

## THE SCOPE OF EXISTENTIAL SPATIALITY

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The paper does not suggest an outline of a comprehensive theory of existential spatiality. Its aim is much moderate – to reveal those aspects of the constitution of meaning within the totality of being in the world which delineate the scope of the problematic under investigation. Since these aspects are addressed by various kinds of constitutional analysis of meaning, a special effort is devoted to overcoming discrepancies among three basic phenomenological discourses – hermeneutic phenomenology, existential psychiatry, and phenomenology of corporeity.

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### Introduction: A Preliminary Note on Abstract Expressionism

By the end of 1940s Willem de Kooning gave in his celebrated lecture “A Desperate View” a laconic formulation of what Abstract Expressionism is: It is the art whose only object is space. All things are fused in spatiality. The abstract artist tries to express his/her immersion in that spatiality, visualizing thereby the latter and the changes she/he may bring into play through the immersion. Short afterwards in another famous lecture entitled “What Abstract Art Means to Me” de Kooning displays his discontent with the “physicists’ space”. The artist declares that he is bored with this space. The optic lenses of science are so thick that when one is looking through them, one is seeing only a space that provokes a melancholy state of mind. The whole room that the artist needs – so de Kooning’s confession goes – is formed by a simple procedure: When I extend my hands along the rest of my body, and put the question of where my fingers are I get the space I need as a painter and

sculptor. It is body’s dimensions and bodily actions that determine the relevant space. Abstract Expressionism provides a polymorphous “study” of the nexus corporeity-spatiality. To a certain extent, this style of modern art delineates what I am going to address in the present paper – the scope of existential spatiality.

By the early 1940s several American artists (most of them employing Cubist space) converted an established iconography into abstraction. In driving this tendency to extremes, artists like Rothko, Pollock, Still, Newman, and de Kooning replaced bit by bit the dimensional space with the field. This proves to be an essential step in the formation of Abstract Expressionism, since by melding figure and ground into totality, and/or by setting the viewer alone before its expanse<sup>1</sup>, the field provides the starting point of expressing

<sup>1</sup> See on this early history of Abstract Expressionism Anfram 1990: 135–143.

how emotional modalities get spatialized. The field is rather a compressed than a reduced spatiality – a spatiality that envelops the spectator.

In transforming the dimensional space into compressed spatiality, the works of Abstract Expressionists brought into focus such phenomena as: the “topography” that shows a tangled realm with existence that generates distracted meaning; the dissipation of the familiar locations of things that leads to resolving space into chromatic zones; the spatial counterparts of acute emotions; the fields as ultimate states of inhabited space that reveal “anthropological constants and constrains”; the dominance of the field’s standpoint over that of the onlooker; the chromatic embodiment of feelings; the “unyielding space” in which the drama of what gets constituted displaces the process of constitution; the spaces of sensations before they become synthesized in a unitary space full with figures; the vacant but luminous space in which the depth appears to well up through flatness; the transcendence of boundaries between temporalizing and making room; the interplay of environment and (what de Kooning calls) “no-environment”. Abstract Expressionists managed to unfold the spatializing (in the remainder I am using this term in analogy with temporalizing) of a wide range of existential phenomena. Their works still provide the “relevant empirical base” for a comprehensive phenomenological theory of existential spatiality.

### Spatiality as Existential

Tentatively speaking, spatiality is a “secondary” existential grounded upon the primary attributes of Dasein’s care – interpretative understanding, discourse, state-of-mind, and fall. As a constant process of making room within-the-world, spatiality is always temporalized, i.e. there is no spatiality beyond the horizon of temporality. Thus, spatiality is always interpretatively understood, expressed within a configuration of discursive practices and by means of a certain discursive genre, thrown in the average

everydayness, and temporalized. At the same time, one might speak of the “spatiality of understanding”, “attuned spatiality”, “spatiality of discourse”, and “spatiality of falling”, all of them being distinguished by concomitant kinds of temporalizing of temporality. What gets temporalized is the ways of making room for a meaningful articulation of the world. A case in point here is the way of making room for anticipation that indicates Dasein’s ownmost potentiality-for-being, or the way in which the “authentic future” is winning itself from the “inauthentic future”. In line with Heidegger’s treatment of spatiality as *existential*, one can make the case that the way of making room for anticipation (as opposed to awaiting of inauthentic future) constitutes the spatiality of resolute existence. The spatiality of being-in-the-world privileges various directions of circumspective manipulation. The pre-scientific images of space reflect these privileged directions. By implication, the “oriented space” of routine everydayness is essentially anisotropic. The most important step on the way to geometrical concepts of space is the change of anisotropic images in isotropic constructions<sup>2</sup>.

