. The living subject's affective and practical stance opposite the world was thus absorbed into psycho-physiological

mechanisms. Every evaluation had to result from a transfer by which complex situations became capable of awakening the elementary impressions of pleasure and pain, themselves closely linked to the organs of the nervous system. The motor intentions of the living being were converted into objective movements: the will was accorded but an instantaneous fiat and the execution of the act was delivered over entirely to the nervous mechanism. Sensing, thus detached from affectivity and motricity [motricité],⁷ became the mere reception of a quality, and physiology believed itself capable of following, from the receptors right through to the nervous centers, the projection of the exterior world into the living being. The living body thus transformed ceased to be my body, that is, the visible expression of a concrete Ego, in order to become one object among all others. Correlatively, another's body could not appear to me as the envelope of another Ego. It was nothing more than a machine, and the perception of another person could not truly be of another person, since it resulted from an inference and thus only placed a consciousness in general behind the automaton, a transcendent cause and not someone actually inhabiting its movements. Thus we no longer had a constellation of Myselfs coexisting in a world. The entire concrete content of "psyches" resulting from a universal determinism according to the laws of psychophysiology and of psychology was integrated into the *in-itself*. There was no longer a genuine *for-itself*, except for the thought of the scientist who perceives this system and who alone ceases to have a place therein. Thus, while the living body became an exterior without an interior, subjectivity became an interior without an exterior, that is, an impartial spectator. The naturalism of science and the spiritualism of the universal constituting subject, to which reflection upon science leads, share in a certain leveling out of experience: standing before the constituting I, the empirical Myselfs are merely objects. The empirical Myself is an illegitimate notion, a mixture of the *in-itself* and the *for-itself*, to which reflective philosophy could grant no status. Insofar as it has a concrete content, the empirical I is inserted into the system of experience, and is thus not a subject; insofar as it is a subject, it is empty and is reduced to a transcendental subject. The ideality of the object, the objectification of the living body, the placement of the mind into a dimension of value that has no common measure with nature – such is the transparent philosophy arrived at by continuing the movement of knowledge initiated by perception. Perception, one might well have concluded, is a nascent science and science a methodical and

complete perception,⁸ since science was merely uncritically following the ideal of knowledge established by the perceived thing.

But this philosophy is collapsing before our eyes. The natural object was the first to give way, and physics itself recognized the limits of its determinations by demanding a reworking and a contamination of the pure concepts that it had adopted. Then the organism, in turn, confronts the physico-chemical analysis not with the actual difficulties of a complex object, but with the *in principle* difficulties of a meaningful being.⁹ More generally, the idea of a universe of thought or a universe of values in which all thinking lives would be brought together and reconciled is thrown into question. Nature is *not* in itself geometrical, it only appears so to a careful observer who limits himself to the macroscopic givens. Human society is not a community of reasonable minds, it can only be understood as such in privileged countries where vital and economic equilibrium has been established locally and for a certain length of time. The experience of chaos, on the speculative plane as much as on the other, leads us to see rationalism from an historical perspective that it claimed on principle to escape, to seek a philosophy that could render intelligible the springing forth of reason in a world that it did not create, and to prepare the living infrastructure without which reason and freedom are emptied or break down. We will no longer say that perception is a nascent science, but rather that classical science is a perception that has forgotten its origins and believes itself to be complete. The fundamental philosophical act would thus be to return to the lived world beneath the objective world (since in this lived world we will be able to understand the law as much as the limits of the objective world); it would be to give back to the thing its concrete physiognomy, to the organisms their proper manner of dealing with the world, and to subjectivity its historical inherence; it would be to rediscover phenomena (the layer of living experience through which other people and things are first given to us, the system “Self–Others–things” in its nascent state); it would be to awaken perception and to thwart the ruse by which perception allowed itself to be forgotten as a fact and as perception to the benefit of the object that it delivers to us and of the rational tradition that it establishes.

84

[b. Phenomena and “facts of consciousness.”]

This phenomenal field is not an “inner world,” the “phenomenon” is not a “state of consciousness” or a “mental fact,” and the experience

of phenomena is not an introspection or a Bergsonian intuition. The object of psychology had long been defined by saying that it was “unextended” and “accessible to only one person,” and the result was that this strange object could only be grasped through a very peculiar type of act – “inner perception” or introspection – in which the subject and the object merged and knowledge was obtained through coinciding. The return to the “immediate givens of consciousness”¹⁰ thus became a hopeless operation since the philosophical gaze sought to be what it could not in principle see. The difficulty was not merely to destroy the unquestioned belief in the exterior, as all philosophies lead the beginner to do, nor was it to describe the mind in a language designed rather to express the things. The problem was much more radical, for interiority, defined by the impression, eluded in principle every attempt at expression. It was not only the communication of philosophical intuitions to others that became difficult – or more precisely, was reduced to a sort of incantation destined to induce in them some experiences analogous to those of the philosopher – but also that the philosopher himself could not become aware of what he immediately saw, for he would then have to think it, which is to say fix and distort it. The immediate was thus a solitary, blind, and mute life.

85 The return to the phenomenal presents none of these particularities. The sensible configuration of an object or of a gesture, which the critique of the constancy hypothesis brought before our eyes, is not grasped in an ineffable coinciding, but rather “understood” through the sort of appropriation we all experience when we say we have “found” the rabbit in the foliage of the visual puzzle, or that we have “caught on” to a movement. Once the unquestioned belief in sensations has been removed, then a face, a signature, and a behavior cease to be simple “visual givens” whose psychological signification must be sought in our inner experience, and the psyche of another becomes an immediate object as a whole impregnated with an immanent signification. More generally, the very notion of the “immediate” is transformed: henceforth it is no longer the impression or the object that merges with the subject; rather, the immediate becomes the sense, the structure, and the spontaneous arrangement of parts. My own “psyche” is not given to me in any other way, since the critique of the constancy hypothesis again teaches me to recognize the articulation and the melodic unity of my behaviors as originary givens of inner experience and to recognize that introspection, reduced down to

its positive content, also consists in making explicit the immanent sense of a behavior.¹¹

Thus, what we discover by overcoming the unquestioned belief in the objective world is not a mysterious inner world. And, unlike Bergsonian interiority, this lived world is not absolutely unknown to naïve consciousness. By critiquing the constancy hypothesis and revealing the phenomena, the psychologist certainly goes against the natural movement of knowledge, which blindly passes through the perceptual operations in order to go straight to their teleological result. Nothing is more difficult than knowing precisely *what we see*. "There is in natural intuition itself a kind of 'crypto-mechanism' which we must first destroy if we are to get to phenomenal being,"¹² or again, a dialectic by which perception hides itself from itself. But if the essence of consciousness is to forget its own phenomena and to thus make possible the constitution of "things," then this forgetting is not a simple absence, it is the absence of something that consciousness could make present. In other words, consciousness can only forget phenomena because it can also recall them; it can only neglect them in favor of things because they are the birthplace of things. For example, phenomena are never absolutely unknown to scientific consciousness (which borrows all of its models from the structures of lived experience), it is just that scientific consciousness does not "thematize" them, it does not make explicit the horizons of perceptual consciousness by which it is surrounded and whose concrete relations it seeks to express objectively. The experience of phenomena is not, then, as is Bergsonian intuition, the experience of an unknown reality to which there is no methodical passage. Rather, it is the making explicit or the bringing to light of the pre-scientific life of consciousness that alone gives the operations of science their full sense and to which these operations always refer. This is not an irrational conversion, but rather an intentional analysis.

If, as is clear, phenomenological psychology is distinguished from introspective psychology in each of its characteristics, this is because it differs from it in principle. Introspective psychology marked out, on the margins of the physical world, a zone of consciousness where physical concepts are no longer valid, but the psychologist still believed that consciousness was only one sector of being and he decided to explore this sector in the manner that the physicist explores his own sector. He attempted to describe the givens of consciousness, but without

questioning the absolute existence of the world surrounding it. He presupposed, following the scientist and common sense, the objective world as the logical frame of all of his descriptions and as the milieu of his thought. He did not notice that this presupposition controlled the sense he gave to the word "being," carried him toward establishing consciousness under the rubric "psychical fact," diverted him in this way from a true insight or from truly immediate experience, and rendered the precautions, which he multiplied in order to avoid distorting the "inner," simply laughable. This is what happened to empiricism when it replaced the physical world with a world of inner events. This is also what happens to Bergson at the very moment when he contrasts the "multiplicity of fusion" with the "multiplicity of juxtaposition."¹³ For here again it is a question of two genres of being. Mechanistic energy was merely replaced by a spiritual energy, the discontinuous being of empiricism replaced by a flowing being, a being that itself flows by and that is described in the third person. By taking the *Gestalt* as the theme of his reflection, the psychologist breaks with psychologism. Indeed, the sense, connection, and "truth" of the perceived no longer result from the fortuitous coming together of our sensations, such as they are given to us by our psycho-physiological nature, but rather determine the spatial and qualitative values of the perceived¹⁴ and are their irreducible configuration. This is to say that the transcendental attitude is already implied in the psychologist's descriptions, so long as they are faithful descriptions. Consciousness, as an object of study, offers this strange quality of not being able to be analyzed, even naïvely, without leading beyond the assumptions of common sense. If, for example, one intends to construct a positive psychology of perception while simultaneously granting that consciousness is enclosed in the body and through it suffers the action of a world in itself, then one is led to describe the object and the world such as they appear to consciousness and thereby to wonder if this immediately present world, the only world we know, is not also the only one worth speaking of. A psychology is always led toward the problem of the constitution of the world.

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[c. *Phenomenal field and transcendental philosophy.*]

Once psychological reflection is under way, it thus goes beyond itself through its own momentum. After having recognized the originality

of phenomena in relation to the objective world – since we know the objective world through them – psychological reflection is led to integrate each possible object with the phenomena and to seek out how this possible object is constituted through them. At that very moment, the phenomenal field becomes a transcendental field. Since it is now the universal center of knowledge, consciousness must clearly cease to be a particular region of being, or a certain collection of “psychical” contents. It no longer resides in, or is no longer confined to, the domain of “forms” that psychological reflection had first acknowledged, but rather the forms, like all things, exist for consciousness. It can no longer be a question of describing the lived world that consciousness carries in itself like an opaque given, this lived world must be constituted. The process of making explicit that had revealed the lived world beneath the objective world is pursued with regard to the lived world itself and reveals the transcendental field beneath the phenomenal field. The system “self–others–world” is in turn taken as an object of analysis, and now it is a question of awakening the thoughts that are constitutive of other people, of myself as an individual subject, and of the world as the pole of my perception. This new “reduction” could thus know but one true subject, namely, the meditating Ego. This passage from the created [*naturé*] to the creating [*naturant*], or from the constituted to the constituting, would complete the thematization begun by psychology and would no longer leave anything implicit or implied in my knowledge. It would make me take full possession of my experience and would achieve the adequation between the reflecting and the reflected upon. Such is the standard perspective of a transcendental philosophy as well as, at least in appearance, the program of a transcendental phenomenology.¹⁵

But the phenomenal field, such as we have discovered it in this chapter, resists in principle being directly and completely made explicit. Psychologism has surely been overcome: the sense and the structure of the perceived are no longer for us the simple result of psycho-physiological events, rationality is not a fortuitous accident that would bring dispersed sensations into agreement with each other, and the *Gestalt* is acknowledged as originary. But if the *Gestalt* can be expressed by an internal law, this law must not be considered as a model according to which the phenomena of structure are realized. Their appearance is not the outward deployment of a preexisting reason. “Form” is not privileged in our perception because it achieves a certain state of equilibrium, resolves a problem of

maximization, or makes a world possible (in the Kantian sense), but rather because form is the very appearance of the world, not its condition of possibility. It is the birth of a norm, not realized according to a norm; it is the identity of the exterior and the interior, not the projection of the interior into the exterior. So even if it is not the result of a circulation of self-contained psychical states, neither is form an idea. The *Gestalt* of a circle is not its mathematical law, but rather its physiognomy. The recognition of phenomena as an original order certainly puts an end to empiricism as an *explanation* of order and reason through the coming together of facts and the accidents of nature, but it also preserves a characteristic of “facticity” for reason and order themselves. If a universal constituting consciousness were possible, the opacity of the fact would disappear. If we want reflection to preserve the descriptive characteristics of the object upon which it bears and to actually understand this object, then we must not consider reflection a simple return to a universal reason, setting it up in advance in the unreflected; rather, we must consider reflection to be a creative operation that itself participates in the facticity of the unreflected. This is why, of all philosophies, only phenomenology speaks of a transcendental *field*. This word signifies that reflection never has the entire world and the plurality of monads spread out and objectified before its gaze, that it only ever has a partial view and a limited power. This is also why phenomenology is a phenomenology, that is, the study of the *appearance* of being to consciousness, rather than taking for granted its possibility in advance. It is striking to see that classical transcendental philosophies never question the possibility of carrying out the complete making-explicit that they always assume is *completed somewhere*. They are satisfied with the necessity of this possibility, and they thereby judge what is by what ought to be, or by what the idea of knowledge requires.

89 In fact, the meditating Ego can never suppress its inherence in an individual subject who knows all things from a particular perspective. Reflection can never make it the case that I cease to perceive the sun on a hazy day as hovering two hundred paces away, that I cease to see the sun “rise” and “set,” or that I cease to think with the cultural instruments that were provided by my upbringing, my previous efforts, and my history. Thus, I never actually bring together or simultaneously awaken all of the originary thoughts that contribute to my perception or to my present conviction. Critical philosophy ultimately attaches no importance to this resistance of passivity, as if it were not necessary to become

the transcendental subject in order to have the right to affirm it. It thus implies that the philosopher's thought is not subjugated to any situation. Beginning from the spectacle of the world, which is the spectacle of a nature open to a plurality of thinking subjects, critical philosophy seeks the condition that makes this unique world offered to many empirical myselfs possible, and it finds this in a transcendental I in which they all participate without thereby dividing it, because it is not a Being but rather a Unity or a Value. This is why Kantian philosophy never asks the question of the knowledge of others: the transcendental I that it speaks of is as much the other's as it is mine; the analysis is immediately placed outside of myself, has merely to extract the general conditions that make a world possible for an I – whether it be myself or another – and never encounters the question of *who is meditating?* If, on the contrary, contemporary philosophy takes the fact as its primary theme, and if others become a problem for it, this is because it wants to achieve a more radical insight. Unless it becomes conscious of itself at the same time as becoming conscious of its results, reflection can never be full and it can never be a total clarification of its object. We must not merely settle into a reflective attitude or into an unassailable *Cogito*, but also reflect upon this reflection, understand the natural situation it is aware of replacing and that thereby belongs to its definition. We must not merely practice philosophy, but also become aware of the transformation that it brings with it in the spectacle of the world and in our existence. Only on this condition can philosophical knowledge become an absolute knowledge and cease to be a specialty or a technique. Thus, an absolute Unity will no longer be asserted, which is even less doubtful now that it does not need to be realized in Being. The center of philosophy is no longer an autonomous transcendental subjectivity, situated everywhere and nowhere, but is rather found in the perpetual beginning of reflection at that point when an individual life begins to reflect upon itself. Reflection is only truly reflection if it does not carry itself outside of itself, if it knows itself as *reflection-upon-an-unreflected*, and consequently as a change in the structure of our existence.

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Above we criticized introspection and Bergsonian intuition for seeking knowledge through coinciding. But at the other extreme of philosophy, in the notion of a universal constituting consciousness, we discover a symmetrical error. Bergson's error is believing that the meditating subject could merge with the object upon which he is meditating, or that

knowledge could expand by merging with being. The error of reflective philosophies is believing that the meditating subject could absorb the object into his meditation or grasp the object upon which he is meditating without remainder, or that our being reduces down to our knowledge. As the meditating subject, we are never the unreflective subject whom we seek to know; but no more can we become entirely conscious, nor reduce ourselves to transcendental consciousness. If we were consciousness, we would have the world, our history, and perceived objects before us in their singularity as transparent systems of relations. And yet, even when we are not doing psychology, even when we attempt to understand what a perceived movement or circle is through a direct reflection and without any help from the various correspondences drawn from inductive thought, we can only clarify the singular fact by varying it in imagination and by defining it through the invariant idea drawn from this mental experiment; we can only penetrate the individual through the illegitimate process of the *example*, that is, by stripping it of its facticity. Thus it is debatable whether thought can ever entirely cease to be inductive and can assimilate any experience whatever to the point of taking it up and of possessing its entire texture. A philosophy becomes transcendental, that is, radical, not by taking up a position within absolute consciousness while failing to mention the steps that carried it there, but rather by considering itself as a problem; not by assuming the total making-explicit of knowledge, but rather by recognizing this presumption of reason as the fundamental philosophical problem.

91 This is why we had to begin a study of perception through psychology. Had we not done so, we would not have understood the full sense of the transcendental problem, since we would not have followed methodically the steps that, beginning from the natural attitude, lead us there. If we did not want to follow reflective philosophy in placing ourselves immediately into a transcendental dimension that we would have to assume to be eternally given and if we did not want to miss the true problem of constitution, we had to frequent the phenomenal field and we had to familiarize ourselves with the subject of phenomena through psychological descriptions. Nevertheless, we could not begin the psychological description without suggesting that, once purified of all psychologism, it could become a philosophical method. In order to awaken the perceptual experience buried beneath its own results, it would not have been enough to present descriptions of them that might not have been

understood; rather, it was necessary to establish through philosophical references and anticipations the perspective from which these descriptions may appear true. Thus, we could not begin without psychology and we could not begin with psychology alone. Experience anticipates a philosophy and philosophy is but an elucidated experience. But now that the phenomenal field has been sufficiently circumscribed, let us enter into this ambiguous domain and secure there our first steps with the psychologist until the psychologist's self-critique carries us, by way of a second-order reflection, to the phenomenon of the phenomenon, and definitively converts the phenomenal field into a transcendental field.

Part One

The Body

INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE¹

[a. *Experience and objective thought.*]

Our perception ends in objects, and the object, once constituted, appears as the reason for all the experiences of it that we have had or that we could have. For example, I see the neighboring house from a particular angle. It would be seen differently from the right bank of the Seine, from the inside of the house, and differently still from an airplane. Not one of these appearances is the house itself. The house, as Leibniz said, is the *geometrical plan* [*le géométral*]² that includes these perspectives and all possible perspectives; that is, the non-perspectival term from which all perspectives can be derived; the house itself is the house seen from nowhere. But what do these words mean? To see is always to see from somewhere, is it not? If we say that the house is seen from nowhere, are we not just saying that it is invisible? And yet, when I say “I see the house with my eyes,” surely I am not saying anything controversial, for I do not mean that my retina and my crystalline lens, or that my eyes as material organs are operational and make me see the house. With only myself to examine, I know nothing of these things. With this assertion I wish to express a certain manner of reaching the object, namely, the “gaze,” which is as indubitable as my own thought, and which I know just as directly. We must attempt to understand how vision can come about from somewhere without thereby being locked within its perspective.

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To see an object is either to have it in the margins of the visual field and to be able to focus on it, or actually to respond to this solicitation by

96 focusing on it. When I focus on it, I anchor myself in it, but this “pausing” of the gaze is but a modality of its movement: I continue within one object the same exploration that, just a moment ago, surveyed all of them. With a single movement, I close off the landscape and open up the object. The two operations do not coincide accidentally: the contingencies of my bodily organization, such as the structure of my retina, are not what necessitates my seeing the surroundings as blurred if I wish to see the object in focus. Even if I knew nothing of cones and rods, I would still understand that it is necessary to suspend the surroundings in order to see the object better, and to lose in the background what is gained in the figure, because to see the object is to plunge into it and because objects form a system in which one object cannot appear without concealing others. More precisely, the inner horizon of an object cannot become an object without the surrounding objects becoming an horizon, and so vision is a two-sided act. For I do not identify the detailed object that I now have with the one I glanced over a moment ago through an explicit comparison of these details with a memory of the initial overview. Compare this to a film when the camera focuses on an object and moves in to give us a close-up of it. In this case we can surely remember that we are seeing an ashtray or a character’s hand, but we do not actually identify it as such. This is because the screen has no horizons. In vision, however, I apply my gaze to a fragment of the landscape, which becomes animated and displayed, while the other objects recede into the margins and become dormant, but they do not cease to be there. Now, along with these other objects, I also have their horizons at my disposal, and the object I am currently focusing on – seen peripherally – is implied in these other horizons. The horizon, then, is what assures the identity of the object throughout the exploration, it is the correlate of the imminent power my gaze has over the objects that it has just glanced over and the power it already has over the new details that it is about to discover. No express memory and no explicit conjecture could play this role – they could only provide a probable synthesis, whereas my perception is given as actual.

The object–horizon structure, that is, perspective, thus does not hamper my desire to see the object. Although it may be the means that objects have of concealing themselves, it is also the means that they have of unveiling themselves. To see is to enter into a universe of beings that show themselves, and they could not show themselves if they could not also be

hidden behind each other or behind me. In other words, to see an object is to come to inhabit it and to thereby grasp all things according to the sides these other things turn toward this object. And yet, to the extent that I also see those things, they remain places open to my gaze and, being virtually situated in them, I already perceive the central object of my present vision from different angles. Each object, then, is the mirror of all the others. When I see the lamp on my table, I attribute to it not merely the qualities that are visible from my location, but also those that the fireplace, the walls, and the table can “see.” The back of my lamp is merely the face that it “shows” to the fireplace. Thus, I can see one object insofar as objects form a system or a world, and insofar as each of them arranges the others around itself like spectators of its hidden aspects and as the guarantee of their permanence. Each act of seeing that I perform is instantly reiterated among all the objects of the world that are grasped as coexistent because each object just is all that the others “see” of it. Thus, our formula above must be modified: the house itself is not the house seen from nowhere, but rather the house seen from everywhere. The fully realized object is translucent, it is shot through from all sides by an infinity of present gazes intersecting in its depth and leaving nothing there hidden.

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What we have just said about spatial perspective could also be said about temporal perspective. If I examine the house attentively and unreflectively, it seems eternal, and a sort of wonder emanates from it. Of course, I see it from a certain point in my duration, but it is the same house that I saw yesterday when it was one day younger; an old man and a child gaze upon the same house. The house surely has its own age and its own changes; however, even if it collapses tomorrow, it will always remain true that it existed today. Each moment of time gives itself as a witness to all the others. It shows, by taking place, “how this was bound to happen” and “how it will have ended.” Each present definitively establishes a point of time that solicits the recognition of all others. Thus, the object is seen from all times just as it is seen from all places, and by the same means, namely, the horizon structure. The present still holds in hand the immediate past, but without positing it as an object, and since this immediate past likewise retains the past that immediately preceded it, time gone by is entirely taken up and grasped in the present. The same goes for the imminent future that will itself have its own horizon of imminence. But along with my immediate past, I also have the horizon

of the future that surrounded it; that is, I have my actual present seen as the future of that past. Along with the imminent future, I also have the horizon of the past that will surround it; that is, I have my actual present as the past of that future. Thus, thanks to the double horizon of retention and protention, my present can cease to be a present that is in fact about to be carried off and destroyed by the flow of duration and can rather become a fixed and identifiable point in an objective time.

98 But again, my human gaze never posits more than one side of the object, even if by means of horizons it intends all the others. My gaze can only be compared with previous acts of seeing or with the acts of seeing accomplished by others through the intermediary of time and language. If I imagine, taking my own gaze as a model, the gazes that scour the house from all directions and define the house itself, I still have but a concordant and indefinite series of points of view upon the object, I do not have the object in its fullness. In the same way, even though my present condenses within itself the time gone by and the time to come, it only possesses them in intention. And if, for example, the consciousness that I now have of my past appears to me to match precisely what it was, this past that I claim to take hold of again is not itself the past in person; it is my past such as I now see it, and I have perhaps altered it. Perhaps in the future I will similarly misjudge the present that I am currently living. Thus the synthesis of horizons is but a presumptive synthesis, it only operates with certainty and precision within the object's immediate surroundings. I no longer hold in hand the more distant surroundings, for it no longer consists in still identifiable objects or memories; rather, it is an anonymous horizon that can no longer provide precise testimony, it leaves the object incomplete and open, as it in fact is in perceptual experience. Through this openness, the substantiality of the object slips away. If the object is to achieve a perfect density or, in other words, if there is to be an absolute object, it must be an infinity of different perspectives condensed into a strict coexistence, and it must be given as if through a single act of vision comprising a thousand gazes. The house has its water pipes, its foundation, and perhaps its cracks growing secretly in the thickness of the ceilings. We never see them, but it *has them*, together with its windows or chimneys that are visible for us. We will forget our present perception of the house: each time that we can compare our memories with the objects to which they refer, allowing for other reasons for error, we are surprised by the changes the objects owe to their own duration. We believe,

however, that there is a truth of the past, we base our memory upon an immense world-Memory in which the house figures just as it truly was that day and that grounds its current *being*. Taken in itself – and as an object it demands to be taken as such – the object conceals nothing: it is fully spread out and its parts coexist while our gaze skims over them one by one; its present does not efface its past, and its future will not efface its present. The positing of the object thus takes us beyond the limits of our actual experience, which throws itself against a foreign being such that, in the end, experience believes it draws from the object everything that experience itself teaches us. The ecstasy [*extase*]³ of this experience makes it such that every perception is perception of something.

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[b. *The problem of the body.*]

Obsessed with being, and forgetting the perspectivism of my experience, I henceforth treat my experience as an object and I deduce it from a relation among objects. I consider my body, which is my point of view upon the world, as one of the objects of that world. I repress the consciousness that I had of my gaze as a means of knowing and I treat my eyes as fragments of matter. From then on my eyes are placed within the same objective space where I attempt to situate the exterior object and I believe that the projection of the objects upon my retina brings about the perceived perspective. Likewise, I treat my own perceptual history as a result of my relations with the objective world. My present, which is my point of view upon time, becomes one moment of time among all others, my duration becomes a reflection or an abstract appearance of universal time, and my body becomes a mode of objective space. And finally, if the objects that surround the house or inhabit it remained what they are in perceptual experience, that is, gazes limited to a specific perspective, then the house would not be posited as an autonomous being. Thus, the positing [*position*] of a single object in the full sense of the word requires the composition [*or co-positing*] of all of these experiences in a single, polythetic act. Therein it exceeds perceptual experience and the synthesis of horizons – just as the notion of a universe (a completed and explicit totality where relations would be reciprocally determined) exceeds the notion of a world (an open and indefinite multiplicity where relations are reciprocally implicated).⁴ I take flight from my experience and I pass over to the *idea*. Like the object, the idea claims to be the same for everyone,

valid for all times and for all places, and the individuation of the object at an objective point of time and space appears, in the end, as the expression of a universal positing power.⁵ I no longer pay attention to my body, to time, or to the world such as I live them in pre-predicative knowledge, that is, in the inner communication that I have with them. I only speak
 100 of my body as an idea, of the universe as an idea, and of the idea of space and of time. Thus is formed “objective” thought (in Kierkegaard’s sense) – the objective thought of common sense and of science – which in the end makes us lose contact with the perceptual experience of which it is nevertheless the result and the natural continuation. The whole life of consciousness tends to posit objects, since it is only consciousness (or self-knowledge) insofar as it takes itself up and gathers itself together in an identifiable object. And yet the absolute positing of a single object is the death of consciousness, since it congeals all of experience, as a seed crystal introduced into a solution causes it suddenly to crystallize.

We cannot remain within this dilemma of understanding either nothing of the subject or nothing of the object. We must rediscover the origin of the object at the very core of our experience, we must describe the appearance of being, and we must come to understand how, paradoxically, there is *for-us* an *in-itself*. Not wanting to prejudge anything, we will take objective thought literally and not ask it any questions it does not ask itself. If we are led to rediscover experience behind it, this passage will only be motivated by its own difficulties. Let us, then, consider objective thought at work in the constitution of our body as an object, since this is a decisive moment in the genesis of the objective world. We will see that, in science itself, one’s own body evades the treatment that they wish to impose upon it.⁶ And since the genesis of the objective body is but a moment in the constitution of the object, the body, by withdrawing from the objective world, will carry with it the intentional threads that unite it to its surroundings and that, in the end, will reveal to us the perceiving subject as well as the perceived world.



THE BODY AS AN OBJECT AND MECHANISTIC PHYSIOLOGY

[a. *Neural physiology itself goes beyond causal thought.*]

The definition of the object is, as we have seen, that it exists *partes extra partes*¹ and thus only admits of external and mechanical relations among its parts or between itself and other objects, either in the strict sense of a received and transmitted movement or in the larger sense of a relation of function to variable. In order to insert the organism into the universe of objects and to thereby seal off this universe, the functioning of the body had to be expressed in the language of the in-itself and the linear dependence between stimulus and receptor, or between receptor and *Empfinder* [the one sensing], had to be discovered beneath the level of behavior.² Of course, it was conceded that new determinations emerge in the circuit of behavior. For example, the theory of specific nervous energy³ granted the organism the power to transform the physical world. But this theory in fact attributed to the nervous apparatus the occult power of creating the different structures of our experience, and although vision, touch, and hearing are so many ways of reaching the object, these structures were

transformed into compact qualities and were derived from the local distinction between the organs in question. The relation between stimulus and perception could thus remain clear and objective; the psycho-physical event was of the same order as the relations of “worldly” causality.

102 Modern physiology no longer resorts to these tricks. It no longer links the different qualities of the same sense and the givens of the different senses to distinct material instruments. In fact, central lesions, and even lesions to conductors, do not translate into the loss of certain sensible qualities or of certain sensory givens; rather, they result in a lack of differentiation of the function. We have already shown this above: regardless of the location of the lesion along the sensory pathways, and regardless of its genesis, what is experienced is, for example, a decomposition of color sensitivity. All colors are initially affected, their fundamental shade remains the same but their saturation decreases. Then, the spectrum simplifies and reduces to four colors: yellow, green, blue, and red-purple. In fact, all colors with a short wavelength tend toward a sort of blue, while all colors with a long wavelength tend toward a sort of yellow. Moreover, vision itself varies from one moment to the next, according to the degree of fatigue. In the end, a monochromatic gray is reached, although favorable conditions (contrast, long exposure) may momentarily bring back a dichromatism.⁴ The progression of the lesion in the nervous substance thus does not destroy ready-made sensible contents one by one, but rather renders the active differentiation of the stimulations, which appears to be the essential function of the nervous system, increasingly uncertain. Likewise, in cases of non-cortical lesions of tactile sensitivity, if certain contents (temperatures, for example) are more fragile and disappear first, this cannot be because a determinate region (destroyed in the patient) enables us to sense hot and cold, for the specific sensation will be restored if an extended-enough stimulus is applied.⁵ Rather, it is because the stimulation now only succeeds in taking on its typical form for a stronger stimulus. Central lesions seem to leave the qualities intact and rather modify the spatial organization of the givens and the perception of objects. This led to the supposition of mystical centers specialized in the localization and interpretation of qualities. In fact, modern research shows that central lesions act above all by raising the chronaxies,⁶ which are twenty or thirty times higher in the patient. The stimulation produces its effects more slowly, they survive longer, and the tactile perception of roughness, for example, is compromised insofar as it assumes a series of

circumscribed impressions or a precise consciousness of different hand positions.⁷ The vague localization of the stimulus is not explained by the destruction of a localizing center, but by the leveling out of stimulations that no longer succeed in organizing themselves into a stable whole where each of them would receive a univocal value and would only be expressed in consciousness through a definite change.⁸ So the stimulations of a single sense differ less by the material instrument they use than by the manner in which the elementary stimuli are spontaneously organized among themselves. This organization is the decisive factor both at the level of sensible “qualities” and at the level of perception.

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This organization again, and not the specific energy of the nervous mechanism in question, makes a stimulus give rise to a tactile or a thermal sensation. If a given area of the skin is stimulated several times with a hair, we at first have perceptions that are punctual, clearly distinguished, and localized each time at the same point. To the extent that the stimulation is repeated, the localization becomes less precise, the perception spreads out in space, and the sensation simultaneously ceases to be specific. It is no longer a contact, but a burning, sometimes cold and sometimes hot. Later still, the subject believes that the stimulus moves and traces out a circle on his skin. In the end, nothing more is sensed.⁹ This is to say that the “sensible quality,” the spatial determinations of the perceived, and even the presence or absence of a perception are not effects of the factual situation outside of the organism, but rather represent the manner in which the organism comes to anticipate stimulations and in which it relates to them. A stimulation is not perceived when it reaches a sensory organ that is not “attuned” to it.¹⁰ The organism’s function in the reception of stimuli is, so to speak, “to understand” a certain form of stimulation.¹¹ The “psycho-physical event” is thus no longer of the “worldly” type of causality. The brain becomes the place of an “articulation” that intervenes even before the cortical stage and that blurs, as early as the entrance into the nervous system, the relations between the stimulus and the organism. The stimulation is grasped and reorganized by the transversal functions that make it resemble the perception that it is about to arouse. I cannot imagine this form, which takes shape in the nervous system, or this unfurling of a structure as a series of third person processes, as the transmission of movement, or as the determination of one variable by another. Nor can I gain a detached knowledge of it. I only foresee what this form might be by leaving behind the body as an object,

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partes extra partes, and by turning back to the body I currently experience, for example, to the way my hand moves around the object that it touches by anticipating the stimuli and by itself sketching out the form that I am about to perceive. I can only understand the function of the living body by accomplishing it and to the extent that I am a body that rises up toward the world.

Exteroceptivity thus demands an articulation of stimuli, the consciousness of the body invades the body, the soul spreads across all of its parts, and behavior overflows its central region. It might be objected that this “experience of the body” is itself a “representation,” a “psychical fact,” and that as such it is at the end of a chain of psychical and physiological events that can only be attributed to the “real body.” Is my body not an object, precisely like external bodies, that acts on receptors and ultimately gives rise to the consciousness of the body? Is there not an “interoceptivity” just as there is an “exteroceptivity”? Can I not find in the body some threads that the internal organs send to the brain and that are instituted by nature in order to give the soul the opportunity to sense its body? Consciousness of the body and of the soul are thereby repressed, and the body again becomes that highly polished machine that the ambiguous notion of behavior had almost made us forget. If, for example, the stimulation from the leg is replaced by a stimulation along the trajectory that runs between the stump and the brain, the subject will sense a phantom leg, because the soul is immediately united to the brain, and to the brain alone.

[b. *The phenomenon of the phantom limb: physiological and psychological explanations are equally insufficient.*]

What does modern physiology have to say about this? A cocaine-induced anesthesia does not remove the phantom limb and there are cases of phantom limbs that result from cerebral lesions without any amputation.¹² Finally, the phantom limb often maintains the very position occupied by the real arm at the moment of injury. A war-wounded man still senses in his phantom arm the shrapnel that tore into his real arm.¹³ Must the “peripheral theory” thus be replaced by a “central theory”? But a central theory would get us no further if it merely added cerebral traces to the peripheral conditions of the phantom limb, for a collection of cerebral traces could not represent the relations of

consciousness that intervene in the phenomenon. The phenomenon in fact depends upon “psychical” determinants. A phantom limb appears for a subject not previously experiencing one when an emotion or a situation evokes those of the injury.¹⁴ It happens that the phantom arm, which is enormous following the operation, subsequently shrinks in order finally to be absorbed into the stump “in accordance with the resignation of the patient to accept his mutilation.”¹⁵ Here the phenomenon of the phantom limb is clarified through the phenomenon of anosognosia,¹⁶ which clearly demands a psychological explanation. Subjects who systematically ignore their right hand, and who rather offer their left hand when they have been asked for their right, nevertheless speak of their paralyzed arm as a “long and cold serpent,” which excludes the hypothesis of a genuine anesthesia and suggests the hypothesis of a refusal of the deficiency.¹⁷ Must it then be said that the phantom limb is a memory, a wish, or a belief? Lacking a physiological explanation, must it be given a psychological explanation? Yet no psychological explanation can ignore the fact that the phantom limb disappears when the sensory conductors that run to the brain are severed.¹⁸

Thus, we must attempt to understand how the psychical determinants and the physiological conditions gear into each other. If the phantom limb depends upon physiological conditions and is thereby the effect of a third person causality, then it is inconceivable how it can also result from the personal history of the patient, from his memories, his emotions, or his desires. Indeed, for the two series of conditions to be able to co-determine the phenomenon – the way two components determine an outcome – they would require a single point of application or a common ground, and it is difficult to see what might serve as the common ground between “physiological facts” (which are in space) and “psychical facts” (which are nowhere), or even between objective processes, such as nervous impulses (which belong to the order of the in-itself), and *cogitationes*, such as acceptance or refusal, consciousness of the past, or emotion (which belong to the order of the for-itself). A mixed theory of the phantom limb that acknowledges the two series of conditions¹⁹ may thus

an encounter between them, or if third person processes and personal acts could be integrated into a milieu they would share.

[c. Existence between the “psychical” and the “physiological.”]

In order to describe the belief in the phantom limb and the refusal of the mutilation, these authors speak of a “repression” or of an “organic suppression” [*refoulement organique*].²⁰ These terms, which are hardly Cartesian, force us to form the idea of an organic thought by which the relation between the “psychical” and the “physiological” could become conceivable. We have already encountered elsewhere, in the case of substitutions, phenomena that exceed the alternative between the psychical and the physiological, between explicit finality and mechanism.²¹ When an insect instinctively substitutes a healthy leg for the leg that has been removed, it is not, as we have seen, that a preestablished safety mechanism is automatically triggered and substituted for the circuit that has just been put out of service. But no more is it because the animal is conscious of a goal to attain and uses its limbs as different means, for then the substitution would have to be produced each time that the action is blocked and we know that it does not occur if the leg is merely tied. The animal simply continues to exist in the same world and carries itself toward this world with all of its powers. The tied limb is not replaced by the free one because the tied one continues to count in the animal’s being and because the impulse of activity that goes toward the world still passes through that limb. There is no more choice here than in a drop of oil that employs all of its internal forces in order to solve, in practice, the maximum/minimum problem set for it. The only difference is that the drop of oil adapts itself to given external forces, while the animal itself projects the norms of its milieu and establishes the terms of its vital problem;²² but here it is a question of an *a priori* of the species and not of a personal choice.

Thus, behind the phenomenon of substitution we discover the movement of being in and toward the world, and we must now make this notion more precise. When we say that an animal exists, that it *has* a world, or that it *belongs* to a world, we do not mean that it has a perception or an objective consciousness of the world. The situation that triggers instinctive operations is not wholly articulated and determinate, its total sense is not possessed, which is clearly shown by the errors and the blindness

of instinct. The situation provides only a practical signification, and the recognition that it induces is merely a bodily recognition. It is lived as an “open” situation and it calls for the animal’s movements – just as the first notes of the melody call for a certain mode of resolution – without thereby being known for itself. And this is precisely what allows the limbs to be interchangeable, to be equivalent before the evidentness of the task.

If it anchors the subject to a certain “milieu,” is “being in the world” something like Bergson’s “attention to life” or Janet’s “reality function”? Attention to life is the consciousness we gain of “nascent movements” in our body. But reflex movements, either sketched out or already accomplished, are still merely objective processes whose development and results can be observed by consciousness, but in which consciousness is not engaged.²³ In fact, reflexes themselves are never blind processes: they adjust to the “sense” of the situation, they express our orientation toward a “behavioral milieu” just as much as they express the action of the “geographical milieu” upon us. They trace out, from a distance, the structure of the object without waiting for its punctual stimulations. This global presence of the situation gives the partial stimuli a sense and makes them count, stand out, or exist for the organism. The reflex does not result from objective stimuli, it turns toward them, it invests them with a sense that they did not have when taken one by one or as physical agents, a sense that they only have when taken as a situation. The reflex causes them to exist as a situation; it establishes a “knowledge relation” with them, that is, it points to them as what it is destined to encounter. Reflex, insofar as it opens itself to the sense of a situation, and perception, insofar as it does not first of all posit an object of knowledge and insofar as it is an intention of our total being, are modalities of a *pre-objective perspective* that we call “being in the world.” Prior to stimuli and sensible contents, a sort of inner diaphragm must be recognized that, much more than these other ones, determines what our reflexes and our perceptions will be able to aim at in the world, the zone of our possible operations, and the scope of our life. Certain subjects can move closer to being blind without having changed “worlds.” They bump into objects everywhere, but they are unaware of no longer having visual qualities, and the structure of their behavior remains unaltered. Other patients, on the contrary, lose their world as soon as the contents begin to slip away. They renounce their usual life even before it becomes impossible, they become crippled

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before literally being so, and they break their vital contact with the world before having lost sensory contact with it. Thus, our “world” has a particular consistency, relatively independent of stimuli, that forbids treating “being in the world” as a sum of reflexes, and the pulsation of existence has a particular energy, relatively independent of our spontaneous thoughts, that precludes treating it as an act of consciousness. Because it is a pre-objective perspective, being in the world can be distinguished from every third person process, from every modality of the *res extensa*, as well as from every *cogitatio*, from every first person form of knowledge – and this is why “being in the world” will be able to establish the junction of the “psychical” and the “physiological.”

[d. *Ambiguity of the phantom limb.*]

Let us return now to the problem from which we began. Anosognosia and the phantom limb admit of neither a physiological explanation, a psychological explanation, nor a mixed explanation, although they can be linked to the two series of conditions. A physiological explanation would interpret anosognosia and the phantom limb as the mere suppression or the mere persistence of interoceptive stimulations. On this hypothesis, anosognosia is the absence of a fragment of the body’s representation that should be given, since the corresponding limb is in fact present; the phantom limb is the presence of a part of the body’s representation that should not be given, since the corresponding limb is in fact absent. If these phenomena are now given a psychological explanation, the phantom limb becomes a memory, a positive judgment, or a perception; anosognosia becomes a forgetting, a negative judgment, or a non-perception. In the first case, the phantom limb is the actual presence of a representation and anosognosia is the actual absence of a representation. In the second case, the phantom limb is the representation of an actual presence and anosognosia is the representation of an actual absence. In neither case do we escape from the categories of the objective world where there is no middle ground between presence and absence. In fact, the anosognosic patient does not merely ignore the paralyzed limb: it is only because he knows where he risks encountering his deficiency that he can turn away from it, just as the psychoanalytic subject knows what he does not want to see head-on, otherwise he could not avoid it so well. We only understand the absence or the death of a

friend in the moment in which we expect a response from him and feel [éprouver] that there will no longer be one. At first we avoid asking the question in order not to have to perceive this silence and we turn away from regions of our life where we could encounter this nothingness, but this is to say that we discern them. The anosognosic patient likewise puts his paralyzed arm out of play in order not to have to sense its degeneration, but this is to say that he has a preconscious knowledge of it. In the case of the phantom limb, the subject certainly seems to be unaware of the mutilation and counts on his phantom as if on a real limb, since he tries to walk with his phantom leg and is not even discouraged by a fall. But in other respects he describes the particularities of the phantom leg quite well – such as its strange motricity – and, if he treats it in practice as a real limb, this is because, like the normal subject, he has no need of a clear and articulated perception of his body in order to begin moving. It is enough that his body is “available” as an indivisible power and that the phantom leg is sensed as vaguely implicated in it. Consciousness of the phantom limb itself therefore remains equivocal. The amputee senses his leg, as I can sense vividly the existence of a friend who is, nevertheless, not here before my eyes. He has not lost his leg because he continues to allow for it, just as Proust can certainly recognize the death of his grandmother without yet losing her to the extent that he keeps her on the horizon of his life. The phantom arm is not a representation of the arm, but rather the ambivalent presence of an arm. The refusal of the mutilation in the case of the phantom limb or the refusal of the deficiency in anosognosia are not deliberated decisions, they do not occur at the level ofthetic consciousness, which explicitly decides after having considered different possibilities. The desire for a healthy body or the refusal of the diseased body are not formulated for themselves; the experience of the amputated arm as present or of the diseased arm as absent are not of the order of the “I think that . . .”

This phenomenon – distorted by both physiological and psychological explanations – can nevertheless be understood from the perspective of being in the world. What refuses the mutilation or the deficiency in us is an I that is engaged in a certain physical and inter-human world, an I that continues to tend toward its world despite deficiencies or amputations and that to this extent does not *de jure* recognize them. The refusal of the deficiency is but the reverse side of our inherence in a world, the implicit negation of what runs counter to the natural movement that

111 throws us into our tasks, our worries, our situation, and our familiar horizons. To have a phantom limb is to remain open to all of the actions of which the arm alone is capable and to stay within the practical field that one had prior to the mutilation. The body is the vehicle of being in the world and, for a living being, having a body means being united with a definite milieu, merging with certain projects, and being perpetually engaged therein. In the evidentness of this complete world in which manipulable objects still figure, in the impulse of movement that goes toward it and where the project of writing or of playing the piano still figures, the patient finds the certainty of his [bodily] integrity. But at the very moment that the world hides his deficiency from him, the world cannot help but to reveal it to him. For if it is true that I am conscious of my body through the world and if my body is the unperceived term at the center of the world toward which every object turns its face, then it is true for the same reason that my body is the pivot of the world. I know that the objects have several faces because I can move around them, and in this sense I am conscious of the world by means of my body. At the same moment that my usual world gives rise to habitual intentions in me, I can no longer actually unite with it if I have lost a limb. Manipulable objects, precisely insofar as they appear as manipulable, appeal to a hand that I no longer have.

Regions of silence are thus marked out in the totality of my body. The patient knows his disability precisely insofar as he is ignorant of it, and he ignores it precisely insofar as he knows it. This is the paradox of all being in the world. By carrying myself toward a world, I throw my perceptual intentions and my practical intentions against objects that appear to me, in the end, as anterior and exterior to these intentions, and which nevertheless exist for me only insofar as they arouse thoughts or desires in me. In the case we are considering, the ambiguity of knowledge amounts to this: it is as though our body comprises two distinct layers, that of the habitual body and that of the actual body. Gestures of manipulation that appear in the first have disappeared in the second, and the problem of how I can feel endowed with a limb that I no longer have in fact comes down to knowing how the habitual body can act as a guarantee for the actual body. How can I perceive objects as manipulable when I can no longer manipulate them? The manipulable must have ceased being something that I currently manipulate in order to become something *one* can manipulate; it must have ceased being something *manipulable for me* and

have become something *manipulable in itself*. Correlatively, my body must be grasped not merely in an instantaneous, singular, and full experience, but moreover under an aspect of generality and as an impersonal being.

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[e. “Organic repression” and the body as an innate complex.]

The phenomenon of the phantom limb connects in this way to the phenomenon of repression, which in turn will shed some light on it. For psychoanalysis, repression consists in the following: the subject commits to a certain path (a love affair, career, or work of art), encounters along this path a barrier and, having the force neither to overcome the obstacle nor to abandon the enterprise, he remains trapped in the attempt and indefinitely employs his forces to renew it in his mind. The passage of time does not carry away impossible projects, nor does it seal off the traumatic experience. The subject still remains open to the same impossible future, if not in his explicit thoughts, then at least in his actual being. One present among all of them thus acquires an exceptional value. It displaces the others and relieves them of their value as authentic present moments. We remain the person who was once committed to this adolescent love, or the person who once lived within that parental universe. New perceptions replace previous ones, and even new emotions replace those that came before, but this renewal only has to do with the content of our experience and not with its structure. Impersonal time continues to flow, but personal time is arrested. Of course, this fixation is not to be confused with a memory, it even excludes memory insofar as memory lays a previous experience out before us like a painting. On the contrary, this past that remains our true present does not move away from us; rather, in lieu of being displayed before our gaze, it always hides behind it. Traumatic experience does not subsist as a representation in the mode of objective consciousness and as a moment that has a date. Rather, its nature is to survive only as a style of being and only to a certain degree of generality. I relinquish my perpetual power of giving myself “worlds” to the benefit of one of them and thereby even this privileged world loses its substance and ends up being no more than a particular anxiety. All repression is thus the passage from first person existence to a sort of scholastic view of this existence, which is sustained by a previous experience, or rather by the memory of having had this experience, and then by the memory of having had this memory, and so on, to the point that in the end it only retains its essential form.

Now, as the advent of the impersonal, repression is a universal phenomenon. It clarifies our condition of being embodied by relating this condition to the temporal structure of being in the world. Insofar as I have “sense organs,” a “body,” and “psychical functions” comparable to those of others, each moment of my experience ceases to be an integrated or rigorously unique totality (where details would only exist in relation to the whole) and I become the place where a multitude of “causalities” intertwine. Insofar as I inhabit a “physical world,” where consistent “stimuli” and typical situations are discovered – and not merely the historical world in which situations are never comparable – my life is made up of rhythms that do not have their *reason* in what I have chosen to be, but rather have their *condition* in the banal milieu that surrounds me. A margin of almost impersonal existence thus appears around our personal existence, which, so to speak, is taken for granted, and to which I entrust the care of keeping me alive. Around the human world that each of us has fashioned, there appears a general world to which we must first belong in order to be able to enclose ourselves within a particular milieu of a love or an ambition. Just as we speak of a repression in the restricted sense when I preserve through time one of the momentary worlds that I have passed through and that I make into the form of my entire life, so too can we say that my organism – as a pre-personal adhesion to the general form of the world, as an anonymous and general existence – plays the role of an *innate complex* beneath the level of my personal life. My organism is not like some inert thing, it itself sketches out the movement of existence. It can even happen that, when I am in danger, my human situation erases my biological one and that my body completely merges with action.²⁴

But these moments can be no more than moments,²⁵ and most of the time personal existence represses the organism without being able to transcend it or to renounce it, and without being able to reduce the organism to itself or itself to the organism. When I am overcome with grief and wholly absorbed in my sorrow, my gaze already wanders out before me, it quietly takes interest in some bright object, it resumes its autonomous existence. After this moment, in which we attempted to lock up our entire life, time (or at least pre-personal time) again begins to flow, and it carries with it if not our resolution, then at least the heartfelt emotions that sustained it. Personal existence is intermittent and when this tide recedes, decision can no longer give my life more than a forced signification. The fusion of soul and body in the act, the sublimation

of biological existence in personal existence and of the natural world in the cultural world, is simultaneously rendered possible and precarious by the temporal structure of our experience. Through its horizon of the immediate past and the near future, each present grasps, little by little, the totality of possible time; it thereby overcomes the dispersion of moments, it is in a position to give our past itself its definitive sense and to reintegrate into personal existence even this past of all pasts that the organic stereotypes lead us to notice at the origin of our volitional being. To this extent, even reflexes have a sense, and the style of each individual is still visible in them just as the beating of the heart is felt even at the periphery of the body. But obviously this power belongs to all presents, to previous presents as much as to new ones. Even if we claim to understand our past better than it understood itself, it can always deny our present judgment and enclose itself within its autistic evidentness. This move is even necessary insofar as I conceive of it as a previous present. Each present can claim to solidify our life, this is what defines it as present. Insofar as it presents itself as the totality of being and fills up an instant of consciousness, we never actually break free of it; time never actually closes it off and it remains like a wound through which our strength seeps away. All the more reason to conclude that the specific past, which is our body, can only be recovered and taken up by an individual life because this life has never transcended it, because it secretly feeds this past and uses a part of its strength there, because this past remains its present, as is seen in the disease in which the bodily events become the events of the day. What allows us to center our existence is also what prevents us from centering it completely, and the anonymity of our body is inseparably both freedom and servitude. Thus, to summarize, the ambiguity of being in the world is expressed by the ambiguity of our body, and this latter is understood through the ambiguity of time.

We will return to the question of time below. Let us simply show for the moment that the relations between the "psychical" and the "physiological" become thinkable by starting from this central phenomenon. On the one hand, how could the memories evoked for the amputee make the phantom limb appear? After all, the phantom limb is not a recollection, it is a quasi-present, the disabled person senses it at present, folded upon his chest without any hint of the past. On the other hand, we cannot assume that an image of an arm floating across consciousness came to settle upon the stump, for then it would not be a "phantom," but

rather a revived perception. The phantom arm must be the same arm that was torn apart by shrapnel – whose visible envelope had at some point burned or decayed – and that now comes to haunt the present body without thereby merging with it. The phantom limb is thus, like a repressed experience, a previous present that cannot commit to becoming past. The memories called back before the amputee's mind induce a phantom limb not in the manner in which one image calls forth another in associationism, but because every memory reopens lost time and invites us to again take up the situation that it evokes. Intellectual memory, in Proust's sense, is satisfied with a description of the past, with the past in ideas. It extracts "characteristics" or the communicable signification from the past, rather than discovering the past's structure. But in the end it could not be memory if the object that it constructs was not still held by some intentional threads to the horizon of the lived past, and to this very past such as we would rediscover it by plunging into these horizons and by reopening time. Likewise, if the emotion is put back within being in the world, then we can understand how emotion can be at the origin of the phantom limb. To be emotional is to find oneself engaged in a situation that one is unable to cope with and yet from which one does not want to escape. Rather than accepting failure or retracing his steps, the subject abolishes the objective world that blocks his path in this existential dilemma and seeks a symbolic satisfaction in magical acts.²⁶ The ruins of the objective world, the renunciation of genuine action, and the flight into autism are favorable conditions for the illusion that amputees have insofar as it too presupposes the obliteration of reality. If memory and emotion can make the phantom limb appear, this is not in the manner that one *cogitatio* necessitates another *cogitatio*, or as a condition determines its consequence. Nor is it that a causality of the idea here superimposes itself upon a physiological causality. Rather, it is because one existential attitude motivates another and because memory, emotion, and the phantom limb are equivalent with regard to being in the world.

116 Finally, why does the sectioning of the afferent conductors suppress the phantom limb? From the perspective of being in the world, this fact signifies that the stimulations coming from the stump keep the amputated arm within the circuit of existence. They mark off and reserve its place, ensure it has not been annihilated, and that it continues to count for the organism; they maintain a void that the history of the subject will fill in; they allow it to produce the phantom, just as structural

disturbances allow the psychotic to produce a delirium. From our point of view, one sensorimotor circuit is a relatively autonomous current of existence within our total being in the world. Not that it always brings a separable contribution to our total being, but because, under certain conditions, it is possible to bring to light consistent responses for stimuli that are themselves consistent. Thus, the question is why the refusal of the deficiency, which is an overall attitude of our existence, needs this highly specialized modality we call a sensorimotor circuit in order to actualize itself, and why our being in the world, which gives all of our reflexes their sense and which establishes them under this relation, nevertheless delivers itself over to them and, in the end, is grounded upon them. In fact, as we have shown elsewhere, sensorimotor circuits stand out all the more clearly insofar as one is dealing with more integrated existences, and reflex, in its pure state, is hardly ever found in man, who has not merely a milieu (*Umwelt*), but also a world (*Welt*).²⁷ From the point of view of existence, these two facts (which scientific induction limits itself to juxtaposing) are internally linked and are included under the same idea. If man is not to be enclosed within the envelope of the syncretic milieu in which the animal lives as if in a state of ecstasy, if he is to be conscious of a world as the common reason of all milieus and as the theater of all behaviors, then a distance between himself and that which solicits his action must be established. As Malebranche said, external stimulations must only touch him with “respect”; each momentary situation must for him cease to be the totality of being, and each particular response must cease to occupy his entire practical field. Furthermore, the elaboration of these responses must, rather than taking place at the center of his existence, happen on the periphery and, finally, the responses themselves must no longer require, each time, a unique position-taking and must rather be sketched out once and for all in their generality. Thus, by renouncing a part of his spontaneity, by engaging in the world through stable organs and preestablished circuits, man can acquire the mental and practical space that will free him, in principle, from his milieu and thereby allow him to see it. And, provided we put even the coming to awareness of an objective world back into the order of existence, we will no longer find a contradiction between it and bodily conditioning: that it provides itself with an habitual body is an internal necessity for the most integrated existence. What allows us to tie the “physiological” and the “psychical” together is that, now reintegrated into existence, they are

no longer distinguished as the order of the in-itself and the order of the for-itself, and because they are both oriented toward an intentional pole or toward a world.

These two histories probably never completely overlap: one is banal and cyclical, the other may be open and singular, and it would be necessary to reserve the term "history" for the second order of phenomena if history were a series of events that not only have a sense, but provide themselves with that sense. Nevertheless, failing a true revolution that breaks apart the historical categories valid up until then, the subject of history does not create his role from scratch. Faced with typical situations, he makes typical decisions, and Nicolas II, rediscovering the very words of Louis XVI, plays the already scripted role of an established power confronted with a new power. His decisions express an *a priori* of the threatened prince, just as our reflexes express a species *a priori*. These stereotypes are not for that matter a destiny, and just as clothing, jewelry, and love transform the biological needs from which they are born, so too, within the cultural world, the historical *a priori* is only consistent for a given phase and provided that the equilibrium of forces allows the same forms to remain. History, then, is neither a perpetual novelty nor a perpetual repetition, but rather the unique movement that both creates stable forms and shatters them. The organism and its monotonous dialectics are thus not foreign to history and somehow beyond the reach of history. Taken concretely, man is not a psyche joined to an organism, but rather this back-and-forth of existence that sometimes allows itself to exist as a body and sometimes carries itself into personal acts. Psychological motives and bodily events can overlap because there is no single movement in a living body that is an absolute accident with regard to psychical intentions and no single psychical act that has not found at least its germ

118 or its general outline in physiological dispositions. It is never a question of the incomprehensible encounter of two causalities, nor of a collision between the order of causes and the order of ends. Rather, through an imperceptible shift, an organic process opens up into a human behavior, an instinctive act turns back upon itself and becomes an emotion, or, inversely, a human act becomes dormant and is continued absent-mindedly as a reflex. The psychical and the physiological can be related through exchanges that prevent almost every attempt to define a mental disturbance as either psychic or somatic. A disturbance called "somatic" opens onto a psychical commentary on the theme of the organic accident,

and the “psychic” disturbance restricts itself to developing the human signification of the bodily event. One patient senses a second person implanted within his body. He is a man in one half of his body, a woman in the other. How could physiological causes and psychological motives be distinguished in this symptom? How could the two explanations merely be associated, and how could an intersection between the two determinants be conceived?

In symptoms of this kind, the psychical and the physical are so intimately linked that we can no longer hope to complete one functional domain by the other and that both must be presupposed by a third [. . .]. (We must) [. . .] pass from a knowledge of psychological and physiological facts to a recognition of the animistic event as a vital process inherent to our existence.²⁸

Thus, modern physiology gives a very clear reply to the question that we asked: the psycho-physical event can no longer be conceived in the manner of Cartesian physiology or as the contiguity between a process in itself and a *cogitatio*. The union of the soul and the body is not established through an arbitrary decree that unites two mutually exclusive terms, one a subject and the other an object. It is accomplished at each moment in the movement of existence. We discover existence in the body by approaching it through a first way of access, namely, physiology. We can now confirm this first result and make it more precise by examining existence on its own terms, that is, by turning our attention to psychology.



THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BODY AND CLASSICAL PSYCHOLOGY

[a. The “permanence” of one’s own body.]

- 119 When classical psychology described one’s own body, it already attributed “characteristics” to it that are incompatible with the status of an object. It first claimed that my body is distinguished from the table or the lamp because my body is constantly perceived, whereas I can turn away from these other objects. Thus, my body is an object that is always with me. But then, is it still an object? If an object is an invariable structure, this is not in spite of the change of perspectives, but rather in this change, or through it. The always new perspectives are not, for the object, a simple opportunity to manifest its permanence or a contingent manner of appearing to us. It is only an object in front of us because it is observable, which is to say, situated at our fingertips or at the end of our gaze, indivisibly overthrown and rediscovered by each of their movements. Otherwise, the object would be true in the manner of an idea and not present in the manner of a thing. In particular, the object is only an object if it can be moved away and ultimately disappear from my visual field. Its presence is such that it requires a possible absence.

Now, the permanence of one's own body is of an entirely different type: it is not to be found as the result of an indefinite exploration. In fact, my own body defies exploration and always appears to me from the same angle. Its permanence is not a permanence in the world, but a permanence on my side. To say that my body is always near to me or always there for me is to say that it is never truly in front of me, that I cannot spread it out under my gaze, that it remains on the margins of all of my perceptions, and that it is *with* me. Of course, external objects themselves never show me one of their sides without thereby hiding from me all their other sides, but I can at least choose the side I want them to show me. They can only appear to me in perspective, but the particular perspective that I obtain from them at each moment is merely the result of a physical necessity, a necessity I can use, but also one that does not imprison me. From my window, only the steeple of the church can be seen, but this constraint simultaneously assures me that from elsewhere the entire church could be seen. It is true that if I were a prisoner, the church would be reduced for me to a truncated steeple. If I never removed my clothes, I would never see their inside, and we will in fact see below that my clothes can become appendages of my body. But this fact does not prove that the presence of my body is comparable to the factual permanence of certain objects, or that the organ is comparable to an always available tool. On the contrary, it shows that the actions in which I habitually engage incorporate their instruments and make them participate in the original structure of my own body [*le corps propre*]. Moreover, my own body is the primordial habit, the one that conditions all others and by which they can be understood. Its near presence and its invariable perspective are not a factual necessity, since factual necessity presupposes them: for my window to impose on me a perspective on the church, my body must first impose on me a perspective on the world, and the former necessity can only be a purely physical one because the latter necessity is metaphysical. Factual situations can only affect me if I am first of such a nature that there can be factual situations for me. In other words, I observe external objects with my body, I handle them, inspect them, and walk around them. But when it comes to my body, I never observe it itself. I would need a second body to be able to do so, which would itself be unobservable. When I say that I always perceive my body, these words must not be understood in a merely statistical sense, and there must be something in the presentation of one's own body that renders its absence, or even its variation, inconceivable.

What might this something be? The tip of my nose and the contours of my eye sockets are all that I see of my own head. I can, of course, see my eyes in a three-faced mirror, but these are the eyes of someone who is observing, and I can barely catch a glimpse of my living gaze when a mirror on the street unexpectedly reflects my own image back at me. My body, as seen in the mirror, continues to follow my intentions as if they were its shadow, and if observation involves varying the point of view by holding the object fixed, then my body escapes observation and presents
 121 itself as a simulacrum of my tactile body, since it mimics the tactile body's initiatives rather than responding to them through a free unfolding of perspectives. My visual body is certainly an object when we consider the parts further away from my head, but as we approach the eyes it separates itself from objects and sets up among them a quasi-space to which they have no access. And when I wish to fill this void by resorting to the mirror's image, it again refers me back to an original of the body that is not out there among things, but on my side, prior to every act of seeing. And despite appearances, the same holds for my tactile body, for I can palpate my right hand with my left while my right hand is touching an object. The right hand, as an object, is not the right hand that does the touching. The first is an intersecting of bones, muscles, and flesh compressed into a point of space; the second shoots across space to reveal the external object in its place. Insofar as it sees or touches the world, my body can neither be seen nor touched. What prevents it from ever being an object or from ever being "completely constituted"¹ is that my body is that by which there are objects. It is neither tangible nor visible insofar as it is what sees and touches.

The body, then, is not just another external object that could offer the peculiarity of always being there. If it is permanent, then this has to do with an absolute permanence that serves as the basis for the relative permanence of objects that can be eclipsed, that is, of true objects. The presence and the absence of external objects are only variations within a primordial field of presence, a perceptual domain over which my body has power. Not only is the permanence of my body not a particular case of the general permanence of external objects in the world, but moreover this latter can only be understood through the former. Not only is the perspective upon my body not a particular case of the general perspectives upon object, but rather the perspectival presentation of objects itself must be understood through the resistance of my body to every

perspectival variation. If objects must never show me more than one of their sides, then this is because I myself am in a certain place from which I see them, but which I cannot see. If I nevertheless believe in their hidden sides, as well as in a world that encompasses them all and that coexists with them, I do so insofar as my body, always present for me and yet engaged with them through so many objective relations, maintains them as coexisting with it and makes the pulse of its duration reverberate through them all. Thus, the permanence of one's own body, if classical psychology had analyzed it, could have directed it toward the body, no longer as an object of the world but rather as our means of communication with it, or could have directed it toward the world, no longer as the sum of determinate objects but rather as the latent horizon of our experience, itself ceaselessly present prior to all determining thought.

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[b. "Double sensations."]

The other "characteristics" by which classical psychology defined one's own body are no less interesting, and for the same reasons. My body, it was said, is recognized as what gives me "double sensations." When I touch my right hand with my left hand, the object "right hand" also has this strange property, itself, of sensing. As we have just seen, the two hands are never simultaneously both touched and touching. So when I press my two hands together, it is not a question of two sensations that I could feel together, as when we perceive two objects juxtaposed, but rather of an ambiguous organization where the two hands can alternate between the functions of "touching" and "touched." In speaking of "double sensations," psychologists mean that, in the passage from one function to the other, I can recognize the touched hand as the same hand that is about to be touching; in this package of bones and muscles that is my right hand for my left hand, I glimpse momentarily the shell or the incarnation of this other right hand, agile and living, that I send out toward objects in order to explore them. The body catches itself from the outside in the process of exercising a knowledge function; it attempts to touch itself touching, it begins "a sort of reflection,"² and this would be enough to distinguish it from objects. I can certainly say that these latter "touch" my body, but merely when it is inert, and thus without every catching it in its exploratory function.

[c. *The body as an affective object.*]

Or again, it was said that the body is an affective object, whereas external things are merely represented. This was to raise the problem of the status of one's own body for a third time. For if I say that my foot hurts, I do not simply mean that my foot is a cause of the pain in the same way as the nail piercing it, the only difference being that my foot is closer to me in the causal chain. Nor do I mean that my foot is the last object of the external world, after which a pain would begin in the intimate sense, namely, a consciousness of pain by itself and without a location that would only be linked to my foot through a causal determination and in the system of experience. Rather, I mean that the pain indicates its place, that it is constitutive of a "pain-space." "I have a pain in my foot" does not signify that "I think that my foot is the cause of this pain," but rather, "the pain comes from my foot," or again, "my foot hurts." This is in fact demonstrated through what psychologists called the "primitive voluminousness of pain." Thus, classical psychology recognized that my body is not presented as an object of external sense, and that perhaps such objects only appear perspectively against this affective background that first throws consciousness outside of itself.

[d. *"Kinesthetic sensations."*]

And finally, when psychologists attempted to reserve for one's own body what they called "kinesthetic sensations" – which were to present its movements to us as a whole – while they attributed the movements of external objects to a mediated perception and the comparison of successive positions, one could certainly have objected that movement – being a relation – could not be sensed and requires some mental operation. But this objection only condemns their language. What they expressed, admittedly poorly, by "kinesthetic sensation" was the originality of movements that I execute with my body: my movements anticipate directly their final position, my intention only sketches out a trajectory in order to meet up with a goal that is already given in its location, and there is something like a seed of movement that only grows later through its objective trajectory. I move external objects with the help of my own body, which takes hold of them in one place in order to take them to another. But I move my body directly, I do not find it at one objective point in space in order

to lead it to another, I have no need of looking for it because it is always with me. I have no need of directing it toward the goal of the movement, in a sense it touches the goal from the very beginning and it throws itself toward it. In movement, the relations between my decision and my body are magical ones.

[e. *Psychology necessarily leads back to phenomena.*]

If the description of one's own body in classical psychology already offered everything necessary to distinguish one's own body from objects, how did psychologists fail to make this distinction, or how did they fail in each case to draw any philosophical consequence? Because, through quite a natural move, they placed themselves into the realm of impersonal thought to which science referred when it thought itself capable of identifying in its observation precisely what came from the situation of the observer and what came from the absolute properties of the object. For the living subject, one's own body was certainly able to be different from all external objects; for the non-situated thought of the psychologist, the experience of the living subject became in turn an object and, far from calling forth a new definition of being, it took up a place within universal being. It was a question of imposing laws upon the "psyche," which was opposed to the real, but treated like a secondary reality or like an object of science. They postulated that our experience, already besieged by physics and biology, would be entirely dissolved by objective knowledge when the system of the sciences was complete. From then on, the experience of the body was demoted to a "representation" of the body, it was not a phenomenon, it was a psychical fact. For living appearances, my body for vision comprises a large lacuna at the level of my head. But biology was there to fill in this lacuna, to explain it through the structure of the eyes, and to teach me what the body in fact is. It teaches me that I have a retina, a brain like other men and the cadavers I dissect, and that the surgeon's instrument could ultimately and infallibly reveal in this indeterminate zone of my head the exact replica of the anatomical charts. I grasp my body as an object-subject, as capable of "seeing" and of "suffering," but these confused representations are merely psychological curiosities, samples of a magical thought whose laws are studied by psychology and sociology, which bring them back into the system of the real world as objects of science.

The imperfect nature of my body, its marginal presentation, and its ambiguity as a touching body and a body touched could thus not be structural traits of the body itself; they did not alter its idea, they became “distinctive characteristics” of the contents of consciousness that make up our representation of the body. These contents are consistent, affective, and strangely twinned as “double sensations,” but apart from this the representation of the body is a representation like any other, and correlatively the body is an object like any other. Psychologists did not notice that by treating the experience of the body in this way they, in accordance with science, only deferred an inevitable problem. The imperfect nature of my perception was understood as an *actual* imperfection that resulted from the organization of my sense organs; the presence of my body was understood as an *actual presence* that resulted from its perpetual action upon my nervous receptors; and finally, the union of the soul and the body, presupposed by these two explanations, was understood, according to Descartes’s thought, as an *actual union* whose in principle possibility did not have to be established because this fact, as the starting point of knowledge, was eliminated from the final results.

125 Now, the psychologist was certainly able to imitate the scientist momentarily by seeing his own body through the eyes of others and, in turn, seeing the body of another person as a mechanism without an interior. The contribution made by these external experiences came to erase his own structures, and reciprocally, having lost contact with himself, he became blind to the behavior of others. He thereby settled into a universal thought that repressed his experience of others just as much as his experience of himself. But as a psychologist, he was engaged in a task that called him back to himself, and he could not remain at this unconscious point. For the physicist is not the object he himself discusses, and neither is the chemist. On the contrary, the psychologist *was himself*, in principle, that very fact he was investigating. He was in fact this very representation of the body, this magical experience that he was now approaching with such indifference; he lived it at the same time that he thought about it. Of course, as has been shown,³ it is not enough for him to be the psyche in order to know it; this knowledge, like all others, is only acquired through our relations with others, and it is not to the ideal of introspective psychology that we are referred; between himself and others as much as between himself and himself, the psychologist was both able and obliged to rediscover a pre-objective relation. But as a psyche speaking of the

psyche, he was everything he was *speaking* about. The psychologist already possessed, through himself, the results of the story he was developing from within the objective attitude, or rather in his very existence he was the condensed result and the latent memory of it. The union of the soul and the body was not accomplished once and for all in some distant world; rather, it is born again at each moment beneath the psychologist's thought, although not as an event that repeats and captures the psyche each time, but as a necessity that the psychologist knew in his own being at the same time that he observed it through objective knowledge. The genesis of perception, from "sensory givens" right up to the "world," has to be renewed with each act of perception, otherwise the sensory givens would have lost the sense that they owed to this evolution.

The "psyche" was thus not one object like all others: it had already accomplished everything that the psychologist was going to say about it before it had been said. The psychologist's being knew more about the psychologist than the psychologist himself – nothing that had happened to him or that was happening to him according to science was absolutely foreign to him. When applied to the psyche, the notion of "fact" thus undergoes a transformation. The factual psyche, along with its "particularities," was no longer an event in objective time and in the external world, but rather an event that we touched from the inside, of which we were the perpetual accomplishment or upsurge, and that continuously gathered together its past, its body, and its world. Before being an objective fact, the union of the soul and the body thus had to be a possibility of consciousness itself, and the question arises: what is the perceiving subject if he must be able to experience [éprouver] a body as his own? Here it is no longer a question of a fact experienced passively, but rather of a fact taken up. To be a consciousness, or rather *to be an experience*, is to have an inner communication with the world, the body, and others, to be with them rather than beside them. To concern oneself with psychology is necessarily to encounter, beneath the objective thought that moves among ready-made things, a primary opening onto things without which there could be no objective knowledge. The psychologist cannot fail to rediscover himself as an experience, that is, as an immediate presence to the past, the world, the body, and others, at the very moment he wanted to see himself as just one object among others. Let us return then to the "characteristics" of one's own body and take up the study at the point we left off. By doing so, we will retrace the progress of modern psychology and accomplish with it the return to experience.



THE SPATIALITY OF ONE'S OWN BODY AND MOTRICITY

[a. Spatiality of position and spatiality of situation: the body schema.]

127 Let us begin by describing the spatiality of one's own body. If my arm is resting on the table, I will never think to say that it is next to the ashtray in the same way that the ashtray is next to the telephone. The contour of my body is a border that ordinary spatial relations do not cross. This is because the body's parts relate to each other in a peculiar way: they are not laid out side by side, but rather envelop each other. My hand, for example, is not a collection of points. In cases of *allochiria*,¹ where the subject senses in his right hand the stimulus that is applied to his left hand, it is impossible to suppose that each of the stimulations individually changes its spatial value,² and the various points on the left hand are transported to the right insofar as they fall within a total organ, within a hand without parts that was displaced all at once. The points, then, form a system, and the space of my hand is not a mosaic of spatial values. Likewise, my entire body is not for me an assemblage of organs juxtaposed in space. I hold my body as an indivisible possession and I know

the position of each of my limbs through a *body schema* [un schéma corporel]³ that envelops them all. But the notion of the “body schema” is ambiguous, as are all concepts that appear at turning points in science. They can only be fully developed given a reform of methodology. At first they are employed in a sense that is not yet their full sense, and their immanent development is what breaks up previous methods.

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“Body schema” was at first understood to be a summary of our bodily experience, capable of providing any momentary interoceptivity and proprioceptivity with a commentary and a signification. It was assumed to provide me with the change of position of the parts of my body for each movement of one of them, the position of each local stimulus in the body as a whole, an assessment of the movements accomplished at each moment of a complex gesture, and finally a perpetual translation into visual language of the momentary kinesthetic and articular impressions. By speaking of the body schema, they believed themselves at first simply to be introducing a convenient name designating a large number of image associations, and they merely wanted to express that these were well-established associations constantly ready to come into play. The body schema was thought to develop gradually throughout childhood and to the extent that tactile, kinesthetic, and articular contents associated between themselves or with visual content and were thereby recalled more easily.⁴ As such, it was described physiologically as a center of images in the classical sense. And yet the body schema clearly overflows this associationist definition in the very manner in which psychologists used the concept. For example, in order for the body schema to improve our understanding of *allochiria*, it is not enough that each sensation of the left hand be posited among the generic images of all the parts of the body that would come together to form around the sensation something like a superimposed sketch of the body. Rather, these associations must be constantly submitted to a unique law, the spatiality of the body must descend from the whole to the parts, my left hand and its position must be implicated in an overall bodily *plan* and must have their origin there, such that this hand can suddenly become the right hand, and not merely superimpose itself upon it or fold over it. When one attempts to shed light on the phenomenon of the phantom limb by linking it to the subject's body schema,⁵ then nothing is added to classical explanations involving cerebral traces and renewed sensations unless the body schema, rather than being the residue of habitual *cenesthesia*,⁶ in fact becomes its law

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of constitution. If the need was felt to introduce this new word, it was in order to express that the spatial and temporal unity, the inter-sensorial unity, or the sensorimotor unity of the body is, so to speak, an in principle unity, to express that this unity is not limited to contents actually and fortuitously associated in the course of our experience, that it somehow precedes them and in fact makes their association possible.

Thus we are making our way toward a second definition of the body schema: it will no longer be the mere result of associations established in the course of experience, but rather the global awareness of my posture in the inter-sensory world, a “form” in Gestalt psychology’s sense of the word.⁷ But the psychologist’s analyses in turn overflow this second definition. It is insufficient to say that my body is a form, or a phenomenon in which the whole is anterior to the parts. For how is such a phenomenon possible? Because a form, when compared to the mosaic of the physico-chemical body or to that of the “cenesthesia,” is a new type of existence. If the paralyzed limb of the anosognosic patient no longer counts in the subject’s body schema, this is not because the body schema is neither the simple copy, nor even the global awareness of the existing parts of the body; rather, the subject actively integrates the parts according to their value for the organism’s projects. Psychologists often say that the body schema is *dynamic*.⁸ Reduced to a precise sense, this term means that my body appears to me as a posture toward a certain task, actual or possible. And in fact my body’s spatiality is not, like the spatiality of external objects or of “spatial sensations,” a *positional spatiality*; rather, it is a *situational spatiality*. If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both hands, only my hands are accentuated and my whole body trails behind them like a comet’s tail. I am not unaware of the location of my shoulders or my waist; rather, this awareness is enveloped in my awareness of my hands and my entire stance is read, so to speak, in how
 130 my hands lean upon the desk. If I am standing and if I hold my pipe in a closed hand, the position of my hand is not determined discursively by the angle that it makes with my forearm, my forearm with my arm, my arm with my torso and, finally, my torso with the ground. I have an absolute knowledge of where my pipe is, and from this I know where my hand is and where my body is, just as the primitive person in the desert is always immediately oriented without having to recall or calculate the distances traveled and the deviations since his departure. When the word “here” is applied to my body, it does not designate a determinate

position in relation to other positions or in relation to external coordinates. It designates the installation of the first coordinates, the anchoring of the active body in an object, and the situation of the body confronted with its tasks. Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and it can envelop its parts rather than laying them out side by side because it is the darkness of the theater required for the clarity of the performance, the foundation of sleep or the vague reserve of power against which the gesture and its goal stand out,⁹ and the zone of non-being in front of which precise beings, figures, and points can appear. If my body can ultimately be a "form," and if there can be, in front of it, privileged figures against indifferent backgrounds, this is insofar as my body is polarized by its tasks, insofar as it exists toward them, insofar as it coils up upon itself in order to reach its goal, and the "body schema" is, in the end, a manner of expressing that my body is in and toward the world.¹⁰ With regard to spatiality, which is our present concern, one's own body is the always implied third term of the figure-background structure, and each figure appears perspectively against the double horizon of external space and bodily space. We must, then, reject as abstract any analysis of bodily space that considers only figures and points, since figures and points can neither be conceived nor exist at all without horizons.

One might reply that the figure-background structure or the point-horizon structure themselves presuppose the notion of objective space, or that, in order to experience a skillful gesture as a figure on the solid background of the body, the hand must be united with the rest of the body through this relation of objective space and that, in this way, the figure-background structure again becomes one of the contingent contents of the universal form of space. But what sense could the word "on" have for a subject who could not be situated by his body in front of the world? It implies a distinction between up and down, that is, an "oriented space."¹¹ When I say that an object is *on* a table, I always place myself (in thought) in the table or the object, and I apply a category to them that in principle fits the relation between my body and external objects. Stripped of this anthropological contribution, the word *on* is no longer distinguished from the word "under" or the term "next to . . ." Even if the universal form of space is that without which there would be, for us, no bodily space, it is not that through which there is a bodily space. Even if the form is not the milieu in which but rather the means by which the content is posited, when it comes to bodily space the form is an

insufficient means for this positing, and to this extent the bodily content remains, in relation to it, something opaque, accidental, and unintelligible. The only solution in this direction would be to admit that the body's spatiality has no meaning [sens] of its own distinct from objective spatiality, and this would erase the content as a phenomenon and thereby erase the problem of its relation to form.

And yet, can we pretend not to find any distinct sense in the words "on," "under," and "next to . . .," or in the dimensions of oriented space? Even if analysis discovers the universal relation of exteriority in all of these relations, the evidentness of up and down, or left and right, for someone who inhabits space prevents us from treating all of these distinctions as mere non-sense and invites us to seek, beneath the explicit sense of the definitions, the latent sense of experiences. The relations between the two spaces would thereby be the following: from the moment I want to thematize bodily space or to work out its sense, I find in it nothing but intelligible space. But at the same time, this intelligible space is not extricated from oriented space, it is in fact nothing but the making explicit of it, and, detached from this source, it has absolutely no sense. Homogeneous space can only express the sense of oriented space because it received this sense from oriented space. If the content can be truly subsumed under the form and can appear as the content of this form, this is because the form is only accessible through the content. Bodily space can only truly become a fragment of objective space if, within its singularity as bodily space, it contains the dialectical ferment that will transform it

132 into universal space. This is what we tried to express by saying that the point-horizon structure is the foundation of space. The horizon or the background would not extend beyond the figure or around it if they did not belong to the same genre of being as it, and if they could not be converted into points by a shift of the gaze. But the point-horizon structure can only teach me what a point is by organizing in advance the zone of corporeality in which the point will be seen and, around this zone, the indeterminate horizons that are the counterpart of this act of seeing. The multiplicity of points or of "heres" can only, in principle, be constituted by an interlocking of experiences in which one of them is perpetually given as an object and that turns itself into the very heart of this space. And, finally, far from my body being for me merely a fragment of space, there would be for me no such thing as space if I did not have a body.

If bodily space and external space form a practical system, the former being the background against which the object can stand out or the void in front of which the object can *appear* as the goal of our action, then it is clearly in action that the spatiality of the body is brought about, and the analysis of movement itself should allow us to understand spatiality better. How the body inhabits space (and time, for that matter) can be seen more clearly by considering the body in motion because movement is not content with passively undergoing space and time, it actively assumes them, it takes them up in their original signification that is effaced in the banality of established situations. Let us examine closely a case of morbid motricity that lays bare the fundamental relations between the body and space.

[b. *The analysis of motricity in Gelb and Goldstein's study of Schneider.*]

One patient,¹² whom traditional psychiatry would class among those suffering from psychic blindness, is incapable of performing "abstract" movements with his eyes closed, namely, movements that are not directed at any actual situation, such as moving his arms or legs upon command, or extending and flexing a finger. He cannot describe the position of his body or even of his head, nor the passive movements of his limbs. Finally, when his head, arm, or leg is touched, he cannot say at what point his body was touched; he does not distinguish between two points of contact on his skin, even if they are 80 millimeters apart; he recognizes neither the size nor the form of objects pressed against his body. He only accomplishes abstract movements if he is allowed to see the limb in question, or to execute preparatory movements involving his whole body. The localization of stimuli and the recognition of tactile objects also become possible with the aid of preparatory movements. Even with his eyes closed, the patient executes the movements that are necessary for life with extraordinary speed and confidence, provided they are habitual movements: he takes his handkerchief from his pocket and blows his nose, or takes a match from a matchbox and lights a lamp. He makes wallets by trade, and the output of his work reaches three-quarters the output of a normal worker. He can even,¹³ without any preparatory movements, execute these "concrete" movements on command. In this patient, as well as for patients with cerebellar injuries, a dissociation between the act of pointing and the reactions of taking or

grasping can be observed:¹⁴ the same subject who is incapable of pointing to a part of his body on command quickly reaches with his hand for the point at which a mosquito is biting him. We must, then, seek out the reason behind the privilege enjoyed by concrete movements and grasping movements.

[c. "Concrete movement."]

Let us take a closer look. One patient asked to point to a part of his body, such as his nose, only succeeds if he is allowed to grasp it. If the patient is directed to interrupt the movement before it reaches its goal, or if he is only allowed to touch his nose with a wooden ruler, then the movement becomes impossible.¹⁵ It must thus be admitted that "grasping" and "touching" are different from "pointing," even for the body. From its very beginnings, the grasping movement is magically complete; it only gets under way by anticipating its goal, since the ban on grasping is enough to inhibit the movement. And it must be acknowledged that a point of my body can be present to me as a point to grasp without being presented to me in this anticipated grasp as a point to indicate. But how is this possible? If I know where my nose is when it is a matter of grasping it, how could I not know where my nose is when it is a matter of pointing to it? This is likely the case because the knowledge of a location can be understood in several senses. Classical psychology does not have any concepts for expressing these varieties of the consciousness of location because for it the consciousness of location is always a positional consciousness, a representation, a *Vor-stellung*, because as such it gives us the location as a determination of the objective world and because such a representation either is or is not; but, if it is, then it delivers to us its object without any ambiguity and as an identifiable term throughout all of its appearances. We must, on the contrary, forge here the concepts necessary to express that bodily space can be given to a grasping intention without being given to an epistemic one.

The patient is conscious of bodily space as the envelope of his habitual action, but not as an objective milieu. His body is available as a means of insertion into his familiar surroundings, but not as a means of expression of a spontaneous and free spatial thought. When ordered to perform a concrete movement, he first repeats the order in an interrogative tone of voice, then his body settles into the overall position required by the task,

and finally he executes the movement. The whole body can be seen collaborating here, and the patient never reduces it to the strictly indispensable traits as does the normal subject. Along with the military salute come other external marks of respect. Along with the gesture of the right hand that pretends to comb his hair comes the gesture of the left hand that pretends to hold the mirror. Along with the gesture of the right hand that hammers the nail comes the gesture of the left hand that pretends to hold the nail. This is because the instruction is taken literally and because the patient only succeeds in carrying out concrete movements on command on condition of placing himself into the spirit of the actual situation to which they correspond. When the normal subject executes the military salute on command, he sees nothing there but an experimental situation, he thus reduces the movement to its most significant elements and does not fully place himself in the situation.¹⁶ He role-plays with his own body, he amuses himself by playing the soldier, he “irrealizes” himself in the role of the soldier¹⁷ just as the actor slides his real body into the “great phantom”¹⁸ of the character to be performed. The normal subject and the actor do not take the imaginary situations as real, but inversely they each detach their real body from its living situation in order to make it breathe, speak, and, if need be, cry in the imaginary. This is what our patient can no longer do. In life, he says, “I experience movements as a result of the situation, as the sequence of events themselves; my movements and I, we are, so to speak, merely a link in the unfolding of the whole, and I am scarcely aware of any voluntary initiative [. . .] everything works by itself.” Similarly, in order to execute a movement upon command, he places himself “within the affective situation of the whole, and the movement flows from this whole, just as in life.”¹⁹ If his trick is interrupted and he is reminded of the experimental situation, all of his dexterity disappears. Kinetic initiation again becomes impossible. The patient must first “find” his arm and “find” the requested gesture through preparatory movements; the gesture itself loses the melodic character that it presents in everyday life and quite clearly becomes a sum of partial movements laboriously placed end to end.

I can thus – by means of my body as a power for a certain number of familiar actions – settle into my surroundings as an ensemble of *manipulanda* without intending my body or my surroundings as objects in the Kantian sense, that is, as systems of qualities linked by some intelligible law, as entities that are transparent, free of all local or temporal

adherence, and ready to be named or at least available for a gesture of designation. There is, on the one hand, my arm as the support of these familiar acts, my body as the power of determinate action whose field and scope I know in advance, and my surroundings as the collection of possible points for this power to be applied; there is, on the other hand, my arm as a machine of muscles and bone, as a flexing and extending apparatus, as an articulated object, and the world as a pure spectacle with which I do not merge but that I contemplate and that I point to. As for bodily space, there is clearly a knowledge of location that is reduced to a sort of coexistence with that location but that is not a nothingness, even though it cannot be expressed by a description, nor even by the mute designation of a gesture. The patient bitten by a mosquito need not look for the point of the bite; he finds it immediately, because it is not for him a matter of situating it in relation to axes of coordinates in objective space, but rather of reaching with his phenomenal hand a certain painful place on his phenomenal body. Between the hand as a power for scratching and the point of the bite as a place to be scratched, a lived relation is given in the natural system of one's own body. The operation takes place wholly within the order of the phenomenal, it does not pass through the objective world. Only the spectator, who lends to the subject of movements his own objective representation of the living body, can believe that the bite is perceived, that the hand moves itself in objective space and, consequently, is surprised that the very same subject fails in the designation experiments. Likewise, the subject placed in front of his scissors, his needle, and his familiar tasks has no need to look for his hands or his fingers, for they are not objects to be found in objective space (like bones, muscles, and nerves), but rather powers that are already mobilized by the perception of the scissors or the needle, they are the center-point of the "intentional threads" that link him to the given objects. We never move our objective body, we move our phenomenal body, and we do so without mystery, since it is our body as a power of various regions of the world that already rises up toward the objects to grasp and perceive them.²⁰ Likewise, the patient need not seek a situation and a space in which to deploy concrete movements, this space is itself given, it is the present world: the piece of leather "to be cut" and the lining "to be sewn." The workbench, the scissors, and the pieces of leather are presented to the subject as poles of action; they define, through their combined value, a particular situation that remains open, that calls for a

certain mode of resolution, a certain labor. The body is but one element in the system of the subject and his world, and the task obtains the necessary movements from him through a sort of distant attraction, just as the phenomenal forces at work in my visual field obtain from me, without any calculation, the motor reactions that will establish between those forces the optimum equilibrium, or as the customs of our milieu or the arrangement of our listeners immediately obtains from us the words, attitudes, and tone that fits with them – not that we are trying to disguise our thoughts or simply aiming to please, but because we literally are what others think of us and we are our world. In concrete movement, the patient has neither a thetic consciousness of the stimulus nor a thetic consciousness of the reaction: quite simply, he is his body and his body is the power for a certain world.

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[d. *Movement toward the possible, "abstract movement."*]

What happens, however, in experiments in which the patient fails? If a part of his body is touched and he is asked to locate the point of contact, he begins by putting his entire body into motion and thereby obtains a rough idea of the location, then he makes the location more precise by moving the limb that is being touched and he completes the task by twitching his skin in the area being touched.²¹ If the subject's arm is horizontally extended, then he can only describe its position after a series of pendular movements that present him with the position of the arm in relation to his torso, the position of the forearm in relation to the arm, and the position of his torso in relation to the vertical. In the case of passive movement, the subject senses that there is movement without being able to say what movement and in which direction. Here again he resorts to active movements. The patient deduces that he is lying down from the pressure of the mattress on his back, or that he is standing from the pressure of the ground on his feet.²² If the two points of a compass are placed on his hand, he only distinguishes between them provided he is able to swing his hand and to first bring one point into contact with his skin, then the other. If letters or numbers are traced on his hand, he only identifies them provided he moves his hand himself and it is not the movement of the point on his hand that he perceives, but rather the movement of his hand in relation to the point. This is demonstrated by drawing on his left hand normal letters, which are never recognized,

and then the mirror image of the same letters, which are immediately understood. The mere contact of a paper rectangle or oval does not give rise to any recognition, whereas the subject recognizes the shapes if he is allowed exploratory movements that he uses in order to “spell them out,” to locate their “characteristics,” and to deduce the object from them.²³

138 How are we to make sense of this series of facts, and how should the function that exists for the normal person, but that is missing for the patient, be understood through them? It cannot be a question of simply transferring to the normal person what is missing in the patient and what he is trying to recover. Illness, like childhood or like the “primitive” state, is a complete form of existence, and the procedures that it employs in order to replace the normal functions that have been destroyed are themselves pathological phenomena. The normal cannot be deduced from the pathological, and deficiencies cannot be deduced from their substitutions, through a mere change of sign. The substitutions must be understood as substitutions, as allusions to a fundamental function that they attempt to replace, but of which they do not give us the direct image. The genuine inductive method is not a “method of differences,” it consists in correctly reading phenomena, in grasping their sense, that is in treating them as modalities and variations of the subject’s total being. We observe that the patient who is questioned on the position of his limbs or on the location of a tactile stimulus seeks, through preparatory movements, to turn his body into a present object of perception; when questioned about the form of an object touching his body, he seeks to trace it himself by following the contour of the object. Nothing could be more mistaken than to assume that the same operations are at work for the normal person and merely abridged by habit. The patient only seeks these explicit perceptions in order to supply himself with a particular presence of the body and the object that is given for the normal person and that remains for us to reconstitute. Of course, the perception of the body and of objects in contact with the body is confused for the normal subject as well when there is no movement.²⁴ Nevertheless, the normal subject distinguishes in every case, without movement, between a stimulus applied to his head and a stimulus applied to his body.

Shall we assume²⁵ that the exteroceptive or proprioceptive stimulation has awakened for him “kinesthetic residues” that take the place of actual movements? But how could the tactile givens awaken determinate

“kinesthetic residues” if they did not carry with them some characteristic that makes them capable of this, if they did not themselves have a precise or a confused spatial signification?²⁶ We shall say then, at the very least, that the normal subject immediately has several “holds”²⁷ on his body. He does not have his body available merely as implicated in a concrete milieu, he is not merely situated in relation to the tasks set by his trade, nor is he merely open to real situations. Rather, in addition he possesses his body as the correlate of pure stimuli stripped of all practical signification; he is open to verbal and fictional situations that he can choose for himself or that a researcher might suggest. His body is not presented to him through touch as a geometrical plan upon which each stimulus would come to occupy an explicit position, and Schneider’s illness consists in precisely the need to convert the touched part of his body into a figure in order to know where he is being touched. But each bodily stimulation for the normal subject awakens, not an actual movement, but a sort of “virtual movement”; the part of the body addressed escapes from anonymity, appears through a strange tension, and as a certain power for action within the frame of the anatomical apparatus. The normal subject’s body is not merely ready to be mobilized by real situations that draw it toward themselves, it can also turn away from the world, apply its activity to the stimuli that are inscribed upon its sensory surfaces, lend itself to experiments and, more generally, be situated in the virtual. Because the patient is enclosed in the actual, the pathological sense of touch needs its own movements in order to localize the stimuli, and again it is for the same reason that the patient substitutes for recognition and tactile perception the laborious decoding of stimuli and the deduction from objects. For example, for a key to appear in my tactile experience as a key, touch must have a sort of fullness, a tactile field where isolated impressions can be integrated into a configuration, just as notes are no longer the points of passage of a melody; and the same viscosity of tactile givens that subjects the body to actual situations also reduces the object to a sum of successive “characteristics,” reduces perception to an abstract signaling, reduces recognition to a rational synthesis or a probable conjecture, and strips the object of its carnal presence and its facticity. Whereas for the normal person each motor or tactile event gives rise in consciousness to an abundance of intentions that run from the body as a center of virtual action either toward the body itself or toward the object, for the patient, on the contrary, the tactile impression

remains opaque and closed in upon itself. It can surely draw the grasping hand toward itself, but it is not laid out before that hand as something that could be pointed to. The normal person *reckons* with the possible, which thus acquires a sort of actuality without leaving behind its place as a possibility; for the patient, however, the field of the actual is limited to what is encountered in real contact or linked to these givens through an explicit deduction.

[e. *Motor project and motor intentionality.*]

For these patients, the analysis of “abstract movement” shows even more clearly this possession of space, or this spatial existence that is the primordial condition of every living perception. If the patient is asked to execute an abstract movement with his eyes closed, a series of preparatory operations are necessary for him “to find” the operative limb itself, the direction or the pace of the movement, and finally the level on which it will unfold. If, for example, he is simply asked to move his arm, he is at first dumbfounded. Then he moves his whole body and the movements are subsequently restricted to the arm that, in the end, the subject “finds.” If it is a question of “raising his arm,” the patient must also “find” his head (which is for him the symbol of “up”) by a series of pendular oscillations that are carried out throughout the duration of the movement and that establish the goal. If he is asked to trace a square or a circle in the air, he first “finds” his arm, then he brings his hand forward, just as a normal subject does in order to locate a wall in the dark, and finally he attempts several movements in a straight line and along various curves, and if one of these movements happens to be circular, he promptly completes the task. Moreover, he only succeeds in finding the movement on a certain plane that is just about perpendicular with the ground, and, outside of this privileged plane, he does not even know how to begin.²⁸

Clearly the patient’s body is only available to him as an amorphous mass in which only real movements introduce divisions and articulations. He leaves the care of executing the movement to his body, like an orator who could not speak a word without relying upon a text written in advance. The patient does not seek and does not find the movement himself; rather, he agitates his body until the movement appears. The instructions he receives are not meaningless for him, since he knows

how to recognize what remains imperfect in his first attempts, and since, if the accidents of the gesticulating bring about the requested movement, he also knows to recognize and to make use of this good fortune. But even if the instructions have for him an *intellectual signification*, they do not have a *motor signification*, they do not speak to him as a motor subject. He can surely discover in the trace of a completed movement the illustration of the given instructions, but he can never deploy the thought of a movement into an actual movement. He is missing neither motricity nor thought, and we must acknowledge, between movement as a third person process and thought as a representation of movement, an anticipation or a grasp of the result assured by the body itself as a motor power, a “motor project” (*Bewegungsentwurf*), or a “motor intentionality” without which the instructions would remain empty. Sometimes the patient thinks of the ideal formula of the movement, other times he throws his body into blind attempts; however, for the normal person every movement is indissolubly movement and consciousness of movement. This can be expressed by saying that, for the normal person, every movement has a *background*, and that the movement and its background are “moments of a single whole.”²⁹ The background of the movement is not a representation associated or linked externally to the movement itself; it is immanent in the movement, it animates it and guides it along at each moment. For the subject, the beginning of kinetic movement is, like perception, an original manner of relating to an object.

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The distinction between abstract movement and concrete movement is thereby clarified: the background of concrete movement is the given world, the background of abstract movement is, on the contrary, constructed. When I motion to my friend to approach, my intention is not a thought that I could have produced within myself in advance, nor do I perceive the signal in my body. I signal across the world; I signal over there, where my friend is. The distance that separates us and his consent or refusal are immediately read in my gesture. There is not first a perception followed by a movement, the perception and the movement form a system that is modified as a whole. If, for example, I realize that my friend does not want to obey, and if I thereby modify my gesture, we do not have here two distinct conscious acts. Rather, I see my partner's resistance, and my impatient gesture emerges from this situation, without any interposed thought.³⁰ If I now execute the “same” movement, but without aiming at a present or even an imaginary partner, that is,

142 the same movement as “a sequence of movements in themselves,”³¹ if in other words I execute a “bending” of the forearm toward the arm with a “supination” of the arm and a “bending” of the fingers, then my body, which was just previously the vehicle of movement, now becomes the goal of movement. Its motor project no longer aims at someone in the world: it aims at my forearm, my arm, my fingers, and it aims at them insofar as they are capable of breaking with their insertion in the given world and of sketching out around me a fictional situation, or when I do not even have a fictional partner, insofar as I curiously examine this strange signifying machine and set it to work for my own amusement.³²

[f. The “function of projection.”]*

Within the busy world in which concrete movement unfolds, abstract movement hollows out a zone of reflection and of subjectivity, it superimposes a virtual or human space over physical space. Concrete movement is thus centripetal, whereas abstract movement is centrifugal; the first takes place within being or within the actual, the second takes place within the possible or within non-being; the first adheres to a given background, the second itself sets up its own background. The normal function that makes abstract movement possible is a function of “projection” by which the subject of movement organizes before himself a free space in which things that do not exist naturally can take on a semblance of existence. There are patients, not as severely affected as Schneider, who perceive forms, distances, and objects themselves, but who can neither trace out the directions useful for action upon these objects, nor arrange them according to a given principle, nor in general apply the anthropological determinations to the spatial spectacle that would turn it into the landscape of our action. When these patients are, for example, placed in a labyrinth and confronted by an impasse, they only discover the “opposite direction” with difficulty. If a ruler is placed between them and the doctor, they do not know how to arrange objects to be “on their side” or “on the doctor’s side.” They are inaccurate when indicating on another person’s arm a point that is being stimulated on their own body. Knowing that today is a Monday in March, they will have difficulty indicating the previous day and month, even though they know the sequence of days and months by heart. They do not succeed in comparing the

number of units contained in two sets of sticks placed in front of them: sometimes they count the same stick twice, sometimes they count sticks from one set with those that belong to the other.³³ This is because all of these operations require the same power of marking out borders and directions in the given world, of establishing lines of force, of arranging perspectives, of organizing the given world according to the projects of the moment, and of constructing upon the geographical surroundings a milieu of behavior and a system of significations that express, on the outside, the internal activity of the subject. The world no longer exists for these patients except as a ready-made or fixed world, whereas the normal person's projects polarize the world, causing a thousand signs to appear there, as if by magic, that guide action, as signs in a museum guide the visitor. This function of "projection" or "conjuring up" [*évoation*] (in the sense in which the medium conjures up and makes the dead person appear) is also what makes abstract movement possible. For, in order to possess my body independently of all urgent tasks, in order to make use of it in my imagination, and in order to trace in the air a movement that is only defined by a verbal instruction or by moral necessities, I must also invert the natural relation between my body and the surroundings, and a human productivity must appear through the thickness of being.

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[g. (i) *These phenomena are impossible to understand through a causal explanation and by connecting them to a visual deficiency . . .*]

These are the terms in which the movement disorders we are considering can be described. But one might find that this description (as has often been said of psychoanalysis)³⁴ only reveals the sense or the essence of the illness and does not give us its cause. Science would only begin with an explanation that must seek beneath phenomena the conditions on which they depend according to the proven methods of induction. Here, for example, we know that Schneider's motor disorders coincide with extensive disorders of the visual function, themselves linked to the occipital injury at the origin of the condition. Through vision alone, Schneider does not recognize any object.³⁵ His visual givens are nearly formless patches.³⁶ As for absent objects, he is incapable of forming a visual representation of them.³⁷ On the other hand, we know that "abstract" movements become possible for the subject the moment he focuses his eyes upon the limb charged with the task.³⁸ Thus, what

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remains of voluntary motricity depends upon what remains of visual knowledge. Mill's famous methods would allow us to conclude here that abstract movements and *Zeigen* [pointing] depend upon the power of visual representation, and that the concrete movements retained by the patient, along with imitative movements by which he compensates for the poverty of his visual givens, come from the kinesthetic or tactile sense, which are, in fact, remarkably exploited by Schneider. The distinction between concrete and abstract movement, like that between *Greifen* [grasping] and *Zeigen*, would allow itself to be reduced to the classical distinction between the tactile and the visual, and the function of projection or conjuring up, which we brought to light just above, would be reduced to perception and visual representation.³⁹

145 In fact, an inductive analysis carried out according to Mill's methods does not reach any conclusion. For the disorders of abstract movement or of *Zeigen* are not only encountered in the case of psychic blindness, but also in cerebellar injuries and in many other diseases.⁴⁰ Among all of these concordances, it is not permitted to choose one of them alone as the decisive one and to "explain" the act of pointing through it. Faced by the ambiguity of the facts, one can only renounce the simple statistical recording of coincidences and seek to "understand" the relation manifested by them. In the case of cerebellar injuries, it is observed that visual stimuli, in contrast to sonorous stimuli, only give rise to imperfect motor reactions, and nevertheless there is no reason in these cases to assume a primary disturbance of the visual function. The designating movements do not become impossible because the visual function is affected; it is, on the contrary, because the *Zeigen* attitude is impossible that the visual stimuli only give rise to imperfect reactions. We should acknowledge that sound, of itself, calls forth rather a grasping movement, while visual perception calls forth a designating gesture. "Sound always directs us toward its content, its signification for us; in visual presentation, to the contrary, we can much more easily 'abstract' from the content and we are much more oriented toward the location in space where the object is situated."⁴¹ A sense is thus defined less by the indescribable quality of its "psychic contents," than by a certain way of offering its object, that is, by its epistemological structure of which the quality is but the concrete realization and, to use Kant's term, the exhibition. The doctor who applies "visual" or "sonorous stimuli" to the patient believes he is testing the patient's "visual" or "auditive sensitivity" and thus taking

inventory of the sensible qualities that compose his consciousness (in empiricist language) or the material available to his knowledge (in intellectualist language). The doctor and the psychologist borrow the concepts of "vision" and "hearing" from common sense, and common sense takes them to be univocal because our body indeed comprises distinct visual and auditory mechanisms to which common sense – according to a general postulate of "constancy"⁴² that expresses our natural ignorance of ourselves – assumes isolatable conscious contents must correspond. But when taken up and applied systematically by science, these confused concepts hinder research and ultimately reveal the need for a general revision of these naïve categories. In fact, what the threshold measurement actually tests for are functions anterior to the specification of sensible qualities and anterior to the deployment of knowledge; it tests the manner in which the subject makes that which surrounds him exist for him: either as the pole of activity and the term of an act of grasping or releasing, or as a spectacle and the theme of knowledge. The motor disorders in cerebellar injury cases and those of psychic blindness can only be coordinated if the background of movement and vision is defined not by a stock of sensible qualities, but by a certain manner of articulating or of structuring the surroundings. We are thus led back by the very use of inductive method to these "metaphysical" questions that positivism wanted to avoid. Induction only reaches its end if it is not restricted to recording presences, absences, and concomitant variations, and if it conceives of and understands facts as subsumed under ideas not contained in them. There is no choice between a description of the illness that would give us its sense and an explanation that would give us its cause, and there are no explanations without understanding.

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But let us hone our objection, which upon analysis splits into two. (1) The "cause" of a "psychic fact" is never another "psychic fact" that could be discovered by simple observation. For example, visual representation does not explain abstract movement because this representation is itself inhabited by the same power of projecting a spectacle that appears in abstract movement and in the designating gesture. But this power does not appear to the senses, and not even to inner sense. Let us say provisionally that it is only revealed to a certain type of reflection whose nature we will make more precise below. From this, it follows directly that psychological induction is not a simple inventory of facts. Psychology does not explain by designating, among facts, the constant and unconditioned

antecedent. It conceives or understands facts, just as induction in physics is not restricted to recording empirical sequences and rather creates concepts that are capable of coordinating facts. This is why no induction – in psychology or in physics – can boast a critical experiment. Since the explanation is invented, not discovered, it is never given with the fact, it is always a probable interpretation. So far we have merely applied to psychology what has been fully established with regard to induction in physics,⁴³ and our first objection weighs against the empiricist manner of conceiving induction and against Mill's methods. – (2) Now, we will see that this first objection overlaps with a second. In psychology, it is not only empiricism that needs to be rejected, but rather the inductive method and causal thought in general. The object of psychology is of such a nature that it could not be determined by relations of function to variable. Let us establish these two points in some detail.

(1) We observe that Schneider's motor disorders are accompanied by an extensive deficiency in visual knowledge. We are thus tempted to consider psychic blindness as a differential case of pure tactile behavior and, since the consciousness of bodily space and of abstract movement (which aims at virtual space) are almost completely missing for him, we are inclined to conclude that touch in itself gives us no experience of objective space.⁴⁴ We will say, then, that touch is not by itself apt to offer a background to movement, that is, to lay out before the moving subject his point of departure and his point of arrival in a strict simultaneity. The patient attempts to provide a "kinesthetic background" for himself through preparatory movements, and he succeeds in this way at "noting" the position of his body at the outset and in beginning the movement. Nevertheless, this kinesthetic background is labile; it cannot, like a visual background, reveal to us the trajectory of the moving object in relation to its point of departure and point of arrival during the entire duration of its movement. This kinesthetic background is disrupted by the movement itself, and it needs to be reconstructed after each phase of movement. This is why, we will say, Schneider's abstract movements have lost their melodic character, why they are built out of fragments placed end to end, and why they often "derail" along the way. Schneider's missing practical field is nothing other than the visual field.⁴⁵

But in order to be justified in linking motor disorders and visual disorders in psychic blindness, or the function of projection to vision as its constant and unconditioned antecedent for the normal subject, we

would have to be certain that only the visual givens were affected by the illness, and that all other behavioral conditions (and particularly tactile experience) remained what they were for the normal subject. Can this be confirmed? Here is where we will see that the facts are ambiguous, that no critical experiment is possible, and that no explanation is final. If we observe that a normal subject is capable of executing abstract movements with his eyes closed, and that his tactile experience is sufficient to govern motricity, then one might always respond that the tactile givens of the normal subject have in fact received their objective structure from the visual givens, according to the previous schema of training of the senses. If we observe that a blind man is capable of localizing the stimuli on his body and of executing abstract movements (notwithstanding the fact that there are examples of preparatory movements among the blind), one might still respond that the frequency of associations has communicated the qualitative coloration of kinesthetic impressions to the tactile impressions, and has welded them into a quasi-simultaneity.⁴⁶ And yet, several facts leave the impression of a primary alteration of tactile experience even in the behavior of the patients in question.⁴⁷ For example, one subject who knows how to knock on a door can no longer perform the action if the door is hidden or if it is simply out of reach. In this latter case, the patient cannot execute the gesture of knocking on the door, or of opening it, *even if his eyes are open and focused on the door.*⁴⁸ How could visual deficiencies be blamed here, when the patient has a visual perception of the goal available that ordinarily suffices to more or less orient his movements? Have we not revealed a primary disturbance of touch? Clearly, in order for an object to trigger a movement it must be included in the motor field of the patient, and the disorder consists in a shrinking of the motor field, from now on limited to the actually tangible objects and to the exclusion of that horizon of possible touching that surrounds them for the normal subject. This deficiency would ultimately be related to a function deeper than vision, and also deeper than touch (as a sum of given qualities); it would concern the subject's living region, that opening up to the world that ensures that objects currently out of reach nevertheless count for the normal subject, that they exist as tactile for him and remain part of his motor universe. According to this hypothesis, when patients observe their hand and the goal throughout the entire duration of the movement,⁴⁹ we must not see this as the mere magnification of a normal procedure, and in fact this recourse to vision could only be made

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necessary through the collapse of virtual touching. If, however, we remain on a strictly inductive level, this interpretation, which puts touch into question, remains optional; one can still prefer (with Goldstein) another interpretation: in order to knock, the patient needs a goal within reach, precisely because vision, which is deficient for him, no longer suffices to provide a solid background for the movement. Thus, there is no fact that could establish, in a decisive manner, that the tactile experience of these patients is or is not identical to that of normal subjects, and Goldstein's conception, like the physical theory, can always be harmonized with the facts by means of some auxiliary hypothesis. Just as in physics, no strictly exclusive interpretation is possible in psychology.

Nevertheless, if we look more closely we will see that the impossibility of a critical experiment is grounded in psychology on peculiar reasons: it comes from the very nature of the object under investigation – behavior – and this impossibility has much more decisive consequences. Given a set of theories in which none are absolutely excluded and of which none are rigorously established by the facts, physics can all the same choose according to the degree of plausibility, that is, according to the number of facts that each one succeeds in coordinating without weighing itself down with auxiliary hypotheses believed to respond to the needs of the case. In psychology, this criterion leads us into error: we have just seen that no auxiliary hypothesis is necessary to explain the impossibility of the “knocking” gesture in front of the door through the visual disorder. Not only do we never reach an exclusive interpretation (a deficiency of virtual touching or a deficiency of the visual world), but moreover we must necessarily deal with *equally probable* interpretations, because “visual representations,” “abstract movement,” and “virtual touching” are only different names for a single central phenomenon. Psychology, then, does not find itself in the same situation as physics, that is, confined to the probability of inductions; it is incapable of choosing, even according to plausibility, between hypotheses that nevertheless remain incompatible from the strictly inductive point of view. For an induction, even a merely probable one, to remain possible, the “visual representation” or the “tactile perception” must cause the abstract movement, or they must in the end both be effects of another cause. The three or four terms must be able to be considered from the outside, and one must be able to discover correlative variations in them. But, if they were not separable, if each of them presupposed the others, then the failure would not be the failure

of empiricism or of the attempts to find critical experiments, it would be the failure of inductive method or of causal thought in psychology. Thus, we arrive at the second point we wanted to establish.

(2) If, as Goldstein acknowledges, the coexistence of the tactile givens with the visual givens modifies the normal subject's tactile givens profoundly enough for them to be able to serve as the background of abstract movement, then the tactile givens of the patient – cut off from this visual support – will not be able to be directly identified with those of the normal subject. Tactile and visual givens, says Goldstein, are not juxtaposed for the normal subject, the former owe to the nearness of the latter a “qualitative nuance” that they have lost for Schneider. This is to say, he adds, that the study of the purely tactile is impossible in the normal person, and that the disorder alone provides a picture of what tactile experience, reduced to itself, might look like.⁵⁰ This conclusion is correct, but it amounts to saying that the word “touching” does not have the same sense when applied to the normal subject and to the patient, that the “purely tactile” is a pathological phenomenon that does not enter as a component of normal experience, that the disorder, by disorganizing the visual function, had not revealed the pure essence of the tactile, that it had rather modified the entire experience of the subject. Or again, if one prefers, it is to say that there is, for the normal subject, not a tactile experience and a visual experience, but rather an integral experience where it is impossible to measure out the different sensory contributions. Experiences mediated by touch in psychological blindness have nothing in common with those mediated by touch for the normal subject, and neither are worthy of being called “tactile” givens. Tactile experience is not an isolated condition that could be held constant while “visual” experience is varied in such a way as to locate the causality belonging to each, nor is behavior a function of these variables, it is presupposed in their definition, just as each one is presupposed in the definition of the other.⁵¹ Psychic blindness, deficiencies in the sense of touch, and motor disorders are three expressions of a more fundamental disturbance by which they can be understood, not three components of morbid behavior. Visual representations, tactile givens, and motricity are three phenomena cut out of the unity of behavior. If, because they present correlated variations, we want to explain one in terms of the others, then we forget, for example, that the act of visual representation, as is shown by the case of cerebellar injury, already presupposes the very

power of projection that also appears in abstract movement and in the designating gesture, and so we assume what was meant to be explained. By enclosing within vision, touch, or some actual given the power of projection that actually inhabits them all, inductive and causal thought conceals this power from us and makes us blind to the dimension of behavior that is precisely that of psychology.

152 In physics, of course, the establishing of a law demands that the scientist conceive of the idea under which the facts will be coordinated and this idea, which is not found in the facts, will never be verified through a critical experiment, it will only ever be probable. But it is still the idea of a causal link in the sense of a relation between a function and a variable. Atmospheric pressure had to be invented, but, after all, it was still a third person process, a function of a number of variables. If behavior is a form in which “visual contents” and “tactile contents,” or sensitivity and motricity, only figure as inseparable moments, then it remains inaccessible to causal thought. Behavior can only be grasped by another type of thought – the type of thought that takes its object in its nascent state, such as it appears to him who lives it, with the atmosphere of sense by which it is enveloped, and that seeks to slip itself into this atmosphere in order to discover, behind dispersed facts and symptoms, the total being of the subject in the case of the normal person or the fundamental disorder in the case of the patient.

[g. (ii.) . . . or through a reflective analysis and by connecting them to the “symbolic function.”]

If we can explain neither the disorders of abstract movement through the loss of visual contents, nor consequently the function of projection through the actual presence of these contents, then only one method seems possible: it would consist in reconstituting the fundamental disorder by following the symptoms backward, not to an observable *cause*, but to an intelligible *reason* or condition of possibility; that is, to treat the human subject as an indivisible consciousness that is wholly present in each of its manifestations. If the disorder should not be related to content, then it must be linked to the form of knowledge; if psychology is not empiricist and explanatory, then it must be intellectualist and reflective. Precisely like the act of naming,⁵² the act of pointing presupposes that the object, rather than being approached, grasped, and engulfed by

the body, be maintained at a distance and sketch out an image in front of the patient. Plato still allowed the empiricist the power of definition by pointing, but in fact even this silent gesture is impossible if what it designates is not already ripped out of instantaneous and monadic existence and treated as the representative of its previous appearances in me and of its simultaneous appearances in others; that is, unless it is subsumed under a category and promoted to the status of an idea. If the patient can no longer point to a place on his body that is being touched, this is because he is no longer a subject facing an objective world and because he can no longer take up the "categorical attitude."⁵³ Abstract movement is likewise compromised insofar as it presupposes a consciousness of the goal, insofar as it is carried by it and is a movement for itself. And indeed, no existing object can trigger abstract movement, it is clearly centrifugal, it sketches out in space an unmotivated intention that falls upon one's own body and constitutes it as an object rather than moving through it in order to meet up with things by its means. Abstract movement is thus inhabited by a power of objectification, by a "symbolic function,"⁵⁴ a "representation function,"⁵⁵ or a power of "projection"⁵⁶ that, moreover, is already at work in the constitution of "things" and that consists in treating the sensory givens as representatives of each other and, when taken together, as representatives of an "eidos." It consists in giving them a sense, in animating them from within, in organizing them into a system, in centering a plurality of experiences upon a single intelligible core, and in making an identifiable unity appear in them under different perspectives. In short, it consists in arranging behind the flux of impressions an invariant that gives the flux its reason and in articulating the material of experience.

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But it cannot be said that consciousness has this power; rather, it is this power itself. From the moment there is consciousness, and in order for consciousness to exist, there must be something of which it is conscious, an intentional object, and it can only bear upon this object insofar as it "irrealizes" itself and throws itself into the object, insofar as it is entirely within this reference to . . . something, and insofar as it is a pure act of signification. If a being is consciousness, it must be nothing other than a fabric of intentions. If he ceases to be defined by the act of signifying, then he falls back to the status of a thing, the thing being precisely that which does not know, that which remains within an absolute ignorance of itself and of the world, that which, consequently, is not a genuine "self," that

is, a “for itself,” and that has merely a spatio-temporal individuation and existence in itself.⁵⁷ Consciousness will thus not admit of degrees. If the patient no longer exists as a consciousness, then he must exist as a thing. Either movement is movement for itself, in which case the “stimulus” is not the cause but rather the intentional object, or movement breaks apart and scatters throughout existence in itself, it becomes an objective process in the body whose phases are successive but unknown to each other. The privilege of concrete movements in the disorder would be explained because they are reflexes in the classical sense. The patient’s hand finds the mosquito’s location on his body because the preestablished nervous circuits direct the reaction to the place of stimulation. The movements involved in his regular work are preserved because they depend upon firmly established conditioned reflexes. They subsist despite the psychic deficiencies because they are movements in themselves. The distinction between concrete and abstract movement, between *Greifen* and *Zeigen*, would be the distinction between physiology and psychology, between existence in itself and existence for itself.⁵⁸

We will see that the first distinction, far from mapping onto the second, is in fact incompatible with it. Every “physiological explanation” tends to be generalized. If the grasping movement or concrete movement is guaranteed by a connection between each point on the skin and the motor muscles that guide the hand to it, then it is not clear why the same nervous circuit directing the same muscles in a movement that is scarcely different could not guarantee the *Zeigen* gesture just as well as the *Greifen* movement. The physical difference between the mosquito stinging the skin and the wooden ruler that the doctor presses against the same location does not suffice to explain that the grasping movement is possible while the designating gesture is impossible. The two “stimuli” are only genuinely distinguished if we take into consideration their affective value or their biological sense; the two responses only cease to merge if *Zeigen* and *Greifen* are considered as two different ways of relating to the object and two types of being in the world. But this distinction is precisely what is impossible once the living body has been reduced to the condition of an object. If one concedes even once that the living body is the seat of a third person process, then nothing in behavior can be reserved for consciousness. Gestures and movements, since they make use of the same organ-objects and the same nerve-objects, must be laid out upon the stage of surface-level processes and must be inserted

into the closely woven fabric of "physiological conditions." When the patient, engaging in his work, lifts his hand toward a tool that is on the table, does he not shift the segments of his arm exactly as he would have to in order to execute an abstract movement of extension? Does not an everyday gesture contain a series of muscular contractions and of innervations? The physiological explanation, then, cannot be limited.

On the other hand, it is also impossible to limit consciousness. If the gesture of pointing is related to consciousness, and if the stimulus can even once cease to be the cause of the reaction in order to become the intentional object, then it is inconceivable that it could, in any case, function as a pure cause or that movement could ever be blind. For if "abstract" movements, in which there is a consciousness of the point of departure and the point of arrival, are to be possible, then we must know at each moment of our lives just where our body is without having to go looking for it (in the manner that we go looking for an object that was moved during our absence). Even "automatic" movements must be anticipated in consciousness – that is, in our body there are never any movements in themselves. And if every objective space exists only for intellectual consciousness, then we must discover the categorial attitude even in the grasping movement.⁵⁹ Like physiological causality, the appearance of consciousness [*prise de conscience*] cannot begin at some particular point. Either the physiological explanation must be rejected, or it must be acknowledged as total; either consciousness must be denied, or it must be acknowledged as total. We cannot relate certain movements to the bodily mechanism and certain other ones to consciousness, the body and consciousness are not mutually limiting, they can only be parallel. Every physiological explanation generalizes into a mechanistic physiology, every appearance of consciousness generalizes into an intellectualist psychology, and mechanistic physiology or intellectualist psychology level out behavior and efface the distinction between abstract movement and concrete movement, between *Zeigen* and *Greifen*. The distinction can only be maintained if there are several ways for the body to be a body, and several ways for consciousness to be consciousness. So long as the body is defined through existence in itself, it functions uniformly as a mechanism; so long as the soul is defined by pure existence for itself, it will only know objects laid out in front of it. The distinction between abstract and concrete movement does not, then, merge with the distinction between the body and consciousness, it does not belong to the same reflective dimension, it

only finds its place in the dimension of behavior. Pathological phenomena make something flicker before our eyes, but this something is not the pure consciousness of the object. Like the diagnosis offered by empiricist psychology, intellectualist psychology's diagnosis – that we are seeing a collapse of consciousness and a setting free of automatic reflexes – would miss the fundamental disorder.

