**An Argument for Dualism from the Lived Experience of Being in Space**

In a previous essay, I presented an argument for dualism from our lived experience of time, in which I claimed that, whether one adopts a three-dimensional A-theory of time or a four-dimensional B-theory of time, the self-conscious rational subject that experiences temporal passage is not a temporal being – is not in time but stands outside of it. In that paper, I left open whether the self-conscious rational subject is at rest in relation to the 3D universe subject to temporal passage, or in motion in relation to a 4D block universe from which all change and temporal succession is excluded. In this paper, however, I offer additional considerations designed to show that there is a decided preference in favor of the former option, one that supports the thesis that the soul is a sempiternal entity without any sort of history considered in itself.

I do this by bringing our lived experience of time into relation to the facts of our lived experience of space, or rather, of our being localized in space, facts that strongly suggest that, while we experience ourselves as *located* in space, our being so located and so experiencing ourselves as so located in fact requires that the self-conscious rational subject that experiences itself as located in space not be a spatial being at all. In that case, not only do we have compelling evidence that 3-Dimensionalism is true, we also have compelling evidence for a central claim of mind-body dualism – that I am not identical to, nothing but, or some process occurring in, my body.

**The Experience of Spatial Localization** In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty carefully describes the experience of spatial location in relation to the self-conscious rational subject that experiences him- or herself as being *in* space – as located in space as a subject. The fundamental feature of this experience is that one both *contained* in space – related to space as a container that surrounds one – and *localized* in space, as occupying a discrete *place* within space, one that founds one’s perspective on the world and one’s relation to the other objects that exist there as present (either actually or potentially) to one. This experience has both an objective aspect and a subjective one as well, especially as spatial location is relativized to the *now* that, as I have explained elsewhere, is not the present or the present moment, but simply the point at which experience of the external world is focused in relation to the self-conscious rational subject.

Space, as ordinarily experienced by us, is a kind of dome that is as though placed over us, with oneself at the center. So far as space is concerned, we are all self-centered, and are ineluctably so. While I can take myself out of the center of a room or a sports stadium, using that as a fixed, external spatial limit (since I can’t see through or around it), I can’t do this with space generally considered, or space itself. If I am outside, for example, while the limits of the “dome” of space, which terminates on the ground at the visible horizon, are clearly observable by me, as I move though space, occupying different places *seriatim*, so too does the dome of space move with me, bringing an ever-changing spectacle as objects come across the horizon and approach me as I approach them. At any place I happen to occupy, if I turn in a tight circle (the original sense of the French *environs*, from which we get our word environment), I will see an unbroken horizon constituting a container-space at which I remain at the center and that contains many other material things besides myself within it. As I move from place to place, I continue to be at the center of that dome – it moves with me, and in the process comes to contain different objects, adding some in the direction in which I am tending, while others I pass and then pass out of the moving dome of phenomenal space.

The “moving dome” with its horizon across which objects enter into the visual field and (if I turn my head and watch as I move forward) out of which they recede and disappear is clearly a subjective feature of experience. Every self-conscious rational subject (indeed, every conscious subject, whether rational or not) is ineluctably *self-centered*, possessing a unique and incommunicable perceptual perspective at each moment that it occupies a specific place, always at the center of a finite spatial dome that moves as one move and whose content changes as one do so. In everyday lived experience, we take it that this space is *phenomenal*. The space of my visual field is not the whole of space, nor the objects that enter and leave that space as its contents come to be and pass away in the process of doing so. We also have no difficulty in acknowledging that what is true for me and my visual, perceptual space is also true for others – each of us lives in his or her own perceptual space and sees the world from his or her own unique point of view.

At the same time, we have no trouble accommodating this realization to our conviction that there is one common, objective space upon which all of these individual perspectives are focused and into which each is an *entrée*. This entire space is explored, mapped, and connected together in such a way as to be formed into a whole that is both complete and continuous, so that from any place a path may be plotted to any other place in that continuum. Each of these particular subjective perspectives can be *mapped* onto that objective spatial reconstruction and related to every other such perspective. This space, however, as represented in a map, on a globe, or a star-chart is not the space of lived experience – the space in which we live, and move, and have our being. Instead, this common, objective space is something that exists only for is only in the intellect as something understood rather than perceived, as something existing solely for the imagination as a representation. We can never experience space or be spatially related to its contents by means of a map, a chart, or a GPS device, even if we can use a map or a chart or GPS to orient ourselves within the space of lived experience and even to tell us where we are and what we are thus spatially and perceptually related to. (“Look! That’s the tree that’s marked on the treasure map! Let’s go that direction, the one indicated by that lone branch!”) If that were not so, then there would be no difference between knowing where something is on a map and our actually visiting that thing in real life.

