Selfhood and Appearing:

The Intertwining

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**Introduction**

Aristotle wrote that the question that had been asked long ago and continually puzzles us is that of being: “What is being, what is it in its primary sense?”[[1]](#endnote-1)  Even more baffling, however, is the question of our being: who or what are we? What do we mean by a “self”? How are we to understand it, both individually and collectively? This question is connected to that of appearing. We are not just a being among beings, but a being to whom beings appear. This position presents its own puzzle. Sitting in a room, we experience it as out there and ourselves as in it. But the room appears and vanishes each time we open and close our eyes. This convinces us that the room is inside our heads, in the perceptual experience located within it. We, thus, face “the puzzle,” as William James writes, “of how the one identical room can be in two places.”[[2]](#endnote-2) The question is actually that of our being-in-the-world. What exactly is our relation to the world? Are we in the world or is it in us? This question involves a number of issues. By examining them, we can set the terms of engagement that animate the inquiries that follow.

**The Status of Consciousness**

The first of these concerns what we mean by consciousness. Given its constant presence, we have to accept it as a fact. The problem is that we have no way of connecting this fact to our scientific view of reality. Thus, there is nothing about the behavior of neurons that distinguishes them from, say, liver cells with regard to consciousness. The metabolic processes of neither point to it. [[3]](#endnote-3) We can, of course, find neural correlates to our sensory experiences. When we see or hear something, patterns of activity occur among our neurons. But a correlate of consciousness is not consciousness. As the cognitive scientist, Riccardo Manzotti, writes, “When scientists look for AIDS or DNA, they look for the thing itself, not a mere correlate.”[[4]](#endnote-4) In fact, the situation we face with regard to consciousness is similar to those that preceded previous scientific revolutions. With consciousness, we confront a fact that does not fit with our current scientific view of reality. In this, our situation is analogous to that occasioned by Michelson and Morley’s discovery of the constant speed of light. The fact that its speed is not additive, that it cannot be increased by the velocity of its source, did not tally with what we understood of reality. In response, Einstein transformed our understanding of space and time. The fact of consciousness is like that of the constant speed of light. It demands that we alter our view of reality to take account of this fact.[[5]](#endnote-5) The question, of course, is what this change might be.

At issue here is not just our ontological conception of reality. It also concerns our own conduct. In Plato’s *Phaedo*, Socrates gives two explanations for why he sits in prison, talking with his friends while he awaits his execution. The first points to his “bones and sinews,” i.e., to the fact that his “bones are rigid and separated at the joints, but the sinews are capable of contraction and relaxation” and have, thus, enabled him to sit in his present position. Similarly, the explanation of his talking with his friends relies on “sound and air and hearing,” understood mechanically. [[6]](#endnote-6) The second explanation is moral. It involves his belief that it is “more right to stay and submit” to the penalty imposed on him rather than attempt to escape.[[7]](#endnote-7) The first explanation gives the material conditions for his action. Socrates admits that without them “I should not be able to do what I think is right.” But, while necessary, such conditions are not sufficient. One has to add his “choice of what is best,” that is, the fact that his “actions are controlled by mind.”[[8]](#endnote-8) This second factor involves the mind’s capacity to form intentions and, as such, is teleological. At issue is the rightness of the goal that he seeks to realize. The question that Plato raises, but does not answer, is how these two explanations are to be combined. A mechanical explanation explains the present by speaking of the past conditions that led up to it. A teleological explanation relies on an intended future. It explains action in terms of its goal. The distinction between the two plays itself out in the split between the sciences and the humanities. History, for example, focuses on the intentions of the actors, judging them accordingly. Geology, by contrast, accounts for an event—for example, that of an earthquake—by pointing to the slow accumulation of pressures that occurred before the event. Given that both material-causal and teleological explanations apply to ourselves, what this split signifies is a lack in our self-understanding. We have no clear conception of how our being-in-the-world can sustain these different accounts.

The difficulty can be put in terms of temporalities involved in our selfhood. The temporality of our pragmatic activities is by and large teleological. As such, it begins with the future. Suppose, for example, we want to bake a cake. This cake exists only as an intended future. It affects our present activity, not directly, but rather through determining our regard to our past. We try to remember if we have purchased the requisite materials and, if necessary, set about searching for them. As determined by our goal, our past is here regarded in terms of the resources it offers us for the goal’s accomplishment. Similarly, if I wish to run a marathon race, this goal makes me think of how much I have trained in order to set my current training schedule. Again the past, as resulting in my current physical condition, is regarded in terms of resources it offers. It is taken, as it were, as “material” for my project. The same temporality is also at work in perception. Here, the goal is what we intend to see. The past is regarded as material for this intention. Thus, in moving to get a better look at an object, I regard the object through an accumulating series of views, each of which offers me a different perspective of it. Such views serve as the material for my goal of grasping the object. Putting these past views together, I see the object as showing itself through them. It is not just clearer and more detailed as I approach it, it also appears as something that shows itself through a succession of views. As perspectivally appearing, i.e., as capable of being successively viewed from different sides, it is grasped as a spatial-temporal object.

It goes without saying that my action of walking around the object also involves the temporality of physical action. By this, I mean the temporality where the past, rather than the future, plays the leading role. Such temporality is present in the chemical actions that power my muscle cells and neurons. It is equally present in the rising of the cake I put in the oven. If teleological temporality goes from the future to the present through the past, the temporality of mechanical processes proceeds from the past to the present to the future. Thus, when I play billiards, I assume that my action of hitting a ball with a certain impact will affect the ball it subsequently strikes and cause it eventually to enter into a specific side pocket. Overlaid on this is the teleological temporality of my choosing to try and get it into this pocket. This goal affects how I regard the positions of the balls on the table and, through this, my action of hitting the ball. Both temporalities are involved when I play this game. In fact, all my actions, to the point that they are intentional, embody them. This, however, does tell me how their combination is possible—how, in fact, the temporality that defines me can proceed in two different directions.

**The Status of Cognition**

Our inability to respond to this points to our failure to integrate the fact of consciousness with our scientific conception of reality—a conception that relies exclusively on physical causality and its associated temporality. This failure also lies behind our difficulties with cognition. Husserl gives voice to these when he asks, “how can we be certain of the correspondence between cognition and the object cognized? How can knowledge transcend itself and reach its object reliably?”[[9]](#endnote-9) His questions are animated by the split that Descartes introduced between consciousness and the world. The aporia that Descartes leaves us with recalls William James’s comment about the room being inside and outside us. For Descartes, the puzzle is that of the correspondence between the two: how can we match the inside with the outside? He writes, “the principal and most common error which can be encountered here consists in judging that the ideas [sensuous perceptions] which are in myself are similar to, or conformable to, things outside myself.”[[10]](#endnote-10) Our reaching the object depends, of course, on its reaching us. Given that it physically remains there, we seem to be driven to talk of its likeness reaching us. In Descartes’ words, I have to assert “that this alien entity sends to me and imposes upon me its likeness.”[[11]](#endnote-11) But, how can we know that the image imposed on us is like the original? Do we have to again traverse the distance between ourselves and the object to compare image and object? If we do, then how can we tell whether this second attempt at transcendence with *its* resulting image is successful? The verification of this image seems to require a third effort, which requires a fourth for its confirmation, and so on indefinitely.[[12]](#endnote-12) Besides, if we look within ourselves, we never find anything like an image. All we encounter are the electro-chemical processes of our neurons.