[h. *The existential ground of the "symbolic function" and the structure of illness.*]

157 The intellectualist analysis, here as everywhere, is less false than it is abstract. The "symbolic function" or "representation function" certainly underlies our movement, but it is not an ultimate term for the analysis, it in turn rests upon a certain ground. Intellectualism's error is to make it depend upon itself, to separate it from the materials in which it is realized, and to recognize in us, as originary, a direct presence in the world. For beginning from this transparent consciousness, and from this intentionality that does not admit of degrees, everything that separates us from the true world – error, illness, madness, and, in short, embodiment – is reduced to the status of a mere appearance. Of course, intellectualism does not set up consciousness apart from its materials, and, for example, it explicitly resists introducing a "symbolic consciousness" behind speech, action, and perception that would be the common and numerically single form of linguistic, perceptual, and motor materials. There is no "general symbolic faculty,"⁶⁰ says Cassirer, and reflective analysis does not look to establish a "community of being," but rather a "community of sense"⁶¹ among the pathological phenomena that concern perception, language, and action. Intellectualist psychology, given that it has definitively left causal thought and realism behind, would be capable of seeing the sense or the essence of the disorder and of recognizing a unity of consciousness that is not observable on the level of being and that is self-affirmed upon the level of truth. But precisely this distinction between the community of being and the community of sense, the conscious passage from the order of existence to the order of truth, and the reversal that allows for the affirmation of sense and value as autonomous are, in practice, equal to an abstraction, since, from the point of view ultimately adopted, the variety of phenomena becomes meaningless and incomprehensible. If consciousness is placed outside of being, then consciousness can never be penetrated by being. The empirical

variety of consciousnesses – morbid consciousness, primitive consciousness, infantile consciousness, the consciousness of others – cannot be taken seriously; there is nothing there to be known or comprehended. One thing alone is comprehensible, namely, the pure essence of consciousness. None of these other consciousnesses could fail to actualize the *Cogito*. Behind his delusions, obsessions, and lies, the madman knows that he is delirious, that he makes himself obsessive, that he lies, and ultimately that he is not mad, he just thinks he is. On this account, then, everything is just fine and madness is simply a lack of good will. The analysis of the sense of the disorder, once it posits the symbolic function, identifies all disorders, reduces aphasia, apraxia, and agnosia to a unity,⁶² and perhaps even has no means of distinguishing them from schizophrenia.⁶³

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We can thus understand why doctors and psychologists decline intellectualism's invitation, and go back, lacking a better explanation, to attempts at causal explanation that at least have the advantage of bringing into the account what is peculiar to the disorder and to each particular disorder, and which thereby offer us at least the illusion of actual knowledge. Modern pathology shows that there is no strictly elective disorder, but it also shows that each disturbance is nuanced according to the region of behavior that it principally attacks.⁶⁴ Even if every case of aphasia, when closely observed, included gnostic⁶⁵ and practical disturbances, even if every case of apraxia included disturbances of language and perception, and even if every case of agnosia included disturbances of language and action, it remains the case that the center of these disturbances is here in the zone of language, there in the zone of perception, and lastly in the zone of action. When the symbolic function is blamed in each of these cases, the common structure of different disturbances is certainly characterized, but this structure must not be detached from the materials where it is, if not electively, then principally produced each time. After all, Schneider's disorder is not initially metaphysical, for it was a piece of shrapnel that injured him in his occipital region. His visual deficiencies are extensive, but as we have said it would be absurd to explain all others through them as if through their cause, and it is no less absurd to think that the shrapnel collided with symbolic consciousness. Rather, his Spirit is affected through vision.

So long as the means of linking the origin and the essence of the disorder has not been found, so long as a *concrete essence* or a structure of the illness that expresses both its generality and its particularity has not been

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found, so long as phenomenology has not become genetic phenomenology, then these offending retreats into causal thought and naturalism will remain justified. Our question thus comes into focus. We must imagine, between the linguistic, perceptual, and motor contents and the form that they receive or the symbolic function that animates them, a relationship that would be neither the reduction of the form to the content, nor the subsumption of the content under an autonomous form. We must understand how Schneider's disorder simultaneously overflows the particular contents of his experience (visual, tactile, and motor) and yet only attacks the symbolic function through the privileged material of vision. The senses, and one's own body overall, present the mystery of a whole that, without leaving behind its *haecceity* and its particularity, emits beyond itself significations capable of offering a framework for an entire series of thoughts and experiences. If Schneider's disorder has to do with motricity and thought as much as with perception, it remains the case that for thought the disorder primarily affects his power of recognizing simultaneous wholes, and for motricity it primarily affects his power of surveying movement from above [*survoler*] and of projecting it into the exterior world. Thus, mental space and practical space are, in a way, destroyed or damaged, and the words themselves are a sufficient indication of the genealogy of the disorder in vision. The visual disorder is not the cause of other disorders, nor of the particular disorder affecting thought. But neither is it a simple consequence of them. Visual contents are not the cause of the function of projection, but no more is vision a simple opportunity for the Spirit to deploy a power that is in itself unconditioned. Visual contents are taken up, utilized, and sublimated to the level of thought through a symbolic power that transcends them, but this power can only be constituted on the basis of vision. Phenomenology calls the relation between matter and form a relation of *Fundierung* [found-ing]: the symbolic function does not depend on vision as its ground because vision is its cause, but because vision is this gift of nature that Spirit had to make use of beyond all expectations, to which it had to give a radically new sense and upon which nevertheless it depended, not merely in order to become embodied, but even in order to exist at all. Form absorbs content to the point that content ultimately appears as a mere mode of form, and the historical preparations of thought appear as a ruse of Reason disguised as Nature. But reciprocally, even in its intellectual sublimation, content remains radically contingent as the initial

institution or founding⁶⁶ of knowledge and action, as the first grasp of being or of value whose concrete richness will never be exhausted by knowledge or action, and whose spontaneous method they will everywhere renew. We must restore this dialectic between form and matter, or rather, since "reciprocal action" is nothing more than a compromise with causal thought and a contradictory formulation, we must describe the milieu where this contradiction is conceivable; in other words, existence, or the perpetual taking up of fact and chance by a reason that neither exists in advance of this taking up, nor without it.⁶⁷

If we wish to see what underlies the "symbolic function" itself, we must first understand that even intelligence does not fit well with intellectualism. What compromises thought for Schneider is not that he is incapable of perceiving the concrete givens as exemplars of a unique *eidos*, or of subsuming them under a category; rather, it is that he can only link them through an explicit subsumption. We observe, for example, that the patient does not understand analogies as simple as: "fur is to the cat what feathers are to the bird," or "light is to a lamp what heat is to a stove," or again, "the eye is to light and color what the ear is to sounds." He similarly fails to understand terms in their usual metaphorical sense, such as "the foot of the chair" or "the head of the nail," even though he knows what part of the object these words designate. Sometimes normal subjects with the same education do not know how to explain the analogy any better than the patient, but this is for opposite reasons. It is easier for the normal subject to understand the analogy than it is for him to analyze it, whereas the patient only succeeds in understanding it when he has made it explicit through a conceptual analysis. "He seeks [. . .] a common material property from which he could deduce the identity of the two relations as if from a middle term."⁶⁸ For example, he reflects upon the analogy between the eye and the ear and clearly only understands it when he can say: "the eye and the ear are both sense organs, thus, they must produce something similar." If we were to describe the analogy as the apperception of two given terms under one concept that coordinates them, then we would be giving as normal a procedure that is nothing other than pathological and that represents the detour through which the patient must go in order to offer a substitution for a normal understanding of the analogy.

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This freedom in the choice of a *tertium comparationis*⁶⁹ is, for the patient, the opposite of the intuitive determination of the image for the normal

subject. The normal person grasps a specific identity in the conceptual structures; for him, the living processes of thought are symmetrical and match. This is how the normal subject “catches” the essence of the analogy and one can always wonder if a subject does not remain capable of understanding even when this comprehension is not adequately expressed through the formulation and the explicit account of it that he offers.⁷⁰

Living thought, then, does not consist in the act of subsuming under a category. The category imposes a signification upon the terms that it brings together, a signification that is external to the terms. By drawing from constituted language and the meaningful relations that it includes, Schneider succeeds in linking the eye to the ear as “sense organs.” In normal thought, the eye and the ear are immediately grasped according to the analogy of their function, and their relationship can only be fixed in a “common characteristic” and recorded in language because it has first been perceived in the nascent state in the singularity of vision and hearing.

Perhaps the objection will be raised that our critique only bears upon a rudimentary intellectualism that would absorb thought into a merely logical activity, whereas reflective analysis in fact goes back to the very
162 foundations of predication, discovers a relational judgment behind the judgment of inherence, and finds behind subsumption (as a mechanical and formal operation) the categorial act by which thought invests the subject with the sense that is expressed in the predicate. Thus, our critique of the categorial function would have no other result than of awakening, behind the empirical use of the category, a transcendental use without which the first would indeed be incomprehensible. And yet, this distinction between the empirical use and the transcendental use conceals the difficulty rather than solving it. Critical philosophy doubles the empirical operations of thought with a transcendental activity charged with producing all of the syntheses of which empirical thought merely provides the pieces. But when I think of something now, the guarantee of a non-temporal synthesis is neither sufficient nor even necessary to ground my thought. It is now, in the living present, that the synthesis must be produced, otherwise thought would be cut off from its transcendental premises. Thus, it cannot be said that when I think I place myself back into the eternal subject I never ceased being, for the genuine

subject of thought is the one who produces the present conversion and resumption, and it is he who communicates his life to the non-temporal phantom. We must, then, attempt to understand how temporal thought is secured upon itself and how it produces its own synthesis. If the normal subject immediately understands that the relation between the eye and vision is the same as the relation between the ear and hearing, this is because the eye and the ear are given to him immediately as ways of reaching a single world, and because he possesses a pre-predicative evidentness of a unique world, such that the equivalence of the "sense organs" and their analogy is read upon the things and can be lived prior to being conceived. The Kantian subject posits a world, but, in order to be able to affirm a truth, the actual subject must first have a world or be in the world, that is, he must hold a system of significations around himself whose correspondences, relations, and participations do not need to be made explicit in order to be utilized.

When I move about in my house, I know immediately and without any intervening discourse that to walk toward the bathroom involves passing close to the bedroom, or that to look out the window involves having the fireplace to my left. In this small world, each gesture or each perception is immediately situated in relation to a thousand virtual coordinates. When I chat with a close friend, each of his words and each of mine contain, beyond what they signify for everyone else, a multitude of references to the principal dimensions of his personality and of mine, without our needing to evoke our previous conversations. These acquired worlds, which give my experience its secondary sense, are themselves cut out of a primordial world that grounds the primary sense of my experience. Similarly, there is a "world of thoughts," a sedimentation of our mental operations, which allows us to count on our acquired concepts and judgments, just as we count upon the things that are there and that are given as a whole, without our having to repeat their synthesis at each moment. This is how for us there can be a sort of mental panorama with its accentuated regions and its confused regions, a physiognomy of questions, and intellectual situations such as research, discovery, and certainty. But this word "sedimentation" must not trick us: this contracted knowledge is not an inert mass at the foundation of our consciousness. For me, my apartment is not a series of strongly connected images. It only remains around me as my familiar domain if I still hold "in my hands" or "in my legs" its principal distances and directions, and only if a multitude

of intentional threads run out toward it from my body. Likewise, my acquired thoughts are not an absolute acquisition; they feed off my present thought at each moment; they offer me a sense, but this is a sense that I reflect back to them. In fact, the acquisition that is available to us expresses, at each moment, the energy of our present consciousness. Sometimes it becomes weaker, such as happens with fatigue, and then my “world” of thought becomes impoverished and is reduced even to one or two obsessive ideas; sometimes, on the contrary, I am directed toward all of my thoughts, and each word that is spoken in front of me thus engenders questions or ideas, regroups and reorganizes the mental panorama, and appears with a precise physiognomy. The acquired, then, is only truly acquired if it is taken up in a new movement of thought, and a thought is only situated if it itself assumes its situation. The essence of consciousness is to provide itself with one or many worlds, to make its own thoughts exist in front of itself like things, and sketching out these landscapes and abandoning them indivisibly demonstrates its vitality. The structure “world,” with its double moment of sedimentation and spontaneity, is at the center of consciousness, and it is through a certain leveling out of the “world” that we will be able to understand Schneider’s intellectual, perceptual, and motor disorders simultaneously and without thereby reducing them to each other.

[i. Existential analysis of “perceptual disorders” and “intellectual disorders.”]

164 The classical analysis of perception⁷¹ separates within perception the sensible givens and the signification that they receive through an act of the understanding. From this point of view, perceptual disorders must be either sensory deficiencies or gnostic disorders. Schneider’s case reveals, however, deficiencies that have to do with the junction of sensitivity and signification, and which reveal the existential conditioning of both. If the patient is shown a fountain pen such that the clip is not visible, the phases of recognition are as follows: the patient says: “it’s black, blue, and bright. There is a white patch, it is oblong. It has the form of a stick. It could be some kind of instrument. It shines. It reflects light. It might also be a colored piece of glass.” The pen is then brought closer to the patient and the clip is turned toward him. He continues: “it must be a pencil or a fountain pen. (He touches his vest pocket). This is where it goes, for writing something down.”⁷² Language clearly intervenes in each phase of the

recognition by providing possible significations for what is actually seen, and the recognition clearly progresses by following the connections of language, from “oblong” to “the form of a stick,” from “stick” to “instrument,” then to “instrument for writing something down,” and finally to “fountain pen.” The sensory givens are limited to suggesting these significations in the manner that a fact suggests to the physicist an hypothesis. The patient, like the scientist, verifies mediately and makes his hypothesis more precise by cross-checking the facts. He proceeds blindly toward the hypothesis that coordinates them all. This process brings to light, by contrast, the spontaneous method of normal perception, that sort of life of significations that renders the concrete essence of the object immediately readable and that only allows its “sensory properties” to appear through it. For Schneider this familiarity, this communication with the object is interrupted. For the normal person, the object is “speaking” [*parlant*] and meaningful, the arrangement of colors immediately “means” something, whereas for the patient the signification must be brought in from elsewhere through a genuine act of interpretation.

– Reciprocally, for the normal person, the subject’s intentions are immediately reflected in the perceptual field: they polarize it, put their stamp on it, or finally, effortlessly give birth there to a wave of significations. For the patient, the perceptual field has lost this plasticity. If he is asked to construct a square out of four triangles identical to one that he is shown, he responds that it is impossible and that one can only construct two squares out of four triangles. The doctor insists by showing him that a square has two diagonals and can always be divided into four triangles. The patient responds: “Yes, but that is because the parts necessarily fit together. When a square is divided into four, then if the parts are brought together appropriately, the result must be a square.”⁷³ So he knows what a square and a triangle are, and the relation between these two significations does not escape him – at least after the doctor’s explanations – and he understands that every square can be divided into triangles; but he fails to conclude that every (right isosceles) triangle can serve to construct a square with four times the surface area, because the construction of the square demands that the given triangles be assembled differently and that the sensory givens become the illustration of an imaginary sense. All things considered, the world no longer suggests any significations to him and, reciprocally, the significations that he considers are no longer embodied in the given world.

We shall conclude, in short, that the world no longer has a physiognomy for him.⁷⁴ This is what helps us to understand the strangeness of his drawings. Schneider never draws *according* to the model (*nachzeichnen* [traces]); perception is never directly continued into movement. He palpates the object with his left hand, recognizes certain particularities (a corner, a right angle), articulates his discovery, and finally traces an object freehand corresponding to the verbal articulation.⁷⁵ The translation of the perceived into movement passes through the express significations of language, whereas the normal subject penetrates the object through perception and assimilates its structure, the object directly regulates his movements through his body.⁷⁶ This dialogue between the subject and the object, where the subject takes up the sense scattered across the object and the object gathers together the subject's intentions, namely, physiognomic perception, arranges a world around the subject that speaks to him on the topic of himself and places his own thoughts in the world. If this function is compromised for Schneider, we can expect that, *a fortiori*, perception of human events and of others will present deficiencies, for they presuppose the same taking up of the exterior in the interior and of the interior by the exterior. And indeed, if the patient is told a story, rather than grasping it as a melodic whole with its strong and weak beats and with its characteristic rhythm or flow, he only retains it as a series of facts that must be recorded one by one. This is why he only understands the story if pauses are included in the narration and are used to summarize briefly the essential aspects of what has just been recounted. When he retells the story in turn, it is never *according* to the narration that had just been given (*Nacherzählen* [a retelling]): he accentuates nothing, he only understands the progress of the story to the extent that he recounts it, and the narration is seemingly reconstituted piece by piece.⁷⁷ For the normal subject, then, the story has an essence that appears as the narration advances, without any explicit analysis, and that subsequently guides the reproduction of the narration. The story is, for him, a certain human event, recognizable by its style, and the normal subject "understands" here because he has the power of living – beyond his immediate experience – the events indicated by the narration. In general, nothing is present for the patient other than what is given immediately. Another's thought, since he never experiences it directly, will never be present to him.⁷⁸ Another's words are for him signs that he must decode one by one, whereas for the normal subject these words are the transparent

envelope of a sense in which he could live. For Schneider, words, like events, are not the motive of a taking up or of a projection, but merely the opportunity for a methodical interpretation. Another person, like an object, "says" nothing to him and, although the phantoms that appear to him are certainly not devoid of the intellectual signification that is obtained by analysis, they are devoid of the primordial signification obtained through coexistence.

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Disorders that are properly intellectual – those of judgment and of signification – will not be able to be considered as ultimate deficiencies, and will now have to be put back into the same existential context. Consider "number blindness,"⁷⁹ for example. It was possible to show that the patient – who is capable of counting, adding, subtracting, multiplying, or dividing with regard to objects placed in front of him – cannot, however, imagine the number; all of these results are obtained through ritual procedures with which he has no meaningful relation. He knows the series of numbers by heart and recites it mentally while noting on his fingers the objects to be counted, added, subtracted, or divided: "the number has but a membership in the series of numbers, it has no signification as a fixed size, as a group, or as a determinate measure."⁸⁰ Of two numbers, the greater is the one that comes "after" in the series of numbers. When he is asked to complete the equation "5 plus 4 minus 4," he executes the operation in two steps without "noticing anything peculiar." He simply agrees, if it is pointed out to him, that the number 5 "remains." He does not understand that "doubling half" of a number is this very same number.⁸¹

Should we thus conclude that he has lost "number" as a category or as a schema? But when he glances over the objects to be counted while "noting" each of them on his fingers, even if he often confuses objects already counted with those not yet counted, even if the synthesis is confused, he still clearly possesses the notion of a synthetic operation that is precisely what we call "numeration." And reciprocally, for the normal subject the series of numbers as a kinetic melody, more or less devoid of authentically numerical sense, is most often substituted for the concept of number. Number is never a pure concept whose absence would allow us to define Schneider's mental state, it is a structure of consciousness that includes the more and the less. The genuine act of counting requires of the subject that his operations, as they unfold and cease to occupy the center of his consciousness, not cease to be there for him and rather

constitute a *ground* upon which subsequent operations are established. Consciousness trails behind itself the completed syntheses, they remain available, they could be reactivated, and as such they are taken up and transcended in the total act of numeration. What is called pure number or authentic number is only a promotion or an extension through repetition of the constitutive movement of every perception. For Schneider, the conception of number is affected only insofar as it presupposes eminently the power of deploying a past in order to go toward a future. This existential basis of intelligence is affected much more than intelligence itself, for, as has been shown,⁸² Schneider's general intelligence is intact: his responses may be slow, but they are never meaningless, they are those of a mature and reflective man who is interested in the doctor's experiments.

Beneath intelligence, understood as an anonymous function or as a categorial operation, we must acknowledge a personal core that is the patient's being and his power of existing. Here is where the disorder resides. Schneider would still like to form political or religious opinions, but he knows that it is useless to try. "He must now be content with general beliefs and without being able to express them."⁸³ He never sings nor whistles on his own.⁸⁴ We will see below that he never takes the initiative sexually. He never goes out for a walk, but always to run an errand, and he does not recognize Professor Goldstein's house when walking by it "because he has not gone out with the intention of going there."⁸⁵ Just as he needs to gain a "hold" on his own body through preparatory movement prior to executing movements that are not traced out in advance in a familiar situation, so too a conversation with another person fails to constitute for him a situation that is meaningful in itself and that might solicit impromptu responses. He can only speak according to a plan settled in advance: "he cannot give himself over to the inspiration of the moment in order to find the necessary thoughts in response to a complex situation in the conversation, and this is the case whether it is a question of new points of view or of old ones."⁸⁶ There is something meticulous and serious in all of his behavior, which comes from the fact that he is incapable of playing. To play is to place oneself momentarily in an imaginary situation, to amuse oneself in changing one's "milieu." The patient, however, cannot enter into a fictional situation without converting it into a real situation: he does not distinguish between a riddle and a problem.⁸⁷ "For Schneider, the possible situation

is at each moment so narrow that two regions of the milieu, if they do not have something in common for him, cannot simultaneously become a situation."⁸⁸ If someone is speaking to him, he does not hear the noise of another conversation in the next room; if someone brings a dish to the table, he never wonders where the dish came from. He declares that one sees only in the direction that one looks, and only the objects upon which one focuses.⁸⁹ The future and the past are for him nothing but the "shriveled up" continuations of the present. He has lost "our power of seeing according to the temporal vector."⁹⁰ He cannot survey his past from above and unhesitatingly meet up with it by going from the whole to the parts. Rather, he reconstitutes it by beginning with a fragment that has maintained its sense and that serves him as a "fulcrum."⁹¹ When he complains about the weather, he is asked if he feels better during the winter. He responds: "I can't say now . . . for the moment, I can't say anything."⁹²

[j. The "intentional arc."]*

Thus, all of Schneider's disorders can be reduced to a unity, but this is not the abstract unity of the "representation function." Schneider is "bound" to the actual, and he "lacks freedom,"⁹³ he lacks the concrete freedom that consists in the general power of placing oneself in a situation. We discover beneath intelligence and beneath perception a more fundamental function: "a vector moving in every direction, like a searchlight, by which we can orient ourselves toward anything, in ourselves or outside of ourselves, and by which we can have a behavior with regard to this object."⁹⁴ But again, the comparison to a searchlight is not a good one, since it takes for granted the given objects upon which intelligence projects its light, whereas the core function we are speaking of here – prior to making us see or know objects – first more secretly brings them into existence for us. So let us say instead, by borrowing a term from another work,⁹⁵ that the

The study of a pathological case has thus allowed us to catch sight of a new mode of analysis – existential analysis – that goes beyond the classical alternatives between empiricism and intellectualism, or between explanation and reflection. If consciousness were a sum of psychic facts, then each disturbance should be elective. If consciousness were a “representation function” or a pure power of signifying, then it could exist or not exist (and everything else along with it), but it could not cease to exist after having existed, nor could it become ill, that is, it could not be altered. Finally, if consciousness is an activity of projection, which deposits objects around itself like traces of its own acts, but which relies upon them in order to move on to new acts of spontaneity, then we understand simultaneously that every deficiency of “contents” has an effect upon the whole of experience and begins its disintegration, that every pathological weakening has to do with all of consciousness – and that, nevertheless, the disorder each time attacks consciousness from a certain “side,” that in each case certain symptoms are predominant in the clinical picture of the illness, and finally that consciousness is vulnerable and that consciousness itself can suffer the illness. By attacking the “visual sphere,” the illness is not limited to destroying certain conscious contents, namely, “visual representations” or vision in the literal sense; rather, it attacks vision in a figurative sense, of which the former is but the model or the emblem – the power of “surveying” or “dominating” (*überschauen*)⁹⁶ simultaneous multiplicities and a certain manner of positing the object or of being conscious. But since this type of consciousness is nevertheless merely the sublimation of sensory vision, and since it is schematized at each moment in the dimensions of the visual field (admittedly by investing them with a new sense), we can understand that this general function has psychological roots. Consciousness freely develops the visual givens beyond their own sense, it makes use of them in order to express its acts of spontaneity, as can be seen clearly in the semantic evolution that invests the terms “intuition,” “evidentness,” and the “natural light” with an ever-richer sense. But, reciprocally, not one of these terms can be understood, in the final sense that history has given them, without reference to the structures of visual perception. One cannot say that man sees because he is Spirit, nor that he is Spirit because he sees: “to see as a man sees” and “to be Spirit” are synonymous. To the extent that consciousness is only consciousness of something by allowing its wake to trail behind itself, and to the extent that, to think an

object, consciousness must rely upon a previously constructed “world of thought,” there is always a depersonalization at the heart of consciousness. From this appears the principle of a foreign intervention: consciousness can be ill, the world of its thoughts can fall to pieces; or rather, since the “contents” dissociated by the illness did not figure in normal consciousness as parts and only served as the supports for significations that transcended them, consciousness can be seen attempting to maintain its superstructures even though their foundation has collapsed. It mimics its customary operations, but without the power of obtaining their intuitive realization and without the power of hiding the strange deficiency that steals from them their full sense. If the mental illness is, in turn, tied to a bodily accident, then this is understood, in principle, in the same way. Consciousness projects itself into a physical world and has a body, just as it projects itself into a cultural world and has a habitus. This is because it can only be consciousness by playing upon significations given in the absolute past of nature or in its personal past, and because every lived form tends toward a certain generality, whether it be the generality of our habitus or rather that of our “bodily functions.”

[k. *The intentionality of the body.*]

Finally, these clarifications allow us to understand motricity unequivocally as original intentionality. Consciousness is originally not an “I think that,” but rather an “I can.”⁹⁷ Schneider’s motor disorder cannot, any more than his visual disorder, be reduced to a weakness in the general function of representation. Vision and movement are specific ways of relating to objects and, if a single function is expressed throughout all of these experiences, then it is the movement of existence, which does not suppress the radical diversity of contents, for it does not unite them by placing them all under the domination of an “I think,” but rather by orienting them toward the inter-sensory unity of a “world.” Movement is not a movement in thought, and bodily space is not a space that is conceived or represented.

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Each voluntary movement takes place in a milieu, against a background determined by the movement itself (. . .). We execute our movements in a space that is not “empty” and without relation to them, but which is, on the contrary, in a highly determined relation with them: movement

and background are only, in fact, moments artificially separated from a single whole.⁹⁸

The gesture of reaching one's hand out toward an object contains a refer-
 ence to the object, not as a representation, but as this highly determinate
 173 thing toward which we are thrown, next to which we are through antici-
 pation, and which we haunt.⁹⁹ Consciousness is being toward the thing
 through the intermediary of the body. A movement is learned when
 the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its
 "world," and to move one's body is to aim at the things through it, or
 to allow one's body to respond to their solicitation, which is exerted
 174 upon the body without any representation. Motricity is thus not, as it
 were, a servant of consciousness, transporting the body to the point of
 space that we imagine beforehand. For us to be able to move our body
 toward an object, the object must first exist for it, and hence our body
 must not belong to the region of the "in-itself." Objects no longer exist
 for the arm of the person suffering from apraxia, and this is what renders
 his arm immobile. Cases of pure apraxia, where the perception of
 space is intact, where even the "intellectual notion of the gesture to be
 performed" does not seem confused, and where nevertheless the patient
 does not know how to reproduce a triangle,¹⁰⁰ or cases of constructive
 apraxia, where the subject exhibits no gnostic disorder, except that which
 has to do with the localization of stimuli upon the body, and yet is not
 capable of reproducing a cross, a v, or an o¹⁰¹ – all of these cases show
 clearly that the body has its world and that objects or space can be present
 to our knowledge without being present to our body.

[1. *The body is not in space, it inhabits space.*]

Thus, we must not say that our body is in space, nor for that matter
 in time. It *inhabits* space and time. If my hand executes a complicated
 movement in the air, I do not have to add together all the movements in
 one direction and subtract the movements in the other in order to know
 its final position. "Every recognizable change enters into consciousness
 already charged with its relations to something that has gone before, just
 as on a taximeter the distance is presented to us as already transformed
 into shillings and pence."¹⁰² At each moment, previous postures and
 movements constantly provide a standard of measure. This has nothing

to do with the visual or motor “memory” of the hand’s starting point: cerebral lesions can leave the visual memory intact while suppressing the consciousness of movement and, as for “motor memory,” it clearly could not determine the present position of the hand if the perception of where it was born had not itself included an absolute consciousness of the “here,” without which one would be sent from memory to memory and would never have a present perception. Just as it is necessarily “here,” the body necessarily exists “now”; it can never become “past.” Even if we cannot preserve the living memory of the illness when we are healthy, nor the living memory of our body as a child when we have become an adult, these “gaps in memory” do nothing but express the temporal structure of our body. At each moment in a movement, the preceding instant is not forgotten, but rather is somehow fit into the present, and, in short, the present perception consists in taking up the series of previous positions that envelop each other by relying upon the current position. But the imminent position is itself enveloped in the present, and through it so too are all of those positions that will occur throughout the movement. Each moment of the movement embraces its entire expanse and, in particular, its first moment or kinetic initiation inaugurates the link between a here and a there, between a now and a future that the other moments will be limited to developing.

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Insofar as I have a body and insofar as I act in the world through it, space and time are not for me a mere summation of juxtaposed points, and no more are they, for that matter, an infinity of relations synthesized by my consciousness in which my body would be implicated. I am not in space and in time, nor do I think space and time; rather, I am of space and of time;¹⁰³ my body fits itself to them and embraces them. The scope of this hold measures the scope of my existence; however, it can never in any case be total. The space and time that I inhabit are always surrounded by indeterminate horizons that contain other points of view. The synthesis of time, like that of space, is always to be started over again. The motor experience of our body is not a particular case of knowledge; rather, it offers us a manner of reaching the world and the object, a “praktognosia,”¹⁰⁴ that must be recognized as original, and perhaps as originary. My body has its world, or understands its world without having to go through “representations,” or without being subordinated to a “symbolic” or “objectifying function.” Certain patients, if they stand next to the doctor and observe his movements in a mirror, can imitate the doctor’s movements

and raise their right hand to their right ear and their left hand to their nose. But they cannot do so if they are in front of him. Head explained the patient's failure through the inadequacy of his "formulation": the imitation of the gesture would be mediated through a verbal translation. In fact, the formulation can be precise without the imitation being successful, and the imitation can be successful without any formulation at all.

176 Certain authors in this field¹⁰⁵ thus introduce, if not a verbal symbolism, then at least a general symbolic function, a capacity for "transposing" of which imitation would be, like perception or objective thought, merely a particular case. But it is clear that this general function does not explain adapted action. For these patients are capable not merely of formulating the movement to be accomplished, but moreover of representing it to themselves. They know very well what they have to do, and nevertheless, rather than bringing their right hand to their right ear and their left hand to their nose, they touch one ear with each hand, or even their nose and one eye, or one ear and one eye.¹⁰⁶ What has become impossible is the application and adjustment of the objective definition to their own body. In other words, right hand and left hand, eye and ear are still given to them as absolute locations, but are no longer inserted in a system of correspondence that links them to the homologous parts of the doctor's body and that makes them available for imitation, even when the doctor is facing the patient. To be able to imitate the gestures of someone facing me, I need not know explicitly that "the hand appearing to the right of my visual field is my partner's left hand." The patient is precisely the one who resorts to such explanations. In normal imitation, the subject's left hand is immediately identified with his partner's, the subject's action immediately adheres to his model, the subject projects himself into or "irrealizes" himself in the model,¹⁰⁷ identifies himself with the model, and the change of coordinates is eminently contained in this existential operation. This is because the normal subject has his body not only as a system of current positions, but also, and consequently, as an open system of an infinity of equivalent positions in different orientations. What we called the "body schema" is precisely this system of equivalences, this immediately given invariant by which different motor tasks are instantly transposable. This is to say that the body schema is not merely an experience of my body, but rather an experience of my body in the world, and that it gives a motor sense to the verbal instructions. The function destroyed in the disorders of apraxia is thus surely a motor function.

In cases of this genre, it is not the symbolic or significative function in general that is affected, but rather a much more originary function, one that has a motor characteristic, namely, the capacity for motor differentiation of the dynamic body schema.¹⁰⁸

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The space through which normal imitation moves is not (in contrast to concrete space with its absolute locations) an “objective space” or a “space of representation” founded upon an act of thought. It is already sketched out in the structure of my body, it is my body’s inseparable correlate. “Taken in its pure state, motricity already possesses the elementary power of sense-giving (*Sinngebung*).”¹⁰⁹ Even if, in what follows, thought and the perception of space are liberated from motricity and from being in space, in order for us to be able to imagine space, it must first be introduced into it through our body, which must have given us the first model of transpositions, equivalences, and identifications that turns space into an objective system and allows our experience to be an experience of objects and to open onto an “in-itself.” “Motricity is the primary sphere in which the sense of all significations (*der Sinn aller Signifikationen*) is first given in the domain of represented space.”¹¹⁰

[m. Habit as the motor acquisition of a new signification.]

Acquiring a habit as the reworking and renewal of the body schema presents significant difficulties for classical philosophies, which are always inclined to conceive of synthesis as intellectual synthesis. It is true, of course, that what links elementary movements, reactions, and “stimuli” together in habit is not an external association.¹¹¹ Every mechanistic theory runs into the fact that the learning process is systematic: the subject does not weld individual movements to individual stimuli, but rather acquires the power of responding with a certain type of solution to a certain form of situation. The situations may differ widely from case to case, the responding movements may be entrusted sometimes to one effector organ and sometimes to another, and situations and responses resemble each other in the different cases much less through the partial identity of elements than by the community of their sense. Must we thus place an act of the understanding at the origin of the habit that would first organize the habit’s elements only to later withdraw from it?¹¹² For example, in learning the habit of a certain dance, do we not find the

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formula of the movement through analysis and then recompose it, taking this ideal sketch as a guide and drawing upon already acquired movements (such as walking and running)? But in order for the new dance to integrate particular elements of general motricity, it must first have received, so to speak, a motor consecration. The body, as has often been said, “catches” (*kapiert*) and “understands” the movement. The acquisition of the habit is surely the grasping of a signification, but it is specifically the motor grasping of a motor signification. But what exactly does this mean?

Without any explicit calculation, a woman maintains a safe distance between the feather in her hat and objects that might damage it; she senses where the feather is, just as we sense where our hand is.¹¹³ If I possess the habit of driving a car, then I enter into a lane and see that “I can pass” without comparing the width of the lane to that of the fender, just as I go through a door without comparing the width of the door to that of my body.¹¹⁴ The hat and the automobile have ceased to be objects whose size and volume would be determined through a comparison with other objects. They have become voluminous powers and the necessity of a certain free space. Correlatively, the subway door and the road have become restrictive powers and immediately appear as passable or impassable for my body and its appendages. The blind man’s cane has ceased to be an object for him, it is no longer perceived for itself; rather, the cane’s furthest point is transformed into a sensitive zone, it increases the scope and the radius of the act of touching and has become analogous to a gaze. In the exploration of objects, the length of the cane does not explicitly intervene nor act as a middle term: the blind man knows its length by the position of the objects, rather than the position of the objects through the cane’s length. The position of objects is given immediately by the scope of the gesture that reaches them and in which, beyond the potential extension of the arm, the radius of action of the cane is included. If I want to become habituated to a cane, I try it out, I touch some objects and, after some time, I have it “in hand”: I see which objects are “within reach” or out of reach of my cane. This has nothing to do with a quick estimate or a comparison between the objective length of the cane and the objective distance of the goal to be reached. Places in space are not defined as objective positions in relation to the objective position of our body, but rather they inscribe around us the variable reach of our intentions and our gestures. To habituate oneself to a hat,

an automobile, or a cane is to take up residence in them, or inversely, to make them participate within the voluminosity of one's own body. Habit expresses the power we have of dilating our being in the world, or of altering our existence through incorporating new instruments.¹¹⁵ One can know how to type without knowing how to indicate where on the keyboard the letters that compose the words are located. Knowing how to type, then, is not the same as knowing the location of each letter on the keyboard, nor even having acquired a conditioned reflex for each letter that is triggered upon seeing it.

But if habit is neither a form of knowledge nor an automatic reflex, then what is it? It is a question of a knowledge in our hands, which is only given through a bodily effort and cannot be translated by an objective designation. The subject knows where the letters are on the keyboard just as we know where one of our limbs is – a knowledge of familiarity that does not provide us with a position in objective space. The movement of his fingers is not presented to the typist as a spatial trajectory that can be described, but merely as a certain modulation of motricity, distinguished from every other through its physiognomy. The question is often presented as if the perception of the letter written on the paper came to awaken the representation of the same letter, which in turn evoked the representation of the movement necessary to reach it on the keyboard. But this language is mythological. When I glance over the text offered to me, there are no perceptions awakening representations, but rather wholes that arrange themselves at the present moment, endowed with a typical or familiar physiognomy. When I take my place before my machine, a motor space stretches beneath my hands where I will play out what I have read. The word that is read is a modulation of visual space, the motor execution is a modulation of manual space, and the whole question is how a certain physiognomy of “visual” wholes can call forth a certain style of motor responses, how each “visual” structure in the end provides its own motor essence, without our having to spell out the word or to spell out the movement in order to translate the word into movement. But this power of habit is not distinguished from the one we have over our body in general. If I am told to touch my ear or my knee, I bring my hand to my ear or to my knee by the shortest path without my having to imagine the position of my hand at the outset, the position of my ear, or the trajectory from one to the other. We said above that in the acquisition of habit it is the body that “understands.” This formula

will seem absurd if “understanding” is the act of subsuming a sensory given under an idea, and if the body is a mere object. But the phenomenon of habit in fact leads us to rework our notion of “understanding” and our notion of the body. To understand is to experience [*éprouver*] the accord between what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the realization – and the body is our anchorage in a world. When I bring my hand toward my knee, I experience at each moment of the movement the realization of an intention that did not aim at my knee as an idea, or even as an object, but rather as a present and real part of my living body, and ultimately as a point of passage in my perpetual movement toward a world. When the typist executes the necessary movements on the keyboard, these movements are guided by an intention, but this intention does not posit the keys as objective locations. The subject who learns to type literally incorporates the space of the keyboard into his bodily space.

The example of instrumentalists demonstrates even more clearly how habit resides neither in thought nor in the objective body, but rather in the body as the mediator of a world. It is said that an experienced organist¹¹⁶ is capable of playing an organ with which he is unfamiliar and that has additional or fewer keyboards, and whose stops are differently arranged than the stops on his customary instrument. He needs but an hour of practice to be ready to execute his program. Such a brief apprenticeship prohibits the assumption that new conditioned reflexes are simply substituted for the already established collection, unless, that is, they together form a system and if the change is global, but this would be to go beyond the mechanistic theory since in that case the reactions would be mediated by a total hold on the instrument. Shall we say, then, that the organist analyzes the organ, that he forms and maintains a representation of the stops, pedals, and keyboards, as well as their relation in space? But during the short rehearsal that precedes the concert he hardly behaves like someone who wants to draw up a plan. He sits on the bench, engages the pedals, and pulls out the stops, he sizes up the instrument with his body, he incorporates its directions and dimensions, and he settles into the organ as one settles into a house. He does not learn positions in objective space for each stop and each pedal, nor does he entrust such positions to “memory.” During the rehearsal – just as during the performance – the stops, the pedals, and the keyboards are only presented to him as powers of such and such an emotional or musical

value, and their position as those places through which this value appears in the world. Between the musical essence of the piece such as it is indicated in the score and the music that actually resonates around the organ, such a direct relationship is established that the body of the organist and the instrument are nothing other than the place of passage of this relation. From then on, the music exists for itself, and everything else exists through it.¹¹⁷ There is no place here for a “memory” of the location of the stops, and the organist does not play within objective space. In fact, his rehearsal gestures are gestures of consecration: they put forth affective vectors, they discover emotional sources, and they create an expressive space, just as the gestures of the augur define the *templum*.

The entire problem of habit here is to determine how the musical signification of the gesture can be condensed into a certain locality to the extent that, by entirely giving himself over to the music, the organist reaches for precisely the stops and the pedals that will actualize it. Of course, the body is eminently an expressive space. No sooner have I formed the desire to take hold of an object than already, at a point in space that I was not thinking about, my hand as that power for grasping rises up toward the object. I do not move my legs insofar as they are in space and eighty centimeters from my head, but rather insofar as their ambulatory power continues my motor intention downward. The principal regions of my body are consecrated to actions, the parts of my body participate in their value, and the question as to why common sense places the seat of thought in the head is the same as the question of how the organist distributes musical significations in the space of the organ. But our body is not merely one expressive space among all others, for that would be merely the constituted body. Our body, rather, is the origin of all the others, it is the very movement of expression, it projects significations on the outside by giving them a place and sees to it that they begin to exist as things, beneath our hands and before our eyes. Even if our body does not impose definite instincts upon us from birth, as the animal's body does, then it at least gives the form of generality to our life and prolongs our personal acts into stable dispositions. Our nature, in this sense, is not an ancient custom, since custom presupposes nature's form of passivity. The body is our general means of having a world. Sometimes it restricts itself to gestures necessary for the conservation of life, and correlatively it posits a biological world around us. Sometimes, playing upon these first gestures and passing from their

literal to their figurative sense, it brings forth a new core of signification through them – this is the case of new motor habits, such as dance. And finally, sometimes the signification aimed at cannot be reached by the natural means of the body. We must, then, construct an instrument, and the body projects a cultural world around itself. At all levels, the body exercises the same function, which is to lend “a bit of renewable action and independent existence”¹¹⁸ to the momentary movements of freedom. Habit is but a mode of this fundamental power. The body, then, has understood and the habit has been acquired when the body allows itself to be penetrated by a new signification, when it has assimilated a new meaningful core.

What we have discovered through the study of motricity is, in short, a new sense of the word “sense.” The strength of intellectualist psychology, as well as of idealist philosophy, comes from the ease with which they show that perception and thought have an intrinsic sense and cannot be explained through an external association of fortuitously assembled contents. The *Cogito* was the moment of insight into this interiority. And yet, every signification was simultaneously conceived as an act of thought, as the operation of a pure “I”; if intellectualism easily won out over empiricism, it itself remained incapable of accounting for the variety of our experience, for the regions of non-sense in our experience, and for the contingency of its contents. The experience of the body leads us to recognize an imposition of sense that does not come from a universal constituting consciousness, a sense that adheres to certain contents. My body is this meaningful core that behaves as a general function and that nevertheless exists and that is susceptible to illness. In the body we learn to recognize this knotting together of essence and existence that we will again meet up with in perception more generally, and that we will then have to describe more fully.

IV

THE SYNTHESIS OF ONE'S OWN BODY

[a. *Spatiality and corporeality.*]

The analysis of bodily spatiality has led us to results that can be generalized. We observe for the first time with regard to one's own body what is true of all perceived things: the perception of space and the perception of the thing, or the spatiality of the thing and its being as a thing, are not two distinct problems. The Cartesian and Kantian tradition already teaches us this – it turns spatial determinations into the very essence of the object and it shows existence *partes extra partes* and the spatial distribution to be the only possible sense of existence in itself. But this tradition clarifies the perception of the object through the perception of space, whereas the experience of one's own body teaches us to root space within existence. Of course, intellectualism sees that the “thing-motif” and the “space-motif”¹ intertwine, but it reduces the former to the latter. Experience reveals, beneath the objective space in which the body eventually finds its place, a primordial spatiality of which objective space is but the envelope and which merges with the very being of the body. As we have seen, to be a body is to be tied to a certain world, and our body is not primarily in space, but is rather of space.² Persons suffering from anosognosia who

185 speak of their arm as a long and cold “serpent”³ are not, strictly speaking, unaware of its objective contours, and even when the patient looks for his arm without finding it or fastens it in order not to lose it,⁴ he surely knows where his arm is, since that is precisely where he looks for it and where he fastens it. If, however, the patients experience [éprouvent] the space of their arm as strange, and if I can in general sense the space of my body as enormous or as tiny despite the evidence of my senses, this is because there is an affective presence and extension of which objective spatiality is neither the sufficient condition, as is shown in anosognosia, nor even the necessary condition, as is shown by the phantom limb. The spatiality of the body is the deployment of its being as a body, and the manner in which it is actualized as a body. By seeking to analyze it, we thus did nothing but anticipate what we have to say concerning bodily synthesis in general.

We discover in the unity of the body the same structure of implication that we described above with regard to space. The various parts of my body – its visual, tactile, and motor aspects – are not simply coordinated. If I am seated at my desk and want to pick up the telephone, the movement of my hand toward the object, the straightening of my torso, and the contraction of my leg muscles envelop each other; I desire a certain result and the tasks divide themselves up among the segments in question, and the possible combinations of movements are given in advance as equivalent: I could remain leaning back in my chair provided that I extend my arm further, I could lean forward, or I could even partly stand up. All of these movements are available to us through their common signification. This is why, in the very first attempts at grasping, children do not look at their hand, but at the object. The different segments of the body are only known through their functional value and their coordination is not learned. Similarly, when I am seated at my table, I can instantly “visualize” the parts of my body that it conceals from me. As I clench my foot inside my shoe, I can see it. I have this power even for parts of my body that I have never seen. This is how some patients have the hallucination of their own face *seen from within*.⁵ It has been shown that we do not recognize our own hand in a photograph, or even that many subjects hesitate in recognizing their own handwriting among other samples, but that, conversely, everyone recognizes his own silhouette or a filmed version of his own gait. Thus, we do not recognize through vision what we have nevertheless often seen, and conversely we recognize immediately

the visual representation of what is invisible in one's own body.⁶ In autoscopia,⁷ the double seen by the subject is not always recognized through certain visible details; rather, the subject has the absolute feeling that he is seeing himself and consequently claims that he sees his double.⁸ We all see ourselves as if through an inner eye that, from a few meters away, gazes at us from our head to our knees.⁹ So the connection between the segments of our body, or between our visual and our tactile experience, is not produced gradually and through accumulation. I do not translate the "givens of touch" into "the language of vision," nor *vice versa*; I do not assemble the parts of my body one by one. Rather, this translation and this assemblage are completed once and for all in me: they are my body itself.

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Shall we thus say that we perceive our body through its law of construction, just as we know in advance all of the possible perspectives of a cube from its geometrical structure? But – to say nothing still of external objects – one's own body teaches us a mode of unity that is not the subsumption under a law. Insofar as it is in front of me and offers its systematic variations for observation, the external object lends itself to a mental examination of its elements and it can, at least as a first approximation, be defined as the law of their variations. But I am not in front of my body, I am in my body, or rather I am my body.¹⁰ Thus, neither its variations nor their invariant can be explicitly posited. I do not simply contemplate the relations between the segments of my body and the correlations between my visual body and my tactile body; rather, I am myself the one who holds these arms and these legs together, the one who simultaneously sees them and touches them. The body is, to adopt Leibniz's term, the "effective law" of its changes. If one can still speak of an interpretation in the perception of one's own body, then it would be necessary to say that it interprets itself. "Visual givens" only appear here through their tactile sense, and tactile givens only through their visual sense, each local movement only against the background of a global position, each bodily event (whatever the "analyzer" that reveals it) only against a significative background where the furthest repercussions are at least indicated and the possibility of an inter-sensory equivalence is immediately provided. What unites the "tactile sensations" of the hand and links them to the visual perceptions of the same hand and to perceptions of other segments of the body is a certain style of hand gestures, which implies a certain style of finger movements and moreover contributes to a particular fashion in which my body moves.¹¹

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[b. *The unity of the body and the unity of the work of art.*]*

The body cannot be compared to the physical object, but rather to the work of art. In a painting or in a piece of music, the idea cannot be communicated other than through the arrangement of color or sounds. If I have never seen his paintings, then the analysis of Cézanne's œuvre leaves me the choice between several possible Cézannes; only the perception of his paintings will present me with the uniquely existing Cézanne, and only in this perception can the analyses take on their full sense. And even though they are composed of words, the same is true of a poem or a novel. It is well known that a poem, if it carries a primary signification that can be translated into prose, also leads a secondary existence in the mind of the reader that defines it as a poem. Just as speech does not merely signify through words, but also through accent, tone, gestures, and facial expressions, and just as this supplemental sense reveals not so much the thoughts of the speaker, but rather the source of his thoughts and his fundamental manner of being, so too poetry – while it may be accidentally narrating and signifying – is essentially a modulation of existence. The poem is distinguished from the cry because the cry employs our body such as nature gave it to us, that is, as poor in expressive means, whereas the poem employs language, and even a specialized language, such that the existential modulation, rather than dissolving in the very instant that it is expressed, finds in the poetic apparatus the means to make itself eternal. But even if it is independent of our living gestures, the poem is not independent of all material support, and it would be irremediably lost if its text was not perfectly preserved. Its signification is not free and does not reside in the heaven of ideas; it is locked up between the words on some fragile piece of paper. In this sense, like every work of art, the poem too exists in the manner of a thing and does not eternally subsist in the manner of a truth. As for the novel, although it can be summarized, and although the novelist's "thought" can be abstractly formulated, this notional signification is drawn from a larger signification, just as the description of a person is drawn from the concrete appearance of his physiognomy. The novelist's role is not to set forth ideas, or even to analyze characters, but rather to present, without ideological commentary, an inter-human event and to allow it to ripen and burst forth to such an extent that every change in the order of the narration or in the choice of perspectives would modify the *novelistic* sense

of the event. A novel, a poem, a painting, and a piece of music are individuals, that is, beings in which the expression cannot be distinguished from the expressed, whose sense is only accessible through direct contact, and who send forth their signification without ever leaving their temporal and spatial place. It is in this sense that our body is comparable to the work of art. It is a knot of living significations and not the law of a certain number of covariant terms. A certain tactile experience of the arm signifies a certain tactile experience of the forearm and the shoulder, as well as a certain visual appearance of the same arm. This is not because the different tactile perceptions in themselves, or the different tactile and visual perceptions together, all participate in a single intelligible arm (in the manner that all perspectival views of a cube participate in the idea of the cube), but rather because the arm seen and the arm touched, just like the different segments of the arm itself, together perform a single gesture.

[c. *Perceptual habit as the acquisition of a world.*]

Just as we saw above that the motor habit sheds light on the particular nature of bodily space, here habit in general likewise clarifies the general synthesis of one's own body. And, just as the analysis of bodily spatiality anticipated that of the unity of one's own body, we can similarly extend what we have said about motor habits to all habits. In fact, every habit is simultaneously motor and perceptual because it resides, as we have said, between explicit perception and actual movement, in that fundamental function that simultaneously delimits our field of vision and our field of action. The exploration of objects with a cane, which we gave above as an example of a motor habit, is just as much an example of a perceptual habit. When the cane becomes a familiar instrument, the world of tactile objects expands, it no longer begins at the skin of the hand, but at the tip of the cane. One is tempted to say that the blind man constructs the cane and its various positions through the sensations produced by the pressure of the cane upon his hand, since these different positions in turn mediate an object to the second degree, namely, an external object. Perception would remain a reading of the same sensible givens, just one that is accomplished faster and faster and performed upon more and more tenuous signs. But habit does not consist in interpreting the pressure of the cane on the hand like signs of certain positions of the cane, and then these positions as signs of an external object – for the habit

relieves us of this very task. The pressures on the hand and the cane are no longer given, the cane is no longer an object that the blind man would perceive, it has become an instrument with which he perceives. It is an appendage of the body, or an extension of the bodily synthesis. Correlatively, the external object is not the geometrical plan or the invariant of a series of perspectives; it is a thing toward which the cane leads us and whose perspectives, according to perceptual evidentness, are not signs, but rather appearances.

Intellectualism can only conceive of the passage from the perspective to the thing itself, or from the sign to the signification, as an interpretation, an apperception, or an epistemic intention. Sensory givens and perspectives at each level would be contents grasped as (*aufgefaßt als*) manifestations of a single intelligible core.¹² But this analysis simultaneously distorts the sign and the signification; it separates them by objectifying the sensory content, which is already “pregnant” with a sense, and the invariant core, which is not a law, but a thing. The analysis masks the organic relation between the subject and the world, the active transcendence of consciousness, and the movement by which it throws itself into a thing and into a world by means of its organs and instruments. The analysis of motor habit as an extension of existence continues, then, into an analysis of perceptual habit as an acquisition of a world. Reciprocally, every perceptual habit is still a motor habit, and here again the grasping of a signification is accomplished by the body. When the child becomes habituated to distinguishing between blue and red, we see that the habit acquired with regard to this pair benefits all the others.¹³ Is it thus the case that through the pair blue–red the child perceived the signification “color”? Is the decisive moment of habit thus to be found in this moment of insight, in the advent of a “color-perspective,” or in this intellectual analysis that subsumes the givens under a category? But in order for the child to be able to perceive blue and red under the category of color, this category must be rooted in the givens, otherwise no act of subsuming could recognize this category therein. This particular manner of vibrating and of attracting the gaze that we call “blue” and “red” must be manifested from the outset upon the “blue” and “red” panels the child is shown. With the gaze we have available a natural instrument comparable to the blind man’s cane. The gaze obtains more or less from things according to the manner in which it interrogates them, in which it glances over them or rests upon them. Learning to see colors is the

acquisition of a certain style of vision, a new use of one's own body; it is to enrich and to reorganize the body schema. As a system of motor powers or perceptual powers, our body is not an object for an "I think": it is a totality of lived significations that moves toward its equilibrium. Occasionally a new knot of significations is formed: our previous movements are integrated into a new motor entity, the first visual givens are integrated into a new sensorial entity, and our natural powers suddenly merge with a richer signification that was, up until that point, merely implied in our perceptual or practical field or that was merely anticipated in our experience through a certain lack, and whose advent suddenly reorganizes our equilibrium and fulfills our blind expectation.

V

THE BODY AS A SEXED BEING¹

191 All along our goal was to shed light upon the primordial function by which we make space, the object, or the instrument exist for us and through which we take them up, as well as to describe the body as the place of this appropriation. But insofar as we focused on space or the perceived thing, it was not easy to discover the relation between the embodied subject and his world because this relation transforms itself in the pure exchange between the epistemological subject and the object. Indeed, the natural world is given as existing in itself beyond its existence for me, the act of transcendence by which the subject opens to the natural world carries itself along and we find ourselves in the presence of a nature that has no need of being perceived in order to exist. Thus, if we wish to reveal the genesis of being for us, then we must ultimately consider the sector of our experience that clearly has sense and reality only for us, namely, our affective milieu. Let us attempt to see how an object or a being begins to exist for us through desire or love, and we will thereby understand more clearly how objects and beings can exist in general.

[a. Sexuality is not a mixture of “representations” and reflexes, but an intentionality.]

Affectivity is usually conceived as a mosaic of affective states, self-contained pleasures and pains, which are not immediately understood

and can only be explained through our bodily organization. Even if it is conceded that human affectivity is “shot through with intelligence,” all that is meant is that simple representations can replace the natural stimuli of pleasure and pain according to the laws of the association of ideas or those of conditioned reflexes. Moreover, it is meant that these substitutions attach pleasure and pain to circumstances that are naturally indifferent to us and that, through one transfer after another, secondary or tertiary values are constituted that have no apparent relation to our natural pleasures and pains. The objective world plays less and less directly upon the keyboard of our “elementary” affective states, but their value remains as a permanent possibility of pleasure and pain. Apart from the experience of pleasure and pain, of which there is nothing to be said, the subject defines himself through his power of representation, and affectivity is not recognized as an original mode of consciousness. If this conception were correct, then every sexual incapacity would have to be reduced either to the loss of certain representations or to a weakening of pleasure. We will see that this is not the case.

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Consider one particular patient who no longer seeks the sexual act of his own volition.² Obscene pictures, conversations on sexual topics, and the perception of a body fail to arouse any desire in him. The patient hardly ever kisses, and the kiss has no value of sexual stimulation for him. Reactions are strictly local and never begin without contact. If foreplay is interrupted at that point, the sexual cycle does not seek to be continued. During intercourse, *intromissio* is never spontaneous. If his partner reaches orgasm first and moves away, the nascent desire fades away. Things happen at each moment as if the subject did not know what to do. There are no active movements, except for a few instants prior to orgasm, which is itself quite brief. Nocturnal emissions are rare, and are never accompanied by dreams. Shall we attempt to explain this sexual inertia – as we earlier attempted to explain the loss of kinetic initiation – by the disappearance of visual representations? But it will be difficult to maintain that there is no tactile representation of sexual acts, and it would thus remain a question as to why tactile stimulations, and not merely visual perceptions, have lost most of their sexual signification for Schneider. If we attempt now to presuppose a general breakdown of representation, as much tactile as visual, then the concrete appearance that this wholly formal deficiency adopts in the domain of sexuality would remain to be described. For the infrequency of nocturnal emissions, for example, is

not ultimately explained by the weakness of representations, which is more the effect than the cause, and seems to indicate rather an alteration of sexual life itself. Shall we assume, then, some weakening of normal sexual reflexes or of states of pleasure? But this case would be more appropriate for showing that there are no sexual reflexes and no pure states of pleasure. For, as we recall, all of Schneider's disorders result from an injury isolated to the occipital region. If sexuality for humans were an autonomous reflex mechanism, and if the sexual object affected some anatomically defined organ of pleasure, then the cerebral wound should have the effect of freeing these automatic reflexes and be expressed by an accentuated sexual behavior.

[b. *Being in a sexual situation.*]*

Pathology reveals a living zone between automatic reflexes and representation in which the sexual possibilities of the patient are elaborated, as we saw above in terms of his motor, perceptual, and even intellectual possibilities. There must be an immanent function in sexual life that guarantees its unfolding, and the normal extension of sexuality must rest upon the internal powers of the organic subject. There must be an Eros or a Libido that animates an original world, gives external stimuli a sexual value or signification, and sketches out for each subject the use to which he will put his objective body. For Schneider, it is the very structure of erotic perception or experience that is altered. For the normal person, a body is not perceived merely as just another object, this objective perception is inhabited by a more secret one: the visible body is underpinned by a strictly individual sexual schema that accentuates erogenous zones, sketches out a sexual physiognomy, and calls forth the gestures of the masculine body, which is itself integrated into this affective totality. For Schneider, however, a feminine body has no particular essence. Above all, he says, it is the personality that makes a woman attractive, for, when it comes to their bodies, they are all the same. Close bodily contact only produces a "vague feeling" or the "knowledge of something indeterminate," which is never enough "to launch" sexual behavior or to create a situation calling for a definite mode of resolution. Perception has lost its erotic structure both spatially and temporally. The patient has lost the power of projecting before himself a sexual world, of putting himself into an erotic situation, or, once the situation

is under way, of sustaining it or of following it through to satisfaction. In fact – lacking an intention, a sexual initiative that calls forth a cycle of movements and states, that “articulates” them and that finds in them its realization – the very word “satisfaction” no longer means anything to him. If tactile stimuli themselves, which the patient adeptly uses elsewhere, have lost their sexual signification, this is because they have, so to speak, ceased speaking to his body, ceased situating it within the relation of sexuality, or, in other words, because the patient has ceased posing to his surroundings that silent and permanent question that defines normal sexuality. Schneider and the majority of impotent subjects “are not immersed in what they do.” But distraction or inopportune representations are effects, not causes, and if the subject perceives the situation indifferently, this is first of all because he does not live it and because he is not committed to it.

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Here we can detect a mode of perception that is distinct from objective perception, a genre of signification distinct from intellectual signification, and an intentionality that is not the pure “consciousness of something.” Erotic perception is not a *cogitatio* that intends a *cogitatum*; through one body it aims at another body, and it is accomplished in the world, not within consciousness. For me, a scene does not have a sexual signification when I imagine, even confusedly, its possible relation to my sexual organs or to my states of pleasure, but rather when it exists for my body, for this always ready power of tying together the given stimuli into an erotic situation and for adapting a sexual behavior to it. There is an erotic “comprehension” that is not of the order of the understanding, given that the understanding comprehends by seeing an experience under an idea whereas desire comprehends blindly by linking one body to another. Even when it comes to sexuality, which nevertheless has long been taken as the model for bodily function, we are not faced with a peripheral automatic reflex, but rather with an intentionality that follows the general movement of existence and that weakens along with it. Just as he is generally no longer within an affective or an ideological situation, Schneider can no longer place himself in a sexual situation. Faces are neither pleasant nor unpleasant, and people only take on these qualities if he has a direct exchange with them, and then only according to the attitude that they adopt toward him, or the attention and the concern that they show him. The sun and the rain are neither joyful nor sad; his mood depends only upon elementary organic functions; the world is affectively

neutral. Schneider rarely expands his social milieu, and, when he does establish new friendships, they at times end badly: upon analysis, we see that this is because they never emerge from a spontaneous movement, but rather from an abstract decision. He would like to be able to think about politics or religion, but he never even tries. He knows that these regions are no longer accessible to him, and we have seen that, generally speaking, he never executes an authentic act of thought and he substitutes the manipulation of signs and the technique of using “fulcra”³ for the intuition of number or the grasping of significations. We will, all at once, discover sexual life as an original intentionality as well as the vital roots of perception, motricity, and representation, by grounding all of these “processes” upon an “intentional arc” that weakens for the patient and that for the normal subject gives experience its degree of vitality and fecundity.

[c. Psychoanalysis.]

Sexuality, then, is not an autonomous cycle. It is internally linked to the whole thinking and acting being and these three sectors of behavior manifest a single typical structure, they are in a reciprocal expressive relation. Here we connect with the most durable acquisitions of psychoanalysis. Whatever Freud’s principal claims may have been, psychoanalytical research does not end up explaining man through the sexual infrastructure, but rather in revealing in sexuality certain relations and attitudes that previously passed for relations and attitudes of *consciousness*, and the significance of psychoanalysis is not so much in making psychology “biological” as it is in discovering a dialectical movement in functions believed to be “purely bodily” and in reintegrating sexuality into human existence. For example, one of Freud’s dissenting disciples⁴ shows that frigidity is almost never linked to anatomical or physiological conditions, that it most often expresses the refusal of the orgasm, of the feminine condition, or of the condition of being sexed [*être sexué*], and that this latter is in turn the refusal of the sexual partner and of the destiny that he represents. It would be a mistake to believe that psychoanalysis, even for Freud, excludes the description of psychological motives and is opposed to the phenomenological method. Psychoanalysis has, on the contrary (and unwittingly), contributed to developing the phenomenological method by claiming, as Freud puts it, that every human act “has a

sense,"⁵ and by seeking everywhere to understand the event rather than to tie it to mechanical conditions. For Freud himself, the sexual is not the genital, sexual life is not a mere effect of processes situated in the genital organs, and the libido is not an instinct – that is, the libido is not an activity naturally oriented toward determinate ends – rather, it is the subject's general power of adhering to different milieus, of determining himself through different experiences, and of acquiring structures of behavior: the libido is what ensures that a man has a history. If the sexual history of a man gives the key to his life, this is because his manner of being toward the world – that is, toward time and toward others – is projected in his sexuality. There are sexual symptoms at the origin of all neuroses, but these symptoms, if interpreted properly, symbolize an entire attitude: either an attitude of conquest, for example, or one of flight. If it is taken to be the elaboration of a general form of life, then all psychological motives can sneak into the man's sexual history, because there is no longer any interference coming from competing causalities and because the genital life is geared into the total life of the subject. And the question is not so much as to whether human life is based upon sexuality, but rather to know what is understood by sexuality.

Psychoanalysis represents a double movement of thought. On the one side, it insists upon the sexual infrastructure of life; on the other, it "inflates" the notion of sexuality to the point of integrating all of existence into it. But its conclusions remain ambiguous precisely for this reason, just like those of our previous section. When we generalize the notion of sexuality and turn it into a manner of being in the physical and inter-human world, do we mean that ultimately the whole of existence has a sexual signification, or rather that every sexual phenomenon has an existential signification? On the first hypothesis, the notion of existence would be an abstraction or another name for designating sexual life. But since sexual life can no longer be circumscribed, since it is no longer a separate function definable through the causality proper to an organic apparatus, there is no longer any sense in saying that all of existence is understood through sexual life; rather, this proposition becomes a tautology. So must we say, conversely, that the sexual phenomenon is only an expression of our general manner of projecting our milieu? But sexual life is not a mere reflection of existence. An effective life, on the political or ideological level, for example, can be accompanied by a ruinous sexuality; it can even benefit from this ruinous state. Conversely, sexual life

197 might possess, such as for Casanova, a sort of technical perfection that does not respond to any particular vigor of being in the world. Even if the sexual apparatus is shot through by the general current of life, it can seize that current to its own advantage. Life is particularized into separate currents. Either the words are meaningless, or “sexual life” designates a sector of our life that maintains peculiar relations with the existence of the sexual organ. Sexuality cannot be submerged in existence, as if it were merely an epiphenomenon. For if we admit that the sexual disorders of neurotic patients express their fundamental drama in an exaggerated form, it remains to be seen why the sexual expression of this drama is more precocious, more frequent, and more striking than others, and why sexuality is not simply a sign, but in fact a privileged one.

[d. *An existential psychoanalysis is not a return to “spiritualism.”*]*

Here we discover a problem that we have encountered several times already. We showed with Gestalt theory that we cannot identify a layer of sensory givens that would immediately depend upon the sense organs: the slightest sensory given cannot be presented except as integrated into a configuration and as already “articulated.” This, we said, does not prevent the words “seeing” or “hearing” from having a sense. We have pointed out elsewhere⁶ that specialized regions of the brain, such as the “optical zone,” never function in isolation. This, we said, does not prevent the visual or auditive side from dominating in the clinical picture of the illness according to the region in which the lesions are situated. Finally, we just claimed that biological existence gears into human existence and is never indifferent to its particular rhythm. This, we will now add, does not prevent “living” (*leben*) from being a primordial operation from which it becomes possible to “live” (*erleben*)⁷ such and such a world, nor does it keep us from having to eat and breathe prior to perceiving and reaching a relational life, nor of having to be directed toward colors and lights through vision, toward sounds through hearing, and toward the other person’s body through sexuality, prior to reaching the life of human relations. Thus vision, hearing, sexuality, and the body are not merely points of passage, instruments, or manifestations of personal existence. Personal existence takes them up and gathers in them their given and anonymous existence. Thus, when we say that bodily or carnal life and the psyche are in a reciprocal relation of expression, or that the bodily event always has a

psychical *signification*, these formulas need to be explained. Valid as they are for the exclusion of causal thought, nevertheless they do not mean that the body is the transparent envelope of Spirit [l'Esprit]. To return to existence as if to the milieu in which the communication between the body and the mind [l'esprit] are comprehended is not to return to Consciousness or Spirit, and existential psychoanalysis must not serve as a pretext for a restoration of spiritualism. We will understand this better by clarifying the notions of "expression" and "signification" – which belong to the world of language and of constituted thought – that we have just applied uncritically to the relations between the body and the psyche and whose correction must be learned through our bodily experience.

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[e. *In what sense does sexuality express existence? By accomplishing it.*]

Consider the case of a young woman whose mother has forbidden her from seeing the young man she loves, and who loses her ability to sleep, her appetite, and ultimately her ability to speak.⁸ A first manifestation of this *aphonia*⁹ is found to have occurred in the course of her childhood, following an earthquake, and later a return of the *aphonia* follows a severe fright. A strictly Freudian interpretation would blame the oral stage of the development of sexuality. But what is "fixated" on the mouth is not merely sexual existence, but more generally the relations with others of which speech is the vehicle. If the emotion chooses to express itself by *aphonia*, this is because speech is, among all bodily functions, the most tightly linked to communal existence, or, as we will say, to coexistence. *Aphonia*, then, represents a refusal of coexistence, just as a fit of hysterics is, for other patients, a means of fleeing the situation. The patient breaks with the relational life of the familial milieu. More generally, she tends to break with life itself: if she can no longer swallow food, this is because swallowing symbolizes the movement of existence that allows itself to undergo events and assimilate them. The patient is literally unable "to swallow" the prohibition that has been imposed upon her.¹⁰ In the subject's childhood, fear was expressed by *aphonia* because the imminence of death violently interrupted coexistence and reduced the subject to her own personal lot. The symptom of *aphonia* reappears because the maternal prohibition brings back, figuratively, the same situation, and moreover because by closing off the subject's future it leads her back to favored behaviors. These motivations were able to exploit in this patient a particular sensitivity of the throat and the mouth, which

199 could be linked to the history of her libido and to the oral phase of sexuality. Thus, we discover through the sexual signification of the symptoms, sketched out subtly, what they signify more generally in relation to past and future, self and others, that is, in relation to the fundamental dimensions of existence.

But if the body constantly expresses the modalities of existence, we will see that this is not in the same manner as the stripes signify an officer's rank or as a number designates a house. The sign here does not only indicate its signification, but is also inhabited by it; here the sign is, in a sense, what it signifies, just as a portrait is the quasi-presence of the absent Pierre,¹¹ or in magic when wax figures are just what they stand for. The patient does not mime with her body a drama that occurred "in her consciousness." By losing her voice, she does not express an "inner state" on the outside, nor does she put on a "show" – like the head of state who shakes the hand of the conductor of a train or who embraces a peasant, or like a vexed friend who refuses to speak to me. To have lost one's voice is not to keep quiet: one only keeps quiet when one can speak. Of course, aphonia is not a form of paralysis, and the proof is that, when treated by psychological medications and left free by her family to again see the young man she loves, the young woman regains her speech. Yet neither is it a deliberate or voluntary silence. It is known how the theory of hysteria was led to transcend, with the notion of pithiatism,¹² the alternative between paralysis (or anesthesia) and simulation. If the hysteric is a pretender, he above all deceives himself, such that it is impossible to compare what he truly experiences or thinks and what he expresses on the outside. Pithiatism is an illness of the *Cogito*, it is consciousness become ambivalent, and not a deliberate refusal to confess what one knows. Similarly here, the young woman never stops speaking; rather, she "loses" her voice as one loses a memory. Again, as psychoanalysis shows, the lost memory is not in fact lost by accident, it is only lost insofar as it belongs to a certain region of my life that I refuse, insofar as it has a certain signification, and, like all significations, this one only exists for someone. Forgetting, then, is an act. I hold this memory at a distance, as I look away from a person whom I do not want to see. Nevertheless, as psychoanalysis again shows so marvelously, although resistance certainly presupposes an intentional relation with the memory that is resisted, it does not place it in front of us as an object, nor does it explicitly reject it; rather, it aims at a region of our experience, a certain category, a certain

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class of memories. The subject who has forgotten that a certain book, which was a gift from his wife, is in a certain drawer, and who then finds it once he is reconciled with her,¹³ had not lost the book absolutely, but neither did he know where it was. Everything involving his wife no longer existed for him, he had closed his life off from her, he had suddenly pushed to the side all behaviors that related to her, and he thus found himself somehow prior to both knowledge and ignorance, and prior to voluntary assertion and voluntary negation.

Thus, in hysteria and repression, we can be ignorant of something while knowing it because our memories and our body, rather than being given to us through singular and determinate acts of consciousness, are enveloped by generality. Through this generality we still “have” them, but just enough to hold them off at a distance from ourselves. We thereby discover that sensory messages or memories are only explicitly grasped or known by us given a general adhesion to the zone of our body and of our life that they concern. This adhesion or refusal places the subject into a definite situation and delimits his immediately available mental field, just as the acquisition or the loss of a sensory organ offers or subtracts an object of the physical field from his direct grasp. It cannot be said that the factual situation thus created is the simple consciousness of a situation, for this would be to say that the forgotten memory, the “forgotten” arm, or the “forgotten” leg is laid out before my consciousness, present and close to me, just like the “preserved” regions of my past or of my body. No more can aphonia be considered voluntary. The will presupposes a field of possibles among which I choose: here is Pierre, I can choose to speak to him or not. If, however, I lose my power of speech, then Pierre no longer exists for me as a desired or rejected interlocutor. The entire field of possibilities collapses, and I even cut myself off from the mode of communication and signification that is silence. Of course, we could speak here of hypocrisy or bad faith. But then it would be necessary to distinguish a psychological hypocrisy and a metaphysical hypocrisy. The former deceives others by hiding from them thoughts that are explicitly known by the subject. This is an easily avoidable accident. The latter deceives itself by means of generality. It ends up then in a state or a situation that is not a destiny, but that is not posited and desired; it is discovered even in the “sincere” or “authentic” man each time he pretends to be what he is without remainder. This is a part of the human condition. When the fit of hysterics is at its height, even if the subject sought it as

a means of escaping an embarrassing situation and plunges into it as if into a shelter, he *scarcely* hears any longer, he *scarcely* sees any longer, and he has almost become this spastic and breathless existence struggling on a bed. The intensity of indifference is such that it becomes an indifference toward X, an indifference toward life, and an absolute indifference. For every moment that goes by, freedom degrades and becomes less likely. Even if it is never impossible and can always derail the dialectic of bad faith, it is still the case that a single night's sleep has the same power. Whatever can be overcome by this anonymous force must be of the same nature as it, and we must then admit that indifference or aphonia, to the extent that they endure, become solid like things, that they make themselves into a structure, and that the decision that interrupts them comes from beneath the level of the "will." The patient cuts himself off from his voice, just as certain insects sever their own leg. He literally remains without a voice.

Correlatively, clinical psychology does not act upon the patient by making him know the origin of his illness. Sometimes a touch of the hand ends the convulsions and restores the patient's power of speech,¹⁴ and the same gesture, having become a ritual, will subsequently suffice to overcome new attacks. In any case, even if the realization remained purely cognitive in psychological treatment, the patient could not accept the sense of his disorders that have been revealed to him without the personal relationship that he has established with the doctor, without the confidence and friendship felt toward him, and without the change of existence that results from this friendship. The symptom and the recovery are worked out at a deeper level than that of objective orthetic consciousness. Moreover, the situation of aphonia can be compared to sleep: I lie down in my bed, on my left side, with my knees drawn up; I close my eyes, breathe slowly, and distance myself from my projects. But this is where the power of my will or consciousness ends. Just as the faithful in Dionysian mysteries invoke the god by imitating the scenes of his life, I too call forth the visitation of sleep by imitating the breathing and posture of the sleeper. The god is there when the faithful no longer distinguish themselves from the role they are playing, when their body and their consciousness cease to be opposed to their particular opacity and are entirely dissolved into the myth. Sleep "arrives" at a particular moment, it settles upon this imitation of itself that I offered it, and I succeed in becoming what I pretended to be: that unseeing and nearly unthinking mass, confined to a

point in space and no longer in the world except through the anonymous vigilance of the senses. This last link is surely what makes waking up possible: things will return through these half-open doors, or the sleeper will return through them to the world. The patient, who broke with coexistence, can similarly still perceive the sensible envelope of the other person and abstractly conceive of the future by means of a calendar, for example. In this sense, the sleeper is never completely enclosed in himself, never fully asleep, and the patient is never absolutely cut off from the intersubjective world, never fully sick. But the return to the real world for the sleeper and the patient is made possible by merely impersonal functions, namely, sense organs and language. We remain free from sleep and illness to the precise extent that we always remain engaged in the waking or healthy state, our freedom rests upon our being situated, and it is itself a situation. Sleeping, waking, illness, and health – these are not modalities of consciousness or will; rather, they presuppose an “existential step.”¹⁵ Aphonia does not merely represent a refusal of speaking, nor anorexia a refusal of living. They are this refusal of others or this refusal of the future, torn out of the transitive essence of “inner phenomena,” generalized, consummated, and transformed into factual situations.

The role of the body is to ensure this metamorphosis. It transforms ideas into things and my mimicry of sleep into actual sleep. If the body can symbolize existence, this is because it actualizes it and because it is its actuality. It aids its double systolic and diastolic movement. On the one hand, my body is indeed the possibility for my existence to resign from itself, to make itself anonymous and passive, and to settle into a pure formalism [*une scolastique*]. For the patient we have been discussing, movement toward the future, the living present, or the past, and the power to learn, to mature, and to enter into communication with others are all somehow blocked by a bodily symptom; existence has become entangled and the body has become “life’s hiding place.”¹⁶ For the patient, nothing ever happens, nothing takes on a sense and form in his life – or, more precisely, nothing comes to pass but always identical “nows”; life flows back upon itself and history is dissolved into natural time. Even when the subject is normal and engaged in inter-human situations, insofar as he has a body, he continuously preserves the power to withdraw from it. At the very moment when I live in the world and am directed toward my projects, my occupations, my friends, or my memories, I can close my eyes, lie down, listen to my blood pulsing in my ears, lose myself in some

pleasure or pain, and lock myself up in this anonymous life that underpins my personal life. But precisely because it can shut itself off from the world, my body is also what opens me up to the world and puts me into a situation there. The movement of existence toward others, toward the future, and toward the world can begin again, as a river thaws. The patient will rediscover her voice, not through an intellectual effort or through an abstract decree of the will, but through a conversion that gathers her entire body together, through a genuine gesture, as we seek and find a forgotten name not “in our mind” but “in our head” or “on the tip of our tongue.” Memory or voice are rediscovered when the body again opens to others or to the past, when it allows itself to be shot through by coexistence and when it again signifies (in the active sense) beyond itself.

Moreover, even when it is cut off from the circuit of existence, the body never completely falls back on itself. Even if I am absorbed in the experience of my body and in the solitude of sensations, I do not achieve a complete suppression of every reference to the world that is included in my life; at each moment some new intention springs forth from me, whether it be toward the objects that surround me and fall before my eyes, or toward the instants that arrive and push back into the past that I have just lived through. I never fully become an object in the world; the fullness of being of a thing is always lacking for me, my own substance always runs away from me through the inside, and some intention is always sketched out. Insofar as it includes “sense organs,” bodily existence never rests in itself. It is always tormented by an active nothingness, it continuously offers me some form of living, and natural time, in every instant that arrives, ceaselessly sketches out the empty form of the genuine event. This offer surely remains unanswered. The instant of natural time establishes nothing. It must immediately be renewed, and is in fact renewed in another instant. Sensorial functions by themselves do not make me exist in the world. When I am absorbed in my body, my eyes present merely the sensible envelope of things and of other men. Things themselves seem uncanny, behaviors decomposed into absurdity, and even the present, as in false recognition, loses its consistency and turns toward eternity. Bodily existence, which streams forth through me without my complicity, is but the sketch of a genuine presence in the world. But it, at the very least, grounds the possibility of such a presence and establishes our primary pact with the world. I can, of course, withdraw from the human world and take leave of my personal existence, but this

is only to reveal in my body the very same power – this time without a name – by which I am condemned to being. We might say that the body is the “hidden form of self-being,”¹⁷ or, reciprocally, that personal existence is the taking up and the manifestation of a being in a given situation. If we therefore say that the body continuously expresses existence, then this is intended in the sense that speech expresses thought. As we shall see, prior to the conventional means of expression – which only manifest my thought to another person because, for both of us, significations are already given for each sign and which in this sense do not achieve a genuine communication – it is necessary to recognize a primordial operation of signification in which the expressed does not exist apart from the expression and in which the signs themselves externally induce their sense. The body expresses total existence in this way, not that it is an external accompaniment of it, but because existence accomplishes itself in the body. This embodied sense is the central phenomenon of which body and mind, or sign and signification are abstract moments.

[f. The sexual “drama” does not reduce to the metaphysical “drama”; rather, sexuality is metaphysical.]

Understood in this way, the relation between the expression and that which is expressed, or between the sign and the signification, is not a one-way relation, such as the relation that exists between the original text and its translation. Neither the body nor existence could pass for the original model of the human being, since each one presupposes the other and since the body is existence as congealed or generalized, and since existence is a perpetual embodiment. In particular, when it is said that sexuality has an existential signification or that it expresses existence, this should not be understood as if the sexual drama was, in the final analysis, merely a manifestation or symptom of an existential drama.¹⁸ The same reason that prevents us from “reducing” existence to the body or to sexuality also prevents us from “reducing” sexuality to existence: it is because existence is not an order of facts (like “psychical facts”) that one could reduce to other facts or to which these others could be reduced; rather, it is the equivocal milieu of their communication, the point where their boundaries merge, or again, their common fabric. This has nothing to do with turning human existence “on its head.” We must recognize, beyond all question, that modesty, desire, and love have a metaphysical signifi-

tion in general, that is, they are incomprehensible if man is treated as a machine governed by natural laws or even as a “bundle of instincts,” and that they concern man as consciousness and as free. Man does not ordinarily show his body, and, when he does, it is either nervously or with the intention to fascinate. It seems to him that the alien gaze that glances over his body steals it from him or, on the contrary, that the exhibition of his body will disarm and deliver the other person over to him, and in this case the other person will be reduced to slavery. Thus, modesty and immodesty take place in a dialectic of self and other that is the dialectic of master and slave. Insofar as I have a body, I can be reduced to an object beneath the gaze of another person and no longer count for him as a person. Or again, to the contrary, I can become his master and gaze upon him in turn. But this mastery is a dead end, since, at the moment my value is recognized by the other’s desire, the other person is no longer the person by whom I wanted to be recognized: he is now a fascinated being, without freedom, and who as such no longer counts for me.

To say that I have a body is thus a way of saying that I can be seen as an object and that I seek to be seen as a subject, that another person can be my master or my slave, such that modesty and immodesty express the dialectic of the plurality of consciousnesses and that they in fact have a metaphysical signification. The same could be said of sexual desire. If sexual desire cannot bear the presence of a third party witness and if it perceives an overly natural attitude or overly detached words from the desired being as a mark of hostility, this is because it wants to fascinate, whereas the third party observer or the desired being, if too free in spirit, escapes this fascination. We do not attempt, then, to possess a body, but rather a body animated by a consciousness and, as Alain says, one does not love a madwoman, except insofar as one loved her before her madness. The importance attached to the body and the paradoxes of love are linked, then, to a more general drama drawn from the metaphysical structure of my body, at once an object for others and a subject for me. The violence of sexual pleasure would not suffice to explain the place that sexuality holds in human life or, for example, the phenomenon of eroticism, if sexual experience were not like a passive experience, given to everyone and always available, of the human condition in its most general moments of autonomy and dependence. The embarrassments and anxieties of human behavior are thus not explained by linking them to the sexual concern, since this latter already contains them. But reciprocally, sexuality is not

reduced to something other than itself by linking it to the ambiguity of the body. For, as an object before thought, the body is not ambiguous. It only becomes ambiguous in the experience we have of it, preeminently in sexual experience, and through the fact of sexuality. To treat sexuality as a dialectic is not to reduce it to a knowledge process nor to reduce the history of a man to the history of his consciousness. The dialectic is not a relation between contradictory yet inseparable thoughts: it is the tension from one existence to another existence that negates it and without which it can nevertheless not be sustained. Metaphysics – the emergence of a beyond-nature – is not localized on the level of knowledge: it begins with the opening to an “other,” it is everywhere and already contained within the distinctive development of sexuality. Of course we have, following Freud, generalized the notion of sexuality. So how can we speak of a distinctive development of sexuality? How can we characterize a content of consciousness as sexual? Indeed, we cannot.

[g. *Sexuality cannot be “transcended.”*]*

Sexuality hides from itself under a mask of generality, it ceaselessly attempts to escape from the tension and the drama that it institutes. But again, from where do we draw the right to say that it hides itself from itself, as if it remained the subject of our life? Must we not simply say that it is transcended and submerged in the more general drama of existence? Here there are two errors to avoid. The first is to fail to recognize in existence any content beyond its manifest content spread out in distinct representations, as do philosophies of consciousness; the second is to double this manifest content with a latent content, also made up of representation, as do psychologies of the unconscious. Sexuality is neither transcended in human life nor represented at its core through unconscious representations. It is continuously present in human life as an atmosphere. The dreamer does not begin by representing the latent content of his dream to himself – that is, the content that will be revealed through the “second telling” and with the aid of adequate images; nor does he begin by perceiving clearly the stimulations of a genital origin as genital in order to subsequently translate this text into a figurative language. But for the dreamer, who is detached from waking language, such a genital stimulation or such a sexual drive is immediately this image of a wall being scaled or a cliff being climbed that is found in the manifest

content. Sexuality is diffused throughout images that retain from it only certain typical relations, only a certain affective physiognomy. The dreamer's penis becomes this serpent represented in the manifest content.¹⁹

What we have just said of the dreamer is also true of that always obscure part of ourselves that we sense beneath our representations, that individual haze through which we perceive the world. This haze contains confused forms and privileged relations, which are not at all "unconscious," and of which we know unquestionably that they are seedy, that they have a relation to sexuality, without explicitly evoking that relation. Sexuality emanates like an odor or a sound from the bodily region that it occupies most specifically. Here we discover the general function of tacit transposition that we have already recognized in the body when studying the body schema. When I bring my hand toward an object, I implicitly know that my arm stretches out. When I move my eyes, I take account of their movement without gaining an explicit consciousness of it and I understand through this movement that the upheaval of the visual field is only apparent. Similarly, sexuality can motivate privileged forms of my experience without being the object of an explicit act of consciousness. Thus understood as an ambiguous atmosphere, sexuality is coextensive with life. In other words, ambiguity is essential to human existence, and everything that we live or think always has several senses. A style of life – such as an evasive attitude and a need for solitude – is perhaps a generalized expression of a certain state of sexuality. By bringing itself into existence in this way, sexuality is charged with such a general signification that the sexual theme was able to be, for the subject, the opportunity for taking true and accurate notice of so many things in themselves and of so many rationally based decisions, and it has become so weighed down along the way that it is impossible to seek the explanation for the form of existence in the form of sexuality. The fact remains that this existence is the taking up and the making explicit of a sexual situation, and that it therefore always has at least a double sense. There is osmosis between sexuality and existence, that is, if existence diffuses throughout sexuality, sexuality reciprocally diffuses throughout existence, such that it is impossible to identify the contribution of sexual motivation and the contribution of other motivations for a given decision or action, and it is impossible to characterize a decision or an action as "sexual" or as "nonsexual."

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In human existence, then, there is a principle of indetermination, and this indetermination does not merely exist for us, it does not result

from some imperfection in our knowledge, and we must not hold that a God might sound out our hearts and minds and determine what comes from nature and what comes from freedom. Existence is indeterminate in itself because of its fundamental structure: insofar as existence is the very operation by which something that had no sense takes on sense, by which something that only had a sexual sense adopts a more general signification, by which chance is transformed into reason, or in other words insofar as existence is the taking up of a *de facto* situation. “Transcendence” is the name we shall give to this movement by which existence takes up for itself and transforms a *de facto* situation. Existence, precisely because it is transcendence, never definitively leaves anything behind, for then the tension that defines it would disappear. It never abandons itself. What it is never remains external and accidental to it, since it takes it up in itself. Sexuality, no more than the body in general, must not be taken for a fortuitous content of our experience. Existence has no fortuitous attributes and no content that does not contribute to giving it its form, it does not admit any pure facts in themselves, because it is the movement by which facts are taken up.

One might respond that the organization of our body is contingent, that one could “conceive of a man without hands, feet, or a head,”²⁰ and, even more so, conceive of a man without sexual organs who could reproduce through cutting or layering. But this is only true if we consider hands, feet, the head, or the sexual organs abstractly, that is, as fragments of matter and not in their living function, and only if we also form an abstract notion of man into which only the *Cogitatio* is allowed entry. If, however, we conceive of man through his experience, that is, through his distinctive way of articulating the world, and if the organs are reintegrated into this functional whole from which they are cut out, then a man without hands or without a sexual system is as inconceivable as a man without thought. Or again, one might respond that our proposition only ceases to be paradoxical by becoming a tautology: we claim in short that man would be different from what he is, and would thus no longer be a man, if he were missing a single one of the relational systems that he actually possesses. But, they will add, this is because we defined man through empirical man, such as he in fact exists, and that we tie together – through an essential necessity and in a human *a priori* – characteristics of this given whole that are gathered together there merely through the encounter of multiple causes and by the caprice of nature. But in fact,

we are not imagining some essential necessity through a retrospective illusion; rather, we are observing an existential connection. Since, as we have shown above through the analysis of Schneider's case, all "functions" in man – from sexuality and motricity through to intelligence – are rigorously unified. It is impossible to distinguish in the total being of man a bodily organization that one could treat as a contingent fact and other predicates that necessarily belong to him. Everything is necessary in man, and, for example, it is not through a simple coincidence that the reasonable being is also the one who stands upright or who has opposable thumbs – the same manner of existing is expressed in both of these cases.²¹ And everything is also contingent in man in the sense that this human way of existing is not guaranteed to each human child through some essence acquired at birth, in the sense that it must be continuously renewed in him through the accidents of the objective body.

Man is an historical idea, not a natural species. In other words, there is no unconditioned possession in human existence, and yet neither is there any fortuitous attribute. Human existence will lead us to revisit our usual notion of necessity and of contingency, because human existence is the change of contingency into necessity through the act of taking up.²² All that we are, we are on the basis of a factual situation that we make our own and that we ceaselessly transform through a sort of *escape* that is never an unconditioned freedom. There is no explanation of sexuality that reduces it to something other than itself, for it is already something other than itself; it already is, so to speak, our entire being. It is said that sexuality is dramatic *because* we engage our whole personal life therein. But why precisely do we do this? Why else would our body be, for us, the mirror of our being, if not because it is a *natural self*, a given current of existence, such that we never know if the forces that carry us belong to us or belong to our body – or rather, such that they are never entirely our body's or entirely ours. Sexuality cannot be transcended, and yet there is no self-enclosed sexuality. No one is fully saved, and no one is fully lost.

[Note on the existential interpretation of dialectical materialism.]²³

The condemnation of "reductive" conceptions and causal thought in the name of a descriptive and phenomenological method can no more rid us of historical materialism than of psychoanalysis, for historical materialism is no more committed to the possible "causal" versions of it than

is psychoanalysis, and like psychoanalysis it too can be stated in a different language. Historical materialism consists just as much in rendering economics historical as it does in rendering history economic. The economics upon which it bases history is not, as in classical science, a closed cycle of objective phenomena, but rather a confrontation between productive forces and forms of production that only reach completion when the productive forces emerge from their anonymity, become self-conscious, and thereby become capable of articulating the future. Now, this coming to awareness is clearly a cultural phenomenon, and in this way all of the psychological motivations can be introduced into the fabric of history. A “materialist” history of the 1917 Revolution does not consist in explaining each revolutionary thrust through the retail price index at the moment in question, but rather in placing each revolutionary thrust back into the class dynamic and conscious relations – fluctuating from February to October – between the new proletarian power and the old conservative power. Economics is reintegrated into history rather than history being reduced to economics. “Historical materialism,” in the works it inspired, is often nothing other than a concrete understanding of history that takes into account, beyond its manifest content (such as official relations between “citizens” in a democracy), its latent content, that is, the inter-human relations such as they are actually established in concrete life. When “materialist” history characterizes democracy as a “formal” regime and describes the conflicts by which it is tormented, the real subject of history, which it seeks to find beneath the juridical abstraction of the citizen, is not merely the economic subject or man as a factor of production, but more generally the living subject – man insofar as he is a certain productivity, insofar as he wants to give his life form, insofar as he loves, hates, and creates or does not create works of art, insofar as he has children or does not. Historical materialism is not an exclusively economic causality. One would be tempted to say that it does not base history and ways of thinking upon production and the ways of working, but more generally upon the manner of existing and coexisting, upon inter-human relations. It does not reduce the history of ideas to economic history, but puts them back into the unique history that they both express, namely, the history of social existence. Solipsism as a philosophical doctrine is not an effect of private property; rather, the same existential commitment to isolation and mistrust is projected into the economic institution and into the conception of the world.

Yet this interpretation of historical materialism might seem ambiguous. We are “inflating” the notion of economics, just as Freud inflated that of sexuality. We are introducing, in addition to the processes of production and the struggle of economic forces against economic forms, the constellation of psychological and moral motives that co-determine this struggle. But does not the word “economics” thereby lose all identifiable sense? If economic relations are not expressed in the mode of *Mitsein* [being-with], then is not the mode of *Mitsein* expressed in economic relations?²⁴ When we relate private property (as does solipsism) to a certain structure of *Mitsein*, do we not again make history walk on its head? And must we not choose between the following two positions: either the drama of coexistence has a purely economic signification, or the economic drama dissolves into a more general drama and has only an existential signification, which thus leads back to spiritualism?

The notion of existence, if properly understood, allows us to leave precisely this alternative behind, and what we said above about the existential conception of “expression” and “signification” must again be applied here. An existential theory of history is ambiguous, but it cannot be reproached for this ambiguity, for the ambiguity is in the things. History only presses closer to economics insofar as the revolution approaches, and just as an illness in an individual life subjects the man to the vital rhythms of his body, the relations of production show through and are explicitly perceived as decisive in a revolutionary situation, such as in the movement of a general strike. Again, as we have just seen, the outcome depends upon the manner in which the opposing forces conceive of each other. All the more so in periods of depression, in which economic relations are only effective insofar as they are lived and taken up by a human subject, that is, wrapped in ideological rags, through a process of mystification, or rather through a permanent equivocation that is part of history and that has its own weight. Neither the conservative nor the proletarian are aware of being engaged in a merely economic struggle and they always give their action a human signification. In this sense, there is never a purely economic causality because the economy is not a closed system and because it is part of the total and concrete existence of society. But an existential conception of history does not strip economic situations of their power of *motivation*. If existence is the permanent movement by which man takes up and assumes a certain factual situation for himself, then none

of his thoughts will be completely detached from the historical context in which he lives and, in particular, from his economic situation. The external becomes internal and the internal becomes external precisely because economics is not a closed world and because all motivations intersect at the center of history, and no part of our existence can ever be wholly transcended.

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It would be absurd to consider Paul Valéry's poetry a mere episode of economic alienation, for pure poetry can have an eternal sense. But it is not absurd to seek in the social and economic drama, or in the mode of our *Mitsein*, the motive of this moment of insight. Just as our entire life, as we have said, breathes within a sexual atmosphere, without our being able to identify a single content of consciousness that would be "purely sexual" or that would not be sexual at all, so too the economic and social drama offers each consciousness a certain background or again a certain *imago* that it will decode in its own manner, and, in this sense, this drama is coextensive with history. The artist's or the philosopher's act is free, but not unmotivated. Their freedom resides in the power for equivocation of which we just spoke, or again in the process of escape of which we spoke above. It consists in taking up a factual situation by giving it a figurative sense beyond its literal sense. Thus Marx, not content *to be* the son of a lawyer and a student of philosophy, *thinks* his own situation as that of a "petty bourgeois intellectual," and from this new perspective of the class struggle. Thus Valéry transforms into pure poetry a malaise and a solitude of which others would have made nothing. Thought is the inter-human life such as it comprehends and interprets itself. In this voluntary taking up, in this passage from objective to subjective, it is impossible to say where the forces of history end or where ours begin, and strictly speaking the question is meaningless, since history only exists for a subject who lives through it and a subject only exists as historically situated. History has no single signification; what we do always has several senses, and this is how an existential conception of history is distinguished from both materialism and spiritualism. But every cultural phenomenon has (among others) an economic signification and, no more than can history be reduced to economics, history in principle never transcends economics either. The conception of law, morality, religion, and economic structure are co-signified in the Unity of the social event, just as the parts of the body are all co-implicated in the Unity of a gesture, or just as "physiological,"

“psychological,” and “moral” motives intersect in the Unity of an action. Moreover, it is impossible to reduce inter-human life either to economic relations or to juridical and moral relations conceived by men, just as it is impossible to reduce the individual life either to bodily functions or to the knowledge that we have of that life. But one of the orders of signification can be considered dominant in each case, one gesture can be considered “sexual,” another one “loving,” and still another “warlike,” and even within coexistence, some period of history can be considered as above all cultural, or primarily political or economic. To ask whether our current history has a primarily economic sense and whether our ideologies give nothing but a secondary or derivative sense of it is a question that no longer comes from philosophy, but rather from politics. It is a question that will only be resolved by researching which scenario fits the facts more completely, the economic scenario or the ideological one. Philosophy can only show that resolving the question is *possible* by starting from the human condition.

VI

THE BODY AS EXPRESSION, AND SPEECH

We have discovered in the body a unity distinct from that of the scientific object. We have just discovered, even in the body's "sexual function," an intentionality and a power of signification. By now seeking to describe the phenomenon of speech and the deliberate act of signification, we will have the opportunity to leave behind, once and for all, the classical subject-object dichotomy. 213

[a. *Empiricism and intellectualism in the theory of aphasia, equally insufficient.*]

The recognition of speech as an original region naturally comes late. Here as everywhere, the relation of *having* [avoir], which is nevertheless visible in the very etymology of the word "habit" [habitude],¹ is at first masked by relations from the domain of *being* [être], or, as we might also put it, by intra-worldly and ontic relations.² The possession of language is understood at first as the simple actual existence of "verbal images," that is, of traces left in us by words that were spoken or heard. It is of little importance whether the traces are bodily or are deposited in an "unconscious psyche," and in both cases the conception of language is the same in that there is no "speaking subject." Whether stimuli trigger, 214

according to the laws of the nervous system, the stimulations capable of provoking the articulation of the word, or whether states of consciousness bring about the appearance of the appropriate verbal image in virtue of acquired associations, in both cases speech takes place in a circuit of third person phenomena. There is no one who speaks, there is but a flow of words that occurs without any intention to speak governing it. The sense of the words is assumed to be given with the stimuli or with the states of consciousness to be named; the sonorous or articulatory configuration of the word is given along with the cerebral or psychical traces; speech is not an action, for it does not manifest the inner possibilities of the subject. Man can speak in the way an electric lamp can become incandescent. Since there are selective disorders that attack spoken language to the exclusion of written language, or writing to the exclusion of speech, and since language can be decomposed into fragments, this would be because it is constituted by a series of independent contributions and because speech, in the general sense, is a being that comes from reason.

The theory of aphasia and of language seemed to be completely transformed when it became necessary to distinguish, beyond anarthria³ (which affects word articulation), a true aphasia, which never occurs without some intellectual disorder; and beyond automatic language (which is in fact a motor phenomenon in the third person), an intentional language, the only one affected in the majority of cases of aphasia. The individuality of the "verbal image" was, in effect, dissociated. What the patient had lost, and what the normal person possessed, was not a certain stock of words, but rather a certain manner of using them. The same word that remains available to the patient on the level of automatic language escapes him on the level of spontaneous language; the same patient who easily finds the word "no" to express a negative answer to the doctor's questions, that is, when the word signifies a present and lived negation, cannot pronounce it when engaged in an exercise without any affective or vital importance. Thus, behind the word we discover an attitude or a function of speech that conditions it. The distinction had to be made between the word as an instrument of action and the word as a means of disinterested denomination. If "concrete" language remained a third person process, then spontaneous language or authentic denomination became a phenomenon of thought, and so the origin of certain types of aphasia had to be sought in some mental disorder. For example, an amnesia of color names, placed back into the overall behavior of the

patient, appeared as a particular manifestation of a more general disorder. The same patients who fail to name the colors presented to them are equally incapable of classifying them according to a given rule. For example, if they are asked to sort samples according to their fundamental tint, it is first observed that they perform the task more slowly and more meticulously than a normal subject. They bring the samples together to compare them, and they do not see at a glance which ones “go together.” Moreover, after having correctly assembled several blue ribbons, they commit incomprehensible errors. For example, if the last blue ribbon was of a pale shade, they proceed by adding a pale green or a pale pink ribbon to the “blue” pile – as if it were impossible for them to sustain the proposed principle of classification and of considering the samples from the point of view of color from the beginning to the end of the operation. They have thus become incapable of subsuming the sensory givens under a category and incapable of immediately seeing the samples as representatives of the *eidos* “blue.” Even when they proceed correctly at the beginning of the test, it is not the participation of the samples in a single idea that guides them, but rather the experience of an immediate resemblance, and this is why they can only classify the samples after having brought them together. For these patients, the sorting test reveals a fundamental disorder of which the amnesia of color names will only be another manifestation. For to name an object is to tear oneself away from what its individual and unique properties are in order to see it as the representative of an essence or of a category. And if the patient cannot name the samples, this is not because he has lost the verbal image of the word “red” or the word “blue,” it is because he has lost the general power of subsuming a sensory given under a category, it is because he has fallen back from the categorial attitude into the concrete attitude.⁴ These analyses, and other similar ones, lead us it would seem to the extreme opposite of the theory of verbal images, since language now appears as conditioned by thought.

[b. *Language has a sense.*]

In fact, we will see once again that there is a kinship between empirical or mechanistic psychologies and intellectualist psychologies, and the problem of language cannot be solved by going from thesis to antithesis. A moment ago, the reproduction of the word and the awakening of the

216 verbal image was the key; now, the word is no more than the envelope of genuine denomination of authentic speech, which is an inner operation. These two theories, however, concur in the claim that the word *has* no signification. This is clear in the first case since the evocation of the word is not mediated by any concept, and because the stimuli or the given “states of consciousness” call forth the word according to the laws of the nervous system or according to those of association. Hence the word does not bear its sense, it has no inner power, and is nothing more than a psychical, physiological, or even physical phenomenon juxtaposed with others and brought to light through the play of an objective causality. Nothing changes when the denomination is doubled by a categorial operation. The word is again stripped of any efficacy of its own, this time because it is merely the external sign of an inner recognition that could be accomplished without it and to which it does not contribute. The word is not stripped of sense, since behind it there is a categorial operation, but the word itself does not *have* this sense, it does not possess it. Thought has a sense and the word remains an empty envelope. The word is merely an articulatory, sonorous phenomenon, or the consciousness of this phenomenon, but in any case, language is only an external accompaniment of thought. In the first account, we exist prior to the word as meaningful; in the second account, we are beyond it – in the first, there is no one who speaks; in the second, there is certainly a subject, but it is the thinking subject, not the speaking subject. With regard to speech itself, intellectualism hardly differs from empiricism, and it is no more able to do without an explanation through automatic reflexes. Once the categorial operation has been accomplished, the appearance of the word that accomplishes it remains to be explained, and again an explanation is found through a physiological or psychological mechanism, since the word is an inert envelope. Thus, we move beyond intellectualism as much as empiricism through the simple observation that *the word has a sense*.

[c. *Language does not presuppose thought, it accomplishes thought.*]

If speech presupposed thought, or if speaking was primarily the act of connecting with the object through a knowledge intention or through a representation, then we could not understand why thought tends toward expression as if toward its completion, why the most familiar object appears indeterminate so long as we have not remembered its name, and

why the thinking subject himself is in a sort of ignorance of his thoughts so long as he has not formulated them for himself, or even spoken or written them, as is shown through the example of so many writers who begin a book without knowing just what they are going to include. A thought, content to exist for itself outside the constraints of speech and communication, would fall into the unconscious the moment it appears, which amounts to saying that it would not even exist for itself. To Kant's famous question, we can respond that it is indeed an experience of thought, in the sense that we give our thought to ourselves through inner or outer speech. It certainly moves forward instantly, as if through flashes, but it subsequently remains for us to appropriate it, and it is through expression that thought becomes our own. The designation of objects never happens after recognition, it is recognition itself. When I focus on an object in the shadows and I say: "It's a brush," there is no concept of the brush in my mind beneath which I could subsume the object and that moreover could be linked with the word "brush" through a frequent association. Rather, the word bears the sense, and, by imposing it upon the object, I am conscious of reaching the object. As has often been said, the object is only known by the child once it has been named; the name is the essence of the object and resides in it, just like its color or its form.⁵ For pre-scientific thought, to name an object is to bring it into existence or to modify it: God creates beings by naming them, and magic affects objects by speaking of them. These "errors" would be incomprehensible if speech was based upon the concept, for the concept would always have to know itself as distinct from speech and to know speech as an external accompaniment. If one responds that the child learns to know objects through the designations of language, that, presented primarily as linguistic beings, objects thereby only receive a natural existence secondarily, and finally that the actual existence of a linguistic community accounts for these childish beliefs, then this explanation leaves the problem intact. For if the child can know himself as a member of a linguistic community prior to knowing himself as a thought about Nature, this is on condition that the subject can be unaware of himself as a universal thought and can grasp himself as speech, and on condition that the word, far from being the simple sign of objects and significations, inhabits things and bears significations.

For the speaker, then, speech does not translate a ready-made thought; rather, speech accomplishes thought.⁶ Even more so, it must be acknowl-

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edged that the person listening receives the thought from the speech itself. At first glance, one might believe that speech that is heard can bring him nothing: he gives the words and the phrases their sense, and even the combination of words and phrases is not some external contribution, since it would not be understood if it did not encounter in him the power of actualizing it. Here as everywhere, it seems true at first glance that consciousness can only find in its experience what it had itself put there. Hence the experience of communication would be an illusion. One consciousness constructs – for X – this language machine that will give to another consciousness the opportunity to enact the same thoughts, but nothing actually passes from one to the other. Nevertheless, given the problem of knowing how according to all appearances consciousness learns something, the solution cannot consist in asserting that it knows everything in advance. The fact is that we have the power to understand beyond what we could have spontaneously thought. People can only speak to us in a language we already know, and each word of a difficult text awakens thoughts in us that belonged to us in advance, but these significations sometimes combine into a new thought that reworks them all, and we are transported to the heart of the book and connect with the source. There is nothing here comparable to the resolution of a problem, where an unknown term is discovered through its relation with known terms. For the problem can only be resolved if it is determinate, that is, if the cross-checking of the givens assigns one or several definite values to the unknown. In understanding others, the problem is always indeterminate⁷ because only the solution to the problem will make the givens retrospectively appear as convergent, and only the central motive of a philosophy, once understood, gives the philosopher's texts the value of adequate signs. Through speech, then, there is a taking up of the other person's thought, a reflection in others, a power of thinking *according to*

219 *others*,⁸ which enriches our own thoughts. Here, then, the sense of words must ultimately be induced by the words themselves, or more precisely their conceptual signification must be formed by drawing from a *gestural signification*, which itself is immanent in speech. And just as, when in a foreign country, I begin to understand the sense of words by their place in a context of action and by participating in everyday life, so too a philosophical text that remains poorly understood nevertheless reveals to me at least a certain "style" – whether Spinozistic, critical, or phenomenological – which is the first sketch of its sense. I begin to understand a

philosophy by slipping into this thought's particular manner of existing, by reproducing the tone or the accent of the philosopher in question. In short, every language teaches itself and imports its meaning [sens] into the listener's mind. A piece of music or a painting that is not immediately understood ultimately creates its own public – so long as it truly says something – which is to say, by secreting its own signification. In the case of prose or poetry, the power of speech is less visible because we have the illusion of already possessing within ourselves, with the common meaning of words, what will be necessary for understanding any text whatsoever, whereas, to all appearance, the colors of the palette or the brute sounds of the instruments, such as natural perception presents them to us, are insufficient to form the musical sense of a piece of music or the pictorial sense of a painting. But in fact, it is less the case that the sense of a literary work is built from the common meanings of the words than that the literary work contributes to modifying that common meaning. There is, then, either for the person listening or reading, or for the person speaking or writing, a *thought in the speech* of which intellectualism is wholly unaware.

[d. *Thought in words.*]

If we wish to give an account of this, we must return to the phenomenon of speech and question the usual descriptions that congeal both thought and speech, and that make anything other than external relations between them inconceivable. We must first recognize that, for the speaking subject, thought is not a representation; that is, thought does not explicitly posit objects or relations. The orator does not think prior to speaking, nor even while speaking; his speech is his thought. The listener similarly does not think about the signs. The “thought” of the orator is empty while he speaks and, when a text is read in front of us, and if the expression is successful, we do not have a thought on the margins of the text itself. The words occupy our entire mind, they come to fulfill our expectation exactly, and we experience the necessity of the speech [discours]; but we would not have been capable of predicting it, and we are possessed by it. The end of the speech or of the text will be the lifting of a spell. It is then that thoughts about the speech or the text will be able to arise. Previously the speech was improvised and the text was understood without a single thought; the sense was present everywhere,

but nowhere was it posited for itself. If the speaking subject does not conceive of the sense of what he says, he no more represents to himself the words he employs. As we have said, knowing a word or a language [langue] does not consist in having available some preestablished neural arrangements. But for all that, neither is it the preservation of some “pure memory” or some weakened perception of the word. The Bergsonian alternative between habit-memory and pure memory does not account for the near presence of the words that I know. They are behind me, like the objects behind my back or like the horizon of the village surrounding my house; I reckon with them or I count upon them, but I have no “verbal image” of them. If they persist in me, they do so more in the manner of the Freudian *Imago*, which is much less the representation of a previous perception than a very precise and very general emotional essence detached from its empirical origins. What remains for me of the word I have learned is its sonorous and articulatory style. We must say of the verbal image what we said above of the “representation of movement”: I have no need of representing to myself external space and my own body in order to move the one within the other. It is enough that they exist for me and that they constitute a certain field of action held around me. Likewise, I have no need of representing to myself the word in order to know it and to pronounce it. It is enough that I possess its articulatory and sonorous essence as one of the modulations or one of the possible uses of my body. I relate to the word just as my hand reaches for the place on my body being stung. The word has a certain place in my linguistic world, it is a part of my equipment. The only means I have of representing it to myself is by pronouncing it, just as the only means the artist has of representing to himself the work he is pursuing is by producing it. When I imagine absent Pierre, I am not conscious of contemplating Pierre in an image numerically distinct from Pierre himself. As far away as Pierre might be, I aim at him in the world, and my power of imagining is nothing other than the persistence of my world around me.⁹ To say that I imagine Pierre is to say that I obtain a pseudo-presence of Pierre by triggering the “Pierre-behavior.” Just as imagined Pierre is only one of the modalities of my being in the world, the verbal image too is only one of the modalities of my phonetic gesticulation, given with many others in the overall consciousness of my body. This is clearly what Bergson means when he speaks of a “motor structure” of recollection,¹⁰ but if these pure representations of the past come to insert themselves

into this structure, then it is not clear why they would have need of it in order to become actual again. The role of the body in memory can only be understood if memory is not the constituting consciousness of the past, but rather an effort to reopen time beginning from the implications of the present, and if the body, being our permanent means of “adopting attitudes” and hence of creating pseudo-presents, is the means of our communication with both time and space.¹¹ The function of the body in memory is that very function of projection that we have already encountered in kinetic initiation: the body converts a certain motor essence into a vocalization, deploys the articulatory style of a word in sonorous phenomena, deploys the previous attitude that it takes up in the panorama of the past, and projects an intention to move into actual movement, all because the body is a natural power of expression.

[e. *Thought is expression.*]

These remarks allow us to give the act of speaking its true physiognomy. First, speech is not the “sign” of thought, if by this we understand a phenomenon that announces another as smoke announces fire. Speech and thought would only admit of this external relation if they were both thematically given; in fact, they are enveloped in each other; sense is caught in speech, and speech is the external existence of sense. We can no more admit, as is ordinarily done, that speech is a simple means of solidifying thought, or again, that it is the envelope or the clothing of thought. If the so-called verbal images need to be reconstructed each time, why would it be easier to recall words or phrases than to recall thoughts? And why would thought seek to double itself or to clothe itself in a series of vocalizations, if the latter do not carry and do not contain their sense in themselves? Words can only be the “fortresses of thought” and thought can only seek expression if the words are by themselves a comprehensible text and if speech possesses a power of signification of its own. In one way or another, the word and speech must cease to be a manner of designating the object or the thought in order to become the presence of this thought in the sensible world, and not its clothing, but rather its emblem or its body. There must be, as the psychologists say, a “linguistic concept” (*Sprachbegriff*)¹² or a verbal concept (*Wortbegriff*), a “central internal experience, specifically verbal, thanks to which the sound heard, pronounced, read, or written becomes a fact of language.”¹³ Some patients can read a

text “expressively” despite not understanding it. This is because speech or words carry a primary layer of signification that adheres to them and that gives the thought as a style, as an affective value, or as an existential mimicry, rather than as a conceptual statement. We discover here, beneath the conceptual signification of words, an existential signification that is not simply translated by them, but that inhabits them and is inseparable from them. The most important achievement of expression is not to commit to writing some thoughts that might otherwise be lost; a writer hardly ever rereads his own works and, on the first reading, a great work deposits in us everything that we will subsequently draw from it. The operation of expression, when successful, does not simply leave to the reader or the writer himself a reminder; it makes the signification exist as a thing at the very heart of the text, it brings it to life in an organism of words, it installs this signification in the writer or the reader like
 223 a new sense organ, and it opens a new field or a new dimension to our experience.

This power of expression is well known in art, for example in music. The musical signification of the sonata is inseparable from the sounds that carry it: prior to having heard it, no analysis allows us to anticipate it. Once the performance has come to an end, we cannot do anything in our intellectual analyses of the music but refer back to the moment of the experience. During the performance, the sounds are not merely the “signs” of the sonata; rather, the sonata is there through them and it descends into them.¹⁴ Likewise, the actress becomes invisible, and it is Phaedra who appears. The signification absorbs the signs, and Phaedra has so fully taken possession of Berma that her ecstasy in Phaedra seems to us to be the pinnacle of naturalness and of facility.¹⁵ Aesthetic expression confers an existence in itself upon what it expresses, installs it in nature as a perceived thing accessible to everyone, or inversely rips the signs themselves – the actor’s person, the painter’s colors and canvas – from their empirical existence and steals them away to another world. No one will object that here the expressive operation actualizes or accomplishes the signification and is not merely a matter of translating it. But despite appearances, the same is true for the expression of thoughts by speech. Thought is nothing “inner,” nor does it exist outside the world and outside of words. What tricks us here, what makes us believe in a thought that could exist for itself prior to expression, are the already constituted and already expressed thoughts that we can silently recall to

ourselves and by which we give ourselves the illusion of an inner life. But in fact, this supposed silence is buzzing with words – this inner life is an inner language. “Pure” thought is reduced to a certain emptiness of consciousness and to an instantaneous desire. The new meaningful intention only knows itself by donning already available significations, which are the results of previous acts of expression. The available significations suddenly intertwine according to an unknown law, and once and for all a new cultural being has begun to exist.

Thought and expression are thus constituted simultaneously when our cultural assets are mobilized in the service of this unknown law, just as our body suddenly lends itself to a new gesture in the acquisition of habit. Speech is a genuine gesture and, just like all gestures, speech too contains its own sense. This is what makes communication possible. In order for me to understand the other person’s words, I must “already know” his vocabulary and his syntax. But that does not mean that the words act by arousing “representations” in me, which could be associated with them and which, when taken together, could eventually reproduce in me the speaker’s original “representation.” I do not primarily communicate with “representations” or with a thought, but rather with a speaking subject, with a certain style of being, and with the “world” that he aims at. Just as the significative intention that initiated the other person’s speech is not an explicit thought, but rather a certain lack that seeks to be fulfilled, so too is my taking up of this intention not an operation of my thought, but rather a synchronic modulation of my own existence, a transformation of my being. We live in a world where speech is already instituted. We possess in ourselves already formed significations for all of these banal words [paroles]. They only give rise in us to second-order thoughts, which are in turn translated into other words that require no genuine effort of expression from us, and that will demand no effort of comprehension from our listeners. Thus, language and the comprehension of language seem self-evident. The linguistic and intersubjective world no longer causes us any wonder, we no longer distinguish it from the world itself, and we reflect within a world already spoken and speaking. We become unaware of what is contingent in expression and in communication, either for the child who learns to speak, or for the writer who says and thinks of something for the first time, in short, for those who transform a certain silence into speech. It is, however, clear that constituted speech, such as it plays out in everyday life, assumes that the decisive step of expression

has been accomplished. Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we do not return to this origin, so long as we do not rediscover the primordial silence beneath the noise of words, and so long as we do not describe the gesture that breaks this silence. Speech is a gesture, and its signification is a world.

[*f. The understanding of gestures.*]

225 Modern psychology has, of course, shown that the spectator does not look within himself or within his inner experience for the sense of gestures he witnesses.¹⁶ Consider an angry or threatening gesture. In order to understand these gestures, I have no need of recalling the feelings I experienced while I myself performed these same gestures. I have, from the inside, quite a limited knowledge of the gesture of anger, and so an association through resemblance or a reasoning by analogy would be missing a decisive element. And moreover, I do not perceive the anger or the threat as a psychological fact hidden behind the gesture, I read the anger in the gesture. The gesture does not *make me think* of anger, it is the anger itself. And yet, the sense of the gesture is not perceived like, for example, the color of the rug. If it were presented to me as a thing, then it would not be clear why my understanding of gestures should be restricted, for the most part, to human gestures. I do not “understand” the sexual gesture of the dog, and even less that of the beetle or the praying mantis. I do not even understand emotions in primitive people, or in milieus too different from my own. If a child accidentally witnesses a sexual scene, he can understand it without having the experience of desire or the bodily attitudes that it expresses, but if the child had not yet reached the degree of maturity at which this behavior becomes a possibility for him, then the sexual scene will remain merely an unusual and disturbing spectacle, it will not make sense. Of course, knowledge of other people often illuminates self-knowledge; the external spectacle reveals to the child the sense of his own impulses by offering them a goal. But the example would pass by unnoticed if it was not found among the child’s internal possibilities. The sense of the gestures is not given but rather understood, which is to say taken up by an act of the spectator. The entire difficulty is to conceive of this act properly and not to confuse it with an epistemic operation. Communication or the understanding of gestures is achieved through the reciprocity between my intentions and

the other person's gestures, and between my gestures and the intentions which can be read in the other person's behavior. Everything happens as if the other person's intention inhabited my body, or as if my intentions inhabited his body. The gesture I witness sketches out the first signs of an intentional object. This object becomes present and is fully understood when the powers of my body adjust to it and fit over it. The gesture is in front of me like a question, it indicates to me specific sensible points in the world and invites me to join it there. Communication is accomplished when my behavior finds in this pathway its own pathway. I confirm the other person, and the other person confirms me.

Here the experience of others, which is distorted by intellectualist analyses, must be restored, just as we will have to restore the perceptual experience of the thing. When I perceive a thing such as a fireplace, it is not the concordance of its various appearances that leads me to believe in the existence of the fireplace as the geometrical plan and common signification of all of these perspectives. On the contrary, I perceive the thing in its own clarity, and this is what gives me the assurance of obtaining an indefinite series of concordant perspectives through the unfolding of perceptual experience. The identity of the thing throughout perceptual experience is merely another aspect of the identity of one's own body throughout the exploratory movements, and is thus of the same nature. Just like the body schema, the fireplace is a system of equivalences that are not grounded upon the recognition of some law, but upon the experience [*l'épreuve*] of a bodily presence. I engage myself with my body among things, they coexist with me insofar as I am an embodied subject, and this life among things has nothing in common with the construction of scientific objects. Similarly, I do not understand the other person's gestures through an act of intellectual interpretation; the communication between consciousnesses is not grounded upon the shared sense of their experiences, rather it grounds them in turn. The movement by which I lend myself to the spectacle must be recognized as irreducible. I join with it in a sort of blind recognition that precedes the definition or intellectual elaboration of the sense. Generation after generation "understand" and accomplish the sexual gestures, such as the caress, prior to the philosopher¹⁷ defining their intellectual signification – which is to enclose the passive body within itself, to sustain the passive body in the sleepy state of pleasure, and to interrupt the incessant movement by which it projects itself into things and toward others. I understand the other person

through my body, just as I perceive “things” through my body. The sense of the gesture thus “understood” is not behind the gesture, it merges with the structure of the world that the gesture sketches out and that I take up for myself. The sense of the gesture spreads across the gesture itself – just as the signification of the fireplace in perceptual experience is not beyond the sensible spectacle nor beyond the fireplace itself such as my gaze and my movements find it in the world.

[g. *The linguistic gesture.*]

227 The linguistic gesture, like all others, sketches out its own sense. At first this idea is surprising, but we are nevertheless obliged to adopt it if we wish to understand the origin of language, a problem that is still pressing, despite the agreement among psychologists and linguists to deny it in the name of positive science. At first, it seems impossible to allow either words or gestures an immanent signification, because the gesture is limited to indicating a certain relation between man and the perceptible world, because this world is given to the spectator through natural perception, and because the intentional object is hence offered to the observer at the same time as the gesture itself. The verbal gesture, however, intends a mental landscape that is not straightaway given to everyone, and it is precisely its function to communicate this landscape. But culture here offers what nature does not provide. Available significations, namely, previous acts of expression, establish a common world between speaking subjects to which current and new speech refers, just as the gesture refers to the sensible world. And the sense of the speech is nothing other than the manner in which it handles this linguistic world, or in which it modulates upon this keyboard of acquired significations. I grasp it in an undivided act that is as brief as a cry. Of course, the problem is merely deferred. How are these available significations themselves constituted? Once language is formed, we believe that speech can signify like a gesture against the shared mental background. But do syntactical forms and forms of vocabulary, which are thus presupposed, carry their sense in themselves? We can, for example, see quite clearly what is shared between the gesture and its sense in the expression of emotions and in the emotions themselves: the smile, the relaxed face, and the cheerfulness of the gestures actually contain the rhythm of the action or of this joy as a particular mode of being in the world. And yet, is not the link between the verbal sign and its signification

purely accidental, as is attested to by the existence of several languages? And was not the communication of the elements of the language between the “first man who spoke” and the second necessarily of an entirely different kind than communication through gestures?