The way of treating Dasein’s temporalized spatiality is not to be detached from the way of conceiving the world as a horizon that tem-

<sup>2</sup> In *Being and Time* Heidegger addresses in a sketchy manner the problematic of the geometrical spaces’ “existential genesis”. In Section 24 there is the following statement rich of implications: “When space is intuited formally, the pure possibilities of spatial relations are discovered. Here one may go through a series of stages in laying bare pure homogeneous space, passing from the pure morphology of spatial shapes to *analysis situs* and finally to the purely metrical science of space.” The study of the existential genesis of mathematical space is by no means a “side-program” within the scope of fundamental ontology. Searching for this genesis is *sine qua non* for overcoming that hypostatization of mathematical space which characterizes the ontological approach to the world as *res extensa*. Thus considered, it is a prerequisite for destructing the “ontology of presence” (*Vorhandenheitsontologie*). Not by accident, in *Being and Time* the announced sketch of the program supervenes on the hermeneutic critique of the Cartesian conception of the world.

poralizes itself in temporality. In advocating this claim, Heidegger distinguishes between the “spatiality of the ready-to-hand within-the-world” and the “spatiality of being-in-the-world”. The former is the closeness of utensils and equipment that Dasein implements in the circumspective manipulation within-the-world. This spatiality is a function of the closeness’ self-regulation in the ongoing articulation of contexts of equipment (*Zeugzusammenhänge*). Closeness expresses the contextual being of a utensil or equipment. (The rationale for speaking that closeness regulates itself is provided by the very nature of the worldhood of the world. To the changing configurations of practices within the world correspond changing connections among contexts of equipment. It is the changeability of both, configurations and contexts that provokes variability of the spatial locations of tools and equipment employed in circumspective manipulation.)

Heidegger attributes the “production of closeness” to the trans-subjective totality of interrelated practices and contexts of equipment. This production is irreducible to a purely subjective behavior. Furthermore, closeness is a function of the contextual involvements of a tool or equipment that is ready-to-hand in circumspective manipulation. Obviously, closeness cannot be measured objectively, since it is the circumspective manipulation within a context of equipment that ascertains whether the utensil is enough “to hand”. What gets ascertained is the place of the utensil within this context. Because spatiality is a complexity of contexts and environments that does not display characteristics of a dimensional space, the contextual place of a tool is not reducible to a position in a mathematical manifold of positions. By the same token, closeness or remoteness of a tool in a particular environment cannot be equated with a distance which is a purely geometrical notion applicable solely to metric spaces. Heidegger insists on the fact that closeness and remoteness are not measurable variables. They are entirely dependent on the contextuality of circumspective manipula-

tion<sup>3</sup>. Following this line of reasoning, he defines a context of equipment as a multiplicity of places which are not statically present-at-hand, but depend on the definite “here” and “yonder” that accompany the dealings taking place in the context. This is why the places that are circumspectively interpreted within a context of equipment are not to be catalogued by procedures that objectify space as a mathematical structure.

Roughly speaking, in introducing the “spatiality of being-in-the-world”, Heidegger is willing to demonstrate that there is a higher degree of spatiality’s “ontological autonomy” from the readiness-to-hand. This type of spatiality characterizes not what is going on within-the-world circumspectively, but rather the situatedness of the “circumspection of concern” in a world that is always already transcendent. Dasein is dealing with readiness-to-hand – so Heidegger’s argument goes – with familiarity just because this spatial dealing takes place “in” the world that transcends (as an open horizon) all particular contexts of equipment. It is the “transcendence of the world” that launches the spatiality of being-in-the-world. (The example Heidegger provides with regard to the abovementioned “ontological autonomy” is the left-right-directionality. Left and right are not something entirely dependent on Dasein’s concerned circumspection. They are directions of the directedness into a world that because of its horizontality is always already transcendent. Thus considered, left and right are

<sup>3</sup> Remoteness and closeness are qualitative features of Dasein’s circumspective thrownness in everyday practices. To this thrownness belong the relativity effects of spatiality. In this regard, Heidegger (1962: 141) provides the following illustration: “When a man wears a pair of spectacles which are so close to him distantly that they are ‘sitting on his nose’, they are environmentally more remote from him than the picture on the opposite wall. Such equipment has so little closeness that often it is proximally quite impossible to find. Equipment for seeing – and likewise for hearing, such as the telephone receiver – has what we have designated as the inconspicuousness of the proximally ready-to-hand.” Generally speaking, the relativity effects are due to the discordance between contextualizing a utensil for reaching a purpose and grasping the outcome of that contextualization as an actualized possibility.

directions of the spatiality that belongs to the “transcendence of the world”.)