At the heart of this difficulty is the distinction between consciousness and the physical reality, which supposedly impresses it with its image or representation. According to Descartes, I can be certain of the representations and experiences that fill my consciousness. The doubt simply concerns their correspondence with reality. Given that this doubt cannot be resolved, we seem to be driven to Kant’s taking the external reality as a “thing in itself.” This conception arises once we ask what the object is in itself *apart from* the contributions our consciousness makes to its appearance. Kant’s account of such contributions fills his *Critique of Pure Reason*. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that once these have been abstracted from, the thing in itself becomes totally unknowable. It escapes all the categories that we use to make sense of appearing. Thus, the Kantian response to Husserl’s question—“How can knowledge transcend itself and reach its object reliably?”—is that it cannot reach the object in itself.

**Materialism and Idealism**

The history of philosophy presents us with two possible responses to this impasse. The first asserts that science does, in fact, give us access to things in themselves. It does this by distinguishing the primary from the secondary qualities of things. The *secondary* consist in all the sensuous qualities (the qualia) that fill our conscious experience—the tastes, smells, sounds, colors and tactile qualities through which objects present themselves. These differ according to the state of our embodiment. Not only do they alter depending on whether we are sick or well, they also differ for different species. A bat’s embodiment, for example, gives it a different sensuous depiction of reality. To move beyond this relativity, we have to engage in a translation. The secondary qualities of our experience must be restated in terms we can enumerate—such terms being the *primary qualities* of reality. Thus, the color we experience has to be translated into the frequency and amplitude of the light-waves reaching our eyes; equivalently, sound is to be understood as the frequency and amplitude of the moving pressure ridges in the air that cause our eardrums to vibrate. Molecular counts can be used to translate odors and tastes, while texture can be numbered in terms of differences in the positions of material particles and the elasticity that the particles manifest in their relations. The point of such translation is not the details of the account, which tend to change with the advance of science. It is the insight underlying it, which is that mathematical understanding transcends the particulars of our embodiment. Thus, regardless of the particular body configuration a sentient being might have, if his senses allow him to distinguish objects and if his mind allows him to enumerate them and to mathematically express their relations, this creature will be capable of giving an objective account of them. “Objective” here means independent of his particular embodiment. It is a practical expression of Descartes’ mind-body dualism.

An objective account can, according to science, also be given of ourselves. Freud gives a typical expression of this claim when he writes, “our mental apparatus ... is itself a constituent part of the world which we set out to [scientifically] investigate, and it readily admits of such investigation.”[[13]](#endnote-13) This investigation does not just show the details of its anatomical structure, it also examines the structure’s functioning. Since the result of such functioning is our grasp of the world, the investigation also shows how the structure affects this grasp. As Freud puts this conclusion: “the task of science is fully covered if we limit it to showing how the world must appear to us in consequence of the particular character of our organization.”[[14]](#endnote-14) Once it has accomplished this, science has reached its goal. It has shown how the subjective categories involved in such appearing can be reduced to the physical ones which specify the “particular character” of our “mental apparatus.” The problem with this claim is readily apparent. It involves the difficulty we began with, which is that the study of this “apparatus” fails to account for the fact of consciousness. Given that this study occurs through consciousness, we cannot know if consciousness can grasp this apparatus as it is in itself. Lacking such certainty, as Husserl writes, “Thoughts of a biological order intrude.” Evolution shows that apparatus has evolved and, with it, our intellect.[[15]](#endnote-15) What prevents us from assuming that the changing structure of this apparatus affects the understanding that allows us to enumerate and grasp mathematical relations? What presents us from asserting that “[e]ven logic alters with the structure of the brain,” and, with this, our grasp of mathematical reasoning.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Husserl, having raised such difficulties, gives the alternative response to the impasse that Kant leaves us with. Rather than attempting to derive consciousness from spatial-temporal reality, he asserts that “the whole spatial-temporal world … is a being that consciousness posits in its experiences ... *beyond* this, however, it is nothing at all or, more precisely, for this being a notion of a *beyond* is a contradictory one.”[[17]](#endnote-17) As he also puts this, “the existence of nature … *is* only as constituting itself in the ordered connections of consciousness.”[[18]](#endnote-18) In his idealistic phrase, Husserl thus derives nature—i.e., the spatial-temporal reality that science studies—from consciousness.[[19]](#endnote-19) The existence of a spatial-temporal object, for example, results from its perspectival appearing. It arises in our grasp of its appearances as appearances of some given entity. Here, the Kantian problem of what a thing in itself is apart from consciousness makes no sense. For Husserl, “Genuine epistemology, …. instead of dealing with contradictory inferences which lead from a supposed immanence to a supposed transcendence—that of some undetermined ‘thing-in-itself’ which is allegedly unknowable in principle”—simply takes “every sort of being itself (*Seiendes selbst*), be it real or ideal, … as a constituted *product* (*Gebilde*) of transcendental subjectivity.[[20]](#endnote-20)

**Social and Political Implications**

Husserl later distanced himself from this extreme form of idealism. As he observes in his late work, *The* *Crisis*, it leads to the paradox of our constituting spatial-temporal nature while being part of it. The paradox is that of our twofold being—our possessing “both the being of a subject for the world and the being of an object in the world.”[[21]](#endnote-21) If we accept that the world is our “constituted product,” we have to ask: “How can human subjectivity, which is a part of the world, constitute the whole world, i.e., constitute it as its intentional product …?” To assume this, for Husserl, leads to the “absurdity” of having a *part* of the world constitute the *whole* of the world and, therefore, itself as a *part within* this whole.[[22]](#endnote-22) The absurdity appears when we ask: Does this part of the world exist before it constitutes the world and, hence, itself as a part? If the part does not exist before it constitutes, how can it act? If it does already exist as part of the world, doesn’t its constitutive activity result in a duplicate of itself and the world?

The difficulty Husserl confronts can be put in terms of the different roles, which human subjectivity is called on to play. As a part of the world, it is the subjectivity of an embodied individual. As such, it submits to the world’s material causality. As constitutively responsible for the world, however, such subjectivity stands apart from it. As Husserl expresses this, when taken “as a presupposition for knowledge of the world, …” the subject, “cannot be and cannot remain presupposed as a worldly being.”[[23]](#endnote-23) In fact, as such a presupposition, it “loses that which gives it the value of something real in the naively experienced, pre-given world; it loses its sense of being a soul of an animal organism which exists in a pre-given, spatial-temporal nature.”[[24]](#endnote-24) The logic of such remarks is clear. A ground or explanation cannot be grounded by that which it is supposed to ground. As Fichte expresses this, “By virtue of its mere notion, the ground falls outside of what it grounds.”[[25]](#endnote-25) It cannot, without circularly, be explained by that which it is supposed to explain. Given this, how can human subjectivity be both part of the world and stand apart from it?