[h. *There are neither any natural signs nor any purely conventional signs.*]*

This difference is what we usually express by saying that the emotional gesture and gesticulation are “natural signs,” whereas speech is a “conventional sign.” But conventions are a recent mode of relation between men, they presuppose an earlier means of communication, and language must be put back into this communicative current. If we consider only the conceptual and final sense of words, it is true that the verbal form – with the exception of the inflections – seems arbitrary. This would no longer hold if we took the emotional sense of the word into account, what we have above called its gestural sense, which is essential in poetry, for example. We would then find that words, vowels, and phonemes are so many ways of singing the world, and that they are destined to represent objects, not through an objective resemblance, in the manner imagined by the naïve theory of onomatopoeia, but because they are extracted from them, and literally express their emotional essence. If we could deduct from a vocabulary what was owed to the mechanical laws of phonetics, to the contaminations by foreign languages, to the rationalization of grammarians, and to the imitation of the language itself by itself, we would likely discover a somewhat restricted system of expression at the origin of each language, but this would likely be a system such that, for example, if we use the word “nuit” for night, then it would not be arbitrary that we use “lumière” for light. The predominance of vowels in one language, of consonants in another, or systems of construction and syntax would not represent so many arbitrary conventions for expressing the same thought, but rather several ways for the human body to celebrate the world and to finally live it. This is why the full sense of a language is never translatable into another. We can speak several languages, but one of them always remains the one in which we live. In order to wholly assimilate a language, it would be necessary to take up the world it expresses, and we never belong to two worlds at the same time.¹⁸

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If there is a universal thought, we reach it by taking up the effort of expression and communication such as it was attempted by one language,

229 by taking up all of the equivocations, all of the shifts in sense out of which a linguistic tradition is made and that measure its power of expression precisely. A conventional algorithm – which, moreover, only has sense in relation to language – will never express anything other than nature without man. Thus, there are, strictly speaking, no conventional signs and no simple notation of a thought that is pure and clear for itself. There are only words into which the history of an entire language is compressed, and which accomplish communication without any guarantee in the midst of incredible linguistic hazards. If it still seems to us that language is more transparent than music, this is because we remain for the most part within constituted language, we provide ourselves with available significations, and we limit ourselves – like the dictionary – to indicating equivalences between our definitions. The sense of a phrase appears intelligible to us throughout, even detachable from this phrase and defined in an intelligible world, because we presuppose as given all of the participations that it owes to the history of the language and that contribute to determining its sense. In music, however, no vocabulary is presupposed: the sense appears tied to the empirical presence of sounds, and this is why music seems unable to speak. But as we have said the clarity of language is in fact established against an obscure background, and, if we push the research far enough, we find that language itself, in the end, says nothing other than itself, or that its sense is not separable from it. We must, then, seek the first hints of language in the emotional gesticulation by which man superimposes upon the given world the world according to man.

This is completely different from the famous naturalistic conceptions that reduce the artificial sign to the natural sign and attempt to reduce language to the expression of emotions. The artificial sign does not reduce to the natural sign because there are no natural signs for man. Nor do we compromise what is specific to language by bringing language and emotional expressions together, so long as it is true that the emotion, as a variation of our being in the world, is already contingent with regard to the mechanical resources contained in our body, and manifests the same powers of articulating stimuli and situations that are at their height in language. We could only speak of “natural signs” if the anatomical organization of our body made definite gestures correspond to specific “states of consciousness.” But in fact, the gesticulations of anger or love are not the same for a Japanese person and a Western person. More precisely, the dif-

ference between gesticulations covers over a difference between the emotions themselves. It is not merely the gesture that is contingent with regard to bodily organization, it is the very manner of meeting the situation and of living it. When angry, the Japanese person smiles, whereas the Westerner turns red and stamps his foot, or even turns pale and speaks with a shrill voice. Having the same organs and the same nervous system is not sufficient for the same emotions to take on the same signs in two different conscious subjects. What matters is the manner in which they make use of their body, the simultaneous articulation of their body and their world in the emotion. The psycho-physical equipment leaves so many possibilities open, and here we see that – just as in the domain of instincts – there is no human nature given once and for all. The use that a man makes of his body is transcendent with regard to that body as a mere biological being. It is no more natural and no less conventional to cry out in anger or to express love through the kiss¹⁹ than it is to call a table a “table.” Just like words, passionate feelings and behaviors are invented. Even the ones that seem inscribed in the human body, such as paternity, are in fact institutions.²⁰ It is impossible to superimpose upon man both a primary layer of behaviors that could be called “natural” and a constructed cultural or spiritual world. For man, everything is constructed and everything is natural, in the sense that there is no single word or behavior that does not owe something to mere biological being – and, at the same time, there is no word or behavior that does not break free from animal life, that does not deflect vital behaviors from their direction [sens] through a sort of *escape* and a genius for ambiguity that might well serve to define man. Already the mere presence of a living being transforms the physical world, makes “food” appear over here and a “hiding place” over there, and gives to “stimuli” a sense that they did not have. This is even more the case for the presence of a man in the animal world. Behaviors create significations that are transcendent in relation to the anatomical structure and yet immanent to the behavior as such, since behavior can be taught and can be understood. We cannot do without this irrational power that creates and communicates significations, and of which speech is merely a particular case.

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[i. *Transcendence in language.*]

What is simply true – and what justifies the special place that is ordinarily accorded language – is that, of all the expressive operations, speech

alone is capable of sedimenting and of constituting an intersubjective acquisition. This fact is not explained by observing that speech can be recorded on paper, whereas gestures or behaviors are only transmitted through direct imitation. For music too can be written, and, even though there can be something of a traditional initiation in music – even though it is perhaps impossible to gain access to atonal music without passing through classical music – each artist takes up the task from the beginning, he has a new world to deliver, while in the order of speech, each writer is aware of intending the same world with which other writers were already concerned. Balzac’s world and Stendhal’s world are not like planets without communication; speech installs in us the idea of truth as the presumptive limit of its effort. Speech forgets itself as being a contingent fact, it relies upon itself and, as we have seen, this gives us the ideal of a thought without speech, whereas the idea of a piece of music without sound is absurd. Even if “thought without speech” is no more than a limit-idea and a bit of an absurdity [*contre-sens*], even if the sense of a speech act can never in fact be delivered from its inherence in some speech, the fact remains that the expressive operation in the case of speech can be indefinitely reiterated, that one can speak about speech, whereas one cannot paint about painting, and finally that every philosopher has dreamed of a speech that would end everything, whereas the painter or the musician never hopes to exhaust all possible painting or all possible music. There is, then, a privileged place for Reason. But precisely in order to understand it, we must begin by placing thought back among the phenomena of expression.

[j. Confirmation through the modern theory of aphasia.]

232 This conception of language extends the best and the most current analyses of aphasia, of which we have only begun to draw upon above. In beginning our study, we saw that after an empiricist phase the theory of aphasia (since Pierre Marie)²¹ seemed to pass over to intellectualism, that it implicated the “function of representation” (*Darstellungsfunktion*) or the “categorical” activity²² in linguistic disturbances, and that it based speech upon thought. In fact, the theory does not tend toward a new intellectualism. Whether or not these authors are aware of it, they are attempting to formulate what we will call an existential theory of aphasia, that is, a theory that treats thought and objective language as two manifestations of the

fundamental activity by which man projects himself toward a “world.”²³ Consider the amnesia of color names, for example. Through sorting tests they show that a patient with amnesia has lost the general power of subsuming colors under a category, and they relate the verbal deficiency to this same cause. But if we go back to the concrete descriptions, we notice that the categorial activity, prior to being a thought or a knowledge, is a certain manner of relating to the world, and correlatively is a style or a configuration of experience. For a normal subject, the perception of a pile of color samples organizes itself according to the given instruction: “The colors that belong to the same category as the model stand out from the background of the others”;²⁴ all of the reds, for example, constitute a group and the subject merely has to break apart this group in order to gather together all of the samples that belong to it. For the patient, however, each sample is confined within its individual existence. Against the constitution of a group according to a given principle, the samples present a sort of viscosity or inertia. When two objectively similar colors are presented to the patient, they do not necessarily appear to him as similar. It can happen that the fundamental tone dominates in one, while the degree of light or warmth dominates in the other.²⁵ We can obtain an experience of this sort by placing ourselves in front of a pile of samples with an attitude of passive perception. The identical colors assemble before our eyes, but merely similar colors only establish tentative relations between them. “The pile appears unstable, it shifts, we observe an incessant changing, a sort of battle between several possible groupings of colors according to different points of view.”²⁶ We are reduced to the immediate experience of relations (*Kohärenzerlebnis*, *Erlebnis des Passens*),²⁷ and such is probably the patient’s situation. We were wrong to say that he cannot hold himself to a given principle of classification, and that he goes from one to another: in fact, he never adopts a principle at all.²⁸ The disorder affects “the manner in which colors group together for the observer, the manner in which the visual field is articulated from the point of view of colors.”²⁹ It is not merely thought or knowledge, but the very experience of colors that is in question. One could say, to echo another author, that normal experience includes “circles” or “vortices” within which each element is the representative of all the others and carries, as it were, vectors that link it to them. For the patient:

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consciousness moves within narrower limits, in smaller and more restricted circles than in the case of normal perception. In this case

a movement beginning at the periphery of the vortex would no longer be communicated to its center but would in a manner of speaking remain within the original zone of stimulation or its immediate vicinity. Now comprehensive unities of meaning would no longer be formed within the perceptual world [. . .]. Each sense impression would still be provided with a vector of meaning, though these vectors would no longer possess a common direction toward very definite main centers but would diverge in far higher degree than is the case in normal perception.³⁰

Such is the disorder of “thought” that is discovered as the basis of amnesia. It clearly has to do less with judgment than with the milieu of experience in which judgment is born, less with spontaneity than with the holds of this spontaneity upon the perceptible world and our power to imagine any intention whatever in the world. In Kantian terms, it affects less the understanding than the productive imagination. The categorial act is thus not an ultimate fact, it is constituted in a certain “attitude” (*Einstellung*). Speech, too, is established upon this attitude, such that there could be no question of basing language upon pure thought. “Categorial behavior and the possession of meaningful language express one and the same fundamental behavior. Neither could be the cause or the effect of the other.”³¹

234 First, thought is not an effect of language. It is true that certain patients, incapable of grouping the colors by comparing them to a given sample, succeed at this through the intermediary of language.³² They name the model color, and subsequently bring together all of the samples to which the same name fits, without looking at the model. It is also true that abnormal children classify colors together, and even different colors, if they are taught to designate them by the same name.³³ But these are precisely abnormal procedures; they do not express the essential relation between language and thought, but rather the pathological or accidental relation between a language and a thought equally cut off from their living sense. In fact, many patients are capable of repeating the color names without thereby being able to classify them. In the cases of amnesic aphasia:

it thus cannot be the lack of the word taken in itself that makes the categorial behavior difficult or impossible. The words must have lost something that normally belongs to them and that makes them appropriate for being employed in relation to the categorial behavior.³⁴

What, then, have they lost? Is it the word's notional signification? Must we say that the concept has withdrawn from them and consequently turned thought into the cause of language? But when it loses its sense, the word alters even in its perceptible appearance, it *becomes empty*.³⁵ The patient with amnesia to whom a color name is given, asking him to choose a corresponding sample, repeats the name as if he were expecting something from it. But the name is no longer useful to him, it *says nothing* to him, it is bizarre and absurd, just as names are for us when we have repeated them for too long. Patients for whom the words have lost their sense sometimes preserve, at the highest level, the power of associating ideas.³⁶ The name is thus not detached from previous "associations"; it has altered itself, like an inanimate body. The link from the word to its living sense is not an external link of association; the sense inhabits the word, and language "is not an external accompaniment of intellectual processes."³⁷ Thus we are clearly led to recognize a gestural or existential signification of speech, as we said above. Language certainly has an interior, but this interior is not a thought closed in upon itself and conscious of itself. What, then, does language express if it does not express thought? It presents, or rather it is, the subject's taking up of a position in the world of his significations. The term "world" is here not just a manner of speaking: it means that "mental" or cultural life borrows its structures from natural life and that the thinking subject must be grounded upon the embodied subject. For the speaking subject and for those who listen to him, the phonetic gesture produces a certain structuring of experience, a certain modulation of existence, just as a behavior of my body invests – for me and for others – the objects that surround me with a certain signification.

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The sense of the gesture is not contained in the gesture as a physical or physiological phenomenon. The sense of the word is not contained in the word as a sound. Rather, it is the definition of the human body to appropriate, in an indefinite series of discontinuous acts, meaningful cores that transcend and transfigure its natural powers. This act of transcendence is initially found in the acquisition of a behavior, and then in the silent communication of the gesture: the body opens itself to a new behavior and renders that behavior intelligible to external observers through the same power. A system of definite powers suddenly decenters here and there, breaks apart, and is reorganized under a law that is unknown to the subject or the external observer, and which is revealed to them in

236 this very moment. According to Darwin, for example, the knitting of the eyebrows destined to protect the eye from the sun, and the convergence of the eyes destined to permit clear vision become components of the human act of meditation and signify this act for the spectator. Language, in turn, poses no other problem: the contraction of the throat, the sibilant emission of air between the tongue and the teeth, a certain manner of playing with our body suddenly allows itself to be invested with a *figurative sense* and signifies this externally. This is no more and no less miraculous than the emergence of love from desire, or that of the gesture from the uncoordinated movements at the start of life. For the miracle to happen, the phonetic gesticulation must make use of an alphabet of already acquired significations, and the verbal gesture must be performed in a certain panorama that is shared by the interlocutors, just as the comprehension of other gestures presupposes a perceived world shared by everyone in which the sense of the gesture unfolds and is displayed. But this is not a sufficient condition. If authentic, speech gives rise to a new sense, just as the gesture – if it is an initiating gesture – gives a human sense to the object for the first time. Moreover, significations now acquired must surely have been new significations. Thus, we must recognize as an ultimate fact this open and indefinite power of signifying – that is, of simultaneously grasping and communicating a sense – by which man transcends himself through his body and his speech toward a new behavior, toward others, or toward his own thought.

When these authors attempt to conclude the analysis of aphasia through a general conception of language,³⁸ they can be seen even more clearly abandoning the intellectualist language that they had adopted following Pierre Marie and in reaction to Broca's conceptions. Speech can be said to be neither an "intellectual operation" nor a "motor phenomenon": it is entirely motricity and entirely intelligence. What confirms speech's inherence in the body is that the affections of language cannot be reduced to a unity, and that the primary disorder affects sometimes the body of the word (the material instrument of verbal expression); sometimes the physiognomy of the word (the verbal intention, this sort of overall plan from which we succeed in saying or in writing a word precisely); sometimes the immediate sense of the word (what the German authors call the "verbal concept"); and finally, sometimes the entire structure of the experience, and not merely of linguistic experiences (as in the case of amnesiac aphasia analyzed above). Speech, then, relies upon

a stratification of relatively separable powers. But at the same time, it is impossible to find anywhere a linguistic disorder that would be “purely motor” and that does not, to some extent, affect the sense of language. In pure alexia,³⁹ if the subject can no longer recognize the letters or a word, this is from an absence of the power to articulate the visual givens, to constitute the structure of the word, and to apprehend its visual signification. In motor aphasia, the list of words lost or conserved does not correspond to their objective characteristics (length, complexity), but to their value for the subject: the patient is incapable of pronouncing separately a letter or a word that occurs within a familiar motor sequence due to a lack of the ability to differentiate “figure” and “background” and to confer the value of “figure” freely upon such a word or such a letter. Articulatory and syntactical accuracy are always inversely related, which shows that the articulation of a word is not a simple motor phenomenon and summons the same energies that organize the syntactical order. This is even more the case when disturbances of verbal intention are at issue, as in literal paraphasia,⁴⁰ in which letters are omitted, moved, or added, and where the rhythm of the word is altered, it is clearly not a case of a destruction of engrams,⁴¹ but rather a leveling out of the figure and the background, or an absence of the power for structuring the word and for grasping its articulatory physiognomy.⁴²

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If we wish to summarize these two sets of observations, it must be said that every linguistic operation presupposes the apprehension of a sense, but that the sense here and there is somehow specialized. There are different layers of signification, from the visual signification of the word up to its conceptual signification, passing through the verbal concept. We will never understand these two ideas simultaneously if we continue to oscillate between the notions of “motricity” and “intelligence,” and if we do not discover a third notion that allows them to be integrated: a function, identical at all levels, that would be at work as much in the hidden preparations of speech as in the articulatory phenomena – a function that bears the entire edifice of language, and that nevertheless solidifies into relatively autonomous processes. We will have the opportunity to see this essential power of speech in cases in which neither thought nor motricity are perceptibly affected, and yet in which the “life” of language is altered. [In the case of Schneider], it happens that vocabulary, syntax, and the body of language appear intact, apart from the fact that the principal propositions dominate there. But the patient does not use these

materials in the same way as the normal subject. He hardly speaks unless he is questioned, or, if he takes the initiative of a question, he only ever asks stereotypical questions such as those he asks his children each day when they arrive home from school. He never uses language to express
 238 a merely possible situation, and false statements (“the sky is black”) are meaningless for him. He can only speak if he has prepared his sentences in advance.⁴³ It cannot be said that language has become automatic for him, there is no sign of a decline of general intelligence, and words are certainly organized through their sense. But this sense is somehow congealed. Schneider never feels the need to speak, his experience never tends toward speech, it never raises a question, and it never ceases to have this sort of evidentness and self-sufficiency of the real that stifles all interrogation, all reference to the possible, all wonder, and all improvisation.

By contrast, we catch sight of the essence of normal language: the intention to speak can only be found in an open experience: it appears, as boiling appears in a liquid, when, in the thickness of being, empty zones are constituted and move outward.

From the moment man uses language to establish a living relation with himself or with his contemporaries, language is no longer an instrument, *no longer a means. Rather, it is a manifestation, a revelation of inner being and of the psychical link that unites us to the world and to our fellows.* As much as the patient’s language reveals much knowledge, and as much as it is useful for determinate activities, it is nevertheless completely lacking this productivity that makes up the most profound essence of man and that is perhaps revealed in no creation of civilization with as much clarity as it is revealed in the creation of language itself.⁴⁴

By taking up a famous distinction, it might be said that languages [langages], that is, constituted systems of vocabulary and syntax, or the various empirically existing “means of expression,” are the depository and the sedimentation of acts of speech [parole], in which the unformulated sense not only finds the means of expressing itself on the outside, but moreover acquires existence for itself, and is truly created as sense. Or again, the distinction could be made between a *speaking speech* and a *spoken speech*.⁴⁵ In the former, the meaningful intention is in a nascent state. Here existence is polarized into a certain “sense” that cannot be defined by any natural object; existence seeks to meet up with itself beyond being, and this is why it creates

speech as the empirical support of its own non-being. Speech is the excess of our existence beyond natural being. But the act of expression constitutes a linguistic and cultural world, it makes that which stretched beyond fall back into being. This results in spoken speech, which enjoys the use of available significations like that of an acquired fortune. From these acquisitions, other authentic acts of expression – those of the writer, the artist, and the philosopher – become possible. This ever-recreated opening in the fullness of being is what conditions the first speech of the child and the speech of the writer, the construction of the word and the construction of concepts. Such is the function revealed through language, which reiterates itself, depends upon itself, or that like a wave gathers itself together and steadies itself in order to once again throw itself beyond itself.

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[k. *The miracle of expression in language and in the world.*]

Even more clearly than our remarks on spatiality and bodily unity, this analysis of speech and expression leads us to recognize the enigmatic nature of one's own body. It is not an assemblage of particles where each one would remain in itself; or again, it is not an intertwining of processes defined once and for all – it is not where it is, it is not what it is – since we see it in itself secreting a “sense” that does not come from nowhere, projecting this sense upon its material surroundings, and communicating it to other embodied subjects. It was always observed that the gesture or speech transfigure the body, but no more was said than that they developed or manifested a different power, such as thought or the soul. It was not seen that, in order to be able to express these, the body must ultimately become the thought or the intention that it signifies to us. It is the body that shows, that speaks, and this is what we have learned in this chapter. Cézanne once said of a portrait:

If I weave around your expression the whole infinite network of little bits of blue and brown that are there, that combine there, I'll get your authentic look on my canvas. [. . .] And God help them if they can't see how you make a mouth look sad or a cheek smile by joining a green shade to a red one.⁴⁶

This revelation of an immanent or nascent meaning [sens] in the living body extends, as we will see, to the entire sensible world, and our gaze,

informed by the experience of one's own body, will discover the miracle of expression in all other "objects." In *Le peau de chagrin*, Balzac describes a "tablecloth white as a bed of freshly-fallen snow, on which the places were laid in orderly array, crowned with honey-coloured rolls."⁴⁷ And Cézanne concedes:

240 All my early life I wanted to paint that, the tablecloth of fresh snow . . . Now I know that one must want to paint merely: "the places laid in orderly array" and "honey-coloured rolls." If I paint "crowned" I'm done for . . . Do you understand? And if I truthfully balance and relate my places and my rolls as they are in nature, you can be sure that the crowns, the snow, and all the excitement will be there . . .⁴⁸

The problem of the world – and to begin with, the problem of one's own body – consists in the fact that *everything resides within the world*.

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[*The body and Cartesian analysis.*]⁴⁹

The Cartesian tradition has taught us to disentangle ourselves from the object: the reflective attitude purifies simultaneously the common notions of body and of soul by defining the body as a sum of parts without an interior and the soul as a being directly and fully present to itself. These corresponding definitions establish a clarity within us and outside of us, namely, the transparency of an object without folds, and the transparency of a subject who is nothing other than what it thinks it is. The object is an object through and through and consciousness is consciousness through and through. There are two, and only two, senses of the word "to exist": one exists as a thing, or one exists as a consciousness. The experience of one's own body, however, reveals to us an ambiguous mode of existence. If I attempt to conceive of it as a bundle of third person processes – "vision," "motricity," "sexuality" – I observe that these "functions" cannot be linked among themselves or to the external world through causal relations. All of them are confusedly taken up and implicated in a single drama. The body, then, is not an object. For the same reason, the consciousness that I have of it is not a thought, that is, I cannot decompose

and recompose this consciousness in order to form a clear idea. Its unity is always implicit and confused. It is always something other than what it is: always sexuality at the same time as freedom, always rooted in nature at the very moment it is transformed by culture; it is never self-enclosed but never transcended. Whether it is a question of the other person's body or of my own, I have no other means of knowing the human body than by living it, that is, by taking up for myself the drama that moves through it and by merging with it. Thus, I am my body, at least to the extent that I have an acquisition, and reciprocally my body is something like a natural subject, or a provisional sketch of my total being.

The experience of one's own body, then, is opposed to the reflective movement that disentangles the object from the subject and the subject from the object, and that only gives us thought about the body or the body as an idea, and not the experience of the body or the body in reality. Descartes was well aware of this, for in a famous letter to Elizabeth he distinguishes between the body as it is conceived through its use in life and the body as it is conceived by the understanding.⁵⁰ But for Descartes, this strange knowledge that we have of our body thanks to the mere fact that we are our body remained subordinated to knowledge through ideas because behind man, such as he in fact is, stands God as the rational author of our factual situation. Supported by this transcendent guarantor, Descartes can blandly accept our irrational condition, for we are not the ones required to bear reason and, once we have recognized reason as the foundation of things, all that remains for us is to act and to think in the world.⁵¹ But if our union with the body is substantial, how could we experience a pure soul in ourselves and, from there, accede to an absolute Spirit? Prior to posing this question, let us see clearly all that is implied by the rediscovery of one's own body. It is not merely one object among all others that resists reflection and remains, so to speak, glued to the subject. Obscurity spreads to the perceived world in its entirety.

Part Two

The Perceived World

INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

[The theory of the body is already a theory of perception.]

One's own body is in the world just as the heart is in the organism: it continuously breathes life into the visible spectacle, animates it and nourishes it from within, and forms a system with it. When I walk around my apartment, the different aspects under which it presents itself to me could not appear as profiles of a single thing if I did not already know that each of them represented the apartment as seen from here or as seen from over there, nor if I were unaware of my own movement and of my body as identical throughout the phases of this movement. Of course, I might conceive of my apartment as if from above, I might imagine it or draw a floor plan of it on a piece of paper; but even then I would not be able to grasp the unity of the object without the mediation of bodily experience, for what I call a floor plan is nothing but a more extensive perspective. This is the apartment as "seen from above," and if I can summarize in it all of the customary perspectives, this is only on condition of knowing that a single embodied subject could successively see from different positions.

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One might respond that, by putting the object back into bodily experience as one of the poles of that experience, we strip it of precisely what gives it its objectivity. From my body's point of view, I never see the six faces of a cube as equal, even if it is made of glass, and yet the word "cube" has a sense: the cube itself, the real cube above and beyond its sensible appearances, has its six equal faces. To the extent that I move around the

cube, I see the front face, which was a square, lose its shape and then disappear, while the other sides appear and each in turn become square. But the unfolding of this experience is, for me, nothing but the opportunity for conceiving of the total cube with its six equal and simultaneous faces, that is, the intelligible structure that makes sense of this experience. And
 246 in order for my walk around the cube to motivate the judgment “here is a cube,” my movements themselves must already be located in objective space and, far from the experience of my own movement conditioning the position of an object, it is rather by conceiving of my body as a moving object that I can decode the perceptual appearance and construct the true cube. The experience of my own movement would, then, be merely a psychological circumstance of perception and would not contribute to determining the sense of the object. The object and my body would thus certainly form a system, but it would be a cluster of objective correlations and not, as we said just above, a collection of lived correspondences. The unity of the object would be conceived of – but not experienced as – the correlate of the unity of our body.

But can the object be thus detached from the actual conditions under which it is given to us? The notions of the number six, of a “side,” and of equality can be brought together discursively and linked together in a formula as the definition of the cube. But this definition poses a question more than it offers something to conceive. We only emerge from blind and symbolic thought by seeing the singular spatial being that bears all of these predicates together. This involves drawing in thought this particular form that encloses a fragment of space between six equal faces. Now, if the words “enclose” and “between” have a sense for us, they must borrow it from our experience as embodied subjects. In space itself, and without the presence of a psycho-physical subject, there is no direction, no inside, and no outside. A space is “enclosed” between the sides of a cube as we are enclosed between the walls of our room. To be able to conceive of the cube, we take up a position in space, sometimes on its surface, sometimes inside it, and sometimes outside of it, and from then on we see it in perspective. The cube with six equal sides is not merely invisible, but is even inconceivable; this is the cube such as it would be for itself; but the cube is not for itself, since it is an object. Reflective analysis releases us from a first dogmatism, which consists in taking for granted that the object exists in itself or absolutely, without wondering what the object is. But there is another dogmatism, which consists in

taking for granted the presumptive signification of the object without wondering how it enters into our experience. Reflective analysis replaces the absolute existence of the object with the thought about an absolute object, and, by attempting to view the object from above or by attempting to conceive of the object from nowhere, reflective analysis destroys the object's internal structure.

If there is for me a cube with six equal faces and if I can indeed meet up with the object, this is not because I constitute it from within, but rather because through perceptual experience I plunge into the thickness of the world. The cube with six equal faces is the limit-idea through which I express the carnal presence of the cube that is there before my eyes and beneath my hands in its perceptual evidentness. The sides of the cube are not projections of it, they are nothing other than "sides." When I see them, one after the other and according to perspectival appearance, I do not construct the idea of a geometrical plan that would account for these perspectives; rather, the cube is already there in front of me and unveils itself through them. I have no need of taking an objective view of my own movement and of bringing it into the account in order to reconstitute the true form of the object behind its appearance. The account is already settled, the new appearance has already entered into composition with the lived movement and is offered as the appearance of a cube. The thing and the world are given with the parts of my body, not through a "natural geometry," but in a living connection comparable, or rather identical, to the living connection that exists among the parts of my body itself.

External perception and the perception of one's own body vary together because they are two sides of a single act. The attempt has long been made to explain Aristotle's famous illusion by assuming that the unusual position of the fingers makes the synthesis of their perceptions impossible. The right side of the middle finger and the left side of the index finger do not ordinarily "work" together, and if the two are touched at the same time, then there must be two marbles. In fact, the perceptions from the two fingers are not merely disconnected, they are inverted. The subject attributes to the index finger that which is touched by the middle finger, and *vice versa*, as can be shown by applying two distinct stimuli to the fingers, such as a point and a ball.¹ Aristotle's illusion is primarily a disturbance of the body schema. What makes the synthesis of the two tactile perceptions into a single object impossible is not so much that the position of

the fingers is unusual or statistically rare, but because the right side of the middle finger and the left side of the index finger cannot work together toward a synergetic exploration of the object, and because the crossing of the fingers, as a forced movement, goes beyond the motor possibilities of the fingers themselves and cannot be intended in a movement project. The synthesis of the object is thus accomplished here through the synthesis of one's own body – the former being the response or the correlative to the latter. To perceive a single marble and to have two fingers available as a single organ are, literally, the same thing. The disturbance of the body schema can even be expressed directly in the external world without the contribution of any stimulus. In autoscapy,² prior to seeing himself, the subject always passes through a state of dreaming, musing, or anxiety, and the image of himself that appears on the outside is merely the other side of this depersonalization.³ The patient feels himself in his double, who is nevertheless outside of himself, just as I feel the substance of my body escaping through my head and crossing the limits of my objective body when an ascending elevator stops abruptly. The patient senses the approach of this Other – whom he has never seen with his own eyes – in his own body, just as the normal subject recognizes that someone behind him is staring at him because of a certain burning on his neck.⁴ Reciprocally, a certain form of external experience implies and entails a certain consciousness of one's own body. Many patients speak of a "sixth sense" that would seem to give them their hallucinations. Stratton's subject,⁵ whose visual field was objectively inverted, at first sees everything upside down. By the third day of the experiment, when objects have begun to regain their orientation, he is overcome by "an odd sensation (. . .) as if he were looking at the fire out the back of his head."⁶ This is because there is an immediate equivalence between the orientation of the visual field and the consciousness of one's own body as the power of this field, such that the experimental upheaval can be expressed indifferently by the reversal of the phenomenal objects or by a redistribution of the sensory functions in the body. If a subject focuses in order to see something far off, he has a double image of his own finger (and of all nearby objects). If his finger is then touched or pricked, he perceives a double contact or a double prick.⁷ Diplopia is thus extended into a doubling of the body. Every external perception is immediately synonymous with a certain perception of my body, just as every perception of my body is made explicit in the language of external perception.

Now if, as we have seen, the body is not a transparent object and is not given to us (in the manner that the circle is given to the geometer) through the law of its constitution, and if the body is rather an expressive unity that we can only learn to know by taking it up, then this structure will spread to the sensible world. The theory of the body schema is implicitly a theory of perception. We have learned to again sense our bodies; we have discovered, beneath objective and detached knowledge of the body, this other knowledge that we have of it because it is always with us and because we are bodies. It will be necessary to similarly awaken the experience of the world such as it appears to us insofar as we are in the world through our bodies, and insofar as we perceive the world with our bodies. But by reestablishing contact with the body and with the world in this way, we will also rediscover ourselves, since, if one perceives with his body, then the body is a natural myself and, as it were, the body is the subject of perception.



SENSING

[a. *Who is the subject of perception?*]

251 Objective thought is unaware of the subject of perception. This is because it takes the world as ready-made or as the milieu of every possible event and treats perception as one of these events. The empiricist philosopher, for example, considers subject X while perceiving and attempts to describe what happens: *there are* sensations, which are the subject's states or manners of being and, as such, they are genuinely mental things. The perceiving subject is the place of these things, and the philosopher describes sensations and their substratum – as one might describe the fauna of a distant land – without noticing that he himself also perceives, that he is a perceiving subject, and that perception such as he lives it denies everything that he says about perception in general. For, seen from within, perception owes nothing to what we otherwise know about the world, about *stimuli* such as described by physics, and about sense organs as described by biology. It is not primarily presented as an event in the world to which the category of “causality,” for instance, might be applied, but rather as a recreation or a reconstitution of the world at each moment. If we believe in the world's past, in the physical world, in “stimuli,” and in the organism such as it is represented by textbooks, this is first of all because we have a present and real perceptual

field, a surface of contact with the world or a perpetual rooting in it; it is because the world ceaselessly bombards and besieges subjectivity just as waves surround a shipwreck on the beach. All knowledge is established within the horizons opened up by perception. Since perception is the “flaw” in this “great diamond,”¹ there can be no question of describing it as one of the facts that happens in the world, for the picture of the world will always include this lacuna that we are and by which the world itself comes to exist for someone.

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Intellectualism certainly represents a step forward in the coming to awareness. In intellectualism, that place outside of the world – which the empiricist philosopher merely implied, and where he tacitly placed himself in order to describe the event of perception – now receives a name, it now figures explicitly within the description. This place is the transcendental Ego. Hence, all of the theses of empiricism are reversed. The state of consciousness becomes the consciousness of a state; passivity becomes a positing of passivity; the world becomes the correlate of a thought about the world and no longer exists except for a constituting [Ego]. And yet it remains true to say that intellectualism also takes the world as ready-made. For the constitution of the world, such as conceived by intellectualism, is a simple stylistic requirement: to each term in the empiricist description the phrase: “consciousness about . . .” must be added. The entire system of experience – world, one’s own body, and empirical self – is subordinated to a universal thinker, charged with sustaining the relations among these three terms. But since this universal thinker is not engaged in this system, the terms remain what they were in empiricism, namely, causal relations laid out on the level of cosmic events. Now, if one’s own body and the empirical self are merely elements in the system of experience, merely objects among other objects beneath the gaze of the genuine I, then how can we ever merge with our body? How could we have believed that we saw with our own eyes what we had in fact grasped through an inspection of the mind? How is it that the world is not perfectly explicit in front of us, and why does it only deploy itself little by little and never “in its entirety”? And finally, how does it happen that we perceive? We will only understand this if the empirical self and the body are not immediately objects, and never fully become objects; if, that is, saying that I see the piece of wax “with my eyes” makes sense; if correspondingly this possibility of absence, this dimension of escape and of freedom that reflection opens at the

foundation of ourselves and that is called the “transcendental I” are not initially given and are never absolutely acquired; and finally, if I can never say “I” absolutely and if every act of reflection, every voluntary taking up of a position is established against the background and upon the proposition of a pre-personal life of consciousness. The subject of perception will remain unknown so long as we cannot escape the alternative between created [*naturé*] and creating [*naturant*], between sensation as a state of consciousness and as the consciousness of a state, between existence in itself and existence for itself. Let us return, then, to sensation and examine it closely enough such that it teaches us the living relation of the one who perceives with both his body and his world.

[b. Relations between sensing and behaviors: quality as the concretion of a mode of existence; sensing as coexistence.]

Inductive psychology will aid us in the attempt to give sensation a new status by showing that it is neither a state or quality, nor the consciousness of a state or quality. In fact, each so-called quality – red, blue, color, sound – is inserted into a certain behavior. For the normal subject, sensory stimulations, and above all those in the laboratory, which have almost no living signification for him, hardly modify general motricity. But illnesses of the cerebellum or frontal cortex reveal what the influence of sensory stimulations upon the muscular tonus might be if they were not integrated into an overall situation and if the tonus was not, for the normal person, adjusted with regard to certain privileged tasks. The gesture of raising the arm, which can be taken as an indication of a motor disturbance, is modified differently in its amplitude and its direction by a red, yellow, blue, or green visual field. In particular, red and yellow encourage smooth movements, whereas blue and green encourage jerky movements. For example, when red is applied to the right eye it encourages a stretching movement of the corresponding arm toward the outside, whereas green encourages a bending movement and a folding toward the body.² The privileged position of the arm – where the subject senses his arm balanced and at rest – which is further from the body for the patient than it is for the normal subject, is modified through the presentation of colors: green brings the position nearer to the body.³ The color of the visual field makes the subject’s reactions more or less precise, whether it involves performing a movement with a given amplitude

or showing a determinate length with his fingers. With a green visual field, the valuation is precise; with a red visual field, it is imprecise by excess. Movements toward the outside are accelerated by green, slowed down by red. Red modifies the locating of stimuli upon the skin in the direction of abduction. Yellow and red accentuate errors in the estimation of weight and of time; in the case of cerebellar patients, blue and particularly green help to compensate. In these different experiments, each color always acts in the same direction, such that we can attribute to it a definite motor value. Overall, red and yellow encourage abduction; blue and green adduction. Now in a general manner, adduction signifies that the organism turns toward the stimulus and is drawn out into the world; abduction signifies that it turns away from the stimulus and retreats toward its core.⁴ Sensations, or “sensible qualities,” are thus far from being reduced to the experience [l’*épreuve*] of a certain state or of a certain indescribable *quale*; they are presented with a motor physiognomy, they are enveloped by a living signification.

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It has long been known that sensations include a certain “motor accompaniment,” that stimuli trigger “nascent movements” that are associated with the sensation or the quality and form a halo around it, and that the “perceptual side” and the “motor side” of behavior communicate. But for the most part, it is assumed that this relation changed nothing in the terms between which it is established. For in the examples we gave above, there is no question of an external relation of causality that would leave intact the sensation itself. Motor reactions provoked by blue, or “blue behavior,” are not effects in the objective body of the color defined by a certain wavelength and a certain intensity. A blue obtained through contrast, and to which no physical phenomenon corresponds, is enveloped by the same motor halo.⁵ The motor physiognomy of the color is not constituted in the physicist’s world, nor through the effect of some hidden process. Is it constituted then “in consciousness,” and must it thus be said that the experience of blue as a sensible quality gives rise to a certain modification of the phenomenal body? But it is not clear why the becoming aware of a certain *quale* would modify my appreciation of size and moreover why the *sensed* effect of the color does not always correspond precisely to the influence that it exercises upon behavior: red can exaggerate my reactions without my noticing.⁶ The motor signification of colors can only be understood if colors cease to be self-enclosed states or indescribable qualities offered to the observation of a thinking subject, if they effect in

me a certain general arrangement by which I am adapted to the world, if they entice me toward a new manner of evaluating the world, and if, on the other hand, motricity ceases to be the simple consciousness of my present or imminent changes of place in order to become the function
 255 that continuously establishes my standards of size, the variable scope of my being in the world. Blue is what solicits a certain way of looking from me, it is what allows itself to be palpated by a specific movement of my gaze. It is a certain field or a certain atmosphere offered to the power of my eyes and of my entire body. Here the experience of the color confirms and clarifies the correlations established by inductive psychology. Green is commonly taken to be a “peaceful” color. “It encloses me within myself and calms me down,” says one patient.⁷ It “asks nothing of us and does not summon us to do anything,” says Kandinsky. Blue seems to “yield to our gaze,” says Goethe. Red, to the contrary, “penetrates the eye,” continues Goethe.⁸ Or as one of Goldstein’s patients reports, red “tears open” and yellow is “stinging.” In general, we have on the one hand the “experience of a tearing open, or of a movement that goes away from the center” for red and yellow; on the other hand, we have the experience of “rest and concentration” for blue and green.⁹

The vegetative and motor background, and the living signification of qualities can be revealed by applying either weak or very brief stimuli. The color, before being seen, is foreshadowed by the experience of a certain bodily attitude that alone fits with it and determines it with precision: “There is a slippage from high to low in my body, thus it cannot be green, it can only be blue; but I do not in fact see blue,” says one subject.¹⁰ And another subject says: “I clenched my teeth and so know that it is yellow.”¹¹ If a luminous stimulus is gradually increased, beginning from a subliminal value, there is at first an experience of a certain disposition of the body, and suddenly the sensation enters and “spreads through the visual domain.”¹² Just as, when looking closely at the snow, I break down its apparent “whiteness,” which reduces into a world of reflections and transparencies, so too we can discover a “micro-melody” within a sound and the sonorous interval is nothing other than the final articulation of a certain tension experienced at first in the whole body.¹³ The representation of a color is made possible for subjects who have lost
 256 the ability by displaying any real color in front of them. For the subject, the real color produces a “concentration of color experience” that allows him to “draw together the colors in his eye.”¹⁴

Thus, prior to being an objective spectacle, the quality allows itself to be recognized by a type of behavior that intends it essentially, and this is why I obtain a quasi-presence of blue from the moment my body adopts the blue attitude. We must not, then, wonder how and why red signifies effort or violence, why green signifies rest and peace; rather, we must again learn to live these colors as our body does, as concretions of peace and violence. When we say that red augments the scope of our reactions, we must not understand this as if it were a question here of two distinct facts, a sensation of red and some motor reactions; rather, it must be understood that red, through its texture that our gaze follows and joins with, is already the amplification of our motor being. The subject of sensation is neither a thinker who notices a quality, nor an inert milieu that would be affected or modified by it; the subject of sensation is a power that is born together with a certain existential milieu or that is synchronized with it. The relations between sentient and sensible are comparable to those between the sleeper and his sleep: sleep arrives when a certain voluntary attitude suddenly receives from the outside the very confirmation that it was expecting. I breathe slowly and deeply to call forth sleep, and suddenly, one might say, my mouth communicates with some immense external lung that calls my breath forth and forces it back. A certain respiratory rhythm, desired by me just a moment ago, becomes my very being, and sleep, intended until then as a signification, turns itself into a situation. Similarly, I offer my ear or my gaze with the anticipation of a sensation, and suddenly the sensible catches my ear or my gaze; I deliver over a part of my body, or even my entire body, to this manner of vibrating and of filling space named "blue" or "red." This is just as the sacrament does not merely symbolize, in a sensible way, an operation of Grace, but is the real presence of God and makes this presence occupy a fragment of space and to communicate it to those who eat the bread, given that they are inwardly prepared. In the same way, the sensible does not merely have a motor and vital signification, but is rather nothing other than a certain manner of being in the world that is proposed to us from a point in space, that our body takes up and adopts if it is capable, and sensation is, literally, a communion.

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From this point of view, it becomes possible to give the notion of "sense" a value that intellectualism refuses it. Intellectualism holds that my sensation and my perception can only be identifiable and thus can only exist for me by being a sensation or a perception of something

(such as a sensation of blue or red, or a perception of the table or the chair). But blue and red are not this indescribable experience that I aim at when I coincide with them, and the table and chair are not this ephemeral appearance at the mercy of my gaze. The object is only determined as an identifiable being through an open series of possible experiences, and only exists for a subject who produces this identification. Being only exists for someone who is capable of stepping back from it and is thus himself absolutely outside of being. This is how the mind becomes the subject of perception and the notion of “sense” becomes inconceivable. If seeing or hearing means becoming detached from the impression in order to install it in thought, or ceasing to exist in order to know, then it would be absurd to say that I see with my eyes or that I hear with my ears, for my eyes and ears are still beings of the world and surely incapable as such of organizing that zone of subjectivity prior to the world in which the world will be seen or heard. I cannot even reserve some power of knowing for my eyes or ears by turning them into the instruments of my perception, for this notion is ambiguous: they are only instruments of bodily stimulation, and not of perception itself. There is no middle ground between the in-itself and the for-itself and, given that my senses are multiple, they are not myself and can only be objects. I say that my eyes see, that my hand touches, and that my foot hurts, but these naïve expressions do not convey my genuine experience. They already present me with an interpretation of it that detaches it from its original subject. Because I know that light strikes my eyes, that contact is made by the skin, and that my shoe hurts my foot, I distribute the perceptions that belong to my soul into my body; I place perception within the perceived. But this is nothing but the spatial and temporal wake of conscious acts. If I consider them from within, I find a single knowledge that has no location, a soul that has no parts, and there is no difference between thinking and perceiving, or between seeing and hearing.

– Can we hold to this perspective? If it is true that I do not see with my eyes, how could I ever have been ignorant of this truth? – Did I not
 258 know what I was saying, had I not reflected? But how then could I have not reflected? How could the inspection of the mind, how could the operation of my own thought, have been hidden from me, given that my thought is by definition for-itself? If reflection wants to justify itself as reflection, that is, as progress toward the truth, then it must not limit itself to replacing one view of the world by another; rather, it must

show us how the naïve view of the world is included and transcended in the reflective view. Reflection must clarify the unreflected view that it replaces, and it must show the possibility of this succession in order to be able to understand itself as a beginning. To say that it is still me who conceives of myself as situated in a body and as furnished with five senses is clearly only a verbal solution; since I am reflecting, I cannot recognize myself in this embodied I, since embodiment then remains in principle an illusion and the possibility of this illusion remains incomprehensible. We must again question the alternative between the for-itself and the in-itself that threw the “senses” back into the world of objects and disengaged subjectivity, understood as an absolute non-being, from all bodily inherence. This is what we are doing by defining sensation as coexistence or as communion. The sensation of blue is not the knowledge or the positing of a certain identifiable *quale* throughout all of the experiences that I have of it, in the manner that the geometer’s circle is the same in Paris and in Tokyo. Sensation is certainly intentional; that is, it does not remain in itself like a thing, it intends and signifies beyond itself. But the term that it intends is only recognized blindly through the familiarity of my body with it, it is not constituted in full clarity; it is reconstituted or taken up through a knowledge that remains latent and that leaves to it its opacity and its *haecceity*. Sensation is intentional because I find in the sensible the proposition of a certain existential rhythm – abduction or adduction – and because, taking up this proposition, and slipping into the form of existence that is thus suggested to me, I relate myself to an external being, whether it be to open myself up to it or to shut myself off from it. If qualities radiate a certain mode of existence around themselves, if they have a power to enchant, or if they have what we called earlier a sacramental value, this is because the sensing subject does not posit them as objects, but sympathizes with them, makes them its own, and finds in them his momentary law.

[c. *Consciousness ensnared in the sensible.*]*

Let us be more precise. The sensing being [*le sentant*] and the sensible are not opposite each other like two external terms, and sensation does not consist of the sensible invading the sensing being. My gaze subtends color, the movement of my hand subtends the form of the object, or rather my gaze pairs off with the color and my hand with the hard and

the soft. In this exchange between the subject of sensation and the sensible, it cannot be said that one acts while the other suffers the action, nor that one gives sense to the other. Without the exploration of my gaze or my hand, and prior to my body synchronizing with it, the sensible is nothing but a vague solicitation.

If a subject attempts to experience a determinate color, such as blue, while seeking to adopt with his body an attitude that works for red, an inner battle ensues, a sort of spasm, which ceases as soon as he adopts the bodily attitude that corresponds to blue.¹⁵

Thus, a sensible that is about to be sensed poses to my body a sort of confused problem. I must find the attitude that will provide it with the means to become determinate and to become blue; I must find the response to a poorly formulated question. And yet, I only do this in response to its solicitation. My attitude is never sufficient to make me truly see blue or truly touch a hard surface. The sensible gives back to me what I had lent to it, but I received it from the sensible in the first place. Myself as the one contemplating the blue of the sky is not an acosmic subject *standing before it*, I do not possess it in thought, I do not lay out in front of it an idea of blue that would give me its secret. Rather, I abandon myself to it, I plunge into this mystery, and it “thinks itself in me.” I am this sky that gathers together, composes itself, and begins to exist for itself, my consciousness is saturated by this unlimited blue. – But the sky is not a mind, and so it makes no sense to say it exists for itself. – Now, of course the geographer’s sky or the astronomer’s sky does not exist for itself. Yet when it comes to the perceived or sensed sky, sustained by my gaze that glances over it and inhabits it, or the milieu of a certain living vibration that my body adopts, we can say that it exists for itself in the sense that it is not made up of external parts, that each part of the whole is “sensitive” to what happens in all of the others and “knows them dynamically.”¹⁶ And with regard to the subject of sensation, it has no need of being a pure nothingness without any worldly weight. That would only be necessary if it had to be present everywhere simultaneously, like the constituting consciousness, and coextensive with being, and only if it had to conceive of universal truth. But the perceived spectacle does not belong to pure being. Taken precisely as I see it, it is a moment of my individual history, and, since sensation is a reconstitution, it presupposes in me the

sedimentations of a previous constitution; I am, as a sensing subject, full of natural powers of which I am the first to be filled with wonder. Thus I am not, to recall Hegel's phrase, a "hole in being,"¹⁷ but rather a hollow, or a fold that was made and that can be unmade.¹⁸

[d. *Generality and particularity of the "senses."*]

Let us insist upon this point. How have we been able to escape the alternative between the in-itself and the for-itself, how can perceptual consciousness be saturated with its object, and how can we distinguish sensible consciousness from intellectual consciousness? This has been possible for two reasons:

(1) Every perception takes place within an atmosphere of generality and is presented to us as anonymous. I cannot say that I see the blue of the sky in the sense that I say that I understand a book, or again that I decide to dedicate my life to mathematics. My perception, even seen from within, expresses a given situation: I see blue because I am sensitive to colors; whereas personal acts create a situation: I am a mathematician because I decided to be one. As a result, if I wanted to express perceptual experience with precision, I would have to say that *one* perceives in me, and not that I perceive. Every sensation includes a seed of dream or depersonalization, as we experience through this sort of stupor into which it puts us when we truly live at the level of sensation. Of course, knowledge certainly teaches me that sensation would not have taken place without an adaptation of my body, for example, that there would be no determinate contact without a movement of my hand. But this activity unfolds on the periphery of my being; I have no more awareness of being the true subject of my sensation than I do of my birth or my death. Neither my birth nor my death can appear to me as my personal experiences, since if I conceive of them in this way, I must imagine myself as preexisting or as surviving myself in order to be able to experience them, and thus I could not genuinely conceive of my birth or my death. Thus, I can only grasp myself as "already born" and as "still living," – I can only grasp my birth and my death as pre-personal horizons: I know that one is born and that one dies, but I cannot know my birth or my death. Being at the extreme the first, last, and only one of its kind, every sensation is a birth and a death. The subject who experiences it begins and ends with it, and since he can neither precede himself nor survive himself, sensa-

tion necessarily appears to itself in a milieu of generality. It arrives from beneath myself, and it results from a sensitivity that preceded it and that will survive it, just as my birth or my death belongs to an anonymous natality or mortality. I grasp through sensation, on the margins of my personal life and of my own acts, a given life of consciousness from which these later determinations emerge, the life of my eyes, hands, and ears, which are so many natural selves. Each time that I experience a sensation, I experience that it does not concern my own being – the one for which I am responsible and upon which I decide – but rather another self that has already sided with the world, that is already open to certain of its aspects and synchronized with them. Between my sensation and myself, there is always the thickness of an *originary acquisition* that prevents my experience from being clear for itself. I experience sensation as a modality of a general existence, already destined to a physical world, which flows through me without my being its author.

(2) Sensation can only be anonymous because it is partial. He who sees and touches is not exactly myself, because the visible world and the tangible world are not the world in its entirety. When I see an object, I always feel [*éprouve*] that there is still some being beyond what I currently see, and not merely more visible being, but also more tangible or audible being, and not merely more sensible being, but moreover a depth of the object that no sensory withdrawal will ever fully exhaust. Correlatively, I am not fully within these operations; they remain marginal, they happen in front of me, the self who sees or the self who hears is, in some sense, a specialized self, familiar with a single sector of being. And it is precisely at this price that the gaze and the hand are capable of guessing the movement that will make the perception precise and that can demonstrate this prescience that gives them the appearance of an automatic reflex.

[e. The senses are “fields.”]*

– We can summarize these two ideas by saying that every sensation belongs to a certain *field*. To say that I have a visual field means that I have an access and an opening to a system of visible beings through my position, and that they are available to my gaze in virtue of a kind of primordial contract and by a gift of nature, without any effort required on my part. In other words, it means that vision is pre-personal. Moreover, it means simultaneously that vision is always limited, or that there is

always an horizon of unseen or even invisible things around my present vision. Vision is a thought subjugated to a certain field and this is what is called a sense. When I say that I have senses and that they give me access to the world, I am not the victim of a confusion, nor do I mix up causal thought and reflection. I merely express the truth that forces itself upon a complete reflection, namely, that I am capable (through connaturality) of finding a sense in certain aspects of being, without myself having given them this sense through a constitutive operation.

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[f. *The plurality of the senses. How intellectualism transcends this plurality and how it is justified against empiricism.*]

The distinction between the different senses is justified along with the distinction between the senses and intellection. Intellectualism does not speak of the senses because, for it, sensations and senses only appear when I return to the concrete act of knowledge in order to analyze it. Thus, in the act I distinguish a contingent matter and a necessary form, but the matter is only an ideal moment of the total act, and not a separable element. There are no senses, then, only consciousness. For example, intellectualism refuses to ask the famous question of its own contribution to the experience of space because the perceptible qualities and the senses, as the materials of knowledge, cannot possess space in their own right, because in general space is the form of objectivity and in particular it is the means by which a consciousness of quality becomes possible. A sensation would be no sensation at all if it were not a sensation of something, and “things,” in the most general sense of the word, including definite qualities, only figure within the confused mass of impressions if they are put into perspective and coordinated by space. Thus, all senses must be spatial if they are to give us access to any form whatsoever of being, that is, if they are to be senses at all. And, by the same necessity, they must all open onto the same space, otherwise the sensory beings with which they put us into communication would only exist for the relevant sense – like phantoms that only appear at night – they would be missing the fullness of being and we could not genuinely be aware of them, that is, posit them as true beings.

Against this deduction, empiricism would vainly point to facts. If, for example, the attempt was made to show that touch is not spatial through touch itself, or to find a pure tactile experience for blind persons or

in cases of psychic blindness, and to show that this experience is not articulated according to space, then these proofs presupposed what they were supposed to establish. How are we to know in fact whether blindness and psychic blindness are limited to merely subtracting the “visual givens” from the patient’s experiences, and whether they have not also affected the structure of his tactile experience? Empiricism takes the first hypothesis for granted, and it is only on this condition that the fact might be taken as definitive; but by this very move, empiricism postulates the very separation of the senses that it was attempting to establish. More precisely, if I concede that space originally belongs to vision and that it passes from there to touch and to the other senses, since there is an appearance of a tactile perception of space for the adult, then I must at least admit that the “pure tactile givens” are displaced and covered over by an experience whose source is visual and that they are merged into a total experience in which they are ultimately indiscernible. But then what right do we have to separate out a “tactile” contribution within adult experience? Is not this alleged “purely tactile [experience],” which I attempt to find by turning to blind persons, a truly abnormal type of experience that has nothing in common with the integrated functioning of touch, and thus is useless in the analysis of overall experience? One cannot decide upon the spatiality of the senses through the inductive method and by producing “facts” – such as a touch without space for the blind person – since this fact must itself be interpreted and since it will be considered either as a meaningful fact that reveals the very essence of touch or as an accidental fact that expresses the particular properties of morbid touch, depending upon the idea we adopt of the senses in general and of their relations in total consciousness. The problem surely results from reflection and not from experience in the empiricist sense of the word, which is also the sense adopted by scientists when they dream of an absolute objectivity. We are thus justified in saying *a priori* that all of the senses are spatial, and the question of knowing which sense gives us space is unintelligible, provided we reflect upon what a sense is.

[g. *How reflective analysis nevertheless remains abstract.*]*

Nevertheless, two sorts of reflections are possible here. The first – intellectualist reflection – thematizes the object and consciousness, and, to repeat a Kantian expression, it “raises them to the concept.” The object

thus becomes what is, and consequently what is for everyone and for all times (even if only as an episode that is fleeting, but of which it will always be true that it existed in objective time). Consciousness, thematized by reflection, is existence for itself. And, with the help of this idea of consciousness and of this idea of the object, it is easy to show that every sensible quality is only fully an object within the context of the relations of the universe, and that sensation can only be on condition of existing for a central and unique I. If one wished to pause the reflective movement and speak, for example, of a partial consciousness or of an isolated object, then one would have a consciousness that, in some sense, could not know itself, and that therefore would not be consciousness at all, and an object that would not be accessible from everywhere and that, to this extent, would not be an object. But intellectualism is always susceptible to the question of where it draws this idea or this essence of consciousness and of the object from. If the subject is a pure for-itself, then “the I think must be able to accompany all of our representations.”¹⁹ “If a world is to be able to be conceived,” the quality must contain it in germ. But first, how do we know that there must be a pure for-itself, and from where do we learn that the world must be able to be thought?

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Perhaps the reply will be that this is the very definition of the subject and of the world, and that, failing to understand them in this way, we no longer know what we are talking about when speaking about them. And in fact, on the level of constituted speech, such is certainly the signification of the world and of the subject. But from where do the words themselves draw their sense? Radical reflection is the reflection that again takes hold of me while I am in the process of forming and formulating the idea of the subject and that of the object; it reveals the source of these two ideas and it is a reflection that is not merely operating, but moreover is conscious of itself in its operation. Again, one will perhaps respond that reflective analysis does not merely grasp the subject and the object as “ideas”; that it is an experiment – by reflecting I put myself back into this infinite subject that I already was, and I put the object back into the relations that already subtended it; and finally, that there is no reason to ask from where I get this idea of the subject and this idea of the object since they are the simple formulation of the conditions without which nothing would exist for anyone. But the reflective I differs from the unreflective I, at least insofar as the former is thematized, and what is given is neither pure consciousness nor pure being. As Kant

himself said with insight, what is given is experience, or in other words the communication of a finite subject with an opaque being from which the subject emerges, but also in which the subject remains engaged. It is “that pure and, so to speak, still-mute experience that must be brought to the pure expression of its own sense.”²⁰ We have the experience of a world, not in the sense of a system of relations that fully determines each event, but in the sense of an open totality whose synthesis can never be completed. We have the experience of an I, not in the sense of an absolute subjectivity, but rather one that is indivisibly unmade and remade by the course of time. The unity of the subject or of the object is not a real unity, but a presumptive unity within the horizon of experience; we must discover, beneath the idea of the subject and the idea of the object, the fact of my subjectivity and the object in the nascent state, the primordial layer where ideas and things are born. When it comes to consciousness, I can only form a notion of it by first referring myself back to this consciousness that I am, and in particular I must not first define the senses, but rather regain contact with the sensoriality that I live from within. We are not required to invest the world, *a priori*, with conditions without which it could not be thought, for, in order for it to be able to be thought, it must first not be wholly unknown, it must exist for me, that is, it must be given. Indeed, the Transcendental Aesthetic could only merge with the Transcendental Analytic if I were a God who posited the world, and not a man who is thrown into that world and who, in every sense of the phrase, “is attached to it.”²¹ Thus, we do not have to follow Kant in his deduction of a unique space. Unique space is the condition without which we cannot think the plenitude of objectivity, and it is certainly true that if I attempt to thematize several spaces, they reduce to a unity: each one of them being in a certain positional relation with the others and thus making up a unity with them. But do we know whether complete objectivity can be thought? Whether all perspectives are compossible? Whether they can be somewhere thematized all together? Do we know whether tactile experience and visual experience can be joined without an inter-sensory experience? Whether my experience and that of another person can be connected in a single system of intersubjective experience? Perhaps there are, either in each sensory experience or in each consciousness, some “phantoms” that no rationality could explain away. The entire Transcendental Deduction hangs upon the affirmation of a complete system of truth. We must return to the sources of precisely

this affirmation if we wish to reflect. In this sense we can follow Husserl in saying that Hume had, in intention, taken radical reflection further than anyone, since he had truly wanted to take us back to the phenomena of which we have an experience beneath every ideology – even if he otherwise mutilated and dissociated this experience.²² In particular, the idea of a unique space and that of a unique time, being based upon the idea of a summation of being that Kant had indeed criticized in the Transcendental Dialectic, must be bracketed off and must produce its genealogy beginning from our actual experience.

[h. *The a priori and the empirical.*]*

In other words, this new conception of reflection, which is the phenomenological conception, amounts to giving a new definition of the *a priori*. Kant already showed that the *a priori* is not knowable prior to experience, that is, outside of our horizon of facticity, and that it cannot be a matter of distinguishing two real elements of knowledge, one of which would be *a priori* and the other *a posteriori*. If the *a priori* maintains its character in Kant's philosophy of *that which ought to be the case*, in opposition to what exists in fact and as an anthropological determination, this is merely to the extent that he has not followed his own program to its logical conclusion, for he set out to define our powers of knowledge through our factual condition and that should have obliged him to place every conceivable being against the background of this factual world. From the moment in which experience – that is, the opening onto our factual world – is recognized as the beginning of knowledge, there is no longer any means of distinguishing a level of *a priori* truths and a level of factual ones, or between what the world ought to be and what the world actually is. The unity of the senses, which was taken as an *a priori* truth, is no longer anything but the formal expression of a fundamental contingency: the fact that we are in the world. The diversity of the senses, which was taken as an *a posteriori* given, including the concrete form that it takes in the human subject, appears as necessary to that world, that is, to the only world that we could think of with any importance; the diversity of the senses thus becomes an *a priori* truth.

Thus, every sensation is spatial. We come to this thesis not because the quality, as an object, can only be conceived in space, but because – as a primordial contact with being, as the taking up of a form of existence

indicated by the sensible to the sentient subject, or finally as the coexistence of the sentient being and the sensible – sensation is itself constitutive of a milieu of coexistence, that is, of a space. We say *a priori* that no sensation is punctual and that all sensoriality presupposes a certain field, and thus coexistences, and against Lachelier we conclude from this that the blind person has the experience of a space. But these *a priori* truths amount to nothing other than the making explicit of a fact: the fact of sensory experience as the taking up of a form of existence, and this taking up also implies that at each instant I can make myself almost entirely touch or vision, and even that I can never see or touch without my consciousness becoming saturated to some extent and losing something of its availability. Thus, the unity and the diversity of the senses are truths on the same level. The *a priori* is the fact as understood, made explicit, and followed through into all of the consequences of its tacit logic; the *a posteriori* is the isolated and implicit fact. It would be contradictory to say that touch is without spatiality, and it is *a priori* impossible to touch without touching in space since our experience is the experience of a world. But this insertion of the tactile perspective into a universal being does not express any necessity external to touch; it spontaneously takes place in tactile experience itself, according to its own mode. Sensation, such as it is presented to us by experience, is no longer an indifferent matter and an abstract moment, but rather one of our surfaces of contact with being, or a structure of consciousness. Rather than presenting us with a unique space or a universal condition of all qualities, each sensation gives us a particular manner of being in space and, in a certain sense, of creating space. It is neither contradictory nor impossible that each sense constitutes a small world within the larger one, and it is even because of its particularity that it is necessary to the whole and that each sensation opens onto the whole.

[i. Each sense has its “world.”]

In short, once the distinctions between the *a priori* and the empirical, and between form and content are effaced, sensory spaces become concrete moments of an overall configuration that is a unique space, and the power to go out to it is inseparable from the power of cutting oneself off from it through the isolation of a sense. In the concert hall, when I reopen my eyes, visible space seems narrow in relation to that

other space where the music was unfolding just a moment ago, and even if I keep my eyes open during the performance of the piece, it seems to me that the music is not truly contained in this precise and shabby space. The music insinuates a new dimension across visible space where it unfurls just as, for persons suffering hallucinations, the clear space of perceived things is mysteriously doubled with a “dark space” where other presences are possible.²³ Just as the other person’s perspective affects the world for me, the spatial domain of each sense is, for the other senses, an absolute unknowable and limits their spatiality accordingly. These descriptions, which for the critical philosopher present merely empirical curiosities and do not penetrate to *a priori* certainties, again assume a philosophical importance, because for us the unity of space can only be found where the sensory domains gear into each other. This is what remains true in the famous empiricist descriptions of a non-spatial perception. The experience of persons born blind and who have had a cataract operation has never proven, and could never prove, that space begins to exist for them when they gain the power of vision. Of course, the patient never ceases to marvel at this visual space to which he has just gained access, and with regard to which tactile experience now seems so impoverished to him that he voluntarily claims never to have had the experience of space prior to the operation.²⁴ The patient’s wonder, his hesitations in the new visual world into which he enters, show that touch is not spatial in the manner that vision is. “After the operation,” it is said:

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the form such as it is given by vision is, for the patients, something absolutely new that they do not put into relation with their tactile experience. [. . .] The patient confirms that he sees, but he does not know what he sees (. . .). He never recognizes his hand as such, he only speaks of a moving white patch.²⁵

In order to distinguish a circle from a rectangle through vision, he must trace the border of the figure with his gaze,²⁶ as he did with his hand, and he always tends to reach out for objects that are presented to his gaze.²⁷ What should we conclude from this? That tactile experience does not prepare us for the perception of space? But if tactile experience was not spatial at all, would the patient reach his hand out toward the object shown to him? This gesture presupposes that touch opens

onto a milieu that is at least analogous to the milieu of the visual givens. The facts show, above all, that vision is nothing without a certain use of the gaze. Patients “see colours much as we smell an odour (. . .), which enfolds and intrudes upon us, but without occupying any specific form of extension in a more exactly definable way.”²⁸ At first, everything is mixed together and everything appears moving. The segregation of colored surfaces, or the correct apprehension of movement, only comes later when the subject has understood “what ‘seeing’ is,”²⁹ that is, when he directs and casts his gaze in the manner of a gaze, and no longer in the manner of a hand. This proves that each sense organ interrogates the object in its own way, and that it is the agent of a certain type of synthesis, but, unless we reserve the word space to designate the visual synthesis through a nominal definition, then spatiality cannot be excluded from touch, in the sense of grasping coexistences. The very fact that genuine vision is prepared for through a transition phase and through a sort of touching with the eyes could not be understood if there were no quasi-spatial tactile fields into which the first visual perceptions could be inserted. Vision could never communicate directly with touch, as it does for the normal adult, if touch, even when artificially isolated, were not organized in such a manner as to make coexistences possible. Far from excluding the idea of a “tactile space,” the facts prove to the contrary that there is a space so strictly tactile that its articulations are not at first, nor will they ever be, in a relation of synonymy with the articulations of visual space.

The empiricist analyses thus pose a genuine problem, but in a confused way. Whether or not touch, for example, can only simultaneously embrace a small extension – that of the body and its instruments – this fact does not merely concern the presentation of tactile space, it modifies its sense. For intelligence – or at least for intelligence as understood by classical physics – simultaneity is the same whether it takes place between two contiguous points or between two distant ones, and in every case a long-distance simultaneity can be constructed step by step with short-distance simultaneities. But for experience, the thickness of time thus introduced into the operation modifies the result; it involves a certain “indeterminacy” [*bougé*] in the simultaneity of the extreme points, and to this extent the scope of visual perspectives will be a genuine revelation for the person after the operation, for it will procure the manifestation of distant simultaneity itself for the first time. Patients after the operation declare that tactile objects are not genuine spatial wholes, that the

apprehension of the object is here a simple “knowledge of the reciprocal relation of parts,” and that the circle and the square are not genuinely perceived by touch, but recognized according to certain “signs” – the presence and absence of “corners.”³⁰ Let us conclude that the tactile field never has the scope of the visual field, the tactile object is never wholly present in each of its parts like the visual object, and, in short, that touch is not vision. A blind person and a sighted person can certainly have a conversation, and perhaps it is even impossible to find a single word – even from the vocabulary of color – to which the blind person does not succeed in giving at least a schematic sense. A twelve-year-old blind boy³¹ defines the dimensions of vision quite well: for those who can see, he says, “they were bound to me through an unknown sense, which entirely surrounded me even from a distance, followed me about, penetrated through me and somehow held me in its power (*mich gewissermaßen beherrschte*) from morning to night.”³² But these indications remain notional and problematic for the blind person. They pose a question to which vision alone could respond. And this is why the blind man who has been operated upon finds the world to be different from what he had anticipated,³³ just as we always find a man different from what we knew of him in advance. The blind person’s world and the world of the normal person differ not merely in the quantity of matter available to them, but moreover in the structure of the whole. Through touch, a blind man knows precisely what branches and leaves are, as well as what an arm and the fingers of the hand are. After the operation, he is amazed to find “so much difference” between a tree and a human body.³⁴ Clearly vision has not merely added new details to the knowledge of the tree. It is a question of a new mode of presentation and of a new type of synthesis that transfigures the object. The lighting/object-illuminated structure, for example, could only find rather vague analogies in the tactile domain. This is why one patient, operated upon after eighteen years of blindness, attempts to touch a ray of sunlight.³⁵ The total signification of our life – of which the notional signification is never but an extract – would be different if we were deprived of vision. There is a general function of substitution and replacement that allows us access to the abstract signification of experiences we have not lived through and, for example, to speak of what we have not seen. But just as in the organism, where the functions of replacement are never the precise equivalent of the damaged ones and only give the appearance of integrity, so

too for intelligence, which only guarantees an apparent communication between different experiences; and, for the person born blind, the synthesis of the visual world and the tactile world after the operation, or the constitution of an inter-sensory world, must be completed upon the ground of the sensory itself, for the community of signification between the two experiences is not enough to guarantee their joining together
 271 into a single experience. The senses are distinct from each other and distinct from intellection insofar as each of them brings with it a structure of being that can never be precisely transposed. We can recognize this because we have rejected the formalism of consciousness and identified the body as the subject of perception.

[j. *Communication of the senses.*]

And because the senses communicate, we can recognize [that they are distinct in this way] without compromising their unity. Music is not in visible space, music erodes visible space, surrounds it, and causes it to shift, such that these overdressed listeners – who take on a judgmental air and exchange comments or smirks without noticing that the ground begins to tremble beneath them – are soon like a ship’s crew tossed about on the surface of a stormy sea. These two spaces only stand out against the background of a common world and can only enter into competition because they share the same pretension to total being. They are united in the very moment they come into conflict. If I wish to enclose myself in one of my senses and, for example, I project myself entirely into my eyes and abandon myself to the blue of the sky, soon I am no longer aware of gazing and, at just the moment I wanted to give myself over to vision entirely, the sky ceases to be a “visual perception” in order to become my current world. Sensory experience is unstable and wholly unknown to natural perception, which is accomplished with our entire body all at once and opens onto an inter-sensory world. Like the experience of the sensible quality, the experience of isolated “senses” takes place only within an abnormal attitude and cannot be useful for the analysis of direct consciousness.

I am seated in my room and I look at the sheets of white paper lying on my table, some illuminated by the window and others in the shadow. If I do not analyze my perception, and if I hold myself to the overall spectacle, I will say that all of the sheets appear to me as equally white.

Nevertheless, some of them are in the shadow of the wall. How are they not less white than the others? I decide to take a closer look. I focus my gaze upon them, that is, I restrict my visual field. I can even observe them through a box of matches, which serves to separate them from the rest of the field, or through a window in a “reduction screen.” Whether I employ one of these instruments or merely observe with a naked eye while adopting an “analytic attitude,”³⁶ the appearance of the sheets changes. It is no longer one of white paper in the shadows; it becomes a gray or bluish substance that is thick and poorly localized. If I again consider the overall spectacle, I notice that the sheets covered in shadow were not and had never been identical to the illuminated sheets, nor for that matter objectively different from them. The whiteness of the sheets of paper in the shadow does not admit of a precise classification on the scale between black and white.³⁷ It had no definite quality; I made the quality appear by focusing my eyes upon a portion of the visual field: then, and only then, did I find myself in the presence of a particular *quale* into which my gaze is plunged.

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Now, what does it mean “to focus”? On the side of the object it means to separate the region focused upon from the rest of the field, to interrupt the total life of the spectacle, which assigned a determinate coloration to each visible surface, taking the lighting into account; on the side of the subject it means substituting for overall vision, in which our gaze lends itself to the spectacle and allows itself to be invaded by it, an observation, that is, an isolated vision that the subject directs at will. Far from being coextensive with perception, the sensible quality is the peculiar product of an attitude of curiosity or observation. The sensible quality appears when, rather than abandoning my whole gaze to the world, I turn toward this gaze itself and I wonder *what I am actually seeing*; the quality does not figure in the natural exchange between my vision and the world. It is the response to a certain question posed by my gaze and the result of a second-order or critical act of vision that attempts to know itself in its particularity; it is the result of an “attention to the purely visual”³⁸ that I employ when I am worried about being tricked or when I wish to commence a scientific study of vision. This attitude makes the spectacle disappear: the colors that I see through the reduction screen, or those that the painter obtains by squinting, are no longer the colors-of-objects – the color of the walls or the color of the paper – but rather colored areas, although not without some thickness and together

vaguely located upon the same fictional plane.³⁹ Thus, there is a natural attitude of vision where I join with my gaze and deliver myself over to the spectacle through it: here the parts of the field are linked in an organization that makes them recognizable and identifiable. The quality, an isolated sensoriality, is produced when I break this total structuration of my vision, when I cease to adhere to my own gaze and, rather than living within vision, interrogate myself about it, when I wish to test out my possibilities, or when I untie the link between my vision and the world or between myself and the world in order to catch it in the act and to describe it.

[k. Sensing “prior to” the senses.]*

From within this attitude, at the same time that the world is pulverized into sensible qualities, the natural unity of the perceiving subject is shattered and I become unaware of myself as the subject of a visual field. But just as we must discover the natural unity from within each sense, we will reveal an “originary layer” of sensing that is prior to the division of the senses.⁴⁰ To the extent that I focus on an object or that I allow my eyes to wander, or finally that I abandon myself entirely to the event, the same color appears to me as a surface color (*Oberflächenfarbe*) – it is in a definite place in space, it stretches across an object, or it becomes an atmospheric color (*Raumfarbe*) and diffuses all around the object; or again, I sense it in my eye as a vibration of my gaze; or, finally, it communicates a single manner of being to my entire body, it fills me and no longer merits the name “color.” Similarly, there is an objective sound that resonates outside of me in the musical instrument, an atmospheric sound that is between the object and my body, a sound that vibrates in me “as if I had become the flute or the clock,” and finally a last stage where the sonorous element disappears and becomes a highly precise experience of a modification of my entire body.⁴¹ There is but a narrow margin available to sensory experience: either the sound and the color, through their own arrangement, sketch out an object – the ashtray, the violin – and this object speaks directly to all of the senses; or at the other extreme of experience, the sound and color are received in my body, and it becomes difficult to restrict my experience to a single sensory register: it spontaneously overflows toward all the others. Sensory experience, at the third stage we described above, is only specified by an “accent” that indicates

the direction of the sound or of the color.⁴² At this level, the ambiguity of experience is such that an auditory rhythm fuses cinematic images together and gives rise to a perception of movement whereas, without an auditory contribution, the same succession of images would be too slow to provoke the stroboscopic movement.⁴³ Sounds modify consecutive images of colors: a more intense sound intensifies the colors, the interruption of the sounds makes them vacillate, and a low sound renders blue darker or deeper.⁴⁴ The constancy hypothesis,⁴⁵ which assigns one and only one sensation to each stimulus, is progressively less verified as we gradually move closer to natural perception.

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It is to the extent that behavior is intellectual and impartial (*sachlicher*) that the constancy hypothesis becomes acceptable with regard to the relation between the stimulus and the specific sensory response, and that the sonorous stimulus, for example, is limited to its specific sphere, the auditory sphere in this case.⁴⁶

[1. Cases of synesthesia.]*

Because mescaline intoxication compromises the impartial attitude and delivers the subject over to his vitality, we would expect it to encourage forms of synesthesia. And indeed, under the influence of mescaline, the sound of a flute gives rise to a blue-green color, the sound of a metronome in the dark is expressed by gray patches, spatial intervals for vision corresponding to the temporal intervals of the sounds, the size of the patch to the intensity of the sound, and its height in space to the pitch of the sound.⁴⁷ One subject under the influence of mescaline finds a piece of iron, he taps it upon the windowsill, and exclaims: "There's the magic" – and the trees become greener.⁴⁸ The barking of a dog attracts the light in an indescribable way, and reverberates in his right foot.⁴⁹ Everything happens as if he were seeing "the barriers between the senses, established in the course of evolution, occasionally falling down."⁵⁰ From the perspective of the objective world with its opaque qualities, or from the objective body with its isolated organs, the phenomenon of synesthesia is paradoxical. The attempt is thus made to explain it without touching the concept of sensation: it will be necessary, for example, to assume that stimulations ordinarily circumscribed within a region of the brain (the optical zone or auditory zone, for instance), become capable of

intervening beyond these limits, and that in this way the specific quality is associated with a non-specific quality. Whether or not there are arguments in cerebral physiology for this explanation,⁵¹ it does not account for synesthetic experience, which thus becomes a new opportunity to put the concept of sensation and objective thought into question. For the subject does not tell us merely that he has a sound and a color at the same time: it is the sound itself that he sees, at the place where colors form.⁵² This formula is literally rendered meaningless if vision is defined by the visual *quale*, or sound by the sonorous *quale*. But it falls to us to construct our definitions in such a way as to find a sense for this experience, since the vision of sounds or the hearing of colors exist as phenomena. And they are hardly exceptional phenomena. Synesthetic perception is the rule and, if we do not notice it, this is because scientific knowledge displaces experience and we have unlearned seeing, hearing, and sensing in general in order to deduce what we ought to see, hear, or sense from our bodily organization and from the world as it is conceived by the physicist. It is said that vision can only give us colors or lights, and with them forms (which are the contours of colors) and movements (which are the changes of position of patches of color). But how should we situate transparency or “blurred” colors on the color-scale? In fact, each color in its inmost possession is but the inner structure of the thing manifested on the outside. The brilliance of gold presents its homogeneous composition quite noticeably, and the dull color of wood presents its heterogeneous composition.⁵³ By opening up to the structure of the thing, the senses communicate among themselves. We see the rigidity and the fragility of the glass and, when it breaks with a crystal-clear sound, this sound is borne by the visible glass.⁵⁴ We see the elasticity of steel, the ductility of molten steel, the hardness of the blade in a plane, and the softness of its shavings. The form of objects is not their geometrical shape: the form has a certain relation with their very nature and it speaks to all of our senses at the same time as it speaks to vision. The form of a fold in a fabric of linen or of cotton shows us the softness or the dryness of the fiber, and the coolness or the warmth of the fabric. Finally, the movement of visible objects is not the simple displacement of color patches that correspond to them in the visual field. In the movement of the branch from which a bird has just left, we read its flexibility and its elasticity, and this is how the branch of an apple tree and the branch of a birch are immediately distinguished. We see the weight of a block of cast iron that sinks into the sand, the

fluidity of the water, and the viscosity of the syrup.⁵⁵ Likewise, I hear the hardness and the unevenness of the cobblestones in the sound of a car, and we are right to speak of a “soft,” “dull,” or “dry” sound. Even if one might doubt that hearing gives us genuine “things,” it is at least certain that, beyond mere sounds in space, it offers us something that literally “sounds,” and thereby it communicates with the other senses. Finally, if I alternately bend a steel bar and a lime tree branch with my eyes closed, I perceive between my two hands the most secret texture of the metal and of the wood. If they are taken as incomparable qualities, then the “givens from the different senses” belong to so many separated worlds – each one, in its specific essence, being a manner of modulating the thing – then they nonetheless all communicate through their meaningful core.

[m. *The senses are distinct and yet indiscernible, like monocular images in binocular vision.*]

Only we must clarify the nature of sensible signification, otherwise we would return to the intellectualist analysis that we rejected above. The table that I touch and the one that I see are the same table. But must it be added, as we have said, that I hear the same sonata that Helen Keller touches, and that it is the same man whom I see and whom the blind painter paints?⁵⁶ Any difference between perceptual synthesis and intellectual synthesis would gradually disappear. The unity of the senses would be of the same order as the unity of scientific objects. When I simultaneously touch and see an object, the unique object will be the common reason for these two appearances, just as Venus is the common reason for the Morning Star and the Evening Star, and thus perception would be a nascent science.⁵⁷ And yet, even if perception reunites our sensory experiences in a unique world, it is not in the manner that scientific colligation gathers together objects or phenomena, but rather in the manner that binocular vision grasps a single object. Let us examine this “synthesis” closely.

When my gaze is fixed on the horizon, I have a double image of nearby objects. When I in turn focus upon the latter, I see the two images come together to what will be the unique object, and disappear into it. It must not be concluded here that the synthesis consists in conceiving the two images together as images of a single object. If it were a spiritual act or

an apperception, it would have to happen as soon as I notice the identity of the two images, while in fact the unity of the object keeps us waiting, right up until the moment when the focusing conjures them away. The unique object is not a certain manner of conceiving of the two images, since they cease to be given the moment it appears. Has the “fusion of images” then been obtained through some innate mechanism in the nervous system, and do we mean that in the final analysis, if not at the periphery then at least at the center, we have only one single stimulation mediated by our two eyes? But the mere existence of a visual center cannot explain the unique object, since double vision sometimes occurs, just as elsewhere the mere existence of two retinas could not explain double vision since the latter is not constant.⁵⁸ If in normal vision we can understand double vision just as well as the unique object, this will not be through the anatomical organization of the visual apparatus, but rather through its functioning and through the psycho-physical subject’s use of it. Shall we say, then, that double vision happens *because* our eyes do not converge toward the object and because the object forms non-symmetrical images on our two retinas? Or that these two images merge into one because the focusing brings them back to homologous points on the two retinas? But are the divergence and the convergence of the eyes the cause or the effect of double vision and of normal vision? For persons born blind and having been operated upon for cataracts, in the time following the operation it cannot be said whether it is the non-coordination of the eyes that prevents vision, or if it is the confusion of the visual field that encourages non-coordination; whether they do not see because they fail to focus, or if they do not focus because they are lacking something to

278 see. When I stare off into the distance and when, for example, one of my fingers placed close to my eyes projects its image on non-symmetrical points on my two retinas, the arrangement of the two images upon the retinas cannot be the *cause* of the focusing movement that will put an end to the double vision. For, as has been shown, the disparity of the images does not exist in itself.⁵⁹ My finger forms its image upon a certain area of my left retina and upon a certain area of my right one, which is not symmetrical with the first. But the symmetrical area of the right retina is also filled with visual stimuli; the distribution of stimuli on the two retinas is only “dis-symmetrical” with regard to a subject who compares the two constellations and identifies them. Upon the retinas themselves, considered as objects, there are but two groupings of incomparable stimuli.

Yet one might object that, barring a focusing movement, these two groupings cannot be superimposed over each other, nor can they give rise to the vision of anything, and that, in this sense, their mere presence creates a state of disequilibrium. But this is precisely to admit what we are attempting to show: that the vision of a unique object is not a simple result of focusing, that it is anticipated in the very act of focusing, or as it has been formulated, that the focusing of the gaze is a “prospective activity.”⁶⁰ In order for my gaze to narrow toward the nearby objects and to concentrate my eyes upon them, my gaze must experience [épreuve] double vision as a disequilibrium or as an imperfect vision, and it must be oriented toward the unique object as toward the resolution of this tension and the fulfillment of the act of seeing.⁶¹ “We must ‘look’ in order to see.”⁶² The unity of the object in binocular vision does not result, then, from some third person process that could ultimately produce a unique image by merging the two monocular images. When we go from double vision to normal vision, the unique object replaces the two images and is clearly not the simple superimposition of the two; it is of another order than them, and incomparably more solid than they are. The two images of double vision are not amalgamated into a single image in binocular vision and the unity of the object is surely intentional.

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But – and here we are at the point we hoped to reach – it is not, for all of that, a mere notional unity. One passes from double vision to the unique object not through an inspection of the mind, but when the two eyes cease to function in isolation and are used as a single organ by a unique gaze. The synthesis is not accomplished by the epistemological subject, but rather by the body when it tears itself away from its dispersion, gathers itself together, and carries itself through all of its resources toward a single term of its movement, and when a single intention is conceived within it through the phenomenon of synergy. We withdraw the synthesis from the objective body in order to give it to the phenomenal body, that is, the body insofar as it projects a certain “milieu”⁶³ around itself, insofar as its “parts” know each other dynamically and its receptors are arranged in such a way as to make the perception of the object possible through their synergy. By saying that this intentionality is not a thought, we mean that it is not accomplished in the transparency of a consciousness, and that it takes up as acquired all of the latent knowledge that my body has of itself. Resting upon the pre-logical unity of the body schema, the perceptual synthesis no more possesses the secret of

its object than it does the secret of one's own body, and this is why the perceived object always presents itself as transcendent, this is why the synthesis appears to be carried out upon the object itself, in the world, and not within this metaphysical point that is the thinking subject. And herein lies the distinction between the perceptual synthesis and the intellectual synthesis. When I pass from double vision to normal vision, I am not merely conscious of seeing the *same object* with my two eyes, I am also conscious of progressing toward the object itself and of finally having its carnal presence. The monocular images wander vaguely in front of the things, they have no place in the world, and suddenly they pull back toward a certain place in the world and are absorbed into the world, just as ghosts return through the fissures of the earth from which they came when the day breaks. The binocular object absorbs the monocular images, and the synthesis is accomplished in it; in its clarity, they are
 280 finally recognized as appearances of this object. The sequence of my experiences is given as concordant, and the synthesis takes place not insofar as all of my experiences express a certain invariant and in the identity of the object, but insofar as they are all collected together by the last one in the series and in the ipseity of the thing. Of course, the ipseity is never *attained*. Each appearance of the thing that falls before our perception is still nothing but an invitation to perceive more and a momentary pause in the perceptual process. If the thing itself were attained, it would from then on be stretched out before us without any mystery. It would cease to exist as a thing at the very moment that we believed we possessed it. What makes up the "reality" of the thing is thus precisely what steals if from our possession. The aseity of the thing – its irrecusable presence and the perpetual absence into which it withdraws – are two inseparable aspects of transcendence. Intellectualism is unaware of both, and if we wish to account for the thing as the transcendent term of an open series of experiences, then we must give the subject of perception the unity of the body schema, itself open and indefinite. And this is what the synthesis of binocular vision teaches us.

[n. *Unity of the senses through the body.*]*

Let us apply this to the problem of the unity of the senses. This synthesis cannot be understood as the subsumption of the senses beneath an originary consciousness, but rather through their never completed

integration into a single knowing organism. The inter-sensory object is to the visual object what the visual object is to the monocular images of double vision, and the senses communicate in perception just as the two eyes collaborate in vision.⁶⁴ The vision of sounds or the hearing of colors comes about in the same way as the unity of the gaze through the two eyes, insofar as my body is not a sum of juxtaposed organs, but a synergetic system of which all of the functions are taken up and tied together in the general movement of being in the world, and insofar as it is the congealed figure of existence. It makes sense to say that I see sounds or that I hear colors if vision or hearing are not the simple possession of an opaque *quale*, but rather the experience [*l'épreuve*] of a modality of existence, the synchronization of my body with it, and the problem of cases of synesthesia receives the beginnings of a solution if the quality is that of a certain mode of movement or of a behavior. When I say that I see a sound, I mean that I echo the vibration of the sound with my entire sensory being, and in particular with that sector of myself that is capable of seeing colors.

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Movement, not understood as objective movement and shifting of locations in space, but rather as a movement project or as “virtual movement,”⁶⁵ is the foundation of the unity of the senses. It is more or less known that talking-films do not merely add a sonorous accompaniment to the spectacle, they modify the tenor of the spectacle itself. When I attend the projection of a film dubbed over in French, I do not merely note the discord between the speech and the image, but it also suddenly seems to me that *something else* is being said over there and, while the theater and my ears are filled with the dubbed text, this text does not even have an auditory existence for me, and I only have ears for this other silent speech that comes from the screen. When a breakdown of the sound-system suddenly leaves the character who continues to gesture on the screen without a voice, it is not merely the sense of his discourse that suddenly escapes me; the spectacle itself has changed. The face, animated just a moment ago, thickens and congeals, like the face of a man taken aback, and the interruption of the sound invades the screen with the form of a sort of stupor. For the spectator, the gestures and the words are not subsumed under an ideal signification, but rather the speech takes up the gesture, and the gesture takes up the speech. The speech and the gesture communicate through my body, just as the sensory appearances of my body are immediately symbolic of each other because my body is precisely a

ready-made system of equivalences and of inter-sensory transpositions. The senses translate each other without the need for an interpreter; they understand each other without having to pass through the idea. These observations allow us to present the full sense of Herder's phrase: "Man is a perpetual *sensorium commune*, who is sometimes affected from one side, sometimes from the other."⁶⁶ With the notion of body schema, it is not only the unity of the body that is described in a new way, but also, through it, the unity of the senses and the unity of the object. My body is the place or, rather, the very actuality of the phenomenon of expression (*Ausdruck*); in my body, visual and auditory experience, for example, are pregnant with each other, and their expressive value grounds the pre-predicative unity of the perceived world, and, through this, its verbal expression (*Darstellung*) and intellectual signification (*Bedeutung*).⁶⁷ My body is the common texture of all objects and is, at least with regard to the perceived world, the general instrument of my "understanding."

[O. *The body as a general system of symbols for the world.*]

My body gives a sense not only to the natural object, but moreover to cultural objects such as words. If a subject is shown a word for too short a time for him to be able to make it out, then, for example, the word "chaud" [hot] induces a sort of experience of heat that creates something like a meaningful halo around him.⁶⁸ The word "dur" [hard]⁶⁹ gives rise to a sort of stiffness in the back and neck, and is only subsequently projected into the visual or auditory field and takes its shape as a sign or as a spoken word. Prior to being the indication of a concept, the word is first an event that grasps my body, and its hold upon my body circumscribes the zone of signification to which it refers. One subject claims that upon the presentation of the word "humide" (*feucht*) [damp], in addition to a feeling of dampness or cold, he experiences an entire reworking of the body schema, as if the interior of his body came to the periphery, and as if the reality of his body, collected together up until that moment in his arms and legs, attempted to re-center itself. The word, then, is not distinct from the attitude that it indicates, and it is only when its presence is prolonged that it appears as an external image and that its signification appears as thought. Words have a physiognomy because we have, with regard to them, just as with regard to each person, a certain behavior that suddenly appears the moment they are given.

I attempt to grasp the word *rot* (red) in its living expression, but at first it is only peripheral for me, it is only a sign with the knowledge of its signification. It is not itself red. But suddenly I notice that the word forces open a passage in my body. It is the feeling – which is difficult to describe – of a sort of numbed fullness that invades my body and that simultaneously imparts a spherical shape to my mouth cavity. And precisely at this moment, I notice that the word on the paper receives its expressive value, it comes before me in a dark red halo, while the letter *o* intuitively presents this spherical cavity that I had previously felt in my mouth.⁷⁰

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This behavior associated with the word shows, in particular, that the word is indissolubly something said, heard, or seen. “The word that is read is not a geometrical structure in a segment of visual space; it is the presentation of a behavior and of a linguistic movement in its dynamic plenitude.”⁷¹ Whether it is a matter of perceiving words or objects more generally, “there is a certain bodily attitude, a specific mode of dynamic tension required for structuring the image; man, as a dynamic and living totality, must structure himself in order to trace out a figure in his visual field as part of the psycho-physical organism.”⁷² In short, my body is not merely one object among all others, not a complex of sensible qualities among others. It is an object sensitive to all others, which resonates for all sounds, vibrates for all colors, and that provides words with their primordial signification through the manner in which it receives them. This is not a matter of reducing the signification of the word “*chaud*” [hot] to sensations of heat, according to empiricist formulas. For the heat that I sense by reading the word “*chaud*” is not an actual heat. It is merely my body that prepares itself for the heat, and that, so to speak, sketches out its form. Likewise, when a part of my body is named in my presence, or when I imagine it, I experience a quasi-sensation of contact at the corresponding point, which is merely the emergence of this part of my body in the overall body schema. Thus, we do not reduce the signification of the word, and not even the signification of the perceived, to a sum of “bodily sensations”; rather we say that the body, insofar as it has “behaviors,” is this strange object that uses its own parts as a general system of symbols for the world and through which we can thus “frequent” this world, “understand” it, and find a signification for it.

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[p. *Man is a sensorium commune.*]

It will be acknowledged that all of this surely has some value as a description of appearance. But what does that matter if these descriptions ultimately mean nothing that might come before thought, or if reflection ultimately convicts them of being non-sense? At the level of opinion, one's own body is at once a constituted object and constituting with regard to other objects. But if we wish to know what is being discussed, a choice must be made, and one's own body must ultimately be placed back on the side of the constituted object. There are in fact two possibilities. On the one hand, I might consider myself in the midst of the world, inserted into it through my body, which would allow itself to be invested with relations of causality. In this case, "the senses" and "the body" are material mechanisms and know nothing at all; the object forms an image upon my two retinas, and the retinal image is repeated in the optic center by another image. But then all that exists is *things to see* and *no one who sees*; we are indefinitely sent backward from one bodily stage to another, and in man we assume a "little man," and in him another, without ever arriving at vision. On the other hand, I might genuinely want to understand how there is vision, but then I must leave the constituted (that which exists in itself) behind, and grasp through reflection a being for whom the object could exist. Now, in order for the object to be able to exist for the subject, it is not enough that the subject embraces it with his gaze or grasps it in the manner that my hand grasps this piece of wood. In addition, the subject must know that he grasps it or sees it, he must know himself knowing or seeing, his act must be entirely given to himself, and finally this subject must not be anything other than what he is conscious of being. Otherwise we could certainly have a grasp of the object or a gaze upon it for a third person observer, but the supposed subject, without having any consciousness of himself, would disperse into his act and would have no consciousness at all. In order for there to be a vision of the object or a tactile perception of the object, the senses will always lack this dimension of absence, this irreality through which the subject can know himself and through which the object can exist for him. The consciousness of that which is connected together presupposes the consciousness of that which does the connecting and of its act of connecting; the consciousness of the object presupposes the consciousness of self or, rather, these are synonymous. Thus, if there is conscious-

ness of something, this is because the subject is absolutely nothing and “sensations” or the “matter” of knowledge are not moments or inhabitants of consciousness, they are on the side of the constituted. 285

What can our descriptions do against these facts and how could they escape this alternative? Let us return to perceptual experience. I perceive this table upon which I am writing. This signifies, among other things, that my act of perception occupies me, and it occupies me sufficiently such that I cannot, while I am actually perceiving the table, perceive myself perceiving it. When I wish to do this, I cease, so to speak, immersing my gaze in the table; I turn myself toward myself as the one perceiving, and suddenly realize in this way that my perception must have gone through certain subjective appearances, it must have interpreted certain of my own “sensations”; and finally my perception appears within the perspective of my individual history. It is from that which is connected that I have, secondarily, consciousness of an activity of connecting, when, adopting the analytic attitude, I decompose the perception into qualities and sensations, and when, in order to meet up with the object toward which I was first thrown with their help, I am obliged to presuppose an act of synthesis that is merely the counterpart of my analysis. My perceptual act, taken in its naïveté, does not itself accomplish this synthesis; it benefits from work already completed, from a general synthesis constituted once and for all. This is what I express by saying that I perceive with my body or with my senses, my body and my senses being precisely this habitual knowledge of the world, this implicit or sedimented science. If my consciousness constituted the world that it perceives at this moment, there would be no distance between it and that world, and between them no interval would be possible, my consciousness would penetrate the world all the way to its most secret articulations, intentionality would transport us to the heart of the object, and in the same stroke the perceived would not have the thickness of a present and consciousness would become neither lost nor ensnared in the perceived. On the contrary, we are conscious of an inexhaustible object and we get bogged down in it because, between it and us, there is this latent knowledge that our gaze uses, of which we merely presume that the rational development is possible, and that always remains prior to perception. If, as we have said, every perception has something anonymous about it, this is because it takes up an acquisition that it does not question. The perceiving person is not spread out before himself in the manner that a consciousness

286 must be: he has an historical thickness, he takes up a perceptual tradition, and he is confronted with a present. In perception, we do not think the object and we do not think the thinking, we are directed toward the object and we merge with this body that knows more than we do about the world, about motives, and about the means available for accomplishing the synthesis. This is why we have followed Herder in saying that man is a *sensorium commune*. In that originary layer of sensing that we discover on condition of genuinely coinciding with the perceptual act and of leaving behind the critical attitude, I live the unity of the subject and the inter-sensory unity of the thing, I do not conceive of them in the manner of reflective analysis and science.

[q. *The perceptual synthesis is temporal.*]*

– But what is the connected without the connecting? What is this object that is still not an object for someone? Psychological reflection, which posits my perceptual act as an event in my history, may certainly be secondary. But transcendental reflection, which reveals me as the non-temporal thinker of the object, introduces nothing into this thinker that is not already there: it limits itself to formulating what gives a sense to “the table” or “the chair,” what makes their structure stable and makes my experience of objectivity possible. In short, what is it to live the unity of the object or the subject, if not to create that unity? Even if we suppose that this unity appears with the phenomenon of my body, must I not conceive of that unity in my body in order to find it there, and must I not accomplish the synthesis of this phenomenon in order to have an experience of it?

– We are not attempting to derive the for-itself from the in-itself, we are not returning to any form whatsoever of empiricism, and the body to which we are entrusting the synthesis of the perceived world is neither a pure given nor a passively received thing. Rather, our claim is that the perceptual synthesis is a temporal synthesis. Subjectivity, at the level of perception, is nothing other than temporality and this is what allows us to leave to the subject of perception his opacity and his history. I open my eyes in the direction of my table and my consciousness is immediately flooded with colors and confused reflections; at that moment, my consciousness is hardly distinguished from what is presented to it; it spreads out, through its body, into the spectacle that is not yet a spectacle

of anything. Suddenly I focus upon the table, which is not yet there; I look into the distance although there is still no depth; my body centers upon an object that is still virtual and maneuvers its sensitive surfaces so as to make the object actual. In this way, I can send something that was touching me back to its place in the world because I can, by retreating into the future, send the world's first attack upon my senses into the immediate past, and orient myself toward the determinate object as if toward a near future. The act of seeing is indivisibly prospective (since the object is at the end of my focusing movement) and retrospective (since it will be presented as anterior to its appearance, along with the "stimulus," the motive, or the prime mover of every process since its beginning). The spatial synthesis and the synthesis of the object are based upon this deployment of time. In every movement of focusing, my body ties a present, a past, and a future together. It secretes time, or rather it becomes that place in nature where for the first time events, rather than pushing each other into being, project a double horizon of the past and future around the present and acquire an historical orientation. Here there is indeed an invocation, but not the experience of an eternal creativity [*un naturant éternel*]. My body takes possession of time and makes a past and a future exist for a present; it is not a thing, rather than suffering time, my body creates it.

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But every focusing act must be renewed, otherwise it falls into the unconscious. The object only remains clear in front of me if I scan it with my eyes, and volubility is an essential property of the gaze. The hold that the gaze gives us on a segment of time and the synthesis that it accomplishes are themselves temporal phenomena; they pass by and can only subsist as taken up in a new act, itself temporal. The claim to objectivity made by each perceptual act is taken up by the following one, which is again disappointed and taken up in turn. This perpetual failure of perceptual consciousness was foreseeable from its beginnings. If I can only see the object by pushing it into the past, this is because, like the object's first attack upon my senses, the subsequent perception itself occupies and obliterates my consciousness, and this is because this new perception will pass by in turn, because the subject of perception is never an absolute subjectivity, and because he is destined to become an object for a later I. Perception is always in the impersonal mode of the "One." It is not a personal act by which I myself would give a new sense to my life. Within sensory exploration, I do not give a past to the present and orient

it toward a future as an autonomous subject, but rather insofar as I have a body and insofar as I know how “to see.” In addition to being a true history, perception also confirms and renews in us a “pre-history.” And this is again essential to time, for there would be no present – namely, the sensible with its thickness and its inexhaustible richness – if perception did not, to speak like Hegel, preserve a past in its present depth, and did not condense that past into the present. Perception does not enact the synthesis of its object at present, but this is not because it receives its object passively in the empiricist manner, but rather because the unity of the object appears through time, and because time escapes to the precise extent that it is grasped. I certainly have, thanks to time, an interlocking and a taking up of previous experiences in later experiences, but I never have an absolute possession of myself by myself, since the hollow of the future is always filled by a new present. There are no connected objects without an act of connecting and without a subject, there is no unity without a unifying, yet every synthesis is simultaneously taken apart and remade by time, which, in a single movement, puts it into question and confirms it because it produces a new present that retains the past. The alternative between created [*naturé*] and creating [*naturant*] is thus transformed into a dialectic of constituted time and constituting time. If we are to solve the problem we set for ourselves – the problem of sensoriality, or of finite subjectivity – this will only be accomplished by reflecting upon time and by showing how time only exists for a subjectivity, since, without subjectivity, the past in itself is no longer and the future in itself is not yet, and there would be no time – and how, nevertheless, this subjectivity is time itself, or how we can follow Hegel in saying that time is the existence of the mind, or follow Husserl in speaking of a self-constitution of time.

[r. To reflect is to recover the unreflected.]

For the moment, the preceding descriptions and those that are to follow familiarize us with a new genre of reflection from which we anticipate the solution to our questions. For intellectualism, reflection involves putting sensation at a distance or objectifying it and causing an empty subject to appear across from sensation who can survey this multiplicity and for whom it can exist. To the precise extent that intellectualism purifies consciousness by emptying it of all opacity, it turns the *hylē* into

a real thing, and the apprehension of concrete contents, or the encounter between this thing and the mind, becomes inconceivable. If one responds that the matter of knowledge⁷³ is a result of analysis and should not be treated as a real element, then it must be correspondingly admitted that the synthetic unity of apperception is itself a notional formulation of experience, that it must not be given an originary value, and, in short, that the theory of knowledge must be started over. For our part, we agree that the matter and the form of knowledge are the results of analysis. I posit a matter of knowledge when, breaking with the originary faith of perception, I adopt a critical attitude toward perception and wonder “what I actually see.” The task of a radical reflection, that is, a reflection that attempts to understand itself, consists paradoxically in recovering the unreflective experience of the world in order to import the attitude of verification and reflective operations back into this experience, and in order to reveal reflection as one of the possibilities of my being. What, then, do we have at the outset? We do not have a given multiplicity along with a synthetic apperception that surveys it and thoroughly penetrates it, but rather a certain perceptual field against the background of the world. Nothing here is thematized. Neither the object nor the subject is *posited*. In the originary field, we do not have a mosaic of qualities, but rather a total configuration that distributes functional values according to the demands of the whole, and as we have seen, for example, a “white” sheet of paper in the shadows is not white in the sense of an objective quality, but it has the value “white.” What we call “sensation” is merely the most basic of all perceptions and, as a modality of existence, sensation can no more than any other perception be separated from a background that is, ultimately, the world. Correlatively, every perceptual act appears as taken from an overall adhesion to the world. At the center of this system lies a power of suspending living communication, or at least of restricting it by focusing our gaze upon a certain part of the spectacle and dedicating the entire perceptual field to it. As we have seen, we must not set up determinations within primordial experience that will only later be obtained through the critical attitude, and therefore we must not speak of an actual synthesis when the manifold has not yet been dissociated.

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Must we therefore reject the idea of synthesis and the idea of a matter of knowledge? Shall we say that perception reveals objects as the lamp illuminates them at night? Must we embrace the realism that, as

Malebranche said, imagines the soul going out through the eyes and visiting the objects in the world? This would not even free us from the idea of synthesis since, for example, it is hardly sufficient “to visit” a surface in order to perceive it, for the moments of the journey must be retained and the points of the surface must be linked together. But we have seen that originary perception is a non-thetic, pre-objective, and preconscious experience. Thus, let us say *provisionally* that there is a matter of knowledge that is merely possible. Empty and determinate intentions emerge from each point of the primordial field; by actualizing these intentions, analysis will arrive at the object of science, at sensation as a private phenomenon, and at the pure subject who posits them both. These three terms lie only on the horizon of primordial experience. The reflective ideal of thetic thought will be grounded in the experience of the thing. Thus, reflection only fully grasps itself if it refers to the pre-reflective fund it presupposes, upon which it draws, and that constitutes for it, like an original past, a past that has never been present.



SPACE

[Introduction: *Is space a “form” of knowledge?*]¹

We have just recognized that analysis is not justified in positing a matter of knowledge as an ideally separable moment, and that this matter, the moment we set it up through an explicit act of reflection, is already related to the world. Reflection does not work backward along a pathway already traveled in the opposite direction by constitution, and the natural reference of the matter to the world leads us to a new conception of intentionality, since the classical conception² that treats the experience of the world as a pure act of constituting consciousness only succeeds in doing so to the exact extent that it defines consciousness as absolute non-being, and correspondingly pushes the contents back into an “hyletic layer” that belongs to opaque being. This new intentionality must now be approached more directly by examining the symmetrical notion of a form of perception and, in particular, the notion of space. Kant tried to draw a strict boundary between space as the form of external experience and the things given in that experience. Of course, it is not a question of a relation between a container and its content, since this relation only exists between objects, nor even of a relation of logical inclusion, such as the one that exists between the individual and the class, since space is anterior to its supposed parts, which are always cut out of it. Space is not the milieu (real or logical) in which things are laid out, but rather the

291 means by which the position of things becomes possible. That is, rather than imagining space as a sort of ether in which all things are immersed, or conceiving it abstractly as a characteristic they would all share, we must think of space as the universal power of their connections. Thus, either I do not reflect, I live among things, and I vaguely consider space sometimes as the milieu of things, sometimes as their common attribute; or I reflect, I catch hold of space at its source, I think at this moment of the relations that are beneath this word, and I notice in this way that they are only sustained through a subject who traces them out and bears them; I pass from spatialized space to spatializing space. In the first case, my body and things, and their concrete relations according to up and down, right and left, and near and far, can appear to me as an irreducible multiplicity; in the second case, I uncover a unique and indivisible capacity for tracing out space. In the first, I am dealing with physical space and its variously qualified regions; in the second, I am dealing with geometrical space within which dimensions are substitutable, or I have a homogeneous and isotropic spatiality, and in this latter I can at least conceive of a pure change of place that would not modify the moving object in any way, and consequently I can conceive of a pure *position* distinct from the *situation* of the object in its concrete context. We know how muddled this distinction becomes, even on the level of scientific knowledge, in modern conceptions of space. We would here like to confront this distinction, not with the technical instruments adopted by modern physics, but rather with our experience of space, the ultimate authority (according to Kant himself) of all knowledge touching upon space. Is it true that we are faced with the alternative either of perceiving things in space, or else (if we reflect and if we wish to know what our own experiences signify) of conceiving of space as the indivisible system of connecting acts accomplished by a constituting mind? Does not the experience of space establish unity through a synthesis of an entirely different type?

[A. Up and Down.]³

[i. Orientation is not given with the "content."]

Let us consider this experience of space prior to any theoretical elaboration. Take, for example, our experience of "up" and "down." We cannot grasp this experience in the everyday course of life, for it is already

concealed beneath its own acquisitions. We must look to some exceptional case in which it breaks down and rebuilds itself before our eyes, such as in the case of vision without retinal inversion. If a subject is made to wear goggles that turn the retinal images upright, then the whole landscape at first appears unreal and inverted. On the second day of the experiment, normal perception begins to be reestablished, except that the subject has the feeling that his own body is inverted.⁴ During a second series of experiments lasting eight days,⁵ objects initially appear inverted, though not as unreal as the first time. On the second day, the landscape is no longer inverted, but the body is sensed in an abnormal position.⁶ From the third day to the seventh day, the body is progressively brought upright and appears to be finally in the normal position, above all when the subject is active. When he is motionless and stretched out on a couch, the body is presented again against the background of its former space, and, for the invisible parts of the body, right and left retain their previous localization throughout the experiment. External objects increasingly have an appearance of "reality." By the fifth day, gestures that were initially thwarted by the new mode of vision, and which needed to be corrected by taking into account the visual disruption, attain their goal without any error. The new visual appearances, which were initially isolated against the background of previously oriented space, soon become surrounded by an horizon that is oriented like them at first (on the third day) through a voluntary effort, and then later (on the seventh day) without any effort at all. On the seventh day, sounds are correctly located if the sonorous object is seen and heard at the same time. If the sonorous object does not appear in the visual field, its location remains uncertain (due to a double representation) or even incorrect. When the goggles are removed at the end of the experiment, objects do not, of course, appear inverted, but they do appear "strange,"⁷ while motor reactions are reversed: the subject extends his right hand, for example, when the left one would be required.⁸ The psychologist is at first tempted to say⁹ that the visual world, after the goggles have been put on, is presented to him precisely as if it had pivoted 180 degrees and is consequently inverted for him. Just as the illustrations of a book appear to us as wrong side up if someone has playfully turned it "upside down" while we were looking away, the mass of sensations that constitute the panorama has been turned around and similarly placed "upside down." That other mass of sensations, namely, the tactile world, remains "upright" during this time; it can no longer coincide with the

293 visual world and, in particular, the subject has two irreconcilable representations of his body: one is given to him through his tactile sensations and through “visual images” that he was able to retain from the time prior to the experiment, the other is that of his present vision, which shows him his body with his “feet in the air.” This conflict of images only comes to an end if one of the antagonists disappears. Knowing how a normal situation is reestablished comes down to knowing, then, how the new image of the world and of one’s own body can “weaken”¹⁰ or “displace” the other.¹¹ It is observed that this displacement is more successful to the extent that the subject is more active, for example, as early as the second day when he washes his hands.¹² The experience of movement governed by vision, then, can teach the subject to harmonize the visual and tactile givens. He notices, for example, that the necessary movement for reaching his legs, and which was until then a “downward” movement, is represented in the new visual spectacle by a movement toward what was previously “upward.” Observations of this type would at first allow the correction of the unsuitable gestures by taking the visual givens as simple signs to decipher and by translating them into the language of the previous space. Once they had become “habitual,”¹³ they would create stable “associations”¹⁴ between the previous directions and the new ones that would, in the end, suppress the former in favor of the latter, which are dominant because they are provided through vision. Once the “upper part” of the visual field, where his legs appear at first, has been frequently identified with what is “down” for touch, the subject soon has no more need of the mediation of a controlled movement in order to pass from one system to the other. His legs come to reside in what he called the “upper part” of his visual field; he does not merely “see” them there, he “senses” them there.¹⁵ And finally: “What had been the old ‘upper’ position in the field was beginning to have much of the feeling formerly connected with the old ‘lower’ position, and *vice versa*.”¹⁶ As soon as the tactile body links up with the visual body, the region of the visual field where the subject’s feet appeared ceases to be defined as “up.” This designation returns to the region where the head appears, and the region containing the feet again becomes “down.”

294 And yet, this interpretation is unintelligible. The inversion of the landscape followed by the return of normal vision is explained by assuming that up and down are confused and vary according to the apparent direction of the head and the feet given in the image, by supposing that they are,

so to speak, indicated in the sensory field by the actual distribution of sensations. But the orientation of the field cannot be given by the contents (head and feet) that appear in it – neither at the outset of the experiment, when the world is “inverted,” nor at the end, when it “straightens itself up.” For to be able to provide the field with an orientation, these contents would have to themselves have a direction. “Inverted” in itself and “upright” in itself clearly signify nothing. The response will be the following: after putting on the goggles, the visual field appears inverted in relation to the tactile and bodily field, or in relation to the ordinary visual field, of which we say, through a nominal definition, that they are “upright.” But the same question arises with regard to these standard fields: their mere presence does not suffice in order to provide any direction whatever. Among things, two points are sufficient for defining a direction. Only we are not among things. We still have nothing but sensory fields, which are not agglomerations of sensations placed in front of us, sometimes “right side up,” sometimes “upside down,” but rather systems of appearances whose orientation varies over the course of experience, even when there is no change in the constellation of stimuli. And the question is precisely what happens when these floating appearances suddenly drop anchor and become situated within the relation between “up” and “down,” either at the outset of the experiment, when the tactile and bodily field appears “upright” and the visual field “inverted,” or in what follows when the former is inverted while the latter straightens up, or finally at the end of the experiment when both are more or less “upright.” The oriented world, or oriented space, cannot be taken as given with the contents of sensory experience or with the body in itself, since experience in fact shows that the same contents can, one by one, be oriented in one sense or another, and that the objective relations, recorded upon the retina by the position of the physical image, do not determine our experience of “up” or “down.” The question is precisely how an object can appear to us as “upright” or “inverted,” and what these words mean.

[ii. But neither is orientation constituted by the activity of the mind.]*

This problem does not only arise for an empiricist psychology that treats the perception of space as our reception of a real space, and the phenomenal orientation of objects as a reflection in us of their orientation

in the world; it also arises for an intellectualist psychology for which the “upright” and the “inverted” are relations and depend on the reference points to which one relates. Just as the chosen axis of coordinates, whatever it might be, is still only situated in space through its relations with another reference point, and so on and so forth, so too is the articulation of the world indefinitely deferred. “Up” and “down” lose all assignable sense, unless, through an impossible contradiction, we grant certain contents the power to set themselves up in space, which brings back empiricism and all of its difficulties. It is easy to show that a direction can only exist for a subject who traces it out, and although a constituting mind eminently has the power to trace out all directions in space, in the present moment this mind has no direction and, consequently, it has no space, for it is lacking an actual starting point or an absolute here that could gradually give a direction [*sens*] to all the determinations of space. Intellectualism, as much as empiricism, fails to reach the problem of oriented space because it cannot even ask the question; along with empiricism, the question was to determine how the image of the world that, in itself, is inverted, could straighten itself up for me. Intellectualism cannot even admit that the image of the world is inverted after the goggles are put on. For a constituting mind, there is nothing that distinguishes the two experiences before and after the goggles are put on; or again, nothing that makes the visual experience of the “inverted” body and the tactile experience of the “upright” body incompatible, since the mind does not consider the spectacle from *anywhere*, and since all of the objective relations of the body and the surroundings are preserved in the new spectacle. Thus, the problem is clear: empiricism would willingly assume, through the actual orientation of my bodily experience, this fixed point we need if we wish to understand that there are directions for us – but experience and reflection at once show that no content is in itself oriented. Intellectualism begins from this relativity between up and down, but cannot emerge from it in order to account for an actual perception of space. We cannot, then, understand the experience of space through the consideration of the contents, nor through that of a pure activity of connecting, and we are confronted by that third spatiality that we foreshadowed above, which is neither the spatiality of things in space, nor that of spatializing space, and which, as such, escapes the Kantian analysis and is presupposed by it. We need an absolute within the relative, a space that does not skate over appearances, that is anchored in them and

depends upon them, but that, nevertheless, is not given with them in the realist manner, and that can, as Stratton's experiment shows, survive their upheaval. We must seek the originary experience of space prior to the distinction between form and content.

[iii. *The spatial level, anchorage points, and existential space.*]

If a situation is constructed in which a subject only sees the room he is in through the intermediary of a mirror reflecting the room at a 45° angle from the vertical, then the subject at first sees the room as "oblique." A man moving through the room seems to lean to the side as he walks. A piece of cardboard falling along the doorframe appears to fall diagonally. The whole thing is "strange." After a few minutes, a sudden change takes place: the walls, the man moving through the room, and the direction of the falling cardboard all become vertical.¹⁷ This experiment – which is analogous to Stratton's – has the advantage of revealing an instantaneous redistribution of up and down without any motor exploration. We already knew that there was no sense in saying that the oblique (or inverted) image brings with it a new localization of up and of down that we could gain knowledge of through a motor exploration of the new spectacle. But we now see that this exploration is not even necessary, and that consequently the orientation is constituted by an overall act of the perceiving subject. Let us say that perception accepts, prior to the experiment, a certain *spatial level*¹⁸ in relation to which the experimental spectacle at first appears oblique, and that, during the experiment, this spectacle induces another level in relation to which the whole of the visual field can, once again, appear upright. Everything happens as if certain objects (the walls, the doors, and the body of the man in the room), determined as oblique in relation to the given level, aspired by themselves to provide the privileged directions, attracted the vertical to themselves, played the role of "anchorage points,"¹⁹ and caused the previously established level to tilt.

We do not here fall into the realist error of assuming directions in space as given with the visual spectacle, since the experimental spectacle is only (obliquely) oriented for us in relation to a certain level, and since it does not itself give us the new directions of up and down. It remains to be shown precisely what this level is that always precedes itself, every constitution of a level presupposing another preestablished level, precisely how the "anchorage points" invite us to constitute another space in

the midst of a certain space to which they owe their stability, and finally, precisely what “up” and “down” are, if not simple names for designating an orientation of sensory content in itself. Rather, our claim is that the “spatial level” does not merge with the orientation of one’s own body. Although the consciousness of one’s own body undoubtedly contributes to the constitution of the level – one subject, whose head is tilted, places a string on an angle that he had been asked to place vertically²⁰ – it is, in this function, in competition with the other sectors of experience, and the vertical only tends to follow the direction of the head if the visual field is empty, and if the “anchorage points” are absent, such as when one moves about in the dark. As a mass of tactile, labyrinthine, and kinesthetic givens, the body has no more precise an orientation than other contents, and it itself receives this orientation from the general level of experience. Wertheimer’s observation shows precisely how the visual field can impose an orientation that is not the orientation of the body.

But even if the body, considered as a mosaic of given sensations, does not trace out any direction, the body as an agent, on the contrary, plays an essential role in establishing a level. Variations in muscular tonus, even with a full visual field, modify the apparent vertical to the extent that the subject leans his head in order to place it parallel to this altered vertical.²¹ We might be tempted to say that the vertical is the direction defined by the axis of symmetry of our body, considered as a synergetic system. But my body can nevertheless move without dragging along with it the orientations of up and down, such as when I lie on the ground, and Wertheimer’s experiment shows that the objective direction of my body can form an appreciable angle with the apparent vertical of the spectacle. What counts for the orientation of the spectacle is not my body, such as it in fact exists, as a thing in objective space, but rather my body as a system of possible actions, a virtual body whose phenomenal “place” is defined by its task and by its situation. My body is wherever it has something to do. The moment that Wertheimer’s subject takes up a place within the apparatus prepared for him, the area of his possible actions – such as walking, opening an armoire, using the table, or sitting – sketches out in front of him a possible habitat, even if his eyes are closed. At first, the mirror image presents a differently oriented room, that is, the subject is not geared to the utensils it contains, he does not inhabit the room, he does not live with the man he sees moving about. After several minutes, and provided that he does not reinforce the initial anchorage by glancing

away from the mirror, that miracle takes place: the reflected room conjures up a subject capable of living in it. This virtual body displaces the real body, so much so that the subject no longer feels himself to be in the world he is actually in, and that, rather than his genuine legs and arms, he feels the legs and arms required for walking and acting in the reflected room – he inhabits the spectacle. And this is when the spatial level shifts and is established in its new position. The spatial level is, then, a certain possession of the world by my body, a certain *hold* my body has on the world. In the absence of anchorage points, and so projected solely by my body's attitude (as in Nagel's experiments), and determined solely by the demands of the spectacle when the body is inattentive (as in Wertheimer's experiment), the spatial level normally appears at the intersection of my motor intentions and my perceptual field, that is, when my actual body comes to coincide with the virtual body that is demanded by the spectacle, and when the actual spectacle comes to coincide with the milieu that my body projects around itself. It sets itself up when, between my body as the power of certain gestures and as the demand for certain privileged planes, and the perceived spectacle as the invitation to these very gestures and as the theater of these very actions, a pact is established that gives me possession²² of space and gives to the things a direct power upon my body. The constitution of a spatial level is only one of the means of the constitution of an integrated world. My body is geared into the world when my perception provides me with the most varied and the most clearly articulated spectacle possible, and when my motor intentions, as they unfold, receive the responses they anticipate from the world. This maximum of clarity in perception and action specifies a perceptual *ground*, a background for my life, a general milieu for the coexistence of my body and the world.

With the concept of the spatial level, and that of the body as the subject of space, phenomena that Stratton described but did not explain can now be understood. If the "straightening up" of the field resulted from a series of associations between the new and the former positions, how could the operation appear to be systematic, and how could entire sections of the perceptual horizon come to be connected, all at once, to the objects already "straightened up"? If, however, the new orientation resulted from an operation of thought and consisted in a change of coordinates, how could the auditory or tactile fields resist this transposition? The subject would have to be, by some miracle, divided with himself and capable of ignoring here what he is doing elsewhere.²³ If the

transposition is systematic, and yet partial and progressive, this is because I go from one system of positions to the other without having the key of either and in the manner that a man without any musical knowledge sings a tune he has heard at a different pitch. The possession of a body brings with it the power of changing levels and of “understanding” space, just as the possession of a voice brings with it the power of changing pitches. The perceptual field rights itself and at the end of the experiment I identify it without any reflection because I live within it, because I carry myself into the new spectacle entirely, and because I locate my center of gravity, so to speak, within it.²⁴ At the beginning of the experiment, the visual field appears simultaneously inverted and *unreal* because the subject does not live in this field and is not geared into it. An intermediary phase is observed during the experiment in which the tactile body appears inverted and the landscape upright because, since I am already living within the landscape, I thereby perceive it as upright, and because the experimental perturbation is shifted onto one’s own body which is thereby not a mass of actual sensations, but rather the body that is required for perceiving a given spectacle. Everything points to the organic relations between the subject and space, to this gearing of the subject into his world that is the origin of space.

[iv. *Being has sense only through its orientation.*]

300 But one will want to push this analysis further. Why, it will be asked, are clear perception and confident action only possible in an oriented phenomenal space? This is only evident if one imagines the subject of perception and of action faced with a world in which there are already absolute directions, such that he has to adjust the dimensions of his behavior to the dimensions of the world. But we are placing ourselves within perception, and we are wondering just how it could gain access to absolute directions; and so we cannot assume that they are given in the genesis of our spatial experience.

—This objection amounts to saying what we have been saying since the beginning: that the constitution of a level always presupposes another given level, that space always precedes itself. But this comment is not the mere observation of a failure. It teaches us the essence of space and the only method that allows us to understand it. Space is essentially always “already constituted,” and we will never understand space by withdraw-

ing into a worldless perception. We must not ask why being is oriented, why existence is spatial, why (in the language used above) our body is not geared into the world in all of its positions, and why its coexistence with the world polarizes experience and makes a direction appear suddenly. The question could only be asked if these facts were accidents that befall a subject and an object that were themselves indifferent to space. Perceptual experience shows us, however, that these facts are presupposed in our primordial encounter with being, and that being is synonymous with being situated. For the thinking subject, a face seen “right side up” and the same face seen “upside down” are identical. For the subject of perception, the face seen “upside down” is unrecognizable. If someone is stretched out on a bed and if I look at him while standing at the head of the bed, for a moment the face is normal. There is, of course, a certain disorder in its features, and I have difficulty understanding the smile as a smile, but I sense that I could walk around the bed and I see through the eyes of a spectator placed at the foot of the bed. If the spectacle continues, it suddenly changes in appearance: the face becomes monstrous, its expressions become frightening, the eyelids and eyebrows take on an air of materiality that I had never before found them to have. For the first time I genuinely see this inverted face as if this were its “natural” position. I have before me a pointed and hairless head, bearing on its forehead a blood-red orifice, full of teeth, and where the mouth should be, two moving eyeballs surrounded by glossy hairs and underlined by heavy brushes. It will probably be objected that the “upright” face, among all the possible aspects of a face, is the one that is given most frequently and that the inverted face surprises me because I only see it rarely. But faces are rarely presented in a rigorously vertical position, the “upright” face enjoys no statistical advantage, and the question is precisely why, under these conditions, it is presented to me more often than another. If it is granted that my perception privileges it and refers to it as if to a norm for reasons of symmetry, then the question arises as to why, beyond a certain angle, the “straightening up” does not work. My gaze, which scans the face and which has its preferred directions of moving, must only recognize the face if it encounters the details in a certain irreversible order; the very sense of the object – in this case, the face and its expressions – must be connected to its orientation, as is shown clearly enough through the double meaning of the word *sense* [*sens*].²⁵ Turning an object upside down strips it of its signification. Its being as an object is thus not a

being-for-the-thinking-subject, but rather a being-for-the-gaze that encounters it from a certain angle or otherwise fails to recognize it. This is why each object has “its” top and “its” bottom, which for a given level indicate its “natural” place, the place that it “should” occupy. To see a face is not to form the idea of a certain law of constitution that the object would invariably observe in all possible orientations. Rather, it is to have a certain hold on it, to be able to follow a certain perceptual itinerary along its surface, with its ups and its downs. And if I take this route in the reverse direction [*sens*], it is just as unrecognizable as is the mountain up which I just struggled when I turn to descend with long strides.