The difference between both types of spatiality reflects to a certain extent the ontico-ontological difference since the spatiality of the ready-to-hand within-the-world can be established by a purely “ontic observation” whereas the spatiality of being-in-the-world requires an ontological reflection upon the transcendence of the world. In this regard, Heidegger goes on to lay the claim that the spatiality of being-in-the-world (as related to the transcendence of the world) provides the ontic possibility of Dasein’s environmental encountering of the readiness-to-hand. (This spatiality is generated by the “worldhood of the world”. But there is a worldhood because the world is transcendent.) I will use the expression of “existential spatiality” for designating in the first place the dynamic unity of both types of spatiality in the process of meaning constitution. Yet there is an additional aspect that belongs to the scope of existential spatiality as well. I am going to attribute it to the nexus of “virtual body” (the system of possible bodily movements organized toward a goal)<sup>4</sup> and “lived space” as this nexus is addressed by Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology. By privileging bodily experience as an absolute point of spatializing (and spatial constitution of meaning), Merleau-Ponty eliminates in *Phenomenology of Perception* the need of distinguishing between spatiality of readiness-to-hand and spatiality of being-in-the-world. Since the bodily experience unites man’s transcendence of the things within-the-world and the modes of spatializing and constructing images of space, there is only one source of spatializing. Accordingly, the primary spatiality (the lived space of man’s directedness to things) gets specified in connection with the typical grasp on man’s body in various “anthropological spaces”<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> See Merleau-Ponty (1962: 289).

<sup>5</sup> In saying this, I am not neglecting the deficiencies in Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the lived body. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1982: 112) point out that reading Merleau-Ponty “one would never know

In what sense the spatiality related to “body’s intentionality” resists a reformulation in terms of Heidegger’s types of spatiality is a question I will touch upon in the final section.

There is also another dimension in which Heidegger’s types of spatiality (or aspects of existential spatiality) are to be contrasted. Since the spatiality of being-in-the-world gets constituted by means of the way the world is transcending all kinds of subjectivity (including the inter-subjectivity of being-with-one-another), one should ascribe to this spatiality a sort of trans-subjectivity that is irreducible to the inter-subjectivity. By contrast, the spatiality of ready-to-hand within-the-world is only a characteristic of being-with-one-another because it is generated by the inter-subjective articulation of relatively closed environments. (I am using the expression of a “relatively closed environment” as a translation of what Heidegger calls *Gegend*<sup>6</sup>.) Thus, the opposition between trans-subjectivity and inter-subjectivity plays an important role in elucidating the difference between both types of spatiality.

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that the body has a front and a back and can only cope with what is in front of it, that bodies can move forward more easily than backwards, that there is normally a right/left asymmetry, and so on.” According to these authors, just because the French phenomenologist ignores these more concrete structural invariants of bodily experience, his approach does not enjoy a popularity among those who (like Foucault) are dealing with the problematic of disciplinary techniques and bio-power. Interestingly enough, however, if one pay closer attention to what Merleau-Ponty neglects, one will shift the perspective towards Heidegger’s existential analytic since the aforementioned characteristics of body are to be analyzed phenomenologically in the practical contexts of being-in-the-world.

<sup>6</sup> In *Being and Time*, the notion of a “relatively closed environment” occupies an intermediate status between the notions of spatiality and space. A relatively closed environment is the directionality of the de-severance in articulating contexts of equipment within-the-world. It is a particular “whither” of encountering “things” that ready-to-hand. Thus considered, a relatively closed environment is the spatial unit of the worldhood of the world.

## On the Existential Meaning of Making Room

In existential analytic, the notion of “making room” is assigned to render possible the dynamic unity of the types of spatiality. Making room (spatializing) within-the-world consists in releasing the ready-to-hand for its possible contexts and relatively closed environments. Making room is constantly accompanying the constitution of meaning as ongoing appropriation of possibilities. Put differently, there is no interpretative articulation without spatializing. Furthermore, one can state that in each context of equipment Dasein is making room for a leeway of possibilities that can be actualized. At the same time, these are possibilities projected as a horizon by the same configuration of practices that discloses a particular environment of interwoven contexts of equipment. As an existentially making room belongs to both the contextual spatiality of manipulating the ready-to-hand and the spatiality that is called into being and established by the transcendence of the world<sup>7</sup>. Only by making room for entities within-the-world, one is able to encounter a totality of spatial involvements of these entities that can be made accessible for cognition. In so

doing, one is thematizing space as an object of knowledge *sui generis*.

Heidegger scrutinizes the phenomenon of making room in terms of the most technical doctrine of *Being and Time* – the constitutional analysis of meaning. On the kernel of his hermeneutic version of constitutional analysis, Dasein understands itself in accordance with the possibilities it can appropriate and actualize in its ongoing dealing with what is ready-to-hand within-the-world. To reiterate, the possibilities are projected as an open horizon by contextual configurations of interrelated dealings (practices). This horizon serves the function of a horizon of Dasein’s understanding. However, since Dasein is always in the world, the horizon of Dasein’s understanding within contextualized practices (whose totality is what Heidegger calls the “worldhood of the world”) proves to be at the same time the world as a horizon of understanding. There is a kind of double projection in this hermeneutic paradigm of constitutional analysis: on the one hand, practices in their interrelatedness are projecting possibilities; on the other, Dasein projects understandingly itself upon possibilities. The appropriation of projected possibilities within-the-world takes on the form of interpretative articulation of the world.