Husserl attempts to resolve this paradox by appealing to an “absolutely functioning subjectivity … which objectifies itself in human subjectivity.”[[26]](#endnote-26) The particulars of this solution need not concern us. At issue are the political and social implications of the distinction that Husserl attempts resolve. On the one side, we have the embodied, worldly subject that is explainable in terms of the material causality that rules the natural world. As such, it is open to our abilities to manipulate such causality—for example, by intervening in its genetic material. On the other side, we have the subject that stands apart from the world, that engages in such manipulation. This is the scientist, who claims to know the world as it is in itself. Such a scientist cannot be the material subject, since its very materiality, i.e., the particularity of its embodiment, relativizes its knowledge. Now, nothing in the material subject limits the ability of the scientist to manipulate it. Such limits are necessarily moral, but the biological and chemical structures examined by science do not provide moral knowledge. The questions of “ought” or “ought not” are not those that can be answered through causal analysis. Thus, the laws of chemistry are the same whether we investigate disease or health, whether we give a drug to cure or cause distress.

The situation is no better when we turn to the scientist, understood as distinct from the world. Separated from its limitations, he also separates himself from the moral framework that presupposes such limitations. Thus, the injunctions to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, offer shelter to the homeless, etc. presuppose our embodied being-in-the-world. If moral justification draws its sense from the human framework—in particular, from our relations to embodied Others with their limitations and needs—then to separate oneself from this is, essentially to leave ethics behind. It is to enter a moral vacuum, where the call to justify our actions is undermined by the absence of justification implicit in occupying a standpoint beyond our embodied humanity. The point of these remarks is not to impugn the ethics of scientists, most of whom are highly moral. It is to indicate the aporia that is implicit in science’s abstraction from the human context. Science increasingly gives us the ability to manipulate nature without limit. What prevents this growing ability *to do everything* from translating itself into an attitude that *stops at nothing*? As will be seen in the subsequent chapters, a similar aporia plays itself out in our political life. How can we think a political leader as both a part of society and apart from it?

**Ontological Considerations**

One way to think about the difficulty of overcoming the split between the subject and the world is in terms of the distinction Kant makes between inner and outer perception. Kant observes that “time cannot be outwardly intuited, any more than space can be intuited as something in us.”[[27]](#endnote-27) His point is that external perception provides us only with spatial relations. We cannot, in any sensuous sense, see the past or the future. What is past has vanished and the future has yet to appear. Thus, the world we see is always now. To move beyond this instant and regard the past and the future, we must, then, turn inward and through “inner perception” regard our memories and anticipations. The lesson that Kant draws from this observation is that “if we abstract from our mode of inwardly intuiting ourselves ... then time is nothing.”[[28]](#endnote-28) Without inner perception, we would have no perceptual access to it. Similarly, when we do turn inward, measurable space is also nothing. We cannot measure our representations. The chair I regard may be so many feet high, but I cannot put a measuring stick to my perception to determine its size. How large it appears depends on my approach to it. Given this split, we have to say that consciousness consists of temporal relations, while the external world is limited to spatial relations. If we accept this, then we also must admit that consciousness can never be perceptually present in the external world. The spatial relations it is limited to are not capable of exhibiting its temporal reality. Science, which focuses on the measurable aspects of external reality, is therefore bound to dismiss its existence.

What about the fact that most of the equations science employs involve time? Take, for example, the familiar formula, velocity equals distance traveled divided by the time taken to cover this distance. Is not time present in the equation v = d/t as well as countless other mathematical expressions describing our world? The difficulty with this concerns the way science measures time. Incapable of representing time through outer perception, it translates it into spatial relations—namely, those of the hands on a clock. The case is no different when science relies on the numerical readings of a digital clock. What is captured in both cases is what may be called a snapshot view of reality. In using such measurements, science captures time, not in its reality as a flow, but rather as it appears in the instant of the now. Thus, the formula for velocity yields only results for specific distances and times. One can, of course, plot these on a graph, but then the representation is spatial. The equations that science employs thus work to drain time from reality. This is the reason why the laws of physics, as expressed in its equations, are reversible. They hold whether we run time forwards or backwards. The reality of time—the time that we experience as an ongoing flow—thus cannot be captured by them. But this means that they cannot grasp the reality of conscious life.

With this, we return to the conclusion that something is missing in our scientific view of reality. It cannot account for the fact of consciousness. This is not something that can be ignored since what is at issue is the consciousness of the scientists who create science. The difficulty concerns the embodied consciousness, which registers the sensuous aspects of reality, which reads the dials and takes down measurements, which intentionally directs experiments, assembling and using the laboratory equipment that is suitable for the experiment’s goal. For science to exclude such consciousness is to exclude itself. The exclusion points to a deficit in its conception of reality, one that undercuts its own genesis as a human accomplishment. To remedy this, we have to change our understanding of reality. Somehow, we need to integrate consciousness with the world.

**Merleau-Ponty**

The inquiries that follow are informed by Merleau-Ponty’s and Jan Patočka’s attempts at such integration. Here, I will only sketch out their basic positions, indicating the problems associated with them. To begin with Merleau-Ponty, his fundamental insight is that selfhood, as embodied, has to be taken as both immanent and transcendent—that is, as both subject and object. To show this, he uses the example of the touching of hands. My right hand when it touches an object functions as a *subject*. This means that, in its touch sensations, it functions as the place of the appearance of the touched. The same, hand, however, can also be touched. As such, it becomes an *object*—i.e., part of the appearing world. As Merleau-Ponty describes this in *The Visible and the Invisible*, “When my right hand touches my left hand while [the left hand] is palpating the things … the ‘touching subject’ passes over to the rank of the touched.” It “descends into the things, such that the touch is formed in the midst of the world.”[[29]](#endnote-29) As such, the touching subject and, with this, the consciousness that consists of touch sensations, becomes integrated with the world. This is because the embodiment that locates touching subjectivity thrusts it into the world: it makes the internalized place of touch sensations part of the tangible world. Now, this ability of our embodied selfhood to be both touching subject and touched object does not, in Merleau-Ponty’s account, result in the merging of the two. There is always, as he notes, a failure in our attempts to identify the two. In his words, “If my left hand is touching my right hand, and if I should suddenly wish to apprehend with my right hand the work of my left hand as it touches, this reflection … always miscarries … the moment I feel my left hand with my right hand, I correspondingly cease touching my right hand with my left hand.”[[30]](#endnote-30) As he elsewhere writes, what we face here is “an ambiguous organization in which the two hands can alternate in the function of ‘touching’ and ‘touched.’”[[31]](#endnote-31) There is “a sort of dehis­cence” or bursting open that “opens my body in two,” splitting it “between my body looked at and my body looking, my body touched and my body touching.”[[32]](#endnote-32) As M.C. Dillon has remarked, this non-coincidence is essential to perception. Given that perceiving something is distinct from being it, “there must be a distancing of it.[[33]](#endnote-33)

What, then, is the relation between my body as subject and the same body as object? According to Merleau-Ponty, it is that of chiasm or intertwining. As Ted Toadvine notes, there are “three characteristics” that for Merleau-Ponty are “paradigmatic of chiasmic structure.”[[34]](#endnote-34) The first is the fact that “in order to be sentient, the body must be sensible.” There is, then, “an ontological continuity or kinship between the sentient and the sensible.” In our terms, this signifies that perception must be embodied. As embodied, the perceiver, like his object, is perceivable. The second is the fact of reversibility. Thus, “the relationship between the two hands touching is reversible, in the sense that the hands may exchange roles.” Each can, alternately, assume the role of the touching or the touched. Finally, we have the “gap or divergence” that characterizes the touching-touched relationship.[[35]](#endnote-35) This, for Dillon, is the distancing that is required for the subject-object relationship.