In general, if the subject of perception were not this gaze that only has a hold on things for a particular orientation of things, then our perception would not be composed of contours, shapes, backgrounds, and objects, consequently it would not be perception of anything and, in short, it would not exist at all. An orientation in space is not a contingent property of the object, it is the means by which I recognize the object and by which I am conscious of it as an object. Of course, I can be conscious of the same object in different orientations, and, as we said above, I can even recognize an inverted face. But this is always on condition of adopting a definite attitude in thought when confronted with the face, and sometimes we even adopt this attitude in reality, as when we tilt our head in order to see a photograph held up by someone sitting next to us. Thus, since every conceivable being relates directly or indirectly to the perceived world, and since the perceived world is only grasped through orientation, we cannot dissociate being from oriented being; there is
 302 no reason to “ground” space or to ask what is the level of all levels. The primordial level is on the horizon of all of our perceptions, but this is an horizon that, in principle, can never be reached and thematized in an explicit perception. Each level in which we live in turn appears when we drop anchor in some “milieu” that is offered to us. This milieu is itself only defined spatially for a previously given level. Thus, each of our experiences in sequence, back to and including the first, passes forward an already acquired spatiality. Our first perception in turn could only have been spatial by referring itself to an orientation that preceded it.

Thus, our perception must already find us at work in a world. Nevertheless, this could not be a particular world, a particular spectacle, since we have placed ourselves at the origin of everything. The first spatial level could not find its anchorage points *anywhere*, since these would have

needed a level before the first level in order to be determinate in space. And since, nevertheless, it cannot be oriented “in itself,” my first perception and my first hold on the world must appear to me as the execution of a more ancient pact established between X and the world in general; my history must be the sequel to a pre-history whose acquired results it uses; my personal existence must be the taking up of a pre-personal tradition. There is, then, another subject beneath me, for whom a world exists before I am there, and who marks out my place in that world. This captive or natural mind is my body, not the momentary body that is the instrument of my personal choices and that focuses upon some world, but rather the system of anonymous “functions” that wraps each particular focusing into a general project. And this blind adhesion to the world, this prejudice in favor of being does not merely occur at the beginning of my life. It gives every subsequent perception its sense, and it is started over at each moment. At the core of the subject, space and perception in general mark the fact of his birth, the perpetual contribution of his corporeality, and a communication with the world more ancient than thought. And this is why they saturate consciousness and are opaque to reflection. The lability of levels gives not merely the intellectual experience of disorder, but also the living experience of vertigo and nausea,²⁶ which is the consciousness of, and the horror caused by, our contingency. The positing of a level is the forgetting of this contingency, and space is established upon our facticity. Space is neither an object, nor an act of connecting by the subject: one can neither observe it (given that it is presupposed in every observation), nor see it emerging from a constitutive operation (given that it is of its essence to be already constituted); and this is how space can magically bestow upon the landscape its spatial determinations without itself ever appearing.

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[B. Depth.]

[i. Depth and breadth.]

Classical conceptions of perception agree in denying that depth is visible. Berkeley shows that depth could not be presented to vision for lack

of being able to be recorded, since our retinas only receive a markedly flat projection from the spectacle. If one objected to Berkeley that after the critique of the “constancy hypothesis” we can no longer judge what we see by what is portrayed on our retinas, he would surely respond that, whatever the case may be with the retinal image, depth cannot be seen because it is not spread out before our eyes and it only appears to us through foreshortening. For reflective analysis, depth is in fact invisible for an *in principle* reason: even if it could be inscribed upon our eyes, the sensory impression could merely offer a multiplicity to be surveyed and in this way distance, like all other spatial relations, only exists for a subject who synthesizes it and who conceives it. As opposed as these two doctrines are, they imply the same repression of our actual experience. In both cases, depth is tacitly assimilated to *breadth considered in profile*, and this is what makes it invisible. If made fully explicit, Berkeley’s argument is more or less this very argument. What I call depth is, in fact, a juxtaposition of points comparable according to breadth. Only I am poorly situated to see it. I would see the depth if I were in the place of a lateral spectator, who can see at once the series of objects arrayed before me, whereas for me they conceal each other – or who is in a position to see the distance between my body and the first object, whereas for me this distance is condensed into a point. What makes depth invisible for me is precisely what makes it visible for the spectator under the aspect of breadth: the juxtaposition of simultaneous points along a single direction, namely, the direction of my gaze. The depth that is declared invisible is thus a depth already identified with breadth, and without this condition, the argument would not have even a semblance of consistency. Similarly, intellectualism can only make a thinking subject who accomplishes the synthesis of depth appear in the experience of depth because it reflects upon an actualized depth, upon a juxtaposition of simultaneous points, which is not depth as it presents itself to me, but rather depth for a spectator placed laterally, or, in other words, breadth.²⁷ By immediately assimilating depth and breadth, both philosophies assume as self-evident the result of a constitutive labor whose phases we must, on the contrary, retrace. In order to treat depth as a breadth considered in profile and to arrive at an isotropic space, the subject must leave his place, his point of view upon the world, and conceive of himself in a sort of ubiquity. For God, who is everywhere, breadth is immediately equivalent to depth. Intellectualism and empiricism do not give us an account of a

human experience of the world; they say of human experience what God might think of the world. And surely it is the world itself that invites us to substitute dimensions and to think of it from nowhere.

Indeed, everyone concedes the equivalence of depth and breadth without the least hesitation; it belongs to the intersubjective evidentness of the world, and it is what allows philosophers, just like other men, to forget the originality of depth. But we do not yet know of anything about the world or about objective space; we are attempting to describe the phenomenon of the world, that is, its birth for us in this field into which each perception puts us, where we are still alone, where others will only appear later, where knowledge and particularly science have not yet reduced and leveled out the individual perspective. We must gain access to a world through this individual perspective, and by way of it. Thus, this must first be described. Depth, more directly than the other dimensions of space, obliges us to reject the unquestioned belief in the world and to uncover the primordial experience from where this prejudice springs forth. Of all the dimensions, depth is, so to speak, the most “existential,” because – and this is what holds true in Berkeley’s argument – it is not indicated upon the object itself, it clearly belongs to perspective and not to things. It can, then, neither be extracted from the perspective, nor even placed there by consciousness. It announces a certain indissoluble link between the things and me by which I am situated in front of them, whereas breadth can, at first glance, pass for a relation between things themselves in which the perceiving subject is not implicated. By uncovering the vision of depth, that is, a depth that is not yet objectified and constituted of mutually external points, we will again overcome the classical alternatives and clarify the relation between the subject and the object.

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[ii. *The alleged signs of depth are in fact motives.*]

Here is my table, and further away is the piano, or the wall; or again, a car parked in front of me is started up and moves away. What do these words mean? In order to reawaken perceptual experience, let us begin from the superficial account of this experience given to us by the thinking that remains obsessed with the world and with the object. These words, it says, signify that between the table and myself there is an interval, and between the car and myself an increasing interval that I cannot see from

where I am, but that is indicated to me through the apparent size of the object. It is the apparent size of the table, the piano, and the wall that, compared to their real size, organizes them in space. When the automobile slowly rises toward the horizon while simultaneously diminishing in size, in order to account for this appearance I construct a change of place according to breadth such as I would perceive it were I to observe it from above in an airplane, and this is what the full sense of depth ultimately consists in. But I have additional signs of distance. As an object approaches, my eyes, which focus upon it, converge more and more. The distance is the height of a triangle whose base and the angles formed at the base are given to me and, when I say that I see at a distance, I mean that the height of the triangle is determined by its relations with these given sizes.²⁸

306 According to classical theories, the experience of depth consists in decoding certain given facts – the convergence of the eyes, the apparent size of the image – by putting them back into the context of objective relations that explain them. But if I can work back from the apparent size to its signification, this is only on condition of knowing that there is a world of unchanging objects, that my body is before this world as if before a mirror, and that, like the mirror image, the image that is formed upon the body-screen is exactly proportional to the interval that separates it from the object. If I can understand convergence as a sign of distance, this is on condition of imagining my gaze being like the blind man's two canes, as more inclined toward each other insofar as the object is closer;²⁹ in other words, on condition of inserting my eyes, my body, and the external world into a single objective space. The "signs" that, by hypothesis, should have introduced us to the experience of space can thus only signify space if they are already caught up in space and if space is already known. Since perception is the initiation to the world and since, as has been insightfully put, "there is nothing prior to perception that could be called mind,"³⁰ we cannot import objective relations into perception that are not yet constituted at its level. This is why the Cartesians spoke of a "natural geometry." The signification of apparent size and of convergence, that is, distance, cannot yet be spread out and thematized. Apparent size and convergence themselves cannot be given in a system of objective relations. "Natural geometry" or "natural judgment" are myths in the Platonic sense, destined to represent the envelopment or the "implication" of a signification in signs (of which neither is yet

posited or conceived), and this is what we must come to understand by returning to perceptual experience. Apparent size and convergence must be described, not as they are known by scientific knowledge, but as we grasp them from within. Gestalt psychology observed that they are not explicitly known in perception itself – I have no explicit awareness of the convergence of my eyes or of apparent size while I perceive at a distance, they are not in front of me in the manner of perceived facts – and that nevertheless they intervene in the perception of distance, as the stereoscope and perspectival illusions show quite clearly.³¹ From this, psychologists conclude that they are not signs, but rather conditions or causes of depth. We observe that organization in depth appears when a certain size of the retinal image or a certain degree of convergence is objectively produced in the body; this is a law comparable to physical laws; it merely needs to be recorded, nothing more. But here the psychologist shirks his task: when he recognizes that apparent size and convergence are not present as objective facts in perception itself, he brings us back to the pure description of phenomena prior to the objective world, and he lets us catch a glimpse of a lived depth that is independent of all geometry. And this is when he interrupts the description in order to put himself back into the world and to derive organization in depth from a chain of objective facts. Can the description be restricted in this way? And, once the phenomenal order has been recognized as an original order, can the production of phenomenal depth be reassigned to a cerebral alchemy of which experience would be simply the registering of its results? There are two possibilities: either, following behaviorism, one refuses all sense to the word “experience,” and one attempts to construct perception as a product of the scientific world, or one concedes that experience itself also gives us access to being, but then one cannot treat it as a by-product of being. Experience is either nothing, or it must be total.

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Let us try to imagine what an organization in depth, produced by the physiology of the brain, might be. For an apparent size and a given convergence, a functional structure would appear somewhere in the brain homologous with the organization in depth. But in any case this would merely be a given depth, a factual depth, and would still need to be brought to consciousness. To have the experience of a structure is not to receive it passively in itself: it is to live it, to take it up, to assume it, and to uncover its immanent sense. An experience, then, cannot be tied to certain factual conditions as if to its cause,³² and, if a consciousness of

distance is produced for a certain value of convergence and for a certain size of the retinal image, it can only depend upon these factors insofar as they figure within it. Since we do not have any explicit experience of them, we must conclude that we have a non-thetic experience of them. Convergence and apparent size are neither signs nor causes of depth: they
 308 are present in the experience of depth, just as the motive – even when it is not articulated and separately thematized – is present in the decision. What is meant by a motive, and what does one mean when it is said, for example, that a journey is motivated? This means that the journey has its origin in certain given facts, not that these facts by themselves have the physical power to produce the journey, but insofar as they offer reasons for undertaking it. The motive is an antecedent that only acts through its sense, and it must even be added that it is the decision that confirms this sense as valid and that gives it its force and its efficacy. Motive and decision are two elements of a situation: the first is the situation as a fact; the second is the situation taken up. Thus a death motivates my journey because it is a situation in which my presence is required, whether to comfort a grieving family or to pay my “final respects” to the departed; and by deciding to undertake this journey, I validate this motive that is proposed and I take up this situation. The relation between motivating and motivated is thus reciprocal. Now, the relation that exists between the experience of convergence or of apparent size and the experience of depth is surely of this sort. They do not miraculously reveal, as “causes,” the organization in depth; rather, they tacitly motivate this organization insofar as they already contain it within their sense and insofar as each of them is already a certain way of seeing at a distance. We have already seen that the convergence of the eyes is not the cause of depth, and that it itself presupposes an orientation toward the object at a distance. Let us now emphasize the notion of apparent size.

[iii. *Analysis of apparent size.*]*

If we gaze for a long time at an illuminated object that will leave an enduring image behind it, and if we then focus on screens placed at different distances, the after-image is projected upon them according to an apparent diameter that is proportionally larger as the screen is farther away.³³ The enormous moon at the horizon has long been explained by the large number of interposed objects that could render the distance

more perceptible and could *thereby* increase the apparent diameter. This is to say that the phenomenon “apparent size” and the phenomenon of distance are two moments of the overall organization of the field, that the former is to the latter neither in the relation of sign to signification, nor in the relation of cause to effect, and that, like the motivating and the motivated, they communicate through their sense. Apparent size as lived, rather than being the sign or indication of a depth that is itself invisible, is nothing other than a way of expressing our vision of depth. Gestalt theory has, in fact, contributed to showing that the apparent size of an object that is moving away does not vary like the retinal image, and that the apparent form of a disc that is turning around one of its diameters does not vary as anticipated according to the geometrical perspective. The object moving into the distance diminishes less quickly, and the approaching object increases less quickly for my perception than does the physical image on my retina. This is why the train that approaches us in a film gets larger much more than it would in reality. This is why a hill that seemed quite elevated becomes insignificant in a photograph. Finally, this is why a disc placed diagonally in relation to our face resists the geometrical perspective, as Cézanne and other painters have shown in representing a soup plate in profile with the inside remaining visible. They were right to say that, if these perspectival deformations were given to us explicitly, we would not have to learn perspective. 309

But Gestalt theory talks as if the distortion of the diagonally placed plate were a compromise between the form of the plate seen straight on and the geometrical perspective, as if the apparent size of the object moving away were a compromise between its apparent size when within reach and its much smaller apparent size assigned to it by the geometrical perspective. They talk as if the constancy of form or size were a real constancy; as if there were, beyond the physical image of the object on the retina, a “psychical image” of the same object that could remain relatively constant when the physical image varies. In fact, the “psychical image” of the ashtray is neither larger nor smaller than the physical image of the same object on my retina, for there is no psychical image that can be, like a thing, compared to the physical image that has a determinate size in relation to it, and that acts as a screen between me and the thing. My perception does not turn toward a content of consciousness: rather, it turns toward the ashtray itself. The apparent size of the perceived ashtray is not a measurable size. When I am asked to specify the diameter

I see it as having, I cannot respond to the question so long as I keep both of my eyes open. I spontaneously close one eye, grab a measuring instrument, such as a pencil held at arm's length, and I mark on the pencil the size [of the visual field] cut off by the ashtray. By doing this, I must not simply say that I reduce the perceived perspective to the geometrical one, that I change the proportions of the spectacle, that I make the object seem smaller if it is far off, or that I enlarge it if it is nearby. Rather, it must be said that by breaking apart the perceptual field, by isolating the ashtray, and by positing it in itself, I have revealed the size within something that, until then, had no size. The constancy of apparent size in an object that is moving away is not the actual permanence of a particular psychical image of the object that would resist perspectival deformations, like a rigid object that resists pressure. The constancy of a plate's circular form is not the circle's resistance to a flattening perspective, and this is why the painter, who can only represent it by a real trace upon a real canvas, amazes the public, even though he seeks to present the lived perspective. When I see a road in front of me that recedes toward the horizon, I must not say that the edges of the road are presented to me as convergent, nor that they are presented to me as parallel: they are *parallel in depth*. The perspectival appearance is not posited, but no more so is the parallelism. I *am directed toward the road itself*, through its virtual deformation, and depth is this very intention that thematizes neither the perspectival projection of the road, nor the "real" road.

– Nevertheless, is not a man two hundred paces away smaller than a man five paces away? – He becomes smaller if I isolate him from the perceived context and if I measure the apparent size. Otherwise he is neither smaller, nor for that matter equal in size: he is prior to the equal and unequal, he is *the same man seen from farther away*. All that can be said is that the man at two hundred paces is a less articulated figure, that he offers my gaze fewer and less precise "holds," that he is less strictly geared into my exploratory power. It can also be said that he occupies my visual field less completely, so long as we recall that the visual field is not itself a measurable area. To say that an object occupies a small part of my visual field is to say in the final analysis that it does not offer a rich enough configuration to exhaust my power of clear vision. My visual field has no definite capacity, and it can certainly contain more or fewer things to the extent that I see them "from far away" or "from up close." Apparent size, then, cannot be defined independently of distance: apparent size is implied

by distance just as much as it implies distance. Convergence, apparent size, and distance are read in each other, symbolize or signify each other naturally, are the abstract elements of a situation within which they are synonymous with each other, not because the subject of perception thematizes objective relations between them, but rather because he does not thematize them separately and thus has no need of explicitly reconnecting them. Consider the different “apparent sizes” of the object that is moving away: it is not necessary to reconnect them through a synthesis if none of them has been made the object of a thesis. We “have” the object that is moving away, we do not cease “to hold” it and to keep a hold on it, and the increasing distance is not, as breadth appeared to be, an exteriority that increases. Rather, the increasing distance merely expresses that the thing begins to slip away from the hold of our gaze, and that it joins with it less strictly. Distance is what distinguishes this sketched-out hold from the complete hold we call proximity. Thus, we define distance as we have above defined the “straight” and the “oblique,” namely, through the situation of the object with regard to the power of our hold on it.

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[iv. Illusions are not constructions, the sense of the perceived is motivated.]

Above all, the illusions touching upon depth have accustomed us to considering depth as a construction of the understanding. They can be induced by forcing the eyes into a certain degree of convergence, such as with the stereoscope, or by presenting a perspectival drawing to the subject. Since here I believe I see depth where there is none, is it not because false signs have brought about an hypothesis, and because in general the alleged vision of distance is always in fact an interpretation of signs? But the presupposition is clear: it being assumed that it is impossible to see what does not exist, and that vision is thus defined by the sensory impression, the original relation of motivating is missed and is replaced by a relation of signification. We have seen that the disparity between retinal images that brings about the convergence movement does not exist in itself; disparity only exists for a subject who seeks to fuse the monocular phenomena of the same structure, and who tends toward synergy. The unity of binocular vision, and along with it the depth without which this unity could not be realized, is thus there from the moment the monocular images are presented as “disparate.” When I place myself in front of the stereoscope, a totality is presented in which

the possible order already takes shape and is already sketched out. My motor response takes up this situation. Cézanne said that the painter in front of his “motive” is about to “join together nature’s straying hands.”³⁴ The focusing movement when looking through the stereoscope is also a response to the question posed by the givens, and this response is enveloped within the question. It is the field itself that is oriented toward the most perfect symmetry possible, and depth is nothing but a moment of the perceptual faith in a unique thing. The perspectival drawing is not at first seen as a sketch on a plane, and subsequently arranged in depth. The lines that recede toward the horizon are not at first given as diagonal, and subsequently conceived as horizontal lines. The whole drawing seeks its equilibrium by hollowing out into depth. The poplar along the road that is drawn smaller than a man only succeeds in genuinely becoming a tree by receding toward the horizon. It is the drawing itself that tends toward depth, like a falling stone that falls downward. If symmetry, plenitude, and determination can be obtained in several ways, then the organization will not be stable, as is seen in ambiguous drawings.

Such is the case in Figure 5, which one can perceive as a cube seen from below (with the face ABCD in front), as a cube seen from above (with the face EFGH in front), or finally as a mosaic of tiles consisting of ten triangles and one square. Figure 6, however, will almost inevitably be seen as a cube because that is the only organization that will put it into perfect symmetry.³⁵ Depth is born before my gaze because my gaze attempts to see something. But what is this perceptual genius at work in our visual field that always tends toward the more determinate? Are we not returning to realism? Let us consider an example. The organization according to depth is destroyed if I add to an ambiguous drawing not just any lines whatsoever (Figure 7 certainly remains a cube), but rather lines which break apart the elements of one plane and connect them to the elements of other planes (Figure 5).³⁶ What do we mean by saying that these lines themselves carry out the destruction of the depth? Are we not echoing associationism? We do not mean that the line EH (Figure 5), acting as a cause, breaks up the cube into which it is introduced, but rather that it induces a grasp of the whole that is no longer a grasp according to depth. It is clear that the line EH itself only possesses an individuality if I grasp it as such, if I myself look it over and trace it out. But this grasp and this glancing over of the line are not arbitrary. They are indicated or recommended by the phenomena. The demand here is not a royal decree,

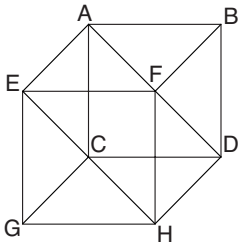


Figure 5

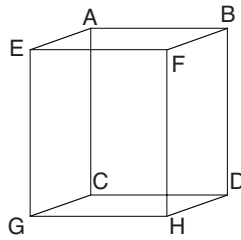


Figure 6

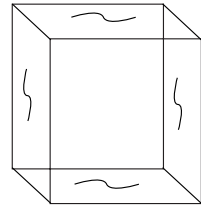


Figure 7

since it is indeed a question of an ambiguous figure, but in a normal visual field the segregation of planes and contours is irresistible, and, for example, when I walk along the boulevard, I am unable to see the intervals between the trees as things and trees themselves as the background. It is certainly I who have the experience of the landscape, but I am aware in this experience of taking up a factual situation, of gathering together a sense that is scattered throughout the phenomena, and of saying what they themselves want to say.³⁷ Even in cases where the organization is ambiguous and where I can make it shift, I do not achieve this directly: for the cube, one of its faces only shifts to the foreground if first I look at it and if my gaze leaves it in order to follow the edges to find the second face as an indeterminate background. If I see Figure 5 as a mosaic of tiles, this is only on condition of first bringing my gaze to the center, and subsequently distributing it equally across the whole figure at once. Just as Bergson waits for the morsel of sugar to dissolve, I am sometimes obliged to wait for the organization to produce itself.³⁸ This is even more the case in normal perception, where the sense of the perceived appears to me as instituted within it and not constituted by me, and the gaze appears as a sort of knowledge machine, which takes the things to where they need to be taken in order for them to become a spectacle, or that divides them up according to their natural articulations. Of course, the straight line EH can only count as straight if I glance over it, but this is not a question of an inspection of the mind, but rather an inspection by the gaze, that is, my act is neither originary nor constituting, it is solicited or motivated. Every focusing is always a focusing on something that presents itself as something to be focused upon. When I focus upon the face ABCD of the cube, this does not mean simply that I make it enter into a state of being clearly seen, but also that I make it count as a figure, and as closer to me than the other face; in short, I organize the cube, and

the gaze is this perceptual genius underneath the thinking subject who knows how to give to things the correct response that they are waiting for in order to exist in front of us.

– Finally, then, what is it to see a cube? Empiricism answers: it is to associate a series of other appearances to the actual appearance of the drawing, namely, those it presented when seen up close, seen in profile, or seen from different angles. But when I am seeing a cube, I do not find any of these images in myself, they are the leftovers of a perception of
 314 depth that makes them possible, but that does not result from them. What then is this unique act by which I grasp the possibility of all appearances? Intellectualism answers: it is the thought of the cube as a solid constructed from six equal sides and twelve equal edges that are cut to right angles – and depth is nothing other than the coexistence of equal faces and equal edges. But here again we are offered a definition of depth that is merely a consequence of it. The six equal faces and twelve equal edges do not make up the whole sense of depth and, on the contrary, this definition is meaningless without depth. The six faces and twelve edges can only simultaneously coexist and remain equal for me if they are arranged in depth. The act that corrects appearances, giving acute or obtuse angles the value of right angles, or to deformed sides the value of a square, is not the thought of geometrical relations of equality and of the geometrical being to which they belong – it is the investment of the object by my gaze that penetrates it, animates it, and immediately makes the lateral faces count as “squares seen from an angle,” to the extent that we do not even see them according to their diamond-shaped perspectival appearance. This simultaneous presence to experiences that are nevertheless mutually exclusive, this implication of the one in the other, and this contraction into a single perceptual act of an entire possible process are what make up the originality of depth; depth is the dimension according to which things or the elements of things envelop each other, while breadth and height are the dimensions according to which they are juxtaposed.

[v. Depth and the “transition synthesis.”]

We cannot, then, speak of a synthesis of depth, since a synthesis presupposes or (like a Kantian synthesis) at least posits discrete terms, since depth does not posit the multiplicity of perspectival appearances that the analysis will make explicit, and finally, since depth only anticipates this

multiplicity against the background of the stable thing. This quasi-synthesis becomes clear if it is understood as temporal. When I say that I see an object at a distance, I mean that I already hold it or that I still hold it, the object is in the future or the past at the same time as in space.³⁹ It will perhaps be said that this is only the case for me: in itself, the lamp that I see exists at the same time as I do, distance is between simultaneous objects, and this simultaneity is included in the very sense of perception. Certainly. But coexistence, which in fact defines space, is not alien to time; rather, it is the adherence of two phenomena to the same temporal wave. With regard to the relation between the perceived object and my perception, it does not connect them in space but outside of time: they are *contemporaries*. The “order of coexistents” cannot be separated from the “order of successives,” or rather time is not merely the consciousness of a succession. Perception gives me a “field of presence”⁴⁰ in the broad sense that it spreads out according to two dimensions: the dimension of here–there and the dimension of past–present–future. The second dimension clarifies the first. I “hold” or I “have” the distant object without explicitly positing the spatial perspective (apparent size and form), just as I “still hold in hand”⁴¹ the near past without any distortion and without any interposed “memory.” If one still wishes to speak of synthesis, this will be, as Husserl says, a “transition synthesis,”⁴² which does not link discrete perspectives, but which accomplishes the “passage” from one to the other.

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Psychology became engaged in endless difficulties when it attempted to establish memory upon the possession of certain contents or memories, present traces (in the body or in the unconsciousness) of the abolished past, because beginning from these traces one can never understand the recognition of the past as past. Similarly, we will never understand the perception of distance if we begin from contents given in a sort of equidistance or a flat projection of the world, like memories considered as a projection of the past into the present. And just as we can only understand memory as a direct possession of the past without any interposed contents, here too we can only understand the perception of distance as a *being in the distance* that connects with it there, where it appears. Memory is established, step by step, upon the continuous passage from one instant into another, and upon the interlocking of each one, along with its entire horizon, within the thickness of the one that follows. The same continuous transition implies the object such as it is over there, with its “real” size – in short, such as I would see it if I were next to it – within the

perception that I have of it from here. Just as there is no discussion to be had over the “conservation of memories,” but merely a certain manner of looking at time that renders the past manifest as an inalienable dimension of consciousness, neither is there a problem of distance, but rather distance is immediately visible, provided we know how to find the living present where it is constituted.

[vi. *Depth is a relation from me to things.*]

316 As we indicated at the beginning, we must rediscover beneath depth as a relation between things or even between planes (which is an objectified depth, detached from experience, and transformed into breadth) a primordial depth that gives the former one its sense and that is the thickness of a medium devoid of things. When we let ourselves be in the world without actively taking it up, or in an illness that encourages this attitude, planes are no longer distinguished from each other, colors no longer condense into surface colors, but rather diffuse around objects and become atmospheric colors (for example, one patient who writes on a sheet of paper must pierce with his pen a certain thickness of white prior to reaching the paper). This voluminosity varies with the color in question, and it is somehow the expression of its qualitative essence.⁴³ There is, then, a depth that does not yet occur between objects, that, *a fortiori*, does not evaluate the distance from one to another, and that is the simple opening of perception to a phantom of a thing that has hardly any qualities. Even in normal perception, depth does not apply initially to things. Just as up and down, or right and left are not given to the subject with the perceived contents, and are rather constituted at each moment along with a spatial level in relation to which the things arrange themselves, so too depth and size come to things from their being situated in relation to a level of distances and sizes that defines far and near, or large and small, prior to any object being taken as a standard of reference.⁴⁴ When we say that an object is enormous or tiny, or that it is far or near, this is often without any comparison, not even an implicit one, with any other object or even with the objective size and position of one’s own body, but rather through a certain “scope” of our gestures, a certain “hold” of the phenomenal body upon its surroundings. If we attempted to deny this rootedness of sizes and distance, we would be sent from one reference object to another without understanding how there could ever

be sizes and distances for us. The pathological experience of micropsia or macropsia,⁴⁵ since it changes the apparent size of all the objects of the field, leaves no reference point in relation to which the objects could appear larger or smaller than normal, and can thus only be understood in relation to a pre-objective standard of distances and sizes. Thus, depth cannot be understood as the thought of an acosmic subject, but rather as the possibility of an engaged subject.

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[vii. *The same goes for height and breadth.*]

This analysis of depth connects with the one we attempted to establish for height and breadth. If we began this section by opposing depth to the other dimensions, this was merely because at first glance they seem to concern the relations of things among themselves, whereas depth immediately reveals the link from the subject to space. But in fact, we have seen above that the vertical and the horizontal are themselves defined ultimately by our body's best hold on the world. As relations between objects, breadth and height are derived, whereas in their originary sense they are also "existential" dimensions. We must not merely say, following Lagneau and Alain, that height and breadth presuppose depth because a spectacle on a single plane presupposes the equal distance from all of its parts to the plane of my face: this analysis only concerns breadth, height, and depth as already objectified and not in terms of the experience that opens these dimensions. The vertical and the horizontal, and the near and the far, are abstract designations for a single situated being and presuppose the same "relation" [vis-à-vis] between the subject and the world.

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[C. *Movement.*]

[i. *Thinking about movement destroys movement.*]

Even if it cannot be defined in this way, movement is a displacement or a change of position. Just as we initially encountered a conception of position that defined it through relations in objective space, so too is there an objective conception of movement that defines it through

intra-worldly relations by taking the experience of the world as acquired. And just as we had to uncover the origin of spatial position in the pre-objective situation or locality of the subject who focuses upon his milieu, so too will we have to rediscover beneath the objective thought of movement a pre-objective experience from which it borrows its sense and where movement, still tied to the person who perceives, is a variation of the subject's hold upon his world. When we attempt to think movement or to undertake the philosophy of movement, we immediately place ourselves in the critical attitude or the attitude of verification: we ask ourselves what is actually given to us in movement, we prepare ourselves for
 318 rejecting appearances in order to attain the truth of movement, and we fail to notice that it is precisely this attitude that reduces the phenomenon and that will block us from attaining it itself, because this attitude introduces – along with the notion of truth in itself – presuppositions capable of concealing from me the birth of movement.

I throw a stone. It crosses my garden. For a moment, it becomes a blurry meteorite and then, falling to the ground in the distance, it again becomes a stone. If I want to think the phenomenon “clearly,” I must decompose it. The stone itself, I will say, is not in fact modified by the movement. I find again on the ground at the end of its trajectory the very same stone I held in my hand, and thus it is the same stone that moved through the air. Movement is but an accidental attribute of the moving object [*le mobile*], and it cannot somehow be seen in the stone. It can be nothing but a change in the relations between the stone and the surroundings. We can only speak of a change if the same rock persists beneath the different relations to the surroundings. On the contrary, if I assume that the stone is annihilated upon arriving at point P, and that another identical stone springs forth at point P', as adjacent to the first as one would like, then we no longer have a unique movement, but rather two movements. There is, then, no movement without a moving object that bears it uninterruptedly from the starting point right through to the end point. Since it is in no way inherent to the moving object and consists entirely in its relations to the surroundings, movement does not work without an external reference point, and, in short, there is no means of attributing movement exclusively to the “moving object” rather than to the reference point.

Once the distinction between the moving object and the movement has been made, there is then no movement without a moving object, no movement without an objective reference point, and no absolute

movement. Nevertheless, this conception of movement is in fact a negation of movement: to distinguish movement rigorously from the moving object is to say, strictly speaking, that the “moving object” *does not move*. If the moving-stone is not in some way different from the stone at rest, then it is never moving (nor at rest, for that matter). As soon as we introduce the idea of a moving object that remains the same throughout its movement, Zeno’s arguments again become valid. The reply that movement must not be considered as a series of discontinuous positions occupied in turn in a discontinuous series of instants, or that space and time are not made up of an assemblage of discrete elements, would be in vain. For even if one considers two limit-moments or two limit-positions whose difference could be decreased below the level of any given quantity and whose differentiation would be merely nascent, the idea of an identical moving object throughout the phases of the movement excluded, as a mere appearance, the phenomenon of “blur” [*bougé*] and brings with it the idea of a spatial or temporal position that is always identifiable in itself, even if it is not so for us, hence the idea of a stone that always exists and that never passes away. Even if a mathematical technique is invented that allows for an indefinite multiplicity of positions and instants to be introduced, the act of transition itself still cannot be conceived within an identical moving object, for this transition is always between two instants or two positions, no matter how proximate the ones we choose are. The result is that, if I attempt to gain a clear conception of movement, I fail to understand how it could ever begin for me or be given to me as a phenomenon.

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[ii. *The psychologists’ description of movement.*]

And yet I walk and I have an experience of movement despite the demands and the alternatives of clear thought, such that, against all reason, I perceive movements without an identical moving object, without an external reference point, and without any relativity. If we show a subject two lines of light, A and B, in succession, the subject sees a continuous movement from A to B, then from B to A, and so on, without any intermediary position or even without the extreme positions being given for themselves; we have a single line ceaselessly moving forward and backward. The extreme points, however, can be made to appear distinctly by accelerating or slowing down the cadence of the presentation. Stroboscopic movement thus

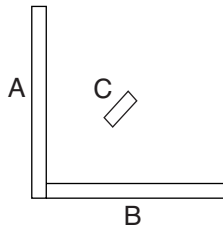


Figure 8

tends to become dissociated: at first the line appears locked into position A, then it suddenly frees itself and leaps to position B. If the cadence is accelerated or slowed down further, the movement ends and we see either two simultaneous lines or two successive ones.⁴⁶ The perception of positions is thus inversely related to the perception of movement. It can even be shown that movement is never the mobile object's successive occupation of all of the positions situated between two extremes. Whether colored or white figures are used against a black background to produce the stroboscopic movement, the space upon which the movement stretches out is, at no moment, illuminated or colored by it. If a short rod C is inserted between the two extreme positions A and B, the rod is at no moment completed by the movement that passes by (Figure 8). We do not have a "passage of the line," but rather a pure "passage." If use is made of a tachistoscope,⁴⁷ then the subject often perceives a movement without being able to say what is moving. When it comes to real movements, the situation is no different: if I see workers unloading a truck and tossing bricks to each other, I see the worker's arm in its initial position and in its final position, and although I do not see it in any intermediary position I nonetheless have a vivid perception of its movement. If I move a pencil quickly across a sheet of paper where I have marked a reference point, at no moment am I aware that the pencil is above the reference point; I see none of the intermediary positions and nevertheless I have the experience of movement. Reciprocally, if I slow the movement down and if I succeed in never losing sight of the pencil, then it is at this very moment that the impression of movement disappears.⁴⁸ Movement disappears at the very moment when it conforms most closely to the definition given to it by objective thought. Thus, phenomena can be produced in which the moving object only appears as caught in the movement. For such an object, to move is not to pass through an indefinite series of positions successively; this object is only given as beginning,

carrying out, or completing its movement. Consequently, even in cases where a mobile object is visible, the movement is not for it an extrinsic denomination, nor a relation between itself and the exterior, and we will be able to have movements without reference points. In fact, if a consecutive image of a movement is projected upon a homogeneous field containing no objects and no contours, the movement takes possession of the entire space; the entire visual field moves, just as in the Haunted House at the fair. If the after-image of a concentrically turning spiral is projected upon a screen in the absence of any fixed frame, then it is space itself that vibrates and dilates from the center to the periphery.⁴⁹ Finally, since movement is no longer a system of relations external to the moving object itself, nothing prevents us now from acknowledging absolute movements, as perception actually gives it to us at each moment.

[iii. *But what does this description mean?*]

But against this description, one can still raise the objection that it is meaningless. The psychologist denies the rational analysis of movement, and, when he is reminded that every movement – in order to be movement – must be a movement of something, he responds that “the claim has no basis in psychological description.”⁵⁰ But if the psychologist is describing a movement, he must be referring to an identical something that moves. If I place my watch on the table in my room, and if it suddenly disappears just to reappear several minutes later in the neighboring room, I will not say there has been movement, there is only movement if the intermediary positions have actually been occupied by the watch.⁵¹ Although the psychologist may show that the stroboscopic movement occurs without any intermediary stimulus between the extreme positions, and even if the line of light A does not journey through the space that separates it from B, even if no light is perceived between A and B during the stroboscopic movement, and finally even if I do not see the pencil or the worker’s arm between the two extreme positions, it must nevertheless be the case, in one way or another, that the moving object was present in each point of the trajectory in order for the movement to appear, and if it is not there perceptibly, then this is because it is conceived as being there. What is true of movement is also true of change: when I say that the fakir transforms an egg into a handkerchief, or that the magician transforms into a bird upon the roof of his palace,⁵² I do not mean simply

that an object or a being has disappeared and has been instantaneously replaced by another. There must be an internal relation between what is annihilated and what is born; the two must be both manifestations or appearances, or two phases of a single thing that is presented in turn beneath these two forms.⁵³ Likewise, the arrival of a movement at a point must be one with its “contiguous” point of departure, and this is only the case if there is a moving object that, in a single stroke, leaves one point and occupies another.

322 A thing that is grasped as a circle would cease to count for us as a circle as soon as the “round” moment, or the equality of all of the diameters, which is essential to the circle, ceased to be present there. It does not matter whether the circle is perceived or conceived; a common determination must be present in each case that obliges us in both to characterize what appears to us as a circle and to distinguish it from every other phenomenon.⁵⁴

Similarly, when we speak of a sensation of movement, or of a consciousness of movement that is *sui generis*, or when, following Gestalt theory, we speak of a global movement, or of some phenomenon ϕ in which no moving object and no particular position of the moving object would be given, these are merely words, so long as we do not say how “that which is given in this sensation or in this phenomenon, or that which is grasped through them immediately stands out (*dokumentiert*) as movement.”⁵⁵ The perception of movement can only be the perception of movement and recognize it as such if it apprehends it with its signification of movement and with all of the moments that are constitutive of it, and particularly with the identity of the moving object. Movement, responds the psychologist, is:

one of those “psychical phenomena” that, as given sensible contents (color and form) are related to the object, appear as objective and not subjective, but which, in contrast to the other psychical givens, are not of a static nature, but are dynamic. For example, the typical and specific “passage” is the flesh and blood of movement, which cannot be formed through composition beginning from ordinary visual contents.⁵⁶

It is indeed impossible to compose movement out of static perceptions. But this is not at issue, and the thought was not to reduce movement to

rest. The object at rest itself needs identification. It cannot be said to be at rest if it is annihilated and recreated at each moment, if it does not subsist through its different instantaneous presentations. The identity to which we are referring is thus anterior to the distinction between movement and rest. Movement is nothing without a moving object that traces it out and that establishes its unity. Here the metaphor of the “dynamic phenomenon” misleads the psychologist: it seems to us that a force guarantees its own unity, but this is because we always presuppose someone who identifies this force in the unfolding of its effects. “Dynamic phenomena” draw their unity from me who lives them, surveys them, and accomplishes their synthesis. Thus, we pass from a thinking of movement that destroys it to an experience of movement that attempts to ground it, but also from this experience to a thinking without which, strictly speaking, that experience would signify nothing.

[iv. *The phenomenon of movement, or movement prior to thematization.*]

Thus, we can side with neither the psychologist nor the logician, or rather we must side with both of them and find the means of recognizing both thesis and antithesis as true. The logician is correct when he demands a constitution of the “dynamic phenomenon” itself and a description of movement through the moving object whose trajectory we follow – but he is wrong when he presents the moving object’s identity as an explicit identity, and he is obliged to acknowledge this himself. The psychologist, for his part, is forced against his will to place a moving object in the movement when he describes the phenomena more closely, but he regains the advantage through the concrete manner in which he conceives of the moving object. In the discussion we have just followed and that we used to illustrate the perpetual debate between psychology and logic, in essence, what is Wertheimer trying to say? He means that the perception of movement is not secondary in relation to the perception of the moving object, that one does not have a perception of the moving object here, then there, and subsequently an identification that would connect these positions in succession,⁵⁷ that their diversity is not subsumed under a transcendent unity, and finally, that the identity of the moving object bursts forth directly “from experience.”⁵⁸ In other words, when the psychologist speaks of movement as a phenomenon embracing the starting point A and the end point B (AB), he does not mean that

there is no subject of movement, but rather that in no case is the subject of movement an object A initially given as present in its place and stationary: insofar as there is movement, the moving object is caught in the movement.

324 The psychologist would probably agree that there is in every movement if not a movable object [un mobile], then at least a moving object [un mouvant], given that we do not confuse this moving object with any of the static figures that one can obtain by stopping the movement at any given point of the trajectory. And here is where he gains the advantage over the logician. For having failed to regain contact with the experience of movement beyond all unquestioned beliefs touching upon the world, the logician only speaks of movement in itself; he poses the problem of movement in terms of being, which ultimately renders it insoluble. Consider, he says, the different appearances (*Erscheinungen*) of movement at different points in the trajectory: they will only be apparitions of a single movement if they are appearances of a single movable object, of a single *Erscheinende* [appearance], or of a single something that appears (*darstellt*) through them all. But the movable object only needs to be posited as a separate being if its appearances at different points of the journey have themselves been actualized as discrete perspectives. In principle, the logician is only familiar withthetic consciousness, and it is this postulate or supposition of an entirely determinate world, of a pure being, that burdens his conception of the manifold, and consequently his conception of synthesis. The movable object [*le mobile*], or rather, as we have said, the moving object [*le mouvant*], is not identical beneath the phases of the movement; it is identical in them. It is not because I find the same stone on the ground that I believe in its identity throughout the course of the movement. On the contrary, it is because I perceived it as identical throughout the course of the movement – an implicit identity that remains to be described – that I go and collect it and that I find it. We must not actualize within the moving-stone everything that we otherwise know about the stone. The logician says that, if it is a circle that I am perceiving, then all of its diameters are equal. But in this account, it would be necessary to put into the perceived circle all of the properties that the geometer has discovered there or could discover there. Now, it is the circle as a thing of the world that possesses, in advance and in itself, all of the properties that analysis will discover there. Circular tree trunks already had, before Euclid, the properties that Euclid discovered. But in the circle as a phe-

nomenon, such as it appeared to the Greeks prior to Euclid, the square of the tangent was not equal to the product of the secant completed by its exterior portion: this square and this product do not figure in the phenomenon, and neither did the equal radii necessarily figure there either. The movable object, as the object of an indefinite series of explicit and concordant perceptions, has properties, while the moving object merely has a style. It is impossible for the perceived circle to have unequal diameters or for the movement to exist without any moving object. But the perceived circle no more has equal diameters because it has no diameters at all. It stands out for me, it makes itself recognized and distinguished from every other figure by its circular physiognomy, and not by any “properties” that thetic consciousness will later discover in it. Likewise, movement does not necessarily presuppose a movable object, that is, an object defined by a collection of determinate properties; rather, it is enough that it contains “something that moves,” at the very most a “colored something” or “something luminous” without any actual color or light. The logician excludes this tertiary hypothesis: the rays of the circle must be either equal or unequal, the movement must either have a movable object or not. But he can only do this by taking the circle as a thing or the movement in itself. Now, as we have seen, this is ultimately to render movement impossible. The logician would have nothing to think about, not even an appearance of movement, if there were no movement prior to the objective world that might serve as the source of all of our claims touching upon movement, if there were no phenomena prior to being that can be recognized, identified, and of which we can speak – in short, phenomena that have a sense, even though they have not yet been thematized.⁵⁹ The psychologist leads us back to this phenomenal layer. We shall not say that it is irrational or anti-logical. This would only be the positing of a movement without a moving object. Only the explicit negation of the moving object would be contrary to the principle of the excluded middle. We must simply say that the phenomenal layer is, literally, pre-logical and will always remain so.

Our picture of the world can only be composed in part with being; we must also acknowledge the phenomenal within it, which completely surrounds being. We are not asking the logician to take into consideration experiences that reason takes to be merely non-sense or contradictory [*faux-sens*], we simply wish to push back the limits of what has sense for us and to put the narrow zone of thematic sense back into the zone

326 of non-thematic sense that embraces it. The thematization of movement ends in the identical moving object and in the relativity of movement, that is, it destroys movement. If we want to take the phenomenon of movement seriously, we must imagine a world that is not merely made up of things, but also of pure transitions. The something in transit that we have recognized as necessary for the constitution of a change is only defined by its particular way of "passing by." For example, the bird that crosses my garden is, in the very moment of the movement, merely a grayish power of flight and, in a general way, we shall see that things are primarily defined by their "behavior," and not by static "properties." It is not I who recognize, in each point and in each instant passed through, the same bird defined by explicit properties; rather, it is the bird in flight that accomplishes the unity of its movement, it is the bird that changes place, and it is this feathery commotion still here which is already over there, in a sort of ubiquity, like the comet and its tail. Pre-objective being, or the non-thematized moving something, does not pose any other problem than the space and time of implication, a problem we have already touched upon. We have said that the parts of space, according to breadth, height, or depth, are not juxtaposed, that they rather coexist because they are all enveloped in the unique hold that our body has upon the world, and this relation was already clarified when we showed that it was temporal prior to being spatial. Things coexist in space because they are present to the same perceiving subject and enveloped in a single temporal wave. But the unity and the individuality of each temporal wave is only possible if it is squeezed between the preceding one and the following one, and if the same temporal pulsation that makes it spring forth still retains the preceding one and holds the one to follow in advance. It is objective time that is made up of successive moments. The lived present contains a past and a future within its thickness. The phenomenon of movement only manifests spatial and temporal implication in a more noticeable way. We know a movement and a moving something without any consciousness of the objective positions, just as we know a distant object and its true size without any interpretation, and just as at each moment we know the place of an event in the thickness of our past without any explicit recollection. Movement is a modulation of an already familiar milieu, and it brings us back once again to our central problem, which is to understand how this milieu, which serves as the background of every act of consciousness, is constituted.⁶⁰

[v. Movement and the thing moving.]

The positing of a self-same movable object led to the relativity of movement. Now that we have reintroduced movement into the moving object, it can only be interpreted in one sense: it begins in the moving object and unfolds into the field from there. I am not free to see the stone as immobile and the garden and myself in motion. Movement is not an hypothesis whose probability is measured through the number of facts that it coordinates in the manner of a theory in physics. That would only give a possible movement. Movement is a fact. The stone is not conceived as moving, it is seen moving. For the hypothesis "it is the stone that moves" would have no proper signification, it would not distinguish itself in any way from the hypothesis "it is the garden that moves," if movement, in reality and for reflection, amounted to a simple change of relations. Movement, then, inhabits the stone. But are we going to side with the realism of the psychologist? Are we going to place movement into the stone as a quality? Movement presupposes no relation to an explicitly perceived object and it remains possible in a perfectly homogeneous field. Moreover, every movable object is given in a field. Just as we need a moving something in movement, so too do we need a background of movement. The claim that the borders of the visual field always provide an objective reference point was wrong.⁶¹ Once again, the border of the visual field is not a real line. Our visual field is not cut out of our objective world, it is not a fragment with well-defined borders like the landscape that is framed by the window. In the visual field we see just as far as the hold of our gaze upon the things extends – well beyond the zone of clear vision, and even behind ourselves. When we reach the limits of the visual field, we do not go from vision to non-vision: the phonograph playing in the neighboring room and which I do not explicitly see still counts in my visual field; reciprocally, what we do see is always, in some respect, not seen: there must be hidden sides of things and things "behind us" if there is to be a "front" of things, or things "in front of us" and, in short, a perception. The limits of the visual field are a necessary moment of the organization of the world and not an objective contour. But finally, it is nonetheless true that an object travels through our visual field, that it changes place within it, and that movement has no sense outside of this relation. Depending upon which part of the visual field we give the value of figure or the value of background, it appears to us

either in movement or at rest. If we are on a boat that skirts the coast, it is certainly true, as Leibniz said, that we can either see the coast flowing by us or take the coast as a fixed point and sense the boat moving.

[vi. The “relativity” of movement.]*

Do we thus side with the logician? Not at all, for to say that movement is a structural phenomenon is not to say that it is “relative.” The very particular relation that is constitutive of movement is not *between objects*, and the psychologist does not ignore this relation, but rather describes it much better than does the logician. The coast flows by before our eyes if we keep our eyes fixed upon the ship’s railing, while the boat moves when we stare at the coast. Of two luminous points in the dark, one immobile and the other moving, the one that we focus upon seems to be moving.⁶² The cloud flies over the steeple and the river flows beneath the bridge when we stare at the cloud or the river. The steeple falls through the sky and the bridge slides over the congealed river when we stare at the steeple or the bridge. What gives the status “moving object” to one part of the visual field, and the status “background” to another is the manner in which we establish our relations with it through the act of looking. What could the words “the stone flies through the air” mean if not that our gaze, being established and anchored in the garden, is solicited by the stone and, so to speak, pulls on its anchors. The relation between the moving object and its background passes through our body. How should we conceive of this mediation by the body? How does it happen that the relations between the body and objects can determine the latter as either moving or at rest? Is not our body an object, and does it not also need to be determined under the relation of rest and of movement? It is often said that objects remain immobile for us during the movement of the eyes because we take into account the shifting of the eyes and because, finding it exactly proportional to the change in appearances, we conclude in favor of the immobility of the objects. In fact, if we have no awareness of the shifting of the eyes, such as in passive movement, then the object seems to move; if, as in the case of paresis of the oculomotor muscles, we have the illusion of a movement of the eye without the relation of objects to our eye seeming to change, we believe we see a movement of the object. It seems at first that – the relation of the object to my eye, such as it is inscribed upon

the retina, being given to consciousness – we could obtain the rest or the degree of movement of objects through subtraction by bringing into the account the shifting or rest of our eye.

In fact, this analysis is entirely fictional and ideal for concealing from us the true relation from the body to the spectacle. When I transfer my gaze from one object to another, I have no consciousness of my eye as an object, as a globe suspended in its socket, of its shifting or of its rest in objective space, nor of what results upon the retina. The elements of the supposed calculation are not given to me. The immobility of the thing is not deduced from the act of seeing, it is rigorously simultaneous; the two phenomena envelop each other: they are not two elements of an algebraic sum, but rather two moments of an organization that encompasses them. My eye is, for me, a certain power for encountering things; it is not a screen upon which things are projected. The relation between my eye and the object is not given to me in the form of a geometrical projection of the object into the eye, but rather as a certain hold that my eye has upon the object – still vague in peripheral vision, more narrow and more precise when I focus upon the object. What I lack in the passive movement of the eye is not the objective representation of its moving within the eye socket, which is in no case given to me, but rather the precise gearing of my gaze to the objects, without which the objects are no longer capable of fixity, nor for that matter of true movements. For, when I press upon my eyeball, I do not perceive a true movement, it is not the things themselves that are moved, but merely a tiny film upon their surface. Finally, in the case of a paresis of the oculomotor muscles, I do not explain the constancy of the retinal image through a movement of the object, rather I experience [j'éprouve] that the hold my gaze has upon the object does not relax, my gaze carries the object along with it and shifts the object as it shifts. Thus my eye is never an object in perception. If we can ever speak of a movement without a moving object, then it is surely in the case of one's own body. The movement of my eye toward what it will focus upon is not the shifting of one object in relation to another object, it is a march toward the real. My eye is moving or at rest in relation to a thing that it is approaching or that flees from it. If the body provides the ground or the background to the perception of movement that perception needs to establish itself, it does so as a perceiving power, insofar as it is established in a certain domain and geared into a world. Rest and movement appear *between* an object that is not in itself determined according to rest

and movement, and my body that, as an object, is no more determined in this way when my body becomes anchored in certain objects. As with up and down, movement is a phenomenon of levels, every movement presupposes a certain anchorage that can vary.

So that is what one can validly mean when speaking confusedly about the relativity of movement. But what exactly is anchorage and how does it constitute a background at rest? This is not an explicit perception. Anchorage points, when we focus upon them, are not objects. The steeple only begins to move when I leave the sky to peripheral vision. It is essential to the supposed reference points of movement not to be thematized in actual knowledge and to be always “already there.” They are not presented directly to perception, they circumvent it and haunt it through a preconscious operation whose results appear to us as ready-made. Cases of ambiguous perception, where we can choose our anchorage as we please, are cases in which our perception is artificially cut off from its context and its past, in which we do not perceive with our entire being, in which we play with our body and with that generality that allows it to break at any time with all historical engagement, and to function on its own account. But even if we can break with a human world, we cannot prevent ourselves from focusing our eyes – which means that so long as we live we remain engaged, if not in a human milieu, then at least in a physical milieu – and for a given focusing of the gaze, perception is not facultative. It is even less so when the life of the body is integrated into our concrete existence. I am free to see my train or the neighboring train moving, whether I do nothing or whether I examine myself on the illusions of movement. But:

When I am playing cards in my compartment, I see the train move on the next track even if it is in reality my own train which is moving, but when I am looking at the other train, searching perhaps for an acquaintance in the coach, then it is my own train that seems to be moving.⁶³

The compartment where we take up residence is “at rest,” its walls are “vertical,” and the landscape passes by in front of us; on one side the fir trees seen through the window appear to us as diagonal. If we place ourselves at the window, we re-enter the large world beyond our small one, the firs straighten up and remain immobile, the train leans with the slope and speeds through the countryside. The relativity of movement is reduced to

the power we have of changing domains within the large world. Once we are engaged in a milieu, we see movement appear before us as an absolute. On condition of taking into account not only explicit acts of knowledge or cogitations, but also the more secret act, always in the past, by which we take up a world, and on condition of acknowledging a non-thetic consciousness, we can accept what the psychologist calls “absolute movement” without falling into the difficulties of realism and we can understand the phenomenon of movement without our logic destroying it.

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[D. Lived Space.]

[i. The experience of spatiality expresses our being firmly set within the world.]

We have until now only considered, as do classical philosophy and psychology, the perception of space, that is, the knowledge that a disinterested subject could have of spatial relations between objects and of their geometrical characteristics. And yet, even in analyzing this abstract function, which is far from covering our entire experience of space, we have been led to uncover the subject’s being firmly set within a milieu and, ultimately, his inherence in the world as the condition of spatiality. In other words, we had to acknowledge that spatial perception is a structural phenomenon and is only understood from within a perceptual field that, as a whole, contributes to motivating it by proposing to the concrete subject a possible anchorage. The classical problem of the perception of space and of perception in general must be reintegrated into a larger problem. To ask oneself how spatial relations and objects with their “properties” can be determined in an explicit act is to ask a second-order question, it is to present an act that only appears against the background of an already familiar world as if it were originary, it is to admit that one has not yet become conscious of the experience of the world. In the natural attitude, I have no perceptions, I do not posit this object as next to that other one along with their objective relations. Rather, I have a flow of experiences that implicate and explicate each other just as much in simultaneity as they do in succession. For me, Paris is not a thousand-sided object or a collection of perceptions, nor for that matter the law of all of these

333 perceptions. Just as a human being manifests the same affective essence in his hand gestures, his gait, and the sound of his voice, each explicit perception in my journey through Paris – the cafés, the faces, the poplars along the quays, the bends of the Seine – is cut out of the total being of Paris, and only serves to confirm a certain style or a certain sense of Paris. And when I arrived there for the first time, the first streets that I saw upon leaving the train station were – like the first words of a stranger – only manifestations of a still ambiguous, though already incomparable essence. In fact, we hardly perceive any objects at all, just as we do not see the eyes of a familiar face, but rather its gaze and its expression. There is here a latent sense, diffused throughout the landscape or the town, that we uncover in a specific evidentness without having to define it. Ambiguous perceptions are the only ones to emerge as explicit acts, that is, the ones to which we ourselves give a sense through the attitude that we adopt, or the ones that respond to questions that we pose. They cannot, however, be of any use in the analysis of the perceptual field since they are drawn out of it, since they presuppose it, and since we obtain them precisely by making use of the structures we acquired in our regular dealings with the world. An initial perception without any background is inconceivable. Every perception presupposes a certain past of the subject, and the abstract function of perception – as the encounter with objects – implies a more secret act by which we elaborate our milieu.

334 Under the influence of mescaline, sometimes objects appear to shrink as they approach. A limb or a part of the body (hand, mouth, or tongue) appears enormous and the rest of the body is no longer anything other than an appendage to it.⁶⁴ The walls of the room are 150 meters from each other, and above them there is but a vast and deserted expanse. The extended hand is as high as the wall. External space and bodily space break apart to the point that the subject has the impression of eating “from one dimension into the other.”⁶⁵ At certain moments, movement is no longer seen and people are transported in a magical way from one point to another.⁶⁶ The subject is alone and abandoned to an empty space, “he complains of only seeing clearly the space between things, and this space is empty. Objects are still there in a certain way, but not as they should be . . .”⁶⁷ Men seem like puppets, and their movements are accomplished with a magical slowness. The leaves of the trees lose their framework and their organization: each point of the leaf has the same value as all others.⁶⁸ One schizophrenic says:

a bird is chirping in the garden. I hear the bird, and I know that it is chirping, but that this is a bird and that it chirps are two things so far removed from each other . . . there is an abyss . . . as if the bird and the chirping had nothing to do with each other.⁶⁹

Another patient can no longer “understand” the clock, that is, first the passing of the hands from one position to another and above all the connection of this movement with the thrust of the mechanism or the “workings” of the clock.⁷⁰

These disturbances do not have to do with perception as a knowledge of the world: the enormous parts of the body or the nearby objects that are too small are not posited as such; the walls of the room are not, for the patient, as distant from each other in the manner of the two ends of a soccer pitch for a normal person. The subject knows quite well that his food and his own body reside in the same space, since he picks up his food with his hand. Space is “empty,” and yet all of the objects of perception are there. The disturbance does not bear upon the information that one can draw out of perception, and it reveals a deeper life of consciousness beneath “perception.” Even when there is a lack of perception [imperception], as happens with regard to movement, the perceptual deficit seems to be merely an extreme case of a more general disturbance that has to do with the structuring of the phenomena with each other. There is a bird and there is some chirping, but the bird no longer chirps. There is a movement of the hands and a movement of a mechanism, but the clock no longer “works.” Similarly, certain parts of my body are disproportionately large and the nearby objects are too small because the ensemble no longer forms a system. Now, if the world falls to pieces or is broken apart, this is because one’s own body has ceased to be a knowing body and has ceased to envelop all of the objects in a single hold; and this degradation of the body into an organism must be itself related to the collapse of time, which no longer rises toward a future, but rather falls back upon itself.

Before, I was a man, with a soul and a living body (*Leib*) and now I am nothing more than a being (*Wesen*) . . . now, there is no longer anything there but the organism (*Körper*) and the soul is dead . . . I hear and I see, but I no longer know anything, life has become a problem for me . . . now I live on in eternity . . . The branches on the trees sway, and

others move about in the room, but for me time does not pass by . . . Thought has changed, there is no more style . . . What is the future? One cannot anticipate it . . . Everything is in question . . . Everything is so monotone, morning, noon, and night; past, present, and future. Everything always begins again.⁷¹

The perception of space is not a particular class of “states of consciousness” or of acts, and its modalities always express the total life of the subject, the energy with which he tends toward a future through his body and his world.⁷²

[ii. *The spatiality of the night.*]

Thus, we are forced to broaden our research: once the experience of spatiality has been related to our being firmly set within the world, there will be an original spatiality for each modality of this anchorage. When, for example, the world of clear and articulated objects is abolished, our perceptual being, now cut off from its world, sketches out a spatiality without things. This is what happens at night. The night is not an object in front of me; rather, it envelops me, it penetrates me through all of my senses, it suffocates my memories, and it all but effaces my personal identity. I am no longer withdrawn into my observation post in order to see the profiles of objects flowing by in the distance. The night is without profiles, it itself touches me and its unity is the mystical unity of the *mana*. Even cries, or a distant light, only populate it vaguely; it becomes entirely animated; it is a pure depth without planes, without surfaces, and without any distance from it to me.⁷³ For reflection, every space is sustained by a thought that connects its parts, but this thought is not accomplished from nowhere. On the contrary, it is from within nocturnal space that I unite with it. The anxiety of neurotics at night comes from the fact that the night makes us sense our contingency, that free and inexhaustible movement by which we attempt to anchor ourselves and to transcend ourselves in things, without there being any guarantee of always finding them.

[iii. *Sexual space.*]*

– But the night is still not our most striking experience of the unreal: at night I can hold onto the structures of the day, such as when I feel my way through my apartment, and in any case the night is located within

the general frame of nature; even in pitch black space there is something reassuring and worldly. During sleep, however, I only keep the world present in order to hold it at a distance, I turn toward the subjective sources of my existence, and the fantasies of dreams reveal even more clearly the general spatiality in which clear space and observable objects are embedded. Consider, for example, the themes of elevation and of falling, so frequent in dreams and, for that matter, in myths and in poetry. We know that the appearance of these themes in the dream can be related to concomitant respiratory events or to sexual drives, and a first step is made by recognizing the living and sexual signification of up and down. But these explanations do not get very far, for elevation and falling as dreamed are not in visible space in the manner of the waking perceptions of desire and of respiratory movements. We need to understand why, at a given moment, the dreamer lends himself entirely to the bodily facts of breathing and of desire and hence infuses them with a general and symbolic signification to the point of only seeing them appear in the dream in the form of an image – such as the image of a giant bird that glides and that, hit by a bullet, falls and is reduced to a small pile of burnt paper. We need to understand how respiratory or sexual events, which have their place in objective space, detach from that space in the dream and are established within a different theater.

We shall not reach this understanding if we do not grant the body an emblematic value, even in the waking state. Between our emotions, desires, and bodily attitudes, there is neither merely a contingent connection nor even a relation of analogy: if I say that in disappointment I fall down from my high, this is not merely because it is accompanied by gestures of prostration in virtue of the laws of the nervous system, or because I discover between the object of my desire and my desire itself the same relation as between an object placed up high and my gesture toward it. Rather, the movement upward as a direction in physical space and the movement of desire toward its goal are symbolic of each other because they both express the same essential structure of our being as a situated being in relation to a milieu, and we have already seen that this structure alone gives a sense to the directions up and down in the physical world. When one speaks of a high or low morale, one does not extend to the psychological domain a relation that could only have its full sense in the physical world; rather, one uses “a direction of signification that, so to speak, crosses the different regional spheres and receives

337 in each one a particular signification (spatial, auditive, spiritual, psychical, etc.).”⁷⁴ The fantasies of the dream, those of the myth, each man’s favorite images, or finally the poetic image are not connected to their sense through a relation of sign to signification, such as the one that exists between a telephone number and the name of the subscriber. They genuinely contain their sense, which is not a notional sense, but a direction of our existence. When I dream that I am flying or that I am falling, the entire sense of the dream is contained in this flight or in this fall, so long as I do not reduce them to their physical appearance in the waking world and consider them with all of their existential implications. The bird that glides, falls, and becomes a handful of cinders, does not glide and does not fall in physical space; it rises and falls with the existential tide that runs through it, or again it is the pulsation of my existence, its systole and its diastole. The level of this tide at each moment determines a space of fantasies, as, in waking life, our commerce with the world that is presented determines a space of realities. There is a determination of up and down and, in general, a determination of “place” that precedes “perception.” Life and sexuality haunt their world and their space.

[iv. *Mythical space.*]*

To the extent that they live within the myth, primitive persons do not transcend this existential space, and this is why dreams count for them as much as perceptions. There is a mythical space where directions and positions are determined by the placement of great affective entities. For a primitive person, knowing the whereabouts of the clan’s encampment does not involve locating it in relation to some landmark: for the encampment is in fact the landmark of all landmarks. Rather, to know this location is to tend toward it as if toward the natural place of a certain peace or a certain joy, just as, for me, knowing where my hand is involves joining myself to this agile power that is dormant for the moment, but that I can take up and discover as my own. For the augur, the right and the left are the sources from which the blessed or the ill-fated arrive, just as for me my right hand and my left hand are respectively the embodiment of my dexterity and of my clumsiness. In the dream, as in the myth, we learn where the phenomenon is located by sensing [*en éprouvant*] what our desire moves toward, what strikes fear in our hearts, and upon what our life depends.

[v. *Lived space.*]*

Even in waking life, things do not proceed otherwise. I arrive in a village for the holidays, happy to leave behind my work and my ordinary surroundings. I settle into the village. It becomes the center of my life. The low level of water in the river, or the corn or walnut harvest, are events for me. But if a friend comes to see me and brings news from Paris, or if the radio and newspapers inform me that there are threats of war, then I feel exiled in this village, excluded from real life, and imprisoned far away from everything. Our body and our perception always solicit us to take the landscape they offer as the center of the world. But this landscape is not necessarily the landscape of our life. I can “be elsewhere” while remaining here, and if I am kept far from what I love, I feel far from the center of real life. Bovarism and certain forms of homesickness are examples of a decentered life. The maniac, however, centers himself everywhere: “his mental space is large and luminous, his thought, sensitive to all the objects that are presented, flies from one to the other and is drawn into their movement.”⁷⁵ Beyond the physical or geometrical distance existing between me and all things, a lived distance links me to things that count and exist for me, and links them to each other. At each moment, this distance measures the “scope” of my life.⁷⁶ Sometimes between me and events there is a certain leeway (*Spielraum*) that preserves my freedom without the events ceasing to touch me. Sometimes, however, the lived distance is at once too short and too wide: the majority of events cease to count for me, whereas the nearest ones consume me. They envelop me like the night, and they rob me of individuality and freedom. I can literally no longer breathe. I am possessed.⁷⁷ At the same time, the events gather together. One patient senses a cold draft, a scent of chestnuts, and the freshness of the rain. Perhaps, he says, “at this exact moment a person, suffering from suggestions like me, passed under the rain and in front of someone selling grilled chestnuts.”⁷⁸ One schizophrenic, under the care of both Minkowski and the village priest, believes that they have met to talk about him.⁷⁹ One elderly schizophrenic woman believes that a person who resembles another person must have known the latter.⁸⁰ The contraction of lived space, which no longer leaves the patient any leeway, no longer leaves any role for chance to play. Causality, like space, is established upon my relation to things prior to being a relation between objects. The “short circuits”⁸¹ of delirious causality and the long causal

chains of methodical thought express ways of existing:⁸² “the experience of space is intertwined (. . .) with all other modes of experience and all other psychical givens.”⁸³ Clear space, that impartial space where all objects have the same importance and the same right to exist, is not merely surrounded, but also wholly penetrated by another spatiality that morbid variations reveal. One schizophrenic stops in the mountains and views the landscape. After a moment, he feels threatened. A particular interest arises in him for everything that surrounds him, as if a question had been posed from the outside to which he can find no answer. Suddenly the landscape is snatched away from him by some alien force. It is as if a second limitless sky were penetrating the blue sky of the evening. This new sky is empty, “subtle, invisible, and terrifying.” Sometimes it moves into the autumn landscape, and sometimes the landscape itself moves. And during this time, says the patient, “a permanent question is asked of me; it is like an order to stay put or to die, or to go farther.”⁸⁴ This second space permeating visible space is the one that composes, at each moment, our own manner of projecting the world, and the schizophrenic disorder consists merely in that this perpetual project is dissociated from the objective world such as it is still offered by perception, and it withdraws, so to speak, into itself. The schizophrenic patient no longer lives in the common world, but in a private world; he does not go all the way to geographical space, he remains within “the space of the landscape,”⁸⁵ and this landscape itself, once cut off from the common world, is considerably impoverished. This results in the schizophrenic questioning: everything is amazing, absurd, or unreal because the movement of existence toward things no longer has its energy, because it appears along with its contingency, and because the world is no longer self-evident. If the natural space of classical psychology is on the contrary reassuring and evident, then this is because existence rushes into it and forgets itself there.

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[vi. *Do these spaces presuppose geometrical space?*]

This description of anthropological space could be developed indefinitely.⁸⁶ The objection that will be raised by objective thought, however, is obvious: do these descriptions have any philosophical value? That is: do they teach us something concerning the very structure of consciousness, or do they merely give us the contents of human experience? Are

dream space, mythical space, and schizophrenic space genuine spaces, can they exist and be thought by themselves, or do they not presuppose geometrical space as the condition of their possibility, and along with it the pure constituting consciousness that deploys it? The left, the region of misfortune and of bad omens for the primitive person – or in my body the left as the side of my clumsiness – is only determined as a direction if I am first capable of conceiving of its relation with the right, and this relation ultimately gives a spatial sense to the terms between which it is established. The primitive person does not somehow aim at a space with his anxiety or with his joy, just as it is not with my pain that I know where my injured foot: lived anxiety, lived joy, and lived pain are related to a place in objective space where their empirical conditions are found. Without this agile consciousness, free with regard to all contents and deploying them in space, the contents would never be anywhere. If we reflect upon the mythical experience of space, and if we ask ourselves what it means, we will necessarily find that it rests upon the consciousness of objective and unique space, for a space that could neither be objective nor unique could not be a space, is it not essential for space to be the absolute and correlative “outside,” but also the negation of subjectivity, and is it not essential for space to embrace every being one could imagine, since everything one would like to posit outside of it would, for the same reasons, be in relation with it, and thus in it?

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The dreamer dreams, and that is why his respiratory movements and his sexual impulses are not taken for what they are, and why they break the moorings that tie them to the world and drift before him in the form of the dream. But ultimately what does he really see? Shall we take his word for it? If he wants to know what he sees and to understand his dream himself, he will have to awaken. Sexuality will immediately return to its genital refuge, anxiety and its phantasms will again become what they always were: some respiratory obstruction in the ribcage. The dark space⁸⁷ that invades the schizophrenic’s world can only justify itself as space and provide its spatial qualifications by linking itself to clear space. If the patient claims that there is a second space around him, we will ask him: but then where is it? By seeking to locate this phantom, he will make it disappear as a phantom. And since – as he himself admits – objects are still there, he still keeps, with clear space, the means of exorcising the phantasms and of returning to the shared world. Phantasms are the debris of the clear world, and borrow from it all the prestige they can have. Finally, in the same way,

when we attempt to establish geometrical space and its intra-mundane relations upon the originary existence of spatiality, it will be objected that thought only knows itself or things, that a spatiality of the subject is not conceivable, and that consequently our proposition is strictly meaningless. We shall respond that it has no thematic or explicit sense, and that it certainly disappears when placed before objective thought. But it does have a non-thematic or implicit sense and this is not a lesser sense, for objective thought itself sustains itself on the unreflected and presents itself as a making explicit of the unreflective life of consciousness, to the extent that radical reflection cannot consist in thematizing as parallel the world or space and the non-temporal subject who thinks them, but rather must catch hold of this thematization itself within the horizons of implications that give it its sense. If reflecting is to seek the originary, that by which the rest can be and can be thought, then reflection cannot enclose itself in objective thought, but must think precisely objective thought's acts of thematization and must restore their context.

342 In other words, objective thought refuses the supposed phenomena of the dream, of the myth, and in general of existence because it finds them inconceivable, and because they mean nothing of which it can thematize. It refuses the fact or the real in the name of the possible and the evident. But it does not see that what is evident is itself established upon a fact. Reflective analysis believes that it knows what the dreamer and the schizophrenic experience better than the dreamer or the schizophrenic himself; moreover, the philosopher believes that he knows what he sees better in reflection than he knows it in perception. And it is on this condition alone that he can reject anthropological spaces as merely confused appearances of true, unique, and objective space. But by doubting the testimony of another person with regard to himself, or the testimony of his own perception with regard to itself, the philosopher strips himself of the right to declare what he grasps as evident to be absolutely true, even if, in this evidentness, he is conscious of eminently understanding the dreamer, the madman, or perception. There are only two options: either he who lives something knows at the same time what he lives, and then the madman, the dreamer, and the subject of perception must be taken at their word, and we must merely verify that their language expresses clearly what they live, or he who lives something is not the judge of what he lives, and hence the lived experience of evidentness [*l'épreuve de l'évidence*] can be an illusion.

In order to drain mythical experience, dream experience, or perceptual experience of all positive value, that is, in order to reintegrate these spaces into geometrical space, we must, in short, deny that one ever dreams, that one is ever a madman, or that one ever truly sees. As long as we acknowledge the dream, madness, or perception as, at the very least, absences of reflection – and how could we not if we want to maintain a value for the testimony of consciousness, without which no truth is possible – then we do not have the right to level out all experiences into a single world, nor all modalities of existence into a single consciousness. In order to do this, we would need to have available a higher authority to which one could submit perceptive consciousness and fantastical consciousness, a me more intimate to myself than me who thinks my dream or my perception when I limit myself to dreaming or to perceiving, a me who possesses the true substance of my dream and of my perception while I only have the appearance of this. But this very distinction between appearance and the real is made neither in the world of the myth, nor in the world of the patient or the child. The myth fits the essence into the appearance; the mythical phenomenon is not a representation, but a genuine presence. The demon of the rain is present in each drop that falls after the incantation, just as the soul is present in each part of the body. Every “apparition” (*Erscheinung*)⁸⁸ is here an embodiment and beings are not so much defined by “properties” as they are by physiognomic characteristics. This is what can be legitimately meant in speaking of an infantile and primitive animism: not that the child and the primitive person perceive the objects that they would like, as Comte says, to explain through intentions or consciousnesses, for consciousness as an object belongs tothetic thought, but rather because things are taken to be the incarnation of what they express, because their human signification rushes into them and is presented, literally, as what they mean. A passing shadow or a creaking tree have a sense; there are warnings everywhere, without anyone who is doing the warning.⁸⁹ Given that mythical consciousness does not yet have the notion of “thing” or of an objective truth, how could it accomplish a critique of what it thinks it experiences, where might it find a fixed point to pause and to notice itself as a pure consciousness and notice, beyond the phantasms, the true world?

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One schizophrenic senses that a brush, placed close to his window, comes closer to him and enters into his head, and nevertheless at no

moment does he cease knowing that the brush is over there.⁹⁰ If he looks toward the window, he again perceives it. The brush, as an identifiable term of an explicit perception, is not in the patient's head as a material mass. But the patient's head is not, for him, this object that everyone can see and that he himself can see in a mirror; rather, it is that listening and look-out post that he senses at the top of his body, or that power of joining with all objects through vision and hearing. In the same way, the brush that falls under the senses is only an envelope or a phantom; the real brush, the stiff and prickly being that is embodied in these appearances and that is concentrated by the gaze, has left the window and has thus left behind merely an inert shell. No appeal to explicit perception can awaken the patient from this dream since he does not deny the explicit perception, but simply holds that it proves nothing against what he experiences [*ce qu'il éprouve*]. "You don't hear my voices?" one patient asks the doctor; and she concludes calmly: "so I am alone in hearing them."⁹¹ What protects the healthy man against delirium or hallucination is not his reason [*sa critique*], but rather the structure of his space: objects remain in front of him, they keep their distance and, as Malebranche said about Adam, they only touch him with respect. What brings about the hallucination and the myth is the contraction of lived space, the rooting of things in our body, the overwhelming proximity of the object, the solidarity between man and the world, which is not abolished but repressed by everyday perception or by objective thought, and which philosophical consciousness rediscovers. Of course, if I reflect upon the consciousness of positions and directions in the myth, the dream, and perception, if I thematize them and fix them according to the methods of objective thought, I discover in them the relations of geometrical space. It must not be concluded from this that these relations were already there, but inversely that this is not genuine reflection. In order to know what mythical or schizophrenic space means, we have no other means than of awakening in ourselves, in our current perception, the relation between the subject and his world that reflective analysis makes disappear. We must acknowledge "expressive experiences" (*Ausdrucks-erlebnisse*) as prior to "acts of signification" (*bedeutungsgebende Akten*) by theoretical and thetic consciousness; we must acknowledge "expressive sense" (*Ausdrucks-Sinn*) as prior to "significative sense" (*Zeichen-Sinn*); and we must acknowledge the symbolic "pregnancy" of form in content as prior to the subsumption of content under form.⁹²

[vii. *These spaces must be recognized as original.*]

Does this mean that we must side with psychologism? Since there are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences, and since we do not allow ourselves to set up the configurations of adult, normal, and civilized experience in advance within infantile, morbid, or primitive experience, do we not thereby enclose each type of subjectivity and, ultimately, each consciousness within its private life? In place of the rationalist *cogito*, which discovered a universal constituting consciousness within me, have we not substituted the psychologist's *cogito* that remains within the experience [*l'épreuve*] of its incommunicable life? Are we not again defining subjectivity through the coinciding of everyone with it? The examination of space and, in general, of experience in the nascent state prior to their being objectified, and the decision to ask experience itself for its own sense, in a word, phenomenology, does this not ultimately lead to the negation of being and the negation of sense? Are we not simply reintroducing appearance and opinion under the name "phenomenon"? Does phenomenology not place at the origin of precise knowledge a decision just as unjustifiable as the one that encloses the madman in his madness, and is not the final word of this wisdom to lead back to the anxiety of idle and isolated subjectivity?

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These are the equivocations that remain for us to clear up. Mythical or dreamlike consciousness, madness, and perception, despite all their differences, are not self-enclosed; they are not islands of experience without any communication and from which one cannot escape. We have refused to locate geometrical space as immanent within mythical space and, in general, to subordinate all of experience to an absolute consciousness of that experience that would situate it within the totality of truth, because the unity of consciousness, conceived in this way, makes its variety incomprehensible. But mythical consciousness opens onto an horizon of possible objectifications. The primitive person lives his myths against a perceptual background that is articulated clearly enough such that the acts of daily life – fishing, hunting, or relations with civilized persons – are possible. The myth itself, as diffuse as it might be, has an identifiable sense for the primitive person, since it in fact forms a world, that is, a totality where each element has relations of meaning with the others. Of course, mythical consciousness is not a consciousness of a thing: that is, on the subjective side, mythical consciousness is a flow, and it does not

focus upon itself and does not know itself; on the objective side, mythical consciousness does not posit objects in front of itself defined by a certain number of separable properties and articulated in relation to each other. But neither does mythical consciousness carry itself into each of its pulsations, otherwise it would not be conscious of anything at all. It does not step back from its *noemata*, but if it passed away with each of them, if it did not anticipate the movement of objectification, then it would not crystallize in myths. We have tried to shield mythical consciousness from premature rationalizations that, as happens in Comte, for example, render the myth incomprehensible because they seek in the myth an explanation of the world and an anticipation of science. On the contrary, myth is a projection of existence and an expression of the human condition. But understanding the myth does not mean believing in it, and if all myths are true, this is insofar as they can be put back into a phenomenology of spirit that indicates their function in the emergence of self-consciousness and that ultimately grounds their proper sense upon the sense they have for the philosopher.

Likewise, when I demand an account of the dream, I certainly direct my question toward the dreamer that I was that night, but ultimately the dreamer himself recounts nothing, the waking person is the one who recounts the dream. Without the waking up, dreams would only ever be instantaneous modulations, and would not even exist for us. During the
346 dream itself, we do not leave the world behind: the space of the dream isolates itself from clear space, but it nevertheless makes use of all of its articulations – the world haunts us even in sleep, and we dream about the world. Similarly, madness gravitates around the world. To say nothing of those morbid fantasies or fits of delirium that attempted to build for themselves a private domain out of the debris of the macrocosm, the most advanced states of melancholy, where the patient settles into death and, so to speak, makes it his home, still make use of the structures of being in the world in order to do so, and borrow from the world just what is required of being in order to negate it.

[viii. *They are nevertheless constructed upon a natural space.*]*

This link between subjectivity and objectivity that already exists in mythical or infantile consciousness, and that always subsists in sleep or in madness, is found, *a fortiori*, in normal experience. I never live entirely

within these anthropological spaces; I am always rooted to a natural and non-human space. As I cross Place de la Concorde and believe myself to be entirely caught up within Paris, I can focus my eyes upon a stone in the wall of the Tuileries garden – the Concorde disappears and all that remains is this stone without any history; again, I can lose my gaze within this coarse and yellowish surface, and then there is no longer even a stone, and all that remains is a play of light upon an indefinite matter. My total perception is not built out of these analytical perceptions, but it can always dissolve into them; my body, which assures my insertion within the human world through my habitus, only in fact does so by first projecting me into a natural world that always shines through from beneath the others – just as the canvas shines through from beneath the painting – and gives the human world an air of fragility. Even if there is a perception of what is desired through desire, what is loved through love, what is hated through hate, this is always formed around a sensible core, as meager as it might be, and it finds its verification and its plenitude in the sensible.

We have said that space is existential; we could have just as easily said that existence is spatial, that is, through an inner necessity, it opens to an “outside,” such that one can speak of a mental space and of a “world of significations and objects of thought that are constituted within those significations.”⁹³ Anthropological spaces present themselves as constructed upon natural space, the “non-objectifying acts,” to speak like Husserl, as constructed upon “objectifying acts.”⁹⁴ What is new in phenomenology is not that it denies the unity of experience, but that it establishes it differently than classical rationalism. For objectifying acts are not representations. Natural and primordial space is not geometrical space, and correlatively the unity of experience is not guaranteed by a universal thinker who spreads the contents of experience out before me and who ensures that I could have complete knowledge and complete power with regard to it. It is only indicated by the horizons of possible objectification, it only frees me from each particular milieu because it binds me to the world of nature or to the world of the in-itself that encompasses them all. We will have to ask how existence simultaneously projects around itself worlds that mask objectivity from me and yet sets this objectivity as a goal for the teleology of consciousness by making these “worlds” stand out against the background of a unique natural world.

[ix. *The ambiguity of consciousness.*]

If the myth, the dream, and the illusion are to be possible, then the apparent and the real must remain ambiguous in the subject as well as in the object. It has often been said that consciousness, by definition, does not allow for the separation between appearance and reality, and this was understood in the sense that, in terms of our self-knowledge, appearance would be reality. If I think I see or sense, then I see or sense beyond all doubt, whatever may be true of the external object. Here reality appears in its entirety, to be real and to appear are one, and there is no other reality but appearance. If this is true, then it is impossible for illusion and perception to have the same appearance, for my illusions to be perceptions without an object or for my perceptions to be true hallucinations. The truth of perception and the falsity of illusion must each be marked by some intrinsic characteristic, for otherwise we would never have a consciousness of a perception or an illusion as such, given that testimony of the other senses, of later experience, or of other people – which would remain the only possible criterion of differentiating them – has become itself uncertain. If the entire being of my perception and the entire being of my illusion is contained within their manner of appearing, then the truth that defines the one and the falsity that defines the other must also appear to me. Thus, between them there will be a difference of structure. A true perception will be, quite simply, a genuine perception. Illusion will not be a genuine perception; certainty will have to be extended from vision or from sensation as conceived to perception as constitutive of an object. The transparency of consciousness entails the immanence and the absolute certainty of the object. Nevertheless, illusion essentially does not present itself as an illusion, and, even if I am unable to perceive an unreal object, I must here be able to at least lose sight of its unreality; there must be at least an unconsciousness of the non-perception, an illusion must not be what it appears to be and, at least this once, the reality of an act of consciousness must be beyond its appearance. Shall we thus separate appearance from reality in the subject? But once this break is made, it cannot be repaired. The most clear appearance can from then on be deceptive, and this time it is the phenomenon of truth that becomes impossible.

– We do not have to choose between a philosophy of immanence or a rationalism that only accounts for perception and truth, and a philosophy

of transcendence or of the absurd that only accounts for illusion or error. We only know that there are errors because we have truths, through which we correct the errors and recognize them as such. Reciprocally, the explicit recognition of a truth is much more than the mere existence of an uncontested idea in us, or the immediate faith in what appears: it presupposes an examination, a doubt, and a break with the immediate, it is the correction of a possible error. Every rationalism admits of at least one absurdity, namely that it must be formulated as a thesis. Every philosophy of the absurd recognizes at least one sense in the very affirmation of absurdity. I can only remain within the absurd if I suspend every affirmation, if, like Montaigne or like the schizophrenic, I restrict myself to an interrogation that must not even be formulated (for in formulating it I would turn it into a question that, like every determinate question, would envelop a response), or if, in short, I oppose to truth not the negation of truth, but rather a simple state of non-truth or of equivocation, that is, the actual opacity of my existence. In the same way, I can only remain within absolute evidentness if I hold back every affirmation, if nothing is for me evident in itself, and if, as Husserl suggests, I stand in wonder before the world⁹⁵ and cease to be complicit with it in order to reveal the flow of motivations that carry me into it, in order to awaken my life and to make it entirely explicit. When I want to go from this interrogation to an affirmation and, *a fortiori*, when I want to express myself, I crystallize a collection of indefinite motives in an act of consciousness, I enter back into the implicit, that is, into the equivocal and the play of the world.⁹⁶ The absolute contact of myself with myself, or the identity of being and appearing, cannot be posited, but merely lived prior to all affirmation. Thus, it is the same silence and the same void on both sides. The experience [l'expérience] of absurdity and that of absolute evidentness are interdependent and even indiscernible. The world only appears absurd if a demand of an absolute consciousness at each moment dissociates the significations with which the world is teeming and, reciprocally, if this demand is motivated by the conflict between these significations. Absolute evidentness and the absurd are equivalents, not merely as philosophical affirmations, but also as experiences. Rationalism and skepticism sustain themselves upon the actual life of consciousness that they both hypocritically imply, without which they could be neither thought nor even lived, and in which one cannot say that *everything has a sense* or that *everything is non-sense*, but merely that *there is sense*. As Pascal says, if we only push them slightly, we find that doctrines are teeming with contradictions, and

yet they had the air of clarity, they had a sense at first glance. A truth against the background of absurdity, and an absurdity that the teleology of consciousness presumes to be able to convert into a truth, this is the originary phenomenon. To say that, in consciousness, appearance and reality are one, or to say that they are separated, is to render impossible the consciousness of anything, even as appearance.

And yet there is consciousness of something, something appears, there is a phenomenon – such is the true *cogito*. Consciousness is neither the thematization of self, nor the ignorance of self, it is not *hidden* from itself, that is, there is nothing in it that is not in some way announced to it, even though it has no need of knowing it explicitly. In consciousness, appearance is not being, but phenomenon. This new *cogito*, because it is prior to revealed truth and error, makes them both possible. The lived is, of course, lived by me; I am not unaware of the feelings that I repress and in this sense there is no unconsciousness. But I can live more things than I can represent to myself, my being is not reduced to what of myself explicitly appears to me. What is only lived is ambivalent; there are feelings in me to which I do not give a name, and also false joys to which I am not entirely committed. The difference between illusion and perception is intrinsic, and the truth of perception can only be read in perception itself. If I believe I see a large flat stone, which is in reality a patch of sunlight, far ahead on the ground in a sunken lane, I cannot say that I ever see the flat stone in the sense in which I will see the patch of sunlight while moving closer. The flat stone only appears, like everything that is far off, in a field whose structure is confused and where the connections are not yet clearly articulated. In this sense, the illusion, like the image, is not observable, that is, my body is not geared into it and I cannot spread it out before myself through some exploratory movements. And yet, I am capable of omitting this distinction, and I am capable of illusion. It is not true that, if I hold myself to what I truly see, I never make an error, nor is it true that sensation, at least, is indubitable. Every sensation is already pregnant with a sense, inserted into a confused or clear configuration, and there is no sensible given that remains the same when I pass from the illusory stone to the true patch of sunlight. The evidentness of sensation entails that of perception, and would render illusion impossible. I see the illusory stone in the sense that my entire perceptual and motor field gives to the light patch the sense of a “stone on the lane.” And I already prepare to sense this smooth and solid surface beneath my foot. This is because

correct vision and illusory vision are not distinguished in the manner of adequate thought and inadequate thought: that is, in the manner of an absolutely full thought and an incomplete thought. I say that I perceive correctly when my body has a precise hold on the spectacle, but this does not mean that my hold is ever complete; it could only be complete if I had been able to reduce all of the object's interior and exterior horizons to the state of articulated perception, which is in principle impossible. In the experience of a perceptual truth, I presume that the concordance experienced up until now would be maintained for a more detailed observation; I put my confidence in the world. To perceive is suddenly to commit to an entire future of experiences in a present that never, strictly speaking, guarantees that future; to perceive is to believe in a world. It is this opening to a world that makes perceptual truth possible, or the actual realization of a *Wahr-Nehmung*,⁹⁷ and permits us "to cross out" the preceding illusion, to hold it to be null and void. I saw a large shadow moving on the periphery of my visual field and at a distance, I turn my gaze to this side and the phantasm shrinks and takes its proper place: it was only a fly close to my eye. *I was conscious of seeing a shadow and now I am conscious of having only seen a fly.* My belonging to the world allows me to compensate for the fluctuations of the *cogito*, to displace one *cogito* in favor of another, and to meet up with the truth of my thought beyond its appearance. In the very moment of illusion, this correction was presented to me as possible because the illusion itself makes use of the same belief in the world, only contracts into a solid appearance thanks to this contribution, and hence, being always open to an horizon of presumptive verifications, the illusion does not separate me from truth. But, for the same reason, I am not protected from error since the world that I aim at through each appearance, and that rightly or wrongly gives it the weight of truth, never necessarily requires this particular appearance. There is an absolute certainty of the world in general, but not of any particular thing. Consciousness is distant from being and from its own being, and at the same time united to them, through the thickness of the world. The true *cogito* is not the private exchange between thought with the thought that I am having this thought, for they only unite through the world. The consciousness of the world is not established upon self-consciousness, but they are strictly contemporaries: there is a world for me because I am not unaware of myself; I am not concealed from myself because I have a world. This preconscious possession of the world in the pre-reflective *cogito* remains to be analyzed.



THE THING AND THE NATURAL WORLD

[A. *Perceptual Constants.*]

[i. *Constancy of form and of size.*]

352 Even if it cannot be defined as such, a thing has stable “characteristics” or “properties,” and we will approach the phenomenon of reality by studying perceptual constants. To begin with, a thing has its size and its shape beneath perspectival variations, which are merely apparent. We do not attribute these appearances to the object, they are an accident of our relations with the object and they do not concern the object itself. What do we mean by this, and on what basis, then, do we judge that a form or a size are the form and the size of *the object*?

The psychologist will say that for each object we are given sizes and forms that are always variable according to the perspective, and that we agree to consider as true the size that we obtain of the object at arm’s length or the form that the object assumes when it is situated upon a plane that is parallel to the frontal plane. These are no more true than others, but with this typical distance and this orientation having been defined with the help of our body – the always given reference point

– we always have the means of recognizing them, and they themselves provide a reference point to which we can ultimately fix the fleeting appearances, distinguish them from each other, and, in a word, construct an objectivity. For the square that is seen obliquely, which is more or less a diamond, is only distinguished from the true diamond if the orientation is taken into account, if, for example, the frontal presentation is chosen as the only decisive one, and if every appearance is related to what it would become under these specific conditions. But this psychological reconstitution of objective size and form takes for granted what was to be explained, namely, a range of *determinate* sizes and forms among which it would suffice to choose one, which would become the real size or the real form. As we have already said, for a single object that is moving away or that is spinning, I do not have a series of “psychical images,” increasingly small or increasingly distorted, among which I could make a conventional choice. If I account for my perception in these terms, this is because I already introduce the world, with its objective sizes and forms, into my perception. The problem is not simply to know how one size or one form, among all apparent sizes and forms, is held to be constant; the problem is much more radical: it involves attempting to understand how a determinate form or size – true, or even apparent – can appear in front of me, can crystallize the flow of my experiences, and can, in short, be presented to me. In a word: how can something be objective?

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At first glance, there certainly seems to be a way of evading the question, namely, by admitting that size and form are never ultimately perceived as attributes of an individual object, and that they are merely names for designating the relations between the parts of the phenomenal field. The constancy of real size or form throughout the variations of perspective would merely be the constancy of relations between the phenomenon and the conditions of its presentation. For example, the true size of my fountain pen is not like some quality inherent in one of my perceptions of the fountain pen; it is not, like redness, warmth, or sweetness, given or noticed in a perception. If it remains constant, this is not because I preserve the memory of a previous experience where I would have noticed it. Rather, it is the invariant or the law of corresponding variations of the visual appearance and of its apparent distance. Reality is not one privileged appearance that would remain beneath the others; it is the framework of relations to which all appearances will conform. If I hold my fountain pen close to my eyes such that it conceals almost the

entire landscape, its real size remains quite modest, because this fountain pen that masks everything is also a fountain pen *seen up close*, and this condition – always noted in my perception – restores the appearance to its modest proportions. The square presented to me obliquely remains a square, not because I evoke in relation to this apparent diamond the well-known form of a square seen face on, but rather because the diamond-appearance presented obliquely is immediately identical to the square-appearance presented frontally, because I am given, along with each of its configurations, the orientation of the object that makes it possible and because they are presented in a context of relations that, *a priori*, renders the different perspectival presentations equivalent. The cube whose sides are distorted by the perspective nevertheless remains a cube, not that I imagine the appearance that each of the six faces would in turn have if I were to turn it around in my hand, but rather because the perspectival distortions are not brute givens, and neither is, for that matter, the perfect form of the side facing me. If its full perceptual sense is worked out, each element of the cube indicates the current point of view of the observer upon it. A merely apparent form or size is one that is not yet situated within the rigorous system that phenomena and my body form together. As soon as it takes its place there, it regains its truth, the perspectival distortion is no longer suffered, but rather understood. Appearance is only illusory and, in the literal sense, it is only an appearance when it is indeterminate. The question of knowing how there are true, objective, or real forms or sizes for us is reduced to the question of knowing how there are determinate forms for us; and there are determinate forms (like “a square,” “a diamond,” or an actual spatial configuration) for us because our body, as a point of view upon things, and things, as abstract elements of a single world, form a system where each moment is immediately significant of all the others. A certain orientation of my gaze in relation to the object signifies a certain appearance of the object and a certain appearance of the objects nearby. In all of its appearances, the object preserves its invariable characteristics and itself remains invariable, and it is an object because all of the possible values that it could assume in terms of size and form are contained in advance in the formula of its relations with the context. What we affirm with the object as a definite being is, in fact, a *facies totius universi*¹ that does not change, and the equivalence of all of the object’s appearances and the identity of its being is established in the object. By following out the logic of objective size and form, we

would see with Kant that it turns us back to positing a world as a rigorously connected system, that we are never enclosed within appearance, and that ultimately only the object can fully appear.

Thus we place ourselves immediately within the object and we are unaware of the psychologist's problems. But have we truly overcome them? When it is said that true size or form are merely the constant law according to which appearance, distance, and orientation vary, it is implied that they could be treated as measurable sizes, and thus that they are already determinate, whereas the question is precisely to understand how they become determinate. Kant is right to say that perception is, of itself, polarized toward the object. But it is appearance as appearance that becomes incomprehensible in Kant. Given that the perspectival views upon the object are immediately placed back into the objective system of the world, the subject conceives of his perception and of the truth of his perception rather than perceiving. Perceptual consciousness does not present us with perception as a science, or the size and form of the object as laws, and the numerical determinations of science go back over the outline of a constitution of the world already accomplished prior to them. Kant, like the scientist, takes the results of this pre-scientific experience as acquired, and can only pass over this experience in silence because he makes use of its results. When I see the furniture of my room in front of me, the table with its form and size is not, for me, a law or a rule for the unfolding of phenomena, it is not an invariable relation; rather, because I see the table with its definite size and form, I presume for every change in distance or orientation a corresponding change of size or form, and not *vice versa*. Far from the thing reducing down to constant relations, the constancy of relations is grounded in the evidentness of the thing. For science and for objective thought, an object seen a hundred paces away with a very small apparent size is indiscernible from the same object seen ten paces away and at a greater angle; and the object is in fact nothing other than this constant product of distance multiplied by apparent size. But for me who is perceiving, the object at a hundred paces is not present and real in the sense that the object at ten paces is, and I identify the object in all of its positions, at all of its distances, and through all of its appearances, insofar as all of the perspectives converge toward the perception that I obtain for a certain typical distance and orientation. This privileged perception assures the unity of the perceptual process and gathers all of the other appearances into itself. For each object, just as for each painting in

an art gallery, there is an optimal distance from which it asks to be seen – an orientation through which it presents more of itself – beneath or beyond which we merely have a confused perception due to excess or lack. Hence, we tend toward the maximum of visibility and we seek, just as when using a microscope, a better focus point,² which is obtained through a certain equilibrium between the interior and the exterior horizons. A living body seen from too close, and lacking any background against which it could stand out, is no longer a living body, but rather a material mass as strange as the lunar landscape, as can be observed by looking at a segment of skin with a magnifying glass; and, seen from too far away, the living body again loses its living value, and is no longer anything but a puppet or an automaton. The living body itself appears when its microstructure is visible neither too much, nor too little, and this moment also determines its real form and size. The distance between me and the object is not a size that increases or decreases, but rather a tension that oscillates around a norm. The oblique orientation of the object in relation to me is not measured by the angle that it forms with the plane of my face, but rather experienced as a disequilibrium, as an unequal distribution of its influences upon me. Variations of appearance are not increases or decreases of size, nor real distortions; quite simply, sometimes its parts mix together and merge, sometimes they are clearly articulated against each other and reveal their riches. There is a point of maturity of my perception that at once satisfies these three norms and toward which the entire perceptual process tends. If I bring the object closer to me, or if I turn it around in my fingers in order to “see it better,” this is because every attitude of my body is immediately for me a power for a certain spectacle, because each spectacle is for me what it is within a certain kinesthetic situation, and because, in other words, my body is permanently stationed in front of things in order to perceive them and, inversely, appearances are always enveloped for me within a certain bodily attitude. Thus, if I know the relation from appearances to the kinesthetic situation, this is not through a law or from a formula, but rather insofar as I have a body and insofar as I am, through this body, geared into a world. And just as perceptual attitudes are not known by me individually, but rather implicitly given as stages in the gesture that lead to the optimal attitude, correlatively the perspectives that correspond to them are not thematized before me one after the other and are only presented as pathways toward the thing itself with its size

and its form. Kant saw quite well that it is not a problem of knowing how determinate forms and sizes appear within my experience, since otherwise it would not be an experience of anything and since every inner experience is only possible against the background of external experience. But from this Kant concluded that I am a consciousness who encompasses and constitutes the world, and, in this reflective movement, he passed over the phenomenon of the body and the phenomenon of the thing.

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On the contrary, if we want to describe these two phenomena, then we must say that my experience opens onto things and transcends itself in them because it always accomplishes itself within the framework of a certain arrangement with regard to the world that is the definition of my body. Sizes and forms only serve “to modalize” this overall hold upon the world. The thing is large if my gaze cannot encompass it, small if it does so easily, and medium sizes are distinguished from each other insofar as they, at an equal distance, more or less widen my gaze, or insofar as they, at unequal distances, widen it equally. The object is circular if, when all of its sides are equally close to me, it does not require any change of the curve of the movement of my gaze, or if such changes can be attributed to the oblique presentation according to the knowledge of the world that is given to me with my body.³ Thus, it is certainly true that every perception of a thing, of a form, or of a size as real, or that every perceptual constancy sends us back to the positing of a world and a system of experiences in which my body and the phenomenon would be rigorously connected. But the system of experience is not spread out before me as if I were God, it is lived by me from a certain point of view; I am not the spectator of it, I am a part of it, and it is my inherence in a point of view that at once makes possible the finitude of my perception and its opening to the total world as the horizon of all perception. If I know that a tree on the horizon remains what it is in nearby perception, that it maintains its real form and size, this is merely insofar as this horizon is the horizon of my immediate surroundings, insofar as the perceptual possession of things that it contains is increasingly guaranteed to me. In other words, perceptual experiences are linked together, motivate each other, and are involved in each other. The perception of the world is nothing but an expansion of my field of presence, it does not transcend the essential structures of this field, and the body always remains an agent in and never becomes an object of this field. The world is an open and indefinite unity

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in which I am situated, as Kant indicates in the *Transcendental Dialectic*, but as he seems to forget in the *Transcendental Analytic*.

[ii. *Constancy of color: the “modes of appearance” of color and lighting.*]

The qualities of the thing – such as its color, its hardness, and its weight – teach us much more about it than its geometrical properties do. The table is and remains brown throughout all of the plays of light and in all types of lighting. To begin with, then, what is this real color and how do we have access to it? It will be tempting to respond that it is the color according to which I most often see the table, the one that it takes on in daylight, at close proximity, under “normal” conditions, in short, the most frequent conditions. When the distance is too large, or when the lighting has a color of its own (such as at sunset, or beneath an electric light), I displace the actual color to the benefit of a color from memory,⁴ which is predominant because it is inscribed in me by numerous experiences. The constancy of the color would thus be a real constancy. But here we have merely an artificial reconstruction of the phenomenon. For, if we consider perception itself, it cannot be said that the brown of the table is presented in all lighting conditions as the same brown, or as the same quality actually given by memory. A sheet of white paper in the shadows, that we recognize as such, is not purely and simply white, and it “does not allow itself to be placed upon the white–black series in a satisfactory way.”⁵ Consider a white wall in the shadows and a gray piece of paper in the light. It cannot be said that the wall remains white and the paper gray: rather, the piece of paper makes more of an impression upon the gaze,⁶ it is more luminous, more clear, whereas the wall is darker and more matte, it is merely, so to speak, the “substance of the color” that remains beneath the variations of the lighting.⁷ The supposed constancy of colors does not prevent “an incontestable change during which we continue to receive in vision the fundamental quality and, so to speak, what is substantial in it.”⁸

359 This same reason will prevent us from treating the constancy of colors as an ideal constancy and from relating it to judgment. For a judgment that would distinguish the contribution of the lighting in the given appearance would only come to an end with an identification of the object’s proper color, and we have just seen that its color does not remain identical. The weakness of empiricism, just like intellectualism, is to fail to

recognize colors other than the congealed colors that appear in a reflective attitude, whereas the color in living perception is an initial approach to the thing. This illusion that the world is made up of color-qualities – which has been kept alive by physics – must be eliminated. As painters have observed, there are very few colors in nature. The perception of colors comes late for the child, and in every case it comes well after the constitution of the world. The Maoris have 3,000 color names, not because they perceive many, but rather because they do not identify them when they belong to structurally different objects.⁹ As Scheler said, perception goes directly to the things without passing through colors, just as it can grasp the expression of a gaze without thematizing the color of the eyes. We can only understand perception by accounting for a color-function, which can remain even when the qualitative appearance is altered. I say that my pen is black and I see it as black in the sunshine. But this black is much less the sensible quality of blackness than it is a dark power that shines from the object, even when it is covered over by reflections, and this black as a dark power is only visible in the sense in which a moral blackness is visible. The real color remains beneath the appearances just as the background continues beneath the figure, that is, not as a quality that is seen or conceived, but rather as a non-sensorial presence.

Physics and also psychology give an arbitrary definition of color that in fact only works for one of its modes of appearance, and which has long concealed from us all of the others. Hering asks that only the pure color be employed in the study and comparison of colors – that all extraneous circumstances be held to the side. We must work “not on the colors that belong to a determinate object, but upon a *quale*, whether it is flat or whether it fills space, which subsists for itself without any determinate carrier.”¹⁰ The colors of the spectrum more or less fulfill these conditions. But these colored areas (*Flächenfarben*) are in fact merely one of the possible structures of color, and already the color of a piece of paper or a surface color (*Oberflächenfarbe*) no longer obeys the same laws. Differential thresholds are lower in surface colors than in colored areas.¹¹ Colored areas are localized at a distance, but in an imprecise way; they have a spongy appearance, whereas surface colors are thick and hold the gaze upon their surface. Moreover, colored areas are always parallel to the frontal plane, whereas surface colors can present all manner of orientations; and finally, colored areas are always vaguely flat and cannot mold to a particular form, and cannot appear as curved or as spread across a surface, without

thereby losing their quality of being a colored area.¹² Again, these two modes of appearance of color both figure in the psychologist's experiments, where, for that matter, they are often confused. But there are many others of which the psychologists have long failed to speak: the color of transparent bodies, which occupy the three dimensions of space (*Raumfarbe*); the color of shimmer (*Glanz*), of glow (*Glühen*), of shine (*Leuchten*), and the color of lighting in general, which is so little confused with the color of the light source that the painter can represent the former by distribution of shadows and lights upon the objects without representing the latter.¹³ Here the unquestioned belief is that this has to do with different arrangements of a perception of color that is in itself invariable, or with different forms given to a single sensible material. In fact, color functions differently when the supposed material absolutely disappears, since the articulation is obtained through a change of the sensible properties themselves. In particular, the distinction between the lighting and the object's own color does not result from an intellectualist analysis, it is not the imposition of notional significations upon a sensible matter; rather, it is a certain organization of color itself, the establishing of a lighting/object-illuminated structure, which we must describe more closely if we want to understand the constancy of the thing's "own" color.¹⁴

361 A blue piece of paper appears blue in gaslight. And yet, examining it with a photometer, we are surprised to notice that it sends to the eye the same mixture of rays as a brown piece of paper seen in daylight.¹⁵ A white wall that is weakly illuminated, which appears in spontaneous vision as white (given the stipulations made above), appears gray-blue if we see it through the window of a screen that hides the light source from us. The painter achieves the same result without the screen and manages to see the colors according to how the quantity and quality of reflected light determine them, given that he isolates them from the surroundings by squinting, for example. This change in appearance is inseparable from a structural change in the color: at the moment we place the screen between our eye and the spectacle, or at the moment we squint, we free the colors from the objectivity of bodily surfaces and we reduce them to the simple condition of luminous areas. We no longer see real bodies (the wall, the piece of paper) with determinate colors and located in their place in the world; rather, we see colored patches that are all vaguely situated upon the same "fictional" plane.¹⁶ How exactly does the screen work? We will understand it better by observing the same phenomenon

under different conditions. If we successively view the interior of two large boxes through an eye-hole – the first one painted white and the other painted black, the first one weakly illuminated, the other strongly illuminated, in such a way that the quantity of light received by the eye is the same in both cases, and if it is set up such that there are no shadows and no irregularities in the paint – then they are indiscernible, and in both cases we see an empty space permeated by gray. Everything changes when a piece of white paper is introduced into the black box or black paper into the white box. Instantly the first appears as black and violently illuminated, and the other as white but weakly illuminated. For the lighting/object-illuminated structure to be given, there must thus be at least two surfaces with different reflecting powers.¹⁷ If it is arranged for the beam of light from an arc lamp to fall directly upon a black disc, itself spinning in order to eliminate the influence of any rough areas that it might still bear on its surface, then the disc appears, like the rest of the room, weakly illuminated, and the beam of light is a whitish solid whose base is constituted by the disc. If we place a piece of white paper in front of the disc, “in the very same instant we see the ‘black’ disc and the ‘white’ paper and both are violently illuminated.”¹⁸ The transformation is so complete that one has the impression of seeing a new disc appear. These experiments in which no screen is involved explain those where it is involved: the decisive factor in the phenomenon of constancy – that the screen puts out of play and that can be a factor in free vision – is the articulation of the whole field, the richness and sharpness of its structure. When the subject looks through the window of a screen, he can no longer “survey” or “dominate” (*Überschauen*) the lighting relations; that is, he can no longer perceive in visible space the subordinate wholes with their own brightnesses which stand out from each other.¹⁹ When the painter squints, he destroys the organization of the field according to depth and, along with it, the precise contrasts of the lighting; no longer are there any determinate things with their own colors. If the experiment of the white paper in the shadow and the illuminated gray paper is started over again, and if the negative after-images of the two perceptions are cast upon a screen, it is observed that the phenomenon of constancy is not preserved here, as if the constancy and the lighting/object-illuminated structure could only occur in things and not in the diffuse space of after-images.²⁰ By acknowledging that these structures depend upon the organization of the field, we immediately understand all of the empirical laws of the

phenomenon of constancy:²¹ that it is proportional to the size of the retinal area upon which the spectacle is projected, and all the more clear
 363 insofar as the fragment of the world projected is more extensive and more richly articulated within the retinal space in question; that it is less perfect in peripheral vision than in central vision, less perfect in monocular vision than in binocular vision, less perfect in brief vision than in prolonged vision; that it weakens at long distances; that it varies with individuals and according to the richness of their perceptual world; and that, finally, it is less perfect for colored lighting conditions, which efface the superficial structure of objects and level out the reflective power of the different surfaces, than it is for non-colored lighting conditions that respect these structural differences.²² Thus, the connection between the phenomenon of constancy, the articulation of the field, and the phenomenon of lighting can be considered an established fact.

This functional relationship, however, leads us to understand neither the terms that it unites, nor consequently their concrete relation, and the most significant benefit of the discovery would be lost if we do not hold ourselves to the simple observation of the corresponding variation of the three terms taken in their ordinary sense. *In what sense* must we say that the color of the object remains constant? *What* is the organization of the spectacle and the field where it is organized? And finally, *what is lighting?* Psychological induction remains blind if we do not succeed in gathering into a single phenomenon the three variables that it connotes, and if it does not lead us by the hand to an intuition where the supposed “causes” or “conditions” of the phenomenon of constancy will appear as moments of this phenomenon and in an essential relation with it.²³ Let us reflect, then, upon the phenomena that have just been revealed and attempt to see how they motivate each other in perception generally.
 364 First, let us examine the strange mode of appearance of light or colors that we call lighting. What is strange here? What happens in the moment when a certain patch of light is taken as lighting, rather than counting for itself? It took centuries of painting before the reflections upon the eye were seen, without which the painting remains lifeless and blind, as in the paintings by primitive peoples.²⁴ The reflection is not seen for itself, since it was able to go unnoticed for so long, and yet it has its function in perception, since its mere absence is enough to remove the life and the expression from objects and from faces. The reflection is only seen out of the corner of the eye. It is not presented as an aim of our perception,

it is the auxiliary or the mediator of our perception. It is not itself seen, but makes the rest be seen. Reflections and lighting in photography are often poorly portrayed because they are transformed into things, and if in a film, for example, a character enters a cave holding a lamp, we do not see the beam of light as an immaterial being that explores the darkness and makes objects appear, the beam solidifies, it is no longer capable of showing us the object at its other end, the passage of the light upon a wall only produces pools of dazzling brightness that are not localized upon the wall, but rather upon the surface of the screen. Lighting and reflection only play their role if they fade into the background as discreet intermediaries, and if they *direct* our gaze rather than arresting it.²⁵

But what should we conclude from this? If I am led through an unfamiliar apartment toward its owner, there is someone who knows on my behalf, someone to whom the unfolding of the visual spectacle offers a sense and moves toward a goal; I entrust myself or lend myself to this knowledge that I do not possess. When I am shown a detail of the landscape that I did not know how to distinguish on my own, there is someone here who has already seen, who already knows where to stand and where one must look to see this detail. The lighting directs my gaze and leads me to see the object, so in one sense it *knows* and *sees* the object. If I imagine an empty theater where the curtain rises upon an illuminated scene, it seems to me that the spectacle is *visible in itself* or ready to be seen, and that the light that explores the foreground and the background, forms shadows, and thoroughly penetrates the spectacle accomplishes a sort of vision out in front of us. Reciprocally, our own vision does nothing but take up for itself and follow out the encompassing of the spectacle through the paths traced out for it by the lighting, just as in hearing a phrase we are surprised to find the trace of an external thought. We perceive according to light, just as in verbal communication we think according to others.²⁶ And just as communication presupposes (even though, in the case of new and authentic speech, it transcends it and enriches it) a certain linguistic arrangement by which a sense inhabits the words, so too perception presupposes in us a mechanism capable of responding to the solicitations of light according to their sense (that is, simultaneously according to their direction and their signification, which are but one), capable of drawing together the scattered visibility, and of achieving what is merely sketched out in the spectacle. This mechanism is the gaze, or in other words the natural correlation between appearances and our kinesthetic operations,

which are not known through a law, but are lived as the engagement of our body in the typical structures of a world. Lighting and the constancy of the illuminated thing, which is its correlate, depend directly upon our bodily situation. If, in a brightly lit room, we observe a white disc placed in a shadow in the corner, the constancy of the white is imperfect. It improves when we approach the shadowy zone where the disc is located. It becomes perfect when we enter into this zone.²⁷ The shadow only truly becomes a shadow (and correlatively the disc only counts as white) when it ceases to be in front of us as something to see; it only becomes a shadow when it envelops us, when it becomes our milieu, and when we establish ourselves in it.

We can only understand this phenomenon if the spectacle, far from being a sum of objects, or a mosaic of qualities spread out before an acosmic subject, circumvents the subject and offers him a pact. Lighting is not on the side of the object, it is what we take up, what we adopt as a norm, whereas the illuminated thing stands in front of us and confronts us. Lighting is in itself neither color, nor even light, it is prior to the distinction between colors and lights. And this is why it always tends to become “neutral” for us. The shadowy light in which we remain becomes so natural for us that it is no longer even perceived as shadowy. Electric lighting, which seems yellow to us when we first leave the daylight, soon ceases to have any definite color for us, and, if some remnant of daylight penetrates into the room, it is this “objectively neutral” light that appears to us as tinted blue.²⁸ It must not be said that – once the yellow lighting provided by electricity has been perceived as yellow – we take this into account in the appreciation of appearances and ideally rediscover in this way the proper color of the objects. It must not be said that the yellow light, to the extent that it is generalized, is seen with the appearance of daylight and that thus the color of other objects truly remains constant. Rather, we must say that the yellow light, by taking on the function of lighting, tends to situate itself as prior to every color, tends toward the absence of color, and that correlatively objects distribute the colors of the spectrum according to the degree and to the mode of their resistance to this new atmosphere. Every color-*qualé* is thus mediated by a color-function and is determined in relation to a level that is variable. The level is established, and along with it all of the color values that depend upon it, when we begin to live within the dominant atmosphere and redistribute upon the objects the colors of the spectrum in function of this fundamental tacit

agreement. Our settling into a certain colored milieu, along with the transpositions of all color relations that it entails, is a bodily operation; I can only accomplish this by entering into this new atmosphere because my body is my general power of inhabiting all of the world's milieus, and the key to all of the transpositions and all of the equivalences that keep the world constant. Thus, lighting is merely one moment in a complex structure whose other moments are the organization of the field such as our body accomplishes it and the illuminated thing in its constancy. The functional correlations that can be discovered between these three phenomena are merely a manifestation of their "essential coexistence."²⁹

Let us show this more clearly by emphasizing the two latter phenomena. What must we understand by the "organization of the field"? We have seen that, if a piece of white paper is introduced into the beam of light from an arc lamp, up until then having merged with the disc upon which it falls and perceived as a cone-shaped solid – the beam of light and the disc are immediately dissociated and the lighting adopts the quality "lighting." The introduction of the paper into the beam of light, by making the "non-solidity" of the luminous cone clear, changes its sense with regard to the disc upon which it rests and makes it count as lighting. Things happen as if there were a lived incompatibility between the vision of the illuminated paper and that of a solid cone, and as if the sense of a part of the spectacle induced a reworking in the sense of the whole. Likewise, we have seen that, in the different parts of the visual field taken one by one, the proper color of the object and that of the lighting cannot be discerned, but that, in the whole of the visual field, through a sort of reciprocal action in which each part benefits from the configuration of the others, a general lighting emanates that gives each local color its "true" value. Everything happens, here again, as if the fragments of the spectacle, each one when taken separately being powerless to give rise to the vision of a lighting, made this possible through their union, and as if, through the color values scattered in the field, someone interpreted the possibility of a systematic transformation. When a painter wishes to represent a radiant object, he does not accomplish this so much by placing a lively color upon the object as by distributing as required its reflections and shadows upon the surrounding objects.³⁰ If we succeed momentarily in seeing an *intaglio* motif as one in relief, a seal for example, then we suddenly have the impression of a magical lighting that comes from the interior of the object. This is because the relations between light and shadows

upon the seal are thus the reverse of what they should be, taking account of the lighting of the place. If a lamp is carried around a bust while maintaining a constant distance, even when the lamp itself is invisible, we perceive the rotation of the light source in the complex of changes in the lighting and the color that are given.³¹ Thus, there is a “logic of illumination,”³² or again a “synthesis of illumination,”³³ a compossibility of the parts of the visual field, which can of course be made explicit through disjunctive propositions (for example, if the painter wants to justify his painting in front of the art critic), but which is primarily lived as the consistency of the scene or of the reality of the spectacle. Moreover, there is a total logic of the painting or the spectacle, an experience of coherence between colors, spatial forms, and the sense of the object. A painting in an art gallery, seen from the appropriate distance, has its inner lighting that gives to each of its colored patches not merely their color value, but also a certain representative value. Seen from too close, it falls
 368 under the dominant lighting of the gallery, and the colors “no longer act representatively, they no longer give the image of certain objects, but act as smears of paint upon a canvas.”³⁴ If, before a mountainous landscape, we adopt the critical attitude that isolates a part of the field, the color itself changes, and this green, which was a meadow-green isolated from the context, loses its thickness and its color at the same time that it loses its representative value.³⁵ A color is never simply a color, but rather the color of a certain object, and the blue of a rug would not be the same blue if it were not a wooly blue. The colors of the visual field, as we have just seen, form an ordered system around a dominant color, namely, the lighting taken as a level.

Now we catch a glimpse of a deeper sense of the organization of the field: it is not merely colors, but also geometrical characteristics, all of the sensory givens, and the signification of objects, which form a system; our perception is entirely animated by a logic that assigns to each object all of its determinations in relation to those of the others, and that “crosses out” as unreal every aberrant given; our perception is entirely sustained by the certainty of the world. From this point of view, we finally see the true signification of perceptual constancies. The constancy of color is merely an abstract moment of the constancy of things, and the constancy of things is established upon the primordial consciousness of the world as the horizon of all of our experiences. Thus, it is not because I perceive constant colors beneath the variety of lightings that I believe in things,

and the thing will not be a sum of constant characteristics; rather, I discover constant colors to the extent that my perception is in itself open to a world and to things.

[iii. *Constancy of sounds, temperatures, and weights.*]

The phenomenon of constancy is general. It has been possible to speak of a constancy of sounds,³⁶ of temperatures, of weights,³⁷ and, in short, of tactile givens in the strict sense; this constancy is itself also mediated by certain structures, or certain “modes of appearance” of phenomena in each of these sensorial fields. The perception of weight remains the same regardless of the muscles that contribute to it and regardless of the initial position of these muscles. When we lift an object with our eyes closed, its weight is not different whether or not the hand is weighed down with a supplementary weight (and whether this weight itself acts through pressure on the back of the hand or through traction upon the palm) – whether the hand acts freely or whether it is rather tied in such a way so that the fingers work alone – whether one finger or several perform the task – whether the object is lifted with the hand or with the head, a foot, or the teeth – and finally, whether it is lifted in the air or through water. Thus the tactile impression is “interpreted,” taking into account the nature and number of organs brought into play, and even the physical circumstances in which it appears; and this is how impressions that are very different in themselves, like a pressure upon the skin of the forehead and a pressure upon the hand, mediate the same perception of weight. Here the assumption that the interpretation rests upon an explicit induction, and that, in previous experience, the subject was able to measure the incidence of these different variables upon the actual weight of the object, is impossible. The subject has probably never had the opportunity to interpret forehead pressures in terms of weight or to add the weight of the arm partially reduced through its immersion in water to the local impression of the fingers in order to discover the ordinary scale of weights. Even if it is admitted that the subject, through the use of his body, gradually acquired a scale of weight-equivalences and learned that such an impression provided by the finger muscles is equivalent to this other impression provided by the whole hand, then such inductions – since he applies them to parts of his body that have never been used for lifting weights – must at least unfold within the framework of a comprehensive

knowledge of the body that systematically encompasses all of its parts. The constancy of weight is not a real constancy, nor is it the permanence in us of an “impression of weight” provided by the most often used organs and restored in other cases through association.

Will weight, then, be an ideal invariant, and the perception of weight a judgment by means of which – by relating in each case the impression with the bodily and physical conditions in which it appears – we discern, through a natural physics, a constant relation between these two variables? But this can only be a manner of speaking, for we do not know our body or the power, weight, and scope of our organs, like an engineer knows the machine he has assembled piece by piece. And when we compare the work of our hand to that of our fingers, they are distinguished or identified against the background of an overall power of our limb anterior to this comparison; the operations of different organs appear equivalent within the unity of an “I can.” Correlatively, the “impressions” provided by each of them are not really distinct and merely connected through an explicit interpretation; they are immediately given as different manifestations of “real” weight, the pre-objective unity of the thing is the correlate of the pre-objective unity of the body. Thus, the weight appears as the identifiable property of an object against the background of our body as a system of equivalent gestures.