It is by means of this articulation that the world becomes meaningful, which amounts to claiming that the constitution of meaning through the “understanding that interprets” takes place in the world. In stressing that the interpretative appropriation of possibilities projected as a horizon of understanding implies that Dasein is constantly making room for its own leeway of actualized possibilities, one goes on to ascribe spatiality to the constitution of meaning as well<sup>8</sup>. More specifically, one ascribes

<sup>7</sup> In accordance with the general scenario of existential analytic, one has to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic modes of making room. Thus, making room in the average-everyday mode of being-in-the-world creates the spatiality of articulating the world as (inauthentic) making-present. It is the spatiality in which Dasein has forgotten itself in its ownmost thrown potentiality-for-being. In associating everyday making room with the kind of articulation that makes present, one is most of all preoccupied with the spatiality of “the present” that provides the existential meaning of falling. Following the tenets of Heidegger’s approach, one may go on to say that by making room for “the present”, Dasein is constituting the spatiality of idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. Thus, curiosity provides that “dimension” of the spatiality of making-present in which “the present is encountered” as it constantly leaps away (where leaping-away is a regime of temporalizing). In another formulation, this is the spatial dimension of Dasein’s average everydayness that is defined by Dasein’s awaiting which leaps after the making-present in order to fabricate something new.

<sup>8</sup> The understanding that interprets is always temporalized, attuned, discursively defined, and fallen (thrown in everyday practices). By the same token, the constitution of meaning through understanding that interprets is characterized by regimes of “spatializing of spatiality” assigned respectively to the temporalized state-of-mind, discourse, and falling.

a local spatiality (environment) of readiness-to-hand to each context of equipment delineated by a particular configuration of practices. It is such a configuration that at once projects and appropriates possibilities, disclosing thereby a relatively autonomous environment. (Dasein's spatiality within-the-world consists of interwoven contextual environments.)

Dasein's making room for its own leeway of actualized possibilities is constituted by two "parameters" – directionality (*Ausrichtung*) and de-severance (*Ent-fernung*). The former is not to be confused with the notion of vector that is only definable in a mathematical space. In its "deliberative circumspection" Dasein manages to eliminate the farness of what is ready-to-hand to it. By contextualizing the utensils in the everyday dealing within-the-world, Dasein creates constantly de-severance. In other words, the delineation of a particular context of equipment brings to the fore a kind of de-severance<sup>9</sup>. This is why Heidegger goes on to assert that Dasein is essentially de-severant, i.e. Dasein is making the farness vanish by putting utensils in readiness. Consequently, in Dasein's primordial mode of being-in-the-world an "essential tendency towards closeness" takes place. The "morphology" of existential spatiality is defined by "circumspective concern" which decides as to the closeness and farness of what is proximally ready-to-hand environmentally.

Directionality is a characteristic of circumspective concern which is de-severing. By means of it, in this concern a "supply of signs" for "whithers" to which something belongs or goes, or gets brought or fetched is coming

into being. Making room within a configuration of practices through appropriating and actualizing possibilities is temporalized since it is a directional awaiting of a relatively autonomous environment. Thus, temporalized directionality of dealing with the ready-to-hand is a prerequisite for articulating the world in environments. Finally, out of the temporalized directionality of making room the fixed directions of right and left being already discussed are arising. Like de-severance, directionality of making room is mediating between the spatiality of readiness-to-hand and the spatiality of being-in-the-world. The former contains only contingent and occasional directions of near and remote directions, while the latter is stabilizing and privileging directions like up and down of vertical axis, right and left, before and behind of horizontal plane, and so on. The images of "oriented space" are called into life thanks to privileged directions in the constitution of meaning through actualizing possibilities. These are images that help one to identify "great" and "small" as well-defined, qualitatively different sizes.

From the viewpoint of the transcendental position advocated in *Being and Time*, space becomes accessible for cognition and is constituted as a possible object because the contextual making room belongs at once to the circumspective manipulation and to the transcendence of the world, i.e. it belongs at once to the ontic availability of what gets spatialized and to the transcendental condition of having such an availability in the world. All "entities" (including space) that are disclosed in the world by Dasein's circumspective being-in-the-world can be made under certain conditions possible objects of knowledge. This is why the possibility of space as an entity that can be thematically objectified is laid bare not within the epistemic subject-object relation: *Space is not in the subject, nor is the world in space*. In stressing the pre-epistemological origin of space, Heidegger (1962: 146) indicates several lines of developing this claim. On his account, the possibility of objectifying space depends

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger (1962: 141) illustrates the relativity of the spatial relations constituted by de-severance with following example: "When a man wears a pair of spectacles which are so close to him distantly that they are 'sitting on his nose', they are environmentally more remote from him than the picture on the opposite wall. Such equipment has so little closeness that often it is proximally quite impossible to find. Equipment for seeing – and likewise for hearing, such as the telephone receiver – has what we have designated as the inconspicuousness of the proximally ready-to-hand."

on the changeability of the circumspective deliberation inherent in making room within-the-world in an attitude of de-contextualizing spatial relations (of contextual involvements) whereby the latter become relations of positions in a mathematically expressible manifold.