The crucial characteristic here, according to Dillon, is the reversibility thesis.[[36]](#endnote-36) It characterizes not just the body’s relation to itself, but also the relation of the sensible to the visible. Thus, generally speaking I can touch what I see and see what I touch. A colored surface, for example, has texture that can be felt; and the solidity that allows it to be touched also renders it visible. This does not make visibility the same as tangibility. Rather, as Merleau-Ponty writes, “There is double and crossed situating of the visible in the tangible and of the tangi­ble in the visible; the two maps are complete, and yet they do not merge into one.”[[37]](#endnote-37) As with hand touching hand, a gap remains with the two.

As Dillon argues, the difficulty with the reversibility thesis is the asymmetry that appears once we pass beyond the hand touching hand example. Thus, while I can touch worldly things because I myself am a worldly thing, this does not mean that our relation is symmetrical. I can feel my hand being touched when I touch it with my other hand, but I cannot feel the table being touched when I touch it with my hand.[[38]](#endnote-38) Similarly, a painter may see the trees that he paints, but it does not follow that they see the painter.[[39]](#endnote-39) To take one further example, as Dillon remarks, “Shaking hands with the Other is not the same as shaking hands with oneself.” This is because “his experience of my right hand as object is inaccessible to me in a way that my left hand's experience of my right hand is not.”[[40]](#endnote-40) I cannot, in other words, *feel* the Other’s hand being touched.

The difficulty with such asymmetry is that the intertwining is not just a relation designating our relation to the world. It has an ontological import. As Dillon writes, “Merleau-Ponty's single most important goal was to conceive a non-dualistic ontology.” For him, “the notion of chiasm/intertwining is the critical thought in that endeavor.” [[41]](#endnote-41) This becomes apparent in his treatment of flesh. For Merleau-Ponty, flesh involves our embodiment. It expresses “a relation of the visible with itself that traverses me and constitutes me as a seer.”[[42]](#endnote-42) But as such, it involves more than this. It “is the formative medium of the object and the subject,” which means that “we must think of it … as an element, as the concrete emblem of a general manner of being.”[[43]](#endnote-43) What is emblematic is the “reversibility of the seeing and the visible, the touching and the touched.”[[44]](#endnote-44) It is this that allows our selfhood to straddle the divide between subject and object, being both immanent and transcendent. The fact that it can be both is supposed to integrate consciousness with the world. It is at the heart of the non-dualistic ontology advanced under the title of flesh.

The problem is that while such reversibility characters my body’s relation to itself, it does not characterize the world as such. Yet Merleau-Ponty, in moving from our body to an account of being, is compelled to claim that the body is an “exemplar sensible.”[[45]](#endnote-45) This, Dillon remarks, is to take it as “an example of sensibles in general. ” He adds, “If the body is conceived as flesh, then to take it as exemplary of all sensibles is to conceive of everything sensible as being somehow flesh.”[[46]](#endnote-46) The implication is that everything sensible is, like flesh, also sensing. This is also implied by Merleau-Ponty’s statement, “When we speak of the flesh of the visible, we do not mean to do anthropology, to describe a world covered over with all our own projections, leaving aside what it can be under the human mask. Rather, we mean that carnal being … is a prototype of Being, of which our body, the sensible sentient, is a very remarkable variant.”[[47]](#endnote-47) Our body exhibits the reversibility between the sentient and the sensed. In its case, the sentient is also sensed. But we cannot say that the visible world, though sensed, is inherently sentient. To say this would be to claim, for example, that the forest that I regard also regards me.

Renaud Barbaras repeats this criticism on a more general level. He writes that the “predetermination of the subject as flesh is absolutely ruinous” when we try “to comprehend how the subject ... can be simultaneously situated on both sides of the world”—i.e., stand before it as a perceiver and within it as perceived.[[48]](#endnote-48) Thus, “there is my flesh, i.e., my seeing body, and there is the flesh of the world, which precisely corresponds to the inscription of my flesh in the depths of the world … but it is impossible to comprehend how the same flesh can both be facing the world [as sentient] and be at its heart, how the subject can, in the same sense, belong to the world and make it appear.”[[49]](#endnote-49) Here, the appeal to flesh is no help since, as Merleau-Ponty finally recognizes in a note to his manuscript, “the flesh of the world does not sense like my flesh—it is sensible but not sensing.”[[50]](#endnote-50) Given this we cannot make the move from our flesh to the flesh of the world considered as a “style of being.”[[51]](#endnote-51)

There is, however, another way to conceive the intertwining, one that this book will follow. Merleau-Ponty introduces it when he discusses perceptual faith. Such faith signifies that when I see an object, I believe “my vision terminates in it, that it holds and stops my gaze with its insurmountable density.” The object is out there in the world, a world that includes me as one of its visible objects. “Yet,” he writes, “as soon as I attend to it, this conviction is just as strongly contested by the very fact that this vision is *mine*.”[[52]](#endnote-52) I believe that my perception “is formed this side of the body.”[[53]](#endnote-53) Thus, the very “experience of my flesh … has taught me that perception … emerges in the recesses of a body”—my body.[[54]](#endnote-54) Similarly, I put the perception that the other has “behind his body”—that is, in his head.[[55]](#endnote-55) Yet, we both claim that our perception terminates in something out there. In fact, we regard each other and the seeing that we engage in as both being out there among the things. As embodied, we take ourselves as present among them. Thus, each of us has to assert, “I am in the world and the world is in me.” This, according to Merleau-Ponty, is our natural, perceptual faith. In his words, “The ‘natural’ man holds on to both ends of the chain.”[[56]](#endnote-56) He lives the paradox, undisturbed by it. He thinks both that he grasps external objects and that their apprehension is within him.

The basic tenet of such belief is that our relation to world is that of a double of being-in. We are inside that which is in us. What is asserted here is more than the fact that our embodiment places us in the world, which we internalize through perception. At issue is the appearing of the world. The world appears through our embodied senses. The body is the place of its disclosure. Thus, when I close my eyes, the visual world disappears. When I open them again, it is present. My eyes provide the venues for its appearing. Using the word *tapisser*, to cover, drape, line or wallpaper, Merleau-Ponty generalizes this insight. He asserts, “our flesh lines and even envelops all the visible and tangible things.”[[57]](#endnote-57) Thus, we “line” the world with audio qualities through our ears, with tactile qualities through our sensitive skin, and so on. Doing so, our embodied being provides measures “for being, dimensions to which we can refer it.”[[58]](#endnote-58) In other words, through our flesh, we can refer to the sensible aspects of being. We can measure it along the axes or dimensions of its sights, sounds, tastes, smells, roughness and smoothness.[[59]](#endnote-59) The world that is present through our embodiment is, however, the very world that our embodiment thrusts us into. This means, Merleau-Ponty writes, “my eyes which see, my hands which touch, can also be seen and touched … they see and touch the visible, the tangible from within” the visible and tangible world.[[60]](#endnote-60) Similarly the flesh that “lines and even envelops” the things of this world is “nevertheless surrounded” by them.[[61]](#endnote-61) It is within the world it reveals. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, “*because* our flesh lines and even envelops all the visible and tangible things with which nevertheless it is surrounded, the world and I are within one another.”[[62]](#endnote-62)