This, of course, is paradoxical. On the one hand, the space of lived experience is irreducibly subjective and personal. Either I have seen Mt. Rushmore or I have not – no one can see it for me. Even if, to gratify my dying wish, someone sees it in my stead, it is that person, not me, that sees that particular monument. At the same time, it is possible for more than one person to see the same thing at the same time, as when, to gratify my dying wish, both you and I travel to Mt. Rushmore and see it prior to my death. More than this, those perspectives can overlap each other, so that each of the overlapping perspectives contain the same objective content. Indeed, we commonly talk about seeing the same things, not just things but unrepeatable events (“We were both there when he was shot”), and this is not a metaphor.

Nevertheless, this seems paradoxical. How can it be that each of us can see the same thing when each of us possesses and is limited to one’s own subjective stream of conscious awareness? Even if we suppose that the cause of the representations we see are the same, given that we have no other access to the external world than subjective lived experience, how could we know this is the case? Elsewhere, I have given my answer to this question. On an Aristotelian ontology of material things, the substantial forms of things, existing in them as their essence-as-nature, can be transferred from that thing in the form of species, resulting in numerically the same form existing in the mind of the perceiver, first as the principle of unity for a set of otherwise externally related sense-data, then as an abstract concept in the intellect, then subsequently, when applied to the phantasm or mental image, constituting a representation of a particular external object. In this way, the intellect literally becomes what it knows due to the fact that the thing itself becomes present in and to conscious awareness formally and intentionally rather than as its nature as it exists in the thing itself. Material things are constantly reflecting light and sound waves, exuding odors, and possess qualities discernible by touch, such as solidity, hardness, texture, and heat and cold. There is no reason in principle to suppose that only a single person at any one time might be inFORMed by the same material thing, so that the essence-as-nature of that particular is simultaneously present in the conscious awareness of more than one person as multiple, perspectivally distinct representations of the same particular thing. In that case, there is no difficulty in two persons literally seeing the same thing despite their possessing distinct representations of that thing in their distinct and incommunicable streams of conscious awareness.

**The Paradox of Spatial Localization** More than this, each of us *qua* perceptual subject is *immersed* in space, having no purchase on the world that is not embedded in space, so that even if we attempt to “think away” all the contents of spatial experience, we cannot “think away” space itself. At best, we imagine (or, more properly, attempt to image) *empty* space, space that contains nothing. Even in this case, however, we do not succeed – each of us is still in that space, and at the center of it, though space now becomes a sphere, and the perceiver located at the fixed point of that sphere – at the center point of the horizontal or equatorial circle with the largest area belonging to that sphere. It is impossible for us to even imagine what spaceless existence would like and no way for us to “get out of space” as a perceptual subject.

Nor do we have, even imaginatively, a perspective on space that is entirely outside of space. We can map a particular region of space, make a representation of it, and even mark it with a tag that says “You are here.” But where is *here*, exactly? After all, whatever place I occupy is *here* for me and in that sense I am always here, wherever I am, for as long as I exist. Nevertheless, I can still sensibly ask where I am and a map marked in that fashion can inform me of my position in space relative to my surroundings. In a sense, this allows us to get an objective perspective on that particular region of space, as though we were outside it. At the same time, we are still inside that space – our lived experience of which occurs within the very space being represented by the map – and the primary use of the map is to help us navigate the space in which we live, and move, and have our being by orienting us with regard to the surrounding area. (“It says here that Custer’s grave is over there. (*Pointing*) Let’s go that way.”) Indeed, even if we were to make a globe representing all of “space-time” our lived experience of that globe would still be spatially contained within the space represented there and whatever sort of perspective it provided for us would not be entirely outside of space – no matter how hard we tried, there would still be space *behind us*, for example We are always at the center of space, whether in perception or imagination, and the purchase on space given to us by a map or globe never allows us to occupy a perspective wholly outside of space. Nor could a map or globe work to tell us where we are unless we were already immersed in space and localized at some place within the space of lived experience.