Let me note again that according to Heidegger, there are concepts of space (both in Dasein's average everydayness and in doing research guided by a theoretical attitude) just because the interpretative appropriation of possibilities within-the-world is constantly making room, uniting thereby the spatiality of circumspective manipulation and the spatiality of being-in-the-world. Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology shows the ubiquity of the existentials of making room. There is no scheme of ecstatic temporality without a specific regime of making room (a regime of spatializing that accompanies a certain kind of temporalizing). This is why in *Being and Time* there is a section devoted on "the temporality of the spatiality". Its task is to outline the integrity of "Dasein's spatio-temporal character". More specifically, Heidegger tries in this section to address (though superficially) the problematic of how the modalities of temporalizing get (necessarily) complemented by modalities of spatializing whereby in each "chrono-topos" one is opening up a room of possibilities. In extending Heidegger's discussion of the issues focused on this problematic, one might go on to develop a sort of chrono-topology in terms of existential analytic.

### Attuned Spatiality

Each of the basic existentials has presumably its own regime of spatializing in an ek-static manner its peculiar spatiality. In terms of *Being and Time*, spatializing spatiality ecstatically would mean the way in which each of the existentials (of understanding, discourse, state-of-mind, and fall) creates a unitary spatiality through synthesizing the spatiality of the ready-to-hand within-the-world with the spatiality

of being-in-the-world. For the sake of illustration, let me take the "attuned spatiality" that arises out of the ways spatializing the moods of Dasein's thrownness. Minkowski argues that whole spectrum of moods lying between euphoria and severe depression – the opposition between darkness and luminousness, both of them regarded as deviations from clearness. "Darkness-luminousness" is an independent "dimension" of the attuned spatiality. Moreover, it is the dimension that makes meaningful the dimensions of depth, breadth, and length. The priority of the former is due to the fact that the original form of a human being's spatial opening toward the world goes through exteriorizing a state-of-mind. In a state of an emotionally positive attitude (when the feeling of easiness in life dominates) there are the phenomena of experienced distance and life amplitude<sup>10</sup>. The abnormal states of psychic life are related to moods that deform the two phenomena. Thus, a type of paranoid hallucination becomes intelligible through analyzing the way in which a dark space gets superimposed on the patient's ordinary space. Consequently, the experienced distance (*distance vécue*) disappears and there is no more life amplitude. The more the gloomy substance of darkness prevails, the more the delusions of persecution increase. In this regard, the clinical use of spatiality becomes extended to cover the anomalies of visual perception. Minkowski (1927: 59) describes the symptom of "morbid geometrism" that consists in an undue intrusion of mathematical space into "oriented spatiality", creating thereby in the patient a predilection for hypesymmetry.

Attuned spatiality is a central object of investigation in existential psychiatry. The point here is that each state of temporalizing-spatializing within the world (including the psychopathological states) constitutes a heterogeneity of spatial relations that leads to a peculiar image of an anisotropic space. Starting point of the psychiatric studies in spatiality is

<sup>10</sup> See Minkowski 1923: 366–398.

the account of the “oriented space”<sup>11</sup>. At stake is the issue of the constitution of anisotropic spaces as related to the feeling that particular directionalities have specific values. One cannot visualize oriented space as an empty continuum. The body is regarded as a center of reference that informs the anisotropic space of a characteristic state-of-mind. Binswanger (1955: 74–97) makes the case that the vertical axis is the basic axis of human existence. The order of what is ready-to-hand within-the-world is felt as a constant movement upward or downward. The linguistic expressivity of privileging the vertical axis is also a subject of prime importance in phenomenological psychiatry. Here is a typical statement raised by Henry Ellenberger (1958: 109) that deserves to be quoted: “In contrast to the isotropism of mathematical space, oriented space is anisotropic, i.e., each dimension has different, specific values. There is a vertical axis, with its up and down. There is a wide, horizontal plane, in which before and behind, right and left are differentiated. Two lines of the same length have a very different value if they are in our ‘near space’ or ‘remote space’, if they are between two objects or between us and an object. In oriented space, ‘great’ and ‘small’ are not relative measures but well-defined, qualitatively different sizes. We cannot visualize oriented space as an empty continuum; it has limitations and contents; it is mapped by objects (which have an inside and an outside), distances, directions, roads, and boundaries.”

<sup>11</sup> Henry Ellenberger (1958: 110–111) gives the following examples of how the oriented space does express emotions and moods: “The outside oriented space may have a hollow tone or a rich, expressive, physiognomic tone. Love, for instance, is a space-binding: the lover feels himself close to the beloved in spite of the distance, because in the spatial modality of love distance is transcended. Happiness expands the attuned space; things are felt as aggrandized (which is quite different from macropsia). Sorrow constricts attuned space, and despair makes it empty. In schizophrenic experience, attuned space loses its consistency, either in a progressive way or sometimes in a sudden, dramatic way (the feeling of the end of the world).”