This double relation of being-in justifies perceptual faith since it locates seeing beyond the immanent-transcendent divide. It places perception in the transcendent world. This does not mean that it reduces it to the anonymity of non-sentient nature. Understood as an intertwining, the relation of perceiver and perceived is not a reduction one to the other. Thus, Merleau-Ponty, having asserted that flesh lines the world that surrounds it, adds: “and there is no anteriority of the *percipere* to the *percipi*, there is simultaneity or even retarda­tion.”[[63]](#endnote-63) As with hand touching hand, there is a difference. Both hands are simultaneously mine, but a delay prevents me from taking simultaneously the touching hand as touched. Similarly, the reversibility of the relation of my being in the world and the world being in me involves both simultaneity and retardation. Even though the appearing of the world demands an embodied, worldly perceiver, I cannot simultaneously regard myself as in the world and, yet as having the world in me. A delay always intervenes when I turn inward.

The conception of the intertwining as a double relation of being-in will be discussed in the chapters that follow. For the present, three points should be made regarding it. The first is that its reversibility does not imply that the world itself is sentient. The fact that the subject is in the world makes a *part* of the world sentient, but such sentience does not extend to the world as a whole. The second is that the double relation is one of disclosure. Because my flesh lines the world, I serve as the place for its sensuous disclosure. I also serve as a place for its appearing through my embodied “I can.” Thus, through my practical projects, I also discloses the pragmatic senses of the objects I encounter. Water, for example, appears as water to drink from or water to wash up with depending on my use of it. As we shall see, we “line” the world in all our activities thus serving, in an extended sense, as a place for the world’s appearing. It is, however, equally true that the world serves as the place for our disclosure. The eyes I see with can be examined by an optometrist. Similarly, the activities I engage in, as occurring in the world, can be studied as part of it. As such examples indicate, the intertwining is not to be conceived as a physical placing in. As Merleau-Ponty writes, “We have to reject the age-old assumptions that put the body in the world and the seer in the body, or, conversely, the world and the body in the seer as in a box.” My body’s lining the world is not a matter of putting the world in the seer “as in a box.” What we have to deal with here is rather a “reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other.”[[64]](#endnote-64) This leads to the third point, which is that this reciprocal insertion or intertwining is an ontological form. It is not a physical insertion of two things in each other, but rather a form determining the reality of the intertwined. Thus, the reality of selfhood is neither that of an observer apart from the world nor that of an inherent component of the world. It is, in fact, composed of the double relation of being in. What this signifies is that the two temporalities that characterize our being-in-the-world have to be taken as intertwined. Each is to be conceived as in the other. Each must also be thought of as disclosive of the other. The same holds of the space and time that Kant separates by distinguishing inner and outer perception. How this could be possible is a subject of the inquiries that form this book.

**Patočka**

Patočka’s attempt to integrate consciousness with the world begins with his stress on the uniqueness of the category of appearing. He writes that appearing or “manifesting is, in itself, something completely original.” This means that “manifesting in itself, in that which makes it manifesting, is not reducible, cannot be converted into anything that manifests itself in manifesting.”[[65]](#endnote-65) It cannot, in other words, be explained by the beings that appear; it cannot be deduced from them or their properties. This holds both for subjects and objects, taken as appearing entities. In Patočka’s words, “showing itself is not any of these things that show themselves, whether it is a psychic or physical object.”[[66]](#endnote-66) In fact, any attempt to derive appearing from what appears would be circular since it would necessarily presuppose appearing. As Patočka puts this: “I cannot go back to what appears to explain the appearing of appearing, since the understanding of appearing is presupposed in every thesis I might make about the appearing entity.”[[67]](#endnote-67) What this signifies is that, in speaking about appearing as such, our focus is not on what is “given as a being.” It is on “the givenness and modes of givenness of a being, which modes themselves cannot be designated as beings.”[[68]](#endnote-68)

Appearing, then, cannot be explained in terms of any material, physical process. Equally, appearing cannot be understood in terms of “a subject whose accomplishments are phenomena.” Thus, we cannot ontologize the structure of appearing and see it as the structure of a subject.[[69]](#endnote-69) This, for Patočka, was Husserl’s error. He writes, in this regard:

Perhaps the chief source of the misunderstanding of the problem of appearing as such is that we exchange or conflate the structure of appearing with the structure of what appears. To assert that there is a structure of appearing is not to assert that there exists an entity, a this-here, which one can call appearing. Appearing as such is not a being and it cannot referred to as a being. Because he has somehow a sense of this distinction, but never explicitly draws it out, Husserl, instead of inquiring after the givenness of being—the givenness of some sort of absolute being—searches for an absolutely given being.[[70]](#endnote-70)

The reference, here, is to Husserl’s absolute consciousness, the consciousness that posits the world out of the connections of its experiences. In Patočka's eyes, Husserl subjectivized appearing by taking it as the experiences of a subject. He also ontologized it, since such experiences compose an actual subject’s consciousness.

Patočka’s position recalls our earlier remarks on materialism and idealism. Both fail to explain the fact of our embodied consciousness and, hence, the claims of such consciousness to apprehend the world. Idealism fails because, while accepting consciousness, it ignores the fact of its embodiment. Realism begins with this embodiment, but cannot show how consciousness arises from it. Patočka’s understanding is distinct from this. He distinguishes appearing as such from consciousness. In his view, both materialism and idealism conflate appearing with consciousness and attempt to derive appearing/consciousness from what appears—be this the materiality of nature or the experiences and syntheses of an existing subject. Appearing as such, however, can be derived neither from consciousness nor the realities that appear to it. Considered in itself, it is a “world-structure.” It is, according to Patočka, “the basic structure that allows the world to appear and … makes experiential knowing possible.” Prior to both subjects and objects, it informs both. It makes knowing possible because it structures our experiences and the ways we put them together. Because these are informed by the same structure that informs the realties that appear to consciousness, this world-structure serves as “a basis for the objective sciences.”[[71]](#endnote-71) It, in fact, is what integrates consciousness with the world.

The crucial element in this solution is Patočka’s interpretation of it in terms of motion. He writes that his goal “is a philosophy of a distinct kind, one which takes movement as its basic concept and principle … What is distinctive about our attempt is our interpretation of movement; we understand it independently of the dichotomy between subject and object,” i.e., between “on the one hand, an objective world, complete, self-enclosed, and, on the other hand, a subject perceiving this world.”[[72]](#endnote-72) Prior to both is appearing as such; such appearing, however, is to be understood in terms of motion. As Patočka expresses this, “movement … first makes this or that being *apparent*, causes it to manifest itself in its own original manner.”[[73]](#endnote-73) The moving entity does this through affecting what surrounds it. Thus, an oscillating charged particle sets up an oscillating magnetic field, which sets up an oscillating electric field, which sets up an oscillating magnetic field, and so on. The result is that the oscillating particle affects its environment through an expanding series of electro-magnetic waves. These waves, encountering a sentient creature with appropriate eyes, also affect its vision. Without this ability through motion to affect what surrounds it, an entity cannot distinguish itself from its environment. But without this, it has no presence either to inanimate or animate beings. In living sentient creatures, this manifests itself as experience. It forms the subjective component of appearing. The objective component is simply the physical presence that the entity has through its action. It is, for example, the depression on the pillow left by an object pressing on it.