[iv. *The constancy of tactile experiences and movement.*]*

This analysis of the perception of weight clarifies the whole of tactile perception: the movement of one’s own body is to touch what lighting is to vision.³⁸ Every tactile perception, at the same time that it opens onto an objective “property,” includes a bodily component, and, for example, the tactile localization of an object locates it in relation to the cardinal points of the body schema. At first glance, this property that draws an absolute distinction between touch and vision in fact allows us to bring them together. The visible object is surely in front of us and not on our eye, but we have seen that ultimately the visible position, size, and form are determined through the orientation, the scope, and the hold of my gaze upon them. And surely passive touch (such as touch by the inside of the ear or the nose, and in general by parts of the body that are ordinarily covered) hardly presents anything more than the state of one’s own body to us, and presents us with almost nothing having to do with the object.

Even in the most astute parts of our tactile surface, a pressure without any movement presents nothing but a barely identifiable phenomenon.³⁹ But there is also a passive vision with no gaze, such as the case of a dazzling light that does not display an objective space before us, and where the light ceases to be light in order to become painful, invading our eye itself. And just like the exploratory gaze of genuine vision, “knowing touch”⁴⁰ throws us beyond our body through movement. When one of my hands touches the other, the moving hand functions as subject, and the other as object.⁴¹ There are tactile phenomena, the so-called tactile qualities, such as rough and smooth, which completely disappear if the exploratory movement is removed. Movement and time are not merely an objective condition of knowing touch, but rather a phenomenal component of tactile givens. They actualize the articulation of tactile phenomena, just as light sketches out the configuration of a visible surface.⁴² Smoothness is not a sum of similar pressures, but rather the manner in which a surface makes use of the time of our tactile exploration or modulates the movement of our hand. The style of these modulations traces out as many modes of appearance of the tactile phenomenon, which are not reducible to each other and cannot be deduced from an elementary tactile sensation. There are “surface touch phenomena” (*Oberflächentastungen*) in which a two-dimensional tactile object offers itself to touch and more or less firmly resists penetration; there are three-dimensional tactile milieus, comparable to colored areas, such as a current of air or a current of water through which we drag our hand; and there is a tactile transparency layer (*durchtastete Flächen*).⁴³ The damp, the oily, and the sticky belong to a layer of more complex structures.⁴⁴ In a carved piece of wood that we touch, we immediately distinguish between the grain of the wood, which is its natural structure, and the artificial structure that it has been given by the woodcarver, just as the ear distinguishes a sound in the midst of other noises.⁴⁵ Here there are different structures of the exploratory movement and the corresponding phenomena cannot be treated as a collection of elementary tactile impressions, since the supposed component impressions are not even given to the subject: if I touch a linen fabric or a brush, between the needles of the brush or the threads of the linen, there is not a tactile nothingness, but rather a tactile space without matter, that is, a tactile background.⁴⁶ If it is not actually decomposable, the complex tactile phenomenon, for the same reasons, will not be ideally decomposable, and if we wanted to define hardness or softness, roughness or

smoothness, the sand-like or the honey-like, as so many laws or rules for the unfolding of tactile experience, then we would have to put into tactile experience the knowledge of the elements that the law coordinates. He who touches and who recognizes roughness or smoothness does not posit their elements nor the relations between them, he does not thoroughly conceive of them. It is not consciousness who touches or who palpates, it is the hand, and the hand is, as Kant says, “man’s outer brain.”⁴⁷

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In visual experience, which pushes objectification further than tactile experience, we can at least at first glance flatter ourselves that we constitute the world, because it presents a spectacle spread out before us at a distance and it gives us the illusion of being immediately present everywhere and of being situated nowhere. Tactile experience, however, adheres to the surface of our body; we cannot spread it out before ourselves and it does not fully become an object. Correlatively, as the subject of touch, I cannot flatter myself as being everywhere and nowhere, here I cannot forget that it is through my body that I go toward the world, tactile experience is accomplished “out in front” of me, and is not centered in me. It is not me who touches, but rather my body. When I touch I do not conceive of a multiplicity, rather, my hands discover a certain style that is among their motor possibilities and this is what is meant when one speaks of a perceptual field: I can only effectively touch if the phenomenon encounters an echo in me, if it is in accord with a certain nature of my consciousness, and if the organ that comes to encounter it is synchronized with it. The unity and the identity of the tactile phenomenon are not produced through a synthesis of recognition in the concept, they are established upon the unity and the identity of the body as a synergetic whole. “Once the child uses the hand as a unitary grasping tool, it also becomes a unitary touching tool.”⁴⁸ Not only do I use my fingers and my entire body as a single organ, but also, thanks to this unity of the body, the tactile perceptions obtained by one organ are immediately translated into the language of other organs. For example, the contact between our back or our chest with linen or wool remains within memory in the form of a contact with the hand,⁴⁹ and more generally in memory we can touch an object with parts of our body that have never actually touched it.⁵⁰ Each contact of an object with a part of our objective body is thus in fact a contact with the totality of the actual or possible phenomenal body. And this is how the constancy of a tactile object can be produced through

its different manifestations. It is a constancy-for-my-body, an invariant of my body's overall behavior. It carries itself beyond tactile experience through all of its surfaces and through all of its organs at once, and it has with it a certain schema [*typique*] of the tactile "world."

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[B. *The Thing or the Real.*]

[i. *The thing as norm of perception.*]

We are now in a position to approach the analysis of the inter-sensory thing. The visual thing (the bluish disc of the moon) or the tactile thing (my head such as I sense it by palpating it), which remains for us the same throughout a series of experiences, is neither a *quale* that actually subsists nor the notion of the consciousness of such an objective property, but rather that which is met with or taken up by our gaze or by our movement, a question to which they respond precisely. The object that is presented to the gaze or to the palpation awakens a certain motor intention that is not directed at the movements of one's own body, but at the thing itself upon which it somehow hangs. And if my hand knows hardness and softness, if my gaze knows moonlight, then it is as a certain manner of connecting with the phenomenon and of communicating with it. Hardness and softness, coarseness and smoothness, and moonlight and sunlight in our memory are presented before all else, not as sensory contents, but as a certain type of symbiosis, a certain manner that the outside has of invading us, a certain manner that we have of receiving it, and the memory does nothing here but bring out the framework of perception from which it was born.

If the constants of each sense are thus understood, it will not be a question of defining the inter-sensory thing in which they unite by a collection of stable attributes or by the notion of this collection. The sensory "properties" of a thing together constitute a single thing just as my gaze, my touch, and all of my other senses are, together, the powers of a single body integrated into a single action. When I simply glance at the surface that I am about to recognize as the surface of the table, it already invites me to a particular focus and calls forth the focusing movement that will

give it the surface's "true" appearance. Likewise, every object given to one sense calls forth the corresponding operation of all the others. I see a surface color because I have a visual field and because the arrangement of the field guides my gaze toward it – I perceive a thing because I have a field of existence and because each phenomenon that appears polarizes my entire body, as a system of perceptual powers, toward it. I go through appearances and I reach the real color or form when my experience is

374 at its highest degree of clarity, and Berkeley can certainly counter that a fly would see the same object differently, or that a stronger microscope would transform it. These different appearances are, for me, appearances of a certain true spectacle, namely, the one where the perceived configuration, for a sufficient clarity, reaches its maximum richness.⁵¹ I have visual objects because I have a visual field where richness and clarity are inversely related to each other and because these two demands, of which each one taken separately goes on to infinity, once reunited, determine within the perceptual process a certain point of maturity and a maximum. Likewise, I call the experience of the thing or of reality – no longer merely of a reality-for-vision or for-touch, but of an absolute reality – my full coexistence with the phenomenon at the moment when it would be in all relations at its maximum articulation, and the "givens of the different senses" are oriented toward this unique pole just as my sightings when looking through the microscope oscillate around a privileged sighting. I will not name a phenomenon a "visible thing" if it fails to offer some maximum of visibility across the various experiences that I have of it (such as colored areas), nor something that is far off and tiny on the horizon, that is vaguely located and diffuse at the zenith, that allows itself to be contaminated by the structures nearest to it and that does not oppose to them any configuration of its own (such as the sky). If a phenomenon – such as a reflection or a light breeze – only presents itself to one of my senses, then it is a phantom,⁵² and it will only approach real existence if, by luck, it becomes capable of speaking to my other senses, as when the wind, for example, is violent and makes itself visible in the disturbances of the landscape. Cézanne said that a painting contained, in itself, even the odor of the landscape.⁵³ He meant that the arrangement of the color upon the thing (and in the work of art if it fully captures the thing) by itself signifies all of the responses that it would give to the interrogation of my other senses, that a thing would not have that color if it did not have this form, these tactile properties, that sonority, or that

odor; and that the thing is the absolute plenitude that projects my undivided existence in front of itself.

[ii. *The existential unity of the thing.*]*

The unity of the thing, beyond all of its congealed properties, is not a substratum, an empty X, or a subject of inherence, but rather that unique accent that is found in each one, that unique manner of existing of which its properties are a secondary expression. For example, the fragility, rigidity, transparency, and crystalline sound of a glass expresses a single manner of being. If a patient sees the devil, he also sees his odor, his flames, and his smoke, because the meaningful unity “devil” is just this acrid, sulfurous, and burning essence. In the thing, there is a symbolism that links each sensible quality to the others. Heat is given in experience as a sort of vibration of the thing, color in turn is given as the thing going outside of itself, and it is *a priori* necessary that an extremely hot object turns red, for the excess of its vibration causes it to shine.⁵⁴ The unfolding of sensible givens beneath our gaze or beneath our hands is like a language that teaches itself, where signification would be secreted by the very structure of signs, and this is why it can be said that our senses literally interrogate the things and that the things respond to them. “Sensible appearance is what reveals (*Kundgibt*), it expresses what it itself is not as such.”⁵⁵ We understand the thing as we understand a new behavior, that is, not through an intellectual operation of subsumption, but rather by taking up for ourselves the mode of existence that the observable signs sketch out before us. A behavior outlines a certain manner of dealing with the world. Similarly, in the interaction of the things, each one is characterized by a sort of *a priori* that it observes in all of its encounters with the outside. The thing’s sense inhabits it as the soul inhabits the body: it is not behind appearances. The sense of the ashtray (or at least its total and individual sense, such as is presented in perception) is not a certain ideal of the ashtray that coordinates the sensory appearances and that would only be accessible to the understanding. Rather, it animates the ashtray, and it is quite evidently embodied in it. This is why we say that in perception the thing is given to us “in person,” or “in flesh and blood.” Prior to other persons, the thing accomplishes this miracle of expression: an interior that is revealed on the outside, a signification that descends into the world and begins to exist there and that can only be fully understood

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by attempting to see it there, in its place. Thus, the thing is the correlate of my body and, more generally, of my existence of which my body is merely the stabilized structure. The thing is constituted in the hold my body has upon it; it is not at first a signification for the understanding, but rather a structure available for inspection by the body. And if we want to describe the real such as it appears to us in perceptual experience, we find it burdened with anthropological predicates. Given that relations among things or among the appearances of things are always mediated by our body, then the setting of our own life must in fact be all of nature; nature must be our interlocutor in a sort of dialogue.

And this is why we ultimately cannot conceive of a thing that could be neither perceived nor perceptible. As Berkeley said, even a desert that has never been visited has at least one spectator, and it is we ourselves when we think of it, that is, when we perform the mental experiment of perceiving it. The thing can never be separated from someone who perceives it; nor can it ever actually be in itself because its articulations are the very ones of our existence, and because it is posited at the end of a gaze or at the conclusion of a sensory exploration that invests it with humanity. To this extent, every perception is a communication or a communion, the taking up or the achievement by us of an alien intention or inversely the accomplishment beyond our perceptual powers and as a coupling of our body with the things. If this was not noticed earlier, it is because the becoming aware of the perceived world was made difficult by the prejudices of objective thought. The consistent function of objective thought is to reduce all of the phenomena that attest to the union of the subject and the world, and to substitute for them the clear idea of the object as an *in-itself* and of the subject as a pure consciousness. Thus, objective thought cuts the ties that unite the thing and the embodied subject and leaves behind only sensible qualities for composing our world (to the exclusion of the modes of appearing that we described), and preferably visual qualities, because they have an autonomous appearance, because they are less directly tied to our body, and because they present us with an object rather than introducing us into a milieu. But in fact all things are concretions of a milieu, and every explicit perception of a thing is sustained by a previous communication with a certain atmosphere. We are not:

377 a mere collection of eyes, ears, tactile organs, and their prolongations to their respective parts in the brain. (. . .) Just as all literary works (. . .) are

only “instances” of possible permutations of the sounds and letters that enter into a language, so also qualities of sensations are “elements” of which the great “poem” of our environment (*Umwelt*) consists. But just as certainly as one who knows only such sounds and letters knows nothing at all of world literature and its “ultimate being” and has nothing of such literature “given” to him, so also those to whom “sensations” are “given” not only have no world but also have *nothing* of the world.⁵⁶

[iii. The thing is not necessarily an object.]*

The perceived is not necessarily an object present in front of me as a term to be known, it might be a “unit of value” that is only present to me in practice. If a painting has been removed from a room in which we live, we can perceive a change without knowing what has changed. Everything that makes up part of my environment is perceived, and my environment includes “everything with whose existence or absence, with whose being so or other than so, I practically ‘reckon’”⁵⁷ – the storm that has not yet broken, whose signs I could not even list and that I do not even foresee, but for which I am “equipped” and prepared; the periphery of the visual field that the hysteric does not explicitly grasp, but that nevertheless co-determines his movement and his orientation; the respect for other men, or that loyal friendship that I no longer even noticed, but that were nevertheless present for me since, when they are withdrawn, I am left off-balance.⁵⁸ Love is in the bouquets that Félix de Vandenesse prepares for Madame de Mortsauf:

as I picked [the flowers], one by one, cutting them near the root, admiring them, I reflected that their leaves and colouring had a harmony, a poetry which found its way into the understanding by charming the eye, just as musical phrases arouse a thousand memories in the hearts of those who love and are beloved. If colour is organic light, must it not have a meaning in the same way that organised vibrations of the air have theirs? (. . .) Love has its coat of arms and the Countess deciphered it. She gave me one of those incisive glances that resemble the cry of a sick man when his wound is touched. She was both shamefaced and delighted.⁵⁹

It is evident that the bouquet is a bouquet of love and yet it is impossible to say what in the bouquet signifies love, and this is precisely why

378 Madame de Mortsauf can accept it without violating her vows. The only way of understanding the bouquet is by looking at it, but then it says what it means. Its signification is the trace of an existence, legible and comprehensible for another existence. Natural perception is not a science, it does not posit the things upon which it bears, and it does not step back from them in order to observe them; rather, it lives among them and is the “opinion” or the “originary faith” that ties us to a world as if to our homeland; the being of the perceived is the pre-predicative being toward which our total existence is polarized.

[iv. *The real as the identity of all the givens among themselves, as the identity of the givens and their sense.*]

However, we have not exhausted the sense of the thing by defining it as the correlate of our body and of our life. After all, we only grasp the unity of our body in the unity of the thing, and only by beginning with things do our hands, our eyes, and all of our sense organs appear to us as interchangeable instruments. The body by itself, or the body at rest, is merely an obscure mass; we perceive it as a precise and identifiable being when it moves itself toward a thing, insofar as it projects itself intentionally toward the outside; but this perception is, for that matter, merely out of the corner of the eye and on the margins of consciousness, whose center is occupied by things and by the world. One cannot, as we said, conceive of a perceived thing without someone who perceives it. But moreover, the thing is presented as a thing in itself even to the person who perceives it, and thereby poses the problem of a genuine in-itself-for-us. We do not ordinarily catch sight of this because our perception, in the context of our everyday dealings, bears upon the things just enough to find in them their familiar presence, and not enough to rediscover what of the non-human is hidden within them. But the thing is unaware of us, it remains in itself. We will see this if we suspend our everyday dealings and bring a metaphysical and disinterested attention to bear upon the thing. The thing is then hostile and foreign, it is no longer our interlocutor, but rather a resolutely silent Other [Autre], a Self that escapes us as much as the intimacy of an external consciousness does. The thing and the world, we said, are presented to perceptual communication like a familiar face whose expression is immediately understood. But a face in fact only expresses something through the arrangement of colors and

lights that compose it; the sense of this facial expression is not behind its eyes, but upon them, and a touch of color more or less is enough for the painter to transform the facial expression of a portrait. In the works of his youth, Cézanne sought to paint the expression first, and this is why he missed it. He gradually learned that expression is the language of the thing itself, and is born of its configuration. His painting is an attempt to connect with the physiognomy of things and faces through the complete restitution of their sensible configuration. This is what nature effortlessly accomplishes at every moment. And this is why Cézanne's landscapes are "those of a pre-world where there were still no men."⁶⁰

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The thing appeared to us above as the term or end of a bodily teleology, and as the norm of our psycho-physiological arrangement. But that was merely a psychological definition that did not make explicit the full sense of the thing defined, and that reduced the thing to the experiences in which we encounter it. We now discover the core of reality: a thing is a thing because, no matter what it says to us, it says it through the very organization of its sensible appearances. The "real" is this milieu where each moment is not only inseparable from the others, but in some sense synonymous with them, where the "appearances" signify each other in an absolute equivalence. The "real" is the insurmountable plenitude: it is impossible to describe fully the color of a carpet without saying that it is a carpet, or a woolen carpet, and without implying in this color a certain tactile value, a certain weight, and a certain resistance to sound. The thing is this manner of being in which the complete definition of an attribute demands that of the entire subject, and where, consequently, its sense is indistinguishable from its total appearance. Again, Cézanne said: "the drawing and the colour are no longer distinct; as soon as you paint you draw; the more the colours harmonize, the more precise the drawing becomes. [. . .] When the colour is at its richest, the form is at its fullest."⁶¹ With the lighting/object-illuminated structure, foreground and background are possible. With the appearance of the thing, univocal forms and locations are ultimately possible. The system of appearances and pre-spatial fields becomes anchored and ultimately becomes a space. But it is not only geometrical characteristics that merge with color. The very sense of the thing is constructed before our eyes, a sense that no verbal analysis could exhaust and that merges with the presentation of the thing in its evidentness. Every touch of color that Cézanne puts down must, as Émile Bernard says, "contain the air, the light, the object, the

380 relief, the character, and the style.”⁶² Each fragment of a visible spectacle satisfies an infinite number of conditions, and it belongs to the real to contract an infinity of relations into each of its moments. Like the thing, the painting must be seen and not defined, but in the end, even if it is like a little world that opens up within the larger one, it cannot lay claim to the same solidity. We sense quite clearly that the painting is intentionally fabricated, that in its sense precedes existence, and it only wraps itself in the minimum amount of matter required to be communicated. On the contrary, the miracle of the real world is that in its sense and existence are one, and that we see sense take its place in existence once and for all. In imagination, I have hardly formed the intention to see before I already believe that I have seen. Imagination is without depth; it does not respond to our attempts to vary our points of view; it does not lend itself to our observation.⁶³ We are never geared into the imagination. In each perception, however, it is the matter itself that takes on sense and form. If I am waiting for someone at the door of a house on a poorly lit street, each person who comes through the door appears momentarily under a confused form. *Someone* is leaving the house, and I do not yet know if I can recognize this person as the one I am waiting for. The well-known silhouette will be born from this fog like the earth from its nebula. The real stands out against our fictions because in the real sense surrounds matter and penetrates it deeply. Once a painting has been torn to pieces, we have in our hands nothing but pieces of canvas smeared with paint. If we shatter a stone, and then the fragments of this stone, the pieces we obtain are still pieces of stone. The real lends itself to an infinite exploration, it is inexhaustible. This is why human objects and utensils appear as if placed into the world, whereas things are rooted in a background of non-human nature. For our existence, the thing is much less a pole of attraction than a pole of repulsion. We do not see ourselves in it, and this is precisely what makes it a thing. We do not begin by knowing the perspectival appearances of the thing; it is not mediated by our senses, our sensations, or our perspectives; we go straight to the thing, and only secondarily do we notice the limits of our knowledge and of ourselves as knowing.

[v. The thing “prior to” man.]*

Here is a die; let us consider it such as it is presented in the natural attitude to a subject who has never interrogated his own perception and who lives

among things. The die is there, it rests in the world. If the subject moves around it, these are not signs, but rather sides of the die that appear; he does not perceive projections or even profiles of the die; rather, he sees the die itself sometimes from here, and sometimes from over there; the appearances that have not yet congealed communicate among themselves, pass into each other; they all emanate from a central *Würfelhaftigkeit* [cubeness],⁶⁴ which is their mystical link. A series of reductions takes place from the moment we take the perceiving subject into consideration. First, I notice that this die is only for me. Perhaps my neighbors do not see it after all, and from this first observation the die already loses something of its reality; it ceases to be in itself in order to become the center of a personal history. Then I notice that the die is only, strictly speaking, given to me through vision, and suddenly I merely have the envelope of the total die, it loses its materiality, it empties out, and it is reduced to a visual structure of form and color, shadows and lights. At least form, color, shadows, and lights are not in the void, they still have a support, namely, the visual thing. In particular, the visual thing still has a spatial structure that affects its qualitative properties with a particular value: for if I am told that this die is an illusory one, its color immediately changes, it no longer has the same manner of modulating space. All the spatial relations that one could find in the die by working them out – such as the distance from its near face to its rear face, the “real” value of its angles, or the “real” direction of its sides – are undivided in its being as a visible die. Through a third reduction, we move from the visual thing to the perspectival appearance: I observe that all of the die’s faces cannot fall beneath my gaze, and that certain of them undergo deformations. Finally, through a last reduction, I reach the sensation that is no longer a property of the thing nor even of the perspectival appearance, but rather a modification of my body.⁶⁵ The experience of the thing does not go through all of these mediations and, consequently, the thing is not presented to a mind that would grasp each constitutive layer as representative of the higher layer and that would construct the thing straight through. Before all else, the thing is in its evidentness, and every attempt to define it – either as the pole of my bodily life, as the permanent possibility of sensations, or as the synthesis of appearances – substitutes for the thing itself in its originary being an imperfect reconstitution of the thing with the help of subjective bits and pieces. How might we simultaneously understand that the thing is the correlate of my knowing body and that the thing denies this body?

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[vi. *The thing beyond anthropological predicates because I am in the world.*]

What is given is not the thing alone, but also the experience of the thing, a transcendence in the wake of a subjectivity, a nature that shines forth through a history. If we attempted to follow realism in turning the perception into a coinciding with the thing, then we could no longer even understand the nature of the perceptual event, how the subject can assimilate the thing, or how the subject can carry the object into his history after having coincided with it, for in realism, the subject necessarily possesses nothing of the object. We must live things in order to perceive them. And yet we also reject the idealism of synthesis because it distorts our lived relation with things. If the perceiving subject accomplishes the synthesis of the perceived, he must dominate and think a material of perception, he must himself organize and unite all of the appearances of the thing; that is, perception must lose its inherence in an individual subject and in a point of view, and the thing must lose its transcendence and its opacity. To live a thing is neither to coincide with it, nor to think it straight through. Thus, our problem becomes clear. The perceiving subject must, without leaving his place or his point of view in the opacity of sensing, tend toward things whose key he does not hold in advance, and whose design [*projet*] he nevertheless carries within himself, he must open up to an absolute Other that he prepares from deeper within himself. The thing is not a block, perspectival aspects and the flow of appearances, if they are not explicitly posited, are at least ready to be perceived and given in non-thetic consciousness, just to the extent necessary so that I can escape from them in the thing. When I perceive a pebble, I am not explicitly conscious of only knowing it through vision, of only having certain perspectival aspects of it, and yet this analysis, if I undertake it, does not surprise me. I knew silently that the total perception went through and made use of my gaze, and that the pebble appeared to me in full light in front of the compacted darkness of the organs of my body. I guessed the possible fissures in the solid block of the thing given a simple fantasy of closing an eye or of thinking of perspective. This is how it is true to say that the thing is constituted in a flow of subjective appearances. And nevertheless, I did not constitute it at the time, that is, I did not actively, and through an inspection of the mind, posit the relations of all the sensory profiles among themselves and with my

sensory mechanisms. This is what we expressed by saying that I perceive with my body. The visual thing appears when my gaze – following the indications of the spectacle and gathering together the lights and the shadows that are scattered there – approaches the illuminated surface as what the light manifests. My gaze “knows” what such a patch of light signifies in such a context, and it understands the logic of illumination.

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More generally, there is a logic of the world that my entire body merges with and through which inter-sensory things become possible. My body, insofar as it is capable of synergy, knows what more or less of some color signifies for the totality of my experience; and my body immediately grasps the effect of this change in the presentation and in the sense of the object. To have senses such as vision is to possess this general arrangement, this schema [*typique*] of possible visual relations with the help of which we are capable of taking up every given visual constellation. To have a body is to possess a universal arrangement, a schema of all perceptual developments and of all inter-sensory correspondences beyond the segment of the world that we are actually perceiving. Thus, a thing is not actually given in perception, it is inwardly taken up by us, reconstituted and lived by us insofar as it is linked to a world whose fundamental structures we carry with ourselves and of which this thing is just one of several possible concretions. Although lived by us, the thing is no less transcendent to our life, because the human body, along with its habits that outline a human environment around itself, is crossed by a movement toward the world itself. Animal behavior aims at an animal milieu (*Umwelt*) and at centers of resistance (*Widerstand*). When the attempt is made to submit this behavior to natural stimuli stripped of concrete signification, neuroses appear.⁶⁶ Human behavior opens onto a world (*Welt*) and to an object (*Gegenstand*) beyond the tools that it constructs, it can even treat one's own body as an object. Human life is defined by this power that it has of denying itself in objective thought, and it draws this power from its primordial attachment to the world itself. Human life “understands” not only some definite milieu, but rather an infinity of possible milieus, and it understands itself because it is thrown into a natural world.

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[C. *The Natural World.*]

[i. *The world as schema. As a style. As an individual.*]

384 Thus, this originary comprehension of the world must be clarified. We said that the natural world is the schema [*typique*] of inter-sensory relations. We do not mean, in the Kantian manner, that it is an invariable system of relations to which every existing thing is subjected if it is to be known. It is not like a crystal cube, where all possible presentations can be conceived by its law of construction and that even allows its hidden sides to be seen in its present transparency. The world has its unity without the mind having succeeded in linking its sides together and in integrating them in the conception of a geometrical plan. This unity is comparable to that of an individual whom I recognize in an irrecusable evidentness prior to having succeeded in giving the formula of his character, because he conserves the same style in all that he says and in all of his behavior, even if he changes milieu or opinions. A style is a certain way of handling situations that I identify or understand in an individual or for a writer by taking up the style for myself through a sort of mimicry, even if I am incapable of defining it; and the definition of a style, as accurate as it might be, never presents the exact equivalent and is only of interest to those who have already experienced the style. I experience [*éprouve*] the unity of the world just as I recognize a style. Moreover, the style of a person or of a town does not remain constant for me. After ten years of friendship, and without even taking into account changes from growing older, it seems to be a relationship with a different person; after ten years of living in a neighborhood, it seems to be a different neighborhood. Yet this is only the *knowledge of things* that varies. Almost unnoticeable upon my first glance, this knowledge is transformed through the unfolding of perception.

The world itself remains the same world throughout my entire life because it is precisely the permanent being within which I make all corrections to knowledge, a permanent being that is not affected in its unity by these corrections, and whose evidentness polarizes my movements toward the truth through appearance and error. The world is on the margins of the infant's first perception, like a still unknown though irrecusable presence, which knowledge subsequently determines and fills out. If I make a mistake, I must rework my certainties and I must expel

my illusions from being, but I do not for a moment doubt that things in themselves have been compatible and compossible, because from the very beginning I am in communication with a single being, an immense individual from which my experiences are drawn, and who remains on the horizon of my life, just as the constant hum of a large city serves as the background for everything we do there. Sounds and colors are said to belong to a sensory field, because sounds, once perceived, can only be followed by other sounds or by silence, which is not an auditory nothingness, and which thus preserves our communication with sonorous being. If I am reflecting, and if during that time I cease listening, the moment I regain contact with sounds they appear to me as already there; I pick up a thread that I had dropped, but that was not broken. The field is a structure that I have for a certain type of experiences, and that, once established, cannot be canceled.

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[ii. *The world appears perspectively, but is not posited by a synthesis of understanding.*]*⁶⁷

Our possession of the world is of the same genre, except that one can conceive of a subject without an auditory field, but not of a subject without a world.⁶⁸ Just as the absence of sound for the hearing subject does not break the communication with the sonorous world, so too the absence of the visual or auditory world for the subject who is blind or deaf from birth does not break the communication with the world in general; there is always something opposite this subject, something of being to be deciphered, an *omnitudo realitatis*,⁶⁹ and this possibility is forever established by the first sensory experience, as narrow or imperfect as it might be. We have no other way of knowing what the world is than by taking up this affirmation that is made in us at each moment, and every definition of the world would merely be an abstract description that would mean nothing to us if we did not already have access to the definite, if we did not know it through the simple fact that we exist. All of our logical operations of signification must be established upon the experience of the world, and the world itself is thus not a certain signification common to all of our experiences that we discern through them, nor an idea that comes to animate the material of knowledge. We do not have a series of profiles of the world whose unity would be established in us by consciousness. The world certainly appears perspectively, and primarily spatially. I only see the southern side of the boulevard, and if I crossed the

street I would see its northern side; I only see Paris, and the countryside that I have just come back from has fallen again into a sort of dormant life. And on a deeper level, spatial profiles are also temporal: an “elsewhere” is always something that we have seen or that we could see, and even if I perceive it as simultaneous with the present, this is because it is part of the same wave of duration.

[iii. *Transition synthesis.*]*

386 The town I am approaching changes appearance, which I experience when I look away for a moment and then look at it again. But the profiles do not succeed each other and are not juxtaposed in front of me. My experience in these different moments is united with itself in such a way that I do not have different perspectival views linked together through the conception of an invariant. The perceiving body does not occupy different points of view in turn beneath the gaze of a consciousness who has no place and who thinks these perspectives. It is reflection that objectifies points of view or perspectives; when I perceive, I am directed toward the entire world through my point of view, and I do not even know the limits of my visual field. The diversity of points of view is only suspected through an imperceptible slippage, or through a certain “indeterminacy” [*bougé*] of the appearance. If successive profiles are actually distinguished, such as when I approach a town by car and only look at it intermittently, there is no longer a perception of the town, I suddenly find myself before another object without any common measure with the previous one. I ultimately judge: “It’s Chartres”; I weld together the two appearances, but only because they are both drawn from a single perception of the world, which cannot consequently admit the same discontinuity. The perception of the thing and of the world can no more be constructed from distinct profiles than binocular vision of an object from two monocular images, and my experiences of the world are integrated into a single world just as the double image disappears into the single thing when my finger ceases to press on my eyeball. I do not have one perspectival view, then another, along with a link established by the understanding; rather, each perspective *passes into* the other and, if one can still speak here of a synthesis, then it will be a “transition synthesis.”⁷⁰

In particular, present vision is not limited to what my visual field actually presents to me, and the next room, the landscape behind that hill, or

the interior or the back of this object is not evoked or represented. My point of view is for me much less a limitation on my experience than a way of inserting myself into the world in its entirety. When I gaze upon the horizon, it does not cause me, to think of that other landscape that I would see if I were there, nor does that one cause me to think of a third, and so on; I do not imagine anything, but all of the landscapes are already there in the concordant series and open infinity of their perspectives. When I gaze upon the brilliant green of Cézanne's vase, it does not cause me to think of pottery, it presents it to me, it is there, along with its thin and smooth outer surface, and its porous interior, in the particular manner in which the green is modulated. Within the interior and exterior horizon of the thing or the landscape there is a co-presence or a coexistence of profiles that are tied together through space and time. The natural world is the horizon of all horizons, and the style of all styles, which ensures my experiences have a given, not a willed, unity beneath all of the ruptures of my personal and historical life; the counterpart of the natural world is the given, general, and pre-personal existence in me of my sensory functions, which is where we discovered the definition of the body.

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[iv. Reality and incompleteness of the world: the world is open.]

But how could I have the experience of the world as an actually existing individual, since none of the perspectival views that I have of it exhaust it, since its horizons are always open, and since, on the other hand, no form of knowledge – not even science – gives us the invariable formula of a *facies totius universi*? How might anything ever be presented to us definitively, since the synthesis of it is never completed, and since I can always expect to see it break apart and pass to the status of a simple illusion? And yet, there is something rather than nothing. Something is determinate, at least to a certain degree of relativity. Even if I ultimately do not know this stone absolutely, even if knowledge about the stone gradually approaches infinity but is never completed, it still is the case that the perceived stone is there, that I recognized it, that I named it, and that we agree upon a certain number of claims regarding it. So it seems we are led into a contradiction: the belief in the thing and in the world can only signify the presumption of a completed synthesis – and yet this completion is rendered impossible by the very nature of the perspectives to be tied together, since each of them refers indefinitely to other perspectives

through its horizons. There is indeed a contradiction, so long as we are operating within being, but the contradiction ceases, or rather is generalized – it becomes linked to the ultimate conditions of our experience, and it merges with the possibility of living and thinking – if we operate within time, and if we succeed in understanding time as the measure of being. The synthesis of horizons is essentially temporal, that is, it is not subjected to time, it does not suffer time, and it does not have to overcome time; but rather, it merges with the very movement by which time goes by. Through my perceptual field with its spatial horizons, I am present to my surroundings, I coexist with all the other landscapes that extend beyond, and all of these perspectives together form a single temporal wave, an instant of the world. Through my perceptual field with its temporal horizons, I am present to my present, to the entire past that has preceded it, and to a future.

388 And at the same time, this ubiquity is not actual, it is clearly only intentional. The landscape that I have before my eyes can certainly announce to me the shape of the landscape hidden behind the hill, but it only does so with a certain degree of indetermination, for here there are fields, while over there might be a forest, and, in any case, beyond the next horizon I know only that there will be either land or sea, and beyond again, either open sea or frozen sea, and beyond again, either earth or sky, and, within the confines of the earth's atmosphere, I know only that there will be something to see in general. I possess no more than the abstract style of these distant landscapes. Likewise, even though each past is gradually enclosed entirely in the more recent past that it had immediately succeeded – thanks to the interlocking of intentionalities – the past degrades, and my first years are lost in the general existence of my body of which I know merely that it was already confronted with colors, sounds, and a similar nature to the one I presently see. My possession of the distant landscape and of the past, like my possession of the future, is thus only a possession in principle; my life slips away from me on all sides and it is circumscribed by impersonal zones. The contradiction that we find between the reality of the world and its incompleteness is the contradiction between the ubiquity of consciousness and its engagement in a field of presence.

But let us look more closely: is this really a contradiction and a dilemma? If I say that I am enclosed in my present – since after all one passes through an unnoticeable transition from the present to the past,

or from the near to the far – and since it is impossible to separate strictly the present from what is merely appresented,⁷¹ then the transcendence of distant landscapes invades my present and introduces a suspicion of unreality even into the experience with which I believe I coincide. If I am here and now, I am neither here nor now. If, however, I take my intentional relations with the past and with “elsewhere” to be constitutive of the past or of “elsewhere,” if I want to remove consciousness from every place and every temporality, and if I am everywhere that my perception and my memory take me, then I cannot inhabit any time and the privileged reality that defines my current present disappears, along with the reality of my previous presents or my eventual presents. If the synthesis could be actual, if my experience formed a closed system, if the thing and the world could be defined once and for all, if spatio-temporal horizons could (even ideally) be made explicit and if the world could be conceived from nowhere, then nothing would exist. I would survey the world from above, and far from all places and times suddenly becoming real, they would in fact cease to be real because I would not inhabit any of them and I would be nowhere engaged. If I am always and everywhere, then I am never and nowhere. Thus, there is no choice between the incompleteness of the world and its existence, between the engagement and the ubiquity of consciousness, or between transcendence and immanence, since each of these terms, when it is affirmed by itself, makes its contradiction appear. What must be understood is that for the same reason I am present here and now, and present elsewhere and always, or absent from here and now and absent from every place and from every time. This ambiguity is not an imperfection of consciousness or of existence, it is their very definition.

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[v. *The world as the nucleus of time.*]*

Time understood broadly, that is, the order of coexistences as much as the order of successions, is a milieu to which one can only gain access and that one can only understand by occupying a situation within it, and by grasping it as a whole through the horizons of this situation. The world, which is the nucleus of time, only subsists through this unique movement that simultaneously separates and brings together the appresented and the present, and consciousness, which is taken as the place of clarity, is in fact the very place of equivocation. Given these conditions, one could

certainly say, if one wanted to, that nothing absolutely exists, and it would be in fact more precise to say that nothing exists and that everything is temporalized. But temporality is not a diminished existence. Objective being is not full being. The model is provided to us by these things before us that, at first glance, seem absolutely determinate: that stone is white, hard, and warm; the world appears to crystallize in it, and it seems that the stone has no need of time in order to exist, that it is entirely spread out in the instant, and that every surplus of existence is for it a new birth. One would be tempted to believe for a moment that the world, if it is something, could not be anything but a sum of things analogous to this stone, and time nothing but a sum of perfect instants. Such is the Cartesian world and Cartesian time, and it is certainly true that this conception of being is somehow inevitable, since I have a visual field with circumscribed objects, a sensible present, and that every “elsewhere” is given as another here, every past and every future as a previous or a future present. The perception of a single thing forever establishes the ideal of objective or explicit knowledge that classical logic works out.

390 But as soon as we press on these certainties, and as soon as we awaken the intentional life that engenders them, we realize that objective being has its roots in the ambiguity of time. I cannot conceive of the world as a sum of things, nor time as a sum of punctual “nows,” since each thing can only be presented with its full determinations if the other things recede into the vagueness of the distance, since each present can only be presented in its reality by excluding the simultaneous presence of previous and later presents, and since, in this way, a sum of things or a sum of presents is non-sensical. Things and instants can only be linked together to form a world through this ambiguous being that we call “subjectivity,” and can only become co-present from a certain point of view and only in intention. Objective time, which flows by and exists part by part, would not even be suspected if it were not enveloped by an historical time that is projected from the living present toward a past and toward a future. The supposed fullness of the object and of the instant only springs forth in the face of the imperfection of intentional being. A present without a future, or an eternal present, is precisely the definition of death, the living present is torn between a past that it takes up and a future that it projects. Thus, it is essential for the thing and for the world to be presented as “open,” to send us beyond their determinate manifestations, and to promise us always “something more to see.” This is what is sometimes

expressed when it is said that the thing and the world are mysterious. They are indeed mysterious, as soon as we do not limit ourselves to their objective appearance, and as soon as we place them back into the milieu of subjectivity. They are even an absolute mystery, which admits of no elucidation, not through a temporary flaw in our knowledge – for then it would fall back to the status of a mere problem – but rather because it is not of the order of objective thought where there are solutions. There is nothing to see beyond our horizons except still other landscapes and other horizons; there is nothing within the thing except other, smaller things. The ideal of objective thought is simultaneously grounded upon and left in ruins by temporality. The world, in the full sense of the word, is not an object, it is wrapped in objective determinations, but also has fissures and lacunae through which subjectivities become lodged in it or, rather, which are subjectivities themselves. We understand now why things, which owe their sense to the world, are not significations presented to the intelligence, but are rather opaque structures, and why their final sense remains foggy. The thing and the world only exist as lived by me, or as lived by subjects like me, since they are the interlocking of our perspectives; but they also transcend all perspectives because this interlocking is temporal and incomplete. It seems to me that the world itself lives outside of me, just as absent landscapes continue to live beyond my visual field, and just as my past was previously lived prior to my present.

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[D. *Verification through the Analysis of Hallucination.*]

[i. *Hallucination is incomprehensible for objective thought.*]

Hallucination disintegrates the real before our eyes and substitutes for the real a quasi-reality, and in these two ways the hallucinatory phenomenon carries us back to the pre-logical foundations of our knowledge and confirms what we have just said about the thing and the world. The most important fact is that patients distinguish, for the most part, between their hallucinations and their perceptions. Schizophrenics who have tactile hallucinations of injections or of “electrical currents” give a start when they are given a shot of ethyl chloride or a genuine electrical current: “that

time," they say to the doctor, "it came from you, because you are going to operate . . ." Another schizophrenic, who claims to see a man in the garden stopped beneath his window, and having indicated the location, clothing, and posture of the man, is astonished when someone is actually placed in the garden, at the spot indicated, in the same outfit, and standing with the same posture. He stares attentively: "it's true, there is someone there, but it is another person." And yet, he refuses to count two men in the garden. One patient, who has never doubted her voices, when she is made to listen to a gramophone recording of voices analogous to her own, interrupts her work, raises her head without turning around, and sees a white angel appear as happens when she hears her voices; but she does not count this experience among those of the "voices" of the day: this time it was not the same thing, it was a "direct" voice, perhaps the voice of the doctor. One demented and senile female patient who complains of finding powder in her bed is startled upon actually finding there a thin layer of rice powder: "What is this?" she asks. "This powder is wet, the other one is dry." In an alcoholic mania, the subject who sees the doctor's hand as a guinea pig immediately notices that a genuine guinea pig has been placed in the other hand.⁷² If patients say so often that someone speaks to them by telephone or from the radio, this is in fact to express that the morbid world is artificial, and that something is missing in order for it to be a "reality." The voices are uncouth voices, or "of people pretending to be uncouth," it is a young man imitating the voice of an old man, or "as if a German were attempting to speak Yiddish."⁷³ "It is like when someone says something to someone else, but without quite making a sound."⁷⁴

Do these confessions not end all debate about hallucination? Since hallucination is not a sensory content, all that remains is to consider it as a judgment, as an interpretation, or as a belief. But if the patients do not believe in the hallucination in the same sense in which one believes in perceived objects, then an intellectualist theory of hallucination is also impossible. Alain cites Montaigne's phrase about madmen, "who believe they see what they do not actually see."⁷⁵ But in fact madmen do not believe they see or, so long as they are questioned, they correct their declarations on this point. The hallucination is not a rash judgment or belief for the same reasons that prevent it from being a sensory content: judgment or belief could only consist in positing the hallucination as true, and this is precisely what the patients do not do. On the level of judgment, patients

distinguish between hallucination and perception, and in any case they argue against their hallucinations: rats cannot exit from the mouth and re-enter through the stomach;⁷⁶ one doctor who hears voices climbs into a small boat and rows toward the open seas to convince himself that no one is actually speaking to him.⁷⁷ When the hallucinatory attack suddenly takes place, the rat and the voices are again there.

Why do empiricism and intellectualism fail to understand hallucination, and through what other method might we have a chance at succeeding? Empiricism attempts to explain hallucination like perception: through the effect of certain physiological causes, such as the irritation of the nervous centers, sensible givens would appear as they appear in perception, through the action of physical stimuli upon the same nervous centers. At first glance, there is nothing in common between these physiological hypotheses and the intellectualist conception. In fact as we will see there is this in common: the two doctrines presuppose the priority of objective thought, have only one mode of being at their disposal, that is, objective being, and attempt to introduce the hallucinatory phenomenon into it by force. In this way, they falsify this phenomenon, they fail to see its own mode of certainty and its immanent sense, since, according to the patient himself, the hallucination has no place in objective being. For empiricism, hallucination is an event in the chain of events that goes from the stimulus to the state of consciousness. In intellectualism, the attempt is made to remove the hallucination, to construct it, to deduce what it might be beginning from a certain idea of consciousness. The *cogito* teaches us that the existence of consciousness merges with the consciousness of existing, that there can thus be nothing in it of which it is unaware, that reciprocally, everything that it knows with certainty it finds in itself, and that consequently the truth or falsity of an experience must not consist in its relation to an exterior reality, but must be read in it as intrinsic denominations without which it would never be recognized. Thus, false perceptions are not genuine perceptions. The person suffering from hallucinations cannot hear or see in the strong sense of these words. He judges or believes he sees or hears, but he does not actually see or hear. This conclusion does not even spare the *cogito*, for the question remains as to how a subject can believe he hears when he does not actually hear. If we say that this belief is merely assertive [*asséritive*],⁷⁸ that it is a knowledge of the first order, one of these floating appearances in which we do not believe in the full sense of the word and that only

remain in the absence of a critique, in a word, a simple factual state of our knowledge, then the question will be how a consciousness can exist in this incomplete state without knowing it or, if it knows it, how it can adhere to it.⁷⁹ The intellectualist *cogito* does not leave before itself anything but a wholly pure *cogitatum* that it entirely possesses and constitutes. It is a hopeless task to attempt to understand how it can be wrong about an object that it constitutes. Thus, it is surely the reduction of our experience to objects, and the priority granted to objective thought that, here again, diverts the gaze from the hallucinatory phenomenon. There is a deep kinship between empiricist explanation and intellectualist reflection, namely, their common ignorance of phenomena. Both construct the hallucinatory phenomenon rather than living it. Even that which is new and valuable in intellectualism – the essential difference that it establishes between perception and hallucination – is compromised by the priority given to objective thought: if the person suffering from hallucinations objectively knows or thinks his hallucination as such, then how is hallucinatory deception possible? Everything follows from the fact that objective thought, or the reduction of lived things to objects and the reduction of subjectivity to the *cogitatio*, leaves no place for the equivocal adhesion of the subject to pre-objective phenomena.

[ii. Return to the hallucinatory phenomenon.]*

Thus, the conclusion is obvious. Hallucination, and consciousness in general, must no longer be constructed according to a certain essence or idea of it that requires it to be defined through an absolute adequation and that renders its developmental interruptions inconceivable. We learn to know consciousness just like everything else. When the person suffering from hallucinations says that he sees and hears, we must not believe him,⁸⁰ since he also says the opposite; rather, we must understand him. We must not restrict ourselves to the opinions that the healthy consciousness has of a consciousness suffering from hallucinations, and take ourselves to be the sole judges of the proper sense of the hallucination. To this we might expect the objection that I cannot reach the hallucination such as it is for itself. The one who conceives of the hallucination, or of others, or of his own past, never coincides with the hallucination, with others, or with his past such as it was. Knowledge can never go beyond this limit of facticity. This is true, but it must not serve to justify

arbitrary constructions. It is true that we would speak of nothing if it were only necessary to speak of that with which we coincide, since speech is already a separation. Moreover, there is no experience without speech, the purely lived is not even found within man's speaking life. But the primary sense of speech is, nevertheless, in this text of experience that it attempts to utter. What is sought is not an imaginary coinciding of me with another, of the present self with its past, or of the doctor with the patient; we cannot take up the other's situation, relive the past in its reality, or experience the illness such as it is lived by the patient. The other person's consciousness, the past, and the illness are never reduced in their existence to what I know of them. But no more does my own consciousness, insofar as it exists and is engaged, reduce to what I know of it. If the philosopher gives himself hallucinations by means of an injection of mescaline, either he gives in to the hallucinatory momentum and then he will live the hallucination and will not know it, or he will preserve something of his reflective power and then his testimony – which is not that of an hallucinating person “engaged” in the hallucination – will always be questionable. Thus, self-knowledge enjoys no privilege, and another person is no more impenetrable than I am myself. What is given is not myself here and others over there, nor my present here and my past over there, nor healthy consciousness and its *cogito* here and the hallucinating consciousness over there – with the former being the sole judge of the latter and reducing it to its internal conjectures – rather, what is given is the doctor with the patient, me with another person, and my past on the horizon of my present. I distort my past by evoking it at present, but I can take these very deformations into account. They are indicated to me through the tension that subsists between the abolished past that I aim at and my arbitrary interpretations. I am mistaken about the other because I see him from my point of view, but I hear him object and finally I have the idea of another person as a center of perspectives. The situation of the patient whom I question appears to me within my own situation and, in this phenomenon with two centers, I learn to know myself as much as I learn to know the other person. We must put ourselves back into the actual situation in which the hallucinations and the “real” are presented to us, and we must grasp their concrete differentiation at the moment it operates in the communication with the patient. I am seated before my subject and I speak with him; he attempts to describe what he “sees” and what he “hears”; there is no question of taking him at his word, nor of

reducing his experiences to mine, nor of coinciding with him, nor of holding myself to my point of view; rather, it is a question of making explicit my experience and his experience, such as it is indicated in my own, or of making explicit his hallucinatory belief and my real belief, and of understanding them through each other.

[iii. *The hallucinatory thing and the perceived thing.*]

396 If I classify the voices and visions of my interlocutor as hallucinations, this is because I do not find anything of the sort in my visual or auditory world. I am thus conscious of grasping, through hearing and above all through vision, a system of phenomena that does not constitute merely a private spectacle, but that is the only one possible for me and even for others, and this is what we call the real. The perceived world is not my world alone, for I see the behaviors of others take form there, behaviors that also aim at this world; and the world is the correlate not only of my consciousness, but also of every consciousness that I might encounter. What I see with my eyes exhausts the possibilities of vision for me. Of course, I only see it from a certain angle, and I admit that an observer placed in another location would perceive what I can only surmise. But these other spectacles are, at present, implied in my own spectacle, just as the back or the bottom of objects is perceived at the same time as their visible side, or as the room next door preexists the perception that I would actually have of it were I to walk over there. The other person's experiences, or those I obtain by changing locations, do nothing but unfold what is indicated by the horizons of my present experience, and add nothing to it. My perception makes an indefinite number of perceptual chains coexist, which would confirm my perception on all points and would harmonize with them. My gaze and my hand know that every actual displacement would bring about a sensible response that conforms precisely to my expectation, and I sense, teeming beneath my gaze, the infinite mass of more detailed perceptions that I anticipate and upon which I have a hold. I am thus conscious of perceiving a milieu that does not "tolerate" anything more than what is written or indicated in my perception; I communicate in the present with an insurmountable plenitude.⁸¹ The person suffering from hallucinations does not believe this: the hallucinatory phenomenon is not part of the world, that is, it is not accessible, there is no definite road that leads from this phenomenon to all the other experiences of

the hallucinating subject, or to the experience of healthy subjects. "You don't hear my voices?" asks the patient. "Then I am the only one who hears them."⁸² Hallucinations play out on a different stage than that of the perceived world; it is as if they are superimposed: "Look," explains one patient, "while we are talking, they say this or that to me. Now where could that come from?"⁸³

If the hallucination does not take place in the stable and intersubjective world, this is because it lacks the plenitude and the internal articulation that makes it the case that the real thing remains "in itself," or acts and exists by itself. The hallucinatory thing is not like the real thing, packed with little perceptions that sustain it in existence. Rather, it is an implicit and inarticulate signification. Confronted with the real thing, our behavior feels motivated by the "stimuli" that fill it out and that justify its intention. When it comes to fantasy, the initiative comes from us and nothing responds to it on the outside.⁸⁴ The hallucinatory thing is not, like the real thing, a deep being that contracts a thickness of duration in itself; the hallucination is not, like perception, my concrete hold upon time within a living present. Rather, the hallucination slides across time, just as it slides across the world. The person who speaks to me in a dream has hardly opened his mouth before his thought is magically communicated to me; I know what she says to me before she has said anything at all. The hallucination is not in the world, but rather "in front of" it, because the body of the person suffering from hallucinations has lost its insertion in the system of appearances. Every hallucination is first an hallucination of one's own body. Patients claim that: "it is as if I heard with my mouth," or "the person speaking is on my lips."⁸⁵ In "feelings of presence" (*leibhaften Bewusstheiten*), patients immediately experience near to them, behind them, or on them, the presence of someone whom they never see; they sense this person approaching or moving away. One schizophrenic has the continuous impression of being seen naked and from behind. George Sand had a double whom she never saw, but who saw her constantly and called her by name with her own voice.⁸⁶ Depersonalization and the disturbance of the body schema are immediately expressed through an external fantasy, because for us it is one and the same thing to perceive our body and to perceive our situation in a certain physical and human milieu, and because our body is nothing other than this situation itself insofar as it is realized and actual. In extracampine hallucination,⁸⁷ the patient believes he sees a man standing behind him,

believes he sees from everywhere around himself, and believes he can see through a window situated behind his back.⁸⁸ The visual illusion is thus much less the presentation of an illusory object than the unfolding and, so to speak, wild fluctuations of a visual power henceforth lacking a sensory counterpart. There are hallucinations because we have, through the phenomenal body, a constant relation with a milieu into which it is projected, and because, being detached from the actual milieu, the body remains capable of evoking a pseudo-presence of this milieu through its own arrangements. To this extent, the hallucinatory thing is never seen and is never visible. One subject, under the influence of mescaline, perceives the screw on an appliance as a glass bulb, or as a bulge in a rubber balloon. But what does he actually see?

I see a world of swellings . . . It is as if the key of my perception was suddenly changed, as if I were made to perceive in C, or in B flat . . . At that moment, all of my perception transformed and, for a second, I perceived a rubber bulb. Is this to say that I saw nothing else? No, but I felt myself somehow “equipped” [*monté*] such that I could not perceive otherwise. I was overcome with the belief that the world is as such . . . Later, another change took place . . . Everything seemed simultaneously pasty and scaly, like certain large snakes that I have seen uncoiling at the Berlin Zoo. And then I was seized by the fear of being on an island surrounded by snakes.⁸⁹

The hallucination does not present me with the swellings, the scales, or the words as weighty realities that gradually reveal their sense. It only reproduces the manner in which these realities affect me in my sentient or my linguistic being.

When the patient refuses a meal because it is “poisoned,” we must understand that the word does not have for him the same sense that it has for a chemist,⁹⁰ since the patient does not believe that the food, in its objective body, contains toxic properties. Here the poison is an affective entity, a magical presence, like the presence of an illness or of misfortune. The majority of hallucinations are not things with many facets, but rather ephemeral phenomena, injections, shocks, explosions, drafts, hot or cold flashes, sparks, points of light, glimmers, or silhouettes.⁹¹ When the hallucination has to do with real things, such as a rat, they are only represented by their style or their physiognomy. These inarticulate phenomena

do not allow for precise causal connections among themselves. Their only relation is a relation of coexistence – a coexistence that always has a sense for the patient, because the consciousness of chance presupposes a precise and distinct causal sequence, and because we are here within the debris of a shattered world. “The nasal discharge becomes a bizarre discharge and now the fact of sleeping in the subway acquires a special meaning.”⁹² Hallucinations are only tied to a certain sensory domain insofar as each sensory field offers particular possibilities of expression to the alteration of existence. The schizophrenic has, above all, auditory and tactile hallucinations because, given their natural structure, the worlds of hearing and of touch are best able to represent a possessed, threatened, or leveled-out existence. The alcoholic has, above all, visual hallucinations because the delirious activity finds in vision the possibility of evoking an adversary or a task that must be confronted.⁹³ The person suffering hallucinations does not see and does not hear in the normal sense; he makes use of his sensory fields and his natural insertion in a world in order to fabricate for himself, with the debris of this world, an artificial milieu conforming to the total intention of his being.

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[iv. *Both the hallucinatory thing and the perceived thing are born from a function deeper than knowledge.*]

Although the hallucination is not sensory, it is even less a judgment. The hallucination is not given to the subject as a construction, it takes place neither in the “geographical world,” that is, within the being that we know and of which we judge, nor in the tissue of facts subjected to laws. Rather, the hallucination takes place in the individual “landscape”⁹⁴ through which the world touches us and through which we are in living communication with it. One patient claims that someone was staring at her at the market; she felt as if she were struck by this gaze, without being able to say where it came from. She does not mean that someone, in flesh and blood, was standing there within the space that is visible for everyone and had turned their eyes toward her – and this is why our arguments against her experience find no traction for her. For her, this has nothing to do with what happens in the objective world, but rather with what she encounters, what touches her, or what affects her. The food refused by the hallucinating person is only poisoned for him, but it is irrecusably poisoned.

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The hallucination is not a perception, but it has the value of reality, and it alone counts for the hallucinating person. The perceived world has lost its expressive force,⁹⁵ and the hallucinatory system has usurped this force. Although the hallucination is not a perception, there is an hallucinatory deception, and this is what we will never understand if we turn the hallucination into an intellectual operation. As different as it may be from a perception, the hallucination must be able to supplant it and to exist for the patient even more than his own perceptions do. This is only possible if hallucination and perception are modalities of a single primordial function by which we arrange around ourselves a milieu with a definite structure, and by which we situate ourselves sometimes fully in the world and sometimes on the margins of the world. The existence of the patient is decentered and is no longer accomplished in commerce with a harsh, resistant, and intractable world that is unaware of us; rather, it gradually exhausts itself in the solitary constitution of a fictional milieu. *But this fiction can only count as reality because reality itself is reached for the normal subject in an analogous operation.* Insofar as he has sensory fields and a body, the normal subject himself also bears this gaping wound through which illusion can be introduced; the normal subject's representation of the world is vulnerable. If we believe what we see, this is prior to all verification, and the error of classical theories of perception is in introducing, into perception itself, intellectual operations and a critique of sensory evidence to which we resort only when direct perception flounders in ambiguity. For the normal subject, and without any explicit verification, private experience links up with itself and with the experiences of others, and the landscape opens onto a geographical world and tends toward absolute plenitude. The normal subject does not revel in subjectivity, he flees from it, he is really in the world, he has a direct and naïve hold on time, whereas the hallucinating subject makes use of being in the world in order to carve out a private world within the common world, and always runs into the transcendence of time.

[v. "Originary opinion."]*

Beneath the explicit acts by which I posit an object out in front of myself, in a definite relation with other objects and with definite characteristics that can be observed, beneath, then, perceptions properly so-called, there is, sustaining them, a deeper function without which perceived objects

would lack the mark of reality, as it is missing for the schizophrenic, and by which the objects begin to count or to have value for us. This is the movement that carries us beyond subjectivity, that places us in the world prior to every science and every verification through a sort of “faith,” or “primordial opinion,”⁹⁶ – or that, on the contrary, becomes bogged down in our private appearances. In this domain of originary opinion, hallucinatory illusion is possible even though hallucination is never perception, and even though the true world is always suspected by the patient at the very moment he turns away from it, because here we are still within pre-predicative being, and because the connection between appearance and total experiences is merely implicit and presumptive, even in the case of true perception. The child attributes his dreams, like his perceptions, to the world; he believes that the dream takes place in his room, at the foot of his bed, and it is just that it is only visible for those who are sleeping.⁹⁷ The world remains the vague place of all experiences. It accommodates, pell-mell, true objects as well as individual and fleeting fantasies – because it is an individual that encompasses everything and not a collection of objects linked together through causal relations. To have hallucinations and, in general, to imagine is to exploit this tolerance of the pre-predicative world as well as our vertiginous proximity to all of being in syncretic experience.

Thus, we only succeed in giving an account of the hallucinatory deception by stripping perception of its apodictic certainty and perceptual consciousness of its full self-possession. The existence of the perceived is never necessary, since perception presumes a making explicit that could go on indefinitely, and that, moreover, could not progress in one direction without losing ground in the other and without exposing itself to the danger of time. But from this we must not conclude that the perceived is merely possible or probable and, for example, that it is reduced to a permanent possibility of perception. Possibility and probability presuppose the prior experience of error, and they correspond to the situation of doubt. The perceived is and remains, despite all critical training, beneath the level of doubt and demonstration. The sun “rises” for the scientist just as much as it does for the uneducated person, and our scientific representations of the solar system remain merely so many rumors, like the lunar landscapes – we never believe in them in the sense in which we believe in the rising of the sun. The rising of the sun, and the perceived in general, is “real” –

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potentially “crossed out” and pushed over to the realm of illusions, only disappears in order to leave a place for another perception that corrects it. Of course, each thing can, *après coup*, appear uncertain, but at least it is certain for us that there are things, that is, that there is a world. To wonder if the world is real is to fail to understand what one is saying, since the world is not a sum of things that one could always cast into doubt, but precisely the inexhaustible reservoir from which things are drawn. The perceived, taken in its entirety, along with the worldly horizon that simultaneously announces its possible disjunction and its eventual replacement by another perception, does not fully trick us. There could be no error where there is still no truth, but rather reality, and where there is still no necessity, but rather facticity. Correlatively, we must surely deny perceptual consciousness full self-possession and the immanence that would exclude every illusion. If hallucinations are to be possible, consciousness must at some moment cease to know what it does, otherwise it would be conscious of constituting an illusion, it would no longer adhere to it, and there would thus be no more illusion; and in fact, as we have said, the illusory thing and the real thing do not have the same structure. In order for the patient to accept the illusion, he must forget or repress the real world, he must cease to take his bearings there, and he must have at least the power to return to the primitive indistinction between the true and the false. Yet we do not cut consciousness off from itself, which would prevent all progress in knowledge beyond originary opinion and, in particular, prevent the philosophical recognition of originary opinion as the foundation of all knowledge. It is simply necessary that the self-coincidence with myself, such as is accomplished in the *cogito*, must never be a real coincidence, and must merely be an intentional and presumptive coincidence. In fact a thickness of duration already intervenes between myself who has just had this thought and myself who thinks that I have just had this thought, and I can always doubt whether that thought, which has already gone by, was really as I currently see it. And furthermore, since I have no other evidence of my past beyond these present testimonies and since, nevertheless, I have the idea of a past, then I have no reason to place the unreflected – as an unknowable – in opposition to the reflection that I bring to bear upon it. But my confidence in reflection ultimately comes down to taking up the fact of temporality and the fact of the world as the invariable frame of every illusion and of every disillusion: I only know myself in my inherence in the world and in time; I only know myself in ambiguity.

IV

OTHERS AND THE HUMAN WORLD

[a. Intertwining of natural time and historical time.]

I am thrown into a nature, and nature appears not only outside of me in objects devoid of history, but is also visible at the center of subjectivity. Theoretical and practical decisions in my personal life can certainly grasp my past and my future from a distance; they can give my past, along with all of its accidents, a definite sense by following it up with a certain future of which, *après coup*, this past will be said to have been the preparation; and they can introduce a historicity into my life. But there is always something artificial to this order. I currently understand my first twenty-five years as a prolonged childhood that had to be followed by a difficult weaning process in order to arrive finally at autonomy. If I think back to those years such as I lived them and such as I now carry them with me, their happiness refuses to be explained by the protected atmosphere of the parental milieu – the world itself was more beautiful, things were more fascinating – and I can never be certain of understanding my past better than it understood itself while I lived it, nor can I ever silence its protests. My current interpretation is tied to my confidence in psychoanalysis; tomorrow, with more maturity and more insight, I will

perhaps understand my past differently and I will accordingly construct it differently. In any case, I will in turn interpret my present interpretations, I will discover their latent content and, in order finally to assess their truth value, I will have to take these discoveries into account. My hold on the past and my hold on the future are precarious and my possession of my own time is always deferred until the moment when I fully understand myself, but that moment can never arrive since it would again be a moment, bordered by the horizon of a future, and would in turn require further developments in order to be understood.

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My voluntary and rational life thus knows itself to be entangled with another power that prevents it from being completed and that always gives it the air of a work in progress. Natural time is always there. The transcendence of moments of time at once establishes and compromises the rationality of my history: it establishes it since it opens me up to an absolutely new future in which I will be able to reflect upon what is opaque in my present; it compromises it since from the perspective of that future I will never grasp the present that I am living with an apodictic certainty, since the lived is never fully comprehensible in this way (what I understand never precisely links up with my life), and since, in short, I am never at one with myself. Such is the fate of a being who is born, that is, a being who once and for all was given to himself as something to be understood. Since natural time remains at the center of my history, I also see myself as surrounded by it. If my first years are behind me like some unknown land, this is not through some fortuitous breakdown of memory or the lack of a complete exploration: there is nothing to be known in these unexplored lands. For example, nothing was perceived in intra-uterine life, and this is why there is nothing to remember. There was nothing but the sketch of a natural self and of a natural time. This anonymous life is merely the limit of the temporal dispersion that always threatens the historical present. To catch sight of this formless existence that precedes my history and that will draw it to a close, all I have to do is see, in myself, this time that functions by itself and that my personal life makes use of without ever fully concealing. Because I am swept along into personal existence by a time that I do not constitute, all of my perceptions appear perspectively against a background of nature. While I am perceiving – and even without any knowledge of the organic conditions of my perception – I am conscious of integrating distracted and dispersed “consciousnesses,” namely, vision, hearing, and touch,

along with their fields, which are anterior to and remain foreign to my personal life. The natural object is the trace of this generalized existence. And in some respect, each object will at first be a natural object; if it is to be able to enter into my life, it must be made of colors and of tactile and sonorous qualities.

[b. *How do personal acts become sedimented?*]

Just as nature penetrates to the center of my personal life and intertwines with it, behaviors also descend into nature and are deposited there in the form of a cultural world. Not only do I have a physical world and live surrounded by soil, air, and water, I have around me roads, plantations, villages, streets, churches, a bell, utensils, a spoon, a pipe. Each of these objects bears as an imprint the mark of the human action it serves. Each one emits an atmosphere of humanity that might be only vaguely determined (when it is a matter of some footprints in the sand), or rather highly determined (if I explore a recently evacuated house from top to bottom). Now, even if it is not surprising that sensory and perceptual functions – given that they are pre-personal – deposit a natural world in front of themselves, one might still be surprised that the spontaneous acts through which man has articulated his life themselves become sedimented on the outside and thereby lead an anonymous existence as things. The civilization in which I participate exists for me with an evidentness in the tools that it adopts. When it comes to an unknown or foreign civilization, several ways of being or living can fit over the ruins or the broken instruments that I find, or the landscape that I travel across. The cultural world is thus ambiguous, although it is already present. There is a society here that we must get to know. An Objective Spirit inhabits these vestiges and these landscapes. How is this possible?

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[c. *How are others possible?*]*

In the cultural object, I experience the near presence of others under a veil of anonymity. One uses the pipe for smoking, the spoon for eating, or the bell for summoning, and the perception of a cultural world could be verified through the perception of a human act and of another man. How can a human action or thought be grasped in the mode of the “one,” given that it is, in principle, a first person operation and inseparable from

an I? The easy response is that the indefinite pronoun is here simply a vague formula for designating a multiplicity of I's, or even an I in general. It will be said that I have the experience of a certain cultural milieu and of behaviors that correspond to it; standing before the vestiges of a lost civilization, I imagine through analogy the type of man who lived there. But it would first be necessary to know how I could have the experience of my own cultural world, of my own civilization. The response will again be that I see other men around me putting the tools that surround me to a certain use and that I interpret their behavior through analogy with my own behavior and my own inner experience, which teaches me the sense and the intention of the perceived gestures. In the end, the other person's actions would here still be understood through my own; the "one" or the "we" would still be understood through the I. But this is precisely the question: how can the word "I" be made plural? How can we form a general idea of the I? How can I speak of another I than my own? How can I know that there are other I's? How can consciousness, which as knowledge of itself is, in principle, in the mode of the I, be grasped in the mode of the You [Toi], and thereby in the mode of the "One"?¹

The very first cultural object, and the one by which they all exist, is the other's body as the bearer of a behavior. Whether it has to do with vestiges or with another person's body, we must ask how an object in space can become the speaking trace of an existence, and how, inversely, an intention, a thought, or a project can detach from the personal subject and become visible outside of him in his body and in the environment that he constructs. The constitution of others does not entirely clarify the constitution of society, which is not an existence shared by two or even three persons, but is rather a coexistence with an indefinite number of consciousnesses. Nevertheless, the analysis of the perception of others encounters the essential difficulty raised by the cultural world because it must resolve the paradox of a consciousness seen from the outside, the paradox of a thought that resides in the exterior and that, when compared to my own, is already without a subject and is anonymous.

[d. *Coexistence made possible by the discovery of perceptual consciousness.*]

What we have said about the body provides the beginnings of a solution to this problem. The existence of others is a difficulty for and an affront to objective thought. If events of the world are, to speak with

Lachelier, an intertwining of general properties and are found at the intersection of functional relations that, in principle, allow for the completion of an analysis of these events, and if the body is in fact a region of the world – if it is that object biologists describe for me, that conjunction of processes whose analysis I find in physiological studies, and that pile of organs described by anatomy charts – then my experience could be nothing other than the confrontation between a bare consciousness and the system of objective correlations that it thinks. The other's body is no more inhabited than is my own, it is an object in front of the consciousness that thinks it or that constitutes it, and we – namely, other men and myself as an empirical being – are merely mechanisms moved by springs; the true subject has no peers. This consciousness that would be hidden in a piece of flesh and blood is the most absurd of occult qualities and my consciousness – being coextensive with what can exist for me and the correlate of the entire system of experience – can never encounter another consciousness in the other's body who would immediately make the background of his own phenomena (wholly unknown to me) appear in the world. Here there are two, and only two, modes of being: being in itself, which is the being of objects spread out in space, and being for itself, which is the being of consciousness. Now, the other would be an in-itself in front of me, and yet he would exist for himself, and in order to be perceived he would require of me a contradictory operation, since I would simultaneously have to distinguish him from me, thus placing him in the world of objects, and think of him as conscious, that is, as this type of being without an outside and without parts to which I only have access because I am this consciousness and because he who thinks and he who is thought merge in him. There is no room, then, for others and for a plurality of consciousnesses within objective thought. If I constitute the world, then I cannot conceive of another consciousness, for it too would have to have constituted the world and so, at least with regard to this other view upon the world, I would not be constituting. Even if I succeeded in conceiving of this other consciousness as constituting the world, it is again I who would constitute it as such, and once again I would be the only constituting consciousness.

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But we have in fact learned to call objective thought into doubt and we have made contact with an experience of the body and of the world beneath scientific representations of the world and the body that these representations fail to embrace. My body and the world are no longer

objects coordinated with each other through functional relations of the sort established by physics. The system of experience in which they communicate is no longer spread out in front of me and watched over by a constituting consciousness. I have the world as an unfinished individual through my body as a power for this world; I have the position of objects through the position of my body, or inversely I have the position of my body through the position of objects, not through a logical implication, nor in the manner in which we determine an unknown size through its objective relations with given sizes, but rather through a real implication and because my body is a movement toward the world and because the world is my body's support. The ideal of objective thought – the system of experience as a bundle of physico-mathematical correlations – is grounded upon my perception of the world as an individual in harmony with itself; and when science attempts to integrate my body into the relations of the objective world, it does so because it attempts, in its own way, to express the suturing of my phenomenal body onto the primordial world. At the same time that the body withdraws from the objective world and comes to form a third genre of being between the pure subject and the object, the subject loses his purity and his transparency. Objects are in front of me, they form a certain projection of themselves upon my retina and I perceive them. It can no longer be a question of isolating, in my physiological representation of the phenomenon, the retinal images and their cerebral correlate from the total field – both actual and virtual – in which they appear. The physiological event is but the abstract outline of the perceptual event.² Moreover, we can no longer assume under the name “psychical images” some discontinuous perspectival views that would correspond to successive retinal images, or introduce in the end a “mental inspection” that restores the object over and against the distorting perspectives. We must conceive of perspectives and the point of view as our insertion in the world-as-an-individual, and we must no longer conceive of perception as a constitution of the real object, but rather as our inherence in things.

Along with sensory fields and the world as the field of all fields, consciousness discovers in itself the opacity of an originary past. If I experience this inherence of my consciousness in its body and in its mind, the perception of others and the plurality of consciousnesses no longer present any difficulty. If the perceiving subject appears (to me who is reflecting upon perception) as endowed with a primordial arrangement

in relation to the world, drawing with it that bodily thing without which there would be no other things for it, then why should the other bodies that I perceive not be equally inhabited by consciousnesses? If my consciousness has a body, why would other bodies not “have” consciousnesses? This is obviously to assume that the notion of the body and the notion of consciousness have been deeply transformed. With regard to the body, and even the other’s body, we must learn to distinguish it from the objective body described by physiology textbooks. For that body is not the one that could be inhabited by a consciousness. We must catch hold of the behaviors that take shape upon these visible bodies, that make their appearance there, but that are not actually contained there.³ It will never be made clear how signification and intentionality could inhabit molecular structures or cellular masses, and here Cartesianism is correct. But then again, there is no question of such an absurd undertaking. We must recognize that the body – as a chemical structure or a collection of tissues – is formed through a process of impoverishment beginning from a primordial phenomenon of the body-for-us, of the body of human experience, or of the perceived body, which objective thought encompasses but whose completed analysis it has no need of postulating. With regard to consciousness, we must no longer conceive of it as

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a constituting consciousness and as a pure being-for-itself, but rather as a perceptual consciousness, as the subject of a behavior, as being in the world or existence, for only in this way will another person appear in control of his phenomenal body and receive a sort of “place.”

Given these conditions, the antinomies of objective thought disappear. Rather than defining vision as “thought that one is seeing” [*pensée de voir*] (according to Descartes’s phrase),⁴ through phenomenological reflection I find vision to be the gaze gearing into the visible world, and this is why another’s gaze can exist for me and why that expressive instrument that we call a face can bear an existence just as my existence is borne by the knowing apparatus that is my body. When I turn toward my perception itself and when I pass from direct perception to the thought about this perception, I reenact it, I uncover a thought older than I am at work in my perceptual organs and of which these organs are merely the trace. I understand others in the same way. Here again I have but the trace of a consciousness that escapes me in its actuality and, when my gaze crosses another, I reenact the foreign existence in a sort of reflection. But here there is nothing like a “reasoning from analogy.” Scheler said

it well: reasoning by analogy presupposes what it is meant to explain.⁵ Another consciousness can only be deduced if the other person's emotional expressions and my own are compared and identified, and only if precise correlations are recognized between my gesticulations and my "psychic facts." But the perception of others precedes and makes possible such observations, so they cannot be constitutive of it. A fifteen-month-old baby opens his mouth when I playfully take one of his fingers in my mouth and pretend to bite it. And yet, he has hardly even seen his face in a mirror and his teeth do not resemble mine. His own mouth and teeth such as he senses them from within are immediately for him the instruments for biting, and my jaw such as he sees it from the outside is for him immediately capable of the same intentions. "Biting" immediately has an intersubjective signification for him. He perceives his intentions in his body, perceives my body with his own, and thereby perceives my intentions in his body. The observed correlations between my gesticulations and those of others, and between my intentions and my gesticulations, can certainly provide a guide in the methodical knowledge of others and when direct perception fails, but they do not teach me about the existence of others. There is, between my consciousness and my body such as I live it, and between this phenomenal body and the other person's phenomenal body such as I see it from the outside, an internal relation that makes the other person appear as the completion of the system. Others can be evident because I am not transparent for myself, and because my subjectivity draws its body along behind itself.

As we said above: insofar as another person resides in the world, insofar as he is visible there and part of my field, he is never an Ego in the sense in which I am one for myself. In order to conceive of him as a genuine I, I would have to consider myself as a mere object for him, which I am prevented from doing by the knowledge that I have of myself. But if the other's body is not an object for me, nor my body an object for him, if they are rather behaviors, then the other's positing of me does not reduce me to the status of an object in his field, and my perception of the other does not reduce him to the status of an object in my field. Another person is never fully a personal being if I am fully one myself, that is, if I grasp myself through an apodictic evidentness. But if, through reflection, I find in myself, along with the perceiving subject, a pre-personal subject given to itself, if my perceptions remain eccentric in relation to myself as the center of initiatives and judgments, or if the perceived world remains

in a neutral state, neither verified as an object nor identified as a dream, then not everything that appears in the world is immediately spread out in front of me and the other's behavior can have its place in the world. This world can remain undivided between my perception and his, the perceiving self enjoys no particular privilege that renders a perceived self impossible, these two are not *cogitationes* enclosed in their immanence, but beings who are transcended by their world and who, consequently, can surely be transcended by each other. The confirmation of a foreign consciousness in front of my own would immediately turn my experience into a private spectacle, since it would no longer be coextensive with being. The other person's *cogito* strips my own *cogito* of all value and shatters the confidence I enjoyed in the solitude of having access to the only being conceivable for me, that is, being such as it is intended and constituted by me. But we have learned in individual perception not to conceive of our perspectival views as independent of each other; we know that they slip into each other and are gathered together in the thing. Similarly, we must learn to find the communication of consciousnesses in a single world. In fact, the other person is not enclosed in my perspective on the world because this perspective itself has no definite limits, because it spontaneously slips into the other's perspective, and because they are gathered together in a single world in which we all participate as anonymous subjects of perception.

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[e. *Coexistence of psycho-physical subjects in a natural world and of men in a cultural world.*]

Insofar as I have sensory functions – a visual, auditory, and tactile field – I already communicate with others, themselves taken as psycho-physical subjects. My gaze falls upon a living body performing an action and the objects that surround it immediately receive a new layer of signification: they are no longer merely what I could do with them, they are also what this behavior is about to do with them. A vortex forms around the perceived body into which my world is drawn and, so to speak, sucked in: to this extent, my world is no longer merely mine, it is no longer present only to me, it is present to X, to this other behavior that begins to take shape in it. The other body is already no longer a simple fragment of the world, but rather the place of a certain elaboration and somehow a certain “view” of the world. A certain handling of things – which were

until now mine alone – is taking place over there. Someone is using my familiar objects. But who? I say that it is another person, a second myself, and I primarily know this because that living body has the same structure as my own. I experience my body as the power for certain behaviors and for a certain world, and I am only given to myself as a certain hold upon the world. Now, it is precisely my body that perceives the other's body and finds there something of a miraculous extension of its own intentions, a familiar manner of handling the world. Henceforth, just as the parts of my body together form a system, the other's body and my own are a single whole, two sides of a single phenomenon, and the anonymous existence, of which my body is continuously the trace, henceforth inhabits these two bodies simultaneously.⁶

This only establishes another living being, and not yet another man. But this foreign life, like my own life with which it communicates, is an open life. It is not reducible to a certain number of biological or sensory functions. This other life annexes natural objects by diverting them from their immediate sense, constructs tools and instruments, and projects itself into the cultural objects of its milieu. The child finds these objects around himself at birth like meteorites from another planet. He takes possession of them and learns to use them as others use them because
 412 his body schema assures the immediate correspondence of what he sees done and what he does, and because in this way the utensil takes shape as a determinate *manipulandum* and the other person takes shape as a center of human action. There is, in particular, one cultural object that will play an essential role in the perception of others: language. In the experience of dialogue, a common ground is constituted between me and another; my thought and his form a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion and are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. Here there is a being-shared-by-two, and the other person is no longer for me a simple behavior in my transcendental field, nor for that matter am I a simple behavior in his. We are, for each other, collaborators in perfect reciprocity: our perspectives slip into each other, we coexist through a single world. I am freed from myself in the present dialogue, even though the other's thoughts are certainly his own, since I do not form them, I nonetheless grasp them as soon as they are born or I even anticipate them. And even the objection raised by my interlocutor draws from me thoughts I did not know I possessed such that if I lend him thoughts, he makes me

think in return. Only *après coup* – when I have withdrawn from the dialogue and I am remembering it – can I reintegrate it into my life, turn it into an episode of my private history, and only then does the other person return to his absence or, to the extent that he remains present, is the other person sensed as a threat to me.

The perception of others and the intersubjective world are only problematic for adults. The child lives in a world that he believes is immediately accessible to everyone around him. He is unaware of himself and, for that matter, of others as private subjectivities. He does not suspect that all of us, including himself, are limited to a certain point of view upon the world. This is why the child does not analyze his thoughts, why he believes in them to the extent that they appear and without attempting to tie them together, and why he does not analyze our words. He does not have the knowledge of points of view. For the child, men are blank minds directed toward a single evident world where everything takes place, even dreams (which he believes are in his room) and thought (since it is not distinguished from words). For the child, others are so many gazes inspecting things, they have an almost material existence, to the point that one child wonders how these gazes are not broken when they meet.⁷ At about the age of twelve, Piaget says, the child accomplishes the *cogito* and obtains the truths of rationalism. The child would simultaneously discover himself as a sensible consciousness and as an intellectual consciousness, as a point of view upon the world and as called upon to transcend this point of view, that is, to construct an objectivity at the level of judgment. Piaget brings the child to the age of reason as if the adult's thoughts were self-sufficient and would remove all contradictions. But in fact, children must in some sense be correct against adults or against Piaget and, if there is to be a unique and intersubjective world for the adult, then the barbarous thoughts of the initial stage must remain like an indispensable acquisition beneath the thoughts of the adult stage. The consciousness I have of constructing an objective truth would only ever provide an objective truth for me, and my best effort at impartiality would never lead me to overcome subjectivity, as Descartes expresses so well with the hypothesis of the evil genius, if I did not have beneath my judgments the primordial certainty of touching being itself; if, prior to every voluntary decision, I did not already find myself situated in an intersubjective world; if, that is, science did not lean upon this originary $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$.⁸ With the *cogito* begins the struggle between consciousnesses in which, as

Hegel says, each one seeks the death of the other. For this battle to even begin, for each consciousness to even suspect the external presences that it negates, they must have a common ground and they must remember their peaceful coexistence in the world of childhood.

[f. But is there a coexistence of freedoms and of I's?]

But is it really the other that we reach in this way? We, in effect, level out the I and the You in an experience-shared-by-many, we introduce the impersonal into the center of subjectivity, and we erase the individuality of perspectives – but, in this general conflation, have we not caused the alter Ego to disappear along with the Ego? We said above that the two are mutually exclusive. But this is only the case because they have the same pretensions and because the alter Ego follows all the variations of the Ego: if the perceiving I is truly an I, then it cannot perceive another I; if the perceiving subject is anonymous, then the other self that he perceives is anonymous as well; and when we want to make the plurality of consciousnesses appear within this collective consciousness, we will rediscover the difficulties we thought we had avoided. I perceive the other as a behavior, for example, I perceive the other's grief or anger in his behavior, on his face and in his hands, without any borrowing from an "inner" experience of suffering or of anger and because grief and anger are variations of being in the world, undivided between body and consciousness, which settle upon the other's behavior and are visible in his phenomenal body, as well as upon my own behavior such as it is presented to me. But ultimately, the other's behavior and even the other's words are not the other himself. The other's grief or anger never has precisely the same sense for him and for me. For him, these are lived situations; for me, they are appresented. Or if I can participate in this grief or in this anger through a gesture of friendship, they remain the grief and the anger of my friend Paul: he suffers because he has lost his wife, or he is angry because his watch has been stolen; I suffer because Paul is grieving or I am angry because he is angry – the two situations are not congruent. And finally, if we undertake a shared project, this shared project is not a single project, and it is not presented to me and to Paul from the same angle; we are not equally committed to it, or at least not committed to it in the same way, from the mere fact that Paul is Paul, and I am myself. As much as our consciousnesses construct through our own

situations a common situation in which they communicate, it is nevertheless from the background of his own subjectivity that each projects this "single" world.

The difficulties of perceiving others are not all the result of objective thought, and they do not all cease with the discovery of behavior, or rather, objective thought and the resulting unicity of the *cogito* are not fictions, rather, they are well-founded phenomena, and we will have to seek their foundation. The conflict between me and others does not begin only when we attempt to think others, nor does it disappear if thought is reintegrated into non-thetic consciousness and unreflective life: the conflict is already there when I attempt to live another's experience [*vivre autrui*], for example, in the blindness of sacrifice. I establish a pact with the other person, and I commit to living in an inter-world where I make as much room for the other as I do for myself. But this inter-world is still my project, and it would be hypocritical to believe that I desire the other person's well-being as my own, since even this attachment to another's well-being still comes from me. Without reciprocity there is no alter Ego, since one person's world would thereby envelop the other's, and since one would feel alienated to the benefit of the other. This is what happens to a couple when the love is not equal on both sides: one commits to this love and stakes his life on it, the other remains free, and this love is for him but a contingent way of living. The former feels his being and his substance escaping into this freedom that remains intact in front of him. And even if the second person, through loyalty to previous promises, or through generosity, wishes to in turn reduce himself to the status of a mere phenomenon in the first person's world, to see through the other's eyes, he again achieves this through a dilation of his own life, and so he denies in principle the equivalence between others and himself that he wanted to prove as a thesis.

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Coexistence must be in each case lived by each person. If neither of us is a constituting consciousness, then at the moment that we are about to communicate and to find a common world it will not be clear who communicates and for whom this world exists. And if someone does communicate with someone else, if the inter-world is not an inconceivable "in-itself," and if it must exist for both of us, then communication is once again broken and each of us operates within his private world, like two players playing on separate chessboards a hundred miles apart. Still, the players can communicate their decisions via telephone or in letters,

which amounts to saying that they belong to a single world. However, strictly speaking, I do not have any common ground with other people; the positing of the other person with his world and the positing of myself with my world constitute a dilemma. Once the other has been posited, or once the other's gaze upon me has stripped me of a part of my being by inserting me into his field, then it is clear that I can only recuperate my being by forming relations with the other or by making myself freely recognized by him, and that my freedom requires that others have the same freedom.

[g. *The permanent truth of solipsism.*]*

But first we would have to know how I could posit the other. As we have explained above, insofar as I am born and insofar as I have a body and a world, I can find other behaviors in that world that intertwine with my own. But it is also the case that, insofar as I am born, and insofar as my existence finds itself already at work and knows itself as given to itself, my existence remains always on this side of the actions it wants to commit to, which are forever merely its modalities or particular cases of its insurmountable generality. This given background of existence is what the *cogito* confirms: every affirmation, every engagement, and even every negation and every doubt takes place in a previously opened field, and attests to a self in touch with itself prior to the particular acts in which it loses contact with itself. This self, who is the witness of every actual communication, and without which the communication would be unaware of itself and thus would not be communication at all, seems to prevent any resolution of the problem of others. Here we see a lived solipsism that cannot be transcended.

416 Of course, I do not feel myself to be the constituting force of the natural world, nor of the cultural world: I introduce into each perception and each judgment either sensory functions or cultural arrangements that are not actually my own. Transcended on all sides by my own acts and immersed in generality, I am nevertheless the one through which these acts are lived; my first perception inaugurated an insatiable being who appropriates everything that it can encounter, to whom nothing can be purely and simply given because it inherited the world, and consequently carries in itself the plan of every possible being, and because the world has been, once and for all, imprinted upon his field of experience. The body's

generality will not help us to understand how the indeclinable “I” can alienate itself to the benefit of others, since it is precisely compensated for by this other generality of my inalienable subjectivity. How could I find elsewhere in my perceptual field such a presence of another self to itself? Will we conclude that the existence of others is a simple fact for me? But in any case, it is a fact for me, it must be among my own possibilities, and it must be understood or lived in some way by me in order to count as a fact.

[h. Solipsism cannot be overcome “in God.”]

Being thus unable to restrict solipsism from the outside, shall we attempt to overcome it from within? I can, of course, only recognize one Ego, but as a universal subject I cease being a finite myself, I become an impartial spectator for whom another person and myself as an empirical being are on an equal footing without my enjoying any privilege. It cannot be said that I am the consciousness that I discover through reflection and for whom everything is an object: my “myself” [*mon moi*] is spread out before this consciousness just like everything else, my consciousness constitutes it, it is not enclosed within it, and so it can constitute other myselfs without any difficulty. I can be conscious of others and of myself in God, and love others as myself.

– But this subjectivity we have collided with does not admit of being called God. If reflection reveals me to myself as an infinite subject, we must also recognize, at least in terms of appearances, my previous ignorance of this myself, which is more truly myself than I am. The response will be that I in fact knew of this myself, since I perceived others and myself, and since this perception is in fact only possible through this knowledge. But if I already knew this infinite subject, then all philosophical texts are useless. In fact, the truth needs to be revealed. Thus, it is this ignorant and finite self that recognized God within himself while, on the far side of phenomena, God has forever been thinking himself. It is through this shadow that the empty light comes to illuminate something, and thereby it is definitively impossible to eliminate the shadow in the light; I can never recognize myself as God without denying in principle what I want to prove as a thesis. I could love the other as myself in God, but it would still be necessary that my love for God not come from me, and that it is in fact, as Spinoza said, the love through which God loves himself through me. Such that, in the end there would nowhere be a love of

others nor others at all, but rather a single love of self that is linked to itself beyond our lives, that has nothing to do with us, and to which we cannot gain any access. The movement of reflection and of love that leads to God actually renders impossible the very God to which it would like to lead.

[i. *But solitude and communication are two sides of the same phenomenon.*]

Thus we are brought back to solipsism, and the problem appears now in all of its difficulty. I am not God – I merely have a pretension to divinity. I escape from every engagement, and I transcend others insofar as every situation and every other person must be lived by me in order to exist in my eyes. And yet, the other has a sense for me, at least at first glance. Like polytheistic gods, I must reckon with other gods, or again, like Aristotle's God, I polarize a world that I do not create. Consciousnesses present the absurdity of a solipsism-shared-by-many, and such is the situation that must be understood. Since we live this situation, there must be some way of making it explicit. Solitude and communication must not be two terms of an alternative, but rather two moments of a single phenomenon, since other people do in fact exist for me. We must say about the experience of others what we have elsewhere said about reflection: that its object cannot absolutely escape it, since we only have a notion of the object through reflection. Reflection must, in some way, present the unreflected, for otherwise we would have nothing to set against it, and it would not become a problem for us. Similarly, my experience must present others to me in some way, since if it did not do so I would not even speak of solitude, and I would not even declare others to be inaccessible. What is initially given and true is an open reflection upon the unreflected, the reflective taking up of the unreflected – and so too is the tension of my experience toward another whose existence is uncontested on the horizon of my life, even when the knowledge I have of him is imperfect. Between these two problems, there is more than a vague analogy: in both cases the question is to know how I can reach a point outside of myself and live the unreflected as such.

[j. *Absolute subject and engaged subject, and birth.*]*

How then can I – namely, me who is perceiving and who thereby affirms myself to be a universal subject – perceive another person who immedi-

ately deprives me of this universality? The central phenomenon, which simultaneously grounds my subjectivity and my transcendence toward the other, consists in the fact that I am given to myself. I am given, which is to say I find myself already situated and engaged in a physical and social world; I am given to myself, which is to say that this situation is never concealed from me, it is never around me like some foreign necessity, and I am never actually enclosed in my situation like an object in a box. My freedom, that fundamental power I have of being the subject of all of my experiences, is not distinct from my insertion in the world. I am destined to be free, to be unable to reduce myself to any of my experiences, to maintain with regard to every factual situation a faculty of withdrawal, and this destiny was sealed the moment that my transcendental field was opened, the moment I was born as vision and as knowledge, the moment I was thrown into the world. Against the social world, I can always make use of my sensible nature, close my eyes, plug my ears, live like a stranger in society, treat others, ceremonies, and monuments like mere arrangements of colors and lights, and strip them of all human signification. Against the natural world, I can always have recourse to thinking nature and throw into doubt every perception taken in isolation. And here is the truth of solipsism. Every experience will forever appear to me as a particularity that does not exhaust the generality of my being, and I always have, as Malebranche said, some momentum for going farther. But I can only escape from being into more being; for example, I escape from society into nature, or from the real world into an imaginary that is made up of the debris of the real. The physical and social world always functions as the stimulus of my reactions, whether they are positive or negative. I only call some such perception into question in the name of a truer one that would correct it; if I am able to deny each thing, this is always by affirming that there is something in general, and this is why we say that thought is a thinking nature, an affirmation of being through the negation of beings.

[k. *Suspended, not interrupted, communication.*]*

I can construct a solipsistic philosophy, but by doing so I presuppose a community of speaking men, and I address myself to this community. Even the “unqualified refusal to be anything whatsoever”⁹ assumes something that is refused and in relation to which the subject takes his

419 distance. It is said that a choice must be made between others and myself. But one is chosen *over* the other, and thus both are affirmed. It is said that the other transforms me into an object and negates me, and that I transform the other into an object and negate him. But in fact, the other's gaze does not transform me into an object, and my gaze does not transform him into an object, unless both gazes draw us back into the background of our thinking nature, unless we both establish an inhuman gaze, and unless each senses his actions, not as taken up and understood, but rather as observed like the actions of an insect. This is what happens, for example, when I suffer the gaze of a stranger. But even then the objectification of each by the other's gaze is only harmful because it takes the place of a possible communication. A dog's gaze upon me hardly bothers me at all. The refusal to communicate is still a mode of communication. Protean freedom, thinking nature, the inalienable background, or the non-qualified existence, which in me and in others marks the limits of all sympathy, certainly suspends communication, but it does not annihilate it. If I must deal with a stranger who has not yet uttered a word, I might well believe that he lives in another world where my actions or thoughts are not worthy of appearing. But should he utter a word, or merely make an impatient gesture, then he already ceases to transcend me: so that is his voice, and those are his thoughts, and there is the domain I believed was inaccessible.

Each existence only definitively transcends the others when it remains idle and rests on its natural difference. Even universal meditation, which cuts the philosopher off from his nation, friends, prejudices, and empirical being – in a word, from the world – and that seems to leave him absolutely alone, is in fact action, or speech, and hence dialogue. Solipsism could only be rigorously true of someone who succeeded in tacitly observing his existence without being anything and without doing anything, which is surely impossible, since to exist is to be in the world. In his reflective retreat, the philosopher cannot avoid dragging others along with him, because he learned to forever treat them as *peers* within the obscurity of the world, and because his entire knowledge is built upon this given of opinion. Transcendental subjectivity is a revealed subjectivity, meaning that it is revealed to itself and to others, and as such transcendental subjectivity is an intersubjectivity. As soon as existence gathers itself together and engages in a behavior, it appears to perception. And like every other perception, this one affirms more things than are

grasped in it: when I say that I see the ashtray and that it is over there, I presuppose a complete unfolding of the experience that would have to go on indefinitely, and I open up an entire perceptual future. Likewise, when I say that I know someone or that I like him, I am aiming at an inexhaustible background beyond his qualities that indeed might one day shatter the image that I adopt of him. This is the price for there to be things and “others” for us, not through some illusion, but rather through a violent act that is perception itself.

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[l. *The social, not as an object, but rather as a dimension of my being.*]

Thus, we must rediscover the social world, after the natural world, not as an object or a sum of objects, but as the permanent field or dimension of existence: I can certainly turn away from the social world, but I cannot cease to be situated in relation to it. Our relation to the social, like our relation to the world, is deeper than every explicit perception and deeper than every judgment. It is just as false to place us within society like an object in the midst of other objects, as it is to put society in us as an object of thought, and the error on both sides consists in treating the social as an object. We must return to the social world with which we are in contact through the simple fact of our existence, and that we inseparably bear along with us prior to every objectification. Objective and scientific consciousness of the past or of civilizations would be impossible if I did not have – through the intermediary of my society, my cultural world, and their horizons – at least a virtual communication with them, if the place of the Athenian Republic or of the Roman Empire was not somewhere marked on the borders of my own history, if they were not established there like some particular individuals to meet, indeterminate though pre-existing, and if I did not find the fundamental structures of history within my own life. The social world is already there when we come to know it or when we judge it. An individualistic or sociological philosophy is a certain perception of coexistence systematized and made explicit. Prior to this coming to awareness, the social exists silently and as a solicitation.

[m. *The social event on the outside and on the inside.*]*

At the end of *Notre patrie*, Péguy discovers a buried voice that had never ceased speaking,¹⁰ just as we are sure upon waking up that objects have

not ceased existing during the night, or that someone has been knocking at our door for a while. Despite their cultural, moral, vocational, and ideological differences, the Russian peasants of 1917 join the workers' struggle in Petrograd and Moscow because they sense that their lot is the same; class is lived concretely prior to being the object of a deliberate will. The social does not at first exist like an object in the third person. Wanting to treat it as an object is the common error of the curious bystander, the "great man," and the historian. Fabrice wanted to see the battle of Waterloo as one sees a landscape, but he only found confused episodes.¹¹ Does the Emperor really see the battle on his map? But it is reduced for him to a schema, and is not without lacunae: why is this regiment not advancing; why haven't the reserves arrived? The historian, who is not involved in the battle and who sees it from all angles, who draws together a multitude of facts and who knows how the battle turned out, believes in the end that he reaches the truth of the battle. But he only presents us with a representation, he does not reach the battle itself, since, at the moment that it was taking place, the outcome was still contingent and is no longer contingent when the historian recounts the battle, since the deep causes of the defeat and the fortuitous events that allowed them to play a role were equally determining factors in the singular event of "Waterloo," and because the historian puts the singular event back into the general sequence of the decline of the empire. The true "Waterloo" is not in what Fabrice sees, nor in what the Emperor sees, nor in what the historian sees; it is not a determinable object. The true "Waterloo" is what happens on the borders of all these perspectives, and from which they are all drawn.¹²

The historian and the philosopher seek an objective definition of class or of the nation: is the nation based upon common language or upon conceptions of life? Is class based upon income level or upon one's position in the circuit of production? It is clear that none of these criteria allow us to recognize if an individual belongs to a nation or a class. In all revolutions there are some members of the privileged class who join the revolutionary class, and some oppressed individuals who remain loyal to the privileged class. And every nation has its traitors. This is because nation or class are neither fatalities that subjugate the individual from the outside, nor for that matter values that he posits from within. They are, rather, modes of coexistence that solicit him. In peaceful times, nation and class are there like stimuli to which I only direct distracted or

confused responses; they are latent. A revolutionary situation or a situation of national danger transforms preconscious relations to class and nation that had until then been merely lived into conscious decisions; tacit commitment becomes explicit. But it appears to itself as if it pre-existed the decision.

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[n. *The problems of transcendence.*]

The problem of the existential modality of the social world here meets up with all of the problems of transcendence. Whether it is a question of my body, the natural world, the past, birth or death, the question is always to know how I can be open to phenomena that transcend me and that, nevertheless, only exist to the extent that I take them up and live them, *how the presence to myself (Urpräsenz) that defines me and that conditions every external presence is simultaneously a derepresentation (Entgegenwärtigung) and throws me outside of myself.*¹³ Idealism, by making the exterior immanent in me, and realism, by subjecting me to a causal action, both falsify the relations of motivation that exist between the exterior and the interior and render this relation incomprehensible. Our individual past, for example, cannot be given to us by the actual survival of states of consciousness or of cerebral traces, nor by a consciousness of the past that would constitute it and arrive at it immediately: in both cases, we would lack the sense of the past, for the past would be for us, strictly speaking, present. If something of the past is to exist for us, then this can only be in an ambiguous presence, prior to every explicit recollection, like a field that we open onto. It must exist for us even though we do not think about it, and all of our recollections must be drawn from this opaque mass. Likewise, if I only had the world as a sum of things, and the thing as a sum of properties, I would not have any certainties, but only probabilities; no irrecusable reality, but only conditional truths. If the past and the world exist, then they must have a theoretical immanence – they can only be what I see behind myself and around myself – and an actual transcendence – they exist in my life before appearing as objects of my explicit acts. Or again, my birth or my death cannot be for me objects of thought.

Established within life, propped up by my thinking nature, placed within that transcendental field that opened with my first perception and in which every absence is merely the other side of a presence, or every silence a modality of sonorous being, I have a sort of theoretical

423 ubiquity and eternity, I feel destined to a flow of inexhaustible life whose beginning and whose end I cannot think, since it is still my living self who thinks them, and since thus my life always precedes itself and always survives itself. Nevertheless, this same thinking nature that fills me with being opens the world to me through a perspective, I receive along with it the feeling of my contingency, the anxiety of being transcended, such that, even if I do not think of my death, I still live within an atmosphere of death in general, there is something of an essence of death that is always on the horizon of my thoughts. Finally, just as the instant of my death is an inaccessible future for me, I am certain to never live the presence of another to himself. And nevertheless, every other person exists for me as an irrecusable style or milieu of coexistence, and my life has a social atmosphere just as it has a flavor of mortality.

[o. The true transcendental is the Ur-sprung [springing-forth] of transcendences.]

Along with the natural world and the social world, we have discovered that which is truly transcendental, which is not the collection of constitutive operations through which a transparent world, without shadows and without opacity, is spread out in front of an impartial spectator, but rather the ambiguous life where the *Ursprung* of transcendences takes place, which, through a fundamental contradiction, puts me into communication with them and on this basis makes knowledge possible.¹⁴ Perhaps the objection will be raised that a contradiction cannot be placed at the center of philosophy, and that all of our descriptions, not being ultimately thinkable, are entirely meaningless. The objection would be valid if we restricted ourselves to finding, under the name “phenomenon” or “phenomenal field,” a layer of pre-logical or magical experience. For then it would be necessary to choose between either believing the descriptions and abandoning thought, or knowing what we are saying and abandoning these descriptions. These descriptions must be the
424 opportunity for us to define an understanding and a reflection more radical than objective thought. To phenomenology understood as a direct description, a phenomenology of phenomenology must be added. We must return to the *cogito* in order to seek there a more fundamental *Logos* than that of objective thought, one that provides objective thought with its relative justification and, at the same time, puts it in its place. On the level of being, we will never understand that the subject is

simultaneously creating [*naturant*] and created [*naturé*], and simultaneously infinite and finite. But if we uncover time beneath the subject, and if we reconnect the paradox of time to the paradoxes of the body, the world, the thing, and others, then we will understand that there is nothing more to understand.

Part Three

Being-for-Itself and
Being-in-the-World¹



THE COGITO¹

[a. Interpretation of the cogito in terms of eternity.]

I am thinking of the Cartesian Cogito, wanting to finish this work, sensing the coolness of the paper under my hand, and perceiving the trees of the boulevard through the window. My life continuously throws itself into transcendent things; it happens entirely on the outside. The Cogito is either that thought which formed three centuries ago in Descartes's mind, or the sense of the texts that he left to us, or, finally, an eternal truth that emerges from them; but in any case it is a cultural being that my thought tends toward rather than encompasses, just as my body orients itself and makes its way among objects in a familiar setting without my needing to represent them to myself explicitly. This book in progress is not a certain assemblage of ideas; rather, it constitutes for me an open situation whose complex formula I could not provide and where I blindly struggle until, as if by a miracle, the thoughts and the words organize themselves. *A fortiori*, the sensible beings surrounding me (the paper beneath my hand, the trees before my eyes) do not yield their secret to me, my consciousness flees from itself and is unaware of itself in them. Such is the initial situation that realism attempts to account for by affirming the actual transcendence and the existence in themselves of the world and of ideas.

428 Siding with realism is, however, out of the question, and there is a definitive truth in the Cartesian return of things and of ideas to myself. The very experience of transcendent things is only possible if their project is borne and found within myself. When I say that things are transcendent, this signifies that I do not possess them, that I do not encompass them; they are transcendent to the extent that I am unaware of what they are and blindly affirm their bare existence. But what sense is there in affirming the existence of something unknown? If there can be some truth in this affirmation, this is because I glimpse the nature or essence at issue, because my vision of the tree (for example) as a mute ecstasy [*extase*] in an individual thing already envelops a certain thought that I am seeing [*pensée de voir*] and a certain thought about the tree, and finally because I do not encounter the tree, I am not simply confronted with it, and I find in this existing thing before me a certain nature whose notion I actively form. If I find things around myself, this cannot be because they are really there, for, *ex hypothesi*, I know nothing of this factual existence.

If I am capable of recognizing this, it is because the actual contact of the thing awakens in me a primordial knowledge of all things and because my finite and determinate perceptions are the partial manifestations of a power of knowing that is coextensive with the world and that displays it fully. If we imagine a space in itself with which the perceiving subject could come to coincide – for example, if I imagine that my hand perceives the distance between two points by molding to them – how could the angle formed by my fingers (and that is characteristic of this distance) be evaluated if it were not somehow retraced inwardly by a power that resides neither in one object nor in the other, and that hence becomes capable of knowing or rather of bringing about their relation? If one wants to say that the “sensation of my thumb” and that of my index finger are at least “signs” of this distance, how could these sensations have in themselves what is necessary for signifying the relation between points in space if they were not already situated upon a trajectory running from one to the other, and if this trajectory were, in turn, not merely traveled by my fingers as they open, but also intended through its intelligible outline by my thought? “How could the mind know the sense of a sign that it has not itself constituted as a sign?”² It seems that we must substitute for the image of knowledge we obtained by describing the subject situated in his world a second image according to which the subject constructs or constitutes this very world, and this latter will be more

authentic than the previous, since the exchange between the subject and the objects surrounding him is only possible if he first makes them exist for himself, arranges them around himself, and draws them from his own depths.

This is even more the case in acts of spontaneous thought. The Cartesian *Cogito*, which is the theme of my reflections, is always beyond what I currently represent to myself. It has an horizon of sense made up of so many thoughts that occurred to me while reading Descartes, but that are not currently present, and of other thoughts that I vaguely sense in advance, thoughts that I could have but that I have never developed. But if it is enough that these three syllables are uttered in my presence for me to be immediately oriented toward a certain order of ideas, this is because in some sense all possible developments are at once present to me. "Whoever would hope to restrict the spiritual light to what is at present represented will always run into the Socratic problem: 'How will you look for it, Socrates, when you do not know at all what it is? How will you aim to search for something you do not know at all? If you should meet with it, how will you know that this is the thing that you did not know?' (*Meno*, 80d)."³ A thought that could be truly transcended by its objects would find these objects springing forth along its path without ever being able to grasp their relations or penetrate their truth. It is me who reconstitutes the historical *Cogito*, it is me who reads Descartes's text, me who recognizes there an imperishable truth, and in the final analysis the Cartesian *Cogito* only has sense through my own *Cogito*, I could literally think nothing of it if I did not have, in myself, all that was needed to invent it. It is me who assigns my thought the goal of taking up this movement of the *Cogito*, and who continuously verifies the orientation of my thought toward this goal; my thought must, then, precede itself in this goal, and it must have already found what it is looking for, otherwise it would not go looking for it. My thought must be defined by this strange power it has of anticipating itself and of throwing itself forward, of finding itself at home everywhere; in short, my thought must be defined by its autonomy. If thought had not itself put into things what it will later find there, it would have no hold on things, it would not think them, and it would be an "illusion of thought."⁴

A sensible perception or a chain of reasoning cannot exist as facts that happen in me and of which I take notice. When I consider them *après coup*, they are distributed and dispersed each to its place. But this is nothing

but the wake of reasoning and perception which, when considered in their actuality, had to encompass all at once everything that was necessary for their realization and consequently had to be directly present to themselves in an undivided intention, otherwise they would have fallen
 430 apart. Every thought of something is simultaneously self-consciousness, otherwise it could not have an object. At the root of all of our experiences and all of our reflections we thus find a being that recognizes itself immediately, because it is nothing other than self-knowledge and knowledge of all things, a being that does not know its own existence through ascertainment [*constatation*] or in the manner of a given fact, nor through an inference beginning from an idea of itself, but rather through direct contact with that existence. Self-consciousness is the very being of the mind at work. The act by which I am conscious of something must be itself apprehended in the moment in which it is accomplished, otherwise it would break apart. Consequently, one cannot imagine that self-consciousness could be triggered or provoked by anything whatsoever; this act must be *causa sui*.⁵ To return with Descartes from things to the thought about things is either to reduce experience to a sum of psychological events for which the I is merely a common name or the hypothetical cause, but then it would not be clear how my existence could be more certain than that of any other thing, since it is no more immediate, except for an imperceptible instant, or it is to recognize, beneath events, a field and a system of thoughts that would not be subjected to time, nor to any limitation, a mode of existence that owes nothing to the event and that would be existence as consciousness, a spiritual act that grasps from a distance and contracts into itself everything that it intends, an “I think” that would be an “I am” by itself and without any addition.⁶ “The Cartesian doctrine of the *Cogito* should thus logically entail the affirmation of the non-temporality of the mind and the admission of an eternal consciousness: ‘*Experimur nos aeternos esse* [we experience that we are eternal].’”⁷ Eternity, understood as the power to embrace and to anticipate temporal developments within a single intention, would thus be the very definition of subjectivity.⁸

[b. Consequences: the impossibility of finitude and of others.]

Before questioning this interpretation of the *Cogito* in terms of eternity, let us look closely at its consequences, which will show the need for a

correction. If the *Cogito* reveals a new mode of existence that owes nothing to time, if I discover myself as the universal constituent of every being that is accessible to me, and if I discover myself to be a transcendental field with no folds and no outside, then it must not merely be said that my mind “so far as the formal element of all sense-objects is concerned (. . .) is Spinoza’s God,”⁹ – for the distinction between form and matter can no longer receive an ultimate value, and it is not clear why the mind, reflecting upon itself, could ultimately find any sense in the notion of receptivity or conceive of itself in any valuable way as affected. For, if it is the mind that thinks of itself as affected, then it does not think of itself as affected, since it once again affirms its activity at the moment in which it seems to hold itself back; if it is the mind that places itself in the world, then that mind is not in the world and self-positing is an illusion. It is unclear how Lachièze-Rey, for example, could avoid this consequence.

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If I ceased thinking and then begin to think again, I come alive again, I reconstitute – in its indivisibility and by putting myself back at the source from which it emerges – the movement that I carry on (. . .). Thus, every time that the subject thinks, he takes himself as his support, he places himself, beyond and behind his various representations, in that unity that, as the principle of all recognition, must not be recognized, and he again becomes the absolute because that is what he eternally is.¹⁰

But how could there be several absolutes? How could I in the first place ever recognize other *Myself*s? If the subject’s only experience is the one I obtain by coinciding with it, if the mind, by definition, eludes the “outside spectator” and can only be recognized inwardly, then my *Cogito* is, in principle, unique – no one else could “participate” in it. Might one respond by saying that it is rather “transferable” to others?¹¹ But how could such a transfer ever be motivated? What spectacle will ever truly be able to induce me to posit outside of myself this mode of existence whose sense requires that it be grasped inwardly? If I do not learn within myself to recognize the junction of the for-itself and the in-itself, then none of these mechanisms that we call “other bodies” will ever come to life; if I have no outside, then others have no inside. If I have an absolute consciousness of myself, then the plurality of consciousnesses is impossible. It is even impossible to catch sight of a divine absolute behind the absolute of my thought. The contact of my thought with itself, if

432 perfect, encloses me within myself and prevents me from ever feeling transcended; there is no opening to nor “aspiration”¹² for an Other for this *Myself* who constructs the totality of being and its own presence in the world, who is defined by “self-possession,”¹³ and who only ever finds outside of himself what he has put there. This hermetically sealed self is no longer a finite self.

There is only (. . .) consciousness of the universe thanks to the previous consciousness of organization – in the active sense of the word – and consequently, in the final analysis, thanks to an inner communication with the very operation of divinity.¹⁴

The *Cogito* ultimately leads me to coincide with God. If the intelligible and recognizable structure of my experience, when I recognize it in the *Cogito*, draws me out of the event and places me within eternity, then it simultaneously frees me from all limitations and from this fundamental event that is my private existence, and the same reasons that oblige us to pass from the event to the act, from thoughts to the I, also oblige us to pass from the multiplicity of I’s to one solitary constituting consciousness and prevent me – in an attempt to save in *extremis* the finitude of the subject – from defining it as a “monad.”¹⁵ The constituting consciousness is, in principle, singular and universal.

[c. *Return to the cogito.*]*

If we attempt to maintain that it constitutes in us merely a microcosm, if we preserve for the *Cogito* the sense of an “existential experience,”¹⁶ or if it reveals to me not the absolute transparency of a thought that entirely possesses itself, but rather the blind act by which I take up my destiny as a thinking nature and carry it forward, then this would be a different philosophy, a philosophy that does not draw us outside of time. We see here the necessity of finding a path between eternity and the fragmented time of empiricism, and the necessity of taking up again the interpretation of the *Cogito* and the interpretation of time. We have seen, once and for all, that our relations with things cannot be external relations, nor can our consciousness of ourselves be the simple registering of psychical events. We only perceive a world if, prior to being some set of observed facts, this world and this perception are thoughts of our very own. It remains for

us to attempt to understand the precise way in which the world belongs to the subject and the subject belongs to himself, this *cogitatio* that makes experience possible, our hold on things and our hold on our “states of consciousness.” We shall see that the subject is not indifferent to the event and time, that it is rather the fundamental mode of the event and of *Geschichte* [history], whose objective and impersonal events are derivative forms, and finally that the recourse to eternity is only required given an objective conception of time.

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[d. *The cogito and perception.*]

Thus, that “I think” is beyond doubt. I am not certain that there is an ashtray or a pipe over there, but I am certain that I think I see an ashtray or a pipe. Is it as easy to dissociate these two affirmations as is often thought, and to maintain – independent of every judgment concerning the thing seen – the evidentness of my “thought that I am seeing”? On the contrary, this is impossible. Perception is just that kind of act where there can be no question of separating the act itself and the term upon which it bears. Perception and the perceived necessarily have the same existential modality, since perception is inseparable from the consciousness that it has or rather that it is of reaching the thing itself. There can be no question of maintaining the certainty of perception by denying the certainty of the perceived thing. If I see an ashtray in the full sense of the word “see,” then there must be an ashtray over there, and I cannot repress this affirmation. To see is to see something. To see red is to see an actually existing red. Vision can only be reduced to the simple presumption of seeing if we imagine it as the contemplation of a drifting and anchorless *quale*. But if, as we said above, the quality itself in its specific texture is the suggestion made to us (and to which we respond insofar as we have sensory fields) of a certain manner of existing, and if the perception of a color endowed with a definite structure – a surface color or a colored area – in a place, or at a precise or vague distance, presupposes our opening onto a real or onto a world, then how could we dissociate the certainty of our perceiving existence and that of its external counterpart? My vision essentially refers not merely to an allegedly visible thing, but rather to a being that is actually seen. Reciprocally, if I raise a doubt as to the presence of the thing, this doubt bears upon vision itself; if there is no red or blue over there, then I say that I have not *really seen* them, I

concede that at no moment has this adequation taken place between my visual intentions and the visible, which is vision in actuality.

There are, then, two possibilities: either I have no certainty concerning things themselves, but then I can no more be certain of my own perception understood as a simple thought, since, even understood in this way, it includes the affirmation of a thing; or I grasp my thought with certainty, but this presupposes that I simultaneously assume the existences that my thought intends. When Descartes tells us that the existence of visible things is doubtful, whereas our vision considered as the simple thought that one is seeing [*pensée de voir*] is not, his position is untenable. For “thought that one is seeing” can have two senses. We might first understand it in the restrictive sense of a supposed vision or as the “impression of seeing,” and then we have here merely the certainty of a possibility or a probability; and yet, the “thought that one is seeing” implies that we have had, in some cases, the experience of authentic or actual vision which the thought that one is seeing resembles, and in which the certainty of the thing was then included. The certainty of a possibility is merely the possibility of a certainty; the thought that one is seeing is merely the idea of vision, and we would not have this idea if we did not elsewhere have actual vision. Now, we might understand by the “thought that one is seeing” the consciousness that we would have of our constituting power. Whatever the case may be with our empirical perceptions, which might be true or false, these perceptions would only be possible if they are inhabited by a mind capable of recognizing, identifying, and maintaining before us their intentional object. But if this constituting power is not a myth, and if perception is truly the simple prolongation of an inner dynamism with which I can coincide, then the certitude that I have of the transcendental premises about the world must be extended to the world itself, and, given that my vision is through and through the “thought that I am seeing,” then the thing I see is in itself what I think about it, and transcendental idealism is an absolute realism.¹⁷ It would be contradictory to maintain¹⁸ simultaneously that the world is constituted by me and that I can only grasp the outline and the essential structures of this constitutive operation; I must see the existing world appear – and not merely the idea of the world – upon the completion of the constitutive work, otherwise I would only have an abstract construction and not a concrete consciousness of the world. Thus, in whichever way we understand the “thought that one is seeing,” it is only certain if actual vision is certain as well.

When Descartes tells us that sensation reduced to itself is always true, and that error is introduced by the transcending interpretation given by judgment, he here establishes an illusory distinction, for it is no less difficult for me to know if I sensed something than it is to know if there is something there, and the hysteric senses and does not know what he senses, just as he perceives external objects without being aware of this perception. However, when I am certain of having sensed, the certainty of an external thing is included within the very manner in which sensation is articulated and developed in front of me: it is a pain in *my leg*, or it is *some red*, and an opaque red upon a single plane, for example, or rather a three-dimensional red atmosphere. The “interpretation” that I give of my sensations must surely be motivated, and it can only be motivated by the very structure of these sensations, so much so that it can be equally said that there is no transcendent interpretation or no judgment that does not spring from the very configuration of phenomena, and that there is no sphere of immanence or no domain where my consciousness would be at home and assured against all risk of error. The acts of the I are of such a nature that they transcend themselves and that there is no private sphere of consciousness. Consciousness is entirely transcendence, not a transcendence that is undergone – we have said that such a transcendence would be the end of consciousness – but rather an active transcendence. The consciousness I have of seeing or of sensing is not the passive registering of a self-enclosed psychological event that would leave me uncertain with regard to the reality of the thing seen or sensed; nor is it the unfolding of a constitutive power that would eminently and eternally contain in itself every possible vision or sensation and that would meet up with the object without having to leave itself; rather, that consciousness I have of seeing is the very realization of vision. I assure myself that I am seeing by looking at this or that, or at least by awakening my visual surroundings or a visual world that is ultimately vouched for by the vision of a particular thing. Vision is an action, that is, not an eternal operation (this expression is contradictory), but rather an operation that holds more than it promised, that always goes beyond its premises, and that is only inwardly prepared for by my primordial opening to a field of transcendences, or again through an ecstasy. Vision is accomplished and fulfilled in the thing seen. Vision must surely grasp itself – for if it did not, it would not be a vision of anything at all – but it must grasp itself in a sort of ambiguity and a sort of obscurity, since it does not possess itself and rather escapes

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itself into the thing that is seen. Through the *Cogito*, I do not discover and recognize psychological immanence, which is the inherence of all phenomena to “private states of consciousness,” or the blind contact of sensation with itself, nor even transcendental immanence, which is the belonging of all phenomena to a constituting consciousness, or the self-possession of clear thought. Rather, what I discover and recognize is the profound movement of transcendence that is my very being, the simultaneous contact with my being and with the being of the world.

[e. *The cogito and affective intentionality.*]

Nevertheless, is not the case of perception a special one? It opens me to a world, and it could only do so by going beyond myself and by going beyond itself. The perceptual “synthesis” must be incomplete and perception can only present a “real” to me by exposing itself to the risk of error. It is essential that the thing, if it is to be a thing, have sides hidden from me, and this is why the distinction between appearance and reality immediately has a place in the perceptual “synthesis.” If, however, I consider my consciousness of “psychical facts,” it seems that consciousness reasserts itself and regains full possession of itself. For example, love and desire are inner operations; they create their objects and it is clear that by doing so they can turn away from the real and, in this sense, they can trick us. And yet it seems impossible that they trick us with regard to themselves: from the moment I experience [*éprouve*] love, joy, or sadness, it is true that I love, that I am joyous, or that I am sad, even if the object does not in fact have the value that I currently invest it with (that is, for others or for myself at another moment). Within me, appearance is reality, and the being of consciousness consists in appearing to itself. What is desiring if not the consciousness of an object as valuable (or as valuable precisely insofar as it is not valuable, in the case of perverse desire); what is loving if not the consciousness of an object as lovable? And since the consciousness of an object necessarily includes a self-knowledge, without which this consciousness would escape itself and would not even grasp its object, desire and knowing that we desire, or loving and knowing that we love are but one single act; love is consciousness of loving, desire is consciousness of desiring. A love or a desire that was not self-conscious would be a love that does not love, or a desire that does not desire, just as an unconscious thought would be a thought that does not think. Desire

and love would be unchanged whether their object is fictional or real and, considered without reference to the object upon which they in fact bear, they would constitute a sphere of absolute certainty where truth could not escape us. Everything in consciousness would be true. There would be illusions only when it comes to the external object. From the moment that it is felt, a feeling, considered in itself, would always be true. Nevertheless, let us take a closer look.

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[f. False or illusory feelings. Feeling as engagement.]

First of all, it is clear that we can distinguish in ourselves between “true” feelings and “false” feelings; from this fact it is clear that everything we sense in ourselves is not found on the same plane of existence or true in the same way and that there are degrees of reality in us, just as outside of us there are “reflections,” “phantoms,” and “things.” Next to true love, there is a false or illusory love. This latter case must be distinguished from errors in interpretation and from cases where, in bad faith, I gave the name “love” to emotions that were not worthy of it. For in such cases, there was never even a semblance of love, I did not believe for a moment that my life was engaged in this feeling, I carefully avoided asking the question in order to avoid the response that I already knew, and my “love”-making was merely performed out of kindness or in bad faith. On the contrary, in false or illusory love I am willingly united with the loved person; she really was, for a time, the mediator of my relations with the world. When I said: “I love her,” I was not “interpreting”; and my life really was engaged in a form that, like a melody, demanded a certain continuation. It is true that, after the disillusionment (after the revelation of my illusion *regarding myself*) and when I later attempt to understand what has happened to me, I will uncover beneath this supposed love *something other than love*: a resemblance of the “loved” woman to another person, boredom, habit, shared interests or convictions, and this is just what allows me to speak of illusion. I only loved certain qualities (that smile that resembles another smile, that beauty that asserts itself like a fact, those youthful gestures and behaviors) and not the singular manner of being that is this person herself. And, correlatively, I was not fully caught – regions of my past and my future escaped the invasion, and I preserved places within myself for something else. But then one will reply that either I did not know it, and in that case it is not a

438 question of an illusory love, but rather of a true love that is dying; or that I knew it, and in that case there has never been love at all, not even a false one. And yet, neither of these is the case. It cannot be said that this had been, while it existed, indiscernible from a true love and that it became a “false love” when I repudiated it. It cannot be said that a mystical crisis at age fifteen is, in itself, meaningless and becomes, according to how I freely evaluate it in my later years, either an incident of puberty or the first sign of a religious vocation. Even if I construct my entire life around some incident from puberty, this incident preserves its contingent character, and it is my entire life that is “false.” In the mystical crisis itself, such as I lived it, some characteristic must be found that distinguishes the vocation from the incident: in the first case, the mystical attitude insinuates itself into my fundamental relation with the world and with others; in the second case, the attitude is an impersonal behavior without any internal necessity, – namely, “puberty” – within the subject. Similarly, true love summons up all of the subject’s resources and affects him completely, whereas false love has to do with only one of his personae: “the man of forty,” when it has to do with a late love; “the traveler,” when it has to do with an exotic love; the “widower,” if the false love is sustained by a memory; or “the child,” when it is sustained by the memory of the mother. A true love ends when I change or when the loved person has changed; a false love is revealed as false when I return to myself. The difference is intrinsic. But since it has to do with the place of the feeling in my overall being in the world, since the false love has to do with the person I believe I am at the moment when I experience it, and since in order to discern the falseness I would need a knowledge of myself that I will only obtain precisely through disillusionment, the ambiguity remains, and this is why illusion is possible.