This description provides something like a “topology of anisotropic space”. By scrutinizing it, one can define norms (of spatial orientations) and varieties of (pathological) deviations from these norms. This is a job of the psychiatric existential analysis. However, a topology of anisotropic space provides us also with the pre-scientific image of space as an object of knowledge. This is why it is quite relevant to the task of reconstructing the existential genesis of the mathematically codified concepts of space. The constitution of meaning within routine everydayness accentuates always certain directionalities, loading thereby its outcome – the “oriented and directed meaning” – with specific values. The “axiological structure” of the oriented (and attuned) spaces is precisely what gets lost in the transition to homogeneous space.

Let me mention also the studies in the so-called “phenomenology of schizophrenia” which brought into prominence the constitution of attuned spatiality by patients suffering that disease<sup>12</sup>. The “life-world of schizophrenics” obtained in the 1980s the status of a classical object in psychiatric phenomenology. In accordance with the way this discipline adopts the constitutional analysis, schizophrenia is a clinical distortion that involves a loss of the “natural evidence” that is a pre-predicative grasp of the world and of one’s being-in-the-world, on the basis of which the meaningful articulation of the world within praxis and communication comes into being. Such a loss of sense of being integrated in a world of being-with the others leaves the patient without any resistance against the world pressures<sup>13</sup>. What is of special interest for the supporters of the phenomenological approach to schizophrenia is the role of the bodily experience in having the feeling of being part of shared world. On their account, the bodily experience is a dimen-

<sup>12</sup> On phenomenology of schizophrenia see Chandrasena 1983.

<sup>13</sup> See Ellen E. Corin 1990: 158–59.

sion of the constitution of meaning that is correlated to another dimension – the movement toward the world.

The “lifeworld of schizophrenics” refers first and foremost to the disproportion between these two dimensions. Since this lifeworld – so the argument goes – is not directly accessible in discourse, it exists as a pre-discursive spatiality (i.e. a spatiality constituted by patients’ bodily experience). The latter displays a highly complex attunement. Roughly, this is a spatiality of an affective attitude that impedes the subject-object differentiation. A quite specific nuance of melancholia that has much to do with the patients’ failure to get adjusted to spaces of communication is involved in this attitude. On the results of psychiatric studies, the combination of inability to objectify and the melancholic unwillingness to entering in spaces of communication contributes to the aforementioned disproportion. In fact, the disproportion between the two dimensions discussed by phenomenological psychiatrists indicates a discrepancy between the spatiality of the ready-to-hand within the world and the spatiality of being-in-the-world.

### **Existential Spatiality and Spatiality of *Leibkörper***

To be sure, Merleau-Ponty’s “anthropological spaces” (the spatiality of night, the space of sexual imagery, the space of dreaming, the mythical space, the space of artistic expressivity – each of them defined by the typical grasp of man’s body on the world) can be studied as modes of spatializing related to particular temporalized configurations of existentials. Like Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger would agree that though the objectifying thinking does not have a hold over the anthropological spaces, the objective (geometrical and physical) space is founded upon modalities of existential spatiality. Furthermore, both philosophers reject the implicit presence of an absolute geometrical space in the various anthropological spaces. In other words, they deny that the spaces of the

different (age-related, psychological, pathological, historical, ethnic, etc.) forms of human experience and existence are deviations and transgressions of a supposedly invariant (ideally normal and normative) space. The fact that there are essential similarities between the phenomenology of space perception (and the lived body) and the existential analytic of spatiality does not mean, however, that the whole problematic of the spatiality constituted by body’s intentionality can be absorbed by the problematic of how Dasein’s making room mediates between both types of spatiality addressed in the existential analytic.

As a significant attribute of Dasein, spatiality has nothing to do with the intuitively justified idea that the totality of dealings within-the-world is present-at-hand in space. Moreover, Dasein is never a bit of space which its *Leibkörper* fills up. Yet Heidegger goes further in emphasizing that man’s corporeity is not a privileged starting-point of spatializing. In scrutinizing this claim, one is able to see the basic contrast of Heidegger’s approach to spatiality with Merleau-Ponty’s (1962: 98–147) treating of “lived space”. Notoriously, Heidegger does not pay much attention to the role played by Dasein’s “bodily nature” (*Leiblichkeit*) in the spatial articulation of contexts of equipment within-the-world. Indeed, he argues that bodily nature hides a peculiar problematic of its own. But at the same time he stresses that Dasein is spatial not because of its bodily nature, but because of its ability to transcend the things within the world, and to orient itself towards the world in a manner that is characterized by de-severance and directionality. These “parameters” of spatiality are to be rather assigned to the interrelatedness of practical dealings with what is ready-to-hand than to the lived body. By implication, the anisotropic and asymmetric space of Dasein’s bodily orientations (or, the space of circumspectively allotted places and localities) is due to the whole interrelatedness of Dasein’s practices that are projecting and actualizing possibilities of world’s articulation. (Practices initiated and carried out by man’s

body are only an integral part of the totality of Dasein's dealings that build up its circumspective manipulation. To have a spatializing caused by man's corporeity remains optically possible – so Heidegger's argument goes – only because Dasein itself is spatial with regard to that totality of interrelated practices.)