For Patočka, the very movement through which an entity affects its environment also causes the entity to be. Its appearing or standing out from its environment has the same root as its existing. In an animate creature, this movement, on the most basic, biological level, is that of its metabolic processes. When they cease, the creature dies. In all beings, be they animate or inanimate, movement is present in the atomic, chemical, and other physical processes that make them be what they are. Everywhere, according to Patočka, “movement is what gives things the being that they are; movement is a fundamental ontological factor.”[[74]](#endnote-74) What this signifies is that “movement … is not itself a reality in the same sense as determinate realities.”[[75]](#endnote-75) It is, rather, the *realization* of such entities—this, regardless of their determinations. As Patočka expresses this, “Movement is what makes a being what it is. Movement unifies, maintains cohesion, synthesizes the being’s determinations. The persistence and succession of the determinations of a substrate, etc., are movements.”[[76]](#endnote-76) The necessity for this doctrine is readily apparent. If appearing as such is prior to entities, the movement behind appearing must equally be prior. In other words, by taking movement as prior to the moving being, Patočka can describe appearing in terms of movement without reducing appearing to the beings that appear, i.e. without explaining it in terms of such beings.

We have here, then, three levels of integrating consciousness with the world. On the first, we conceive of appearing as a world structure, one that informs both subjects and objects. Both the subject, who is consciousness of entities, and the entities, which it is aware of, instantiate this structure’s formal relations. As for appearing itself, it, like its structure, is prior to both. Entities, if they are to be sentient, have to adapt themselves to it by possessing the appropriate sense organs. If they do, then appearing will be present as their experience. Similarly, if entities are to appear, they also must be informed by the same structure. On the second level, appearing is understood in terms of motion. The structure of appearing is taken as the structure of movement; the “how” of appearing, i.e., how things show themselves is understood in terms of their motion. Here, the informing of the world by the form of appearing is understood in terms of how motion proceeds. The integration of consciousness with the world is a function of the motion of sentient subjects being integrated with the motion of world. On the third level, we no longer think of motion as the motion of entities. It is, rather, understood ontologically as the realization of entities. On this level, the integration of consciousness with the world involves their common actualization. One and the same “ontological motion” is responsible for the actualization of both sides of the subject-object divide. Such actualization is also that of appearing (in the subjective sense) insofar as it involves the realization of subjects as sentient and thus as capable of having particular experiences. This, however, does not mean that appearing in its qualitative aspects can be reduced to the physical motions of a creature’s sense organs and neurons. It signifies only its adaption to a particular aspect of appearing as such—an adaption that gives it access to this aspect in its qualitative features.

**Barbaras’ Alternative**

Subsequent chapters will fill out this sketch of Patočka's position. We should, however, mention Barbaras’ critique of this account. On the one hand, he takes it as representing a decisive advance over the thought of Merleau-Ponty. In his view, “this approach according to movement … constitutes the sole satisfactory version of what Merleau-Ponty was trying to think at the end of his life under the title of the intertwining or chiasm. In other words, the mutual enveloping of the subject and the world can only be satisfactorily thought in terms of movement.”[[77]](#endnote-77) This is because movement, as opposed to “flesh,” is common to animate and inanimate nature. In other words, while it is “impossible to comprehend how the same flesh can both be facing the world [as sentient] and be at its heart,” this does not hold for motion. This praise, however, is combined with his question whether motion can really account for subjectivity, i.e., position it as distinct from the world. Barbaras, as we shall see, has his doubts.

His own alternative to Patočka's position involves a return to the Greek conception of nature as alive, and desire as the fundamental form of life. In advancing this position, Barbaras embraces an “ontological monism.”[[78]](#endnote-78) Such monism signifies not just that “the subject is made of the same stuff as the world,” but also “that there is a profound ontological continuity between the two.”[[79]](#endnote-79) The basis of this community is “the primary-movement [*archi-mouvement*] … of appearing,” which “consists of a process of individualization by delimitation.”[[80]](#endnote-80) In Patočka’s terms, it is the movement that makes a being stand out, thereby differentiating the being from its environment. There is, however, a difficulty. While we can trace the subject back to this primary movement, we cannot derive from such movement the subject in its distinction from world. In Barbaras’ words, “nothing in this movement calls for the arising of the subject that we are. It is impossible to proceed backwards on the road that has lead us to the primary movement, proceeding from this to the acts by which we make the world appear.” Thus, we know that “our existence is movement, but we cannot explain the singularity of this movement since it presupposes a separation” of ourselves from the world. [[81]](#endnote-81) This situation leads Barbaras to call the movement that separates us “a primary event that affects the primary movement itself.”[[82]](#endnote-82) It “inflects” the latter into the movement by which we make the world appear.

Barbaras’ terminology recalls Alain Badiou’s concept of the event as that which brings forth the new. For Barbaras, the primary movement is what makes “possible” the correlation of subjects and objects, while the event, which separates the two, makes the correlation “necessary.”[[83]](#endnote-83) Patočka, we should note, never posits such a singular event. Rather than embracing an “ontological monism,” he never abandons the “gap or divergence” that characterizes Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the intertwining. The fundamental dichotomy for Patočka is that between the subject, understood as that to whom things appear, and the objects that appear to it. He takes this dichotomy as inherent in the structure of appearing as such. It is, in fact, what underlies the intentionality that structures the subject-object relationship. The issue raised by Barbaras, however, will have to be confronted. We need to see how Patočka understands the actualization of the separation that distinguishes the subject.

**The Inquiries that Follow**

The frame of our engagement includes more than the positions of Merleau-Ponty and Patočka. While their insights are central to the inquiries that follow, the views of a number of other authors, most notably, those of Husserl, Heidegger, Arendt, and Carl Schmitt, will be discussed. Whatever philosopher is referenced, the issue will remain the difficulties raised by this Introduction. They center on the relation between selfhood and appearing. To be a self is to be an embodied consciousness. Can this be integrated with the world in a way that takes account of the primacy of appearing? For Merleau-Ponty, this involves conceiving the intertwining, not just as an epistemological, but also as an ontological form. But how can we understand the latter as “flesh” without falling into the difficulties we noted? Similarly, we will be inquiring into how we could integrate Merleau-Ponty’s intertwining with Patočka's conception of motion without falling into a metaphysical monism. Beyond such questions, there is also the issue of the extent of the intertwining. Can it be understood as a form informing not just our perceptual relations with the world, but also the relations we have with Others? What problems does it solve when we use it to explain our recognition of the Other? What is its role in our social and political relations? Such questions lead, in Part 4, to our relations to the transcendent and to the role the intertwining plays in our spiritual and religious involvements.