The reason for this is that there is no place outside of space for me to occupy in order that I might take up such a perspective. Indeed, there can be place, occupying a place, and spatial perspective on something only from *within* space. There is nowhere, then, from which we can have either a perceptual or an imaginative “view from nowhere.” There is no such *place* as nowhere – every occupiable *where* is some*where*. Nowhere is, well, nowhere – no *where* and no place and consequently incapable of being occupied either in fact or in imagination. Our ability to conceive of space in itself or as a whole in no way requires that we be able to do this – space, as an object of theoretical inquiry, is something we comprehend rather than something that we apprehend. Space so considered is noumenal, not phenomenal and, while something to which lived experience gives us *entrée* and to which theoretical inquiry remains in some respects beholden, has to be understood in accordance with the analogical models that abstract mathematical investigation produces, even as we recognize that these are not literal or descriptive presentations of the nature of the object being depicted except in certain formal respects.

**The Lived Experience of Time in Relation to the Lived Experience of Spatial Location** A further difficulty arises when we attempt to square our lived experience of time with our lived experience of being located in space. We naturally take it that our spatial location within the space of lived experience coincides with our body and occupies a region of space equal to the limits of that body, though in ordinary usage the notion of “place” is quite flexible and context-dependent: the “here” can be limited simply to the region of space occupied by the body, but need not be – both smaller (this place on my arm where I have a scar) and much bigger (such as one’s home or estate, or the interior of a building like a theater or a church, or a market square, an apartment house, or even a small street or alley) can be designated as “places.” Despite that, we further suppose that our lived perspective on space constituted from within space is given to us by the locations of our bodies in space understood as something existing outside of ourselves that nevertheless contains our body within itself. It hardly seems that we could be wrong about this if our lived experience of space – which is precisely our experience of being in space, occupying some place or other at every moment we exist, and being incapable of even so much as imaginatively conceiving an existence outside of space – is not to be wholly unintelligible to us. Yet, I suggest, we are threatened with precisely this sort of unintelligibility in this case.

Consider, once again, the 4D account of space and time as Minkowski space-time, a view that is said to entail an account of noumenal space and time that leads to a block universe from which all change and temporal passage are excluded. On this view, if I am identical with my body and so immersed in space-time as my body is, then I am identical with a space-time “worm” congealed in that block-universe like a vein in a block of marble and none of the relations between the events that make up my life are constituted by mere temporal succession. In such case, however, I can only conceive of my lived experience of time as consisting in a complete, instantaneous, and comprehensive awareness of all of those events occurring simultaneously in my conscious awareness, without any hint of change or succession, as a completed totality held together by relations of *per se* causal dependence. After all, according to 4 Dimensionalism, that is the way things actually are and so the only way we could literally experience them as they really are as part of lived experience. Yet, of course, my experience of the moments of my life, doled out to me in an excruciatingly slow process of successive moments by the miserly hand of nature, is nothing like it would have to be if my lived experience of space and time were anything like an even remotely accurate characterization of the nature of space and time as it really is according to 4-Dimensionalism. For this reason, I can no longer seriously entertain the notion that 4- Dimensionalism is even so much as a metaphysically possible account of the relation of my self *qua* self-conscious rational subject to space and time.

As I previously argued, there is no way to make sense of my experience of temporal passage on the supposition that 4-Dimensionalism is true. Now, it turns out, the same is true given my experience of being in space on the supposition that I am located in space as something physically contained there. On the one hand, my body clearly is physically contained in space. If this were not so, then it would not be possible for me to have *entrée* into the external world or be localized there at all in such a way as to be capable of interacting with that world and its constituents – however we understand that notion on the 4-Dimensionalist account of things. On the other hand, if I were nothing but my body and my body were nothing but a “space-time worm” from which all change and temporal passage were excluded, in that case no part of me nor any “process” going on in me could constitute my lived experience of temporal passage, since even the illusion of temporal passage requires that the subject that experiences that illusion is subject to temporal passage as a necessary condition for the possibility of that illusion. As such, the self-conscious subject that I am must be something other than my body. Even if my body is located in space, I am not – at best, I am *localized there* by my relation to the body that, while a natural part of the human organism, is something other than what I am *qua* self-conscious rational subject.

On the other hand, suppose that 3-Dimensionalism is true. In that case, the world of lived experience itself is characterized by an objective temporal succession of events. Once again, we suppose that I am identical to my body and immersed in time just as my body is. Then, one might suppose, everything is as it ought to be in order for lived experience to be fully intelligible as we live it. Surprisingly, however, this is not the case. On 3-Dimensionalism, the body is immersed in both space and time – as a material thing, the body is itself subject to temporal passage, undergoing constant change within and across time. In the environment in which it exists and is found, the body is just another material thing in flux, immersed in the changing stream of things, events, and states-of-affairs. Its natural perspective on things, then, ought to be that of something immersed in the flow of the world as a participant of that flow rather than as an observer of changing processes occurring from an as-though fixed point, as is *in fact* natural to us as rational, self-conscious subjects.