For Merleau-Ponty, by contrast, thanks to the bodily experience (or the “virtual body”) man is able to transcend the things, being thereby irreducible to an entity coexisting with those things. (The virtual body is the “phenomenal place” of the complexity of doings within the world as this place gets fixed by its situations and its tasks.) Through the bodily experience man is getting a status of existence “toward the world”. In other words, the world's horizontality gets “generated” by man's lived body which becomes the unconditioned starting-point of the constitution of meaning. Accordingly, man's perception becomes the primordial level of meaningful spatializing the things of the world. It is the perceptive body that “breathes life into the world”. The virtual body is the only way of entering the world's meaningful articulation. Since perception has a priority in bodily experience (and accordingly, in existence in and toward the world), it is the constitution of perceptive space that provides the point of departure of the constitutional analysis of meaning. From that perspective, the virtual body is ontologically equiprimordial with the world. It is the unity of body and world as a unity of mutual implication mediated by sense perception that brings meaning to light. This unity conditions the constitution of images of anisotropic space. A Merleau-Ponty-like “phenomenology of sensation” would allow one to identify the basic heterogeneities of lived space (including kinesthetic space, tactile space, visual space, and auditory space) that are to be taken into consideration when one is concentrated on the pre-conditions for having a homogeneous (proto-mathematical) space with isotropic dimensionality.

The unity with the world-nature's spatiality precedes the spatiality of the ready-to-hand

within the world. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's “phenomenological naturalism” adds a new aspect to the scope of existential spatiality<sup>14</sup>. The relation between lived body and space is not one of practical concern. Though in a non-Husserlian sense, it is an intentional relation. The lived space of the virtual body is meaningfully constituted (as a manifold of sensations' spaces) in a direct manner, i.e. not by means of mediating practices. There is a sensible relation between the body and its environment set up before the body gets involved (thrown) in practical dealings with things that are ready-to-hand. The lived space is an outcome not only of pre-reflexive and pre-predicative experience, but of pre-practical being-in-the-world as well. (The “motives” which Merleau-Ponty refers to when dealing with the lived space disclose teleology of body's intentionality that has nothing to do with the end-means schematism of doing practices.) Ted Toadvine is right in stressing that Merleau-Ponty's way of recasting Husserl's notions of intentionality and motivation is intended as an alternative to the Manichean ontology of plenitude versus void. By entangling intentionality with bodily spatiality, the French phenomenologist is looking for a being that transcends the mere alternation of plenitude and void<sup>15</sup>.

In privileging the depth of the lived over its breadth and height, Merleau-Ponty envisages a completely new (as compared with Heidegger's) treatment of the original directionality of meaning constitution. Breadth and height are entirely dependent on the relations between things, while depth characterizes the situatedness of the virtual body in the lived space. Depth refers to the embodiment – the filling up of the lived space with embodied meaning welling up from the virtual body. Breadth and height are the dimensions that become visible when one takes a reflexive distance from (the process of) embodiment, and looks exclusively upon how entities are juxtaposed in space. By contrast, depth is

<sup>14</sup> See in this regard also Joseph Kockelmans (1970).

<sup>15</sup> Ted Toadvine 2009: 98.

the dimension in which things does not occupy isolated places but implicate each other. (A great achievement of Abstract Expressionism is the way of compressing height and breadth into depth, disclosing thereby the “spatial field” as the terrain of all possible kinds of embodiment.)

In my view, there is no genetic (not to speak of causal) relation between Merleau-Ponty’s lived space of the virtual body and Heidegger’s spatiality of the ready-to-hand<sup>16</sup>. They are “phenomenological objects” delineated by virtue of different paradigms of constitutional analysis. This is why I am inclined to treat them as independent aspects within the scope of existential spatiality.

Although Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of lived space’s depth brings to the fore as it were the most subjective aspect of existential spatiality, it is this aspect that makes possible the transition from the phenomena being regarded so far to a phenomenologically oriented environmentalist philosophy. Merleau-Ponty stresses that human being never completely lives in anthropological spaces<sup>17</sup>. This claim rehabilitates by no means a sophisticated version of the geometrical intellectualism – all anthropological spaces are founded upon a hidden geometrical (non-existential) space. It states rather that the spaces of all particular modes of human existence are always rooted in nature’s non-human space. However, this pre-existential space that escapes human freedom and arbitrariness is not a meaning-less formal presence irrelevant to any kind of phenomenological study. By

the same token, nature’s non-human space that is presupposed by every mode of human spatializing is not a (hypothetically primordial) geometrical space. One can come to grips with it only by scrutinizing the original contact between spatial existence and the world in which bodily experience is immersed. Since this is a phenomenological task, the outcome of addressing it has to be formulated in terms of a constitutional analysis: The non-human space of world-nature shows itself as a substrate of meaning in human beings which is not subject to human beings’ freedom. Thereby nature is disclosed as a unique meaningful background against which spatializing and the constitution of anthropological spaces take place. (Merleau-Ponty speaks in this regard of a primordial “level of all levels” that grounds the strata of spatial meaning.)