Let us again consider the example of the hysteric. He was quickly treated as a pretender, but it is first of all himself that he deceives, and this plasticity again raises the problem that they had hoped to avoid: how can the hysteric not sense what he senses, and sense what he does not sense? He does not *feign* pain, sadness, or anger, and yet his “pains,” “sadnesses,” and “angers” are distinct from a pain, a sadness, or an anger that is “real” because he is not entirely caught up in them. At his core there remains a zone of calm. Illusory or imaginary feelings are certainly lived, but they are lived, so to speak, on the periphery of ourselves.¹⁹ The child and many adults are dominated by “situational values” that hide

their actual feelings from them – they are happy because they are given a gift, sad because they are attending a funeral, joyful or sad depending upon the landscape, and beneath these emotions they are indifferent and empty. “We do indeed have the feeling itself, but ‘only in [an inauthentic]’ way; the feeling is like a ‘shadow’ of the [authentic] feeling.”²⁰ Our natural attitude is not to experience our own feelings or to adhere to our own pleasures, but rather to live according to the emotional categories of our milieu.

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The young girl in love does not project her emotions into Isolde or Juliet; she experiences [*éprouve*] the emotions of these poetic phantoms and slips then into her own life. It is only later that a personal and authentic emotion might break into this web of emotional fantasies.²¹

But so long as this feeling is not yet born, the young girl has no way of detecting what is illusory and affected in her love. It is the truth of these future feelings that will bring to light the falsity of her present feelings. Thus, these present feelings are certainly lived, the young girl “irrealizes”²² herself in them just like the actor in his character, and here we do not have representations or ideas that could trigger real emotions, but rather fictional emotions and imaginary feelings.

Thus, we do not possess our entire reality at each moment, and one has the right to speak of an inner perception, an intimate sense, an “analyzer”²³ between us and ourselves, that at each moment goes more or less the distance toward knowledge of our life and of our being. What remains beneath the level of inner perception and does not leave an impression on inner sense is not an unconsciousness. “My life” and my “total being” are not some contestable constructions there – like Bergson’s “deep-seated self”;²⁴ rather, they are phenomena that are presented to reflection as evident. It is simply a question here of what we are *doing*. I discover that I am in love. Perhaps nothing of the facts that I now take as proof escaped me: not that quickened movement from my present toward my future, nor this emotion that left me speechless, nor this impatience for the day of our date to arrive. But alas, I had not brought these facts together or, even if I had, I did not think it involved such a strong emotion. But I now discover that I can no longer conceive of my life without this love. Thinking back to the previous days or months, I notice that my actions and my thoughts were polarized, I uncover the traces of an arrangement

440 or of a synthesis that was *in the making*. It is impossible to claim that I always knew what I now know and to set up in past months a knowledge of myself that I have just acquired. In general, it is impossible to deny that I have much to learn about myself, or to place in advance at my core a self-knowledge that contains everything that I will later know about myself, after having read books and lived through the events of which I at present have no inkling.

The idea of a consciousness that would be transparent for itself and whose existence would amount to the consciousness that it has of existing is not so different from the notion of the unconsciousness. In both cases we have the same retrospective illusion: everything that I will later learn about myself is introduced into me as an explicit object. The love that worked out its dialectic through me and that I have just discovered is not from the outset a hidden thing in my unconsciousness, nor is it for that matter an object in front of my consciousness; rather, it is the movement by which I am turned toward someone, the conversion of my thoughts and of my behaviors – I was hardly unaware of it, since it was I who lived through the hours of boredom prior to a date, and I who experienced joy when it approached; this love was lived – not known – from beginning to end. The lover is comparable to the dreamer. The “latent content” and the “sexual sense” of the dream are surely present to the dreamer, since it is he who dreams his dream. But, precisely because sexuality is the general atmosphere of the dream, dreams are not thematized as sexual, for lack of a non-sexual background against which they might stand out. When one wonders if the dreamer is or is not conscious of the sexual content of his dream, the question is poorly formed. As we explained above, if sexuality is one of the ways we have of relating ourselves to the world, then when our meta-sexual being is eclipsed, as happens in dreaming, then sexuality is everywhere and nowhere; the dream is inherently ambiguous and cannot be specified as sexuality. The fire that figures in the dream is not, for the dreamer, a way of disguising a sexual impulse beneath an acceptable symbol; rather, it becomes a symbol for the man who is awake. In the language of the dream, fire is the emblem of sexual impulse because the dreamer, detached from the physical world and the strict context of waking life, only employs images in proportion to their affective value. The sexual signification of the dream is not unconscious, nor is it for that matter “conscious,” because the dream does not “signify,” as waking life does, by relating one order of facts

to another. We would be equally wrong by making sexuality crystallize in “unconscious representations” or by setting up in the depths of the dreamer a consciousness that can identify sexuality by name. Similarly, love cannot be given a name by the lover who lives it. It is not a thing that one could outline and designate, it is not the same love spoken of in books and newspapers, because it is rather the way the lover establishes his relations with the world; it is an existential signification. The criminal does not see his crime, nor the traitor his betrayal, but not because these exist deep within him as unconscious representations or tendencies, but rather because these crimes or betrayals are so many relatively closed worlds and so many situations. If we are situated, then we are surrounded and cannot be transparent to ourselves, and thus our contact with ourselves must only be accomplished in ambiguity.

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[g. I know that I think because first I think.]

But have we not overshot the goal? If illusion is sometimes possible in consciousness, will it not always be possible? We said that there are imaginary emotions in which we are engaged enough for them to be lived, but not enough for them to be authentic. But are there any absolute engagements? Is it not essential to the engagement to allow the autonomy of the person engaged to subsist such that the engagement is never complete, and are we thus not stripped of every means of describing certain feelings as authentic? If we define the subject through existence, that is, through a movement in which it transcends itself, do we not simultaneously destine the subject to illusion, since it will never be able to be anything? Without having defined reality as appearance in consciousness, have we not cut the ties between us and ourselves, and reduced consciousness to the condition of the simple appearance of an elusive reality? Are we not confronted with the alternative between an absolute consciousness and an interminable doubt? And have we not, by rejecting the first solution, rendered the *Cogito* impossible?

– The objection brings us to the essential point. It is neither true that my existence possesses itself, nor that it is foreign to itself, because it is an act or a doing, and because an act, by definition, is the violent passage from what I have to what I aim at, or from what I am to what I have the intention of being. I can actualize the *Cogito* and have the assurance of really desiring, loving, or believing, given that I first actually desire, love,

or believe and given that I accomplish my own existence. If I do not do so, an unassailable doubt spreads across the world, and also across my own thoughts. I will endlessly wonder if my “tastes,” my “desires,” my “wishes,” and my “adventures” are truly my own, and they will always
 442 seem artificial, unreal, and flawed. But this doubt itself, for lack of being an actual doubt, could no longer even approach the certainty of doubting.²⁵ One only escapes from this and reaches “sincerity” by forestalling these scruples and by throwing oneself blindly into the “doing” [*le faire*]. Thus, it is not *because* I think being that I am certain of existing, but rather the certainty that I have of my thoughts derives from their actual existence. My love, my hate, and my desire are not certain as simple thoughts of loving, hating, or desiring, but rather all of the certainty of these thoughts comes from the certainty of acts of loving, of hating, and of desiring, of which I am certain because I am the one who *does* them. Every inner perception is inadequate because I am not an object that one could perceive, because I make my reality and I only meet up with myself in the act.

“I doubt”: the only way of ending all doubt with regard to this claim is actually to doubt, to engage in the experience of doubt, and thereby to make this doubt exist as the certainty of doubting. To doubt is always to doubt something, even if one “doubts everything.” I am certain of doubting because I take up this or that thing, or even everything including my own existence, precisely as doubtful. I know myself in my relation to “things,” inner perception comes later, and it would not be possible if I had not made contact with my doubt by in fact experiencing it in its object. We can say of inner perception what we said of external perception: it includes the infinite, or it is a never completed synthesis that, although never completed, is nevertheless self-affirming. If I wish to verify my perception of the ashtray, I will never finish this task, for my perception assumes more that I can know from explicit knowledge. Similarly, if I wish to verify the reality of my doubt, I will never finish this task, it would be necessary to put my thought of doubting into question, the thought of this thought into question, and so on. Certainty comes from doubt itself as an act and not from these thoughts, just as the certainty of the thing and of the world precedes the thetic knowledge of their properties. As has been said, to know is certainly to know that one
 443 knows, not that this second-order knowledge grounds knowledge itself, but rather the reverse. I cannot reconstruct the thing, and yet there are

perceived things, just as I can never coincide with my fleeting life, and yet there are inner perceptions. When it comes to myself, the same reason makes me capable of illusions and of truths: it remains to be seen if there are acts in which I gather myself together in order to transcend myself. The Cogito is the recognition of this fundamental fact. In the proposition “I think, I am,” the two affirmations are certainly equivalent, otherwise there would be no Cogito. But again, we must attempt to understand the sense of this equivalence: it is not the “I think” that eminently contains the “I am,” nor is it my existence that is reduced to the consciousness that I have of it; rather, it is the “I think” that is reintegrated into the movement of transcendence of the “I am,” and consciousness reintegrated into existence.

[h. *The cogito and the idea: geometrical idea and perceptual consciousness.*]

It certainly seems necessary then to concede an absolute coinciding of myself with myself, if not in the case of desire or emotion, then at least in the acts of “pure thought.” If this were the case, then everything we have said above would be thrown into question, and, far from thought appearing as a manner of existing, we would actually belong solely to the domain of thought. We must now examine the understanding. I am thinking of the triangle (the three-dimensional space to which it is supposed to belong, the extension of one of its sides, and the parallel that can be drawn from one of its vertexes to the opposite side), and I see that this vertex and these lines form a sum of angles equal to the sum of the triangle’s angles and equal, on the other hand, to two right angles. I am certain of this result, which I consider demonstrated. This means that my constructed diagram is not – like the lines arbitrarily added by the child to his drawing and which completely change its signification (“it’s a house; no, it’s a boat; no, it’s a man”) – an assemblage of lines fortuitously born beneath my hand. The entire operation has to do with the triangle. The genesis of the construction is not merely a real genesis, but also an intelligible genesis; I construct according to rules, I make properties appear upon the figure, that is, relations drawn from the essence of the triangle, and not – like the child – all the relations suggested by the undefined figure that actually exists on the paper. I am conscious of demonstrating because I perceive a necessary connection between the collection of givens that constitute the hypothesis and the conclusion that I draw

444 from them. This necessity ensures my ability to reiterate the operation upon an indefinite number of empirical figures, and it comes from the fact that – at each step in my proof and each time that I introduced new relations – I remained conscious of the triangle as a stable structure that these steps determine, but that they do not efface. This is why it can be said, if one wishes, that the demonstration consists in introducing the sum of constructed angles into two different constellations, and in seeing this sum alternately as equal to the angles of the triangle and equal to two right angles.²⁶ But it must be added²⁷ that here we do not have just two configurations that follow each other and that drive each other away (as in the drawing of the fantasizing child); the first remains for me while the second is established, the sum of angles that I equate to two right angles is the same that I elsewhere equate to the sum of the triangle's angles, and this is not possible unless I go beyond the order of phenomena or appearances to gain access to the order of the *eidos* or of being. Truth appears impossible without an absolute self-possession in active thought, otherwise it would not succeed in developing into a series of successive operations and in constructing an eternally valid result.

There would be no thought and no truth without an act by which I overcome the temporal dispersion of the phases of thought and the simple factual existence of my psychic events, but the key is to gain a clear understanding of this act. The necessity of the demonstration is not an analytic one, for the construction that enables its conclusion is not actually contained in the essence of the triangle, it is merely possible beginning from this essence. There is no definition of the triangle that contains in advance both the properties that will be demonstrated through what follows and the intermediaries that will be passed through in order to arrive at this demonstration. Extending a side, drawing a line through the vertex that is parallel with the opposite side, bringing in the theorem concerning parallels and their secant, these acts are only possible if I consider the triangle itself (as it is drawn on the paper, on the blackboard, or in the imagination), its physiognomy, the concrete arrangement of its lines, in short, its *Gestalt*. Is this not precisely the essence or the idea of the triangle?

445 – Let us begin by rejecting the idea of a formal essence of the triangle. Whatever one might think of attempts at formalization, it is clear in all cases that such attempts do not claim to offer a logic of invention, and that one cannot construct a logical definition of the triangle that equals

the fecundity of the vision of the shape and that allows us, through a sequence of formal operations, to reach the conclusions that had not first been established with the help of intuition. Perhaps the objection will be raised that this merely concerns the psychological circumstances of the discovery, and that if, *après coup*, it is possible to establish a connection between the hypothesis and the conclusion that owes nothing to intuition, then this is because intuition is not the necessary mediator of thought and has no place in logic. But given that the formalization is always retrospective, this proves that it is never complete except in appearance, and that formal thought is sustained by intuitive thought. It uncovers unformulated axioms upon which reason is said to rest, it seems to bring reason an additional rigor and it seems to lay bare the foundations of our certainty, but in fact, intuition is always the place where certainty is established and where a truth appears, even though principles are here tacitly taken up or rather *precisely for that reason*. There would be no experience of truth and nothing could arrest the “fecundity of our mind”²⁸ if we thought *vi formæ*,²⁹ and if formal relations were not first presented to us as crystallized in some particular thing. We would not even be capable of fixing an hypothesis in order to draw out its consequences if we did not begin by taking it as true. An hypothesis is what is taken as true, and so hypothetical thought presupposes an experience of factual truth. Thus, the construction refers to the configuration of the triangle, to the way it occupies space, to relations expressed by the words “on,” “by,” “vertex,” and “extend.” Do these relations constitute a sort of material essence of the triangle? If the words “on,” “by,” etc., maintain a sense, this is because I am working on a sensible or imaginary triangle, which is to say, one that is at least virtually situated in my perceptual field, oriented according to “up” and “down,” “right” and “left,” or again, as we have shown above, one that is implicated in my general hold upon the world. The construction makes explicit the possibilities of the triangle being examined, not according to its definition and as an idea, but according to its configuration and as the pole toward which my movements are directed. The conclusion is necessarily derived from the hypothesis because, in the act of constructing, the geometer experienced the possibility of this transition. Let us attempt to describe this act more completely.

We have seen that this is clearly not a simple manual operation, the actual movement of my hand and my pen upon the paper, for then there

would be no difference between a construction and a random drawing, and no demonstration would result from the construction. The construction is a gesture, that is, the actual line expresses an intention on the outside. But then what is this intention? I “examine” the triangle, it exists for me as a system of oriented lines, and if words like “angle” or “direction” have a sense for me, this is insofar as I situate myself at one point and from there tend toward another point, insofar as the system of spatial positions is for me a field of possible movements. This is how I grasp the concrete essence of the triangle, which is not a collection of objective “characteristics,” but rather the formula of an attitude, a certain modality of my hold on the world, in short, a structure. By constructing, I engage the triangle in another structure, the structure of “parallels and secant.” How is this possible? It is because my perception of the triangle was not, so to speak, congealed and dead; the drawing of the triangle on the paper was merely its envelope, it was shot through by lines of force, untraced yet possible directions were born everywhere in it. Insofar as the triangle was implicated in my hold on the world, it was bursting with indefinite possibilities of which the construction actually drawn is merely one particular case. The construction has a demonstrative value because I make it spring forth from the motor formula of the triangle. It expresses the ability I have of making sensible emblems appear from a certain hold on things that is nothing other than my perception of the structure “triangle.” This is an act of productive imagination and not a return to the eternal idea of the triangle. Just as the localization of objects in space, according to Kant himself, is not a purely spiritual operation and makes use of the motricity of the body,³⁰ the movement being that which arranges sensations at the point in its trajectory where it is when those sensations are produced, so too the geometer, who studies the totality of the objective laws of localization, only knows the relations that he is interested in by tracing them out – at least virtually – with his body.

447 The subject of geometry is a motor subject. This signifies first that our body is not an object, nor is its movement a simple displacement in objective space, otherwise the problem would only be pushed back and the movement of one’s own body would bring no insight to the problem of the localization of things, since it itself would be a thing. There must be, as Kant conceded, a “motion that generates space,” which is our intentional movement, and is distinct from “motion in space,”³¹ which is the movement of things and of our passive body. But there is more:

if motion generates space, then it is impossible that the motricity of the body is merely an “instrument”³² for constituting consciousness. If there is a constituting consciousness, then bodily movement is only movement insofar as this consciousness thinks movement as such;³³ the constructive power only uncovers in bodily movement what it has put there, and the body is not even an instrument for the constituting consciousness: it is simply one object among objects. There is no psychology in a philosophy of the constituting consciousness, or at least there no longer remains anything valuable for it to say; all it can do is apply the results of reflective analysis to each particular content, rendering them false, for that matter, since it strips them of their transcendental signification. Bodily movement can only play a role in the perception of the world if it is itself an original intentionality, a manner of being related to the object that is distinct from knowledge. The world must not exist around us as a system of objects whose synthesis we perform, but rather as an open ensemble of things toward which we project ourselves. The “movement that generates space” does not display the trajectory from some metaphysical point without a place in the world, but rather from a certain here toward a certain there, which, moreover, are in principle substitutable. The project to move is an act, and it traces out the spatio-temporal distance by crossing it. Thus, to the extent that the geometer’s thought necessarily relies upon this act, it does not coincide with itself: it is transcendence itself. If I can, by means of a construction, make properties of the triangle appear, if the figure thus transformed does not cease being the same figure from which I started, and if, finally, I can perform a synthesis that preserves the character of necessity, this is not because my construction is subtended by a concept of the triangle in which all of its properties would be included, or because, having emerged from perceptual consciousness, I reach the *eidōs*. Rather, these are possible because I actualize the synthesis of the new property by means of the body that inserts me, all at once, in space, and whose autonomous movement allows me to meet up with that comprehensive view of space through a series of precise steps. As far as geometric thought transcends perceptual consciousness, it is nevertheless from the world of perception that I borrow the notion of essence. I believe that the triangle always had and always will have a sum of angles equal to two right angles, along with all of the other less visible properties that geometry attributes to it because I have the experience of a real triangle, and because, as a physical thing, it necessarily *has* in itself

all that it could have or will be able to manifest. If the perceived thing had not forever established in us the ideal of the being that is what it is, then there would be no phenomenon of the being, and mathematical thought would appear to us as a creation. What I call the essence of the triangle is nothing other than this presumption of a completed synthesis by which we have defined the thing.

[i. *Idea and speech, the expressed in the expression.*]

Our body, insofar as it moves itself, that is, insofar as it is inseparable from a perspective and is this very perspective brought into existence, is the condition of possibility not merely of the geometrical synthesis, but also of all of the expressive operations and all of the acquisitions that constitute the cultural world. When it is said that thought is spontaneous, this does not mean that it coincides with itself; rather, it means that thought transcends itself, and speech is precisely the act by which it in fact becomes eternal. Indeed, it is obvious that speech cannot be considered as a mere clothing for thought, nor expression as the translation of a signification, already clear for itself, into an arbitrary system of signs. It is often said that sounds and phonemes mean nothing by themselves, and that our consciousness can only find in language what it has put there. But it would result from this that language could teach us nothing, and that it could at most give rise in us to new combinations of the significations that we already possess. This is precisely what the experience of language testifies against. Communication certainly presupposes a system of correspondences, such as those given by the dictionary, but it goes beyond, and it is the sentence that gives each word its sense, it is for having been employed in different contexts that the word gradually takes on a sense that is impossible to fix absolutely. An important speech or a great novel imposes its sense. Thus, in a certain way, they bear their

449 sense. And as for the speaking subject, the act of expression must allow even the subject himself to transcend what he had previously thought, and he must find in his own words more than he thought he had put there, otherwise we would never see thought, even when isolated, seek out expression with such perseverance. Thus, speech is this paradoxical operation in which – by means of words whose sense is given and by means of already available significations – we attempt to catch up with an intention that in principle goes beyond them and modifies them in

the final analysis, itself establishing the sense of the words by which it expresses itself.

Constituted language simply plays a role in the operation of expression like the role of colors in the painting: if we did not have eyes or senses in general then there would be no painting for us, and yet the painting “says” more than what the simple exercise of our senses could teach us. The painting beyond the sensory givens and speech beyond the givens of constituted language must thus in themselves have a signifying virtue, without reference to a signification that exists for itself in the mind of the spectator or the listener.

By means of words, like the painter by means of colors or the musician by means of notes, we attempt – with a spectacle, an emotion, or even an abstract idea – to constitute a sort of equivalent or a *type* that can be absorbed by the mind. Here the expression becomes the primary thing. We impart a form to the reader [*nous informons le lecteur*], we make him participate in our creative or *poetic* action, we place some object or some emotion into the secret mouth of his mind.³⁴

For the painter or the speaking subject, the painting and the speech are not the illustration of an already completed thought, but rather the appropriation of this very thought. This is why we have been led to distinguish between a secondary speech, which conveys an already acquired thought, and an originary speech, which first brings this thought into existence for us just as it does for others. Now, all of the words that have become the simple signs of a univocal thought could only do so because they first functioned as originary spoken words, and we still remember the precious appearance that they had, like an unknown landscape, when we were in the process of “acquiring” them and when they still exerted the primordial function of expression. Thus, self-possession or the coinciding with the self is not the definition of thought: this is rather a product of expression and is always an illusion to the extent that the clarity of the acquired rests upon the fundamentally obscure operation by which we have eternalized a moment of fleeting life within ourselves. We are called to uncover beneath thought, which basks in its acquisitions and is merely a stopping point in the indefinite process of expression, a thought that attempts to establish itself and that only does so by bending the resources of constituted language to a new usage. This operation must be considered

an ultimate fact, since every explanation that one would like to give of it – either the empiricist explanation that reduces new significations to given significations, or the idealist explanation that posits an absolute knowledge immanent in the very first forms of knowledge – would amount to denying it. Language transcends us, not merely because the use of language always presupposes a large number of thoughts that are not present and that each word summarizes, but also for another deeper reason: namely, these thoughts in their actuality had never themselves been “pure” thoughts either, there was already in them an excess of the signified over the signifying, the same effort of thought already thought [*pensée pensée*] to equal thinking thought [*pensée pensante*], and the same provisional joining of the two that makes up the entire mystery of expression.

What we call an “idea” is necessarily linked to an act of expression and owes its appearance of autonomy to this act. It is a cultural object, like the church, the street, the pencil, or the Ninth Symphony. The objection will be that the church can burn, the street and the pencil can be destroyed, and that, if all the scores of the Ninth Symphony and all musical instruments were reduced to ashes, then it would no longer exist apart from a few brief years in the memory of those who had heard it, whereas, on the contrary, the idea of the triangle and its properties are imperishable. In fact, the idea of the triangle along with its properties and the idea of the quadratic equation have their historical and geographical regions, and if the tradition from which we receive them and the cultural instruments that carry them were destroyed, then new acts of creative expression would be necessary to bring them into the world. What is true is simply that, once the initial appearance has been given, subsequent “appearances” will add nothing (if they are successful) and remove nothing (if they are unsuccessful) from the quadratic equation, which remains shared between us like an inexhaustible possession. But as much could be said about the Ninth Symphony, which subsists in its intelligible place, as Proust said, whether it is skillfully or poorly executed, or rather that leads its existence in a time more secret than natural time. The time of ideas does not merge
 451 with the time in which books appear and disappear, in which musical scores are printed or lost: a book that had always been reprinted is one day no longer read, a score of which there only remain a few copies is suddenly in high demand, and the existence of the idea does not merge with the empirical existence of the means of expression, but rather ideas endure or pass away, and the intelligible sky subtly changes color.

We have already distinguished between empirical speech (that is, the word as sonorous phenomenon, and the fact that such a word is said at such a moment by such a person, which can happen without any accompanying thought), and transcendental or authentic speech (the speech by which an idea begins to exist). But if there had not been a man with phonatory and articulatory organs, and with a mechanism for blowing – or at least with a body and the capacity for self-movement – then there would have been no speech and no ideas. It remains true that in speech, more than in music or in painting, thought seems able to detach itself from its material instruments and to take on an eternal value. In a certain way, all the triangles that will ever exist through the encounters of physical causality will always have a sum of angles equal to two right angles, even if humans have lost the knowledge of geometry and if not a single person remains who knows it. But this is because, in this case, speech applies to nature, whereas music and painting, like poetry, create their own object and, as soon as they are sufficiently self-conscious, they deliberately enclose themselves within the cultural world. Prosaic and, in particular, scientific speech are cultural beings that have the pretension of expressing a truth of nature in itself. We know that there is no such thing, and the modern critique of the sciences has clearly shown that there is something constructive to these types of speech. If it is true that lived space is no less resistant to non-Euclidian metric theory than it is to Euclidian metric theory, then “real” triangles, that is, perceived triangles, do not necessarily have a sum of angles equal to two right angles for all eternity. Thus, there is no fundamental difference between the modes of expression, and no privilege can be granted to one of them on the assumption that it expresses a truth in itself. Speech is just as mute as music, and music is just as eloquent [*parlante*] as speech. Expression is everywhere creative, and the expressed is always inseparable from it. No analysis can clarify language and lay it in front of us like an object. The act of speech is only clear for the person who is actually speaking or listening, and it becomes obscure the moment we attempt to make explicit the reasons that lead us to understand a certain speech in this way and not otherwise.

What we said about perception and what Pascal says about opinions could also be said about the act of speech, for in all three cases we see the same miracle of a clarity at first glance that disappears as soon as we want to reduce it to what we take to be its component elements. I speak

and, without any ambiguity, I understand myself and I am understood; I take hold of my life and others take hold of it as well. I say “I have been waiting a long time,” or that someone “is dead,” and I believe I know what I am saying. And yet, if I interrogate myself about time or about the experience of death, which were implicated in my discourse, all that remains in my mind is a certain obscurity. This is because I attempted to speak about speech, to reiterate the act of expression that gave a sense to the word “dead” or to the word “time,” and to extend the cursory hold upon my experience that they provide; these secondary and tertiary acts of expression certainly have, like the others, in each case their convincing clarity, but without my ever being able to dissolve the fundamental obscurity of the expressed or to reduce to zero the distance between my thought and itself.

Must it be concluded from this that language, born and developed in obscurity, and yet capable of moments of clarity, is nothing but the other side of an infinite Thought, and this Thought’s message as confided to us?³⁵ This would be to lose contact with the analysis that we have just completed, and to overturn in the conclusion what has been established along the way. Language transcends us, and yet we speak. If we conclude from this that our speech spells out some transcendent thought, then we assume that an attempt at expression has been completed just when we have said that this completion never occurs; we invoke an absolute thought at the moment we have just shown that for us such a thought is inconceivable. This is the principle of Pascalian apologetics, except that rather than making it more probable, here the more we show man to be without absolute power, the more the affirmation of an absolute becomes suspect. In fact, the analysis shows not that there is a transcendent thought behind language, but that thought transcends itself in speech, that speech itself establishes the concordance of myself with myself and of myself with others, upon which the attempt was made to ground speech. The phenomenon of language – in the double sense of an originary fact and as a wonder – is not explained, but rather suppressed if we double it with a transcendent thought, since it consists in the fact that an act of thought, for having been expressed, has from then on the power of outliving itself. This is not because the verbal formula, as is often said,

453 serves as a mnemonic means, because the verbal formula inscribed upon the paper or committed to memory would be of no use at all unless we had already acquired, once and for all, the inner power of interpreting

it. To express is not to substitute for the new thought a stable system of signs that can be connected to thoughts that are certain; rather, it is to ensure, through the use of already well-worn words, that the new intention takes up the heritage of the past; it is, in a single gesture, to incorporate the past into the present and to weld this present to a future, to open an entire cycle of time where the “acquired” thought will remain present as a dimension without our needing to ever again summon it or reproduce it. That which is called the “non-temporal” within thought is that which, for having thus taken up the past and engaged the future, is presumptively of all times, and is thus anything but transcendent to time. The non-temporal is the acquired.

[j. *The non-temporal is the acquired.*]

Time itself offers us the primary model of this everlasting acquisition. Since time is the dimension according to which events drive each other from existence, it is also the dimension according to which each one receives an inalienable place. To say that an event *takes place* is to say that it will always be true that it has taken place. By its very essence, each moment of time sets down an existence against which all other moments of time are powerless. After the construction, the geometrical relation is acquired; even if I forget the details, the mathematical gesture establishes a tradition. Van Gogh’s painting is forever established in me, a step has been taken that I can never take back, and, even if I hold no precise memories of the paintings that I have seen, my entire aesthetic experience will from then on be that of someone who has known Van Gogh’s paintings, just as a bourgeois who has become a worker remains forever, in his very manner of being a worker, a bourgeois-become-worker, or just as an act defines us forever, even if we have subsequently disavowed it and changed our beliefs. Existence always takes up its past, either by accepting it or by refusing it. We are, as Proust said, perched upon a pyramid of the past, and if we fail to see it, that is because we are obsessed with objective thought. We believe that our past, for ourselves, reduces to the explicit memories that we can contemplate. We cut our existence off from the past itself, and we only allow our existence to seize upon the present traces of this past. But how would these traces be recognized as traces of the past if we did not otherwise have a direct opening upon this past? Acquisition must be acknowledged as an irreducible phenomenon.

What we have lived exists and remains for us, perpetually; the old man remains in contact with his childhood. Each present that happens drives into time like a wedge and lays a claim to eternity. Eternity is not a separate order beyond time, it is the atmosphere of time.

A false thought surely possesses this sort of eternity as much as a true one does: if I am currently mistaken, it is forever true that I am mistaken. There must then be a different fecundity in true thought, it must remain true not merely as an actually lived past, but also as a perpetual present, forever taken up in the sequence of time. This, however, does not establish an essential difference between truths of fact and truths of reason. For, from the moment I have taken it up, every one of my actions (and even every one of my erroneous thoughts) aims at some value or truth and thereby preserves its actuality in the succession of my life, not merely as an indelible fact, but also as a necessary stage toward the more complete truths or values that I have later recognized. My truths have been constructed with these errors and draw them along in their eternity. Reciprocally, there is not a single truth of reason that does not contain a coefficient of facticity. The supposed evidentness [*transparence*] of Euclidian geometry is one day revealed as evident merely for a certain historical period of the human spirit; it merely signifies that men were able, for a time, to take a homogeneous three-dimensional space as the “ground” of their thoughts and to adopt unreflectively what generalized science will later consider to be a contingent description of space.

Thus, every truth of fact is a truth of reason, and every truth of reason is a truth of fact. The relation between reason and fact, or between eternity and time, just like the relations between reflection and the unreflected, between thought and language, or between thought and perception, is the two-way relation that phenomenology has called *Fundierung* [founding].³⁶ The founding term (time, the unreflected, fact, language, perception) is primary in the sense that the founded term is presented as a determination or a making explicit of the founding term, which prevents the founded term from ever fully absorbing the founding term; and yet the founding term is not primary in the empirical sense and the founded is not merely derived from it, since it is only through the founded that the founding appears. This is how one can say indifferently that the present is a sketch of eternity and that the eternity of the true is only a sublimation of the present. This equivocation will not be transcended, but will rather be understood as definitive by discovering

the intuition of genuine time that preserves everything, and that is at the center of demonstration as well as expression. Brunschvicg writes: 455

Reflection upon the creative power of the mind implies, in each certainty drawn from experience, the feeling that, in any determinate truth that one has just managed to demonstrate, there exists a soul of truth that transcends it and that detaches from it, a soul that can detach itself from the particular expression of this truth in order to bear upon a more comprehensive and a more profound expression, but not that this progression infringes upon the eternity of the true.³⁷

But what is this eternal truth that no one possesses? What is this expressed beyond all expression, and, if we have the right to posit this, then why is our constant worry to obtain a more precise expression? What is this One [Un] around which minds and truths are arranged as if they tended toward it, while it is maintained that they do not tend toward any pre-established term? At least the idea of a transcendent Being had the advantage of not rendering pointless the actions through which – through an always difficult taking up – each consciousness and each intersubjectivity themselves establish their own unity. Of course, if these actions are the most intimate thing we can grasp of ourselves, then the positing of God does not contribute at all toward the elucidation of our life. We do not have the experience of an eternal truth, nor of a participation in the One, but rather of concrete acts of taking up by which, in the accidents of time, we establish relations with ourselves and with others. In short, we have the experience of a participation in the world; “being-in-the-truth” [l’être-à-la-vérité] is not distinct from being in the world [être au monde].

[k. Evidentness, like perception, is a fact.]

We are now in a position to decide upon the question of evidentness and to describe the experience of truth. There are truths just as there are perceptions: not that we could ever fully lay out before ourselves the reasons for any affirmation – there are only motives, and we merely have a hold on time, not a possession of it – but because it is essential to time to take itself up to the extent that it leaves itself behind, and to contract itself into visible things or into things that are evident at first

glance. Every consciousness is, to some extent, perceptual consciousness. Were it possible to unfold at each moment all of the presuppositions in what I call my “reason” or my “ideas,” then I would always be discovering experiences that have not been made explicit, weighty contributions of the past and of the present, and an entire “sedimented history”³⁸ that does not merely concern the *genesis* of my thought, but that
 456 determines its *sense*. In order for an absolute evidentness – one that is free of all presuppositions – to be possible, or in order that my thought could penetrate itself, meet up with itself, and arrive at a pure “self-assent to itself,”³⁹ it would be necessary, to speak like the Kantians, that it cease to be an event and that it become an act through and through; to speak like the Scholastics, that its formal reality be included in its objective reality; or to speak like Malebranche, that it cease to be “perception,” “emotion,” or “contact” with the truth in order to become pure “idea” and “vision” of the truth. In other words, rather than being myself, I must become a pure knower of myself, and the world must cease to exist around me in order to become a pure object in front of me. We clearly have the power of suspending what we are from the fact of our acquisitions and from the fact of this preexisting world, and this is enough to ensure that we are not determined. I can close my eyes and plug my ears, but I cannot stop seeing, even if only the blackness before my eyes, or hearing, even if only the silence; and similarly I can bracket my acquired opinions or beliefs, but, whatever I think or decide, it is always against the background of what I have previously believed or done. *Habemus ideam veram*,⁴⁰ we possess a truth, this experience of truth would only be absolute knowledge if we could thematize all of its motives, that is, if we ceased being situated. The actual possession of the true idea thus does not give us any right to affirm an intelligible place of adequate thought and of absolute productivity, it merely sets up a “teleology”⁴¹ of consciousness that, with this first instrument, will forge more perfect ones, and from these again more perfect ones still, and so on endlessly. As Husserl writes: “[o]nly in eidetic intuition can the essence of eidetic intuition become clarified.”⁴² In our experience, the intuition of some particular essence necessarily precedes the essence of intuition. The only way of thinking thought is to first think of something, and it is thus essential to the thinking of thought not to take itself as its object. To think thought is to adopt an attitude toward it that we have first learned with regard to “things,” and this is never

to eliminate the opacity of thought for itself, but only to push it to a higher level. Every pause in the movement of consciousness, every focusing upon an object, and every appearance of a “something” or of an idea presupposes a subject who ceases to interrogate himself, at least in terms of this relation. 457

This is why, as Descartes said, it is at once true that certain ideas are presented to me with a *de facto* irresistible evidentness and that this fact has no *de jure* value, it does not suppress the possibility of doubting from the moment that we are no longer in the presence of the idea. It is no accident that even evidentness can be thrown into doubt; it is because *certainty is doubt*, being the taking up of a tradition of thought that cannot condense itself into evident “truth” without my renouncing the attempt to make it explicit. An evident truth is irresistible in fact and yet always open to doubt for the very same reasons, and these are two ways of saying the same thing: it is irresistible because I take for granted a certain acquisition from experience and a certain field of thought, and precisely for this reason it appears to me as evident for a certain thinking nature whose use I enjoy and that I carry forward, but that remains contingent and given to itself. The consistency of a perceived thing, of a geometrical relation, or of an idea is only obtained if I give up the attempt to make it explicit everywhere, and if I come to rest in it. From the moment I have entered the game, or engaged in a certain order of thought – whether it be, for example, Euclidian space or the conditions of existence for some society – I discover evident truths, but these are not irrevocable evident truths, since perhaps this space or this society are not the only possibilities. Thus, it is essential to certainty that it be established given certain reservations, and there is a form of opinion that is not a provisional form of knowledge, destined to be replaced by absolute knowledge, but is rather the form that is at once the most ancient or the most rudimentary, and the most conscious or the most developed form of knowledge – an originary opinion in the double sense of “original” and “fundamental.” This is what makes *something in general* appear suddenly in front of us, to which thetic consciousness [*pensée thétique*] – either doubt or demonstration – can subsequently be related in order to affirm or deny it. There is sense, or something rather than nothing; there is an indefinite interlocking of concordant experiences, testified to by this ashtray that is before me in its permanence, and the truth that I perceived yesterday and to which I believe I can return today.

[l. *Apodictic evidentness and historical evidentness.*]*

458 This evidentness of the phenomenon, or again of the “world,” is equally misunderstood when the attempt is made to reach being without passing through the phenomenon, that is, when being is considered necessary, as it is when the phenomenon is cut off from being, and when it is demoted to the level of a mere appearance or of a mere possibility. The first conception is Spinoza’s. Originary opinion is here subordinated to an absolute evidentness, the “there is something,” a mixture of being and nothingness, subordinated to a “Being is.” Every interrogation that touches upon being is rejected as meaningless, for it is impossible to wonder why there is something rather than nothing, or why this world rather than another, since the shape of this world and the very existence of a world are merely the consequences of necessary being. The second conception reduces the evidentness of phenomena to appearance, for all of my truths are, after all, only evident truths for me and for a thought constructed like my own, they are tied to my psycho-physiological constitution and to the existence of this particular world. We can conceive of other ways of thinking that function according to other rules, and of other possible worlds like this one. Here the question as to why there is something rather than nothing is apposite, and so too is the question of why this particular world has been brought into being. But the response is, in principle, out of our reach, since we are enclosed within our psycho-physiological constitution, which is a simple fact like the form of our face or the number of our teeth. This second conception is not as different as it may seem from the first, for it too presupposes a tacit reference to an absolute knowledge and to an absolute being, in relation to which our *de facto* evident truths are considered inadequate.

[m. *Against psychologism and skepticism.*]*

In a phenomenological conception, this dogmatism and this skepticism are simultaneously overcome. The laws of our thought and of our evident truths are certainly facts, but they are inseparable from us, and they are implied in every conception that we could form of being and of the possible. It is not a matter of restricting ourselves to phenomena, of locking consciousness in its own states by reserving the possibility of another

being beyond apparent being, nor of treating our thought as a fact among facts; rather, it is a matter of defining being as what appears to us, and consciousness as a universal fact. I think, and such and such a thought appears to me as true; I know quite well that it is not unconditionally true, and making it completely explicit is an infinite task, but the fact remains that at the moment I am thinking, I think something, and that every other truth, in the name of which I would like to devalue this one if it can for me be called truth, must harmonize with the “true” thoughts I have experienced. If I attempt to imagine Martians, angels, or a divine thought whose logic would not be the same as my own, this Martian, angelic, or divine thought must appear within my universe and must not make it explode.⁴³ My thought, or my evidentness, is not one fact among others, but rather a value-fact that envelops and conditions every other possible one. There is no other possible world in the sense that my world is possible; not, as Spinoza believed, that this latter is necessary, but rather because every “other world” that I would like to conceive would limit my world, would encounter it at its limit, and would hence unite with it. Even if consciousness is not absolute truth or *a-lethia*,⁴⁴ it at least excludes every absolute falsity. Our errors, illusions, and questions are really errors, illusions, and questions. Error is not the consciousness that I am making an error, and it even excludes this. Our questions do not always encompass answers, and to say with Marx that man only poses questions that he can resolve is to renew a theological optimism and to postulate the completion of the world. Our errors only become truths once they have been recognized, and a difference remains between their manifest content and their latent content of truth, between their supposed signification and their actual signification. The truth remains that neither error nor doubt ever cut us off from truth, because they are surrounded by an horizon of the world, where the teleology of consciousness invites us to seek out their resolution. Finally, the contingency of the world should be understood neither as a lesser being, a gap in the tissue of necessary being, a threat to rationality, nor as a problem to be resolved as soon as possible through the discovery of some deeper necessity. This is an ontic contingency, or contingency within the world. Ontological contingency or the contingency of the world itself, being radical, is on the contrary what establishes once and for all our idea of truth. The world is the real, of which the necessary and the possible are merely provinces.

[n. *The dependent and indeclinable subject.*]

In short, we are restoring a temporal thickness to the *Cogito*. If there is no interminable doubt, and if “I think,” then this is because I throw myself into provisional thoughts and because I overcome the discontinuities of time by doing so. Thus vision runs headlong into a thing seen that precedes it and that outlives it. Have we escaped this difficulty? We have conceded that there is a solidarity between the certainty of vision and the certainty of the thing seen. Given that the thing seen is never absolutely
 460 certain (as is shown by illusions), must we conclude that vision too is drawn into this uncertainty; or, given that vision is in itself absolutely certain, must we conclude that the thing seen is also certain, and that I can never be truly mistaken? The second solution would come down to reestablishing the immanence that we rejected. But if we adopt the first solution, thought would be cut off from itself and there would no longer be anything but “facts of consciousness,” which may well be called “inner” through a nominal definition, but which would remain for me just as opaque as things. In other words, there would no longer be either interiority or consciousness, and the experience of the *Cogito* would once again be lost. When we describe consciousness engaged in a space through its body, in a history through its language, or in its concrete form of thought through its unquestioned beliefs, there is no question of putting consciousness back into the series of objective events, not even the series of “psychic events,” nor back into the causality of the world.

He who doubts cannot, while doubting, doubt that he doubts. Doubt – even a generalized doubt – is not an annihilation of my thought, it is but a pseudo-nothingness. I cannot escape being, my act of doubting itself establishes the possibility of a certainty; my act is there for me, it keeps me busy, I am engaged in it, and I cannot pretend to be nothing while I accomplish this act. Reflection, which holds things at a distance, at least discovers itself as given to itself in the sense that it cannot conceive of itself as eliminated, it cannot hold itself at a distance from itself. But this does not mean that reflection and thought are primitive facts that are simply observed. As Montaigne had clearly seen, one can still question this thought, which is loaded with historical sediments and weighed down by its own being; one can have doubt about doubt itself, considered as a definite modality of thought and as a consciousness of a doubtful object. Moreover, the formula of radical reflection is not “I know nothing” – a

formula that is all too easy to catch committing the flagrant offense of contradiction – but rather: “What do I know?” Descartes did not forget this. He is often credited with having overcome skeptical doubt, which is only a state, by making doubt into a method, an act, and with having thus found a fixed point for consciousness and for having restored certainty. But in fact, Descartes did not bring doubt to an end in the face of the certainty of doubt itself, as if the act of doubting was enough to obliterate doubt and for certainty to prevail. He carried it further. He did not say “I doubt, I am,” but rather “I think, I am,” and this signifies that doubt itself is certain, not as actual doubt, but as the mere thought of doubting; and, since we could say the same of this thought in turn, the only absolutely certain proposition, the only one before which doubt stops – because it is implicated by it – is “I think,” or again “something appears to me” [*quelque chose m’apparaît*]. There is no particular act or experience that precisely fills my consciousness and imprisons my freedom:

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No thought is such that it destroys, and concludes, the power of thinking – there is no given position of the bolt which closes the lock forever. And there is no thought that is, for thought, a resolution born of its very development, and like a final harmony from this permanent dissonance.⁴⁵

No particular thought reaches to the heart of our thought, nor is any thought conceivable without another possible thought that witnesses it. And this is not an imperfection from which we could imagine consciousness freed. If there really is to be consciousness, if something is to appear to someone, then an enclave, or a Self, must be carved out behind all of our particular thoughts. I do not have to reduce myself to a series of “consciousnesses,” and each of these consciousnesses, along with the historical sedimentations and the sensible implications with which it is filled, must be presented to a perpetual absence.

Thus, our situation is the following: to know that we think, first we must actually think. And yet, this engagement does not remove all doubt, my thoughts do not stifle my power of interrogation; a word, an idea, considered as events in my history, only have a sense for me if I take up this sense from within. I know that I think through some particular thoughts that I have, and I know that I have these thoughts because I take them up, that is, because I know that I think in general. The intending

of a transcendent term and the view of myself intending it, or the consciousness of the connected and the consciousness of the connecting, are in a circular relation. The problem is to understand how I can be the one constituting my thought in general, without which it would not be thought by anyone, would pass by unnoticed, and would thus not be a thought – without ever being the one constituting any particular one of my thoughts, since I never see them born in plain view, and since I only know myself through them. We must attempt to understand how subjectivity can be simultaneously dependent and indeclinable.

[o. *Tacit cogito and spoken cogito.*]

462 Let us attempt to gain this understanding through the example of language. There is a consciousness of myself who makes use of language, and who is thoroughly buzzing with words. I read the “Second Meditation.” “Myself” is clearly at issue here, but this is a myself as an idea that is not, strictly speaking, my own, nor Descartes’s for that matter; it is the myself of every reflecting man. By following the sense of the words and the thread of ideas, I arrive at the conclusion that indeed, because I think, I am; but this is a second-hand *Cogito*.⁴⁶ I have only grasped my thought and my existence through the medium of language, and the true formulation of this *Cogito* would be: “One thinks, one is” [On *pense, on est*]. The wonder of language is that it makes itself be forgotten: my gaze is drawn along the lines on the paper, from the moment that I am struck by what they signify, I no longer see them. The paper, the letters on the paper, my eyes, and my body are only present as the minimum of production materials necessary for some invisible operation. The expression fades away in the face of the expressed, and this is why its role as mediator can pass by unnoticed, and why Descartes nowhere mentions it. Descartes and, *a fortiori*, his reader begin meditating within a universe that is already speaking [*parlant*]. Language has, in fact, installed in us this certainty that we have of reaching, beyond its expression, a truth separable from that expression, and of which this expression is only the clothing and the contingent manifestation. Language only appears to be a simple sign when it has taken on a signification, and the coming to awareness, in order to be complete, must uncover the expressive unity in which signs and significations first appear.

When a child does not know how to speak, or when he does not yet know how to speak the adult’s language, the linguistic ceremony that

unfolds around him has no hold on him, he is near to us like a poorly placed spectator at the theater: he sees clearly that we are laughing and gesticulating, he hears the nasal melody, but there is nothing at the end of those gestures or behind those words, nothing happens for him. Language takes on a sense for the child when it creates a situation for him. In a children's book, we are told of the disappointment of a young boy who puts on his grandmother's glasses, opens her book, and believes he will be able to find for himself the stories that she has read to him. The fable ends with these two lines:

*Rats! So where is the story?
I see nothing but black and white.*⁴⁷

For the child, the "story" and the expressed are not "ideas" or "significations," nor are speech and reading "intellectual operations." The story is a world that he should be able to make appear, as if by magic, by putting on the spectacles and by leaning over a book. The power language has of bringing the expressed into existence, and of opening routes, new dimensions, and new landscapes to thought, is ultimately just as obscure for the adult as it is for the child. In every successful work, the sense imported into the reader's mind exceeds already constituted language and thought, and magically appears during the linguistic incantation, just as the story emanates from the grandmother's book.

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If we believe that, through thought, we communicate directly with a universe of truth and meet up with others in that universe, or if it seems that Descartes's text has simply awakened in us some already formed thoughts and that we never learn anything from the outside, and finally, if a philosopher – in what is supposed to be a radical meditation – does not even mention language as a condition of the *Cogito as read* and does not more explicitly invite us to pass from the idea to the practice of the *Cogito*, this is because, for us, the expressive operation is taken for granted, and because it counts as one of our acquisitions. The *Cogito* that we obtain by reading Descartes (and even the one that Descartes performs with the intention of expressing it and when, turning toward his own life, he determines it, objectifies it, and "characterizes" it as indubitable) is thus a spoken *Cogito*, put into words and understood through words; it is a *Cogito* that, for this very reason, fails to reach its goal, since a part of our existence – the part that is busy conceptually determining our life

and conceiving of it as indubitable – escapes this very determination and conception. Shall we conclude from this that language envelops us and that we are carried by language in the manner the realist believes we are determined by the exterior world, or in the manner the theologian believes we are guided by Providence? This would be to forget half of the truth. For after all, words (such as the words “*Cogito*” or “*sum*”) can certainly have an empirical and statistical sense, and it is true that they do not directly intend my experience and that they ground an anonymous and general thought; but I would not find any sense in them, not even a derived and inauthentic one, and I could not even read Descartes’s text, were I not – prior to every speech – in contact with my own life and my own thought, nor if the spoken *Cogito* did not encounter a tacit *Cogito* within me. In writing his *Méditations*, Descartes was aiming at this silent *Cogito*, which animates and directs all of the expressive operations that, by definition, fail to reach their goal, since they interpose – between Descartes’s existence and the knowledge that he gains of this existence – the entire thickness of cultural acquisitions; but, on the other hand, these expressive operations would not even be attempted if Descartes had not, at the outset, had his own existence in sight. Everything hangs on gaining a clear understanding of the tacit *Cogito*, on only putting into it what is really there, and on not turning language into a product of consciousness on the pretext that consciousness is not a product of language.

[p. *Consciousness does not constitute language, it takes it up.*]

In fact, neither the word nor the sense of the word is *constituted* by consciousness. Let us try to explain this. The word certainly never reduces to some particular embodiment of it. The word “sleet,” for example, is not this printed text that I have just inscribed on the paper, nor that other sign that I read one day for the first time, nor even this sound that travels through the air when I pronounce the word. These are merely reproductions of the word; I recognize the word in all of them and the word is not all used up in them. Shall I conclude, then, that the word “sleet” is the ideal unity of these manifestations, and that it only exists for my consciousness and through a synthesis of identification? This would be to forget what psychology taught us about language. To speak is not, as we have seen, to evoke verbal images and to articulate words according to the imagined model. By performing the critique of the verbal image, and

by showing that the speaking subject throws himself into speech without representing to himself the words he is about to pronounce, modern psychology eliminates the word as a representation or as an object for consciousness, and uncovers a motor presence of the word, which is not identical to the knowledge of the word. The word “sleet,” when I know it, is not an object that I recognize through a synthesis of identification; it is a certain use of my phonatory apparatus and a certain modulation of my body as being in the world; its generality is not the generality of an idea, but rather that of a style of behavior that my body “understands” insofar as my body is a power of producing behaviors and, in particular, of producing phonemes. One day I “caught on” to the word “sleet,” just as one imitates a gesture, that is, not by breaking it down and by establishing a correspondence between each part of the word that I hear and some movement of articulation and phonation, but rather by hearing it as a single modulation of the sonorous world and because this sonorous entity appeared as “something to be pronounced” in virtue of the overall correspondence that exists between my perceptual possibilities and my motor possibilities, which are elements of my indivisible and open existence. The word has never been inspected, analyzed, known, and constituted, but rather caught and taken up by a speaking power [*puissance parlante*], and, ultimately, by a motor power that is given to me along with the very first experience of my body and of its perceptual and practical fields. As for the sense of the word, I learn it just as I learn the use of a tool – by seeing it employed in the context of a certain situation. The word’s sense is not made up of a certain number of physical characteristics of the object; it is, before all else, the appearance that it takes on in a human experience, for example, my astonishment when confronted by these hard, friable, and melting pellets that fall ready-made from the sky. This is an encounter between the human and the non-human, it is something like a behavior of the world, a certain inflection of its style, and the generality of its sense, as much as the generality of the term is not the generality of the concept, but rather of the world as schema [*typique*]. Thus, language clearly presupposes a consciousness of language and a silence of consciousness that envelops the speaking world, a silence in which words first receive their configuration and their sense. This is why consciousness is never subjected to some empirical language, why languages can be translated or learned, and, finally, why language is not (as sociologists believe) an external support.

Beyond the spoken *cogito*, the one that is converted into utterances and into essential truth, there is clearly a tacit *cogito*, an experience [épreuve] of myself by myself. But this indeclinable subjectivity has but a fleeting hold upon itself and upon the world. This subjectivity does not constitute the world, it catches a glimpse of the world around itself, like a field that it has not given to itself; it does not constitute the word, it speaks in the manner that one sings when one is joyful; nor does it constitute the sense of the word, for this sense springs forth for subjectivity in its commerce with the world and with the others who inhabit it; sense is found at the intersection of several behaviors, it remains, even once it has been “acquired,” just as precise and just as little definable as the sense of a gesture is. The tacit *Cogito*, the presence of self to self, being existence itself, is prior to every philosophy, but it only knows itself in limit situations in which it is threatened, such as in the fear of death or in the anxiety caused by another person’s gaze upon me. What is believed to be the thinking of thinking,⁴⁸ as a pure self-affection, still cannot be thought and must rather be revealed. The consciousness that conditions language is not merely a comprehensive and inarticulate grasp of the world, like that of the child’s upon his first breath, or of the man who is about to drown and who frantically struggles back toward life. And if it is true that every particular piece of knowledge is established upon this first perspective, then it is also true that this first perspective waits to be reconquered, fixed, and made explicit through perceptual exploration and through speech. Silent consciousness only grasps itself as “I think” in general in the face of a confused world that is “to be thought.” Every particular grasp, and even philosophy’s recovery of this general project, requires that the subject deploy powers of which the subject himself does not hold the secret and, in particular, that he turns himself into a speaking subject. The tacit *Cogito* is only a *Cogito* when it has expressed itself.

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[q. *The subject as a project of the world, a field, temporality, and the cohesion of a life.*]

These formulas may seem enigmatic: if ultimate subjectivity does not think itself from the moment it exists, then how will it ever think itself? How could something that does not think begin to think and how could subjectivity be reduced to the status of a thing or of a force that produces its effects on the outside without being capable of knowing it?

– We do not want to claim that the primordial I is unaware of itself. If it were unaware of itself, it would indeed be a thing, and nothing could subsequently make it become conscious. The only thing we have refused subjectivity is objective thought, or the thetic consciousness of the world and of itself. What do we mean by this? Either these words mean nothing, or they mean that we prevent ourselves from presupposing an explicit consciousness that doubles and subtends the confused hold that originary subjectivity has upon itself and upon the world. My vision, for example, is surely the “thought that I am seeing,” if we mean by this that it is not simply a function like digestion or respiration, a bundle of isolated processes in an ensemble that is found to have a sense, but rather that it is itself this ensemble and this sense, that anteriority of the future with regard to the present, or of the whole with regard to the parts. Vision only exists through anticipation and intention, and since no intention could truly be an intention if the object toward which it tends were presented to it as ready-made and without motivation, then clearly every vision ultimately takes up, at the core of subjectivity, a total project of the world or a logic of the world that empirical perceptions determine but that they could not engender. But vision is not the “thought that I am seeing,” so long as we understand by this that vision itself establishes the connection to its object, or that it perceives itself in an absolute transparency and as the author of its own presence in the visible world. The key is to grasp clearly the project of the world that we are.

What we have said above about the world being inseparable from perspectives upon the world should help us here in understanding subjectivity as inherence in the world. There is no *hylē* [matter] and there is no sensation without communication with other sensations or with the sensations of others; and for this very reason, there is no *morphē* [form] and no apprehension or apperception that would be charged with giving a sense to an insignificant matter, and of assuring the *a priori* unity of my experience and of intersubjective experience. Imagine that my friend Paul and I are currently gazing across a landscape. What is actually happening? Must we say that we both have private sensations, a matter of knowledge that is forever incommunicable? Or that, with regard to pure lived-experience, we are locked within distinct perspectives? Or finally, that the landscape is not, for the two of us, *idem numero* [numerically identical] and that it is merely a question of a specific identity? To consider my perception itself, prior to every objectifying reflection, I have at no moment a conscious-

ness of finding myself enclosed within my own sensation. My friend Paul and I point to certain details of the landscape, and Paul's finger, which is pointing out the steeple to me, is not a finger-for-me that I conceive as oriented toward a steeple-for-me; rather, it is Paul's finger that itself shows me the steeple that Paul sees. Just as reciprocally, by making some gesture toward some point in the landscape that I see, it does not seem that I trigger for Paul, in virtue of some preestablished harmony, some internal visions that are merely analogous to my own: rather, it seems to me that my gestures invade Paul's world and guide his gaze. When I think of Paul, I do not think of a flow of private sensations in relation to my own sensations that are mediated through some interposed signs; rather, I think of someone who lives in the same world as I, in the same history as I, and with whom I communicate through this world and through this history.

Will we say, then, that here it is a question of an ideal unity, that my world is the same as Paul's, just as the Pythagorean theorem that is discussed in Tokyo is the same one that is discussed in Paris, and finally that the ideality of the world guarantees its intersubjective value? And yet ideal unity is not satisfactory either, for it exists just as much between Mount Hymettus seen by the Greeks and Mount Hymettus seen by me. For as much as I tell myself that the Greeks saw these russet mountain sides that I am examining, I will never convince myself that they are the same ones. On the other hand, Paul and I see the landscape "together," we are co-present before it, and it is the same for the two of us not merely as an intelligible signification, but also as a certain accent of the world's style, reaching all the way to its *haecceity*. The unity of the world weakens and crumbles according to the temporal and spatial distance that the ideal unity (in principle) crosses without suffering any loss. It is precisely because the landscape touches and affects me, because it reaches me in my most singular being, and because it is my own perspective upon the landscape, that I have the landscape itself, and that I have it as a landscape for Paul as much as for me. Universality and the world are at the core of individuality and of the subject. We will never understand this as long as we turn the world into an ob-ject;⁴⁹ but we will understand it immediately if the world is the field of our experience, and if we are nothing but a perspective upon the world, for then the most secret vibration of our psycho-physical being already anticipates the world, quality is the sketch of a thing, and the thing is the initial sketch of the world. A world that is

never, as Malebranche said, anything other than an “unfinished work”⁵⁰ or that, according to the phrase that Husserl applies to the body, is “never completely constituted”⁵¹ does not require, and even excludes, a constituting subject.

To this initial outline of being that shines through in the concordances of my own experience and intersubjective experience, and whose possible completion I presume through indefinite horizons – from the simple fact that my phenomena solidify in a thing and follow a certain constant style in their unfolding – that is, to this open unity of the world, an open and indefinite unity of subjectivity must correspond. Just like the unity of the world, the unity of the I is invoked rather than experienced each time I perform an act of perception, each time I reach some evidentness, and the universal I is the background against which these brilliant figures stand out; it is through a present thought that I create the unity of my thoughts. What remains beneath my particular thoughts for constituting the tacit *Cogito* and the original project of the world? And what am I in the end such that I can catch sight of myself outside of every particular act? I am a field, I am an experience. One day, and indeed once and for all, something was set in motion that, even during sleep, can no longer cease seeing or not seeing, sensing or not sensing, suffering or being happy, thinking or resting, in a word, that can no longer cease “having it out” with the world. What began was not a new batch of sensations or states of consciousness, nor even a new monad or a new perspective, since I am not attached to any particular one and since I can change my point of view, only being bound always to occupy one and to occupy only one at a time – let us say that what began was a new possibility of situations. The event of my birth has not passed away, it has not fallen into nothingness in the manner of an event in the objective world; rather, it engaged a future, not as a cause determines its effect, but like a situation that, from the moment it takes shape, inevitably leads to some resolution. There was henceforth a new “milieu” and the world received a new layer of signification. In the household where a new child is born, all objects change their sense, they begin to anticipate from this child some still indeterminate treatment; someone new and someone additional is there, a new history, whether it be brief or long, has just been established, and a new register is open. My first perception, along with the horizons that surrounded it, is an ever-present event, an unforgettable tradition; even as a thinking subject I am still this first perception, I am the continuation

of the same life that it inaugurated. In a sense, there are no more distinct acts of consciousness or of *Erlebnisse* [experiences] in a life than there are isolated things in the world. Likewise, as we have seen, when I move around an object, I do not obtain a series of perspectival views that I subsequently coordinate through the idea of a unique geometrical plan (all I find is a bit of “indeterminacy” [*bougé*] in the thing that crosses through time all by itself), so too am I not a series of psychical acts, nor for that matter a central I who gathers them together in a synthetic unity, but rather a single experience that is inseparable from itself, a single “cohesion of life,”⁵² a single temporality that unfolds itself [*s’explicité*] from its birth and confirms this birth in each present. It is this advent or rather this transcendental event that the *Cogito* recovers. The fundamental truth is certainly that “I think,” but only on condition of understanding by this that “I belong to myself”⁵³ in being in the world.

When we attempt to go farther into subjectivity, when we place everything into doubt and suspend all of our beliefs, we only succeed in catching sight of the non-human ground by which, according to Rimbaud’s phrase, “we are not in the world”⁵⁴ as the horizon of our particular engagements and as the power of something in general that is the phantom of the world. The interior and the exterior are inseparable. The world is entirely on the inside, and I am entirely outside of myself. When I perceive this table, the perception of the top must clearly not be unaware of the perception of the legs, otherwise the object would come apart. When I hear a melody, each moment must clearly be tied to the following one, otherwise there would be no melody. And yet, the table certainly has external parts, and succession is essential to the melody. The act that gathers together also moves away and holds at a distance; I only touch myself by escaping from myself. In a famous *pensée*, Pascal shows that from a certain angle I understand the world and from another the world understands me.⁵⁵ It must now be said that this is in fact the same angle: I understand the world because there is for me a near and a far away, foregrounds and horizons, and because in this way the world sketches out a scene and takes on a sense before my eyes; in short, I understand the world because I am situated in the world and because the world understands me. We are not saying that the notion of the world is inseparable from the notion of the subject, nor that the subject *thinks himself* to be inseparable from the idea of the body and the idea of the world, for if it were merely a relation in thought, this very fact would

preserve the absolute independence of the subject as a thinker and the subject would not be situated. If the subject is in a situation, or even if the subject is nothing other than a possibility of situations, this is because he only achieves his ipseity by actually being a body and by entering into the world through this body. If I find, while reflecting upon the essence of the body, that it is tied to the essence of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is identical with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because, ultimately, the subject that I am, understood concretely, is inseparable from this particular body and from this particular world. The ontological world and body that we uncover at the core of the subject are not the world and the body as ideas; rather, they are the world itself condensed into a comprehensive hold and the body itself as a knowing-body.

The question will be asked, however, that if the unity of the world is not established upon the unity of consciousness, and if the world is not the result of a constitutive labor, then how does it happen that appearances are concordant and come together in things, in ideas, and in truths? Why do our errant thoughts, the events of our lives, and those of collective history – at least at certain moments – take on a common direction and sense, and allow themselves to be grasped under one idea? Why does my life succeed in gathering itself up in order to project itself into words, intentions, or acts? This is the problem of rationality. We know that classical thought attempted, in short, to explain these concordances through a world in itself or through an absolute mind. Such explanations borrow from the phenomenon of rationality everything that in them might be convincing, but they therefore do not explain rationality and are never more clear than rationality itself. Absolute Thought is no clearer for me than is my finite mind, since it is through my finite mind that I conceive of absolute Thought. We are in the world,⁵⁶ which means that things take shape, that an immense individual asserts itself, and that each existence understands itself and understands the others. All that remains is to recognize these phenomena that ground all of our certainties. The belief in an absolute spirit or in a world in itself and detached from us is no more than a rationalization of this primordial faith.



TEMPORALITY

Le temps est le *sens* de la vie (*sens*: comme on dit le sens d'un cours d'eau, le sens d'une phrase, le sens d'une étoffe, le sens de l'odorat).

– Claudel, *Art poétique*.¹

Der Sinn des Daseins ist die Zeitlichkeit.

– Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit."²

471 If we have, in the preceding pages, already encountered time along the road that led us to subjectivity, this is primarily because all of our experiences – insofar as they are our own – are arranged according to the before and the after, because temporality, in Kantian language, is the form of inner sense, and because temporality is the most general characteristic of “psychical facts.” But without prejudging what the analysis of time will bring us, we have in fact already found a much more intimate relation between time and subjectivity. We have just seen that the subject, who cannot be a sequence of psychical events, cannot be eternal either. It remains for the subject to be temporal, not through some accident of the human constitution, but in virtue of an inner necessity. We are called upon to forge a conception of the subject and of time such as they communicate internally. We can now say about temporality what we said

above, for example, about sexuality or about spatiality: existence can have no external or contingent attribute. Existence cannot be anything – spatial, sexual, temporal – without being so entirely, or without taking up and assuming its “attributes” and turning them into the dimensions of its being, such that a relatively precise analysis of each of them in fact has to do with subjectivity itself. Problems cannot be divided into dominant and subordinate ones, for all problems are concentric. To analyze time is not to draw out the consequences of a preestablished conception of subjectivity, but rather to gain access to its concrete structure through time. If we succeed in understanding the subject, this will not be in its pure form, but rather by looking for the subject at the intersection of its various dimensions. Thus, we must consider time in itself, and by following its internal dialectic we will be led to revise our idea of the subject.

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[a. *There is no time in things.*]

We say that time passes or flows by. We speak of the flow of time. The water I see passing by was prepared several days ago when the ice melted in the mountains; now it is in front of me and runs toward the sea into which it will flow. If time is like a river, then it runs from the past toward the present and future. The present is the outcome of the past, and the future is the outcome of the present. But this famous metaphor is in fact quite confused. For, *examining the things themselves*, the melting of the snow and its consequences are not successive events, or rather the very notion of an event has no place in the objective world. When I say that the water currently passing by was produced by the glacier two days ago, I imply a witness fixed to a certain place in the world and I compare his successive perspectives: over there he witnessed the melting of the snow and he followed the water along its descent; or perhaps after two days of waiting he sees from the riverside the pieces of wood float by that he had tossed into the river at the source. “Events” are carved out of the spatio-temporal totality of the objective world by a finite observer. And yet, if I consider this world itself, there is but a single indivisible being that does not change. Change presupposes a certain observation post where I place myself and from where I can see things go by; there are no events without someone to whom they happen and whose finite perspective grounds their individuality. Time presupposes a view upon time. Thus, time is not like a stream; time is not a fluid substance. This metaphor has been able to

survive since Heraclitus up until today because we surreptitiously place in the river a witness to its flowing. We already do this when we say that the river flows, since this amounts to conceiving – right there where there is merely a thing that is entirely external to itself – of an individuality or
 473 an interior of the stream that deploys itself on the outside. Now, from the moment I introduce the observer, depending on whether he follows the flow of the river or whether he observes its passage from the riverbank, the temporal relations are reversed. In the second case, the masses of water that have already gone by do not head toward the future, they sink into the past; the still-to-come [l'â-venir] is on the side of the source, and time does not come from the past. The past does not drive the present into being, nor does the present drive the future into being; the future is not prepared behind the observer, it is planned out in front of him, like the storm on the horizon. If the observer is now placed in a boat and follows the current, it can certainly be said that he descends with it toward his future, but the future is in those new landscapes that await him at the estuary, and the flow of time is no longer the stream itself, but is rather the unfolding of the landscapes for the moving observer.

Thus, time is neither a real process nor an actual succession that I could limit myself simply to recording. It is born of my relation with things. In the things themselves, the future and the past are a sort of eternal pre-existence or afterlife; the water that will pass by tomorrow is currently at the source, the water that has just passed by is now a bit further down into the valley. Whatever is past or future for me is present in the world. It is often said that in the things themselves the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present is strictly speaking merely a limit, the result being that time collapses. This is why Leibniz could define the objective world as *mens momentanea*,³ and why Saint Augustine could demand, for the constitution of time, beyond the presence of the present, a presence of the past and a presence of the future.⁴ But let us understand clearly what they are trying to say. If the objective world is incapable of bearing time, this is not because it is in some sense too narrow, or that we would have to add a bit of past and a bit of future to it. Past and future exist all too well in the world, they exist in the present, and what being itself lacks in order to be temporal is the non-being of the elsewhere, of the bygone, and of tomorrow. The objective world is too full for there to be time. Past and future voluntarily withdraw from being and pass over to the side of subjectivity, to seek there not some real support, but rather a possibility

of non-being that harmonizes with their nature. If the objective world is detached from the finite perspectives that open onto it, and if it is posited in itself, then all that can be found throughout it are “nows.” Moreover, these nows, not being present to anyone, have no temporal character and could not succeed one another. The definition of time, which is implicit in the comparisons made by common sense and which could be formulated as “a succession of nows,”⁵ does not merely commit the error of treating the past and the future as presents: it is in fact inconsistent, since it destroys the very notion of the “now” and the very notion of succession.

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[b. Nor is time to be found in “states of consciousness.”]

We would gain nothing by transporting the time of things into ourselves if we repeat “in consciousness” the error of defining time as a succession of nows. And yet this is precisely what psychologists do when they seek “to explain” the consciousness of the past through memories, or the consciousness of the future through the projection of these memories in front of us. The refutation of “physiological theories” of memory, in Bergson for example, takes place in the domain of causal explanation; it consists in showing that cerebral traces and other bodily mechanisms are not adequate causes of the phenomena of memory; that, for example, nothing in the body can account for the order in which memories disappear in cases of progressive aphasia. Such an argument clearly discredits the idea of a bodily preservation of the past: the body is no longer a receptacle of *engrams*, but rather an organ of pantomime given the task of assuring the intuitive realization of the “intentions”⁶ of consciousness. But these intentions cling to memories preserved “in the unconsciousness,” and the presence of the past to consciousness remains a simple factual presence. It was not seen that our best reason for rejecting the physiological preservation of the past is also a reason for rejecting “psychological preservation,” and this reason is that no preservation, no physiological or psychical “trace” of the past can provide an understanding of the consciousness of the past. This table bears the traces of my past life: I scratched my initials into it over here, and over there I left behind some ink stains. But these traces by themselves do not refer back to the past, for they are present; and if I find in them the signs of some “anterior” event, this is because I have, in addition, the sense of the past

and it is because I bear this signification in myself. If my brain preserves the traces of bodily processes that accompanied one of my perceptions, and if the nerve impulse again passes through these previously cleared pathways, then my perception will reappear, I will have a new perception
 475 – weakened and unreal perhaps – but in no case will this perception, which is present, be able to indicate to me a past event, unless I have another view upon my past that allows me to recognize this perception as a memory, but this has itself been excluded in principle.

If we now replace the physiological trace with a “psychical trace,” and if our perceptions remain in an unconsciousness, the difficulty will be the same: a preserved perception is still a perception, it continues to exist, it is always in the present, and it does not open up behind us the past – that dimension of escape and absence. A preserved fragment of the lived past can only be, at best, an opportunity for thinking about the past, and it does not make itself recognized; recognition, when we attempt to derive it from any content whatsoever, always precedes itself. Reproduction presupposes recognition, it can only be understood as such if I first have a sort of direct contact with the past in its own place. Nor can the future, *a fortiori*, be constructed with the contents of consciousness: no actual content can pass for a witnessing of the future, not even at the price of an equivocation, since the future has not even existed and, like the past, cannot make its mark upon us. So we could not hope to explain the relation of the future to the present except by assimilating it to the relation of the present to the past. To examine only the long series of my past states, I see that my present always passes by, that I can anticipate this passage, treat my near past as if it were long ago, and treat my actual present as if it were past: the future, then, is this hollow that takes shape out in front of me. Prospecption⁷ would in fact be a retrospection, and the future would be a projection of the past. But even if, by some miracle, I were able to construct the consciousness of the past with some presents removed from their present functions, they certainly could not open me up to a future. Even if we in fact represent the future to ourselves with the help of what we have already seen, it remains the case that, in order to project⁸ it in front of us, we must first have the sense of the future. If prospecption is a retrospection, then it is in every case an anticipated retrospection, and how could we anticipate if we did not already have the sense of the future? It is said that we guess, “by analogy,” that this incomparable present will pass by like all the others. But for there to

be an analogy between past presents and the actual present, this latter must not be merely presented as present; it must already announce itself as an impending past; we must sense weighing upon it the pressure of the future that seeks to depose it; in short, given that it is originary, the course of time must be not merely the passage of the present into the past, but also the passage of the future into the present. If it can be said that every prospection is an anticipated retrospection, then it can equally be said that every retrospection is a reversed prospection. For example, I know that I was in Corsica before the war because I know that the war was on the horizon of my trip to Corsica. Past and future cannot be simple concepts that we could form by abstraction from our perceptions and our memories, or simple names for designating the actual series of "psychical facts." We conceive of time before we conceive of its parts; temporal relations make events in time possible. Thus, correlatively, the subject must not himself be situated in time for him to be able to be present in intention to the past and to the future. Let us no longer say that time is a "given of consciousness," but rather, more precisely, that consciousness unfolds or constitutes time. Through the ideality of time, consciousness finally ceases to be imprisoned in the present.

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[c. *Ideality of time? Time is a relation of being.*]

But does consciousness have an opening onto a past and a future? It is no longer obsessed by the present and by "contents"; rather, it moves freely from a past and from a future that are not far from it (since it constitutes them as past or future, and since they are its immanent objects) to a present that is not close to it (since it is only present through the relations that it posits between itself, the past, and the future). But has not a consciousness liberated in this way lost all notion of what the future, the past, and even the present might be? Is not the time it constitutes, in all of its key characteristics, similar to the real time whose impossibility we have already demonstrated? Is it not still a series of "nows," and a series that is not presented to anyone, since no one is engaged there? Are we not still just as far from understanding what the future, the past, the present, and the passage from one to the other might be?

Time taken as an immanent object of consciousness is a time that is set out on one level, or in other words it is no longer time at all. There can be time only if it is not completely deployed, if past, present, and

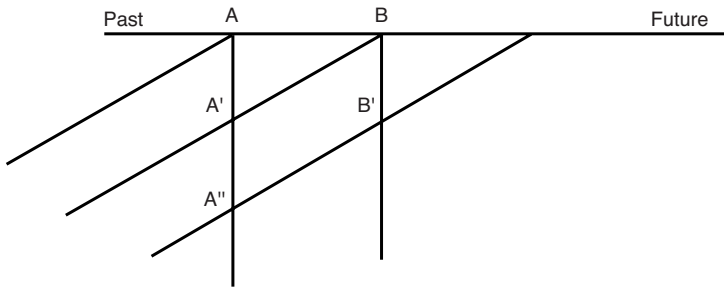
future are not in the same sense. Time must not merely be, it must come about; time is never completely constituted. Constituted time – the series of possible relations according to the before and the after – is not time itself, it is merely the final registering of time, and it is the result of time’s passage, which objective thought always presupposes but never manages to grasp. Constituted time belongs to space, since its moments coexist in front of thought;⁹ it belongs to the present, since consciousness is the contemporary of all times. Constituted time is a milieu that is distinct from myself and that is immobile where nothing passes by and where nothing happens. There must be another time, a true time, where I learn what passage or transition is in itself. It is certainly true that I could not perceive any temporal position without a before and an after; that, in order to apperceive the relation between the three terms, I must not merge with any one of them; and finally, that time requires a synthesis. But it is equally true that this synthesis must always be started over, and to assume that somewhere time has been completed amounts to negating time. Philosophers certainly dream of conceiving an “eternity of life”¹⁰ above and beyond permanence and change in which the productivity of time would be eminently contained, but a thetic consciousness of time that dominates it and that encompasses it destroys the phenomenon of time. If we are to encounter a sort of eternity, it will be at the core of our experience of time, and not in some non-temporal subject who would be given the task of thinking and positing time. The problem now is to make explicit this time in the state of its being nascent and in its appearing, which is always implied by the notion of time, and which is not an object of our knowledge, but rather a dimension of our being.

[d. The “field of presence,” the horizons of past and future.]

I make contact with time and learn to recognize its flow in my “field of presence,” taken broadly to include this current moment that I spend working, along with the horizon of the day that has already gone by behind it and the horizon of the evening and the night out in front of it. The distant past, of course, also has its temporal order and a temporal position in relation to my present, but only insofar as it itself has been present, insofar as it was “in its time” traversed by my life, and insofar as it has been carried forward until now. When I recall a distant past, I reopen time, I place myself back at a moment when it still included an

horizon of the future that is today closed off and an horizon of a recent past that is today a distant past. Everything sends me back to the field of presence, as if to the originary experience where time and its dimensions appear in person without any intervening distance and with an ultimate evidentness. This is where we see a future slipping into the present and into the past. These three dimensions are not given to us through discrete acts: I do not represent to myself my day, rather, my day weighs upon me with all of its weight, it is still there; I do not recall any particular detail, but I have the imminent power of doing so, I have it "still in hand."¹¹ Similarly, I do not think about the evening that is about to arrive, nor of what it will entail, and yet it "is there," just like the back of the house whose front I am looking at, or like the background beneath the figure. Our future is not built exclusively of conjectures and fantasies. Prior to what I see and what I perceive, there is certainly nothing visible any longer, but my world is carried along by intentional lines that trace out in advance at least the style of what is about to arrive (even though we will forever expect, probably until death, to see *something else* appear). The present (in the strict sense of the term) is not itself posited. The paper and my pen are there for me, but I do not perceive them explicitly; rather than perceiving objects, I reckon with what is around me, I depend upon my tools, and I am caught up in my task rather than standing before it.

Husserl calls the intentionalities that anchor me to my surroundings "protentions" and "retentions." These do not emanate from a central I, but somehow from my perceptual field itself, which drags along behind itself its horizon of retentions and eats into the future through its protentions. I do not pass through a series of nows whose images I would preserve and that, placed end to end, would form a line. For every moment that arrives, the previous moment suffers a modification: I still hold it in hand, it is still there, and yet it already sinks back, it descends beneath the line of presents. In order to keep hold of it, I must reach across a thin layer of time. It is still clearly the same one, and I have the power of meeting up with it such as it just was, I am not cut off from it; but then again it would not be past if nothing had changed, it begins to appear perspectively against or to project itself upon my present, whereas just a moment ago it in fact was my present. When a third moment takes place, the second one suffers a new modification; having been a retention, it now becomes the retention of a retention, and the layer of time between it and myself becomes thicker. We can follow Husserl in representing the



Following Husserl ("Zeitbewusstseins," 389). Horizontal line: series of "nows." Diagonal lines: *Abschattungen* of the same "nows" as seen from a later "now." Vertical lines: successive *Abschattungen* of the same "now."

- 479 phenomenon by a diagram, to which it would be necessary to add, in order to be complete, the symmetrical perspective of protentions. Time is not a line, but rather a network of intentionalities.¹²

[e. Operative intentionality.]

The objection will probably be raised that this description and this diagram do not take us a single step further. When we pass from A to B, and then to C, A is first projected into or appears in profile in A' and then in A''. For A' to be recognized as a retention or an *Abschattung* [profile] of A, and A'' as such for A', and even for the transformation of A into A' to be experienced as such, must there not be a synthesis of identification that connects A, A', A'', and all of the other possible *Abschattungen*? And does this not amount to turning A into an ideal unity, just as Kant wants to do? And yet, we know that as a result of this intellectual synthesis there will no longer be any time – A and all anterior moments will certainly be identifiable, and I will in some way be protected from time, which makes them slide past and become muddled; but with the same stroke I will have lost the very sense of the before and the after, which is only given by this sliding, and nothing will any longer distinguish the temporal series from a spatial multiplicity. If Husserl introduced the notion of "retention" and claimed that I still hold the immediate past in hand, this is precisely to express that I do not posit the past, nor do I construct it from an *Abschattung* that is actually distinct from it and through some explicit act, but rather that I reach the past in its recent and yet already past *haecceity*. I am not at first given A', A'', or A''', nor do I follow the "profiles" back to the

original A, in the manner that one goes from the sign to the signification. Rather, I am presented with A as seen shining through A', and then this ensemble shining through A'', and so on and so forth, just as I see the pebble through the volumes of water that flow over it.

There are, of course, syntheses of identification, but only in explicit memory or in the voluntary recollection of a distant past, or in other words in modes derived from the consciousness of the past. For example, I might hesitate over the date of a memory, having before myself a certain scene, but without knowing to which point in time it belongs; the memory has lost its anchorage. Then I might reach an intellectual identification established upon, for instance, the causal order of events: I must have had this suit made before the armistice, given that English fabric has been impossible to find ever since. In this case, however, I do not reach the past itself. On the contrary, when I uncover the concrete origin of the memory, this is because it again takes its place in a certain current of worry and hope that runs from Munich to the war, because I rejoin lost time, because, from the moment at issue right up until my present, the chain of retentions and the interlinking of successive horizons assures a continuous passage. The objective reference points by which I put my memory into its place through a mediate identification, and the intellectual synthesis in general, only have in themselves a temporal sense because the synthesis of apprehension gradually connects me to the whole of my actual past. Thus my past cannot be reduced to this synthesis. If the *Abschattungen* A' and A'' appear to me as *Abschattungen* of A, this is not because they all participate in an ideal unity "A" that would be their common principle. This is because I have, through them, the point A itself in its irrecusable individuality, established once and for all by its passage through the present, and that I see the *Abschattungen* A', A'', etc., springing from it. In Husserl's language, beneath "act intentionality" – which is the thetic consciousness of an object that, in intellectual memory, for example, converts the "this-thing" into an idea – we must acknowledge an "operative" intentionality (*fungierende Intentionalität*),¹³ which makes the former one possible and is what Heidegger calls "transcendence."¹⁴ My present transcends itself toward an imminent future and a recent past, and touches them there where they are, in the past and in the future themselves. If we did have the past in the form of an explicit memory, we would be tempted to recall it at each moment in order to verify its existence, just like the patient, discussed by Scheler, who turns around in

481 order to assure himself that the objects were really there,¹⁵ whereas we sense it behind us like an irrecusable acquisition. In order to have a past or a future, we do not have to connect a series of *Abschattungen* through an intellectual act, for they have something like a natural or primordial unity, and it is the past or the future itself that is announced through them. Such is the paradox of what we can call, following Husserl, the “passive synthesis” of time¹⁶ – a term that is clearly not a solution, but merely a sign for designating a problem.

[f. Cohesion of time through the very passage of time.]

The problem becomes clearer when we remember that our diagram represents an instantaneous cross-section of time. What exists in reality is not a past, a present, and a future, nor discrete instants A, B, and C, nor truly distinct *Abschattungen* A', A'', B', nor even a multitude of retentions on one side and a multitude of protentions on the other. The springing forth of a new present does not *provoke* a piling up of the past and an upheaval of the future; rather, the new present is the passage from a future to the present and of the previous present to the past – time sets itself in motion, from one end to the other, with a single movement. The “instants” A, B, and C do not exist in succession, they *differentiate themselves* from each other, and correspondingly A passes over into A' and from there into A''. In short, the system of retentions continuously gathers into itself what was, an instant ago, the system of protentions. Here there is no multiplicity of connected phenomena, but rather a single phenomenon of flowing [*écoulement*]. Time is the unique movement that harmonizes with itself in all of its parts, just as a gesture envelops all of the muscular contractions that are necessary for producing it. When we pass from B to C, there is something like a rupture, a disintegration of B into B', and of A' into A''; and C itself which, when it was about to arrive, was anticipated by a continuous emission of *Abschattungen*, has no sooner arrived than it begins to already lose its substance. “Time is the means offered to all that will be in order to be so that it can no longer be.”¹⁷ It is nothing other than a general flight outside of Self, nothing but the unique law of these centrifugal movements, or again, as Heidegger says, an “*ek-stase*.”¹⁸ While B is becoming C, it also becomes B', and in the same stroke A, which in becoming B also became A', falls to A'''. A, A', and A'', on the one hand, and B and B' on the other hand, are not linked together through a synthesis of

identification that would congeal them to a point in time, but rather through a synthesis of transition (*Übergangssynthese*),¹⁹ insofar as they emerge from each other, and each one of these projections is only an appearance of the total rupture or dehiscence. And this is why time, in the primordial experience of it that we have, is not for us a system of objective positions through which we pass, but rather a moving milieu that recedes from us, like the landscape from the window of a train. Yet we do not really believe that the landscape moves; the attendant at the railway crossing whizzes by, but the hill in the distance hardly moves, and, in the same way, even if the start of my journey has already moved off, the start of my week remains a fixed point; an objective time is sketched out upon the horizon and must therefore be taking shape in my immediate past.

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How is this possible? How can the temporal *ek-stase* not be an absolute disintegration in which the individuality of its various moments disappears? This is because the disintegration undoes what the passage from the future to the present had done: C is at the end of a long concentration that had brought it to maturity; to the extent that it was being prepared, it was signaled by fewer and fewer *Abschattungen*, it was approaching *in person*. When it arrived in the present, it brought with it its genesis of which it was merely the limit, and the near presence of what must come after it. Such that when what comes next actually arrives and pushes C into the past, it does not suddenly strip C of all being, and such that its disintegration is forever the other side or the consequence of its maturation. In short, since being and passing by are synonymous within time, the event does not cease to exist by becoming past. The origin of objective time, along with its fixed positions lying before our gaze, must not be sought in an eternal synthesis, but rather in the harmony and the overlapping of the past and the future through the present in the very passage of time. Time maintains what it has brought into being at the very moment that it drives this from being, because the new being was announced by the preceding one as destined to be, and because for this thing there was no difference between becoming present and being destined to pass by.

Temporalizing does not mean a “succession” [*Nacheinander*] of the ecstasies. The future is *not later* than the having-been, and the having-been is *not earlier* than the present. Temporality temporalizes itself as a future-that-goes-into-the-past-by-coming-into-the-present [*avenir-qui-va-au-passé-en-venant-au-présent*].²⁰

483 Bergson was wrong to *explain* the unity of time through its continuity, for this amounts to confusing past, present, and future, on the pretext that we move from one to the other through imperceptible transitions; and, in short, this amounts to negating time. But he was correct to latch onto the continuity of time as an essential phenomenon. Only this must be elucidated. Instant C and instant D – as close together as one wishes to make them – are never indiscernible, for then there would be no time at all; rather, they pass into each other, and C becomes D because it was never anything but the anticipation of D as present, and of its own passage into the past. This amounts to saying that each present reaffirms the presence of the entire past that it drives away, and anticipates the presence of the entire future or the “to-come” [*l’à-venir*], and that, by definition, the present is not locked within itself but transcends itself toward a future and toward a past. Thus, there is not one present and then another one that takes its place in being, nor is there even a present with some perspectives upon the past and upon the future followed by another present in which these perspectives would be overthrown, such that an identical spectator would be necessary to effect the synthesis of successive perspectives. Rather, there is a single time that confirms itself, that can bring nothing into existence without having already established it as present and as a past to come [*à venir*], and that establishes itself all at once.

[g. *Time as subject and subject as time.*]

The past, then, is *not* past, nor is the future future. It only exists when a subjectivity comes to shatter the plenitude of being in itself, to sketch out a perspective there, and to introduce non-being into it. A past and a future spring forth when I reach out toward them. I am not, for myself, directed toward the present time; I am just as much directed toward this morning or toward the night that is about to arrive, and although my present is surely this present instant, it is also just as much today, this year, or even my entire life. There is no need for a synthesis that would externally connect the *tempora* [separated times] into a single time, because each of these *tempora* already included, beyond itself, the open series of other *tempora* and communicated inwardly with them, and because the “cohesion of a life”²¹ is given along with its *ek-stase*. I do not think about the passage from the present to another present, I am not the spectator of this passage, I accomplish it. I am already directed toward the present that is about to arrive, just

as my gesture is already at its goal. I myself am time, a time that “perdures” and that neither “flows by” nor “changes,” as Kant occasionally said.²²

In its own way, common sense catches sight of this time that anticipates itself. Everyone speaks about “time,” and not in the manner that the zoologist speaks about the dog or the horse, using these as general names, but rather in the sense of a proper name. Time is even occasionally personified. Everyone imagines that time is a single concrete being, fully present in each of its manifestations just as a man is fully present in each of his spoken words. We say that there is a time just as we say that there is a fountain: the water changes and the fountain remains, because the form is preserved; the form is preserved because each successive burst takes up the functions of the previous one. Each burst of water goes from being the thrusting one in relation to the one it pushes forward, and becomes in turn the one pushed in relation to another; and even this comes, in short, from the fact that from the source right through to the fountain’s jet the bursts of water are not isolated: there is one single thrust, and a single gap in the flow would suffice to break up the jet. Here is where the river metaphor is justified, not insofar as the river flows, but insofar as it is one with itself. Only this intuition of the permanence of time is compromised in common sense, since it thematizes it or objectifies it, which is in fact the most effective way of ignoring it. There is more truth in the mythical personifications of time than in the concept of time considered in the scientific way, as a variable of nature in itself or, in the Kantian way, as a form ideally separable from its matter. There is a temporal style of the world, and time remains the same because the past is a previous future and a recent present, the present is an impending past and a recent future, and finally, the future is a present and even a past to come. This is to say that each dimension of time is treated or intended as something other than itself – which is to say, in short, because there is at the core of time a gaze, or, as Heidegger says, an *Augenblick*, someone through whom the word “as” can have a sense. We are not saying that time exists for someone: this would be again to lay it out and to immobilize it. We are saying, rather, that time is someone or, in other words, that the temporal dimensions – insofar as they perpetually fit together – affirm each other, never do more than make explicit what was implied in each one, and each express a single rupture or a single thrust that is subjectivity itself.

Time must be understood as a subject, and the subject must be understood as time. This originary temporality is clearly not the juxtaposition

of mutually external events, since it is the power that holds them together by separating them from each other. Ultimate subjectivity is not temporal in the empirical sense of the word: if the consciousness of time was built from successive states of consciousness, then a new consciousness would be necessary for the awareness of this succession, and so on. We
 485 are forced to acknowledge “a consciousness that would no longer have behind it any consciousness in order to be conscious of itself,”²³ which, as a result, must not be spread out in time and in which “being coincides with being for itself.”²⁴ We can say that ultimate consciousness is “timeless” (*zeitlos*), in the sense that it is not intra-temporal.²⁵ “In” my present – given that I catch hold of it while it is still living and with all that it implies – there is an ecstasy toward the future and toward the past that makes the dimensions of time appear, not as rivals, but as inseparable: to be in the present is to have always been and to be forever. Subjectivity is not in time because it takes up or lives time and merges with the cohesion of a life.

[h. *Constituting time, and eternity.*]

Are we thus coming back to a sort of eternity? I am directed toward the past and, through a continuous interlocking of retentions, I still retain my most distant experiences; I do not have some duplication or some image of them, I retain them themselves, precisely as they were. But the continuous interlocking of fields of presence, by which I am guaranteed this access to the past, has the essential characteristic of only being actualized little by little and step by step. Each present, by its very essence, excludes juxtaposition with other presents and, even for the distant past, I can only encompass a certain duration of my life by once again unfolding it according to its own *tempo*. The temporal perspective, the confusion of the distant past, and this sort of “shriveling up” of the past whose extreme would be oblivion, these are not accidents of memory, they do not express a degradation in the empirical existence of a consciousness of time that is in principle total; rather, they express the initial ambiguity of memory: to retain is to hold onto, but at a distance. Once again, the “synthesis” of time is a “transition synthesis” and the movement of a life that unfolds, and the only way to actualize this life is to live it; time has no place, rather time carries itself along and launches itself forward. Time, as an indivisible thrust and as a transition, alone can make time

as a successive multiplicity possible, and what we place at the origin of intra-temporality is a constituting time. When we describe above the fitting together of time with itself, we only succeeded in treating the future as a past by adding “a past to come,” and the past as a future by adding “a future that has already happened.” This is to say that, at the same moment that we leveled out time, we had to confirm again the originality of each perspective and establish this quasi-eternity upon the event. That which does not pass by in time is the passage of time itself. Time begins itself anew: yesterday, today, tomorrow – this cyclical rhythm, this constant form can certainly give the illusion of possessing the entirety of time all at once, just as the fountain gave us a feeling of eternity. But the generality of time is merely a secondary attribute and only gives us an inauthentic view of time, for we cannot conceive of a cycle without temporally distinguishing the point of arrival from the point of departure. The feeling of eternity is hypocritical; eternity feeds on time. The fountain of water only remains the same through the continuous thrust of the water. Eternity is the time of dreams, and the dream refers back to the day before, from which it borrows all of its structures. So what is this waking time where eternity takes root? In the broadest sense, it is the field of presence with its double horizon of originary past and originary future, and the open infinity of fields of presence that have gone by or that are possible. Time only exists for me because I am situated in it, that is, because I discover myself already engaged in it, because all of being is not given to me in person, and finally because a sector of being is so close to me that it does not even sketch out a scene in front of me and because I cannot see it, just as I cannot see my own face. Time exists for me because I have a present. It is by coming into the present that a moment of time acquires its ineffaceable individuality, the “once and for all time,” which will allow it later to move across time and will give us the illusion of eternity.

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[i. *Ultimate consciousness is presence in the world.*]*

None of the dimensions of time can be deduced from the others. But the present (taken broadly, with its originary horizons of past and future) has, nevertheless, a privileged status because it is the zone in which being and consciousness coincide. When I remember an earlier perception, or when I imagine visiting my friend Paul who is in Brazil, it is certainly

487 true that I intend the past itself in its place, or Paul himself in the world, and not some interposed mental object. But in the end, my act of representation (in contrast with represented experiences) is actually present to me; the one is perceived while the others are in fact merely represented. In order to appear to me, a previous experience or a possible one must be carried into being by a primary consciousness, which in this case is my inner perception of recollection or imagination. We said above that it is necessary to arrive at a consciousness that has no other one behind it, that thus grasps its own being, and where finally being and being conscious would be one. This ultimate consciousness is not an eternal subject that catches sight of itself in an absolute transparency, for such a subject would definitively be incapable of descending into time and would thus have nothing in common with our experience; rather, ultimate consciousness is the consciousness of the present. In the present and in perception, my being and my consciousness are one; not that my being is reduced to the knowledge that I have of it and that is clearly laid out in front of me – in fact, it is quite the opposite, since perception is opaque and brings into play (beneath everything I know) my sensory fields and my primitive complicities with the world. My being and my consciousness are one, rather, because “to be conscious” is here nothing other than “being toward . . .” [être à . . .], and because my consciousness of existing merges with the actual gesture of “ex-sistence” [ex-sistance].²⁶ We indubitably communicate with ourselves by communicating with the world. We hold time in its entirety and we are present to ourselves because we are present in and toward the world.

[j. *Temporality [as] self-affection of itself.*]

If this is the case, and if consciousness takes root in being and in time by taking up a situation there, then how will we describe consciousness? It must be a comprehensive project or a view of time and of the world that – in order to appear and in order to explicitly become what it implicitly is, namely, consciousness – needs to develop within the multiple. Neither the indivisible power, nor its distinct manifestations should be conceived separately; consciousness is neither one nor the other, it is both; it is the very movement of temporalization and, as Husserl says, of “flow”; it is a movement that anticipates itself, a flow that never leaves itself behind. Let us attempt to describe this more clearly through an example.

The novelist or the psychologist who does not return to the sources, and who accepts temporalization as ready-made, sees consciousness as a multiplicity of psychic facts between which he attempts to establish causal relations. Proust, for example,²⁷ shows how Swann's love for Odette brings with it the jealousy that, in turn, modifies the love, since Swann – obsessed with tearing her away from every rival – loses the luxury of admiring Odette. In fact, Swann's consciousness is not an inert milieu where psychical facts solicit each other externally. There is no jealousy provoked by the love that responds by altering that love; rather, there is a certain manner of loving in which the entire destiny of this love can be instantly seen. Swann has a taste for Odette's person, for this "spectacle" that she is, for this way that she has of glancing, of forming a smile, and of modulating her voice.²⁸ But what is it to have a taste for someone? Proust answers with regard to another love: it is to feel excluded from this life, and to desire to enter and to occupy it completely. Swann's love does not give rise to jealousy. It is already jealous, and has been since its beginning. Jealousy does not bring about a modification of love, for the pleasure Swann takes in gazing upon Odette carries with it its own alteration since it was the pleasure of being the only one to do so. The series of psychical facts and causal relations only externally translates Swann's particular view upon Odette, a particular way of being toward another person. Moreover, Swann's jealous love would have to be put into relation with his other behaviors, and perhaps then it would itself appear as the manifestation of an even more general structure of existence, which would be Swann's person. Reciprocally, every consciousness as a comprehensive project appears perspectively or is manifested to itself in acts, experiences, and "psychical facts" where it recognizes itself.

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This is where temporality clarifies subjectivity. We will never understand how a thinking or constituting subject can posit or catch sight of itself within time. If the I is Kant's transcendental I, then we will never understand how it could ever merge with its own wake in inner sense, nor how the empirical self remains a self at all. But if the subject is temporality, then self-positing ceases to be contradictory because it expresses precisely the essence of living time. Time is "self-affection of itself":²⁹ time, as a thrust and a passage toward a future, is the one who affects; time, as a spread-out series of presents, is the one affected; the affecting and the affected are identical because the thrust of time is nothing other than the transition from one present to another. Subjectivity is precisely

489 this *ek-stase*, or this projection of an indivisible power into a term that is present to it. The originary flow, says Husserl, does not merely exist, for it must necessarily give itself a “manifestation of itself” (*Selbsterscheinung*), otherwise we would need to install behind it another flow in order to become conscious of it. Time “constitutes itself as a phenomenon in itself”;³⁰ it is essential to time to be not only actual time or time that flows, but also time that knows itself, for the explosion or the dehiscence of the present toward a future is the archetype of the relation of self to self, and it sketches out an interiority or an ipseity.³¹ Here a light shines forth,³² for here we are no longer dealing with a being who rests in itself, but rather with a being whose entire essence, like that of light, is to *make visible*. Ipseity, sense, and reason can exist together through temporality without contradiction. This can even be seen in the common notion of time. We mark out the phases or stages of our life, we consider, for example, everything that has a meaningful relation with our present worries as belonging to our present; and thus we implicitly recognize that time and sense are one. Subjectivity is not an immobile self-identity: as for time, it is essential to subjectivity – in order for it to be subjectivity – to open up to an Other and to emerge from itself. We must not imagine the subject as constituting, and the multiplicity of its experiences or of its *Erlebnisse* as constituted; we must not treat the transcendental I as the true subject and the empirical myself as its shadow or as its wake. If this were truly their relation, we would be able to withdraw into the constituting, and this reflection would hollow out time, it would have no place and no date. If even our purest reflections in fact retrospectively appear to us as in time, and if our reflections upon the flow are inserted into the flow,³³ this is because the most precise consciousness of which we are capable is always found to be affected by itself or given to itself, and because the word consciousness has no sense outside of this duality.

[k. Passivity and activity.]³⁴

490 Thus, nothing that is said about the subject is false: it is true that the subject as absolute self-presence is strictly indeclinable, and that nothing could happen to it whose outline it did not already bear within itself; and it is true that the subject gives itself emblems of itself in succession and in the multiplicity, and that it is nothing other than these emblems, since without them it would be like an inarticulate cry and would not even

reach self-consciousness. What we provisionally called passive synthesis is clarified here. A “passive synthesis” would be contradictory if synthesis means composition, and if passivity consists in receiving a multiplicity rather than composing it. We meant, in speaking of a passive synthesis, that the multiple is penetrated by us, and that, nevertheless, we are not the ones who perform the synthesis. But temporalization, by its very nature, satisfied these two conditions: indeed, it is clear that I am not the author of time, any more than am I the author of my own heartbeats, nor am I the one who takes the initiative of temporalization; I did not choose to be born, but no matter what I do, once I am born, time flows through me. And yet, this springing forth of time is not a mere fact that I undergo; I can find in time a recourse against time itself, as happens in a decision that I commit to, or in an act of conceptual focusing. Time tears me away from what I was about to be, but simultaneously gives me the means of grasping myself from a distance and of actualizing myself as myself. What we call passivity is not our reception of an external reality or of the causal action of the outside upon us: it is being encompassed, a situated being – prior to which we do not exist – that we perpetually start over and that is constitutive of us. A spontaneity that is “acquired” – once and for all and that “is perpetuated in being as the result of being acquired”³⁵ – is precisely time and precisely subjectivity. It is time, since a time that did not have its roots in a present and therefore in a past would no longer be time at all, but rather eternity. Heidegger’s notion of historical time, which flows from the future and that, through a resolute decision, has its future in advance and saves itself once and for all from dispersion, is impossible according to Heidegger’s own thought: for, if time is an *ekstase*, and if present and past are two consequences of this ecstasy, then how could we suddenly cease seeing time from the point of view of the present, and how could we definitively escape from the inauthentic? We are always centered in the present, and all of our decisions emerge from there; they can always be placed into relation with our past, they are never without some motive; even if they open up within our lives some process that might be entirely new, they must be taken up in what follows and they only save us from dispersion for a period of time. Thus, there can be no question of deducing time from spontaneity. We are not temporal because we are spontaneous and because, as consciousnesses, we tear ourselves away from ourselves; rather, we are temporal because time is the foundation and the measure of our spontaneity; and the power of passing

beyond and of “nihilating,”³⁶ which inhabits us and that we in fact are, is itself given to us along with temporality and life. Our birth, or, as Husserl puts it in his unpublished works, our “generativity,”³⁷ simultaneously establishes our activity or our individuality and our passivity or our generality – that internal weakness that forever prevents us from achieving the density of an absolute individual. We are not, in some incomprehensible way, an activity tied to a passivity, a machine surmounted by a will, or a perception surmounted by a judgment; rather, we are entirely active and entirely passive because we are the sudden upsurge of time.

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[1. *The world as the place of significations.*]³⁸

Our goal was to understand the relations between consciousness and nature, from the inside and from the outside.³⁹ Or again, it was to connect the idealist perspective (according to which nothing exists except as an object for consciousness) and the realist perspective (according to which consciousnesses are inserted into the tissue of the objective world and of events in themselves). Or finally, it was to know how the world and man are accessible to two types of research, one explanatory, and the other reflective.⁴⁰ In another work, we have already formulated these classical problems in a different language that reduces them to what is essential: ultimately, the question is to understand what is, in us and in the world, the relation between *sense* and *non-sense*.⁴¹ Is that which has sense in the world carried and produced by the gathering together or the encounter of independent facts, or, on the contrary, is this the expression of an absolute reason? We say that events have a sense when they appear as the realization or expression of a unique intention. There is sense for us when one of our intentions is fulfilled, or inversely when a multiplicity of facts or signs lend themselves to us in our act of taking them up together or, in any case, when one or several objects exist as . . . representatives or as expressions of something other than themselves. Idealism essentially admits that every signification is centrifugal, is an act of signification or of *Sinn-gebung* [sense-giving],⁴² and that there is no natural sign. To understand is still ultimately to construct, to constitute, or to perform at present the synthesis of the object. The analysis of one's own body and

of perception revealed to us a deeper relation to the object and a deeper signification than this idealist one. The thing is nothing but a signification, namely, the signification “thing.” So be it. But when I understand a thing, such as a painting, I do not at that moment perform the synthesis of it; rather, I come before it with my sensory fields, my perceptual field, and finally with a schema [typique] of every possible being, or a universal arrangement with regard to the world. In the hollow space of the subject himself, we thus discovered the presence of the world, such that the subject could no longer be understood as a synthetic activity, but rather as *ek-stase*, and that every active act of signification or of *Sinn-gebung* appeared as derived and secondary in relation to this pregnancy of signification in the signs that might well define the world. We uncovered, beneath act orthetic intentionality – and in fact as its very condition of possibility – an operative intentionality already at work prior to every thesis and every judgment; we discovered a “*Logos* of the aesthetic world,”⁴³ or a “hidden art in the depths of the human soul,”⁴⁴ and that, like every art, only knows itself in its results. And from that point forward, the distinction we made elsewhere⁴⁵ between structure and signification was clarified: what constitutes the difference between the *Gestalt* of the circle and the signification “circle” is that the latter is recognized by an understanding that engenders it as the place of equidistant points from a center, while the former is recognized by a subject who is familiar with his world and capable of grasping it as a modulation of this world, as a circular physiognomy. The only way we have of knowing what a painting is and what a thing is, is by looking at them, and their signification is only revealed if we look at them from a certain point of view, from a certain distance, and in a certain direction [sens], in short, if we put our involvement with the world at the service of the spectacle. “The direction of a stream”⁴⁶ would be meaningless if I did not take for granted a subject who looks from a certain place toward another. In the world in itself, all directions and all movements are relative, which amounts to saying that there are none at all. There could be no actual movement, and I would not even possess the notion of movement if in perception I did not allow the earth – as the “ground”⁴⁷ of all rest and all movement – to persist beneath movement and rest because I inhabit the earth; and similarly, there would be no direction without a being that inhabits the world and that, through its gaze, marks out the first direction-landmark [direction-repère]. Likewise, the weave or grain [sens] of a fabric is only understandable for a subject who

can approach the object from one side or from the other, and the fabric has a grain through my sudden appearance in the world. Or again in the same way, the sense of a sentence is its aim or its intention, which again assumes a point of departure and a point of arrival, an intended thing, and a point of view. And finally, in the same way, the sense of vision is a certain preparation for logic and for the world of colors.

Beneath all of these meanings of the word *sens*, we find the same fundamental notion of a being who is oriented or polarized toward what he is not; and so we are always led to a conception of the subject as *ek-stase* and to a relation of active transcendence between the subject and the world. The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject who is nothing but a project of the world; and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world that it itself projects. The subject is being-in-the-world and the world remains “subjective,”⁴⁸ since its texture and its articulations are sketched out by the subject’s movement of transcendence. Thus, along with the world – as the cradle of significations, as the sense of all senses, and as the ground of all thoughts – we also discovered the means of overcoming the alternatives between realism and idealism, between contingency and absolute reason, and between non-sense and sense. The world, such as we have attempted to reveal it – as the primordial unity of all of our experiences on the horizon of our life and as the unique term of all of our projects – is no longer the visible unfolding of a constituting thought, nor a fortuitous collection of parts, and certainly not the operation of a directing thought upon an indifferent matter; rather, the world is the homeland of all rationality.

[m. *Presence in the world.*]

494 First, the analysis of time confirmed this new notion of sense and of understanding. To consider time as just another object, we would have to say of it what we have said of other objects: that it only has sense for us because we “are it.” We can only place something under this rubric because we are in the past, in the present, and in the future. Time is literally the sense of our life, and like the world it is only accessible to the one who is situated in it and who joins with its direction. But the analysis of time was not merely an occasion to repeat what we had said with regard to the world. Rather, it clarifies the preceding analyses because it reveals the subject and the object as two abstract moments of a unique structure,

namely, *presence*. We conceive of being through time, because it is through the relations between subject-time and object-time that we can understand the relations between the subject and the world. Let us apply the idea of subjectivity as temporality to the questions with which we began.

We asked ourselves, for example, how we might conceive of the relations between the soul and the body, and it was a hopeless endeavor to join the *for-itself* to a certain object whose causal operations it would have to suffer. But if the *for-itself*, the revelation of the self to the self, is nothing but the hollow where time takes place, and if the world “in itself” is merely the horizon of my present, then the problem comes down to knowing how a being that is still to come and has already passed by can also have a present – which means the problem is eliminated, since the future, the past, and the present are tied together in the movement of temporalization. It is just as essential to me that I have a body as it is essential to the future to be the future of a certain present. And this is true to the extent that scientific thematization and objective thought will not be able to find a single bodily function that is strictly independent of existential structures,⁴⁹ and, reciprocally, not a single “spiritual” act that does not rest upon a bodily infrastructure. Moreover, it is not just essential that I have a body, but also that I have this particular body. It is not merely the notion of the body that, through the notion of the present, is necessarily tied to the notion of the *for-itself*, but the actual existence of my body is indispensable to the existence of my “consciousness.” Ultimately, if I know that the *for-itself* crowns a body, this can only be through the experience of a singular body and of a singular *for-itself*, that is, through the experience [*l’épreuve*] of my presence in the world.

It will be objected that I might have differently formed fingernails, ears, or lungs, without my existence being thereby modified. But then my nails, ears, and lungs taken in isolation have no existence. Science accustoms us to considering the body as an assemblage of parts, and so too does the experience of its breaking apart in death. Now, the decomposed body is precisely no longer a body. If I put my ears, my nails, and my lungs back into my living body, they will no longer appear as contingent details. They are not indifferent to the idea of me that others form, they contribute to my physiognomy or to my style, and perhaps science will tomorrow pronounce – in the form of objective correlations – the necessity in which I was to have ears, nails, and lungs formed in just this way in order for me to be dexterous or clumsy, calm or nervous, intel-

ligent or stupid, that is, in order for me to be myself. In other words, as we have shown elsewhere, the objective body is not the truth of the phenomenal body, that is, the truth of the body such as we experience it. The objective body is merely an impoverished image of the phenomenal body, and the problem of the relations between the soul and the body has nothing to do with the objective body, which has merely a conceptual existence, but rather has to do with the phenomenal body. All that is true is that our open and personal existence rests upon an initial foundation of acquired and congealed existence. But if we are temporality, then it could not be any other way, since the dialectic between the acquired and the future is constitutive of time.

We would respond in the same way to questions that might be raised about the world prior to man. When we said above that there is no world without an Existence that bears its structure, one could surely have objected that, nevertheless, the world preceded man, that the earth, according to all the evidence, is the only populated planet, and that thus the philosophical views are revealed as incompatible with the most established facts. But in fact, it is only the abstract reflection of intellectualism that is incompatible with the poorly understood “facts.” For what exactly is meant by saying that the world existed prior to human consciousnesses? It might be meant that the earth emerged from a primitive nebula where the conditions for life had not been brought together. But each one of these words, just like each equation in physics, presupposes our pre-scientific experience of the world, and this reference to the lived world contributes to constituting the valid signification of the statement. Nothing will ever lead me to understand what a nebula, which could not be seen by anyone, might be. Laplace’s nebula is not behind us, at our origin, but rather out in front of us in the cultural world. And on the other hand, what is meant when we say that there is no world without a being in the world? Not that the world is constituted by consciousness, but rather that consciousness always finds itself already at work in the world. Thus, all things considered, what is true is that a nature exists – but this is the nature that perception shows to me, and not the nature of the sciences – and that even the light of consciousness is, as Heidegger says, a *lumen naturale*⁵⁰ given to itself.

In any case, one might continue by saying that the world will linger on after me, other men will perceive it when I am no longer there. But, if my presence in the world is truly the condition of possibility of this

world, then is it not impossible for me to conceive of other men in the world, whether after I am gone or even during my lifetime? From within the perspective of temporalization, the indications that we gave above regarding the problem of others are clarified. In the perception of another person, we said, I overcome in intention the infinite distance that will forever separate my subjectivity from another; I surmount the conceptual impossibility of another for-itself-for-me because I observe another behavior, another presence in the world. Now that we have analyzed the notion of presence more fully, connected self-presence to presence in the world, and identified the *cogito* with engagement in the world, we better understand how we can find another person at the virtual origin of their visible behaviors. Of course, another will never exist for us as we exist for ourselves: he is always a lesser figure, we are never present at the thrust of temporalization in him as we are in ourselves. But unlike two consciousnesses, two temporalities are not mutually incompatible, because each one only knows itself by projecting itself in the present, and because they can intertwine there. Since my living present opens up to a past that I nevertheless no longer live and to a future that I do not yet live, or that I might never live, it can also open up to temporalities that I do not live and can have a social horizon such that my world is enlarged to the extent of the collective history that my private existence takes up and carries forward. The solution to all the problems of transcendence is found in the thickness of the pre-objective present, where we find our corporeality, our sociality, and the preexistence of the world, that is, where we find the starting point for “explanations” to the extent that they are legitimate – and at the same time the foundation of our freedom.



FREEDOM

[a. *Total freedom or none at all.*]

497 To repeat, it is clear that no causal relation can be conceived between the subject and his body, his world, or his society. Calling into question what my presence to myself teaches me would result in the loss of the foundations of all of my certainties. Now, at the very moment that I turn toward myself to describe myself, I catch sight of an anonymous flow,¹ an overall project in which “states of consciousness” do not yet exist, nor, *a fortiori*, do characteristics of any kind. I am for myself neither “jealous,” nor “curious,” nor “hunchbacked,” nor “a civil servant.” We are often amazed that the disabled person or the person suffering from a disease can bear their situation. But in their own eyes they are not disabled or dying. Until the moment he slips into a coma, the dying person is inhabited by a consciousness; he is everything that he sees, he has this means of escape. Consciousness can never objectify itself as sick-consciousness or as disabled-consciousness; and, even if the elderly man complains of his old age or the disabled person of his disability, they can only do so when they compare themselves to others or when they see themselves through the eyes of others, that is, when they adopt a statistical or an objective view of themselves; and these complaints are never wholly made in good faith: in returning to the core of his consciousness, everyone feels him-

self to be beyond his particular characteristics and so resigns himself to them. They are the price we pay, without even thinking about it, for being in the world, a formality we take for granted. And this is how we can criticize our own face and yet not wish to exchange it for another.

It seems that no particularity can be attached to the insurmountable generality of consciousness, and that no limit can be imposed upon this vast power of evasion. For something from the outside to be able to determine me (in both senses of the word),² I would have to be a thing. My freedom and my universality cannot be eclipsed. It is inconceivable that I am free in some of my actions while determined in others, for what exactly would this idle freedom be that grants free play to determinisms? If we assume that my freedom is abolished when it does not act, then how will it be reborn? If, by some miracle, I were able to turn myself into a thing, then how would I later recreate my consciousness? If I am free, even once, then I do not figure among the totality of things, and I must be free continuously. If my actions even once cease to be my own, they will never again become my own; if I lose my hold upon the world, I will never regain it. In addition, it is inconceivable that my freedom could be limited; we cannot be partially free, and if, as it is often said, motivations incline me in a certain direction, then there are only two possibilities: either they have the force to make me act, in which case there is no freedom, or they do not have this force, in which case my freedom is total, as great in the worst tortures as in the peace of my home.

We would thus have to renounce not only the idea of causality, but even the idea of motivation.³ The supposed motive does not weigh on my decision; rather, my decision lends the motivation its force. Everything that I “am” in virtue of nature or history – hunchbacked, handsome, or Jewish – I never fully am for myself, as we explained just above. And although I am surely these things in the eyes of others, I nonetheless remain free to posit the other either as a consciousness whose gaze reaches me in my very being, or rather as a mere object. Again, this alternative itself is certainly a constraint: if I am ugly, then I have the choice either to be an outcast or to condemn others – that is, I am left free between masochism and sadism – but I am not free to ignore others. But this alternative itself, which is a given of the human condition, is not an alternative for myself understood as a pure consciousness, for it is still me who makes others exist for me and who makes us exist for each other as men. Moreover, even if being human were imposed

upon me, only leaving me a choice between ways of being human, when we consider this choice in itself – and notwithstanding the small number of possible choices – this would still be a free choice. If it is said that my temperament inclines me more toward sadism or rather toward masochism, this again is just a figure of speech, for my temperament only exists
 499 for the second-order knowledge that I obtain of myself when I see myself through another person's eyes and insofar as I recognize this, valorize it, and in this sense choose it.

What leads us astray here is that we often seek freedom in voluntary deliberation, which examines each motive one by one and appears to go along with the strongest or with the most convincing among them. In fact, the deliberation follows the decision, for my secret decision is what makes the motives appear and we could not even conceive of what the force of a motive might be without a decision that confirms it or counters it. When I have abandoned a project, suddenly the motives that I believed I had in favor of sticking with it fall away, drained of all force. To give them back their force, I must make the effort of reopening time and of placing myself back at the moment when the decision had not yet been made. Even while I am deliberating, it is already through some effort that I succeed in suspending time and in holding open a situation that I sense is closed by a decision already made and which I am resisting. This is why, after having abandoned a project, I so often experience a feeling of relief: "I wasn't so committed after all," the debate was a mere formality, the deliberation was a parody, I had already decided against the project. Weakness of the will is often cited as an argument against freedom. And in fact, if I can voluntarily adopt a behavior and play the role of a warrior or a seducer, this does not depend upon my being a warrior or a seducer "naturally" and with ease, that is, my genuinely being these things. But neither should we seek freedom in the volitional act, which is, according to its very sense, an abortive act. We only resort to the volitional act in order to go against our genuine decision, and as if to prove deliberately our own lack of power. Had we truly assumed the behavior of the warrior or the seducer, then we would have been a warrior or a seducer. Even those things described as obstacles to freedom are in fact deployed by freedom. An unclimbable rock face, a large or small, vertical or diagonal rock face – this only has sense for someone who intends to climb it, for a subject whose projects cut these determinations out of the uniform mass of the in-itself and make an oriented world and a sense

of things suddenly appear. Thus, there is ultimately nothing that could limit freedom, except those limits freedom has itself determined as such through its own initiatives, and the subject has only the exterior world that he gives himself. Since the subject himself, by suddenly appearing, makes sense and value appear among things, and since nothing could reach him except through his giving them a sense and a value, then there is no action of the things upon the subject, but merely a signifying (in the active sense), and a centrifugal *Sinngebung*. The choice seems to be 500 between a scientific understanding of causality, which is incompatible with our self-consciousness, and the affirmation of an absolute freedom without any exterior. It is impossible to identify a point beyond which things would cease to be ἐφ' ἡμῖν [dependent upon us].⁴ All things are within our power, or none of them are.

[b. Then there is no such thing as action, choice, or “doing.”]

Yet this first reflection on freedom might result in rendering freedom impossible. If freedom is indeed equal in all of our actions and even in our passions, if it is incommensurate with our behavior, or if the slave displays as much freedom by living in fear as he does in breaking his chains, then it cannot be said that there is such a thing as *free action*. Freedom would then be prior to all actions, and in no case can it be said that “here is where freedom appears,” since in order for free action to be detectable it would have to stand out against a background of life that is not free, or that is less free. Freedom is everywhere, so to speak, but also nowhere. The idea of an acquisition is rejected in the name of freedom, but then freedom becomes a primordial acquisition and something like our state of nature. Since we do not have to bring freedom about, it must be the gift granted us of having no gift, or that nature of consciousness that consists in not having a nature, and in no case can it be expressed on the outside or figure in our life. Thus, the idea of action disappears: nothing can pass from us to the world, since we are nothing determinate and since the non-being that constitutes us could not slip itself into the saturated world. There are only intentions immediately followed by an effect, and we are very close to the Kantian idea of an intention that has the value of an act, to which Scheler objected that the disabled person who would like to save a drowning man and the good swimmer who actually saves him do not have the same experience of autonomy. The very idea of

choice disappears, for to choose is to choose *something* in which freedom sees, at least momentarily, a symbol of itself. A free choice only takes place if freedom puts itself into play in its decision and posits the situation that it chooses as a situation of freedom. A freedom that did not have to bring itself about because it is acquired could not commit itself in this way: it knows quite well that the following instant will find it, in every way, just as free and just as little established. The very notion of freedom requires that our decision plunge into the future, that something has been *done* by it, that the following moment benefits from the preceding one and, if not being a necessity, is at least solicited by it. If freedom has to do with *doing*, then what it does must not immediately be undone by a new freedom. Thus, each instant must not be a closed world; one moment must be able
 501 to commit the following ones; once the decision has been made and the action has begun, I must have some acquisition available to me, I must benefit from my momentum, and I must be inclined to continue; there must be an inclination of the mind.

It was Descartes who said that preservation requires a power just as great as creation, and this assumes a realist notion of the instant. Of course, the “instant” is not a philosopher’s fiction. It is the point at which one project is completed and another one begins;⁵ it is the point where my gaze shifts from one goal to another; it is the *Augen-Blick* [blink of an eye].⁶ But this break in time can only appear if the two pieces each make up a block. It is said that consciousness is not broken up into a myriad of instants, but is at least haunted by the specter of the instant, which it must continuously exorcise through a free act. As we will see below, we in fact always have the power of breaking off, but this assumes in every case a power of *beginning*, for there would be no tearing apart if freedom was nowhere committed and was not preparing to establish itself elsewhere. If there were no cycles of behavior, no open situations that call for a certain completion and that can act as a foundation, either for a decision that confirms them or for one that transforms them, then freedom would never take place. Choice of an intellectual character is not only excluded because there is no time before time, but also because choice assumes a previous commitment and because the idea of a first choice is contradictory. If freedom is to have *a field to work with*,⁷ if it must be able to assert itself as freedom, then something must separate freedom from its ends, freedom must have *a field*; that is, it must have some privileged possibilities or realities that tend to be preserved in being. As J.-P. Sartre

himself shows, the dream excludes freedom because in the imaginary we have no sooner intended a signification than we already believe we hold its intuitive realization and, in short, because there are no obstacles and there is nothing to do.⁸ It has been established that freedom is not to be confused with the abstract decisions of the will at grips with motives or passions; the classical schema of deliberation only applies to a freedom of bad faith that secretly feeds antagonistic motives without wanting to take them up, and itself manufactures the supposed proofs of its own lack of power.