In pursuing these issues, our inquiry will exceed what can be directly drawn from Merleau-Ponty and Patočka. In part, this is because neither philosopher left us with finished account. Due to his death from a stroke at 53, Merleau-Ponty never completed *The Visible and Invisible*. As a result, he developed his conception of the intertwining only in a fragmentary manner. Patočka’s exposition of appearing as such and its relation to motion was also cut short. Because of his political activities on behalf of human rights, he was subject to a lengthy eleven hour interrogation, from which he never recovered. The inquiries that follow also exceed these author’s positions in their attempt to think them together—i.e., to understand Merleau-Ponty’s intertwining in terms of Patočka’s ontological motion. Equally, they go beyond them in their attempt to understand the intertwining, not just as an epistemological and ontological form, but as a political, social, and religious conception. In pursuing this goal, the following chapters are organized as inquiries. Each attempts to achieve clarity on a particular topic, this clarity being required for the inquiries that follow. What binds them together is their ultimate subject, which is ourselves in our being-in-the-world. In attempting to understand this in terms of the intertwining, our goal is to understand the relation between selfhood and appearing.

Part 1: Selfhood

**Chapter 1**

Patočka and Artificial Intelligence

The question of our selfhood has, in the twenty-first century, assumed a form undreamed of in past generations. Reflecting, perhaps, the technical proficiencies of our age, it has been reposed in terms of artificial intelligence. Popularized by movies like *The* *Matrix*, the question of the mind’s relation to the body has become that of its relation to the computers whose power and scope increase exponentially. What is a self in this context? Is it simply the “software,” the programs that run in our brains? Is such software analogous to mind or consciousness? Is our selfhood to be identified with consciousness or has it, as embodied, a different status? To begin the exploration of these questions, I am going to turn to a philosopher whose name is not usually associated with artificial intelligence: the mid-twentieth century Czech thinker, Jan Patočka. Neither a mathematician nor a logician, the phenomenology he espoused, with its emphasis on lived experience, seems far from the formalism that marks current studies in artificial intelligence. Yet, as this chapter will show, the radicality and depth of Patočka’s thought is such that it casts a wide net. The reform of metaphysics that Patočka proposed in his asubjective phenomenology also affects our conception of artificial intelligence and, with this, the questions of our selfhood. Its radical claim, which we propose to explore, is that the problem of the mind’s relation to the body—the so called “hard” problem of consciousness—is the result of a category mistake.

**Reductionism and the Hard Problem of Consciousness**

David Chalmers expresses a general consensus of cognitive scientists when he writes, “the really hard problem of consciousness is the problem of ‘experience.’” It is the problem of the “subjective aspect” of our perceptions. Beyond the visual processing, there are also appearances—e.g., “the felt quality of redness, the experience of dark and light, the quality of depth in a visual field.” How do we relate such experiences to the brain’s processing? As Chalmers puts this: “It is widely agreed that experience arises from a physical basis, but we have no good explanation of why and how it so arises.”[[84]](#endnote-84) We can see how physical processes can give rise to further physical processes. In John Locke’s words, we can grasp how a change in “the size, figure, and motion of one body should cause a change in the size, figure and motion of another body.”[[85]](#endnote-85) A physical change, however, is not itself a perceptual appearance with its “qualia” or qualitative contents. The difficulty, then, is that “the structure and dynamics of physical processes yield only more structure and dynamics.” But the perceptual appearances we seek are distinct from structure and dynamics.[[86]](#endnote-86)

The formulation of this problem is quite old—dating from at least the time of Locke and Leibniz.[[87]](#endnote-87) It is marked by the attempt to treat appearance as a derivative category—that is, as something whose reality could be reduced to a physical basis. Much as the temperature of the air can be reduced to the motion and, hence, the kinetic energy of the molecules composing it, so should the felt warmth of the air be reducible to the physical structure and processing of the brain as it receives information from the surrounding world. In Chalmer’s words, the goal here is “an explanatory bridge” that would link perceptual experiences to this structure and processing.[[88]](#endnote-88) Those, like Daniel Dennett, who deny such a bridge, either deny the very existence of appearances with their qualia, asserting that “we are all zombies. Nobody is conscious,”[[89]](#endnote-89) or else they make them epiphenomenal. Here, we affirm with Frank Jackson that appearances exist, but “[t]hey do nothing, they explain nothing.” They are “a useless by-product” of our evolutionary development.[[90]](#endnote-90) Again, the reductionist paradigm is evident. Appearances, if they cannot be explained by physical processes, must be denied or, if this seems too counter-intuitive, taken to be as illusory as the rainbow—neither doing nor explaining anything. Both positions assume that the only reality that does produce effects is physical reality. Everything else, if it is to be taken seriously, must be reduced to this reality.

There is another possible reaction to the failure to find an “explanatory bridge” between appearances and physical processes. This is to explain appearances, not through recourse to matter, but rather by turning to “consciousness.” This transcendental tradition begins with Descartes’ assertion that while bodies are extended, mind is not.[[91]](#endnote-91) Given this, how can mind come in contact with the material world? Lacking any extension, it cannot be touched, pushed or pulled. In fact, since it has no size, there is no physical point of contact between it and matter. George Berkeley, reflecting on this fact, questioned the very existence of matter. If, as Locke argued, “we can by no means conceive how any size, figure, or motion of any particles, can possibly produce in us the idea of any color, taste, or sound whatsoever,” then we have to admit with Locke that “there is no conceivable connection between the one and other.”[[92]](#endnote-92) But, as Berkeley observes, we posit the material world as the cause of our conscious experiences. It is supposed to explain them. Can we persist in this belief when even its proponents “own themselves unable to comprehend in what manner body can act upon spirit”?[[93]](#endnote-93) Berkeley’s fundamental question is, then: why should we posit matter? What explanatory work does the concept do? Matter, from his perspective, has the same problematic character that appearances have for Frank Jackson. It does “nothing.” It explains “nothing.” Hume, who called Berkeley, “a great philosopher”[[94]](#endnote-94) does not make use of it. He starts off with the contents of consciousness, the most basic being “impressions,” and argues that we construct our world from the associations that arise through the resemblance, contiguity and constant conjunction of our mental contents. Thus, having constantly seen a chair from various perspectives, whenever I view it from one of these, I take it as a three-dimensional object. This is because all its views are so associated that when I see one of them, the others come to mind.

Hume, as is well known, takes causality as a form of association. The constant conjunction of two contents, where one always precedes the other, results in our taking the first as the cause of the second. As a relation between the contents of consciousness, causality, however, can in no way explain the existence of such contents. What can? Berkeley had taken such contents as dependent on mind or consciousness. Kant agrees, adding that what things are “in themselves,” apart from the contents of our consciousness, is entirely unknown to us. By the time this line of thought reaches Husserl, consciousness came to be seen as an independent region of being. According to Husserl, “reality, both the reality of the individual thing and that of the entire world, essentially (in the strong sense) lacks independence,” since it is dependent on consciousness.[[95]](#endnote-95) As for consciousness, it “must count as a self-contained connection of being, as a connection of absolute being into which nothing can enter and from which nothing can slip away, a connection which has no spatial-temporal outside ....”[[96]](#endnote-96)

Once again, we confront a form of reductionism—this time to the absolute being of consciousness. The experiences of consciousness presuppose it. Our “ideas”—Berkeley’s term for such experiences—” cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them.”[[97]](#endnote-97) Taken as appearances they are unthinkable apart from it. According to Patočka, the basic assumption of this line of thinking is that “in order that something manifest itself, it has to manifest itself to someone.” This means that “manifesting is always mediated by some kind of *subjectivity*.” It cannot exist without it and, hence, can be reduced to it. This implies that appearing can be explained by “the act of turning inward” and reflecting on the subjective acts and contents that constitute an appearance.[[98]](#endnote-98)

**Appearing as Such**

Two opposing lines of thought, thus, follow from our failure to provide an explanatory bridge between appearances and physical processes. The first line denies appearances either entirely (Dennet) or in terms of their having any efficacy (Jackson). It asserts that the primary reality of the world is physical reality. Such reality is objective. Our experience of it is characterized as “third person” insofar as the physical world is one that, not just “I,” but also “they” (the grammatical third person) can experience. Its objects are available to all of us. The second, opposing line of thought denies that these physical processes are the primary reality. It asserts that what is real in the primary sense are “first person,” subjective experiences. It is out of these that we constitute what we take to be the physical world. The two positions are opposites, the first reducing consciousness to the physical world, the second reducing this world to consciousness.