The substrate of meaning arising out of the original contact underlies the spaces of the cultural world just as the canvas underlies the picture<sup>18</sup>. On an interesting corollary to that idea, there is a pre-personal body-subject (attached to the original stratum of meaning) that is led not by motives and projects, but (through a pre-personal totality of intentions) directly by world-nature<sup>19</sup>. We can have a philosophical reflection on nature only by studying (in a phenomenological manner) this anonymous body-subject. Merleau-Ponty’s celebrated analysis of Cézanne’s artistic credo epitomizes the profile of such a study. It is a study into nature’s spatial expressivity. Cézanne is convinced that in the face of his motif the painter is about to join the aimless hand of nature. In taking this dictum seriously, Merleau-Ponty looks for nature’s expressivity in chromatic spatiality of modern painting.

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, there is a possible scenario in which one might envisage a kind of genetic relation: The plurality of spaces of sensations becomes a unified manifold (the lived space of the virtual body) by being involved in the world’s interrelatedness of practices. According to this scenario that supposedly bridges the gap between Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology and Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception, the integrity of the intentional relation between lived body and space is fore-structured by the worldhood of the world. Nevertheless, I am quite skeptical that such a scenario would lead to a consistent phenomenological program.

<sup>17</sup> Merleau-Ponty 1962: 293.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> To quote Merleau-Ponty’s (1962: 294) formulation: “My personal existence must be the resumption of a pre-personal tradition. There is, therefore, another subject beneath me, for whom the world exists before I am here, and who marks out my place in it. This captive or natural spirit is my body.”

Now, I am in a position to touch upon the issue about the sense in which phenomenology of the lived body (or, the virtual body in the lived space) is outlining a promising program for philosophy of nature. Phenomenologists like Ted Toadvine who (based on the lecture course “Nature”) try take up and develop this program are inspired by Merleau-Ponty’s thesis that the absolute past of the pre-personal body is also an *absolute past of nature*. They are led by the conviction that scientific naturalism must be both revised and complemented by a phenomenological ontology of the human relation with nature. At stake in their investigations is nature’s association with originary space and time. *Phenomenology of Perception* stipulates that: (a) the aforementioned association remains operative in every perception; and (b) it is the pre-personal body that forms a pact with nature. With regard to these two claims the question of the conditions under which nature can be made an interlocutor arises. To answer that question requires to taking seriously nature’s efforts to express its own sense through its silence. Only a philosophy that is capable to ask about nature’s silent autoproduction of meaning might devise a strategy for a dialogue with nature. Since the dialogue is conditioned by the anonymous intentionality of the “pre-personal tradition”, the phenomenology of the lived body is in Merleau-Ponty’s work a prelude to an ontology of the human-nature chiasm<sup>20</sup>.

## Conclusion

Let me in conclusion pinpoint once more the principled contrast between the phenomenology that leads to a kind of environmentalist philosophy and the existential analytic of spatiality. In putting environments of practical manipulation and contexts of equipment first, Heidegger “dissolves nature” in the ongoing genera-

tion of meanings by doing practices. There is only room for a “mathematical projection of nature” in *Being and Time*. For Merleau-Ponty, the pre-reflective (and pre-practical) body-environment unity provides a point of departure related to human being’s unity with nature. On his conception of intentionality, there is a fundamental intersection of body and nature that gets revealed by the orientation of being. (However, the task of an ontology of the “oriented being” is rather indicated than resolved in *Phenomenology of Perception*.) Thus, there is a phenomenology that is seeking after the continuity of the human and the natural. This is why Merleau-Ponty’s ideas are so important for all contemporary philosophical programs that by reflecting upon the spatiality of environment search for a new dialogue with nature.

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<sup>20</sup> See Toadvine 2009: 106–130.

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## EGZISTENCINIO ERDVIŠKUMO APIMTYS

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Straipsnyje nedėstoma pažintinė egzistencinio erdviškumo teorija. Jo tikslas gerokai nuosaikesnis – atskleisti tuos visybinio buvimo pasaulyje prasmės konstitucijos aspektus, kurie nužymi svarstomą problematiką. Kadangi tie aspektai apeliuoja į įvairius konstitucinės prasmės analizės tipus, ypatingas dėmesys čia skiriamas nesutarimams tarp trijų pamatinių fenomenologinių diskursų – hermeneutinės fenomenologijos, egzistencinės psichiatrijos ir kūniškumo fenomenologijos – įveikai.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** įlaikintas erdviškumas, įerdvinimas, antrinis egzistencialas, kryptingumas, santykinai uždara aplinka, išgyventas atstumas, antropologinės erdvės, kūniškas erdviškumas.

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