Beneath these noisy debates and these vain attempts to “construct” ourselves, we can see the tacit decisions by which we have articulated the field of possibilities around ourselves, and the fact is that nothing is done so long as we maintain these fixations, and everything is easy once we have weighed these anchors. This is why our freedom must not be sought in the insincere discussions where a style of life that we do not wish to question clashes with circumstances that suggest an alternative: the genuine choice is the choice of our whole character and of our way of being in the world. But either this total choice is never articulated, it is the silent springing forth of our being in the world, in which case it would not be clear in what sense it could be called ours – this freedom glides over itself and is equivalent to a destiny – or the choice that we make of ourselves is truly a choice, a conversion of our existence, but in this case it assumes a preexisting acquisition that it sets out to modify and it establishes a new tradition. This latter will lead us to wonder if the perpetual tearing away by which we defined freedom at the outset is not merely the negative side of our universal engagement in a world, if our indifference toward each determinate thing does not merely express our immersion in all of them, if the ready-made freedom from which we began does not reduce to a power of initiative that could not be transformed into a *doing* without taking up something proposed to us by the world, and finally if concrete and actual freedom do not exist in this exchange. Certainly nothing has sense or value except for me and through me, but this proposition remains indeterminate and is again mistaken for the Kantian idea of a consciousness that only “finds in things what it has put there” and for the idealist refutation of realism, so long as we fail to clarify how we understand the words “sense” and “me.” By defining ourselves as the universal power of *Sinn-Gebung* [giving sense], we have returned to the method of the “that-without-which” and to the classical style of reflective analysis, which

seeks conditions of possibility without worrying about conditions of reality. Thus, we must again take up the analysis of the *Sinngebung* [sense-giving] and show how it can be at once centrifugal and centripetal, since it has been established that there is no freedom without a field.

[c. *Who gives the motives a sense?*]

I declare that this rock face is unclimbable, and it is certain that this attribute – just like the attributes of large and small, straight and diagonal, and in fact like all attributes in general – can only come to the rock face from a plan to climb it and from a human presence. Thus, freedom makes the obstacles to freedom appear, such that we cannot place these obstacles
 503 opposite freedom as limits. It is clear, however, that given the same project, this rock face over here will appear as an obstacle, while this other more passable one will appear as an aid to the project. My freedom thus does not make an obstacle exist over here and a passageway over there, it merely makes obstacles and passageways exist in general; my freedom does not sketch out the particular figure of this world, it only establishes its general structures. The objection will be that this amounts to the same thing: if my freedom conditions the structure of the “there is,” the “here,” and the “over there,” then my freedom is present everywhere these structures arise; we cannot distinguish the quality “obstacle” from the obstacle itself, relate the first to freedom and the second to the world in itself, which, lacking this quality, would merely be an unnameable and formless mass. Thus, I cannot find a limit to my freedom outside of myself. But could I not find this limit within myself? We must in effect distinguish between my explicit intentions, such as the plan I form today to climb those mountains, and the general intentions that invest my surroundings with some value in a virtual way.⁹ Whether or not I have decided to undertake the climb, these mountains appear large because they outstrip my body’s grasp and, even if I have just read *Micromégas*,¹⁰ nothing I do can make them appear small. Beneath myself as a thinking subject (able to place myself at will either on Sirius or on the earth’s surface), there is thus something like a natural self who does not leave behind its terrestrial situation and who continuously sketches out absolute valuations. Moreover, my projects as a thinking being are clearly constructed upon these valuations; if I decide to see things from the point of view of Sirius, I still have recourse to my terrestrial experience in order to do so: I declare, for example, that the Alps are molehills.

[d. *Implicit valuation of the sensible world.*]*

Insofar as I have hands, feet, a body, and a world, I sustain intentions around myself that are not decided upon and that affect my surroundings in ways I do not choose. These intentions are general in a double sense, first in the sense that they constitute a system in which all possible objects are enclosed: if the mountain seems large and vertical, then the tree appears small and diagonal; and second in the sense that these intentions do not belong to me, they come from farther away than myself and I am not surprised to find them in all psycho-physical subjects who have a similar organization to my own. This is why, as Gestalt theory has shown, there are forms that are privileged for me and for all other humans, and which can give rise to a psychological science and to strict laws. Consider this collection of dots:

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It is always perceived as “six groups of dots, two millimeters apart”; and some figures are always perceived as a cube, while others are always seen as a flat mosaic.¹¹ Everything happens as if, prior to our judgment and our freedom, someone were allocating such and such a sense to such and such a given constellation. Of course, perceptual structures do not always force themselves upon us: some are ambiguous. But these latter reveal to us even more clearly the presence of a spontaneous valuation in us: for these are the floating figures that propose in turn different significations. Now, a pure consciousness can do anything except be unaware of its own intentions, and an absolute freedom cannot choose itself as hesitant, since this amounts to allowing itself to be drawn in several directions, and since by definition the possibilities owe their entire force to freedom, the weight that freedom allocates to one of them is simultaneously withdrawn from the others. We can certainly decompose a form by looking at it askew, but only because freedom makes use of the gaze and its spontaneous valuations. Without these spontaneous valuations, we would not have a world, that is, a collection of things that emerges from the formless mass by offering themselves to our body as things “to be touched,” “to be taken,” or “to be climbed”; we would never be aware of adjusting ourselves to the things and of reaching them out there where they are, beyond us; we would merely be aware of rigorously

conceiving of objects that are immanent to our intentions; we would not be in the world, ourselves implicated in the spectacle and, so to speak, intermingled with things; we would have merely a representation of a universe. Thus, it is certainly true that there are no obstacles in themselves, but the “myself” that qualifies them as obstacles is not an acosmic subject; this subject anticipates himself among the things in order to give them the shape of things. There is an autochthonous sense of the world that is constituted in the exchange between the world and our embodied existence and that forms the ground of every deliberate *Sinngebung* [sense-giving act].

[e. *Sedimentation of being in the world.*]

This is not only true of an impersonal and ultimately abstract function like “external perception.” There is something analogous in all valuations. It has been quite aptly noted that pain or fatigue can never be considered as causes that “act” upon my freedom, and that, if I experience [éprouve] 505 pain or fatigue at a given moment, then they do not come from the outside; they always have a sense, they express my attitude toward the world. Pain makes me give in and say what I should have kept quiet; fatigue brings my journey to an end. We all know that moment when we decide to give up tolerating the pain or the fatigue and when, instantaneously, they become actually intolerable. Fatigue does not stop my companion because he likes the feel of his body damp with sweat, the scorching heat of the road and the sun and, in short, because he likes to feel himself at the center of things, to draw together their rays, or to turn himself into the gaze for this light and the sense of touch for these surfaces. My fatigue stops me because I do not enjoy this, because I have differently chosen my way of being in the world, and because, for example, I do not look to be out in nature, but rather to gain the recognition of others. I am free in relation to my fatigue precisely to the extent that I am free in relation to my being in the world; [despite my fatigue] I am free to continue along my way on condition of transforming my being in the world.¹²

But in fact, here again, we must recognize a sort of sedimentation of our life: when an attitude toward the world has been confirmed often enough, it becomes privileged for us. If freedom does not tolerate being confronted by any motive, then my habitual being in the world is equally fragile at each moment, and the complexes I have for years nourished

through complacency remain equally innocuous, for freedom's gesture can effortlessly shatter them at any moment. And yet, after having built my life upon an inferiority complex, continuously reinforced for twenty years, it is not likely that I would change. A cursory rationalism would obviously object to this illegitimate notion by saying: there are no degrees of possibility, either the free act no longer exists or it is still there, in which case freedom is complete. In short, they would argue that this "likely" is meaningless. This notion belongs to statistical thinking, which is not thinking at all, since it has nothing to do with any particular thing actually existing, nor with any moment of time, nor with any concrete event. "It's unlikely that Paul will renounce writing bad books": this is meaningless since, at any moment, Paul might decide to stop writing such books. The "likely" is everywhere and nowhere, it is a reified fiction that has merely a psychological existence; the "likely" is not an ingredient of the world.

– And yet, we have already encountered it just a moment ago in the perceived world: the mountain is large or small insofar as it is situated as a perceived thing in the field of my virtual actions and in relation to a level that is not merely the level of my individual life, but rather the level of "every man." Generality and probability are not fictions, they are phenomena, and so we must find a phenomenological foundation for statistical thought. Statistical thought necessarily belongs to a being who is fixed, situated, and surrounded in the world. "It's unlikely" that I would in this moment destroy an inferiority complex in which I have been complacent now for twenty years. This means that I am committed to inferiority, that I have decided to dwell within it, that this past, if not a destiny, has at least a specific weight, and that it is not a sum of events over there, far away from me, but rather the atmosphere of my present. The rationalist alternative – either the free act is possible or not, either the event originates in me or is imposed from the outside – does not fit with our relations with the world and with our past. Our freedom does not destroy our situation, but gears into it: so long as we are alive, our situation is open, which implies both that it calls forth privileged modes of resolution and that it, by itself, lacks the power to procure any of them.

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[f. Valuation of historical situations: class prior to class consciousness.]

We would arrive at the same result by examining our relations with history. If I consider myself in my absolute concretion and such as reflec-

tion presents me to myself, then I am an anonymous and pre-human flow that has not yet been articulated as “worker,” for example, or as “bourgeois.” If I later conceive of myself as a man among men, or as a bourgeois among bourgeois, it seems that this can only be a secondary view of myself; I am never a worker or a bourgeois at my very core, but rather a consciousness that freely values itself as a bourgeois or a proletarian consciousness. Indeed, my objective place in the circuit of production is not sufficient to give rise to an awareness of class. People were exploited long before there were revolutionaries. The worker’s movement does not always progress in times of economic crisis. The revolt is not, then, the product of objective conditions, but conversely it is the decision made by the worker to desire the revolution that turns him into a proletarian. The valuation of the present is established by the free project of the future. One might conclude from this that history has no sense by itself, it has the sense we give it through our will.

507 – And yet here again we fall back into the method of the “that-without-which”; in opposition to objective thought, which places the subject into the network of determinism, we have answered with an idealist reflection that makes determinism rest upon the subject’s constituting activity. Now, we have already seen that objective thought and reflective analysis are but two appearances of the same error, two ways of ignoring phenomena. Objective thought deduces class consciousness from the objective condition of the proletariat. Idealist reflection reduces the proletarian condition to the proletarian’s consciousness of that condition. The former draws the consciousness of class from class as defined by objective characteristics, whereas the latter reduces “being a worker” to the consciousness of being a worker. In both cases, we are operating on the level of abstraction, because we remain within the alternative between the in-itself and the for-itself. If we take up the question again, not with the intention of discovering the causes of this becoming conscious – for there is no cause that can act upon a consciousness from the outside, nor its conditions of possibility, for what we need is the conditions that make it actual – but rather with the intention of discovering class consciousness itself, if, in short, we adopt a truly existential method, then what do we find? I am not conscious of being a worker or a bourgeois because I in fact sell my work or because I in fact show solidarity to the capitalist machine, and I certainly do not become a worker or a bourgeois the day that I commit to seeing history through the lens of class

warfare. Rather, “I exist as a worker” or “I exist as a bourgeois” first, and this mode of communication with the world and society motivates both my revolutionary or conservative projects and my explicit judgments (“I am a worker,” or “I am a bourgeois”), without it being the case that I can deduce the former from the latter, nor the latter from the former. Neither the economy nor society, taken as a system of impersonal forces, determine me as a proletarian, but rather society or the economy such as I bear them within myself and such as I live them; nor is it, for that matter, an intellectual operation without any motive, but rather my way of being in the world within this institutional framework.

[As a worker,] I have a certain style of life: I am at the mercy of unemployment and prosperity; I cannot do with my life whatever I please; I am paid on a weekly basis; I control neither the conditions, nor the products of my labor. And as a result, I feel like a foreigner in my factory, my nation, and my life. I am accustomed to dealing with a *fatum* [destiny] that I do not respect, but that must be humored. Or perhaps I work as a day-laborer: I have no farm of my own, nor even any work tools; I move from farm to farm, renting myself out during harvest season; I sense a nameless power hovering over me that turns me into a nomad, even when I would like to settle down. Or finally, perhaps I am the tenant of a farm where the owner has not installed electricity, even though the main lines are a mere two hundred yards away. I am allotted only one inhabitable room for myself and my family, even though it would be easy to make other rooms in the house available. My fellow factory or harvest workers, or the other tenant farmers, do the same work I do, and under similar conditions; we coexist in the same situation and we feel ourselves to be similar, not through some comparison, as if each one of us lived above all in isolation, but on the basis of our tasks and gestures. These situations do not assume any explicit valuation, and if there is a tacit valuation, it is the thrust of a freedom without any project encountering unknown obstacles; in no way can we speak of a choice, for in the three cases it is sufficient that I am born and that I exist in order to experience my life as difficult and constrained – I do not choose to experience it this way. But things might well stay right there without my reaching class consciousness, understanding myself as a proletarian, or becoming a revolutionary. How, then, will this passage come about?

The worker learns that other workers in another trade have, after a strike, obtained an increased salary; he observes that shortly thereafter

the salaries in his own factory were raised. The *fatum* with which he was grappling begins to become more clearly articulated. The day-laborer, who has rarely interacted with workers, who does not resemble them, and who is hardly fond of them, sees the price of manufactured objects increasing, as well as the cost of living, and notices that one can no longer make ends meet. It might happen that, in that moment, he blames the workers of the city, and so class consciousness will not be born. If it is born, this is not because the day-laborer has decided to become a revolutionary and, consequently, to confer a value upon his actual condition, but rather because he perceived concretely the synchronicity between his life and the lives of the workers, and the community of their lot in life. The small farmer, who does not mix with day-laborers, and even less so with the village workers, separated from them through a world of customs and value judgments, nevertheless feels himself on the same side as the day-laborers when he pays them an insufficient salary; he feels solidarity with the workers of the city when he learns that the owners of the farm preside over the board of directors of several industrial corporations. Social space begins to become polarized, and a region of “the exploited” appears. Upon every upsurge, coming from any point on the social horizon whatsoever, the regrouping takes shape beyond different ideologies and trades. Class is coming into being, and we call a situation “revolutionary” when the objectively existing connection between the segments of the proletariat (that is, those connections that an absolute observer would ultimately recognize between them) is finally experienced [vécu] in the perception of a common obstacle to each one’s existence. There is never a need for a representation of the revolution to arise. It is unlikely, for example, that the Russian peasants of 1917 explicitly set for themselves the task of the revolution and the transformation of property relations. Revolution is born day to day, from the interlocking of immediate ends with ends that are further removed. There is no need for each proletarian to conceive of himself as proletarian in the sense a Marxist theoretician gives this word. It is enough for the day-laborer or the farmer to feel himself moving toward a certain crossroads to which the village worker’s path also leads. Both open onto the revolution that – had it been described and represented to them in advance – would have frightened them. At most we can say the revolution is at the end of the paths they have taken and is in their projects in the form of a “things-must-change,” which each concretely experiences in his own difficulties

and at the basis of his particular unquestioned beliefs. Neither the *fatum*, nor the free act that destroys it, are represented; they are lived in ambiguity. This does not mean that the workers and the peasants bring about the revolution unwittingly and in them we have but “elementary forces” or blind actors skillfully manipulated by some lucid agitators. The chief of police may indeed see history this way. But such views are of no help to him when confronted with a truly revolutionary situation, when the commands issued by the so-called agitators are immediately understood as if through some preestablished harmony and find complicity everywhere, because they crystallize what is latent in the life of all producers.

[g. *Intellectual project and existential project.*]*

The revolutionary movement, like the work of the artist, is an intention that creates its own instruments and its own means of expression. The revolutionary project is not the result of a deliberate judgment, nor the explicit positing of an end. This is what it is for the propagandist, because he has been trained by the intellectual, or for the intellectual, because he regulates his life on the basis of his thought. But the revolution only ceases to be the abstract decision of a thinker and becomes an historical reality if worked out in inter-human relations and in the relations of man with his work. Thus, it is true that I recognize myself as a worker or bourgeois the day I situate myself in relation to a possible revolution, and that this stand does not result, through some mechanistic causality, from my social status as a worker or bourgeois (and this is why all classes have their traitors); but no more is this a spontaneous, instantaneous, and unmotivated valuation – it was prepared for by a molecular process, it ripens in coexistence prior to bursting forth in words and relating to objective ends.

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We are correct to observe that the most lucid revolutionaries are not produced by the most extreme poverty, but we forget to ask why a return to prosperity often brings about a radicalization of the masses. This is because the relaxation of the demands of life makes possible a new arrangement of social space: horizons are no longer restricted to the most immediate of worries, there is some breathing space, and there is room for a new life project. This fact does not prove that the worker turns himself into a worker and a revolutionary *ex nihilo*, but rather that he does so upon a certain ground of coexistence. The error of the conception

under consideration is, in short, to examine only intellectual projects, rather than bringing into the account the existential project, which is the polarization of a life toward a determinate–indeterminate goal of which it has no representation and that it only recognizes at the moment the goal is reached. They reduce intentionality in general to the particular case of objectifying acts, they turn the proletarian condition into an object of thought, and they have no trouble showing, in accordance with the established method of idealism, that, like every object of thought, it only subsists before and by the consciousness that constitutes it as an object. Idealism (like objective thought) misses genuine intentionality, which, rather than positing its object, is toward its object.¹³ Idealism is unaware of the interrogative, the subjunctive, the wish, the expectation, and the positive indetermination of these modes of consciousness. It is only familiar with indicative consciousness in the present or the future tenses, and this is why it does not succeed in accounting for class. For class is neither simply recorded, nor established by decree; just like the *fatum* of the capitalist machine and just like the revolution, class is – prior to being conceived – lived as an obsessive presence, as a possibility, as an enigma, and as a myth.

To make class consciousness into the result of a decision or a choice is to say that the questions are resolved the day they are posed, that every question already contains the response it awaits; it is, in short, to return to immanence and to give up the hope of understanding history. In fact, the intellectual project and the positing of ends are merely the fulfillment of an existential project. I am the one who gives a sense and a future to my life, but this does not mean that I conceive of this sense and this future; rather, they spring forth from my present and from my past, and particularly from my present and past mode of coexistence. Even for the intellectual who becomes a revolutionary, the decision is not born
 511 *ex nihilo*; sometimes it follows up a long solitude: the intellectual seeks a doctrine that is demanding of him, and that cures him of subjectivity; sometimes he bows to the clarity a Marxist interpretation of history can bring, in which case he has placed knowledge at the center of his life, and this itself is only understood in relation to his past and his childhood. Even an unmotivated decision to become a revolutionary, made by a pure act of freedom, would again express a certain manner of being in the natural and social world, which is typically that of the intellectual. He only “joins the working class” through his situation as an intellectual

(and this is why even fideism,¹⁴ in his case, remains justifiably suspect). For the worker, the decision is elaborated *a fortiori* in his life. In this case, it is no longer thanks to some misunderstanding that the horizon of an individual life and the revolutionary aims coincide: for the worker, the revolution is a much more immediate and imminent possibility than for the intellectual, since he is at grips with the economic machine in his own life. And this is why, statistically, there are more workers than bourgeoisie in a revolutionary party. Of course, motivation does not suppress freedom. Even the most strict workers' parties have included many intellectuals among their leaders, and it is likely that a man like Lenin identified himself with the revolution and ended up transcending the distinction between intellectual and worker. But these are precisely the virtues of action and commitment. At the outset, I am not an individual above class; I am situated socially, and my freedom, even if it has the power to commit me elsewhere, does not have the power to turn me immediately into what I decide to be. Thus, being bourgeois or a worker is not merely being conscious of so being, it is to give myself the value of a worker or a bourgeois through an implicit or existential project that merges with our way of articulating the world and of coexisting with others. My decision takes up a spontaneous sense of my life that it can confirm or deny, but that it cannot annul. Idealism and objective thought equally miss the arrival of class consciousness, the first because it deduces actual existence from consciousness, the other because it derives consciousness from actual existence, and both of them because they are unaware of the relation of motivation.

[h. *The For-Itself and the For-Others, intersubjectivity.*]

One might respond from the idealist side that I am not for myself a particular project, but rather a pure consciousness, and that the attributes "bourgeois" or "worker" only belong to me insofar as I place myself back among others, insofar as I see myself through their eyes, from the outside, and as an "other." Here we would have categories drawn from the For-Others, and not from the For-Self. But if there were two types of categories, then how could I have the experience of another person, that is, of an *alter ego*? This assumes that the quality of a possible "other" is already nascent in the view I have of myself, and that his quality of *ego* is already implicated in the view I take of others. Again, the response will be

that the other is given as a fact and not as a possibility of my own being. What is meant by this? Do they mean that I would not have the experience of other men if there were none on the surface of the earth? The proposition is self-evident, but it does not resolve our question, since, as Kant already said, one cannot pass from “all knowledge begins with experience” to “all knowledge comes from experience.” If other empirically existing men are to be other men for me, I must have what is needed in order to recognize them, and so the structures of the For-Others must already be the dimensions of the For-Self. Moreover, it is impossible to derive all of the specifications that we are speaking of from the For-Others. The other is neither necessarily, nor even ever fully, an object for me. And, such as occurs in cases of sympathy, I can perceive another person as bare existence and as freedom as much or as little as I can myself. The-Other-as-an-object is only an insincere modality of the other, just as absolute subjectivity is only an abstract notion of myself. Thus, even in my most radical reflection, I must already grasp around my absolute individuality something like a halo of generality, or an atmosphere of “sociality.” This is necessary if the words “a bourgeois” and “a man” are later to be able to take on a sense for me. I must immediately grasp myself as eccentric to myself, and my singular existence must diffuse, so to speak, around itself an existence as quality. The For-Selves – me for myself and the other for himself – must stand out against a background of For-Others – me for others and others for me. My life must have a sense that I do not constitute, there must be, literally, an intersubjectivity; each of us must be at once anonymous in the sense of an absolute individuality and anonymous in the sense of an absolute generality. Our being in the world is the concrete bearer of this double anonymity.

[i. *There is some sense to history.*]¹⁵

On this condition, there can be situations, a sense of history, and an historical truth – three ways of saying the same thing. If I actually made myself into a worker or bourgeois through an absolute initiative, and if, in general, nothing ever solicited freedom, then history would have no structure, we would not see any events take shape there, and anything might result from anything. There would be no British Empire, taken as a relatively stable historical form to which a name can be given and in which certain likely properties can be recognized. The history of the

social movement would not contain revolutionary situations or periods of latency. A revolution would be equally possible at any moment, and one could reasonably expect a despot to be converted to anarchism. History would never be going anywhere, and, even if a short period of time were examined, it could never be said that events are conspiring toward a certain outcome. The Statesman would forever be an adventurer, that is, he would commandeer events to his own advantage by giving them a sense that they *did not have*. Now, if it really is true that history is powerless to complete anything without the consciousnesses that take it up and that thereby decide its course, and if, as a result, history can never be detached from us, like a foreign power that would make use of us toward its own ends, then *precisely because history is always lived history* we cannot deny it at least a fragmentary sense. Something is emerging that will perhaps be aborted, but that for now would satisfy the indications of the present. Nothing can make it happen that a military power “above classes” in the France of 1799 should not appear in the trajectory of the revolutionary backlash, and that the role of “military dictator” should not here be a “role to be played.” Bonaparte’s project – known to us through its actualization – leads us to judge in this manner. But prior to Bonaparte, Dumouriez, Custine, and others had developed it, and we must account for this convergence. What we call the sense of events is not an idea that produces them, nor the fortuitous outcome of their assemblage. It is the concrete project of a future that is elaborated in social coexistence and in the One [l’On] prior to every personal decision. At the point in its history to which the class dynamic had arrived in 1799, the revolution being able neither to be continued nor canceled, and all guarantees having been made for the freedom of individuals, each one of them – through this functional and generalized existence that turned each into an historical subject – tended merely to rest upon what had been acquired. To offer them the alternative of either taking up again the revolutionary methods of government, or returning to the social state of 1789, would have been an historical error, not that there is some truth to history independent of our projects and evaluations, which remain forever free, but because there is an average and statistical signification of these projects.

This amounts to saying that we give history its sense, but not without history offering us that sense. The *Sinn-gebung* is not merely centrifugal, and this is why the individual is not the subject of history. There is an exchange between generalized existence and individual existence; both

receive and both give. A moment occurs when the sense that was taking shape in the One and that was merely an indeterminate possibility threatened by the contingency of history is taken up by an individual. Thus it can happen that, having taken hold of history, an individual directs it (at least for a time) well beyond what seemed to be its sense and commits history to a new dialectic, such as when Bonaparte the Consul turned himself into Emperor and conqueror. We are not claiming that history has a single sense from beginning to end, any more than an individual life does. In any case, we mean that freedom only modifies history by taking up what history *offered* at the moment in question, and it does so by a sort of shift or slippage.¹⁶ In relation to this proposal made by the present, we can distinguish the adventurer from the Statesman, the historical deception from the truth of an epoch and, consequently, our assessment of the past – even if it never reaches absolute objectivity – is never entitled to be arbitrary.

[j. *The Ego and its halo of generality.*]

We thus recognize, surrounding our initiatives and ourselves taken as this strictly individual project, a zone of generalized existence and of already completed projects, significations scattered between us and the things, which confer upon us the qualities of “man,” “bourgeois,” or “worker.” Generality already intervenes, our presence to ourselves is already mediated by it. We cease to be pure consciousness the moment that the natural or social constellation ceases to be an unformulated “this” and is crystallized into a situation, from the moment it takes on a sense, in short, from the moment we exist. Each thing appears to us through a medium that it colors with its fundamental quality. This piece of wood is neither an assemblage of colors and tactile givens, nor even their total *Gestalt*; rather, something like a woody essence emanates from it, these “sensible givens” modulate a certain theme or illustrate a certain style that wood is, and that establishes an horizon of sense around this piece of wood and around the perception I have of it. The natural world, as we have seen, is nothing other than the place of all possible themes and styles. It is irreducibly an unmatched individual and a sense. Correlatively, the generality or the individuality of the subject, subjectivity as bearing qualities or pure subjectivity, the anonymity of the One or the anonymity of consciousness – these are not in each case two conceptions

of the subject between which philosophy would have to choose, but two moments of a single structure that is the concrete subject.

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Let us consider, for example, sensing. I lose myself in this red that is in front of me without qualifying it in any way; it certainly seems that this experience puts me into contact with a pre-human subject. Who perceives this red? Certainly not anyone we could name, nor anyone who could be placed among other perceiving subjects. For no direct comparison will ever be possible between this experience of red that I have, and the experience of red described to me by others. Here I am within my own point of view, and, just as every experience – insofar as it has to do with impressions – is in the same way strictly my own, it seems that a unique and never doubled subject embraces them all. I formulate a thought, for example, I am thinking of Spinoza’s God; this thought, such as I live it, is a certain landscape to which no other person will ever gain access, even if I otherwise succeed in starting up a conversation with a friend on the question of Spinoza’s God. And yet, the individuality of even these experiences is not pure. For the thickness of this red, its *haecceity*, the power that it has of filling me and of reaching me, comes from the fact that it solicits and obtains a certain vibration from my gaze, and presupposes that I am familiar with a world of colors of which it is a particular variation. Thus, the concrete red stands out against a background of generality, and this is why, even without passing over to the other’s point of view, I grasp myself in perception as a perceiving subject and not as an unmatched consciousness. Surrounding my perception of this red, I sense all of the regions of my being that it does not touch, as well as that region destined to colors – “vision” – by which it does touch me. Likewise, my thought of Spinoza’s God is only apparently a rigorously unique experience, for it is a crystallization of a certain cultural world – Spinozist philosophy – or of a certain philosophical style, in which I immediately recognize a “Spinozist” idea.

[k. *The absolute flow is for itself a consciousness.*]*

Thus, we need not wonder why the thinking subject or consciousness catches sight of itself as a man, an embodied subject, or an historical subject, and we should not treat this apperception as a second-order operation that the subject would perform beginning from his absolute existence. The absolute flow appears perspectively to its own gaze as

516 “a consciousness” (or as a man or an embodied subject) because it is a field of presence – presence to itself, to others, and to the world – and because this presence throws it into the natural and cultural world from which it can be understood. We must not represent this flow to ourselves as an absolute contact with itself or as an absolute density without any internal fault-lines, but rather as a being who continues itself into the outside. If the subject makes a continuous and forever peculiar choice of himself and of his ways of being, one might wonder why his experience intertwines with itself and presents to him objects or definite historical phases; why we have a general notion of time that is valid across all times; and finally, why the experience of each one fits with that of others. The question itself, however, must be put into question, for we are not given a fragment of time followed by another or an individual flow followed by another, but rather each subjectivity taking itself up, and subjectivities taking each other up in the generality of a nature, or the cohesion of an intersubjective life of a world. The present actualizes the mediation between the For-Itself and the For-Others, between individuality and generality. True reflection presents me to myself, not as an idle and inaccessible subjectivity, but as identical to my presence in the world and to others, such as I currently bring it into being: I am everything that I see and I am an intersubjective field, not in spite of my body and my historical situation, but rather by being this body and this situation and by being, through them, everything else.

[I. *I do not choose myself starting from nothing.*]

From this perspective, what becomes of the freedom we discussed at the outset? I can no longer pretend to be a nothingness and to choose myself continuously from nothing. If nothingness appears in the world through subjectivity, then it can also be said that nothingness comes into being through the world. I am a general refusal of being anything whatever, secretly accompanied by a continuous acceptance of some form of qualified being. *For even this general refusal still counts among the ways of being and figures in the world.* I can, of course, interrupt my projects at any moment. But what exactly is this power? It is the power of beginning something else, for we never remain in suspense in the nothingness. We are always in the plenum and in being, just as a face, even when at rest or even when dead, is always condemned to express something (there are

cadavers that appear surprised, peaceful, or unobtrusive), and just as silence is still a modality of the sonorous world. I can break every mold and scoff at everything, but there is no case in which I am entirely committed: it is not that I withdraw into my freedom, but because I commit myself elsewhere. Rather than thinking of my sorrow, I stare at my fingernails, or I have lunch, or I get involved in politics. Far from my freedom being forever alone, it is in fact never without accomplices, and its power of perpetually tearing itself away leans upon my universal engagement in the world.

My actual freedom is not on this side of my being, but out in front of me, among the things. It must not be said that I continually choose myself on the pretext that I *could* continually refuse what I am. But not refusing is not a choice. We could only identify non-doing and doing by stripping the implicit of all phenomenal value and by spreading the world out in front of us at each moment in a perfect transparency, that is, by destroying the “worldliness” of the world. Consciousness holds itself responsible for everything, it takes on everything, but it has nothing of its own and makes its life in the world. One is led to conceive of freedom as a continually renewed choice so long as the notion of a natural or generalized time has not been introduced. We have seen that there is no such thing as natural time if we understand this to mean a time of objects without subjectivity. There is, however, at least a generalized time, and this is even the time intended by the common notion. This time is the perpetual starting over of the series: past, present, future. It is like a disappointment and a repeated failure. This is what we express in saying that time is continuous: the present that it brings to us is never really present, since it is always past when it appears, and the future has there but the appearance of a goal toward which we are moving, since it soon arrives in the present and since we then turn toward another future. This is the time of our bodily functions, which are cyclical like them, and it is the time of nature with which we coexist. It only offers us the outline and the abstract form of a commitment, since it continuously gnaws away at itself and undoes what it has just done. As long as we oppose the For-Itself and the In-Itself without any mediation, as long as we do not perceive that natural outline of a subjectivity between ourselves and the world, and that pre-personal time that rests upon itself, then acts will be necessary to sustain the springing forth of time and everything will be a choice in the same way: the breathing reflex as well as the moral decision,

or conservation as well as creation. For us, consciousness only attributes this power to itself if it passes over in silence the event that establishes its infrastructure and that is its birth. A consciousness for which the world is “self-evident,” that finds the world “already constituted” and present even within consciousness itself, *absolutely* chooses neither its being nor its manner of being.

[m. *Conditioned freedom.*]

518 What then is freedom? To be born is to be simultaneously born of the world and to be born into the world.¹⁷ The world is always already constituted, but also never completely constituted. In the first relation we are solicited, in the second we are open to an infinity of possibilities. Yet this analysis remains abstract, for we exist in both ways *simultaneously*. Thus, there is never determinism and never an absolute choice; I am never a mere thing and never a bare consciousness. In particular, even our initiatives, and even the situations that we have chosen, once they have been taken up, carry us along as if by a state of grace. The generality of the “role” and of the situation comes to the aid of the decision, and, in this exchange between the situation and the one who takes it up, it is impossible to determine the “contribution of the situation” and the “contribution of freedom.” We torture a man to make him speak. If he refuses to give the names and addresses that we wish to extract from him, this is not through a solitary and ungrounded decision; he still felt himself among his comrades and was still committed to their common struggle; he was somehow incapable of speaking; or perhaps he had, for months or even years, confronted this test in his thoughts and staked his entire life upon it; or finally, he might wish to prove what he had always thought and said about freedom by overcoming this test. These motives do not annul freedom, but they at least show that freedom is not without supports within being. It is not ultimately a bare consciousness that resists the pain, but the prisoner along with his comrades or along with those he loves and under whose gaze he lives, or finally consciousness along with its arrogantly desired solitude, which is again to say a certain mode of *Mit-Sein* [being-with].¹⁸ It is, of course, the individual alone in his prison who reanimates these phantoms each day, and they give him back the strength that he had given them; but reciprocally, if he is committed to this action, if he ties himself to his comrades or clings to this morality, this is because

the historical situation, his comrades, and the world around him seemed to him to expect this particular behavior from him.

We could thus continue this analysis endlessly. We choose our world and the world chooses us. In any case, it is certain that we can never reserve in ourselves an enclave into which being does not penetrate without it immediately being the case that this freedom takes the shape of being and becomes a motive and a support from the mere fact that it is lived. Taken concretely, freedom is always an encounter between the exterior and the interior – even that pre-human and pre-historical freedom by which we began – and it weakens, without ever becoming zero, to the extent that the *tolerance* of the bodily and institutional givens of our life diminishes. As Husserl said, there is a “field of freedom” and a “conditioned freedom,”¹⁹ not because freedom is absolute within the limits of this field and nothing outside of it (for just like the perceptual field, this one too has no linear limits), but because I have immediate possibilities and more distant possibilities. Our commitments sustain our power, and there is no freedom without some power. Our freedom, it is said, is either total or non-existent. This is the dilemma of objective thought and its accomplice, reflective analysis. Indeed, if we place ourselves within being, then our actions must come from the outside; if we return to constituting consciousness, then our actions must come from within. But we have learned precisely to recognize the order of phenomena. We are mixed up with the world and with others in an inextricable confusion. The idea of a situation precludes there being an absolute freedom at the origin of our commitments and, for that matter, at their end. No commitment, and not even a commitment to the Hegelian State, can cause me to transcend all differences and render me free for anything. This universality itself, from the mere fact that it would be lived, would stand out as a particularity against the background of the world; existence simultaneously generalizes and particularizes everything that it intends, and can never be complete.

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[n. *Provisional synthesis of the in-itself and the for-itself in presence.*]

And yet, the synthesis of the In-itself and the For-itself that brings about Hegelian freedom has its truth. In a sense, it is the very definition of existence: it is accomplished at each moment before our eyes in the phenomenon of presence, only it must be immediately started over and

does not suppress our finitude. By taking up a present, I again take hold of my past and I transform it, I alter its sense, I free myself and detach myself from it. But I only do so by committing myself elsewhere. Psychoanalytic treatment does not heal by provoking an insight into the past, but by first relating the subject to his doctor through new existential relations. It is not a question of giving a scientific approval to the psychoanalytic interpretation, nor of discovering a notional sense of the past; rather, it is a question of re-living the past as signifying this or that, and the patient only achieves this by seeing his past from the perspective of his coexistence with the doctor. The complex is not dissolved by a freedom without instruments, but rather is dislocated by a new pulsation of time that has its supports and its motives. The same is true for all moments of insight: they are actual if they are sustained by a new commitment. Now, this engagement in turn is accomplished in the implicit, and is thus only valid for a particular temporal cycle. The choice that we make of our life always takes place upon the basis of a certain given. My freedom can deflect my life from its spontaneous sense, but only through a series of shifts, by first joining with it, and not through any absolute creation. All explanations of my behavior in terms of my past, my temperament, or my milieu are thus true, but only on condition of not considering them as separable contributions, but rather as moments of my total being whose sense I could make explicit in different directions, without our ever being able to say if it is I who give them their sense or if I receive it from them.

[o. *My signification is outside of myself.*]*

I am a psychological and historical structure. Along with existence, I received a way of existing, or a style. All of my actions and thoughts are related to this structure, and even a philosopher's thought is merely a way of making explicit his hold upon the world, which is all he is. And yet, I am free, not in spite of or beneath these motivations, but rather by their means. For that meaningful life, that particular signification of nature and history that I am, does not restrict my access to the world; it is rather my means of communication with it. It is by being what I am at present, without any restrictions and without holding anything back, that I have a chance at progressing; it is by living my time that I can understand other times; it is by plunging into the present and into the world, by resolutely

taking up what I am by chance, by willing what I will, and by doing what I do, that I can go farther. The only way I can fail to be free is if I attempt to transcend my natural and social situation by refusing to take it up at first, rather than meeting up with the natural and human world through it. Nothing determines me from the outside, not that nothing solicits me, but rather because I am immediately outside of myself and open to the world. We are true right through; we carry with us – from the mere fact that we are in and toward the world [*au monde*] and not merely in the world [*dans le monde*], like things – all that is necessary for transcending ourselves. We need not worry that our choices or our actions restrain our freedom, since choice and action alone can free us from our anchors. Just as reflection borrows its desire for absolute adequation from the perception that makes something appear, and that idealism thereby tacitly makes use of the “originary opinion” that it had wanted to destroy as mere opinion, so too does freedom become mired in the contradictions of commitment and does not notice that it would not be freedom without the roots that it thrusts into the world. Will I make that promise? Will I risk my life for so little? Will I give up my freedom in order to save freedom? There are no theoretical responses to these questions. There are, however, these things that appear, irrecusably, that loved person in front of you, these men existing as slaves around you, and *your* freedom cannot will itself without emerging from its singularity and without willing freedom in general. Whether it is a question of things or of historical situations, philosophy has no other function than to teach us to see them anew, and it is true to say that philosophy actualizes itself by destroying itself as an isolated philosophy. But it is precisely here that we must remain silent, for only the hero fully lives his relation with men and with the world, and it is hardly fitting for another to speak in his name.

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Your son is caught in the fire, you will save him . . . You would trade your shoulder, if there were an obstacle, to knock it down. You reside in your very act. You are your act . . . [. . .] You give yourself in exchange . . . Your signification shines forth, dazzlingly. It is your duty, your hatred, your love, your loyalty, your creativity . . . [. . .] Man is a knot of relations, and relations alone count for man.²⁰

ENDNOTES

FOREWORD

- 1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 9.
- 2 *Phenomenology of Perception*, 69. (References to *Phenomenology of Perception* refer to the current volume.)
- 3 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), para. 73.
- 4 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 8.
- 5 *Phenomenology of Perception*, 146, 147.
- 6 *The Visible and the Invisible*, 11.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 8 *Phenomenology of Perception*, 132.
- 9 See Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (AT VII 32) and *Principles of Philosophy* (AT VIII A 22), in *Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 85, 175.
- 10 Descartes, *Meditations* (AT VII 81), 116.
- 11 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 73.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 61.

“MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY”

- 1 [This article was first published in French in *Histoire de la philosophie*, vol. 3: *Du XIX^e siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, 1974), 692–706.]

- 2 [Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 9–25. First published in 1948.]
- 3 [Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," trans. Michael B. Smith, in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 121–49. Originally published in French in 1960.]
- 4 [Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968). Published posthumously in French in 1964.]
- 5 [See René Descartes, "Optics," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 152–76.]
- 6 [Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002).]
- 7 [Lefort is referring to a project from the early 1950s that Merleau-Ponty abandoned and that was published posthumously as *La prose du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969); *The Prose of the World*, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973). Merleau-Ponty revised a long chapter from this abandoned manuscript for publication as a separate article, and also included it in his 1960 collection of essays as: "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 39–83.]
- 8 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Philosopher and His Shadow," in *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 160.
- 9 [The essays on these specific philosophers can be found in: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964). The other reference is to: *Les philosophes célèbres*, ed. with introductions Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *La galerie des hommes célèbres*, ed. Lucien Mazenod (Paris: Lucien Mazenod (Éditions d'art), 1956).]
- 10 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense; Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem*, trans. John O'Neill (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969). These were originally published in 1948 and 1947 respectively.
- 11 Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 196. [Lefort indicates that this working note is from May 20, 1959, and bears the title "(Bergson) Transcendence -- forgetting -- time."]
- 12 *Ibid.*, 192. [Lefort indicates that this passage is from a working note, dated May 1959, titled "'Thought,' 'consciousness,' and being at . . ."]
- 13 *Phenomenology of Perception*, 334. [References to *Phenomenology of Perception* refer to the current volume.]
- 14 *Ibid.*, 336.

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Primacy of Perception and Its Philosophical Consequences," in *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics*, ed. and trans. James M. Edie, 12–42 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 13.
- 2 Jean-Paul Sartre, "Merleau-Ponty," trans. Benita Eisler, in *Merleau-Ponty: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, vol. 1, *Merleau-Ponty's Contemporaries and the Phenomenological Tradition*, ed. Ted Toadvine, 101–56 (New York: Routledge, 2006), 102.
- 3 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "An Unpublished Text," trans. Arleen B. Dallery, in *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James M. Edie, 3–11 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 4–5.
- 4 *Phenomenology of Perception*, 209. (References to *Phenomenology of Perception* refer to the current volume.)
- 5 Merleau-Ponty, "Titres et travaux: Projet d'enseignement," in *Parcours deux, 1952–1961*, ed. Lacques Prunair, 9–35 (Lagrasse: Éditions Verdier, 2000), 12. (Translations from this article are my own.)
- 6 *Phenomenology of Perception*, 250.
- 7 This exchange occurs at the end of the 1946 presentation of his main themes to the *Société française de philosophie*. See Merleau-Ponty, "Primacy of Perception," 42.
- 8 Paul Ricœur, "Homage to Merleau-Ponty," trans. Alain Beauclair, in *Merleau-Ponty: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, vol. 1, *Merleau-Ponty's Contemporaries and the Phenomenological Tradition*, ed. Ted Toadvine, 68–73 (New York: Routledge, 2006), 69.
- 9 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Nature of Perception: Two Proposals (1933 [and 1934])," trans. Forrest Williams, in *Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry, Jr. (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1992), 74–84.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 77, 79. This dual interest is likely an expression of Aron Gurwitsch's early influence on Merleau-Ponty, and Gurwitsch is mentioned in the proposal explicitly. Merleau-Ponty would assist Gurwitsch in preparing his 1936 article: "Some Aspects and Developments in Gestalt Psychology," trans. Richard M. Zaner, in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 3–55. This influence is emphasized by Théodore Geraets and Taylor Carman. See Théodore Geraets, *Vers une nouvelle philosophie transcendantale: La genèse de la philosophie de Maurice Merleau-Ponty jusqu'à la Phénoménologie de la perception* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 13; Taylor Carman, *Merleau-Ponty* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 20.
- 11 Merleau-Ponty, "Nature of Perception," 78.
- 12 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Being and Having (1936)," trans. Michael B. Smith, in *Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry, Jr. (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1992), 101–2.

- 13 Étienne Bimbenet, *Nature et humanité: Le problème anthropologique dans l'œuvre de Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2004), 14. (All translations from this book are my own.)
- 14 Merleau-Ponty, "Titres et travaux," 11.
- 15 Bimbenet, *Nature et humanité*, 15.
- 16 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 452.
- 17 Merleau-Ponty, "Unpublished Text," 11.
- 18 *Phenomenology of Perception*, 74.
- 19 Merleau-Ponty, "Titres et travaux," 13.
- 20 It might be argued that *Phenomenology of Perception* takes up and reshapes this total project as a result of Merleau-Ponty's more subtle understanding of phenomenology developed in the years following his completion of *The Structure of Behavior* in 1938. (See Geraets, *Vers une nouvelle philosophie transcendante*, 28–31). Although *Phenomenology of Perception* is indeed larger in scope and encompasses many of the themes of empiricism, Merleau-Ponty does continue to present the two projects as a two-pronged approach to this problem in philosophical anthropology in his own reports on his early work submitted as part of his dossier for the Chair in Philosophy at the Collège de France in 1952. And in fact, intellectualism does receive more attention in the later project.
- 21 This conclusion is repeated in *Phenomenology of Perception*: "In fact, reflexes themselves are never blind processes; they adjust to the 'sense' of the situation, they express our orientation toward a 'behavioral milieu' just as much as they express the action of the 'geographical milieu' upon us." See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 81.
- 22 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden Fisher (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1963), 3. Although the thesis was not published until 1942, it is important to note that it was completed and defended in 1938.
- 23 Merleau-Ponty, "Titres et travaux," 16.
- 24 Merleau-Ponty, *Structure of Behavior*, 136–37. Merleau-Ponty often criticizes the Gestalt approach as falling back into a form of naturalism, despite the fact that the position entails the rejection of all forms of *causal* thought. As noted by Geraets, Merleau-Ponty's reading is likely influenced by Kurt Goldstein's critique of Wolfgang Köhler's version of Gestalt theory in Köhler's book *Der Aufbau des Organismus* (1934), cited regularly in *The Structure of Behavior*.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 162. Claude Lefort perhaps has this moment in mind when, in the article "Maurice Merleau-Ponty" included in this volume, he suggests that Merleau-Ponty's later notion of "reversibility" is prefigured even in this first book. See above, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty," page xxiii.
- 26 Merleau-Ponty, "Titres et travaux," 17.
- 27 In this brief suggestion of some of these influences, I am drawing on the more detailed accounts of Merleau-Ponty's philosophical development in the following works: Emmanuelle Garcia, "Vie et œuvre: 1908–1961," in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Œuvres*, ed. Claude Lefort, 27–100 (Paris: Gallimard, 2010),

- 36–50; Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, *Le scénario cartésien: Recherches sur la formation et la cohérence de l'intention philosophique de Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2005); and Geraets, *Vers une nouvelle philosophie transcendantale*.
- 28 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Christianity and *Ressentiment*," trans. Gerald Wening, in *Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry, Jr. (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1992), 85–100.
- 29 Geraets, *Vers une nouvelle philosophie transcendantale*. These lectures were revised and published in French as *Cartesian Meditations* in 1931.
- 30 In fact, Husserl's name does appear in *The Structure of Behavior*, but is only mentioned in passing or in footnotes at the very end of this initial project.
- 31 Both of these are cited in Merleau-Ponty's bibliography below.
- 32 This visit was in fact made possible by Father Van Breda, whose first-hand account of Merleau-Ponty's visit is published as: H. L. Van Breda, "Merleau-Ponty and the Husserl Archives at Louvain," trans. Stephen Michelman, in *Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry, Jr. (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1992), 150–61.
- 33 The phrase itself does not occur in *Phenomenology of Perception*, but rather in Merleau-Ponty's public presentation of his research a year later at the *Société française de philosophie*. See Merleau-Ponty, "Primacy of Perception."
- 34 Merleau-Ponty, "Nature of Perception," 75.
- 35 Merleau-Ponty, "Primacy of Perception," 13.
- 36 Merleau-Ponty, "Unpublished Text," 3.
- 37 Merleau-Ponty, "Primacy of Perception," 16.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 39 *Phenomenology of Perception*, lxxiv.
- 40 *Ibid.*, lxxi.
- 41 *Ibid.*, lxxvii.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 *Ibid.*, lxxxv.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 53.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 57.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 69.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 74.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 84.
- 54 *Ibid.*
- 55 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 113.

- 58 Ibid., 137.
 59 Ibid., 133.
 60 Ibid., 139.
 61 Ibid., 153.
 62 Ibid., 169.
 63 Ibid., 179.
 64 Ibid., 186.
 65 Ibid., 187.
 66 Ibid., 205.
 67 Ibid., 216.
 68 Ibid., 218.
 69 Ibid., 222.
 70 Ibid., 234.
 71 Ibid., 238.
 72 Ibid., 254.
 73 Ibid., 259.
 74 Ibid., 262.
 75 Ibid., 264.
 76 Ibid., 334.
 77 Ibid., 335.
 78 Ibid., 363.
 79 Ibid., 379.
 80 Ibid., 381.
 81 Ibid., 383.
 82 Ibid., 387.
 83 Ibid., 424.
 84 Ibid., 426.
 85 Ibid., 441.
 86 Ibid., 528n7.
 87 See Paul Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body: Studies in the Constructive Energies of the Psyche* (New York: International Universities Press, 1935).
 88 My thanks to Ronald Bruzina for his comments regarding this particular translation decision.
 89 My thanks to Anthony Steinbock for his personal correspondence on this distinction.

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

- 1 [The pagination provided here and in the margins of the text is from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), which, although not a new edition, nevertheless introduced a new pagination and several minor corrections and changes to the original 1945 version. For more information, see the Translator's Introduction.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 [For a discussion of the decision to introduce this Table of Contents into the body of the text as “section titles,” see the Translator’s Introduction. In short, Merleau-Ponty wrote in very long paragraphs, and these titles for the most part line up with the paragraph breaks of his original text. I have thus followed the practice of the German translator of this text by inserting the titles into the body of the text as “section titles.” The placement of some titles, however, was less clear, and an asterisk indicates that the placement does not correspond to an original paragraph break. Cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, trans. Rudolf Boehm, 6th ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1966). In translating this Table of Contents, I consulted the following English versions: Daniel Guerrière, “Table of Contents of ‘Phenomenology of Perception’: Translation and Pagination,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 10, no. 1 (1979), 65–69; Samuel B. Mallin, *Merleau-Ponty’s Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 277–86; and Ted Toadvine, “Translation of Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* Table of Contents,” <http://pages.uoregon.edu/toadvine/>, accessed February 22, 2011.]
- 2 [This final section of Part One is separated from the other titles of this chapter in the original printing, and it is also preceded by three asterisks in the body of the text.]
- 3 [The two final sections of this chapter are set off from the rest.]

PREFACE

- 1 [This is the first of several uses Merleau-Ponty makes of the term *l’homme*, which in French means both “man,” in the sense of “mankind,” and “man” as a singular noun. Given that this is an historical document, I have for the most part preserved Merleau-Ponty’s use of gendered language. The same holds for my translations of Merleau-Ponty’s consistent use of the male third person pronoun *il* (he) for all general discussions of the human subject.]
- 2 [Merleau-Ponty writes: “de l’espace, du temps, du monde ‘vécus.’” The adjective *vécu* has primarily been translated as “lived,” and occasionally as “experienced” where the context requires. For a discussion of the term “lived” in this translation, see the Translator’s Introduction. Cf. Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of the German verbs *leben* and *erleben*, and my corresponding translator’s note, on page 162 (528n7).]
- 3 Edmund Husserl, *Méditations cartésiennes*, trans. Gabrielle Peiffer and Emmanuel Lévinas (Paris: Colin, 1931), 120ff. [Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1999), 14ff. This text was originally published in French, as cited by Merleau-Ponty, and the original German appeared later in *Husserliana*. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, ed. Stephan Strasser, *Husserliana I* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1991).]
- 4 See the unpublished “VI^e Méditation cartésienne,” composed by Eugen Fink,

- to which G. Berger was kind enough to refer us. [This text has since been published in German as well as in French and English translations. The text was primarily written by Fink, but in close collaboration with Husserl. Merleau-Ponty was one of very few people to have had access to the manuscript prior to its relatively recent appearance in print. Fink's first use of the term "constructive phenomenology" appears on page 7 of the English translation: Eugen Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation: The Idea of a Transcendental Theory of Method*, trans. Ronald Bruzina (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).]
- 5 [Martin Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 8 (1927); *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, rev. ed. Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).]
 - 6 [Merleau-Ponty's term here is *l'explicitation*, which means "making explicit," or "developing" what is present only implicitly. The term is more or less rigorously opposed to *expliquer* ("to explain") or *explication* ("explanation"), which is a form of argument Merleau-Ponty identifies more regularly with what he calls "objective thought."]
 - 7 [The term *der "natürliche Weltbegriff"* figures prominently in Husserl's 1910 lectures, published in English as: Edmund Husserl, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology: From the Lectures, Winter Semester, 1910/1911*, trans. Ingo Farin and James G. Hart (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006). As noted in an editor's footnote in the most recent French edition of *Phénoménologie de la perception*, "Der natürliche Weltbegriff" ("The Natural World Concept") is also the title of a lecture given by Husserl in May 1926. See *Phénoménologie de la perception*, in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Œuvres*, ed. Claude Lefort, 653–1164 (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 658, note 1. This lecture has since been published in German; see Husserl, "Der natürliche Weltbegriff," in *Die Lebenswelt: Auslegungen der Vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution, Texte aus den Nachlass (1916–1937)*, ed. Rochus Sowa, 259–74, Husserliana XXXIX (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008).]
 - 8 [Husserl's term *Lebenswelt* (life-world) occurs regularly in his writings. Given how Merleau-Ponty cites it below (see below, Part Two, Chapter IV, 382 (553n14), he may be drawing it from Husserl's discussion found in: Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, trans. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), sections 10–11.]
 - 9 [This is Merleau-Ponty's first use of the word *sens*, which in French means "meaning," "sense," and "direction," depending on the context. As discussed in the Translator's Introduction, I have translated *sens* as "sense" to preserve more of this rich meaning, except in contexts when "direction" is clearly the intended acceptance.]
 - 10 ["Peut-être comprendrons-nous alors pourquoi la phénoménologie est demeurée longtemps à l'état de commencement, de problème et de vœu."]
 - 11 [Although this is a term used by Husserl, it is also the subject of an important series of lectures by Husserl's teacher, Franz Brentano, originally delivered between 1887 and 1891. See Franz Brentano, *Descriptive Psychology*, trans. and ed. Benito Müller (London: Routledge, 1995).]
 - 12 [The original French term is *psychisme*, which means "mind" or "psyche," and

- has been rendered consistently as the latter. Also, the adjective *psychique* has been translated as “psychical,” whereas “mental” has been reserved for Merleau-Ponty’s occasional use of the adjective *mental(e)*.]
- 13 [The term “signitive” is developed by Husserl. See Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, trans. J. N. Findlay, ed. Dermot Moran (New York: Routledge, 2001); see, in particular, “Investigation VI,” section one, chap. 2.]
 - 14 [The terms *éprouver* and *expérience* offer some translation difficulties. The verb *éprouver* and the related phrase *l'épreuve de* are often used by Merleau-Ponty to indicate an experience that is undergone, suffered, or lived *by someone*. The noun *expérience*, on the other hand, is most often used for an event or a possession, something we “have,” a more objective notion of experience. This issue is complicated by the presence of *sentir* (to sense), *se sentir* (to feel), and *vécu* (“lived,” but sometimes contextually translated as “experienced”). Both *éprouver* and *expérience* are translated as “experience,” and I have provided the French in the text where the more subjective meaning of *éprouver* (“experience”) seems particularly prominent.]
 - 15 [“moi pour moi.” Wherever possible, I have translated *moi* as “me” or “myself,” *soi* by “self,” *je* by “I,” and *Égo* by “Ego.” Although occasionally awkward in English when Merleau-Ponty pluralizes *moi*, this does help to preserve Merleau-Ponty’s distinction between a *soi* as a subject in general and *moi* as a particular myself.]
 - 16 [Merleau-Ponty uses the Latin term *Cogito* either as shorthand for Descartes’s argument from his *Meditations* or as a shorthand for the “I think” of Cartesian philosophy more generally. Its appearance in the original text varies, sometimes capitalized, sometimes emphasized. Although its appearance has been regularized in more recent editions, I am preserving in this translation the original capitalization, but I have added italicization where it was missing from the initial publication.]
 - 17 [This phrase is the first occurrence of Merleau-Ponty’s repeated allusion to Descartes’s move from *percevoir* (“perceiving”) to *la pensée de percevoir* or, later, *la pensée de voir* (literally translated, “the thought about perceiving” or “the thought about seeing”). Merleau-Ponty’s point, however, is not that we shift from perceiving to thinking about perceiving or seeing *in general*, but rather that the thinking about perceiving preempts or takes the place of actual perceiving through a first reflective move. Thus, I have occasionally translated these allusions with a more explicit rendering: “the thought that one is perceiving.” See further, Frederick A. Olafson, *What Is a Human Being? A Heideggerian View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 54, note 8. Descartes’s phrase can be found in his “Fifth Set of Objections,” in *Meditations*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 2, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 249.]
 - 18 Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 1, *Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, 4th ed. (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1928), 93. [Husserl, “Prolegomena to Pure Logic,” in *Logical Investigations*, vol. 1, pages 135–36. See also Edmund

- Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 1, *Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, ed. Elmar Holenstein, Husserliana XVIII (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975).]
- 19 ["en deçà de." This turn of phrase is used regularly by Merleau-Ponty. It means, literally, "on this side of," and has often been translated here as either "prior to" or "beneath," depending on the context.]
- 20 [This is the first of numerous appearances of the term *l'irréfléchi*, by which Merleau-Ponty means approximately "that which has not yet been reflected upon," and thus is translated almost exclusively as the "unreflected" although it could be read also as "the unreflected-upon."]
- 21 ["In te redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas" – Saint Augustine. ["Go back into yourself. Truth dwells in the inner man," Saint Augustine, *De vera religione*, 39, n. 72. The phrase is cited by Husserl at the end of his *Cartesian Meditations*, where he argues that science is "lost in the world" and that a phenomenological *epoché* alone can establish a universal truth through self-knowledge. Given his familiarity with *Cartesian Meditations* and his presence at Husserl's 1929 presentation of the corresponding lectures in Paris, Merleau-Ponty's critical stance here with regard to this return to the "inner man" is thus significant in determining his place in the phenomenological tradition. See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 156–57.]
- 22 ["ou plutôt il n'y a pas d'homme intérieur, l'homme est au monde, c'est dans le monde qu'il se connaît." This is the first occurrence of the phrase *être au monde*, which permeates this text. Given that the primary source of this phrase is Heidegger's formulation *In-der-Welt-sein*, the reader should be careful not to read "in the world" as referring to the relation between a container and something contained. In fact, Merleau-Ponty's use of *être au monde*, and not *être dans le monde*, is perhaps historically and philosophically significant. The latter formulation was employed by Henri Corbin in the first French translation of Heidegger's writings, which included later sections of *Being and Time*. See Martin Heidegger, *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?*, trans. Henri Corbin (Paris: Gallimard, 1938). It is also Jean-Paul Sartre's translation of the concept in *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943). Merleau-Ponty's phrase, then, might be understood as a correction or as a nuancing meant to emphasize Heidegger's existential intentions. By presenting Heidegger's notion with the French preposition *à* rather than *dans*, Merleau-Ponty also introduces a rich collection of relational modalities, including "directed toward," "in," "into," "with," "at," and "belonging to," all of which should be heard in his *être au monde*. I have, for the most part, translated *être au monde* as "being in the world" or "being in and toward the world," and I have included the French when the context has required another formulation (i.e., "belonging to the world").]
- 23 ["un sujet voué au monde."]
- 24 [Access to Husserlian and Heideggerian texts in France during the time Merleau-Ponty was writing *Phénoménologie de la perception* was somewhat limited. Merleau-Ponty did, however, manage to visit the newly established Husserl Archives in Spring of 1939, which is where he consulted the unpublished

- manuscripts cited in the original bibliography and included here. For a discussion of Merleau-Ponty's visit to the archives and his role in bringing several transcriptions to Paris, see H. L. Van Breda, "Merleau-Ponty and the Husserl Archives at Louvain," trans. Stephen Michelman, in *Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry, Jr. (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1992), 150–61. The texts he consulted now appear in German and in English translations, and I have made every effort to provide current bibliographic information for Merleau-Ponty's references.]
- 25 [The 2005 Gallimard edition introduces a typo here: *profit* rather than *profil*.]
- 26 [Merleau-Ponty adds emphasis to several occurrences of German terms in *Phénoménologie de la perception* by writing them with hyphens that are not otherwise orthographically required. The result is to emphasize the meaning of the component words. Although the 2005 and 2010 French editions remove these hyphens, I have preserved the original presentation in this translation.]
- 27 [The French word *autrui* is difficult to translate, as it means both another person, others (more generally), and occasionally "the Other," as indicated here by Merleau-Ponty's capitalization. Merleau-Ponty, however, does not use it in an overly technical way, so I have generally used "others" or "another person" wherever possible, and when I use "the other" this should be read as a concrete other person.]
- 28 "Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie," part III (unpublished). [The first two parts of this text were published during Husserl's lifetime in the journal *Philosophia* ("Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie, I und II," *Philosophia* 1 (1936), 77–176), but the entire book only appeared posthumously in 1954 as the sixth volume of the *Husserliana* series. See Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel, *Husserliana* VI (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976). It has been translated into English as *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970). Merleau-Ponty is reported to have consulted Eugen Fink's transcription of Part III during his visit to the Husserl Archives in 1939. (See Van Breda, "Merleau-Ponty and the Husserl Archives," 153.)]
- 29 [The emphasis on "be" is absent in the more recent French editions.]
- 30 Eugen Fink, "Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik," *Kantstudien* 38 (1933), 331ff. [Eugen Fink, "The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism," in *The Phenomenology of Husserl: Selected Critical Readings*, ed. and trans. R. O. Elveton, 73–147 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 86ff. In fact, it seems that Merleau-Ponty is thinking of a passage appearing on English page 109, in which Fink speaks about an "astonishment (*Verwunderung*) [. . .] over the mystery of the being of the world itself." This corresponds to page 350 in the

- original German publication, which Merleau-Ponty cites in relation to this same “wonder” below in Part Two, Ch. II, note 95.]
- 31 [For instance, Husserl uses this term in *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 138.]
- 32 [Recent editions in French introduce a typo (*et*) into this sentence. I am thus translating this sentence according to the older version.]
- 33 *Méditations cartésiennes*, 33. [Given that the French publication cited here does not correspond well to the English translation of this passage, I have retranslated the passage to follow the French version more closely. Cf. *Cartesian Meditations*, 38–39, which reads: “Its beginning is the pure – and, so to speak, still dumb – psychological experience, which now must be made to utter its own sense with no adulteration.”]
- 34 J. Wahl, “Réalisme, dialectique et mystère,” *L'arbalète* 6 (Fall, 1942), n.p.
- 35 “das Erlebnis der Wahrheit.” (Husserl, *Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, 190). [Husserl, “Prolegomena to Pure Logic,” 121. In its first occurrence, Husserl places *Erlebnis* (experience) within quotation marks. This discussion marks Merleau-Ponty’s first use of the word *évidence*, which means “obviousness” or “obvious fact,” and is his translation of Husserl’s use of the German word *Evidenz*. In a phenomenological context, this term is meant to emphasize that which shows itself “as an immediate intimation of truth itself” (*ibid.*, 17), and so the direct English translation as “evidence” or “self-evident truths” is perhaps tied too closely to the sense of evidence relating to “proof,” placing too much of an interpretive distance into the intimacy intended by this intentional relation. Moreover, Merleau-Ponty’s use of the term is not captured by the English translation in *Logical Investigations* as “inner experience” (*ibid.*, section 50). I have thus chosen the less idiomatic terms “evidentness” or “evident truths” to preserve the connection to Husserl’s term and to emphasize the sense of that which shows itself as true. The use of “truths” is justified in this formulation by the context of Husserl’s discussion (*ibid.*, sections 49–50). Elsewhere Husserl writes: “[*Evidenz*] designates *that performance on the part of intentionality which consists in the giving of something-itself*,” and “*the primitive mode of the giving of something-itself is perception*.” *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 157, 158. Cf. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, section 24. For the purposes of this translation, “self-evident” has been primarily reserved for Merleau-Ponty’s use of the various forms of the turn of phrase *ça va de soi* (“it goes without saying”); the English word “evidence” translates *évidence(s)* when used in the sense of “proof,” and also occasionally to translate the French word *témoignage*.]
- 36 In *Formale und transzendente Logik*, Husserl says, more or less, that there is no such thing as Apodictic evidentness (142). [See Edmund Husserl, “Formale und transzendente Logik: Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft,” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 10 (1929), 142; *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 158–59. The German also appears as: *Formale und transzendente Logik: Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft*, ed. Paul Janssen, Husserliana XVII (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).]

- 37 [Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Division I, chap. 3.]
- 38 [Immanuel Kant, "Refutation of Idealism," in *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B274–B279. Merleau-Ponty does not provide bibliographical information for his allusions to Kant, nor to several other figures from the history of philosophy (Spinoza, Pascal, etc.). When I have been able to locate a precise reference in English translations, I have included them in the translator's notes as well as in Supplemental Bibliography B.]
- 39 [Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).]
- 40 [Merleau-Ponty does not establish a thematic distinction between *puissance* ("power," "force," "potential," or "capacity") and *pouvoir* ("power/ability" as a noun; "to be able to/have the capacity" as an auxiliary verb). I have translated the noun *le pouvoir* as "power," the auxiliary verb *pouvoir* as a form of "able to," and *puissance* as "power" whenever possible, indicating the French when the context has required a different translation.]
- 41 [This phrase is used by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A141/B180, and it is again discussed by Merleau-Ponty below in Part Three, Chapter II, 453.]
- 42 [Merleau-Ponty develops the term *projet du monde* at length below. Although it might be translated simply as "a project within the world," or even as a "worldly project," I have chosen to translate it as "a project of the world" to stress that consciousness is not separate from the world, but is rather accomplished within the world, or is *of* the world. Cf. below, Part Three, Chapter I, section q.]
- 43 [As noted by the editors of the most recent edition of *Phénoménologie de la perception* (see Merleau-Ponty, *Œuvres*, 669), Merleau-Ponty develops this term *fungierende Intentionalität* – an operative or functioning intentionality – from Husserl and Fink, indicating an intentionality prior to reflection that is found in the originary operation of perception. See below, Part Three, Chapter II, section f.]
- 44 [Merleau-Ponty's allusion is to Descartes's "Fifth Meditation." See *Meditations*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 44.]
- 45 The term is quite common in the unpublished materials. The idea is also found already in *Formale und transzendente Logik*, 184ff. [*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 207–8.]
- 46 [I have followed the earlier edition of *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945) in emphasizing this phrase.]
- 47 ["par l'engrenage des unes sur les autres." This is the first appearance of Merleau-Ponty's use of the noun *l'engrenage* ("the gearing") and the verb *engrener* ("to gear into"). Although the image is certainly one of "gears" fitting together, Merleau-Ponty draws upon the figurative aspect of this image such that the "fit" is something that is to be accomplished in the act, not something pre-determined by the shape of the gears and teeth. This is captured by the sense of the English verb "to gear (in)to" when it is used to mean "to adjust" or "to adapt" something to a particular purpose. Along with this image,

- Merleau-Ponty also uses the locution *en prise*, which literally means “in gear,” and figuratively means “attuned to.” I have translated both *engrener* and *en prise* by the image of “gearing into.” It should, however, be noted that *en prise*, which employs the past participle of *prendre* (“to take” or “to hold”), also points to a second key image in *Phénoménologie de la perception*, namely, Merleau-Ponty’s usage of the related noun *la prise* to mean “grip” or “hold,” which becomes a key image in Part Two, Chapter III. A final connection to *une reprise* (“a taking up”) is also unfortunately not retained in English.]
- 48 Fink, “VI^e Méditation cartésienne” (unpublished). [Merleau-Ponty is likely referring to the discussion now published in Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation*, 14ff., or perhaps 86ff. The term *uninteressierter Zuschauer* does not in fact appear in Fink’s text; rather, Fink writes *unbeteiligten Zuschauers*, which means approximately the same thing. The term does, however, appear in the form included by Merleau-Ponty in Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, and I have thus adopted the translation from there.]
- 49 Ibid. [Merleau-Ponty does not provide the German phrase for this allusion to Fink. He is perhaps referring to the discussion that appears on pages 70ff., or 65–66 in the English translation.]
- 50 [The phrase “knot of relations” is from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Pilote de guerre*, and is cited by Merleau-Ponty in the final lines of *Phenomenology of Perception* (see page 483). See Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Pilote de guerre: Mission sur Arras* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942); republished as: *Pilote de guerre: Mission sur Arras* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005); Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Flight to Arras*, trans. Lewis Galantière (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1942).]
- 51 [Merleau-Ponty attributes the distinction between “problems” and “mysteries” to the influence of Gabriel Marcel’s thinking on his own early thought. See Merleau-Ponty, “The Philosophy of Existence (1959),” trans. Allen S. Weiss in *Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture*, eds. Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry, Jr. (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1992). Cf. Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary*, trans. Katherine Farrer (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 100.]
- 52 “Rückbeziehung der Phänomenologie auf sich selbst,” declare [Husserl’s] unpublished materials. [This phrase, which means “reflexive relation of phenomenology to itself,” in fact appears at the end of section 63 of Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 152, where Husserl indeed presents a similar discussion to the one here. Although Merleau-Ponty attended Husserl’s 1929 Paris Lectures (in German) that form the basis of *Cartesian Meditations*, this text was only available in French at the time of publication of *Phénoménologie de la perception*.]
- 53 We owe this last phrase to G. Gusdorf, who is currently a prisoner in Germany, and who, for that matter, perhaps employed it in a different sense. [Georges Gusdorf (1912–2000) was a writer from the same generation as Merleau-Ponty. The phrase Merleau-Ponty here attributes to Gusdorf indeed appears in the latter’s work, but only in 1953, several years after the publication of *Phénoménologie de la perception*. See Georges Gusdorf, *Mythe et métaphysique: Introduction à la philosophie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1953), 284.]

INTRODUCTION

I “SENSATION”

- 1 [For a discussion of the section titles included in this translation, see the Translator’s Introduction.]
- 2 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *La structure du comportement* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942), 142ff. [*La structure du comportement*, preface by Alphonse de Waelhens, 3rd ed. (Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), 115ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002), 105ff. The more recent French edition of Merleau-Ponty’s first book includes a preface by Alphonse de Waelhens (“A Philosophy of the Ambiguous”) and introduces a new pagination. Given that the original is difficult to find, I will provide the corresponding pages for the later French edition, followed by the corresponding English pages. The article that is discussed at the cited location in *The Structure of Behavior* is available in an abridged English translation: Wolfgang Köhler, “Simple Structural Functions in the Chimpanzee and in the Chicken,” in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 217–18 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]
- 3 Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’imaginaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), 241. [Translated as: Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, revised and historical intro. Arlette Elkäim-Sartre, trans. and philosophical intro. Jonathan Webber (New York: Routledge, 2004), 190. Sartre writes: “Without this ‘woolen’ characteristic of the colour, something would be lost.”]
- 4 [The phrase *le préjugé du monde* recurs several times in the text, and has been consistently translated as the “unquestioned belief in the world.” For Merleau-Ponty, the intentional structure of consciousness in the natural attitude is an essential aspect of our naïve being in the world, by which we get caught up with the objects of consciousness and forget the perspectivism of experience. The “belief in the world,” then, is not the object of critique, it is quite simply that which establishes the necessity of the phenomenological reduction, even if this very perspectivism precludes a complete reduction. The error of intellectualism and empiricism is to have raised the naïve belief in objects to a scientific belief in a fully determinate universe in itself. Thus, it is the unquestioned nature of this founding belief that leads them into difficulty and that the phenomenological reduction is meant to repair.]
- 5 [This term appears in English in the original.]
- 6 Kurt Koffka, “Psychologie,” in *Lehrbuch der Philosophie*, ed. M. Dessoir, vol. 2, *Die Philosophie in ihren Einzelgebieten* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1925), 530.
- 7 We are translating the “take notice” or the “*bemerken*” of the psychologists. [The words “take notice” are in English in the original footnote. Merleau-Ponty translates this as *remarquer* (“to notice”) in the body of the text.]
- 8 There is no reason to shut down the debate, such as Jaspers does (“Zur Analyse der Trugwahrnehmungen”), by opposing a descriptive psychology

that “understands” phenomena to an explanatory psychology that considers their genesis. The psychologist always sees consciousness as located in a body in the midst of the world, and for him the series stimulus–impression–perception is a sequence of events at the end of which perception begins. Each consciousness is born in the world and each perception is a new birth of consciousness. From this perspective, the “immediate” givens of perception can always be challenged as mere appearances and as the complex products of a genesis. The descriptive method can only gain its own justification from the transcendental point of view. And yet, even from this point of view, it remains to be understood how consciousness perceives itself or appears to itself as inserted in nature. For the philosopher, as for the psychologist, there is thus always a problem of genesis, and the only possible method is to follow, in its scientific development, the causal explanation, in order to make its sense precise and to put it into its true place in the totality of truth. This is why one will not find any *refutation* here, but rather an effort to understand the specific difficulties of causal thought. Karl Jaspers, “Zur Analyse der Trugwahrnehmungen (Leibhaftigkeit und Realitätsurteil),” *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 6 (1911), 460–535.

- 9 See Merleau-Ponty, *La structure du comportement*, chap. 1. [*The Structure of Behavior*, chap. 1.]
- 10 We are roughly translating the sequence: “Empfänger–Übermittler–Empfinder,” discussed by Johannes Stein in “Über die Veränderung der Sinnesleistungen und die Entstehung von Trugwahrnehmungen,” in *Pathologie der Wahrnehmung: Handbuch der Geisteskrankheiten*, ed. O. Bumke, vol. 1, part I (Berlin: Springer, 1928), 351. [The German set of terms here means approximately: “receptor–transmitter–sensor”; the final term *Empfinder* comes from *Empfindung* (“sensation”), and refers to the person who receives that which is transmitted.]
- 11 Wolfgang Köhler, “Über unbemerkte Empfindungen und Urteilstauschungen,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 66 (1913), 51–80. [An English translation of this article is available as: Wolfgang Köhler, “On Unnoticed Sensations and Errors of Judgement,” in *The Selected Papers of Wolfgang Köhler*, ed. Mary Henle (New York: Liveright, 1971), 13–39.]
- 12 This is something Stumpf explicitly acknowledges. Cf. Köhler, *ibid.*, 54.
- 13 Köhler, *ibid.*, 57–58, cf. 58–66.
- 14 Renée Déjean, *Les conditions objectives de la perception visuelle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1926), 60, 83.
- 15 Stumpf, cited by Köhler, “Über unbemerkte Empfindungen und Urteilstauschungen,” 58.
- 16 Köhler, *ibid.*, 58–63.
- 17 It is only fair to add that this is true of all theories and that nowhere are there any critical experiments. For the same reason, the constancy hypothesis cannot be rigorously refuted on the level of induction. It is discredited because it ignores and blocks an understanding of the phenomena. Again, in order to catch sight of the phenomena and to judge the constancy hypothesis, the latter must first be “suspended.”

- 18 J. Stein, "Über die Veränderung der Sinnesleistungen," 357–59.
- 19 Even Daltonism does not prove that particular organs are, and are solely, responsible for the "vision" of red or of green, since the color-blind person succeeds in recognizing red if he is shown a large colored area or if the presentation of the color is made to last. J. Stein, *ibid.*, 365.
- 20 Weizsacker, cited by J. Stein, *ibid.*, 364.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 354.
- 22 Regarding all of these points, see *La structure du comportement*, in particular pages 52ff., 65ff. [*La structure* (1990), 44ff., 55ff.; *Structure of Behavior*, 42ff., 52ff.]
- 23 Adhémar Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," *Handbuch der normalen und pathologischen Physiologie* 12, no. 1 (1929), 595. [Selections of this article are available in English: Adhémar Gelb, "Colour Constancy," in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 196–209 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]
- 24 "Sensations are certainly artificial products, but they are not arbitrary, they are the last partial totalities into which natural structures can be decomposed by the 'analytical attitude.' Considered from this point of view, they contribute to the knowledge of structures, and, consequently, the results of the study of sensations, when properly interpreted, are an important element of the psychology of perception." Koffka, "Psychologie," 548.
- 25 Cf. Paul Guillaume, "L'objectivité en psychologie," *Journal de psychologie* 29 (1932), 682–743.
- 26 Cf. *La structure du comportement*, chap. 3. [*La structure* (1990), chap. 3; *The Structure of Behavior*, chap. 3.]
- 27 Koffka, "Psychologie," 530, 549.
- 28 [The adjective *bougé*, which stems from the verb *bouger* ("to move"), refers both to a sort of movement or shifting and to a sort of indeterminacy or blur in an image.]
- 29 Max Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* (Leipzig: Der Neue Geist, 1926), 412. [This has since been republished as Max Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft*, ed. Maria Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke* 8 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1960). The earlier parts of *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* are translated into English as: *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Manfred S. Frings, ed. and intro. Kenneth W. Stikkers (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980). The sections cited by Merleau-Ponty do not appear in the translation.]
- 30 *Ibid.*, 397: "Man, better than the animal, approaches ideal and exact images, the adult better than the child, men better than women, the individual better than the member of a group, the man who thinks historically and systematically better than the man driven by a tradition, 'caught up' in it and incapable of transforming the milieu in which he is caught into an object through the constitution of memory, incapable of objectifying and localizing it in time and of possessing it by holding it at a distance in the past."
- 31 Hering, Jaensch.
- 32 Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft*, 412.

- 33 Cf. Max Wertheimer, "Über das Denken der Naturvölker," in *Drei Abhandlungen zur Gestalttheorie*, 106–63 (Erlangen: Philosophische Akademie, 1925). [An abridged English translation of this can be found at: Max Wertheimer, "Numbers and Numerical Concepts in Primitive Peoples," in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 265–73 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]

II "ASSOCIATION" AND THE "PROJECTION OF MEMORIES"

- 1 ["cette couleur chaude, éprouvée, vécue dans laquelle je me perds."]
- 2 This is Husserl's expression. The idea is taken up with insight in Maurice Pradines, *Philosophie de la sensation*, vol. 1, *Le problème de la sensation* (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1928), in particular pages 152ff.
- 3 Husserl, *Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, chap. 1, page 68. [*Logical Investigations*, vol. 1, page 24.]
- 4 See, for example, Wolfgang Köhler, *Gestalt Psychology* (London: G. Bell, 1930), 164–65.
- 5 Wertheimer, for example (the laws of proximity, of resemblance, and of "good form").
- 6 Kurt Lewin, "Vorbemerkungen über die psychischen Kräfte und Energien und über die Struktur der Seele," part I, *Untersuchungen zur Handlungs- und Affekt-Psychologie*," *Psychologische Forschung* 7 (1926), 294–329. [It seems that the terms "dak-tak" etc. do not appear in this 1926 article. Lewin discusses "dak" in "Das Problem der Willenmessung und das Grundgesetz der Assoziation I," *Psychologische Forschung* 1 (1922), 191–302. See particularly page 269. Lewin is referring to psychologist Narziss Ach's work on syllables and memory, published as "Über die Willenstätigkeit und das Denken" (1905) and "Über das Willensakt und das Temperament" (1910). Excerpts primarily from Part II of "Untersuchungen zur Handlungs- und Affekt-Psychologie," which immediately follows the "Vorbemerkungen," can be found in English as: Lewin, "Will and Needs," in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 283–99 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]
- 7 "Set to reproduce," Kurt Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.; New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935), 581. [This short quotation is given in English in the original.]
- 8 Kurt Gottschaldt, "Über den Einfluß der Erfahrung auf die Wahrnehmung von Figuren," part I, *Über den Einfluß gehäufte Einprägung von Figuren auf ihre Sichtbarkeit in umfassenden Konfigurationen*, *Psychologische Forschung* 8 (1926), 261–317. [Merleau-Ponty is likely referring to the table 5 on page 276, and the corresponding figure "A" from Fig. 1-III on page 296. These diagrams are slightly more complex than those Merleau-Ponty recreates in *Phenomenology of Perception*. An abridged version is available in English: Kurt Gottschaldt, "Gestalt Factors and Repetition," in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 109–35 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), cf. 116, figure 4.]

- 9 Léon Brunschvicg, *L'expérience humaine et la causalité physique* (Paris: Alcan, 1922), 466.
- 10 Henri Bergson, "L'effort intellectuel," in *L'énergie spirituelle* (Paris: Alcan, 1919), for example 184. [Henri Bergson, "Intellectual Effort," in *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. H. Wildon Carr (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), 187–230. Bergson's discussion of "reading" can be found on page 206.]
- 11 See for example Hermann Ebbinghaus, *Abriss der Psychologie*, 9th ed. (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1932), 104–5. [Hermann Ebbinghaus, *Psychology: An Elementary Text-Book* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1908), 114ff.]
- 12 Ewald Hering, *Grundzüge der Lehre vom Lichtsinn* (Berlin: Springer, 1920), 8. [Ewald Hering, *Outlines of a Theory of the Light Sense*, trans. Leo M. Hurvich and Dorothea Jameson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 8.]
- 13 Max Scheler, "Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis," in *Vom Umsturz der Werte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Der Neue Geist, 1919), 72. [Also in German as: Max Scheler, "Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis," in *Vom Umsturz der Werte*, ed. Maria Scheler, 215–92, *Gesammelte Werke* 3 (Bern: Franke Verlag, 1955); Max Scheler, "The Idols of Self-Knowledge," in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. David R. Lachterman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 49. Emphasis added in the cited English translation.]
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 [Although Merleau-Ponty often uses the verb *poser* in the sense "to posit" the existence of something or "to thematize" something as the object of an explicit intellectual act, he occasionally uses it in a more phenomenological sense of "to intend," as in this case, which for him includes non-thetic modalities of being related to an object. I have included the French when I have opted for this latter translation.]
- 16 Kurt Koffka, *The Growth of the Mind: An Introduction to Child-Psychology*, trans. Robert Morris Ogden (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.; New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925), 320. [This passage in fact appears on page 319.]
- 17 Scheler, "Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis," 85. [Scheler, "The Idols of Self-Knowledge," 58.]

III "ATTENTION" AND "JUDGMENT"

- 1 [Here Merleau-Ponty is likely referring to Malebranche's discussion of "natural revelations" in Dialogues V and VI of *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*, trans. David Scott and Nicholas Jolley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).]
- 2 [Merleau-Ponty provides the translation of *Bemerken*, "take notice," in English in the original.]
- 3 ["Partout stérile, elle ne saurait être nulle part *intéressée*." I am reading the verb *savoir* here in the sense of "being able to," as it often is when employed in constructions in the conditional mood plus an infinitive verb, a construction Merleau-Ponty uses quite often. This phrase could also be rendered more

- literally: “Everywhere barren, nowhere could attention know how to *take an interest*.”]
- 4 René Descartes, “Deuxième méditation,” in *Méditations*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, IX, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1973), 25. [Subsequent references to Descartes follow Merleau-Ponty’s use of AT to stand for Adam and Tannery, followed by volume and page number (e.g., AT IX, 25). Descartes, “Second Meditation,” in *Meditations*, 21. The standard English translation does not maintain the word “attention,” which is prominent in the French and Latin versions. The French version reads: “selon que mon attention se porte plus ou moins aux choses qui sont en elle et dont elle est composée.” The translation provided is from an alternate English version that in this case stays closer to the original French: René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 3rd ed., trans. Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 22.]
 - 5 Alain, *Système des beaux-arts*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1926), 343.
 - 6 Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, *Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1929), 200. [Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, *The Phenomenology of Knowledge* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 173. This point is drawn from a discussion of Hume.]
 - 7 [“également soustraits à l’action de l’esprit.”]
 - 8 [Merleau-Ponty does not provide the location of this short quote. He may be referring to Head and Holmes’s discussion of a “diminished power of attention,” which can be found at: Henry Head and Gordon Holmes, “Sensory Disturbances from Cerebral Lesions,” *Brain* 34 (1911–12), 189.]
 - 9 J. Stein, “Über die Veränderung der Sinnesleistungen,” 362–83.
 - 10 [The German word *überschauen* means both “to survey (from above)” and “to dominate,” and Merleau-Ponty seems to have both senses in mind in his translation into French as *dominer*. I have thus included both English words to preserve this double sense.]
 - 11 E. Rubin, “Die Nichtexistenz der Aufmerksamkeit,” *Bericht über den IX. Kongreß für experimentelle Psychologie in München (von 21–25 April 1925)*, 211–12 (Jena: Verlag Fischer, 1926).
 - 12 Cf. for example W. Peters, “Zur Entwicklung der Farbenwahrnehmung nach Versuchen an abnormen Kindern,” *Fortschritte der Psychologie* 3 (1915), 152–53.
 - 13 See above, page 9.
 - 14 Köhler, “Über unbemerkte Empfindungen und Urteilstäuschungen,” 52.
 - 15 Kurt Koffka, “Perception: An Introduction to the Gestalt Theory,” *Psychological Bulletin* 19 (1922), 561ff.
 - 16 [Merleau-Ponty’s use of the term *synthèse de transition* [synthesis of transition] here foreshadows his use of Husserl’s notion of a transition or “passive” synthesis in action or perception in contrast to a thetic or intellectual synthesis of the Kantian type. See below, for instance, Part Two, Chapter III, section C, subsection iii.]
 - 17 Edith Stein, “Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften,” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische*

- Forschung* 5 (1922), 35ff. [In his use of “motive” [*motif*], Merleau-Ponty often has both senses in mind: “the reason” leading to some action and “the theme” or “subject” as the motif of an artwork. Here, for instance, the object is that which solicits or motivates our attention and is also the theme of the act of attention. Indeed, this is closely related to his uses of the term “motivation” as well.]
- 18 Paul Valéry, *Introduction à la poétique*, 5th ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), 40. [“L’œuvre de l’esprit n’existe qu’en acte.”]
- 19 As Alain does, *Système des beaux-arts*, 343.
- 20 In the following pages, it will become clearer how Kantian philosophy is, to speak with Husserl, a “mundane” and dogmatic philosophy. Cf. Fink, “Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik,” 351ff. [Fink, “The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism,” 97ff.]
- 21 “Hume’s notion of nature required a Kantian understanding, and Hobbes’s notion of man required a Kantian practical reason, insofar as these theories were to be brought back to the facts of natural experience.” Max Scheler, “Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik,” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 2 (1916), 62. [Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 66. This text is also found in the collected works: Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*, ed. Maria Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke* 2 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1954).]
- 22 Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil: Untersuchungen zur Genealogie der Logik*, ed. Ludwig Landgrebe (Prague: Academia Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1939), e.g., 172. [Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 150, for instance.]
- 23 “I normally say that I see the men themselves, just as I say that I see the wax. Yet do I see any more than hats and coats which could conceal automatons? I judge that they are men.” Descartes, “Deuxième méditation,” in *Méditations*, AT IX, 25. [“Second Meditation,” in *Meditations*, 21.]
- 24 “Here again, relief appears to spring into view. Nevertheless, it is the conclusion drawn from an appearance that in no way resembles depth. It is ascertained from a difference between the appearances of the same things for our two eyes.” Alain, *Quatre-vingt-un chapitres sur l’esprit et les passions* (Paris: Bloch, 1917), 19. Moreover, Alain (*ibid.*, 17) refers to Helmholtz’s *Optique physiologique*, in which the constancy hypothesis is still implied and in which judgment only intervenes in order to fill the lacunae of the physiological explanation. Or again: “For that forest on the horizon, it is obvious enough that vision presents it to us not as far away, but rather as bluish, through the interposition of layers of air” (*ibid.*, 23). This is obvious if vision is defined by its bodily stimulus or by the possession of a quality, for then vision could give us the blue and not the distance, which is a relation. But this is not, properly speaking, *evident*, that is, it is not attested to by consciousness. It is precisely consciousness that is astonished to discover in the perception of distance some relations anterior to all estimation, calculation, and conclusion. [The

- text cited here is reprinted as: Alain, *Eléments de philosophie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1941).]
- 25 “What proves that here I judge is that painters know quite well how to give me this perception of a mountain in the distance by imitating the appearances upon a canvas.” Alain, *ibid.*, 14.
- 26 “We see objects in double because we have two eyes, but we do not pay attention to these double images, unless it is in order to draw from them some knowledge concerning the distance or the relief of a single object that we perceive by their means” (Jules Lagneau, *Célèbres leçons* (Nîmes: La Laborieuse, 1926), 105). And, in general, “we must first seek which elementary sensations belong to the nature of the human mind; the human body shows us this nature” (*ibid.*, 75). As Alain writes: “I knew someone who did not want to admit that our eyes present to us two images of each thing; nevertheless, it is enough to focus the eyes upon a fairly close object, such as a pencil, in order that the images of distant objects immediately double.” (*Quatre-vingt-un chapitres*, 23–24.) This does not prove that they were doubled before. Here we can see the prejudice of the law of constancy that demands that the phenomena corresponding to the bodily impressions be given even where they go unnoticed.
- 27 “Perception is an interpretation of primitive intuition, an interpretation seemingly immediate, but in reality acquired by habit and corrected by the power of reasoning.” Lagneau, *Célèbres leçons*, 158.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 160.
- 29 Cf. for example, Alain, *Quatre-vingt-un chapitres*, 15: relief is “thought, concluded, judged, or however one wishes to put it.”
- 30 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 31 Lagneau, *Célèbres leçons*, 132, 128.
- 32 Alain, *Quatre-vingt-un chapitres*, 32.
- 33 Montaigne, cited by Alain, *Système des beaux-arts*, 15.
- 34 Cf. for example Lagneau, *Célèbres leçons*, 134.
- 35 Köhler, “Über unbemerkte Empfindungen und Urteilstäuschungen,” 69.
- 36 Cf. Koffka, “Psychologie,” 533: “One is tempted to say: the side of a rectangle is nevertheless just a line. – But an isolated line, as a phenomenon and also as a functional element, is something other than the side of a rectangle. To limit ourselves to one property, the side of a rectangle has an interior side and an exterior side; the isolated line has, on the other hand, two absolutely equivalent sides.”
- 37 “In fact, the pure impression is conceived, not sensed.” Lagneau, *Célèbres leçons*, 119.
- 38 “When we have acquired this concept, through scientific knowledge and through reflection, it seems to us that what is the most recent product of knowledge, that is, it expresses the relation of a being with others, is in reality the beginning. But this is an illusion. This idea of time, by which we imagine the anteriority of sensation in relation to knowledge, is a construction of the mind.” *Ibid.*

- 39 [Merleau-Ponty's allusion is to Spinoza's "Ethics." See: B. de Spinoza, "Ethics," in *Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley, ed. Michael L. Morgan, 213–382 (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), book II, prop. XXVIII, proof.]
- 40 [This is a short paraphrase of a passage from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, A141/B180, to which Merleau-Ponty will return below. See Part Three, Chapter III, section m.]
- 41 ["we have a true idea." Merleau-Ponty's reference is to Spinoza's "Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect." This can be found in: *Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley, ed. Michael L. Morgan, 1–30 (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), para. 33, page 10.]
- 42 ["le géométral" – Merleau-Ponty likely draws this image from Leibniz, and he uses it to indicate an idea or ideal object that would represent an object from all possible perspectives at once. See page 69.]
- 43 Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, e.g., 331. [*Experience and Judgment*, 327. Husserl's phrase in German is *passiven Doxa*, rendered in English as "passive doxa." However, Merleau-Ponty translates it into French as *doxa originaire*, literally "originary doxa," showing his reading of a strong identity between passive experience, pre-reflective experience, and originary experience. "Doxa" means, more or less, "opinion," and is related to the world of common experience. See section 66 of *Experience and Judgment*. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001), section 14.]
- 44 ". . . I observed that the judgments I was accustomed to making regarding these objects were formed in me prior to my having the leisure of weighing and considering any reasons that might have forced me to make them." "Sixième méditation," in *Méditations*, AT IX, 60. ["Sixth Meditation," in *Meditations*, 53. I have modified the translation to preserve Merleau-Ponty's repetition of Descartes's terminology in this paragraph.]
- 45 [In this reprise of the passage cited in the previous note, Merleau-Ponty shifts Descartes's phrase from *peser et considérer* ("to weigh and to consider") to *penser et considérer* ("to think/conceive and to consider"). I have preserved this shift in the English.]
- 46 "it seemed to me that I had learnt from nature all the other things that I judged concerning the objects of my senses," *ibid.* [*Ibid.*, 53 (translation modified).]
- 47 "It does not seem to me that the human mind is capable of forming a very distinct conception of both the distinction between the soul and the body and their union; for to do this it is necessary to conceive them as a single thing and at the same time to conceive them as two things; and this is absurd." Descartes, "Descartes à Élisabeth, 28 juin, 1643," AT III, 69off. [Found in Descartes, *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. III, *Correspondance*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 690–95 (Paris: Vrin, 1975), 690; René Descartes, "To Princess Elizabeth, 28 June 1643," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 3, *The Correspondence*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, and Anthony Kenny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 227.]
- 48 *Ibid.*

- 49 (The faculty of judgment) “has to provide a concept itself, through which no thing is actually cognized, but which only serves as a rule for it, but not as an objective rule to which it can conform its judgment, since for that yet another power of judgment would be required in order to be able to decide whether it is a case of the rule or not.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique du jugement*, trans. J. Gibelin (Paris: Vrin, 1928), 11. [Immanuel Kant, “Preface,” in *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 57.]
- 50 [“un milieu entre Dieu et le néant.” Descartes, *Méditations*, AT IX, 54. Descartes, *Meditations*, 38.]
- 51 “Troisième méditation,” in *Méditations*, AT IX, 28 (emphasis added). [Descartes, “Third Meditation,” in *Meditations*, 25 (emphasis added by Merleau-Ponty).]
- 52 In the same vein as “two and three added together make five.” Descartes, “Troisième méditation,” in *Méditations*, AT IX, 28. [Descartes, “Third Meditation,” in *Meditations*, 25.]
- 53 According to its trajectory, reflective analysis does not bring us back to authentic subjectivity. It conceals from us the living core of perceptual consciousness because it looks for the conditions of possibility for absolutely determinate being and allows itself to be tempted by theology’s pseudo-evidence that nothingness is nothing. Nevertheless, philosophers who have practiced reflective analysis have always sensed that they had to look *beneath* absolute consciousness. We have just seen this for Descartes, and it could just as easily be shown for Lagneau and Alain.

Reflective analysis, carried to its conclusion, would no longer allow anything to remain on the side of the subject except a universal creativity [*un naturel universel*] for whom the system of experience, including my body and my empirical self, exists as linked to the world by physical and psycho-physiological laws. The sensation that we construct as the “psychic” extension of sensory stimuli obviously does not belong to this universal creativity, and any idea of a genesis of the mind is illegitimate since it puts the mind, for whom time exists, back into time and confuses the two “I’s.” Nevertheless, if we are this absolute mind without any history, and if nothing separates us from the true world, if the empirical self is constructed by the transcendental I and spread out before it, we ought to be able to see right through the opacity; it would not be clear how error could be possible, much less illusion, that is, the “abnormal perception” that no knowledge can remove (Lagneau, *Célèbres leçons*, 161–62). Of course, one can say that illusion and perception are wholly prior to both truth and error (*ibid.*). But this does not help us resolve the problem, since the question is then how a mind can be prior to truth and error. When we sense, we do not perceive our sensation as an object constituted in a web of psycho-physiological relations. Nor do we possess the truth of the sensation. We are not face to face with the true world.

It is the same thing to say that we are individuals and to say that in these individuals there is a sentient nature [*une nature sensible*] in which there is something that does not result from the action of the environment. If everything in sentient nature were subjected to necessity, if there were for

us a manner of sensing that would be the true one, if at each moment our manner of sensing resulted from the exterior world, then we would not sense at all.

(Ibid., 164)

Thus, sensing does not belong to the order of the constituted, the “I” does not find it spread out before itself, it escapes its gaze, it is as if gathered together behind it, where it establishes something like a thickness or an opacity that makes error possible, it marks out a zone of subjectivity or of solitude, it represents to us what is “before” the mind, and it evokes birth and calls for a more profound analysis that could clarify the “genealogy of logic.” The mind is conscious of itself as “established” upon this Nature. There is thus a dialectic of the created [*nature*] and the creating [*naturant*], of perception and judgment, during which their relationship is inverted.

The same move is found in Alain in the analysis of perception. We know a tree always appears to me as larger than a man, even if the tree is in the distance and the man is close by. I am tempted to say that:

Here again, a judgment amplifies the object. But let us take a closer look. The object has not changed because an object in itself has no size; size is always comparative, and so the size of these two objects and of all objects forms an indivisible and real whole without parts; sizes are judged together. From this we can see that the material objects – always separate and formed from mutually external parts – must not be confused with the thought about these objects, in which no division can be accepted. As obscure as this distinction now is, and as difficult as it must always remain for thought, we must hold onto it as we move forward. In a sense, and considered as material, things are divided into parts and they are unique; but in another sense, and considered as thoughts, the perceptions of things are indivisible and without any parts.

(Alain, *Quatre-vingt-un chapitres*, 18)

But then an inspection of the mind that could survey them both and that could determine one in virtue of the other would not be true subjectivity and would still borrow too much from the things considered as in themselves. Perception does not derive the tree’s size from the man’s, nor the man’s size from the tree, nor both from the sense of these two objects. Rather, perception does all of this simultaneously: the tree’s size, the man’s size, and their signification as tree and man, such that each element is in accord with all the others and composes with them a landscape in which all *coexist*. We thus enter into the analysis of what makes size, and more generally, relations or properties of the predicative order, possible; we thus enter into this subjectivity “before all geometry” that Alain nevertheless declared unknowable (ibid., 29). This is because reflective analysis becomes more strictly conscious of itself as analysis. It sees that it has moved beyond its object, namely, perception. Behind the judgment that it reveals, it acknowledges a deeper function that makes the judgment possible; it uncovers phenomena as prior to things. This

- is the function psychologists have in view when they speak of a *Gestaltung* of the landscape. They call philosophy back to the description of phenomena by strictly separating them from the constituted objective world, in terms that are almost the very ones used by Alain.
- 54 [Merleau-Ponty uses *le haut et le bas* here, which can be translated by various relations in English, such as “high/low,” “up/down,” “above/below” or “top/bottom,” depending on the context. I have, for the most part, employed “up/down,” which preserves the orientational emphasis (upward/downward/upside down . . .) and matches Stratton’s usage, which Merleau-Ponty discusses below: Part Two, Chapter II, section A.]
- 55 [This unattributed reference is likely to Kant’s argument (against Leibniz) that establishes the importance of orientation in space (through the “incongruent counterparts” such as two spherical triangles, the left hand and the right hand, etc.). See Kant’s discussion in his 1786 treatise: “Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space,” in *Theoretical Philosophy (1755–1770)*, ed. David Walford, 361–72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).]
- 56 See Aron Gurwitsch, “Rezension: Edmund Husserls ‘Nachwort zu meinen ‘Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie,’”” *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 53 (1932), 401ff. [Aron Gurwitsch, “Critical Study of Husserl’s *Nachwort*,” in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, 107–15 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 109ff.]
- 57 Cf. for example Paul Guillaume, “La perception de l’espace,” in *Traité de psychologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1943), chap. 9, page 151.
- 58 See further, Merleau-Ponty, *La structure du comportement*, 178. [*La structure* (1990), 143–44; *Structure of Behavior*, 132–33.]
- 59 *Fließende* [“fluid”], Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, 428. It is in his final period that Husserl himself became fully conscious of what the return to phenomena meant and tacitly broke with the philosophy of essences. He was, then, only making explicit and thematizing the processes of analysis that he had himself applied for a long time, as is clearly shown in the notion of motivation, which is already found in his work prior to *Ideen*.
- 60 See below, Part Three. Gestalt psychology has developed a type of reflection for which Husserl’s phenomenology offers the theoretical foundation. But are we wrong to see an entire philosophy emerging from the critique of the “constancy hypothesis”? Although an historical analysis is not our current task, let us nevertheless indicate some external evidence of the kinship between Gestalt theory and Phenomenology. It is hardly accidental that Köhler assigns psychology the task of developing a “phenomenological description” (Köhler, “Über unbemerkte Empfindungen und Urteilstauschungen,” 70). Nor is it accidental that Koffka, Husserl’s former student, attributes the principles of his psychology to this influence, attempts to show that the critique of psychologism does not bear upon Gestalt theory (*Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, 614–83), and that the *Gestalt* is not a psychical event in the manner of an impression, but rather a whole that develops an internal law of constitution.

Nor, finally, is it accidental that Husserl, in his final period, and always moving further away from logicism (which he had, for that matter, criticized at the same time as psychologism), took up the notion of “configuration” and even of *Gestalt* (cf. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, I, 106, 109). [Cf. *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 35ff.].

It is certainly true that Gestalt theory’s reaction against naturalism and against causal thought is neither consistent nor radical, as can be seen in its naïvely realist theory of knowledge (cf. *La structure du comportement*, 180 [*La structure* (1990), 144–45; *The Structure of Behavior*, 134–35]). Gestalt theory does not recognize that psychological atomism is but a particular case of a more general prejudice: the unquestioned belief in determinate being and in the world, and this is why it forgets its most valuable descriptions when it seeks to give itself a theoretical framework. Gestalt theory remains free of errors when it operates within the medium regions of reflection. When it wishes to reflect upon its own analyses, it treats consciousness – despite its own principles – as an assemblage of “forms.” This suffices to justify the criticisms explicitly leveled by Husserl against Gestalt theory, and equally against every psychology formulated at a time when he still opposed fact and essence, when he had still not acquired the idea of an historical constitution, and when, consequently, he was stressing the caesura rather than the parallelism between psychology and phenomenology (Husserl, “Nachwort zu meinen ‘Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie,’” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung* 11 (1930), 564ff. [“Nachwort” is reprinted in: Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, vol. 3, *Die Phänomenologie und die Fundamente der Wissenschaften*, ed. Marly Biemel, 138–62, *Husserliana V* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 156–57; Translated as “Epilogue,” in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, vol. 2, *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schwur, 405–30 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), 424]). We have elsewhere cited a text by E. Fink that reestablishes the equilibrium (*La structure du comportement*, 280 [*La structure* (1990), 222; *The Structure of Behavior*, 206, 248, endnote 40]).

With regard to the fundamental question, which is the question of the transcendental attitude opposite the natural attitude, this will only be possible to resolve in the final part of this study where the transcendental signification of time will be examined.

IV THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

- 1 Koffka, “Perception,” 558–59. [Koffka says “dead properties,” not “dead qualities,” but I have preserved Merleau-Ponty’s use of “qualities,” which recalls the earlier discussion.]
- 2 Kurt Koffka, “Mental Development,” in *Psychologies of 1925*, ed. Carl Murchison, 129–43 (Worcester, MA: Clark University Press, 1928), 138. [Although he

is not more specific with his reference here, Merleau-Ponty is likely referring to Koffka's discussion on page 140, where Koffka writes, "it ceases to be an attractive and becomes a repulsive object."

- 3 Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft*, 408.
- 4 Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, pages 77–78. [Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, pages 66–67.]
- 5 As L. Brunschvicg does.
- 6 Cf., for example, Brunschvicg, *L'expérience humaine et la causalité physique*, 536.
- 7 [This is the first occurrence of Merleau-Ponty's use of the physiological term *motricité*, which means, depending on the context, motor activity, motor function, or the faculty or power of movement. All of these senses are present in the English equivalent "motricity," so I have resisted introducing more current terms (such as motility or motivity), which border on over-translation. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the term is closely related to his understanding of intentionality and of Husserl's "I can," although the term itself involves a reference to the work of Grünbaum. Cf. A. A. Grünbaum, "Aphasie und Motorik," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 130 (1930); and below, page 100ff.]
- 8 Cf., for example, Alain, *Quatre-vingt-un chapitres*, 19, and Brunschvicg, *L'expérience humaine et la causalité physique*, 468.
- 9 Cf. *La structure du comportement*, and below, Part One.
- 10 [This is an allusion to Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, 5th ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993). The allusion is preserved by the subtitle in the English translation: *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (New York: Dover, 2001). In my translation, I have generally rendered *les données* as "the givens," rather than by the more empiricist sounding "data."]
- 11 In the following chapters, we will thus be able to have equal recourse to the inner experience of our perception and to the "outer" experience of perceiving subjects.
- 12 Scheler, "Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis," 106. ["The Idols of Self-Knowledge," 73.]
- 13 [Merleau-Ponty's allusion here is to Bergson; see *Time and Free Will*, 75, or 162.]
- 14 Cf. *La structure du comportement*, 106–19, 261. [*La structure* (1990), 87–97, 207–8; *The Structure of Behavior*, 79–88, 192–93.]
- 15 Transcendental phenomenology is presented in these terms in the majority of Husserl's texts, including those published during his later period.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

- 1 [Part One and Part Two begin with short, untitled introductory sections, which I have named accordingly.]

- 2 [The term *géométral* is an adjective that was employed in the seventeenth century in the phrase *le plan géométral* in contrast to *le plan perspectif*. The former designates a type of plan or diagram that indicates all aspects of an object without taking into account any single perspective. The terms are used by Leibniz to contrast how we see the world from a perspective versus how God sees the world from nowhere. Merleau-Ponty uses the term *géométral* (“geometrical plan”) to indicate an ideal object that would encompass, in advance, all possible perspectives.]
- 3 [Merleau-Ponty here employs the French term *extase* (“ecstasy”) in the etymological sense (“outside of oneself”) both to summarize intentionality and with an eye toward Heidegger’s use of the term *ek-stase* in describing the structure of transcendence. When Merleau-Ponty uses the French term, I employ “ecstasy” (which shares this etymological origin); when he employs the German *ek-stase*, I do as well. See below, Part Three, Chapter II.]
- 4 Edmund Husserl, “Umsturz der kopernikanischen Lehre: Die Erde als Ur-Arche bewegt sich nicht” (unpublished). [The first publication was in fact in an American volume from 1940, before *Phenomenology of Perception* appeared: Edmund Husserl, “Grundlegende Untersuchungen zum Phänomenologischen Ursprung der Räumlichkeit der Natur,” in *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, ed. Marvin Farber, 307–25 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940); the English translation is: “Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature: The Originary Ark, the Earth, Does Not Move,” trans. Fred Kersten, rev. Leonard Lawlor, in *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*, ed. Leonard Lawlor with Bettina Bergo, 117–32 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002).]
- 5 “And so something which I thought I was seeing with my eyes is in fact grasped solely by the faculty of judgment which is in my mind.” “Deuxième méditation,” in *Méditations*, AT IX, 25. [“Second Meditation,” in *Meditations*, 21.]
- 6 [Although this is not the first occurrence of the key term *le corps propre* (“one’s own body”), this occurrence does announce the thematization of the concept for Merleau-Ponty’s subsequent analyses, and it may be worth noting again the translation difficulties hidden in this necessary English rendering as “one’s own body.” In general, Merleau-Ponty means “the body that is necessarily lived *as mine*,” rather than a body that I possess contingently or the body considered from a third person perspective as a simple object in the world. The thematic occurrences might indeed suggest a more interpretive translation, such as “the lived body,” but this tends to objectify that which Merleau-Ponty claims resists all objectification. “One’s own body,” then, should not be heard as the body I “possess,” but rather the body that I live as my own. For a more detailed discussion, see the Translator’s Introduction.]

I THE BODY AS AN OBJECT AND MECHANISTIC PHYSIOLOGY

- 1 [As noted by the editors of the most recent edition of *Phénoménologie de la perception*, *partes extra partes* is a Latin phrase meaning, literally, parts outside of parts. The phrase, stemming from the Leibnizian tradition, is used by Merleau-Ponty to summarize a mechanical understanding of objects as composed of atoms or points that only admit of external relations. Cf. Merleau-Ponty, *Œuvres*, 751, note 1.]
- 2 See further, *La structure du comportement*, chaps. 1 and 2. [*La structure* (1990), chaps. 1 and 2; *The Structure of Behavior*, chaps. 1 and 2.]
- 3 [The theory of specific nervous energy, generally attributed to Johannes Müller, states that each nerve will give rise to a unique sensation, regardless of the placement of the stimuli along the pathway.]
- 4 J. Stein, "Über die Veränderung der Sinnesleistungen," 365.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 358.
- 6 ["Chronaxies" are the minimum thresholds required to stimulate a nerve.]
- 7 *Ibid.*, 360–61.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 362.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 364.
- 10 "Die Reizvorgänge treffen ein ungestimmtes Reaktionsorgan." J. Stein, "Über die Veränderung der Sinnesleistungen," 361.
- 11 "[d]ie Sinne [. . .] die Form eben durch ursprüngliches Formbegreifen zu erkennen geben." *Ibid.*, 353.
- 12 Jean Lhermitte, *L'image de notre corps* (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Critique, 1939), 47.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 129ff.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 57.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 73. Lhermitte indicates that the amputee's illusion is related to the psychic constitution of the subject: it is more frequent among cultivated men.
- 16 ["Anosognosia" designates the ignorance a patient may have of a disease, particularly of a paralysis.]
- 17 Lhermitte, *L'image de notre corps*, 129ff.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 The phantom limb lends itself neither to a pure physiological explanation nor to a pure psychological explanation. This is Lhermitte's conclusion. *Ibid.*, 126.
- 20 Paul Schilder, *Das Körperschema: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom Bewusstsein des Eigenen Körpers* (Berlin: Springer, 1923); Erich Menninger-Lerchenthal, *Das Truggebilde der eigenen Gestalt* (Berlin: Karger, 1934), 174; Lhermitte, *L'image de notre corps*, 143.
- 21 Cf. *La structure du comportement*, 47ff. [*La structure* (1990), 40ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 39ff.]
- 22 *Ibid.*, 196ff. [*Ibid.*, 157ff.; *ibid.*, 145ff.]

- 23 When Bergson insists on the unity of perception and action, and invents the term “sensorimotor process” to express this unity, he clearly seeks to engage consciousness in the world. But if sensing is to represent a quality to oneself, and if movement is a displacement in objective space, then no *compromise* is possible between sensation and movement (even taken in the nascent state), and they are distinguished in the manner of the in-itself and the for-itself. In a general sense, Bergson certainly saw that the body and the spirit communicate through the medium of time, that to be a spirit is to dominate the flow of time and that to have a body is to have a present. The body is, he says, an instantaneous cross-section of the becoming of consciousness (*Matière et mémoire*, 150). But the body remains for him what we have called the objective body; consciousness remains knowledge; and time remains a series of “now points,” whether it “snowballs upon itself” or whether it is spread out in spatialized time. Thus, Bergson can only tense or relax the series of “nows.” He does not reach the unique movement by which the three dimensions of time are constituted, and it is not clear why duration is compacted into a present, nor why consciousness engages in a body and in a world. [Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire* (Paris: Alcan, 1896), 150; Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, 7th ed. (Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), 154; Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 139.]

As for the “reality function,” Pierre Janet *uses* it as an existential notion. It is what allows him to sketch out a profound theory of emotion as the collapse of our customary being, as a flight from our world and, consequently, from our being in the world (cf., for example, his interpretation of hysteric fits, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, II, 45off.). But this theory of emotion is not carried through and, as Sartre shows, it competes in Janet's writings with a mechanistic conception that is rather close to that of James. The collapse of our existence into emotion is treated as a simple *derivation* from psychological forces and the emotion itself is treated as the impersonal consciousness of this process, to the extent that there is no longer a reason to seek a sense in the emotional behaviors that are the result of the blind dynamic of tendencies and we thus return to dualism (cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Esquisse d'une théorie de l'émotion*). Moreover, Janet directly treats psychological tension – that is, the movement by which we spread our “world” out before ourselves – as a representational hypothesis. Thus, he is far from considering it as a general thesis of the concrete essence of man, although he does this implicitly in specific analyses. [Pierre Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase: Études sur les croyances et les sentiments*, II (Paris: Alcan, 1928), 45off.; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Esquisse d'une théorie de l'émotion* (Paris: Hermann, 1939); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 1962).]

- 24 Thus, Saint-Exupéry, high above Arras and surrounded by enemy fire, no longer senses as distinct from himself this body that, just a moment previously, had seemed to escape him: “It's as if with every second my life was granted to me anew; as if my life was continuously becoming more vivid. I was living. I

- am living. I am still living. I am always living. I am nothing but a source of life.” Saint-Exupéry, *Pilote de guerre*, 174. [*Pilote de guerre* (2005), 157; Saint-Exupéry, *Flight to Arras*, 186 (translation modified).]
- 25 “It would be foolish to deny that during all those years of my life when nothing insistent was prompting me, when the signification of my existence was not at stake, it was impossible for me to conceive of anything that might be half so important as my body.” *Ibid.*, 169. [*Ibid.*, 152–53; *ibid.*, 182 (translation modified).]
- 26 Cf. Sartre, *Esquisse d'une théorie de l'émotion*. [*Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*.]
- 27 *La structure du comportement*, 55. [*La structure* (1990), 46–47; *The Structure of Behavior*, 44–45.]
- 28 Menninger-Lerchenthal, *Das Truggebilde der eigenen Gestalt*, 174–75.

II THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BODY AND CLASSICAL PSYCHOLOGY

- 1 Husserl, “Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, II” (unpublished). We are indebted to Magister Noël and L'institut supérieur de philosophie de Louvain, the depository of the collection of Husserl's *Nachlass*, and in particular to the kindness of R. P. Van Breda, for having had the opportunity to consult several unpublished manuscripts. [The part of Husserl's *Nachlass* (“unpublished works”) cited by Merleau-Ponty here has since been published: Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, vol. 2, *Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, ed. Marly Biemel, *Husserliana IV* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1991); Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, vol. 2, *Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schwur (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002). Merleau-Ponty is likely alluding to the following passage: “The same Body which serves me as a means for all my perception obstructs me in the perception of it itself and is a remarkably imperfectly constituted thing.” *Ideas*, vol. 2, page 167. Cf. also *Ideas*, vol. 2, chap. 3.]
- 2 Husserl, *Méditations cartésiennes*, 81. [Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 97. As noted by the translator of *Phénoménologie de la perception* into German, this phrase only appears in the original French publication of Husserl's *Méditations cartésiennes*, and does not appear in the later German or English publications. See: *Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, trans. Rudolf Boehm, 118. Merleau-Ponty in fact misquotes the French *sorte* for *espèce*. The French reads, “Puis, par mon activité perceptive, j'ai l'expérience (ou je peux avoir l'expérience) de toute 'nature,' y compris celle de mon propre corps qui par une espèce de réflexion se rapporte ainsi à lui-même.”]
- 3 Guillaume, “L'objectivité en psychologie.”

III THE SPATIALITY OF ONE'S OWN BODY AND MOTRICITY

- 1 See further, for example, Henry Head, "On Disturbances of Sensation with Especial Reference to the Pain of Visceral Disease," *Brain* 16, nos. 1 and 2 (1893), 1–133. [Allochiria is a condition in cases of central nervous lesions where sensation is localized on the symmetrically opposite side of the body from where the stimulation is applied.]
- 2 Ibid. We have also discussed the notion of a local sign in *La structure du comportement*, 102ff. [*La structure* (1990), 84ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 76ff.]
- 3 [For more information on the historical particularities of Merleau-Ponty's use of *le schéma corporel*, and on my choice of "body schema" as its English translation, see the Translator's Introduction.]
- 4 See further, for example, Head, "On Disturbances of Sensation," 189. Also, see: Arnold Pick, "Störungen der Orientierung am eigenen Körper," *Psychologische Forschung* 1 (1922), 303–18. Finally, see Schilder, *Das Körperschema*, even though Schilder admits that "such a complex is not the sum of its parts, but rather a new whole in relation to them" [*Das Körperschema*, 86].
- 5 As does Lhermitte, for example (see, *L'image de notre corps*).
- 6 [The term "cenesthesia" indicates the general awareness of one's own body arising from stimuli of various organs.]
- 7 Klaus Conrad, "Das Körperschema: Eine kritische Studie und der Versuch einer Revision," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 147 (1933), 365, 367. Bürger-Prinz and Kaila define the body schema as "the knowledge of one's own body as the completion of the whole and of the mutual relation of its limbs and its parts." Ibid., 365.
- 8 See, for example, Conrad, *ibid.*
- 9 Grünbaum, "Aphasie und Motorik," 395.
- 10 We have already seen (see above, page 83) that the phantom limb, which is a modality of the body schema, is understood through the general movement of being in the world.
- 11 See further: Oskar Becker, "Beiträge zur phänomenologischen Begründung der Geometrie und ihrer physikalischen Anwendungen," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 6 (1923), 385–560. [Selections of this article are available in translation: Oskar Becker, "Contributions toward a Phenomenological Foundation of Geometry and Its Physical Applications," in *Phenomenology and the Natural Sciences*, trans. Theodore Kiesel, ed. Joseph Kockelmans and Theodore Kiesel, 119–43 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970). The term "oriented space" is used on page 141.]
- 12 Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, "Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes des optischen Vorstellungsvermögens auf das taktile Erkennen," in *Psychologische Analyse hirnpathologischer Fälle auf Grund von Untersuchungen Hirnverletzter*, vol. 1, ed. Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, 157–250 (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1920).

- 13 Kurt Goldstein, "Über die Abhängigkeit der Bewegungen von optischen Vorgängen: Bewegungsstörungen bei Seelenblinden," *Monatschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie – Festschrift Liepmann* 54, no. 1 (1923), 141–94. This second study makes use of observations of the same patient, Schneider, two years after those collected in the work cited just above.
- 14 Kurt Goldstein, "Über Zeigen und Greifen," *Nervenarzt* 4 (1931), 453–66.
- 15 Ibid. This is a case involving a cerebellar injury.
- 16 Goldstein, "Über die Abhängigkeit," 175.
- 17 Sartre, *L'imaginaire*, 243. [*The Imaginary*, 191. Sartre writes: "It is not that the character is *realized* in the actor, but that the actor is *irrealized* in the character."]
- 18 Denis Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le comédien*. [Merleau-Ponty does not provide a specific reference. See: Denis Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le comédien* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009); Denis Diderot, "The Paradox of the Actor," in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. Geoffrey Bremner (London: Penguin Classics, 1994), 104.]
- 19 Goldstein, "Über die Abhängigkeit," 175–76.
- 20 Thus, the problem is not how the soul acts upon the objective body, since it does not in fact act upon it, but rather how the soul acts upon the phenomenal body. From this point of view, the question shifts and now becomes a question as to why there are two perspectives upon myself and my body – my body for myself and my body for others – and how these two systems can exist together. It is not enough, in effect, to say that the objective body belongs to the "for others" and that my phenomenal body belongs to the "for self." Nor can we refuse to raise the question of their relations, since the "for self" and the "for others" coexist in the same world, as is attested to by my perception of another person who immediately reduces me to the status of an object for him.
- 21 [Gelb and] Goldstein, "Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes," 167–206.
- 22 Ibid., 206–13.
- 23 For example, the subject runs his fingers along a certain angle: "My fingers," he says, "go straight, then they are stopped, then they move off again in another direction; this is an angle, this must be a right angle." "Two . . . , three . . . , four . . . , angles . . . , all of the sides are two centimeters long, [. . .] so they are equal, [. . .] all of the angles are right angles . . . it is a die." Ibid., 193, 195, see also 187–206.
- 24 Ibid., 206–13.
- 25 As Goldstein does: *ibid.*, 167–206.
- 26 Cf. above, the general discussion of the "association of ideas," beginning on page 18ff.
- 27 This word is borrowed from the patient Schneider. As he says: "I need *Anhaltspunkte*." [The German term *Anhaltspunkte*, meaning "reference points," is translated by Merleau-Ponty here and below as *prise* ("hold" or "grip").]
- 28 Gelb and Goldstein, "Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes," 213–22.

- 29 Goldstein, "Über die Abhängigkeit," 161. "Bewegung und Hintergrund bestimmen sich wechselseitig, sind eigentlich nur zwei herausgegriffene Momente eines einheitlichen [Aktes]." [Merleau-Ponty changes *Aktes* (of an act) to *Ganzes* (the whole) in this quotation.]
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid., 16off. Goldstein here is content to say that the background of abstract movement is the body, and this is true insofar as the body, in abstract movement, is no longer merely the vehicle and becomes the goal of the movement. Nevertheless, by changing function, it also changes existential modality and passes from the actual into the virtual.
- 33 W. van Woerkom, "Sur la notion de l'espace (le sens géométrique): Sur la notion du temps et du nombre; Une démonstration de l'influence du trouble de l'acte psychique de l'évocation sur la vie intellectuelle," *Revue neurologique* 26 (1919), 113–19.
- 34 See, for example, H. Le Savoureux, "Un philosophe en face de la psychanalyse," *La nouvelle revue française* (Feb. 1939), 316–27. "For Freud, the mere fact of having linked symptoms by plausible logical relations is a sufficient confirmation to justify the validity of a psychoanalytic, that is, a psychological interpretation. This characteristic of logical coherence, proposed as the criterion of precision in interpretation, relates the Freudian demonstration much more to metaphysical deduction than to scientific explanation [. . .]. In mental medicine, psychological plausibility is worth just about nothing in the search for causes" (318).
- 35 He only achieves recognition if he is allowed "imitative movements" (*nach-fahrende Bewegungen*) of the head, hands, or fingers that again run along the imperfect sketch of the object. Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, "Zur Psychologie des optischen Wahrnehmungs- und Erkennungsvorganges," in *Psychologische Analyse hirnpathologischer Fälle auf Grund von Untersuchungen Hirnverletzer*, vol. 1, ed. Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, 1–142 (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1920), 20–24. [Also published as: Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, eds., "Zur Psychologie des optischen Wahrnehmungs- und Erkennungsvorganges: Psychologische Analyse hirnpathologischer Fälle auf Grund von Untersuchungen Hirnverletzer," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 41 (1918); an abridged English version can be found: Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, "Analysis of a Case of Figural Blindness," in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 315–25 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]
- 36 "The patient's visual givens are missing a specific and characteristic structure. The impressions do not have a firm configuration like those of the normal person; they do not have, for example, the characteristic appearance of a 'square' or 'triangle,' of 'straight' or 'curved.' He has in front of him patches upon which he can only visually grasp some salient characteristics such as 'height,' 'size,' and their relation" (ibid., 76–77). A gardener who is sweeping up fifty paces away is "a long streak with something moving back and forth

near the top” (ibid., 108). In the street, the patient distinguishes people from cars because “people are all the same: thin and long; and cars are broad, unmistakably so, and much thicker” (ibid.).