This immersive perspective is something that we can (and sometimes do) perceptually and imaginatively occupy. If I am running in a race, playing in a symphony orchestra, flying through the air after running into a parked car on my motorcycle, acting in a play, in the midst of armed combat, or suffering a fever-dream, I am actively immersed in the current series of passing events, synecdochally like a race-car driver in the middle of the pack in an ongoing stock-car race. As part of what is happening as it happens, I interact with a world in which not only I but everything around me is in motion and in which everything moves at the same time. Given my circumstances, I am unable occupy any sort of overview or external perspective on what is going on in my surroundings. I am primarily aware of my being involved in or undergoing rapid and largely uncontrollable change, of being subject to forces largely or entirely out of control, and so on. We “lose perspective” in such cases and our lived experience devolves into a flotsam of images, impulses, and attempts to cope with the stream of change in which one finds oneself ineluctably involved and upon which one’s attention is almost wholly concentrated. At that point, one might even (and often does) describe one’s lived experience as “crazy” or by saying “and then all hell broke loose.”

By contrast, suppose that I am watching the race, in the audience at the symphony or play, walking down the street when I see a motorcycle crash, or watching the battle unfold on a remote TV screen. In this case, my body is not involved in the events that one is witnessing. This is not just a matter of “being at rest” with regard to what I perceive or imagine – I saw the motorcycle accident while I was walking, after all. Rather, it has to do with a kind of detachment – an ability to transcend the swim of things and to perceive them from a point of view that either perceives or imaginatively constitutes the self-conscious rational subject at rest in relation to passing show of things, events, and states-of-affairs going on in the world as they happen in “real time.” In fact, this is a much more common and natural relation to the external world than that we experience in those moments of immersion in the stream of experience, in which we perceive ourselves or the world as chaotic or “out of control.”

In that natural condition, we experience ourselves as the fixed point that the world and the things, events, and states-of-affairs composing our individual streams of lived experience, whether shared or not, are in motion around. This fixed point is not necessarily “at rest” so far as the body is concerned – it is more than simply holding one’s ground or staying in the same spot. It is not an illusion produced by “standing back” from the flow of life, since unless such a point of view were available to us, there would be no place to “step back” to in order to produce such an illusion. This point of view or perspective is not an illusion – it is something really available to us in lived experience and prevents our characteristic way of being in touch with reality from being a “booming, buzzing confusion” as it very likely is for small children and non-human animals. Yet what is this natural perspective on material things in space, and how is it occupied?

My suggestion is that this perspective is the product of synthesis, specifically, the identification of the *here* with the *now* in lived experience. The *here* will always be identified with some place or other and will endow lived experience with a spatial perspective on the external world and a correspondingly unique set of temporally successive experiential contents. The stability and fixity of this natural perspective is provided by the *now* that, as I have argued elsewhere, is not a moment in time, let alone the present moment of time, but instead the infinitesimal point of the sempiternal, immaterial soul’s *entrée* into lived experience and the sole token of its presence in and to lived experience while serving as both the ontic and phenomenological foundation for the Kantian “I” that accompanies all my representations. To use a somewhat crude analogy, lived experience is something like a pie-wedge, with the *now* at the very point of that slice of pie and the external world at the crust-end. The pie-wedge itself is the body and the crust-end its affective surface. Since the body mediates the soul’s awareness of the external world, wherever the *here* is located, the *now* will also be localized and the content of lived experience made determinate for the self-conscious rational subject that apprehends the external world.