37 Ibid., 116.

38 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes,” 213–22.

39 It is in this sense that Gelb and Goldstein interpreted the case of Schneider in the early works they devoted to his case (“Zur Psychologie des optischen Wahrnehmungs- und Erkennungsvorganges” and “Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes”). In their later work (“Über die Abhängigkeit” and above all “Über Zeigen und Greifen” and in the works published under their direction by Benary, Hochheimer, and Steinfeld), they have enlarged their diagnosis. The progress in their analysis is a particularly clear example of progress in psychology.

40 Goldstein, “Über Zeigen und Greifen,” 456.

41 Ibid., 458–59.

42 Cf., above, Introduction, page 7.

43 Brunshvicg, *L'expérience humaine et la causalité physique*, part 1, 3–85.

44 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes,” 227–50.

45 Goldstein, “Über die Abhängigkeit,” 163ff.

46 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes,” 244ff.

47 We are thinking here of the case of S, which Goldstein himself puts alongside Schneider’s case, in his work “Über die Abhängigkeit.”

48 “Über die Abhängigkeit,” 178–84.

49 Ibid., 150.

50 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes,” 227ff.

51 On the conditioning of the sensory givens by motricity, see further *La structure du comportement*, 41 [*La structure* (1990), 36; *The Structure of Behavior*, 36] and the experiments that show that a chained dog does not perceive in the same way as a dog that is free in its movements. The procedures of classical psychology mix quite strangely in Gelb and Goldstein with the concrete inspiration of Gestalt psychology. They certainly acknowledge that the perceiving subject reacts as a whole, but the totality is understood as a mixture, and touch only receives a “qualitative nuance” from its coexistence with vision; whereas, according to the spirit of Gestalt psychology, two sensory domains can only communicate by becoming integrated as inseparable moments in an inter-sensory organization. Now, if tactile givens constitute a configuration of a whole with visual givens, this is clearly on condition that they themselves achieve a spatial organization on their own terrain, without which the connection between touch and vision would be an external association, and the tactile givens would remain, in the overall configuration, what they were when considered in isolation – two consequences equally excluded by Gestalt theory.

It is only fair to add that Gelb, in another work, himself marks the insufficiency of what we just analyzed. He says we must not even speak of a coalescence of touch and vision in the normal subject, and we must not even distinguish these two components in reactions to space. Pure tactile

- experience and pure visual experience, with its space of juxtaposition and its represented space, are products of the analysis. There is a concrete handling of space in which all of the senses collaborate in an “undifferentiated unity,” and touch is only unfit for the thematic knowledge of space. Adhémar Gelb, “Die psychologische Bedeutung pathologischer Störungen der Raumwahrnehmung,” *Bericht über den IX. Kongreß für experimentelle Psychologie in München (von 21–25 April 1925)*, 23–80 (Jena: Fischer, 1926), 76.
- 52 See further, Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, “Über Farbennamenamnesie: Nebst Bemerkungen über das Wesen des amnestischen Aphasie überhaupt und die Beziehung zwischen Sprache und dem Verhalten zur Umwelt,” *Psychologische Forschung* 6 (1925), 127–86.
- 53 Goldstein, “Über Zeigen und Greifen,” 456–57. [I have removed Merleau-Ponty’s mistaken attribution of this article to both Gelb and Goldstein, but given the context it might be noted he perhaps included them both in recognition that elsewhere they together make use of the term “categorical attitude.”]
- 54 Head.
- 55 Bouman and Grünbaum. [Dr. L. Bouman is listed as the director of the clinic under which Grünbaum published the article cited in this volume. The two also published together on questions surrounding aphasia.]
- 56 Woerkm, “Sur la notion de l’espace.”
- 57 Husserl is often credited with this distinction. In fact, it is already found in Descartes and also in Kant. In the sense we are using here, Husserl’s originality lies beyond the notion of intentionality; rather, it is found in the elaboration of this notion and in the discovery, beneath the intentionality of representations, of a more profound intentionality, which others have called existence.
- 58 Gelb and Goldstein sometimes lean toward interpreting the phenomena in this sense. They have done more than anyone else in overcoming the classical alternative between automatism and consciousness. But they have never named this third term *between* the psychic and the physiological, between the for-itself and the in-itself, to which their analyses always lead them and that we will call “existence.” Hence their earliest works often fall back to the classical dichotomy between body and consciousness:

The movement of grasping is much more immediately determined by the relations between the organism and its surrounding field than is the act of pointing (. . .); it has less to do with relations that unfold in consciousness than with immediate reactions (. . .), we are dealing here with a much more vital process and, in biological terms, a more primitive one. [. . .] The act of grasping remains unaffected by modifications that have to do with the conscious part of the execution, by the deficiencies of simultaneous apprehension (in psychic blindness), by the shifting nature of perceived space (for cases of cerebellar injury), by disorders of sensitivity (in cases of certain cortical lesions), because the act of grasping does not happen in this objective sphere. The act is conserved so long as the peripheral stimulations still suffice to direct it with precision.

(“Über Zeigen und Greifen,” 459–60)

Gelb and Goldstein certainly question the existence of localizing reflex movements (Henri), but only insofar as they are considered innate. They maintain the idea of an “automatic localization that would not include any consciousness of space, since it even takes place in sleep” (sleep being here understood as absolute unconsciousness). This is certainly “learned” beginning from the global reactions of the whole body to tactile stimuli at the time of infancy – but this apprenticeship is understood as the accumulation of “kinesthetic residues” that will be “awakened” in the normal adult through external stimulation and that will orient him toward the appropriate lines of flight (“Über den Einfluß des vollständigen Verlustes,” 167–206). If Schneider correctly executes the movements necessary in his work, this is because they are habitual totalities and they do not require any consciousness of space (*ibid.*, 221–22).

- 59 Goldstein, who tended (as we saw in the preceding note) to relate *Greifen* to the body and *Zeigen* to the categorial attitude, is himself obliged to return to this “explanation.” The act of grasping, he says, can “be executed upon command and the patient *wants* to grasp. In order to do so, the patient has no need of a consciousness of the point of space toward which he launches his hand, but he nevertheless has a feeling of orientation in space . . .” (“Über Zeigen und Greifen,” 461). The act of grasping, for the normal subject, “still requires a categorial and conscious attitude” (*ibid.*, 465).
- 60 “Symbolvermögen schlechthin.” Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, page 320. [In the English translation, Cassirer’s phrase reads: “symbolic faculty as such.” Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, page 275.]
- 61 “Gemeinsamkeiten im Sein, als es Gemeinsamkeiten im Sinn sind.” *Ibid.* [In the English translation of this text, Cassirer’s passage reads: “not so much common factors in *being* as common factors in meaning.” *Ibid.* Merleau-Ponty’s citation of the German was slightly misspelled, and has been corrected.]
- 62 Cf., for example, Cassirer, “Pathologie des Symbolbewusstseins,” in *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, part II, chap. 6. [Cassirer, “Toward a Pathology of the Symbolic Consciousness,” in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, part II, chap. 6, pages 205–77.]
- 63 In fact, an intellectualist interpretation is imagined that reduced the pulverization of time and the loss of the future to a collapse of the categorial attitude.
- 64 *La structure du comportement*, 91ff. [*La structure* (1990), 75–76ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 69ff.]
- 65 [Merleau-Ponty’s term *gnosique* is meant in its etymological sense, meaning “perceptual, or having to do with fundamental knowledge,” which is distinguished in French from *gnostique*, meaning “Gnostic” or mystical.]
- 66 We are translating Husserl’s favorite term, *Stiftung* [institution].
- 67 See below, Part Three. – Cassirer sets himself an analogous goal when he reproaches Kant for having analyzed, for the most part, only an “intellectual ‘sublimation’ of experience” (*Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, page 14 [Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, page 10]), or when he attempts to express, through the notion of “symbolic pregnancy,” the

absolute simultaneity of matter and form [ibid., part II, chap. 5], or when he takes up, on his own account, Hegel's claim that the spirit carries and preserves its past in its present depth [ibid., 78]. But the relations between different symbolic forms remain ambiguous. One still wonders if the *Darstellung* function is a moment in the return to the self of an eternal consciousness, the shadow of the *Bedeutung* function; or whether, on the contrary, the *Bedeutung* function is an unpredictable amplification of the primary constitutive "wave." When Cassirer adopts the Kantian formula by which consciousness can only analyze what it had previously synthesized [*Critique of Pure Reason*, B130], he clearly returns to intellectualism despite the phenomenological and even existential analyses that his book contains and of which we will again have to make use.

- 68 W. Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz bei einem Fall von Seelenblindheit," *Psychologische Analysen hirnpathologischer Fälle*, ed. Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, *Psychologische Forschung* 2 (1922), 262.
- 69 [*tertium comparationis*: the third term of a comparison, the shared quality that allows for the comparison. Cf. Merleau-Ponty, *Œuvres*, note 1, page 810.]
- 70 Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz," 263.
- 71 We reserve a more precise study of perception for Part Two of this work, and here we say of it only what is necessary for clarifying the fundamental disorder and the motor disorder as found in Schneider. These anticipations and repetitions are inevitable if, as we are seeking to show, perception and the experience of one's own body are implicated in each other.
- 72 Wolfgang Hochheimer, "Analyse eines 'Seelenblinden' von der Sprache aus: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Bedeutung der Sprache für das Verhalten zur Umwelt," *Psychologische Analysen hirnpathologischer Fälle*, ed. Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, *Psychologische Forschung* 16 (1932), 49.
- 73 Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz," 255.
- 74 Schneider can hear the reading of a letter or himself read a letter that he wrote without recognizing it. He even declares that one could not, in the absence of a signature, know who a letter is from (Hochheimer, "Analyse eines 'Seelenblinden,'" 11–12.
- 75 Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz," 256.
- 76 It is this appropriation of the "motive" in its full sense that Cézanne obtained after hours of meditation: "together we germinate," he said. After which, suddenly, "everything falls into place." Joachim Gasquet, "Le Motif," in *Cézanne* (Paris: Bernheim Jeune, 1926), part II, 81–83. [Although Merleau-Ponty cites the 1926 edition of this book, his page references are incorrect here and below; perhaps he is referring to a different edition. For instance, the passage cited in this occurrence in fact occurs on page 136. I have included notes to the correct locations of his citations in the cited edition. For the English translation, see: Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne: A Memoir with Conversations*, trans. Christopher Pemberton (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 153 (translation modified).]
- 77 Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz," 279.

- 78 From a conversation that was important for him, Schneider only retains the general theme and the decision made at the end, but not the words of his interlocutor: "I know what I said in a conversation according to the reasons I had for saying it; what the other said, that is more difficult, because I have no basis (*Anhaltspunkt*) for recalling it" (Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz," 214). The patient is seen, moreover, reconstituting and deducing his own attitude at the time of the conversation, and he is incapable of directly "taking up again" even his own thoughts.
- 79 *Ibid.*, 214–15.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 222–23.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 240.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 284.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 213.
- 84 Hochheimer, "Analyse eines 'Seelenblinden,'" 37.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 86 Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz," 213.
- 87 Just as for him there are no equivocations or word plays because words have only one sense at a time and because the actual has no horizon of possibilities. *Ibid.*, 283.
- 88 Hochheimer, "Analyse eines 'Seelenblinden,'" 32.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 32–33.
- 90 "Unseres Hineinsehen in den Zeitvektor." *Ibid.*, 32
- 91 Benary, "Studien zur Untersuchung der Intelligenz," 213.
- 92 Hochheimer, "Analyse eines 'Seelenblinden,'" 33.
- 93 *Ibid.*, 32.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 69.
- 95 See further, Franz Fischer, "Raum-Zeit-Struktur und Denkstörung in der Schizophrenie," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 124 (1930), 250.
- 96 See further, *La structure du comportement*, 91ff. [*La structure* (1990), 75–76 ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 69ff.]
- 97 This term occurs frequently in Husserl's unpublished materials. [Husserl's phrase "ich kann" (the "I can") in fact occurs in both locations cited by Merleau-Ponty in this chapter. See, for instance, Husserl, *Ideas*, vol. 2, page 159; Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 97.]
- 98 Goldstein, "Über die Abhängigkeit," 163.
- 99 It is difficult to bring pure motor intentionality to light, for it hides behind the objective world that it contributes to constituting. The history of apraxia would show how the description of Praxis is almost always contaminated and, in the end, rendered impossible by the notion of representation. In his work *Über Störungen des Handelns bei Gehirnkranke* (Berlin: Karger, 1905), Hugo Liepmann strictly distinguishes between apraxia from agnosic behavioral disorders (where the object is not recognized but where the behavior is in accord with the representation of the object) and general disorders having to do with the "ideational preparation of the action" (forgetting the goal, confusing two goals, premature execution, transfer of the goal resulting from some

intervening perception) (20–31). For Liepmann’s patient (the “Counsellor of State”), the ideational process is normal, since the subject can execute with his left hand everything that he is prevented from doing with his right hand. But the hand is not paralyzed:

The case of the Counsellor of State shows that, between the so-called higher psychical processes and the motor innervation, there is still enough space for another deficiency that blocks the application of the outline (*Entwurf*) of action to the motricity of such and such a limb (. . .). The entire sensor-motor apparatus of a limb is, so to speak, disinterested (*exartikuliert*) in the overall physiological process.

(Ibid., 40–41)

Normally, then, every formulation of movement, while offering us a representation, is also offered to our body as a determinate practical possibility. The patient retained the movement formula as a representation, but it no longer makes sense for his right hand, or rather his right hand no longer has a sphere of action.

He has conserved everything that is communicable in an action, everything that it gives as objective and as perceptible for another person. What he is missing – the capacity of moving his right hand in conformity with the sketched-out plan – is something that is inexpressible and that cannot be an object for an external consciousness. He is missing a power, not a knowledge (“ein Können, kein Kennen”).

(Ibid., 47)

But when Liepmann wishes to make his analysis more precise, he returns to classical views and decomposes movement into a *representation* (the “formula of movement” that gives me, along with the principal goal, intermediary goals) and a system of *automatic reflexes* (that make the appropriate innervation intervene at each intermediary goal) (ibid., 59). The “power” mentioned above becomes a “property of the nervous system” (ibid., 47). This brings us back to the alternative between consciousness and body, which we believed we had left behind with the notion of *Bewegungsentwurf* or motor project. If it has to do with a simple movement, the representation of the goal and the intermediary goals are converted into movement because it triggers automatic reflexes acquired once and for all (ibid., 55); if it has to do with a complex movement, it calls forth the: “. . . kinesthetic memory of composite movements: just as the movement is composed of partial acts, the motor intention too is composed of the representation of its parts or its intermediary goals: this representation is what we have called the ‘formula of movement’” (ibid., 57). Praxis, then, is broken up into representations and automatic reflexes. The case of the Counsellor of State becomes unintelligible since it will be necessary to relate his disorders either to the ideational preparation of movement, or to some deficiency of the automatic reflexes, which is precisely what Liepmann excluded at

the outset. And motor apraxia is reduced either to ideational apraxia, that is, to a form of agnosia, or else to paralysis.

We will not render apraxia comprehensible nor make sense of Liepmann's observations unless the movement to be accomplished can be anticipated, but without being so through a representation. This is only possible if consciousness is not defined as the explicit positing of its objects, but rather more generally as a reference to an object that is practical as much as theoretical. That is, if consciousness is defined as being in the world, and if the body in turn is defined not as one object among others, but as the vehicle of being in the world. So long as consciousness is defined through representation, the only possible operation for it is of forming representations. Thus, consciousness will remain a motor consciousness insofar as it provides itself with a "movement representation." The body, then, executes the movement by reproducing it according to the representation that consciousness adopts and according to a movement formula that it receives from it (Cf. Otto Sittig, *Über Apraxie: Eine klinische Studie* (Berlin: Karger, 1931), 98). We must still determine through which magical operation the representation of a movement gives rise in the body to precisely this very movement. The problem is only resolved if we cease distinguishing between the body as a mechanism in itself and consciousness as a being for itself.

- 100 Jean Lhermitte, Gabrielle Lévy, and Nicolas Kyriaco, "Les perturbations de la représentation spatiale chez les apraxiques: À propos de deux cas cliniques d'apraxie," *Revue neurologique* 32, no. 5 (1925), 11, 597.
- 101 Jean Lhermitte and Julio-Oscar Trelles, "Sur l'apraxie pure constructive: Les troubles de la pensée spatiale et de la somatognosie dans l'apraxie," *Encéphale* 28, no. 6 (1933), 428. Cf. Jean Lhermitte, Jacques de Massary, and Nicolas Kyriaco, "Le rôle de la pensée spatiale dans l'apraxie," *Revue neurologique* 35, no. 6 (1928), 11, 895–903.
- 102 Head and Holmes, "Sensory Disturbances from Cerebral Lesions," 187.
- 103 [Merleau-Ponty writes "je suis à l'espace et au temps," a phrase that, like *être au monde*, makes use of the rich meaning of the preposition *à*. In addition to the translation "I am *of* space and time," it could be rendered as "I am *toward* space and time," "I am *at* space and time," or even "I *belong* to space and time."]
- 104 Grünbaum, "Aphasie und Motorik."
- 105 Goldstein, van Woerkom, Boumann, and Grünbaum.
- 106 Grünbaum, "Aphasie und Motorik," 386–92. [There is a typo in these page numbers in both French editions, which has been corrected here. Cf. *ibid.*, 398.]
- 107 [Merleau-Ponty's use of *s'irréaliser* here is noteworthy. Although the term indicates a connection to Husserl (preserved in the English translation as "irrealize"), the connection intended by the other uses of this verb in *Phenomenology of Perception* is clearly to its appearances in Sartre's *The Imaginary*. The actor *irrealizes* herself in the character, so here we might understand Merleau-Ponty to be saying the normal subject engaged in imitation takes himself up as, in, or through the model, that is, taking up the other's action as one's own.]

- 108 Ibid., 397–98.
- 109 Ibid., 394.
- 110 Ibid., 396.
- 111 On this point see *La structure du comportement*, 125ff. [*La structure* (1990), 102ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 93ff.]
- 112 Such as Bergson thinks when he defines habit as “the fossilized residue of a spiritual activity.” [This uncited phrase is from Bergson’s discussion of the philosophy of Félix Ravaisson, and can be found in the chapter “The Life and Work of Ravaisson.” See: Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Dover, 2007), 198.]
- 113 Head [and Holmes], *Sensory Disturbances from Cerebral Lesions*, 188.
- 114 Grünbaum, “Aphasie und Motorik,” 395.
- 115 Thus, habit clarifies the nature of the body schema. When we say that it immediately gives us the position of our body, we do not mean, in the empiricist manner, that it consists of a mosaic of “extensive sensations.” Rather, it is a system open onto the world, and correlative with it.
- 116 Cf. Jacques Chevalier, *L’habitude: Essai de métaphysique scientifique* (Paris: Boivin, 1929), 202ff.
- 117 See Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 1, *Du côté de chez Swann*, part II, 187, 193. “As though the musicians were not nearly so much playing the little phrase as performing the rites on which it insisted before it would consent to appear” (187). “Its cries were so sudden that the little violinist must snatch up his bow and race to catch them as they came” (193). [Merleau-Ponty does not provide bibliographic information for the edition cited. This passage can be found in the recent printing: Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 1, *Du côté de chez Swann* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 342, 346; Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, vol. 1, *Swann’s Way*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised D. J. Enright (New York: Modern Library, 1998), 494, 500.]
- 118 Paul Valéry, “Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci,” in *Variété*, 13–256 (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 177. [Paul Valéry, “Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci,” in *Leonardo, Poe, Mallarmé*, trans. Malcolm Cowley and James R. Lawlor, 3–63, Bollingen Series XLV-8 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).]

IV THE SYNTHESIS OF ONE’S OWN BODY

- 1 Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, part II, chap. 2. [Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, part II, chap. 2. The terms appear, in fact, at the beginning of part II, chap. 3, page 143.]
- 2 [“notre corps n’est pas d’abord dans l’espace: il est à l’espace.”]
- 3 Lhermitte, *L’image de notre corps*, 130.
- 4 Ludo van Bogaert, “Sur la pathologie de l’image de soi: Études anatomo-cliniques,” *Annales medico-psychologiques* 92 (Nov. 1934), 541.
- 5 Lhermitte, *L’image de notre corps*, 238.

- 6 Werner Wolff, "Selbstbeurteilung und Fremdbeurteilung in wissentlichen und unwissentlichen Versuch: Physiognomische Untersuchungen an der Stimme, dem Profil, den Händen und einer freien Nacherzählung," *Psychologische Forschung* 16 (1932), 251–328.
- 7 ["Autoscopy" is a condition in which the subject hallucinates that he or she is perceiving his or her double.]
- 8 Menninger-Lerchenthal, *Das Truggebilde der eigenen Gestalt*, 4.
- 9 Lhermitte, *L'image de notre corps*, 238.
- 10 ["je suis mon corps." This phrase echoes precisely the words of Gabriel Marcel, who wrote: "je ne me sers pas de mon corps, je suis mon corps" (I do not make use of my body, I am my body), in Gabriel Marcel, *Journal métaphysique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), 323; *Metaphysical Journal*, trans. Bernard Wall (London: Rockcliff, 1952), 332–33.]
- 11 The mechanics of the skeleton cannot, even at the level of science, account for the privileged movements and positions of my body. Cf. *La structure du comportement*, 196. [*La structure* (1990), 157–58; *The Structure of Behavior*, 145–46.]
- 12 Husserl, for example, had long defined consciousness or the imposition of a sense through the schema: *Auffassung-Inhalt* and as a *beseelende Auffassung*. He takes a decisive step in recognizing, as early as the *Lectures on Time*, that this operation presupposes another more profound one by which the content is itself prepared for this apprehension. "[N]ot every constitution has the schema: apprehension-content – apprehension" [*Auffassungsinhalt-Auffassung*]. Edmund Husserl, "Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins," ed. Martin Heidegger, *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung* 9 (1928), 5, note 1. [The more recent, extended German publication of this text is: *Zur Phänomenologie des Inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)*, ed. Rudolf Boehm, *Husserliana X* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1966). This extended version is published in English translation as: *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), 7.]
- 13 Koffka, *Growth of the Mind*, 174ff. [Merleau-Ponty in fact seems to be referring to the discussion from the chapter on "colour-vision," cf. 280–301.]

V THE BODY AS A SEXED BEING

- 1 [I have chosen to translate *sexué* in the title of this chapter as "sexed" in order to follow Merleau-Ponty's choice of the more biological term, versus *sexuel* (sexual). It is perhaps worth noting, however, that the term *sexué* only appears once in the body of the text (section c), as the discussion focuses primarily on the "sexual."]
- 2 The patient in question is Schneider, whose motor and intellectual deficiencies we studied above, and whose affective and sexual behavior have been analyzed by J. Steinfeld, "Ein Beitrag zur Analyse der Sexualfunktion," dir. Kurt Goldstein, *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 107 (1927), 175–80.

- 3 Cf., above, page 135.
- 4 Wilhelm Stekel, *La femme frigide*, trans. Jean Dalsace (Paris: Gallimard, 1937).
- 5 Sigmund Freud, *Introduction à la psychanalyse*, trans. S. Jankélévitch (Paris: Payot, 1922), 45. [It seems that Merleau-Ponty is in fact referring to pages 60–61. For the English see: “Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 15, 1915–16, trans. James Strachley, in collaboration with Anna Freud and Alan Tyson (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), 60–61.] In his empirical studies, Freud himself leaves causal thought behind when he shows that symptoms always have several senses, or, as he puts it, are “overdetermined.” For this comes down to admitting that a symptom, at the moment it is established, always finds some *raison d’être* in the subject, such that no event in a life is strictly speaking determined from the outside. Freud compares the external accident to the foreign body, which is, for the oyster, merely the opportunity for secreting a pearl. See, for example, Sigmund Freud, *Cinq psychanalyses* (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1935), chap. 1, page 91, note 1. [Sigmund Freud, “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 7, trans. James Strachley, in collaboration with Anna Freud, Alex Strachley, and Alan Tyson, 7–122 (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 83.]
- 6 *La structure du comportement*, 8off. [*La structure* (1990), 66ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 62–63ff.]
- 7 [Merleau-Ponty’s provides the French verb *vivre* as the translation for both of the bracketed German verbs in this sentence (*leben* and *erleben*). *Vivre* is a rich term in French, meaning “to simply live” (the usual translation into English of *leben*) and a strong sense of “to experience a world (by a subject)” (a usual translation of *erleben*). The latter is often closely associated with the French verb *éprouver* and adjective *vécu* (“lived experience”).]
- 8 Ludwig Binswanger, “Über Psychotherapie,” *Nervenarzt* 8 (1935), 113ff.
- 9 [“Aphonia” is literally the loss of the ability to speak.]
- 10 Binswanger (“Über Psychotherapie,” 188) indicates that a patient experiences a relaxation of the sphincter when he recalls and communicates a traumatic memory to the doctor.
- 11 Sartre, *L’imaginaire*, 38. [*The Imaginary*, 24, cf. 22–24.]
- 12 [“Pithiatism” is a form of hysteria that can be treated through suggestion, or the name for this form of treatment for hysteria generally.]
- 13 Freud, *Introduction à la psychanalyse*, 66. [Freud’s discussion of this example is in fact on page 54 of the cited French edition; Freud, “Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,” 55.]
- 14 Binswanger, “Über Psychotherapie,” 113ff.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 188.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 182.
- 17 “eine verdeckte Form unseres Selbstseins.” Binswanger, *ibid.*, 188. [Merleau-Ponty translates this into French as: “la forme cachée de l’être soi.”]
- 18 We are adopting the word “drama” in the etymological sense and without any

- Romantic overtones, that is, in the manner that [Georges] Politzer uses the word in his *Critique des fondements de la psychologie* (Paris: Rieder, 1929), 23. [The etymology of the word “drama” points to the Greek term *dran*, “to act” or “to do.” See Georges Politzer, *Critique of the Foundations of Psychology: The Psychology of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Maurice Apprey, foreword Amedeo Giorgi (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994), 34–35.]
- 19 René Laforgue, *L'échec de Baudelaire: Étude psychanalytique sur la névrose de Charles Baudelaire* (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1931), 126. [René Laforgue, *The Defeat of Baudelaire: A Psycho-Analytical Study of the Neurosis of Charles Baudelaire*, trans. Herbert Agar (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), 105.]
- 20 Blaise Pascal, “Section VI, no. 339,” in *Pensées et opuscules*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg (Paris: Éditions de Cluny, 1934), 486. [Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005), 31, entry labeled S143/L111. The English translation reads: “I can certainly conceive of a man without hands, feet, head, for it is only experience that teaches us the head is more necessary than the feet. But I cannot conceive of a man without thought. He would be a stone or a beast.”]
- 21 Cf., *La structure du comportement*, 160–61. [*La structure* (1990), 130–31; *The Structure of Behavior*, 120–21.]
- 22 [“L'existence humaine nous obligera à réviser notre notion usuelle de la nécessité et de la contingence, parce qu'elle est le changement de la contingence en nécessité par l'acte de reprise.”]
- 23 [This section originally appears as a footnote in the French editions. Given the length and importance of this note, and given the fact that this is the only discursive footnote for which Merleau-Ponty provides a section title within his own Table of Contents, I have decided to include it within the body of the text.]
- 24 [This German term *Mitsein* (“being-with”) is closely associated with Heidegger. Cf. *Being and Time*, division I, chap. IV.]

VI THE BODY AS EXPRESSION, AND SPEECH

- 1 [Merleau-Ponty is referring to the shared lineage of *avoir* and *habitude* in the Latin word *habere*, a lineage also shared by “have” and “habit” in English.]
- 2 This distinction between *avoir* and *être* does not coincide with the one offered by Marcel (*Être et avoir*) even though it does not exclude his distinction. Marcel takes *avoir* in the weak sense that it has when it designates a property relationship (I have a house, I have a hat), and immediately takes *être* in the existential sense of “belonging to . . .” [*être à*] or of taking up (I am my body, I am my life). We prefer to take into account the usage that gives the term *être* the weak sense of existence as a thing or of predication (the table is, or is large) and designate by the word *avoir* the relation of the subject to the term into which he is projected (I have an idea, I have a desire, I have fear). Hence our “*avoir*” corresponds more or less to Marcel’s *être*, and our *être* to his “*avoir*.” [Gabriel Marcel, *Être et avoir* (Paris: Aubier, 1925); Marcel, *Being and Having*. It might

be worth noting that, despite his stated preference here, Merleau-Ponty does employ “Marcel’s *être*,” as I noted above with his repetition of “*je suis mon corps*.” See above, page 527n10.]

- 3 [“Anarthria” is the condition of having lost the ability for articulate speech.]
- 4 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über Farbennamenamnesie.”
- 5 For example, see Jean Piaget, *La représentation du monde chez l’enfant* (Paris: Alcan, 1926), 60ff. [Jean Piaget, *The Child’s Conception of the World*, trans. Joan and Andrew Tomlinson (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1997), 61ff.]
- 6 Of course, there are reasons to distinguish between an authentic speech, which formulates for the first time, and a secondary expression, a speech about speech that makes up the usual basis of empirical language. Only the first is identical with thought.
- 7 Once again, what we say here only applies to originary speech – that of the child who utters his first word, of the lover who discovers his emotion, of the “first man who spoke,” or of the writer and the philosopher who awaken a primordial experience beneath traditions.
- 8 Husserl’s “Nachdenken, nachvollziehen,” in “Ursprung der Geometrie als intentional-historische Problem,” ed. Eugen Fink, *Revue internationale de philosophie* 1, no. 2 (1939), 212ff. [“The Origin of Geometry,” in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr, 353–78 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 360.]
- 9 Jean-Paul Sartre, *L’imagination* (Paris: Alcan, 1936), 148. [Jean-Paul Sartre, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique*, trans. and intro. Forrest Williams (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), 34–35.]
- 10 [The reference is to Bergson’s *Matter and Memory*.]
- 11 “[W]hen I awoke like this, and my mind struggled in an unsuccessful attempt to discover where I was, everything revolved around me through the darkness: things, places, years. My body, still too heavy with sleep to move, would endeavour to construe from the pattern of its tiredness the position of its various limbs, in order to deduce therefrom the direction of the wall, the location of the furniture, to piece together and give a name to the house in which it lay. Its memory, the composite memory of its ribs, its knees, its shoulder-blades, offered it a series of rooms in which it had at one time or another slept, while the unseen walls, shifting and adapting themselves to the shape of each successive room that it remembered, whirled round it in the dark [. . .] my body, the side upon which I was lying, faithful guardians of a past which my mind should never have forgotten, brought back before my eyes the glimmering flame of the nightlight in its urn-shaped bowl of Bohemian glass that hung by chains from the ceiling, and the chimney-piece of Siena marble in my bedroom at Combray, in my grandparents’ house, in those far distant days which at this moment I imagined to be in the present without being able to picture them exactly.” (Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, part I, 15–16). [Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann* (1987), 6; Proust, *Swann’s Way*, 5–6.]

- 12 Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, page 383. [Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, page 330.]
- 13 Kurt Goldstein, "L'analyse de l'aphasie et l'étude de l'essence du langage," trans. G. Bianquis, *Journal de Psychologie* 30 (1933), 459.
- 14 Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, part II, 92 [Proust, *Swann's Way*, 496ff.]
- 15 Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 3, *Le côté de Guermantes* [Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 3, *Le côté de Guermantes*, 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 45–46; Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, vol. 3, *The Guermantes Way*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised by D. J. Enright (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 54–56. Merleau-Ponty's description also bears some resemblance to when Proust's narrator describes the experience of the character Phèdre taking over Berma, the actress: see Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, vol. 2, *Within a Budding Grove*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised by D. J. Enright (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 26ff.]
- 16 For example, Max Scheler, *Nature et formes de la sympathie* (Paris: Payot, 1928), 347ff. [Republished as: Max Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, ed. Manfred S. Frings, *Gesammelte Werke* 7 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1973); Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath, intro. W. Stark (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), 253ff.]
- 17 In this case, Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, 453ff. [Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), 425ff; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes, revised Arlette Elkäim-Sartre (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2003), 406ff.]
- 18 "In my case, the efforts for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self, and let me look at the West and its conventions with new eyes: they destroyed it all for me. At the same time I could not sincerely take on the Arab skin: it was an affectation only. Easily was a man made an infidel, but hardly might he be converted to another faith. I had dropped one form and not taken on the other, and was become like Mohammed's coffin in our legend [. . .]. Such detachment came at times to a man exhausted by prolonged physical effort and isolation. His body plodded on mechanically, while his reasonable mind left him, and from without looked down critically on him, wondering what that futile lumber did and why. Sometimes these selves would converse in the void; and then madness was very near, as I believe it would be near the man who could see things through the veils at once of two customs, two educations, two environments." T. E. Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935), 30.
- 19 We know that the kiss is not one of the traditional customs of Japan.
- 20 Paternity is unknown to the indigenous peoples of the Trobriand Islands. Children are raised under the authority of the maternal uncle. After a long voyage, a husband is delighted to find new children in his home. He cares for them, watches over them, and loves them as his own. Malinowski, *The Father in Primitive Psychology*, cited by Bertrand Russell, *Le mariage et la morale* (Paris:

- Gallimard, 1930), 22. [Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals* (London: Routledge Classics, 2009), 11.]
- 21 [Pierre Marie was a French neurologist. Some of his papers on aphasia can be found in: Pierre Marie, *Papers on Speech Disorders*, trans. Merritt Frindel Cole and Monroe Cole (New York: Hafner, 1971).]
 - 22 Notions of this kind are found in works by Head, van Woerkom, Bouman and Grünbaum, and Goldstein.
 - 23 Grünbaum, for example (“Aphasie und Motorik”), shows that the disturbances of aphasia are at once *general* and *motor*. In other words, he turns motricity into an original mode of intentionality or of signification (cf. above, page 143), which amounts in the end to conceiving of man not as consciousness, but rather as existence.
 - 24 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über Farbennamenamnesie,” 151.
 - 25 *Ibid.*, 149.
 - 26 *Ibid.*, 151–52.
 - 27 [The German terms *Kohärenzerlebnis* and *Erlebnis des Passens* roughly mean “the coherence of experience” and “experience of passage.”]
 - 28 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über Farbennamenamnesie,” 150.
 - 29 *Ibid.*, 162.
 - 30 Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, page 258. [Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, page 222. In his translation into French, Merleau-Ponty begins this passage with “cette vie,” or “this life,” rather than “consciousness.” He also generalizes the final clause, changing it from “in normal perception” to “for the normal subject.”]
 - 31 Gelb and Goldstein, “Über Farbennamenamnesie,” 158.
 - 32 *Ibid.*
 - 33 *Ibid.*
 - 34 *Ibid.*
 - 35 *Ibid.*
 - 36 In the presence of a given sample (red), they can be seen recalling the memory of an object of the same color (strawberry) and from this rediscovering the name of the color (red strawberry, red). *Ibid.*, 177.
 - 37 *Ibid.*, 158.
 - 38 Cf. Goldstein, “L’analyse de l’aphasie et l’étude de l’essence du langage.”
 - 39 [“Alexia,” also known as “word blindness,” is a visual aphasia, that is, the inability to see the written word or to read.]
 - 40 [“Paraphasia” is a linguistic disturbance in which the patient alters or substitutes words.]
 - 41 [“Engrams,” also known as “memory traces,” are a hypothetical material trace left by an event in the brain, accounting for memory.]
 - 42 Goldstein, “L’analyse de l’aphasie et l’étude de l’essence du langage,” 460. Goldstein is here in agreement with Grünbaum (“Aphasie und Motorik”) about the need to overcome the alternative between the classical conception (Broca) and modern research (Head). Grünbaum criticizes modern researchers for “not foregrounding the motor exteriorization and the psycho-physical

- structures upon which it depends as a fundamental domain that dominates the clinical presentation [*tableau*] of aphasia" (Grünbaum, "Aphasie und Motorik," 386).
- 43 Benary, "Analyse eines 'Seelenblinden.'" At issue here again is the case of Schneider, which we have analyzed above in relation to motricity and sexuality. [The article cited here is actually written by Hochheimer, and the analysis can be found on pages 30ff.]
- 44 Goldstein, "L'analyse de l'aphasie et l'étude de l'essence du langage," 496. Emphasis is our own.
- 45 ["une *parole parlante* et une *parole parlée*."]
- 46 Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 117. [The quoted material is in fact found on pages 196 and 194, and Merleau-Ponty's citation strays from the original. For the English translation, see: Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 213, 212.]
- 47 [Cézanne is reported to have read this aloud just prior to the passage cited by Merleau-Ponty. The original passage is from *La peau de chagrin* (1831), translated as: Honoré de Balzac, *The Magic Skin*, in *The Magic Skin, The Quest of the Absolute, and Other Stories*, ed. George Saintsbury, *The Works of Honoré de Balzac* (Philadelphia: Avil, 1901). The translation included here has been taken from the English translation of Gasquet's text, which strays slightly from the original (see Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 222).]
- 48 Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 123ff. [The passage in fact appears on page 205. For the English translation, see: Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 222 (the translation has been modified slightly).]
- 49 [This final section title is separated from the other titles of this chapter, and the paragraph is preceded by three asterisks in the body of the text.]
- 50 Descartes, "Descartes à Elisabeth, 28 juin, 1643," AT III, 690–95. [Descartes, "To Princess Elizabeth, 28 June 1643," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 3, pages 226–29.]
- 51 "I believe that it is very necessary to have properly understood, once in a lifetime, the principles of metaphysics, since they are what gives us the knowledge of God and of our soul. But I also think that it would be very harmful to occupy one's intellect frequently in meditating upon them, since this would impede it from devoting itself to the functions of the imagination and the senses. I think the best thing is to content oneself with keeping in one's memory and one's belief the conclusions which one has once drawn from them, and then employ the rest of one's study time to thoughts in which the intellect co-operates with the imagination and the senses." Ibid. [AT III, 695; *ibid.*, 228.]

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

- 1 Tastevin, Czermak, and Schilder, cited by Lhermitte, *L'image de notre corps*, 36ff.

- 2 [As noted, "Autoscopy" is a condition in which the subject hallucinates that he or she is perceiving his or her double.]
- 3 Lhermitte, *L'image de notre corps*, 136–88; cf. 191: "For the duration of autoscopy, the subject is overcome by a feeling of profound sadness whose extension spreads out to the point of penetrating the very image of his double, who seems to be animated by affective vibrations identical with those felt by the original person"; "his consciousness seems to move outside himself." See as well: Menninger-Lerchenthal, *Das Truggebilde der eigenen Gestalt*, 180: "I suddenly had the impression that I was outside of my body."
- 4 Jaspers, cited by Menninger-Lerchenthal, *ibid.*, 76.
- 5 [In fact, Stratton was himself the subject of these experiments.]
- 6 George Malcolm Stratton, "Vision without Inversion of the Retinal Image," *Psychological Review* 4 (1897), 350. [Although I have quoted from the English original, I have altered the passage to follow Merleau-Ponty's French translation in which he shifts from Stratton's first person description to a third person description.]
- 7 Lhermitte, *L'image de notre corps*, 39.

I SENSING

- 1 ["Mes repentirs, mes doutes, mes contraintes / Sont le défaut de ton grand diamant." ("My doubts, my strivings, my repentances, / These are the flaw in your great diamond.") The location of this allusion, not cited by Merleau-Ponty, was provided by Colin Smith in the previous English translation of *Phenomenology of Perception*. The bilingual version of the passage can be found in: Paul Valéry, "Le cimetière marin / The Graveyard by the Sea," in *Poems*, trans. David Paul, Bollingen Series XLV-1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 216–17.]
- 2 Kurt Goldstein and O. Rosenthal, "Zur Problem der Wirkung der Farben auf den Organismus," *Schweizer Archiv für Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 26, no. 1 (1930), 3–9.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *La structure du comportement*, 201. [*La structure* (1990), 165; *The Structure of Behavior*, 152. In the original French publication, there is a typesetting error that jumbles this and the surrounding footnotes. I have corrected this error in the same manner as Boehm's German translation, *Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, 245–46.]
- 5 Goldstein and Rosenthal, "Zur Problem der Wirkung der Farben," 23.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Goldstein and Rosenthal, "Zur Problem der Wirkung der Farben," 23–24.
- 8 Kandinsky, *Form und Farbe in der Malerei*; Goethe, *Farbenlehre*, in particular para. 293; cited by Goldstein and Rosenthal, *ibid.* [Wassily Kandinsky, "On the Spiritual in Art," in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, vol. 1 (1901–21), 121–219 (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982), 183. This passage from Kandinsky is translated as "demands nothing, calls out to no one"; see also: J. W. von Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, trans. Charles Locke

- Eastlake (New York: Dover, 2006). Although Merleau-Ponty cites paragraph 293, he seems to be more generally referring to the initial sections of part VI, “Effect of Colour with Reference to Moral Associations,” which includes discussions of red and blue.]
- 9 Goldstein and Rosenthal, *ibid.*, 23–25.
- 10 Heinz Werner, “Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden, I: Die Rolle der Sprachempfindung im Prozess der Gestaltung ausdrucks-mässig erlebter Wörter,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 114 (1930), 158.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*, 159.
- 13 Heinz Werner, “Über die Ausprägung von Tongestalten,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 101 (1926), 159–81.
- 14 Werner, “Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden,” I, 160.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 158.
- 16 Wolfgang Köhler, *Die physischen Gestalten im Ruhe und in stationären Zustand* (Erlangen and Braunschweig: Philosophische Akademie, 1924), 180. [This is available in an abridged English translation: Wolfgang Köhler, “Physical Gestalten,” in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 17–54 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]
- 17 [This phrase, attributed to Hegel, is perhaps drawn from Alexandre Kojève’s lectures on Hegel in Paris, attended by Merleau-Ponty between 1933 and 1939. For the English version of selected lectures, see: Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980). This phrase is also used repeatedly by Sartre, such as his claim that: “Everything happens as if the Present were a perpetual hole in being – immediately filled up and perpetually reborn.” *Being and Nothingness*, 170.]
- 18 We have shown elsewhere that consciousness, seen from the outside, could not be a pure for itself. (*La structure du comportement*, 168ff. [*La structure* (1990), 136–37; *The Structure of Behavior*, 125–26]). We are beginning to see that it is no different for consciousness seen from within. [Merleau-Ponty makes use of the same image of a “hole” in being at the cited location in his earlier work. The French of this sentence reads “un creux, un pli qui s’est fait et qui peut se défaire,” which one may compare to his later formulations in: “The Intertwining – The Chiasm,” in *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968).]
- 19 [Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B131–32.]
- 20 Husserl, *Méditations cartésiennes*, 33. [*Cartesian Meditations*, 38–39. As noted with an earlier reference to *Méditations cartésiennes* (see Preface, note 33), I have translated this passage from Merleau-Ponty’s French, rather than providing the English translation of Husserl.]
- 21 [“tient à lui.” As indicated by Merleau-Ponty here, there are several ways to translate the final turn of phrase *tenir à*. In addition to the physical and emotional senses that can be conveyed by the choice of “attached to,” it can also indicate “hold to,” “care for,” and even “fit with” or “fit into.”]

- 22 For example, Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, 226. [*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 256.]
- 23 [Merleau-Ponty's allusion here is to Eugène Minkowski, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970). He will return to this below; see page 301.]
- 24 One subject declares that "the 'spatial concepts' *he had thought himself to possess* before the operation" did not give him a genuine representation of space and were merely a "pure knowledge of fact, which he could only have acquired from private reflection..." (Marius von Senden, *Raum- und Gestaltauffassung bei operierten Blindgeborenen, vor und nach der Operation* (Leipzig: Barth, 1932), 23). [Marius von Senden, *Space and Sight: The Perception of Space and Shape in the Congenitally Blind before and after Operation*, trans. Peter Heath (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960), 41.] The acquisition of vision brings about a general reorganization of existence, which affects touch as well. The center of the world is shifted, the tactile schema forgotten, recognition through touch is less certain, and from now on the existential current passes through vision, and it is of this weakened sense of touch that the patient speaks. [The passage cited at the beginning of this note has been altered slightly to reflect the cited English translation. I have, however, preserved the emphasis, which was added by Merleau-Ponty.]
- 25 *Ibid.*, 36, 92–93. [*Ibid.*, 54, 110. I have modified the English translation in the first part of this citation to follow Merleau-Ponty's more active rendering. It is also worth noting the patient referred to in the second half of the quotation is in fact a young girl, not a young boy.]
- 26 *Ibid.*, 102–4. [*Ibid.*, 118–19.]
- 27 *Ibid.*, 124. [*Ibid.*, 139.]
- 28 *Ibid.*, 113. [*Ibid.*, 129. In the French, Merleau-Ponty uses the verb *baigner*, as in the smell "washes over" us.]
- 29 *Ibid.*, 123. [*Ibid.*, 138.]
- 30 *Ibid.*, 28–29. [*Ibid.*, 45–47. The latter, "Scharfen Kante," is on page 47, and is rendered as "sharp edges" in English.]
- 31 [The statements are actually from a twelve-year-old blind girl.]
- 32 *Ibid.*, 45. [*Ibid.*, 62.]
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 *Ibid.*, 50ff. [See in particular page 53; *ibid.*, 69–70. Again, the case referred to involves a blind woman, not a blind man. The case is cited by von Senden in support of his theory that blind persons have a schematic knowledge of spatial organization. In this case, the human body and the tree share certain schematic similarities, which accounts for the surprise of the patient after the operation. The "so much difference" quotation is not obvious in the patient's report, but likely summarizes the following line: "One of the important pieces of information that she imparted to a blind friend was this discovery that men do not really look like trees at all."]
- 35 *Ibid.*, 186. [This example can in fact be located on page 188 of the original; *ibid.*, 200.]

- 36 Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 599–600.
- 37 Ibid., 613.
- 38 "Einstellung auf reine Optik," Katz cited by Gelb, *ibid.*, 599–600.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Werner, "Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden," I, 155.
- 41 Ibid., 157.
- 42 Ibid., 162.
- 43 Heinz Werner and Karl Zietz, "Die dynamische Struktur der Bewegung," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 105 (1927), 226–49.
- 44 Werner, "Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden," I, 163.
- 45 See above: Introduction, Chapter I.
- 46 Werner, "Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden," I, 154.
- 47 J. Stein, "Über die Veränderung der Sinnesleistungen," 422–23.
- 48 W. Mayer-Gross and H. Stein, "Über einige Abänderungen der Sinnestätigkeit im Meskalinrausch," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 101 (1926), 385.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 It is possible, for example, that under the influence of mescaline a modification of chronaxies could be observed. This fact would in no way constitute an explanation of cases of synesthesia through the objective body if, as we will show, the juxtaposition of several sensible qualities is incapable of making us understand perceptual ambivalence such as it is given in synesthetic experience. The change of chronaxies could not be the cause of synesthesia, but rather its objective expression or the sign of an overall and deeper event that does not have its *seat* in the objective body, and that concerns the phenomenal body as the vehicle of being in the world.
- 52 Werner, "Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden," I, 163.
- 53 Wilhelm Schapp, *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, Inaugural Dissertation (Göttingen: Kaestner, 1910; Erlangen: Philosophische Akademie, 1925), 23ff.
- 54 Ibid., 11.
- 55 Ibid., 21ff.
- 56 Wilhelm Specht, "Zur Phänomenologie und Morphologie der pathologischen Wahrnehmungstäuschungen," *Zeitschrift für Pathopsychologie* 2, no. 1 (1914), 9, 11ff.
- 57 Alain, *Quatre-vingt-un chapitres*, 38.
- 58 "The manner in which the convergence of the conductors occurs does not condition the non-distinction of the images in simple binocular vision since the competition between the monoculars can occur, and the separation of the retinas does not account for their distinction when it occurs, for, normally, all else being equal in the receptor and the conductors, this distinction does not occur." Renée Déjean, *Étude psychologique de la "distance" dans la vision* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1926), 74.
- 59 Kurt Koffka, "Some Problems of Space Perception," in *Psychologies of 1930*,

- ed. Carl Murchison, 161–87 (Worcester, MA: Clark University Press, 1930), 179. [In harmony with Merleau-Ponty's claim, Koffka commits to accepting "double images only where they are really seen" (180).]
- 60 Déjean, *Étude psychologique de la "distance" dans la vision*, 110–11. This author says "a prospective activity of the mind" and, as we shall see, we do not agree with this point.
- 61 We know that Gestalt theory bases this oriented process upon some physical phenomenon in the "combination zone." We have said elsewhere that it is contradictory to remind the psychologist of the variety of phenomena or structures, and then to go on to explain them all through some set of them, in this case the physical forms. Focusing, as a temporal form, is not a physical or psychological fact for the simple reason that all forms belong to the phenomenal world. Cf., on this point, *La structure du comportement*, 175ff., 191ff. [*La structure* (1990), 141, 154–55; *The Structure of Behavior*, 130–31ff., 176–77ff. The term "combination zone" is used by Koffka in the article under consideration just above. Cf. Koffka, "Some Problems of Space Perception," 179.]
- 62 Déjean, *Étude psychologique de la "distance" dans la vision*, 110–11.
- 63 Insofar as it has an "Umweltintentionalität." Frederik Jacobus Johannes Buytendijk and Helmuth Plessner, "Die Deutung des mimischen Ausdrucks," *Philosophischer Anzeiger* 1 (1925), 81.
- 64 Of course, the senses must not be placed on the same footing, as if they were all equally capable of objectivity and equally permeable to intentionality. Experience does not present them as equivalent. It seems that visual experience is more accurate than tactile experience, that it gathers into itself its truth, and adds to it, because vision's richer structure presents modalities of being to me that are unsuspected for touch. The unity of the senses is actualized transversally, due to their own structure. But something analogous is found in binocular vision, since it is true that we have a "commanding eye" that subordinates the other. These two facts – the taking up of sensory experiences in visual experience and the taking up of the functions of one eye by the other – prove that the unity of experience is not a formal unity, but rather an autochthonous organization.
- 65 Palágyi, Stein.
- 66 Cited by Werner, "Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden," I, 152. [Given the differences between Merleau-Ponty's French translation of Herder's German and the current English translation, I have translated the phrase from the French. Herder's phrase occurs in his "Essay on the Origin of Language," 139, translated into English as, "We are a single thinking *sensorium commune*, touched from various sides." Johann Gottfried Herder, "Essay on the Origin of Language," in *On the Origin of Language*, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode, 87–176 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).]
- 67 The distinction between *Ausdruck*, *Darstellung*, and *Bedeutung* is made by Cassirer in *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3. [More literally, these German terms mean: "expression," "presentation," and "signification."]
- 68 Werner, "Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden," I, 160ff.

- 69 Or in any case the German word *hart*.
- 70 Heinz Werner, "Untersuchungen über Empfindung und Empfinden, II: Die Rolle der Sprachempfindung im Prozess der Gestaltung ausdrücksmässig erlebter Wörter," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 117 (1930), 238.
- 71 *Ibid.*, 239. What we have just said about the word is even more the case for the sentence. Even before having truly read the sentence, we can say that it is "in the style of a newspaper," or that it is "an incident report" (*ibid.*, 251–53). A sentence can be understood, or at least given a certain sense, by going from the whole to the parts. This is not because, as Bergson says, we form an "hypothesis" based on the first words, but rather because we have a language organ that molds to the linguistic configuration that is presented to it just as our sense organs are directed toward the stimulus and synchronize with it.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 230.
- 73 [It should be clear from this section and the following one that Merleau-Ponty means *matière de connaissance* ("matter of knowledge") to contrast with "form of knowledge," particularly in the sense employed by Kant, but his use of the concept of *hylē* also recalls Husserl's use of the concept of *hylē* ("matter") as a purely sensual layer of perception, alluded to in the next section.]

II SPACE

- 1 [Merleau-Ponty's organizational structure shifts over the next two chapters, which are the longest of the text. He introduces several major section titles, which are subsequently divided into subsections. To distinguish this structure from other chapters, I have maintained his capital letters to indicate the major sections, and introduced lower case Roman numerals for their internal subdivisions.]
- 2 By this we understand either a Kantian conception, such as found in Pierre Lachièze-Rey (*L'idéalisme kantien*), or that of Husserl in the second period of his philosophy (the period of the *Ideen*). [See: Pierre Lachièze-Rey, *L'idéalisme kantien* (Paris: Alcan, 1932). Merleau-Ponty is also referring here to Husserl's so-called transcendental turn, as discussed in 1913 in: Edmund Husserl, "Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, I," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung* I (1913), 1–323; *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, vol. 1, *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, 1, ed. Karl Schuhmann, Husserliana III-1 and III-2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976); *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, vol. 1, *General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. F. Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1998).]
- 3 [Merleau-Ponty's terms here, *le haut et le bas*, indicate equally "up and down," "high and low," "above and below," and "top and bottom."]
- 4 George Malcolm Stratton, "Some Preliminary Experiments on Vision without Inversion of the Retinal Image," *Psychological Review* 3 (1896), 611–17. ["But when, on the other hand, full attention was given to the outer objects, these

- frequently seemed to be in normal position, and whatever there was of abnormality seemed to lie in myself, as if head and shoulders were inverted and I were viewing objects from that position, as boys sometimes do from between their legs." *Ibid.*, 616.)
- 5 Stratton, "Vision without Inversion."
 - 6 [*Ibid.*, 348.]
 - 7 [*Ibid.*, 471.]
 - 8 [*Ibid.*, 470.]
 - 9 This is, at least implicitly, Stratton's interpretation.
 - 10 Stratton, "Vision without Inversion," 350. [Merleau-Ponty is almost certainly thinking instead of this passage from page 351: "But in this older representation there was an unusual paling and weakening of the image of those parts which had most often been seen during the course of the experiment."]
 - 11 "Some Preliminary Experiments," 617.
 - 12 "Vision without Inversion," 346.
 - 13 George Malcolm Stratton, "The Spatial Harmony of Touch and Sight," *Mind* 8 (1899), 492–505.
 - 14 *Ibid.* [See particularly page 499.]
 - 15 Stratton, "Some Preliminary Experiments," 614. [Merleau-Ponty is likely referring to the following passage from page 615: "In this way the limbs began actually to feel in the place where the new visual perception reported them to be."]
 - 16 Stratton, "Vision without Inversion," 350.
 - 17 Max Wertheimer, "Experimentelle Studien über das Sehen von Bewegung," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 61 (1912), 258.
 - 18 [The French term *niveau* translates both as "level" and as "standard," and Merleau-Ponty's use of the term draws upon both senses of the word.]
 - 19 *Ibid.*, 253.
 - 20 Nagel, cited by Wertheimer, *ibid.*, 257. [Wertheimer is referring to Ernest Nagel (1901–85), a Czech-American philosopher of science.]
 - 21 *La structure du comportement*, 199. [*La structure* (1990), 164; *The Structure of Behavior*, 151.]
 - 22 [I am reading *jouissance* in the legal sense of the term, "enjoyment of use" or "possession."]
 - 23 It is very difficult to bring about a change of level for sonorous phenomena. If a pseudophone is used to arrange for sounds from the left to arrive at the right ear before they reach the left ear, then a reversal of the auditory field occurs that is comparable to the reversal of the visual field in Stratton's experiment. Now, a "righting itself" of the auditory field is never achieved, even given a long habituation. The localization of sounds, through hearing alone, remains incorrect throughout the experiment. It is only accurate and the sound only appears to come from the object situated to the left, if the object is seen at the same time as heard. Paul Thomas Young, "Auditory Localization with Acoustical Transposition of the Ears," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 11, no. 6 (1928), 399–429.

- 24 In experiments concerning auditory inversion, the subject can give the illusion of a correct localization when he sees the sonorous object because he inhibits his sonorous phenomena and “lives” in the visible. *Ibid.*
- 25 [As noted earlier, the French word *sens* means both “meaning” and “direction.”]
- 26 Stratton, “Vision without Inversion,” see: “Day One of the Experiment.” [Stratton writes of nausea on page 346.] Wertheimer speaks of a “visual vertigo” (“Experimentelle Studien,” 257–59). We do not stand up straight because of the skeletal mechanism nor even through the nervous system’s regulation of muscular tonus, but because we are engaged in a world. If this engagement is absent, the body collapses and again becomes an object.
- 27 The distinction between the depth of things in relation to me and the distance between two objects is made by Jacques Paliard, “L’illusion de *Sinnsteden* et le problème de l’implication perceptive,” *Revue philosophique* 109 (1930), 400, and by Erwin Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne* (Berlin: Springer, 1935), 267–69. [Erwin Straus, *The Primary World of Senses: A Vindication of Sensory Experience*, trans. Jacob Needleman (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1963).]
- 28 N. Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité*, ed. Geneviève Rodis-Lewis (Paris: Vrin, 1962), vol. 1, book 1, chap. IX. [N. Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, trans. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), book 1, chap. IX.]
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 Paliard, “L’illusion de *Sinnsteden*,” 383.
- 31 Koffka, “Some Problems of Space Perception”; Guillaume, *Traité de psychologie*, chap. 9.
- 32 In other words, a conscious act can have no *cause*. But we prefer not to introduce the concept of consciousness that Gestalt psychology could contest and that we, for our part, do not accept without reservations; and so here we limit ourselves to the incontestable notion of experience.
- 33 Pierre Quercy, *Études sur l’hallucination*, vol. 2, *La clinique* (Paris: Alcan, 1930), 154ff.
- 34 Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 81. [The phrase in fact occurs on page 130; for the English translation, see: Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 148.]
- 35 Koffka, “Some Problems of Space Perception,” 164ff.
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 [“. . . et de dire ce qu’ils veulent dire d’eux-mêmes.”]
- 38 [Bergson’s comment about waiting for the sugar to dissolve can be found in: Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Dover, 1998), 12–13.]
- 39 The idea of depth as a spatio-temporal dimension is indicated by Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne*, 302, 306.
- 40 Husserl, “*Präsenzfeld*.” It is defined in “*Zeitbewusstseins*,” 32–35. [On the *Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 33ff. The term *Präsenzfeld* (“field of presence”) does not in fact occur in the pages cited, although Husserl does refer to the *Zeitfeld* (“temporal field”) on page 31 in the German and

- page 33 in the English, and there is a relevant discussion of perception in relation to retention and protention in section 16, just a few pages after the cited range of pages. Merleau-Ponty discusses this “field of presence” below; see: Part Three, Chapter II, section d.]
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 [This term, which indicates the type of synthesis accomplished prior to the thetic syntheses or syntheses of the understanding (as in Kant), is often called “passive” synthesis by Husserl, and is thus a key moment in Husserl’s own “Transcendental Aesthetic”; see: *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 444, 582. Cf. also the “Translator’s Introduction” to the same volume, where Anthony Steinbock makes this connection explicit, particularly on pages xxii ff. and lxii ff.]
- 43 Adhémar Gelb, “Über den Wegfall der Wahrnehmung von ‘Oberflächenfarben,’” in *Psychologische Analyse hirnpathologischer Fälle auf Grund von Untersuchungen Hirnverletzter*, vol. 1, ed. Adhémar Gelb and Kurt Goldstein, 354–418 (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1920). [An abridged English version can be found as: Adhémar Gelb, “A Distortion of ‘Surface Colours,’” in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 326–32 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]
- 44 Wertheimer, “Experimentelle Studien,” Introduction, 259–61.
- 45 [“Micropsia” and “macropsia” are pathological conditions in which objects appear either smaller or larger than they really are.]
- 46 Wertheimer, “Experimentelle Studien,” 212–14.
- 47 [A “tachistoscope” is an instrument that serves to show objects to the eye for a very brief duration.]
- 48 Wertheimer, “Experimentelle Studien,” 221–33.
- 49 Ibid., 254–55.
- 50 Ibid., 245.
- 51 Paul Ferdinand Linke, “Phänomenologie und Experiment in der Frage der Bewegungsauffassung,” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 2 (1916), 653.
- 52 Ibid., 656–57.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid., 660.
- 55 Ibid., 661.
- 56 Wertheimer, “Experimentelle Studien,” 227.
- 57 The identity of the moving object is not, says Wertheimer, obtained through a conjecture: “Here, and over there, this *must* be the same object” (ibid., 187).
- 58 In fact, Wertheimer does not say in an affirmative way that the perception of movement contains this immediate identity. He only says this implicitly, when he reproaches an intellectualist conception, which relates movement to a judgment, in order to give us an identity that “fließt nicht direkt aus dem Erlebnis” [“does not flow directly from lived experience”] (ibid.).
- 59 Linke ultimately agrees (“Phänomenologie und Experiment in der Frage der Bewegungsauffassung,” 664–65) that the subject of movement can be indeterminate (such as when we see a triangle moving toward a circle and

transforming into a circle in the stroboscopic presentation), that the moving object does not need to be thematized by an explicit perceptual act, that it is only “co-intended” [*co-visé*] or “co-grasped” in the perception of movement, that it is not seen (in the manner of the back of objects or the space behind me), and that, finally, the identity of the moving object like the unity of the perceived thing is grasped through a categorial perception (Husserl) where the category functions without being thought for itself. But the notion of categorial perception throws the entire preceding analysis into question. For it amounts to introducing a non-thetic consciousness into the perception of movement, that is, as we have shown, to rejecting not only the *a priori* as essential necessity, but also to rejecting the Kantian notion of synthesis. Linke’s work typically belongs to the second phase of Husserlian phenomenology, at the transition between the *eidetic* method or logicism of the beginning, and the existentialism of the last period.

- 60 This problem cannot be posed without having already overcome realism, such as the realism of Bergson’s famous descriptions. To the multiplicity of juxtaposition of external things, Bergson contrasts the “multiplicity of fusion and interpenetration” of consciousness. He proceeds through dilution. He speaks of consciousness as a liquid in which instants and positions melt together. He seeks an element in them where their dispersion would be truly abolished. The undivided gesture of my arm that changes position presents to me the movement that I do not find in exterior space, because my movement, when placed back into my inner life, discovers in these gestures the unity of the unextended. The lived experience that Bergson contrasts with thought is, for him, observed, it is an immediate “given.” – This is to seek a solution in the equivocal. We do not clarify space, movement, and time by discovering an “inner” layer of experience where their multiplicity is *truly* erased and abolished. For if this occurs, then neither space, nor time, nor movement remains. The consciousness of my gesture, if it is genuinely an undivided state of consciousness, is no longer the consciousness of a movement at all, but rather an ineffable quality that cannot teach us about movement. [Cf. Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, 120–39, 162.] As Kant said, external experience is necessary to inner experience, which is certainly ineffable, but only because it is meaningless. If, in virtue of the principle of continuity, the past belongs to the present and the present to the past, then the past and the present no longer exist; if consciousness snowballs upon itself, it is, just like the snowball and like all things, entirely in the present. If the phases of movement gradually merge, then nothing anywhere moves. The unity of time, of space, and of movement cannot be obtained through blending; and it is only understood through a real operation.

If consciousness is a multiplicity, who will receive this multiplicity in order to in fact live it as multiplicity? And if consciousness is fusion, how will it know the multiplicity of moments that it fuses? The Kantian idea of synthesis is valid against Bergson’s realism, and consciousness as the agent of this synthesis cannot be confused with any thing, even a fluid one. What is primary and

immediate for us is a flux that does not dissipate like a liquid that, in the active sense, carries itself away, which it cannot do without knowing that it does so, and without gathering itself in the same act by which it carries itself away – it is that “time that does not pass” mentioned by Kant at some point. For us, the unity of movement is not a real unity. But no more is the multiplicity, and what we criticize in the Kantian idea of synthesis and in certain of Husserl’s Kantian texts is precisely that it presupposes, at least ideally, a real multiplicity that it must overcome. What is for us originary consciousness is not a transcendental I, freely positing in front of itself a multiplicity in itself and constituting it from top to bottom; rather, it is an I that only dominates diversity *thanks to* time and for whom even freedom is a destiny, such that I never have a consciousness of being the absolute author of time, or of composing the movement that I live through. It seems to me that the moving something itself changes positions and accomplishes the passage from one instant or position to another. For this relative and pre-personal I who grounds the phenomenon of movement, and in general the phenomenon of the real, clearly needs to be clarified. Let us conclude for the moment that, against the notion of synthesis, we prefer the notion of a synopsis that does not yet indicate an explicit positing of diversity.

- 61 Wertheimer, “Experimentelle Studien,” 255–56.
- 62 The laws of the phenomenon would thus have to be made more precise; what is certain is that there are laws and that the perception of movement, even when it is ambiguous, is not facultative and depends upon the point of focus. Cf. Karl Duncker, “Über induzierte Bewegung: Ein Beitrag zur Theorie optisch wahrgenommener Bewegung,” *Psychologische Forschung* 12 (1929), 180–259. [An abridged English translation appears as: Karl Duncker, “Induced Motion,” in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 161–72 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]
- 63 Koffka, “Perception,” 578. [In his translation from English into French, Merleau-Ponty elides the “seems” in the final clause: “c’est alors mon propre train qui démarre” (“then it is my own train that moves away”).]
- 64 Mayer-Gross and H. Stein, “Über einige Abänderungen der Sinnestätigkeit im Meskalinrausch,” 375.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 377. [Merleau-Ponty clarifies below that he has in mind a patient who senses his food to be in another dimension than his body.]
- 66 *Ibid.*, 381.
- 67 Franz Fischer, “Zeitstruktur und Schizophrenie,” *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 121 (1929), 572.
- 68 Mayer-Gross and H. Stein, “Über einige Abänderungen der Sinnestätigkeit im Meskalinrausch,” 380.
- 69 Fischer, “Zeitstruktur und Schizophrenie,” 558–59.
- 70 Fischer, “Raum-Zeit-Struktur und Denkstörung in der Schizophrenie,” 247ff.
- 71 Fischer, “Zeitstruktur und Schizophrenie,” 560.
- 72 “The schizophrenic symptom is never anything but a pathway toward the schizophrenic person.” Kronfeld, cited by Franz Fischer, “Zur Klinik und

- Psychologie des Raumerlebens," *Schweizer Archiv für Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 31, no. 1 (1933), 61.
- 73 Eugène Minkowski, *Le temps vécu: Études phénoménologiques et psychopathologiques* (Paris: d'Artrey, 1933), 394. [Minkowski, *Lived Time*, 429–30].
- 74 Ludwig Binswanger, "Traum und Existenz," *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* 23 (1930), 674. [Given the differences between the English translation and Merleau-Ponty's translation of this passage into French, I have provided a translation of the latter in the body of the text. The English translation reads: "When, for example, we speak of a high and a low tower, a high and a low tone, high and low morals, high and low spirits, what is involved is not a linguistic carrying over from one sphere of Being (*Seinssphären*) to the others, but, rather, a general meaning matrix in which all particular regional spheres have an equal 'share,' i.e., which contains within it these same particular, specific meanings (spatial, acoustic, spiritual, psychic, etc.)." Ludwig Binswanger, "Dream and Existence," trans. Jacob Needleman, in *Dream and Existence: Michel Foucault and Ludwig Binswanger*, ed. Keith Hoeller, 81–105 (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993), 82.]
- 75 Ludwig Binswanger, "Über Ideenflucht," *Schweizer Archiv für Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 30, no.1 (1933), 78ff.
- 76 Eugène Minkowski, "Les notions de distance vécue et d'ampleur de la vie et leur application en psychopathologie," *Journal de Psychologie* 27 (1930), 727–45. Cf. "Les notions de distance vécue et d'ampleur de la vie et leur application en psycho-pathologie," chap. 7, part I in *Le temps vécu*. [Minkowski, *Lived Time*, chap. 7, section I.]
- 77 ". . . In the street, it is like a whispering that *envelops him entirely*; in the same way he feels deprived of his freedom as if *around him* people were always present; at the café, it is as if there is something nebulous *around him* and he senses a trembling; and when the voices are particularly frequent and numerous, the atmosphere *around him* is saturated as if by fire, and this brings about a suffocating within his heart and lungs and a fog around his head." Eugène Minkowski, "Le problème des hallucinations et le problème de l'espace," *Évolution psychiatrique* 2 (1932), 69. [This article later appears in a slightly modified version as section II of chap. 7 in *Le temps vécu*. See pages 384, 391ff.; see *Lived Time*, chap. 7, section II, pages 418, 426ff.]
- 78 Ibid. [Merleau-Ponty is referring to a footnote on this page in which Minkowski refers the reader to a previous article from which he quotes the passage about the chestnuts. The passage referred to can be found in: Eugène Minkowski, "De la rêverie morbide au délire d'influence," *L'évolution psychiatrique* 2 (1927), 144.]
- 79 Minkowski, *Le temps vécu*, 376. [Minkowski, *Lived Time*, 409.]
- 80 Ibid., 379. [The passage is in fact found on page 377; *ibid.*, 410.]
- 81 Ibid., 381. [*Ibid.*, 414.]
- 82 This is why we can say, with Scheler ("Idealismus-Realismus"), that Newton's space expresses the "emptiness of the heart." [Max Scheler, "Idealismus-Realismus," *Philosophischer Anzeiger* 2 (1927), 298; "Idealismus-Realismus,"

- in *Späte Schriften*, ed. Manfred S. Frings, 183–241, *Gesammelte Werke* 9 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1976); cf. “Idealism and Realism,” in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. David R. Lachterman, 288–356 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Press, 1973), 331–33.]
- 83 Fischer, “Zur Klinik und Psychologie des Raumerlebens,” 70.
- 84 Fischer, “Raum-Zeit-Struktur und Denkstörung in der Schizophrenie,” 253.
- 85 Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne*, 290.
- 86 It could be shown, for example, that aesthetic perception in turn opens a new spatiality, and that the painting as a work of art is no longer in the space that it inhabits as a physical thing or as a colored canvas. It could be shown that dance unfolds in a space without goals or directions, that it is a suspension of our history, that in the dance the subject and his world are no longer opposed, are no longer detached from each other, that consequently the parts of the body are no longer accentuated in the dance as they are in natural experience: the torso is no longer the foundation from which the movements arise and into which they sink once they are completed; rather, the torso directs the dance, and the movements of the limbs are at its service.
- 87 [Cf. Minkowski’s discussion of “dark space” (*espace noir*) versus “light space” (*espace clair*). See *Lived Space*, 427.]
- 88 Cassirer, *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, page 80. [“So ist in der Welt des Mythos jegliche Erscheinung immer und wesentlich Inkarnation.” (“Thus in the world of myth every phenomenon is always and essentially an incarnation.” Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, page 68.)]
- 89 *Ibid.*, 82. [*Ibid.*, 72. “A whispering or rustling in the woods, a shadow darting over the ground, a light flickering on the water: all these are demonic in their nature and origin . . . ‘There is a fitting in; there is an omen; there is a warning’ – but behind these there is not necessarily a personal subject, the shape of any recognizable warner. It is the whole of reality rather than any separate part of it that constitutes this subject . . .”]
- 90 Ludwig Binswanger, “Das Raumproblem in der Psychopathologie,” *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 145 (1933), 630.
- 91 Minkowski, “Le problème des hallucinations et le problème de l’espace,” 64. [Cf. *Lived Time*, 421.]
- 92 Cassirer, *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen*, vol. 3, page 80. [Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, pages 67–68. This sentence paraphrases Cassirer, and the German terms included by Merleau-Ponty can be found on the cited pages. I have altered the translation of the terms to conform to the stated treatment of *sens/signification* being followed in this translation.]
- 93 Binswanger, “Das Raumproblem in der Psychopathologie,” 617.
- 94 Edmund Husserl, “Fünfte Untersuchung,” in *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 2, *Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, 4th ed. (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1928), 387ff. [Husserl, “5th Investigation,” *Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, pages 158ff. See also Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 2, *Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, ed. Ursula Panzer, *Husserliana* XIX (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984).]

- 95 Fink, "Die phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls in der gegenwärtigen Kritik," 350. [Fink, "The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism," 109.]
- 96 The problem of expression is indicated by Fink, *ibid.*, 382. [*Ibid.*, 143ff.]
- 97 ["Wahrnehmung" is German for "perception," but Merleau-Ponty here writes *Wahr-Nehmung*, hence emphasizing the component words *Wahr* ("truth") and *nehmen* ("to take"), which might be translated literally as "truth taking."]

III THE THING AND THE NATURAL WORLD

- 1 [The Latin phrase, which means approximately "the face of the whole universe," is a reference to Spinoza and appears in what is commonly referred to as "Letter 64," which can be found in: Spinoza, "Letters," in *Complete Works*, 919.]
- 2 Schapp, *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, 59ff.
- 3 The constancy of forms and sizes in perception is thus not an intellectual function, but rather an existential function; that is, it must be related to the pre-logical act by which the subject takes up his place in his world. By placing a human subject at the center of a sphere upon which discs of equal diameter are attached, it is observed that the constancy is much more perfect according to the horizontal plane than according to the vertical. The enormous moon on the horizon and the tiny moon at its zenith are only strange cases of the same law. On the contrary, vertical movement for the monkey is just as natural in the trees as horizontal movement is for us upon the ground, and their vertical constancy is just as perfect. Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, 94ff.
- 4 Hering's *Gedächtnisfarbe* [memory-color].
- 5 Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 613.
- 6 It is *eindringlicher* [insistent]. *Ibid.*
- 7 Stumpf, cited by Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 598.
- 8 Gelb, *ibid.*, 671.
- 9 David Katz, *Der Aufbau der Farbwelt*, 2nd ed., *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, Ergänzungsband 7 (1930), 4–5. [David Katz, *The World of Colour*, trans. Robert Brodie MacLeod and Charles Warren Fox (London: Routledge, 1999), 4–5.]
- 10 Cited by Katz, *ibid.*, 67. [*Ibid.*, 52–53 (translation modified).]
- 11 Adolf Ackermann, "Farbschwelle und Feldstruktur," *Psychologische Forschung* 5 (1924), 44–84.
- 12 Katz, *Der Aufbau der Farbwelt*, 8–21. [Katz, *The World of Colour*, 7–17ff.]
- 13 *Ibid.*, 47–48. [*Ibid.*, 27–28.] Lighting is a phenomenal given that is as immediate as surface color. The child perceives it as a line of force that shoots through the visual field, and this is why the shadow that corresponds to the lighting cast behind the objects is immediately placed with it in a living relation: the child says that the shadow "flees from the light." Jean Piaget, *La causalité physique chez l'enfant* (Paris: Alcan, 1927), chap. 8, page 218. [Jean Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality*, trans. Marjorie Gabain (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), chap. 8, page 187.]

- 14 In fact, it has been shown (Gelb, "Über den Wegfall der Wahrnehmung von 'Oberflächenfarbe'") that the constancy of colors could be found in subjects who no longer have either the color of surfaces or the perception of lighting conditions. Constancy would be a much more rudimentary phenomenon. It is found among animals with sensory organs far simpler than the eye. The lighting/object-illuminated structure is thus a special and highly organized type of constancy. But it remains necessary for an objective and precise constancy, and for a perception of things (Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 677).
- 15 The experiment is already reported by Hering, *Grundzüge der Lehre vom Lichtsinn*, 15. [Hering, *Outlines of a Theory of the Light Sense*, 16.]
- 16 Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 600.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 673.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 674.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 675.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 677.
- 21 These are the laws developed by Katz in *Der Aufbau der Farbwelt*.
- 22 Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 677.
- 23 In fact, the psychologist, as positivistic as he would like to remain, senses quite well that the ultimate value of inductive research is to lead us to a view upon phenomena, and he never fully resists the temptation to indicate at least this realization. Thus, P. Guillaume (*Traité de psychologie*, 175), in demonstrating the constancy laws of colors, writes that the eye "takes the lighting into account." Our research here, in a sense, does nothing but develop this short phrase. It signifies nothing on the level of strict positivity. The eye is not the mind; rather, it is a material organ. How could it ever "take account" of anything? It can only do this if we introduce the phenomenal body alongside the objective body, if we turn the objective body into a knowing-body, and if, finally, when it comes to the subject of perception, we replace consciousness with existence, that is, with being in the world through a body.
- 24 Schapp, *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, 91.
- 25 In order to describe the essential function of lighting, Katz borrows the term *Lichtführung* from painters (*Der Aufbau der Farbwelt*, 379–81). [Katz, *The World of Colour*, 224–26.]
- 26 ["Nous percevons d'après la lumière, comme nous pensons d'après autrui dans la communication verbale."]
- 27 Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 633.
- 28 Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, 255ff. See also *La structure du comportement*, 108ff. [*La structure* (1990), 89ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 80ff.]
- 29 *Wesenskoexistenz*. Gelb, "Die 'Farbenkonstanz' der Sehdinge," 671.
- 30 Katz, *Der Aufbau der Farbwelt*, 36. [Katz, *The World of Colour*, 28.]
- 31 *Ibid.*, 379–81. [*Ibid.*, 224–26.]
- 32 *Ibid.*, 213. [*Ibid.*, 133.]
- 33 *Ibid.*, 456. [*Ibid.*, 278ff.]
- 34 *Ibid.*, 382. [*Ibid.*, 227.]

- 35 Ibid., 261. [Ibid., 161–62.]
- 36 Erich M. von Hornbostel, “Das räumliche Hören,” *Handbuch der normalen und pathologischen Physiologie* 11 (1926), 602–18.
- 37 Heinz Werner, *Grundfragen der Intensitätspsychologie*, *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 89, Ergänzungsband 10 (1922), 68ff.; Hermann Fischel, “Transformationserscheinungen bei Gewichtshebungen,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 98 (1926), 342ff.
- 38 See David Katz, *Der Aufbau der Tastwelt*, *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, Ergänzungsband 11 (1925), 58. [David Katz, *The World of Touch*, trans. and ed. Lester E. Krueger (Hillsdale, NJ) and London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1989), 76. The translation of several of the short citations of Katz in this section has been modified to reflect Merleau-Ponty’s French.]
- 39 Ibid., 62. [Ibid., 79. Cf. 41.]
- 40 Ibid., 20. [Ibid., 41.]
- 41 Ibid. [Ibid.]
- 42 Ibid., 58. [Ibid., 76.]
- 43 [Ibid., 56. The translation reads “touch-transparent films.”]
- 44 Ibid., 24–35. [Ibid., 48–56.]
- 45 Ibid., 38–39. [Ibid., 58.]
- 46 Ibid., 42. [Ibid., 60–61.]
- 47 Cited by Katz, without reference. Ibid., 4. [Ibid., 28.]
- 48 Ibid., 160. [Ibid., 159.]
- 49 Ibid., 46. [Ibid., 63. Katz stresses how the “representation of the touching fingers belongs to the representative tactile image.”]
- 50 Ibid., 51. [Ibid., 66.]
- 51 Schapp, *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie den Wahrnehmung*, 59ff.
- 52 [One might here identify an allusion to Husserl’s technical use of the term “phantom”; cf. *Ideas*, vol. 2, section 10, pages 23ff. and *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, section 4, page 61.]
- 53 Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 81. [The discussion is in fact on page 133 of the French book. For the English translation, see: Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 151.]
- 54 This unity of sensory experiences relies upon their integration in a single life of which they thereby become the visible attestation and the emblem. The perceived world is not only a symbolism of each sense in terms of the other senses, but moreover a symbolism of human life, as is proven by the “flames” of passion, the “light” of the mind, and so many other metaphors and myths. Hedwig Conrad-Martius, “Realontologie,” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung* 6 (1923), 302.
- 55 Ibid., 196. The same author also speaks of a *Selbstkundgabe* [self-declaration] of the object. See Hedwig Conrad-Martius, “Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Aussenwelt,” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung* 3 (1916), 371).
- 56 Scheler, “Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik,” 149–51. [Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 149–50.]
- 57 Ibid., 140. [Ibid., 140.] [A more literal translation from Merleau-Ponty’s

- rendering of Scheler's phrase into French would be: "everything whose existence or non-existence, whose nature or alteration counts for me in practice."]
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 [Merleau-Ponty does not provide a citation to this passage from Balzac's novel *Le lys dans la vallée* (1836). The English translation provided here is from: Balzac, *The Lily of the Valley*, trans. Lucienne Hill (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1997, 83–84).]
- 60 Fritz Novotny, "Das Problem des Menschen Cézanne im Verhältnis zu seiner Kunst," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 26 (1932), 274–75.
- 61 Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 123. [The passage in fact occurs on page 204. For the English translation, see: Gasquet, *Cézanne*, 221.]
- 62 Émile Bernard, "La méthode de Cézanne," *Mercur de France* 138, no. 521 (1920), 298.
- 63 Sartre, *L'imaginaire*, 19. [*The Imaginary*, 8–9.]
- 64 Scheler, "Der Formalismus in der Ethik," 52. [*Formalism in Ethics*, 57.]
- 65 Ibid., 51–54. [Ibid., 56–59.]
- 66 See *La structure du comportement*, 72ff. [*La structure* (1990), 60–61ff.; *The Structure of Behavior*, 56–57ff.]
- 67 [The translation of Merleau-Ponty's use of the verb *se profiler* is not straightforward. Most naturally, it is translated as "stands out," but in a phenomenological context it refers to Husserl's use of *die Abschattungen* (profiles) and the verb *sich abschatten* (to appear in perspectival partialities or as profiles). I have translated this verb as either "to appear perspectivally" or "to appear in profile," depending on the context. Cf. below, page 438ff.]
- 68 E. Stein, "Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften," 10ff.
- 69 [This Latin term *omnitudo realitatis* means: "the All of reality." Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A575/B603.]
- 70 [As noted earlier, the term "transition synthesis" is drawn from Husserl, who also uses the phrase "passive synthesis" in contrast to an active or intellectual (Kantian-styled) synthesis.]
- 71 ["Appresentation" or "apperception" is employed by Husserl to mean "making intended as co-present," such as when the side of an object currently seen "appresents" its other, non-present, aspects as co-given.]
- 72 Konrad Zucker, "Experimentelles über Sinnestäuschungen," *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* 83 (1928), 706–54.
- 73 Minkowski, "Le problème des hallucinations et le problème de l'espace," 66–67, note 2. [Cf. *Lived Time*, 423–24, note 13.]
- 74 P. Schröder, "Das Halluzinieren," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 101 (1926), 606.
- 75 Alain, *Système des beaux-arts*, 15. [Alain does not provide a reference for this citation, which he modernizes (and which Merleau-Ponty himself alters a second time again). The source is most likely Montaigne's essay titled "On the

- Power of the Imagination," which can be found in English in *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech, 109–20 (New York: Penguin, 1991), 112.]
- 76 Specht, "Zur Phänomenologie und Morphologie," 15.
- 77 Jaspers, "Zur Analyse der Trugwahrnehmungen," 471–72.
- 78 [Merleau-Ponty's use of *croissance asséritive* recalls Janet's distinction between *asséritive* (often translated as "assertive," although neither Janet nor Merleau-Ponty uses the adjective *assertif*) and *réflective* beliefs. For Janet, the adjective *asséritif (ive)* is used to describe a child's *a priori* belief in something that he or she cannot imagine to be false.]
- 79 Hence Alain's hesitations: if consciousness always knows itself, then it must immediately distinguish the perceived from the imaginary, and it will be said that the imagination is not visible (*Système des beaux-arts*, 15ff.). But if there is an hallucinatory deception, then the imaginary must be able to pass for the perceived, and it will be said that judgment carries vision along (*Quatre-vingt-un chapitres*, 18).
- 80 As Alain accuses psychologists of doing.
- 81 Minkowski, "Le problème des hallucinations et le problème de l'espace," 66. [Cf. *Lived Time*, 423.]
- 82 *Ibid.*, 64. [Cf. *Ibid.*, 421.]
- 83 *Ibid.*, 66. [Cf. *Ibid.*, 422–23.]
- 84 This is why Palágyi could say that perception is a "direct fantasy," and hallucination a "reverse fantasy." Gerhard Schorsch, *Zur Theorie der Halluzinationen* (Leipzig: Barth, 1934), 64.
- 85 Schröder, "Das Halluzinieren," 606.
- 86 Menninger-Lerchenthal, *Das Truggebilde der eigenen Gestalt*, 76ff.
- 87 [Extracampine hallucinations are when a patient believes he or she perceives beyond the possible perceptual field.]
- 88 Menninger-Lerchenthal, *Das Truggebilde der eigenen Gestalt*, 147.
- 89 Unpublished self-observation, Jean-Paul Sartre. [Sartre received mescaline injections in 1935 while writing *L'imaginaire*, and Sartre's self-observations reproduced here by Merleau-Ponty bear some similarities to parts of Sartre's novel *La nausée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938).]
- 90 Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne*, 290.
- 91 Minkowski, "Le problème des hallucinations et le problème de l'espace," 67. [Cf. *Lived Time*, 424.]
- 92 *Ibid.*, 68. [Cf. *Ibid.*, 426.]
- 93 Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne*, 288.
- 94 *Ibid.* – The patient "lives within the horizon of his landscape, dominated by univocal impressions, without motivation and without foundation, which are no longer inserted in the universal order of the world of things and in the universal meaningful relations of language. The things that the patients designate by names we are familiar with are nevertheless not for them the same things for them as they are for us. They have only maintained and introduced into their landscape the debris of our world, and again this debris does not remain what it was as a part of the whole." For the schizophrenic, things are

fixed and inert; for the delirious person, on the contrary, things are even more eloquent [*parlantes*] and living than ours. “If the illness progresses, the disjunction of the thoughts and the disappearance of speech reveal the loss of geographical space, and the dullness of feelings reveals the impoverishment of the landscape” (Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne*, 291).

- 95 The hallucination, says Klages, presupposes a “Verminderung des Ausdrucksgehaltes der äusseren Erscheinungswelt” [loosely: “a reduction of the expressive content of the phenomenal world”], cited by Schorsch, *Zur Theorie der Halluzinationen*, 71.
- 96 Husserl’s *Urdoxa* or *Urglaube*. [The German terms mean “originary opinion” and “originary faith.”]
- 97 Piaget, *La représentation du monde chez l’enfant*, 69ff.

IV OTHERS AND THE HUMAN WORLD

- 1 [There appears to be a typo in the original 1945 French publication, which reads: “. . . comme connaissance d’elle-même, est dans le mode du Je, peut-elle être saisie dans le mode du Toi et par là dans le monde du ‘On’?” Given the focus on linguistic modes here, I have read the third last word, *monde* (“world”), as *mode*. It might be worth noting that the later French editions, however, offer an alternative correction, opting rather to leave the final *monde* and to replace the second *mode* with *monde*.]
- 2 *La structure du comportement*, 125. [*La structure* (1990), 102; *The Structure of Behavior*, 93.]
- 3 This is the work that we attempted to complete elsewhere. (*La structure du comportement* [*The Structure of Behavior*], chaps. 1 and 2.)
- 4 [As noted previously, the phrase *pensée de voir* (“thought about seeing”) is used by Descartes in his replies to the “Fifth Set of Objections” to his *Meditations*, 249. The allusion is often made by Merleau-Ponty to this Cartesian move from “perceiving” to “the thought that one is perceiving,” and I have occasionally opted for this more explicit translation to clarify his intentions.]
- 5 [See, for instance, Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 240.]
- 6 This is why disturbances of a subject’s body schema can be detected by asking him to indicate on the doctor’s body the place on his own body that is being touched.
- 7 Piaget, *La représentation du monde chez l’enfant*, 21. [*The Child’s Conception of the World*, 47.]
- 8 [There appears to be a typographical error in the original French, which reads $\upsilon\alpha\xi\delta$. Given the context of this phrase, it seems correct to follow the more recent French versions, as well as German translation of this book, and to replace this error with the Ancient Greek term $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$, which Merleau-Ponty writes elsewhere in this book as *doxa*, and which roughly translates as “opinion.”]
- 9 Valéry, “Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci,” 200. [Valéry, “Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci,” 212.]

- 10 [Merleau-Ponty's unreferenced allusion is likely to Péguy's discussion of the voice: "cette résonance profonde, cette voix qui n'était pas un voix du dehors" (this deep resonance, this voice that was not a voice from the outside) in: Charles Péguy, *Notre patrie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 124.]
- 11 [Merleau-Ponty's reference here is to the protagonist in Stendhal's *La chartreuse de Parme* (1839). See, for instance, Stendhal, *The Charterhouse of Parma*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 80ff.]
- 12 There would be a need, then, to write history in the present tense. This is what Jules Romains, for example, did in *Verdun*. [See: Jules Romains, *Verdun*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Souvenir Press, 1962).] Of course, even if objective thought is incapable of exhausting a present historical situation, it must not be concluded that we should live history with our eyes closed, as some individual adventure, deny ourselves every attempt to put it in perspective, and throw ourselves into action without any guiding thread. Fabrice fails to understand Waterloo, but the reporter is already closer to the event. The spirit of adventure takes us even farther from the event than objective thought does. There is a thought in contact with the event that seeks its concrete structure. A revolution, if it is truly contained in the direction [*sens*] of history, can be thought at the same time as lived.
- 13 Husserl, "Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie," part III. [By part III, Merleau-Ponty would be actually referring to part III-B. See note in the Bibliography below. The terms *Urpräsenz* and *Entgegenwärtigung* employed here by Merleau-Ponty can be found in Husserl's *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 185. Merleau-Ponty uses the phrase "la présence à moi-même" for Husserl's term *Urpräsenz*, so I have here used "presence to myself" rather than the English translation of Husserl, which is "primal presence."]
- 14 In his late philosophy, Husserl acknowledged that every reflection must begin by returning to the description of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*). But he adds that, through a second "reduction," the structures of the lived world [*monde vécu*] must themselves be put back into the transcendental flow of a universal constitution where all of the obscurities of the world would be clarified. It is, however, clear that there are two possibilities here: either the constitution makes the world transparent, and then it would not be clear why reflection would have to pass through the lived world, or reflection retains something of this lived world, and this would be because it never strips the world of its opacity. Husserl's thought moves more and more in this second direction despite many echoes of the logicist period – it is seen when he turns rationality into a problem, when he acknowledges significations that are ultimately "fluid" (*Erfahrung und Urteil*, 428), and when he grounds knowledge upon an ordinary *doxa*. [Husserl's use of the term *Fließender* [fluid] occurs in a footnote in *Experience and Judgment*, 353. It also occurs earlier in relation to the concept of *doxa* (*ibid.*, 59).]

PART THREE

- 1 [In the initial French publication, this title appeared in the Table of Contents with hyphens, while the hyphens were absent on the title page of Part III in the text. The hyphens are included in both places in the later printings, and so have been included here.]

I THE *COGITO*

- 1 [Given the repeated variations in this chapter, it is worth reminding the reader that the capitalization of *Cogito* varies in the initial French publication of *Phénoménologie de la perception*, while it has been standardized without capitalization in all occurrences in the 2005 and 2010 Gallimard editions. I have opted to follow as the capitalization of the original publication.]
- 2 Pierre Lachièze-Rey, "Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante," *Recherches philosophiques* 3 (1933–34), 134.
- 3 Lachièze-Rey, *L'idéalisme kantien*, 17–18. [For the internally cited passage from Plato's "Meno," see: Plato, *Complete Works*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 880.]
- 4 Lachièze-Rey, *ibid.*, 25.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 55.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 184.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 17–18. [The Latin phrase that ends the passage is from Spinoza, "Ethics," part V, prop. XXIII, *Scholium*. It is slightly altered in Lachièze-Rey's passage, and reads in Spinoza: "*At nihilominus, sentimus experimurque, nos aeternos esse*" ("And nevertheless, we sense and experience that we are eternal").]
- 8 Pierre Lachièze-Rey, *Le moi, le monde et Dieu* (Paris: Boivin, 1938), 68.
- 9 Immanuel Kant, "Übergang," in *Opus Postumum*, ed. Erich Adickes (Berlin: Reichard, 1920), 756; cited by Lachièze-Rey, *L'idéalisme kantien*, 464. [I have taken the English translation from Kant, *Opus Postumum*, ed. with an intro. Eckart Förster, trans. Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 255. In the words introducing this quotation, Merleau-Ponty shifts the subject of Kant's claim from "l'esprit de l'homme" to "mon esprit," which I have preserved in this translation as "my mind," rather than following Kant's English translator's use of "the spirit of man."]
- 10 Lachièze-Rey, "Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante," 145.
- 11 Lachièze-Rey, *L'idéalisme kantien*, 477.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 477. *Le moi, le monde et Dieu*, 83. [In fact, the term *aspiration* appears at *L'idéalisme kantien*, 478.]
- 13 Lachièze-Rey, *L'idéalisme kantien*, 472.
- 14 Lachièze-Rey, *Le moi, le monde et Dieu*, 33.
- 15 As does Mr. Lachièze-Rey, *ibid.*, 69–70.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 72.
- 17 [The claim that "transcendental idealism is an absolute realism" is likely an allusion to Kant's conclusion of the passage from the *Opus Postumum*, cited

- above, which was included in the reference made by Lachièze-Rey (*L'idéalisme kantien*, 464), but omitted by Merleau-Ponty: "The spirit of man is Spinoza's God (so far as the formal element of all sense-objects is concerned) and transcendental idealism is realism in an absolute sense" (*Opus Postumum*, 255).]
- 18 As Husserl, for example, does when he concedes that every transcendental reduction is simultaneously an eidetic reduction. The necessity of going through essences, or the definitive opacity of existences, cannot be taken as self-evident facts, for they contribute to determining the sense of the *Cogito* and of primordial subjectivity [*subjectivité dernière*]. If I cannot equal in thought the concrete richness of the world and reabsorb facticity, then I am not a constituting thought and my "I think" is not an "I am."
- 19 Scheler, "Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis, 63ff. ["The Idols of Self-Knowledge," 43. While Merleau-Ponty uses "periphery of ourselves," Scheler uses the phrase: a "deeper *level* of (the hysteric's) psychic person.]"
- 20 *Ibid.*, 89. [*Ibid.*, 61. I have modified the English translation of Scheler's text to preserve Merleau-Ponty's use of the language of "authentic" and "inauthentic."]
- 21 *Ibid.*, 95. [*Ibid.*, 65. Rather than providing the English translation of Scheler here, I have translated from Merleau-Ponty's translation into French, which bears some important differences from the English translation of Scheler's text. I have, however, returned the subject of the passage to the "young girl in love," rather than "*la jeune fille aimée*" ("the young girl who is loved") as written by Merleau-Ponty, as the context seems to clearly indicate the former to be Merleau-Ponty's understanding. The English translation reads: "The young girl in love does not project her experiences into Isolde or Juliet; she projects the feelings of these poetic figures into her own small experiences. Only later does a genuine feeling of one's own break through the web of this fantasy of feeling." Finally, it might be worth noting that Merleau-Ponty combines this citation with the previous one, citing rather the range of pages between the two quotations: Scheler, *ibid.*, 89–95; *ibid.*, 61–65.]
- 22 Sartre, *L'imaginaire*, 243. [*The Imaginary*, 191.]
- 23 [This is Scheler's term in "The Idols of Self-Knowledge," 40–41.]
- 24 [See, for instance, Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, 125.]
- 25 ". . . but then that, too, had been done deliberately, hadn't it? – that cynical disgust with herself – and this contempt for that trumped-up disgust, wasn't that also theatrical? And this doubt about the contempt [. . .] It became mad-denying, if you began being sincere – was there really no way to stop?" Simone de Beauvoir, *L'invitée* (Gallimard: Paris, 1943), 232. [Simone de Beauvoir, *She Came to Stay* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 225.]
- 26 Max Wertheimer, "Die Schlussprozesse im produktiven Denken," in *Drei Abhandlungen zur Gestalttheorie*, 164–84 (Erlangen: Philosophische Akademie, 1925). [Max Wertheimer, "The Syllogism and Productive Thinking," in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. Willis D. Ellis, 274–82 (New York: Humanities Press, 1967).]

- 27 Aron Gurwitsch, "Quelques aspects et quelques développements de la psychologie de la forme," *Journal de psychologie* 33 (1936), 460. [Merleau-Ponty is thanked as a reader by Gurwitsch in a footnote in this article. This Gurwitsch text appears in English as: "Some Aspects and Developments of Gestalt Psychology," in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, trans. Richard M. Zaner, 3–55 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 53–54.]
- 28 [Merleau-Ponty does not provide a reference for this short quotation, which appears to be drawn from Pascal's *Pensées*, 151, entry labeled S477/L574.]
- 29 [This Latin phrase is translated as "in virtue of the form" in "Rule Ten" of Descartes's "Rules for the Direction of the Mind," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 2, page 36. For the Latin see: "Regulæ ad Directionem Ingenii," in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. X, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1975), 406.]
- 30 Lachièze-Rey, "Utilisation possible du schématisme kantien pour une théorie de la perception," *Études philosophiques* 11 (1937), 30–34; and "Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante."
- 31 Lachièze-Rey, "Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante," 132. [Neither Merleau-Ponty nor Lachièze-Rey provides a reference to these notions in Kant. However, they are likely taken from Kant's reflections in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, B155, including Kant's footnote, where these concepts are at issue.]
- 32 Lachièze-Rey, "Utilisation possible du schématisme kantien," 7.
- 33 "It must contain intrinsically the immanence of a spatial trajectory that alone can allow it to be thought of as movement." *Ibid.*, 6.
- 34 Paul Claudel, "Réflexions sur le vers français," in *Positions et propositions: Art et littérature* (Paris: Gallimard, 1928), 11. [The phrase "nous informons le lecteur" is translated here as "we impart a form to the reader," reading the verb *informer* in its philosophical sense of giving form (to matter), rather than its more colloquial use of "giving some information." Also, I have included the emphasis on *poetic* as it appears in Claudel, which is missing in Merleau-Ponty's citation.]
- 35 As Brice Parain does in his *Recherches sur la nature et les fonctions du langage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), chap. 11.
- 36 [Merleau-Ponty does not provide a specific reference here. See, for instance, Husserl, "Investigation III," in *Logical Investigations*, vol. 2, section 21.]
- 37 Léon Brunschvicg, *Le progrès de la conscience dans la philosophie occidentale*, 2 vols. (Paris: Alcan, 1927), 794.
- 38 Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, 221. [*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 250.]
- 39 [Although Merleau-Ponty does not name the source of this phrase here, he elsewhere attributes it to Pascal (see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 204). He does not, however, indicate the precise location. It is likely a variation of Pascal's phrase: "C'est le consentement de vous à vous-même" ("It is your own assent to yourself"), in *Pensées*, 209, entry labeled S672/L505.]
- 40 ["We have a true idea." Merleau-Ponty does not provide a reference for this

- Latin phrase. His allusion is to paragraph 33 in Spinoza's text: "Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect," 10.]
- 41 This notion returns frequently in Husserl's late works.
- 42 Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, 220. [*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 249.]
- 43 See Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 1, page 117. What we sometimes call Husserl's rationalism is, in fact, the recognition of subjectivity as an inalienable fact, and of the world that it intends as an *omnitude realitatis*. [See *Logical Investigations*, vol. 1, section 36. For Husserl's invocation of the Kantian *omnitude realitatis* ("an All of reality"), see *Ideas*, vol. 1, page xx.]
- 44 [*A-lethia* is the Ancient Greek term for truth, whose privative form is discussed at length by Heidegger. See, for instance, Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit," 33; *Being and Time*, 31.]
- 45 Valéry, "Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci," 194. ["Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci," 205.]
- 46 ["un *Cogito* sur parole." This literally means "a *Cogito* taken at someone's word," i.e., not experienced first-hand.]
- 47 ["Mais bernique! Où donc est l'histoire / Je ne vois rien que noir et blanc." Merleau-Ponty does not provide a reference for this story. The passage is from a short poem entitled "Lunettes" (Spectacles), assembled by Louis Ratisbonne in: *La comédie enfantine: Vignettes par Froment et Gobert* (Paris: Bibliothèque d'Éducation et de Récréation/J. Hetzel et Cie., 1860), 55–56. It might be worth noting a few small corrections to Merleau-Ponty's telling, which was perhaps drawn from memory. Jules, the boy in question, utters the quoted exclamation prior to seeking out his grandmother's glasses, which are to be a solution to the "missing" stories in the already open book. Also, the observation that "Il ne voit rien que noir et blanc" [He sees nothing but black and white] is made in the narrator's voice, whereas Merleau-Ponty puts these words into Jules's mouth as part of the exclamation. Finally, the fable does not end with the cited passage, as Merleau-Ponty reports, but rather with the moral that Jules should not continue being lazy, for if he learns to read he will see the story, even without the spectacles.]
- 48 ["la pensée de la pensée." This is a common translation into French of Aristotle's famous claim in *The Metaphysics*, X–XIV, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/Loeb Classical Library, 1997), book XII, chap. 9 (1074b35) regarding *Nous* necessarily taking itself as the object of thought, that is, "*Nous* thinks itself, if it is that which is best; and its thinking is a thinking of thinking."]
- 49 [Merleau-Ponty here writes *ob-jet*, thus emphasizing the etymological meaning of the word, namely, "to throw or place in front."]
- 50 [Merleau-Ponty does not provide a reference for this short quote, which he also attributes to Malebranche elsewhere. For instance, Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. James Edie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 27. I have not been able to locate this phrase in Malebranche, however, and perhaps Merleau-Ponty is thinking of the opening phrase of

- paragraph 12 in Malebranche's Seventh Meditation, in his *Méditations chrétiennes* (1683): "Le monde présent est un ouvrage négligé" ("The present world is a neglected work").]
- 51 ["never completely constituted" is a phrase mentioned in connection with Husserl several times, including later in the Temporality chapter in *Phenomenology of Perception*. Although the precise source is unclear, it is an approximate reference to Husserl's observation that the body is a "remarkably imperfectly constituted thing" (Husserl, *Ideas*, vol. 2, page 167).]
- 52 "Zusammenhang des Lebens," Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit," 388. [This phrase, which is in fact an allusion to Dilthey, actually occurs on "Sein und Zeit," 373. In the original French translation of Heidegger, Henri Corbin writes: "continuité de la vie," whereas Merleau-Ponty writes: "cohésion de vie." (Cf. Heidegger, *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?*, 170.) Although the English translators write "connection of life" (*Being and Time*, 356), I here follow Merleau-Ponty's understanding by writing "cohesion."]
- 53 Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit," 124–25. [Merleau-Ponty does not provide the original German for this phrase attributed to Heidegger, and the French phrase he does provide – "je suis à moi" – does not appear to correspond to the citation he provides. Perhaps Merleau-Ponty's phrase here is an approximate translation of Heidegger's discussion a few pages earlier regarding the "mineness" (*Jemeinlichkeit*) of *Dasein*. "Dasein ist Seiendes, das je ich selbst bin, das Sein ist je meines"; "Dasein is a being which I myself am, its being is in each case mine" ("Sein und Zeit," 114; *Being and Time*, 112).]
- 54 [This unreferenced phrase, "nous ne sommes pas au monde," is from Rimbaud's *Une saison en enfer* (*A Season in Hell*). See J. N. A. Rimbaud, *Complete Works; Selected Letters*, trans. Wallace Fowlie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 188.]
- 55 [This paraphrase is a variation of the following passage: "Par l'espace l'univers me comprend et m'engloutit comme un point, par la pensée je le comprends." ("Through space the universe encompasses and swallows me up like a mere point; through thought I encompass it.") Pascal, *Pensées*, 29, entry labeled S145/L113.]
- 56 ["Nous sommes au monde." This is in contrast to Rimbaud's phrase, cited above.]

II TEMPORALITY

- 1 ["Time is the *sense* of life. *Direction and sense* as in the direction of a stream, the sense of a sentence, (the weave of a fabric), the sense of smell." Merleau-Ponty does not provide a page reference for this passage. It is found in: Paul Claudel, *Art poétique: Connaissance du temps* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1907), 33. For a more recent edition see: Paul Claudel, *Art poétique: Connaissance du temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 48. The English translation of this text removes one of the clauses, "le sens d'une étoffe," which I re-insert above. See Paul

- Claudel, *Poetic Art*, trans. Renee Spodheim (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), 19–20.]
- 2 ["The meaning of Dasein is temporality." Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit," 331; *Being and Time*, 316.]
 - 3 ["*Omne enim corpus est mens momentanea, seu carins recordatione*" ("Body is 'momentary mind,' i.e., mind without memory"). This passage in Latin by Leibniz can be found in "Theoria Motus Abstracti (1671)," in *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, vol. IV, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1887), 230.]
 - 4 [Merleau-Ponty is referring to Saint Augustine's reflections in Book XI of *Confessions*. See: Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), book XI, particularly paragraphs xi–xxiii. Augustine's descriptions are also very similar to the phrasing of Merleau-Ponty's previous sentence.]
 - 5 "Nacheinander der Jetztpunkte" [succession of now-points] in "Sein und Zeit," for example, 422. [Although Heidegger does not actually use this formulation cited by Merleau-Ponty, he does write on page 422: "Die Zeit wird als ein Nacheinander verstanden, als 'Fluss' der Jetzt, als 'Lauf der Zeit.'" ("Time is understood as a sequence, as the 'flux' of nows, as the 'course of time.'" *Being and Time*, 401.) The only place Heidegger uses *Jetzt-Punkt* (now-point) appears to be earlier in "Being and Time," 408.]
 - 6 Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, 137 (note 1), 139. [*Matière et mémoire* (2004), 143 (note 1), 145; *Matter and Memory*, 256 (note 77), 130.]
 - 7 ["prospection" – literally the act of looking forward.]
 - 8 [Merleau-Ponty writes *pro-jeter*, emphasizing the literal meaning of *projeter*, namely "to throw or cast out in front."]
 - 9 To return to authentic time, it is neither necessary nor sufficient to reject, following Bergson, the spatialization of time. It is not necessary since time only exclusively belongs to space if we consider a previously objectified space, and not that primordial spatiality that we have attempted to describe, which is the abstract form of our presence in the world [*présence au monde*]. It is not sufficient since, even when the systematic translation of time in terms of space has been rejected, one can still remain far removed from an authentic intuition of time. This is what happened to Bergson. When he says that duration "snowballs upon itself" when it accumulates in the unconsciousness of memories in themselves, he builds time out of the preserved present, and builds evolution out of the evolved. [Bergson's image of the "snowball" can be found in Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 2.]
 - 10 ["Eternity of life" is an allusion to Bergson's use of the phrase, which can be found in Henri Bergson, "An Introduction to Metaphysics," in *The Creative Mind*, 158.]
 - 11 "Noch im Griff behalte." Husserl, "Zeitbewusstseins," 39off. [*On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 30–31. Although Husserl is certainly discussing the themes at issue in the referenced section, he does not appear to use the formulation "noch im Griff behalte" there. He does,

- however, thematize this phrase in *Erfahrung und Urteil*, where “Noch-im-Griff-behalten” appears (on page 120) and is translated as “still-retaining-in-grasp” (*Experience and Judgment*, 109).]
- 12 [Merleau-Ponty’s version of Husserl’s “Time Diagram” differs from the one originally published in Husserl’s “Zeitbewusstsein,” 389; *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 29. His drawing, however, is closely related to Husserl’s description and in fact bears some similarities to additional drawings by Husserl that have since been published in the expanded *Husserliana* version. See, for instance, *Husserliana* X, 230; *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 238. It is also worth mentioning that Merleau-Ponty’s indication of Husserl’s term *Abschattungen*, often translated as “adumbrations,” “profiles,” or “gradations,” does not occur in Husserl’s discussion of the diagram.]
 - 13 Husserl, “Zeitbewusstsein,” 430. [Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 79–80.] *Formale und transzendente Logik*, 208. [Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 235.] See also Eugen Fink, “Das Problem der Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls,” *Revue internationale de philosophie* 1, no. 2 (January 1939), 266. [Eugen Fink, “The Problem of the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl,” in *Apriori and World: European Contributions to Husserlian Phenomenology*, ed. and trans. W. McKenna, R. M. Harlan, and L. E. Winters, 21–55 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1981), 51. In the first citation, Husserl does not use the term *fungierende Intentionalität*, but rather “Akt” oder “intentionales Erlebnis” (“act” or “intentional experience”). He does mention, however, a *Querintentionalität* (transverse intentionality), which can be found in *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 86. At the cited location in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl writes *lebendig Intentionalität* (living intentionality, 235), but uses *fungierende Intentionalität* (functioning intentionality), earlier, on page 157. Finally, in the reference to Fink, the term is translated as “functioning intentionality,” but I have maintained “operative” as closer to Merleau-Ponty’s choice of *opérante* in French.]
 - 14 [Heidegger does not explicitly discuss “intentionality” and “transcendence” together. Perhaps Merleau-Ponty is thinking of Heidegger’s claim that: “If the thematization of what is present – the scientific projection of nature – is to become possible, *Dasein* must transcend the beings thematized. Transcendence does not consist in objectification, rather objectification presupposes transcendence” (“Sein und Zeit,” 363; *Being and Time*, 346). This occurs very shortly after Heidegger’s only mention of intentionality in *Being and Time*, in a footnote on the same page.]
 - 15 [See Scheler, “The Idols of Self-Knowledge,” 58–59.]
 - 16 See, for example, Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, 256–57. [Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 292.]
 - 17 Claudel, *Art poétique*, 57. [*Art poétique* (1984), 61; *Poetic Art*, 35. Here the translation is slightly altered to follow the French more literally, which reads: “Le temps est le moyen offert à tout ce qui sera d’être afin de n’être plus.”]
 - 18 [See “Sein und Zeit,” 329; *Being and Time*, 314.]

- 19 [Cf. *Erfahrung und Urteil*, 274; *Experience and Judgment*, 230.]
- 20 Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit," 350. [*Being and Time*, 334. I have altered the cited English translation of the final phrase to reflect Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the passage. The final phrase in the cited translation of *Being and Time* reads: "a future that makes present, in the process of having-been."]
- 21 *Ibid.*, 373. [*Ibid.*, 356.]
- 22 Cited by Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag G. Schulte Bulmke, 1934), 183–84. [Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5th ed., trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 134. Heidegger cites passages from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, A143/B183 and A182/B224f.]
- 23 Husserl, "Zeitbewusstseins," 442: "primäres Bewusstsein [. . .] das hinter sich kein Bewusstsein mehr hat [,] in dem es bewusst wäre [. . .]." ["primary consciousness that has no further consciousness behind it in which it would be intended" (*On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 94). I have provided a translation from Merleau-Ponty's French version of this passage, which is not captured by the English translation of the original German.]
- 24 *Ibid.*, 471: "fällt ja Sein und Innerlich-bewusst-sein zusammen." [*Ibid.*, 121: "indeed being and being-internally-intended coincide." Again I have opted to provide a translation from Merleau-Ponty's French, rather than the English translation, which introduces terminology not used here by Merleau-Ponty.]
- 25 *Ibid.*, 464. [*Ibid.*, 117.]
- 26 We are borrowing this expression from Corbin, in Heidegger, *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?*, 14. [This is a reference to Corbin's "Translator's Introduction" in the French translation: Heidegger, *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?*]
- 27 The example is given by Sartre in *L'être et le néant*, 216. [*L'être et le néant* (2008), 203–4; *Being and Nothingness*, 191. The passage cited by Sartre, and discussed here by Merleau-Ponty, can be found in Proust, *Swann's Way*, 432. The translation here reflects the cited English translation of Proust.]
- 28 [Merleau-Ponty is here paraphrasing from the cited passage: "for the dawn of one of her glances, the formation of one of her smiles, the emission of a particular vocal cadence." Proust, *Swann's Way*, 432.]
- 29 Kant applies the expression to *Gemüt* [mind/disposition]. Heidegger transfers it to time: "Die Zeit ist ihrem Wesen nach reine Affektion ihrer selbst," in *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, 180–81. ["According to its essence, time is pure affection of itself." *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 132.]
- 30 Husserl, "Zeitbewusstseins," 436. [*On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 88.]
- 31 Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, 181: "Als reine Selbstaffektion bildet (die Zeit) ursprünglich die endliche Selbstheit dergestalt [,] dass das Selbst so etwas wie Selbstbewusstsein sein kann." ["As pure self-affection, [time] forms in an original way the finite selfhood, so that the self can be something like self-consciousness." *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 133.]
- 32 Heidegger speaks somewhere of the "*Gelichtetheit*" [clearedness] of *Dasein*. [See

- “Sein und Zeit,” 147, 350–51; *Being and Time*, 142, 334. Although the English translation of *Being and Time* employs “clearedness,” Merleau-Ponty’s locution, “ici jaillit une lumière,” suggests that he may be thinking of an earlier passage, (in particular: “Sein und Zeit,” 133; *Being and Time*, 129), where Heidegger uses “gelichtet” in conjunction with *Lichtung*: “To say that it is ‘illuminated’ [*erleuchtet*] means that it is cleared [*gelichtet*] in itself as being-in-the-world, not by another being, but in such a way that it is itself the clearing (*Lichtung*).”]
- 33 What Husserl calls *Einströmen* [flowing] in the unpublished works.
- 34 [Cf. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*. Despite the clear connection to be drawn here, it is perhaps anachronistic to compare this section with Husserl’s lectures, which were not yet published; however, Merleau-Ponty may have known of them thanks to his contact with Fink (who attended part of the lectures) and through his familiarity with *Experience and Judgment*, given that the editor Ludwig Landgrebe drew from the 1920s lectures when compiling that volume. Cf., as well, Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, sections 38–39.]
- 35 Sartre, *L’être et le néant*, 194. [*L’être et le néant* (2008), 183; *Being and Nothingness*, 171.] The author only mentions this monster in order to reject the very idea of it. [The phrase appears in Sartre in the conditional mood (*perpétuerait*), while Merleau-Ponty shifts it to the indicative mood, as reflected in my translation.]
- 36 [Following the English translation of Sartre, I am rendering *néantiser* as the verb “to nihilate.” See: *L’être et le néant* (2008), 483; *Being and Nothingness*, 461.]
- 37 [Among other places, the term “generative” occurs in Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 51, 142.]
- 38 [This section is set off from the previous ones in the original text.]
- 39 See *La structure du comportement*, “Introduction.” [*The Structure of Behavior*, “Introduction.”]
- 40 [Cf. Merleau-Ponty, “An Unpublished Text by Maurice Merleau-Ponty: A Prospectus of His Work,” in *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. Arleen B. Dallery, 3–11 (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).]
- 41 [Merleau-Ponty published a collection of essays written between 1945 and 1947 bearing the title *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Nagel, 1948); *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).]
- 42 This expression is still often employed by Husserl. See, for example, *Ideen*, 107. [*Ideen*, vol. 1, page 129. “Sense-bestowal” is the translation given at the cited location.]
- 43 Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik*, 257. [*Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 292.] “Aesthetic” is, of course, taken here in the broad sense of the “transcendental aesthetic.”
- 44 [Merleau-Ponty does not provide a reference for this famous phrase, which is Kant’s description of the “schematism of our understanding with regard to appearances and their mere form,” in *Critique of Pure Reason*, A141/B180.]

- 45 *La structure du comportement*, 302. [*La structure* (1990), 240; *The Structure of Behavior*, 221.]
- 46 [This image and those of the following sentences refer back to the quotation from Claudel that serves as the current chapter's epigraph.]
- 47 "Boden," in Husserl, "Umsturz der kopernikanischen Lehre" (unpublished). [This late fragment of Husserl's, which Merleau-Ponty had access to during his visit to the Husserl Archives in Louvain, Belgium in 1939, was in fact published in North America by the time *Phenomenology of Perception* appeared. See Husserl, "Grundlegende Untersuchungen zum phänomenologischen Ursprung der Räumlichkeit der Natur"; Husserl, "Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature."]
- 48 Heidegger, "Sein und Zeit," 366: "Wenn das 'Subjekt' ontologisch als existierendes Dasein begriffen wird, dessen Sein in der Zeitlichkeit gründet, dann muss gesagt werden: Welt ist 'subjektiv.' Diese 'subjektive' Welt aber ist dann als zeitlich-transzendente 'objektiver' als jedes mögliche 'Objekt.'" ["If the 'subject' is conceived ontologically as existing Dasein, whose being (Sein) is grounded in temporality, we must say then that the world is 'subjective.' But this 'subjective' world, as one that is temporally transcendent, is then 'more objective' than any possible 'object.'" *Being and Time*, 349.]
- 49 Which we have shown at length in *The Structure of Behavior*.
- 50 [The Cartesian notion of a "*lumen naturale*" (natural light) is invoked by Heidegger in the passage cited above: *Sein und Zeit*, 133; *Being and Time*, 129.]

III FREEDOM

- 1 "Flow" in the sense we have, following Husserl, given to this word.
- 2 [The context suggests that the two senses of the French verb *déterminer* intended by Merleau-Ponty are (i) "to be the cause or origin of" something and (ii) "to motivate" or "to lead someone to a decision."]
- 3 See Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, 508ff. [*L'être et le néant* (2008), 477ff.; *Being and Nothingness*, 455ff.].
- 4 [As noted by the editors of *Phénoménologie de la perception* (2010), the Ancient Greek term ἐφ' ἡμῖν is an allusion to the Stoic philosophy of Epictetus. In particular: "*ta eph'emin* are the things that depend upon us, in opposition to *ta ouk eph'emin*, the things that do not depend upon us. Wisdom, for Epictetus, consists in drawing a clear distinction between these two orders of reality. Merleau-Ponty understands the term here in a more objective sense." See Merleau-Ponty, *Œuvres*, 1142.]
- 5 Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, 544. [*L'être et le néant* (2008), 510–11; *Being and Nothingness*, 487–88.]
- 6 [The German word *Augenblick*, normally written without the hyphen, means "moment" or "instant." In *Being and Time*, Heidegger emphasizes the components of the word (writing: *Augenblick*), adding a similar emphasis

- to Merleau-Ponty's own addition of the hyphen here. Perhaps this emphasis indicates a more literal rendering of the component words, in the sense of the "glance" or "blink" of an eye (*Augen* means "eyes," *Blick* relates to the act of "looking"), and this is certainly Merleau-Ponty's intention since he is giving a definition of the "instant," not a mere translation of it. In French, Merleau-Ponty chooses "instant" rather than "moment," and I have preserved his choice by using the corresponding English words. See "Sein und Zeit," 328; *Being and Time*, 313, and the corresponding translator's note.]
- 7 [I have preserved Merleau-Ponty's play on the term *champ* ("field"), which connects below and to other passages in this book; his phrase *avoir du champ* means "to have some room or some space."]
 - 8 Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, 562. [*L'être et le néant* (2008), 527–28; *Being and Nothingness*, 504.]
 - 9 [Here Merleau-Ponty uses the verb *valoriser* and the noun *valorisation* repeatedly. He intends the sense of giving or "investing" with value, rather than "evaluating." I have used "value" or "valorize" for the verb, and "valuation" for the noun.]
 - 10 [The reference is to Voltaire's novella "Micromégas," in which the narrator recounts his encounter with a 120,000 foot tall giant from a planet around the star Sirius. See Voltaire, "Micromégas," in *Candide and Other Stories*, trans. Roger Pearson, 89–106 (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2006).]
 - 11 See above, page 275.
 - 12 Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, 531ff. [*L'être et le néant* (2008), 498ff.; *Being and Nothingness*, 476ff.]
 - 13 ["l'intentionnalité véritable . . . est à son object."]
 - 14 [Fideism is the doctrine that absolute truth is grounded upon revelation or faith.]
 - 15 [Again, the meaning of *sens* includes both "sense" and "direction," which is particularly relevant in this section.]
 - 16 [Here Merleau-Ponty is alluding to the linguistic image of *glissement de sens* (a "shift in meaning").]
 - 17 ["Naître, c'est à la fois naître du monde et naître au monde."]
 - 18 [As noted above, the term *Mitsein* (being-with) is a reference to Heidegger. See, for instance, chapter IV ("Being-in-the-World as Being-with and Being a Self: The They") in *Being and Time*.]
 - 19 Eugen Fink, "Vergegenwärtigung und Bild: Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Unwirklichkeit," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 11 (1930), 285.
 - 20 Saint-Exupéry, *Pilote de guerre*, 171, 174. [*Pilote de guerre* (2005), 151–52, 154. In this passage, Merleau-Ponty elides the prose quite liberally, and he alters the original punctuation. Thus, I have provided here a new translation of the passage from Merleau-Ponty's version. The English translation of the passage can be found at: Saint-Exupéry, *Flight to Arras*, 177–81, 183.]

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- 1 [The corrections and additions to Merleau-Ponty's original bibliography have been made possible thanks to the extensive work and expertise of Kathleen Hulley. Changes are indicated as elsewhere by square brackets.]

SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY A

- 1 [This bibliography of translations into English of works cited by Merleau-Ponty has been made possible thanks to the extensive research and expertise of Kathleen Hulley.]

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INDEX

This is an index of Merleau–Ponty’s main text, his original discursive notes, and definitions provided by the translator. In cases where a person’s name appears exclusively in a non–discursive endnote, I have provided the relevant page(s) in the text followed by the first citation of the author in brackets. For example, “Ackermann, Adolf 319 (547n11)” indicates that this author’s work is discussed on page 319 and that his name first appears in note 11 on page 547. For important terms that are used too regularly to index, I have nonetheless provided some guidance to what I take to be important moments (see, for instance, “space”). An entry preceded by “def.” indicates that this leads to a translator’s definition (see, for instance, “alexia”).

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