In this instance, the stable, unchanging *now* provides the form and the *here*, wherever that happens to be, provides the content – the matter in Kant’s sense, one borrowed from Aristotle – of one’s lived experience. While the *now* is localized in space by the *here*, and is so localized in virtue of the mediation of the body, it is not thereby *located* in space as the self-conscious rational subject that occupies the *now*. Were this the case, the perspective of that self-conscious rational subject would be immersed in the flow of experience just as the body is and what I have been calling our natural perspective on the external world would not be possible for us. To continue to use my crude analogy, if there were nothing but the crust-end to the pie-wedge, lived experience could (at best) be world-immersive in the manner described above, without any sort of unifying moment capable of endowing it with the overview perspective that we routinely occupy during most of our lived experience. Whereas the *here* changes as we engage in local motion through the space of lived experience, the *now* does not change in an appreciable way. It cannot be identified, then, with any of the different places it occupies in space nor with a mere stream of conscious contents that are present to it at any moment in time. If the now were tied to any specific place or places in space, then we would be able to adopt the natural perspective on the external world only when occupying that place or places. As it is, we carry the *now* with us wherever we go: it is something contributed by the subject that experiences, not something belonging to the object experienced. In virtue of this, the unity of consciousness resides in the sameness of soul that continuously occupies the natural perspective on the external world, a perspective that, in certain unusual circumstances, becomes unavailable to us as conscious awareness reverts to a more “primitive” relation to the external world, but which is (partially) recoverable as remembered from the natural perspective when that perspective is restored. This is problematic in itself, due to its being the case that this natural perspective is simply built into the memory as an perspective on past lived experience, which constitutes it as an object in relation to conscious awareness rather than as something currently lived through. As so represented we are, paradoxically, both taking that built-in objective point of view and yet taking that perspective on something that, as actually and originally experienced, wholly excludes that perspective. Nevertheless, we can best approximate that past experience by attempting to concentrate on the content of that memory by “immersing” oneself in it in an attempt to relive it as closely as we can given the intrinsic limitation of memory in this regard.

The upshot of all of this is that the *now* is no more in space than it is in time. Where I am in space – where the self-conscious rational subject that I am is localized in space – is wherever my body is located in space. However, while the body’s location in space is a necessary condition for the very possibility of the lived experience of space as we enjoy it, that the self-conscious subject that experiences the external world as spatial be contained in space and thereby located there at some particular place is not required in order for lived experience of a spatial world to occur. Indeed, as those comparatively rare instances of “immersion” in space and time that happen in lived experience indicate, if I were nothing but my body, and like my body merely a material, spatio-temporal being, if I were capable of consciousness at all, my experience would naturally be “world-immersive” in the way just described. As it is, the fact that the self-conscious rational subject that I am naturally occupies the *now* and so is not typically immersed in the stream of experiential contents as something occurring in and along with them. By means of the retreat to the *now*, I am once again capable of observing the external world, which includes my body, by occupying a view from nowhere that constitutes the world as the object of my awareness and so distinct from myself as self-conscious rational subject *qua* observer. This characteristic, natural perspective on the external world, one that is presupposed by the very sort of theoretical inquiry we engage in when we do philosophy and natural science, would not be possible if we were nothing but bodies, understood as material things immersed in space and time and subject to temporal passage.

**Body and Self** My body and I form a single organism, and by a kind of *communication idiomatum* predicates that properly apply to me only by reference to the nature of one of the substances that compose me and not the other can be applied to me *qua* organism. *Qua* organism, I am one, common subject of predication. Each of these predicates, however, is relativized to the two distinct substances that compose my organism, which is what constitutes me as a human being and is essentially involved in my exemplifying human nature. Thus, *qua* human, I can be said to naturally immortal in virtue of my soul yet liable to bodily death, a death that naturally portends the cessation of consciousness due to the soul’s no longer exercising its characteristic power as per se cause of the body’s operation. In turn, the body is such only as operating, hence as sustained in that operation by the soul – as Aristotle tells us, a dead body is no longer a body, but simply a corpse. In the same way, I am both in space and time, in virtue of my body’s spatial location in space as something contained there *qua* material thing, despite the fact that *qua* self-conscious rational subject I am no more in space than I am in time. Instead, I am at best localized in space in virtue of the soul’s relation to the body in virtue of which it has *entrée* into the world of space and time without being in space or time. By a retreat to the *now* I escape the sort of immersion in space that is characteristic of my body that in certain, generally rare circumstances, becomes the tenor of lived experience as well. Nevertheless, since these predicates are relativized to the two substances that compose the human organism, Leibniz’s Law cannot be used to generate any contradictions on this account. The human organism – the living thing that is a human being – is one subject of predication, but it is composed of two separate substances with two distinct and opposed natures. This metaphysical fact about the human organism blocks any confusion of predicates between body and soul. When the “I” refers, not simply to me as a self-conscious rational subject but rather to the organism that I am in virtue of the relation of the soul to the body as the proximate *per se* cause of the body’s operation, then I possess both natures and the characteristics essential to both of them. Thus, I am both immaterial and material, naturally immortal and yet liable to die, both located in space while being merely localized there, and so on, yet there is no contradiction in this.