The question is whether we have to choose between them. Is it the case that one must be false and the other true? Kant observed that “If two opposed judgments presuppose an inadmissible condition, then in spite of their contradiction (which is not actually a genuine one), both fall to the ground, inasmuch as the condition, under which alone each of these propositions is supposed to hold, itself falls.”[[99]](#endnote-99) Kant used this point to show that the classic questions of philosophy, such as whether the world had a beginning in time, were falsely posed. Neither a “yes” nor a “no” answer to them was correct, since the condition or assumption for posing them was not valid.[[100]](#endnote-100) Patočka’s claim is that the same point holds in the present case. Here, the inadmissible assumption is that we ought to provide an explanatory bridge between appearances and material nature. This is to assume that appearing has to be explained in terms of what appears—be this the processes of material nature or those of the subjectivity that is apprehended through reflection. Ontologically speaking, the assumption is that appearing as such is not an independent category, but must be explained in terms of what appears.

Against such a view, Patočka asserts that “manifesting is, in itself, something completely original.” This means that “manifesting in itself, in that which makes it manifesting, is not reducible, cannot be converted into anything that manifests itself in manifesting.”[[101]](#endnote-101) It is not some objective material structure. It is also not the structure of mind or consciousness. Both exist and both can manifest themselves. But manifesting is not a mental or physical object; it is, rather, “the showing of those things.”[[102]](#endnote-102) This distinction means that it cannot be deduced from such objects.[[103]](#endnote-103) As Patočka puts this: “It is clear in advance that the lawfulness of appearing in its appearing can in no way be that of the appearing entity in its own structures, in particular, in its causal relations. I cannot go back to what appears to explain appearing in its appearing, since the understanding of appearing is already presupposed in every thesis about the appearing entity.” [[104]](#endnote-104) In other words, such a deduction would already assume, in the content of its terms, the very showing that it was trying to deduce.

According to Patočka, this point is continually ignored in the history of philosophy.[[105]](#endnote-105) Again and again, we find “that peculiar slide from the problem of manifesting to the problem of existence.” Two examples provided by Patočka make his point clear. The first concerns Plato’s account of the divided line. Each section of the line marks a distinct mode of appearing. Reflected images and shadows appear differently than the objects that generate them. A third form of appearing characterizes the way mathematical objects show themselves; a fourth, the ideas. Plato makes this evident. But, as Patočka remarks, “instead of a completely autonomous problematic of manifesting, the problematic of a determined ladder of existents is introduced.” Thus, “Plato,” in Patočka’s reading, “saw this fundamental difference [in manifesting], except he constantly interprets it as if it were a difference between various degrees of existents and not a difference between stages and aspects of manifesting as such.”[[106]](#endnote-106) The same transformation appears in Husserl. As Patočka interprets him, the tendency to ontologize the process of appearing occurs when Husserl takes his description of this process as a description of transcendental subjectivity.[[107]](#endnote-107) By equating the phenomena with the experiences of a subject, they are subjectivized. As a consequence, the phenomena are also ontologized: they are understood as beings—as particular existing experiences. The result, according to Patočka, is that the description of the phenomena becomes a description of “a subject whose accomplishment are phenomena.” Modes of givenness become ontologized as modes of transcendental subjectivity, the latter being understood as a being.[[108]](#endnote-108)

For Patočka, by contrast, the fact that manifestation is something “completely original” means that it forms its own category, one that is distinct from being. In his words, to assert that “[t]here is a structure of appearance’ does not signify ‘there is a being, a this-here, which one can call appearance. Appearing as such is not a being and cannot be referred to as a being.”[[109]](#endnote-109) In other words, what we have to do with here is not “given as a being, rather it is the givenness and modes of givenness of a being, which modes themselves cannot be designated as beings.”[[110]](#endnote-110) These “modes of givenness” form a separate non-ontological category. If we accept this, then we have to reformulate the history of metaphysics. Such a reformulation goes far beyond Heidegger’s attempt in *Being and Time* to determine the “kind of being” that Dasein possesses by breaking the tie between being and presence. [[111]](#endnote-111) This Heideggerian “destruction” of the “traditional content of ancient ontology” is insufficiently radical. A truly radical reform would break the tie between being and appearing. It would entail our abandoning the attempt to speak of appearing in terms of being, i.e., to link it to some ontological commitment. It does not matter whether this be a commitment to the being of Husserl’s absolute subjectivity or to the being-in-the-world that is Heidegger’s *Dasein* or to the various physical structures and processes that make up a natural scientific account of subjectivity. All such attempts simply bear witness to the category mistake of conflating the question of appearing with that of being. They all go astray in their not taking appearing as its own category.

**The Empty and the Full Subject**

What happens when we do not commit this category mistake? How do we deal with the fact that appearing is appearing to someone, without reducing appearing to a function of subjectivity, interpreted either materially or transcendentally? Patočka’s answer involves our distinguishing the “empty” from the “full” subject. If we take appearing as such as a “world-structure,” it embraces both subjects and things. As such, it has three moments: “what shows itself (the world), that to which it shows itself (subjectivity) and *how,* the manner and way, it shows itself.”[[112]](#endnote-112) For Patočka, subjectivity, regarded as that to which things show themselves (Husserl’s transcendental subjectivity), does not show itself. The active turning inward to reflect on it comes up empty handed. All its content, by definition, comes from its objects—that is, from things appearing to it. Devoid of any internal content, this subject, according to Patočka, is simply a feature of manifestation itself. It is required by the fact that appearing is always appearing to someone. This means, Patočka writes, “mediating by the subject shows itself … directly in [the] things showing themselves to us…. for example, that we have a cup in its original which is always in radii of givenness, and [which] finally crosses into deficient modes of givenness and then the surroundings and so on ….” These are what show themselves. In other words, any supposed turn to the subjectivity t*o whom the world appear*s (the transcendental subject) is actually a turn to such elements. In itself, this subject is actually only a position that these elements determine. This means, Patočka adds, “only these indications, references, and this whole system of indicators is subjectivity, is us.”[[113]](#endnote-113) Empty of any inherent content, the transcendental subject consists simply of the “references and indicators” of this content. It is, for example, the spatially located point of view set by a pattern of perspectival appearing. It is, further, the 0-point in time between the remembered and anticipated perspectives of this pattern. To ontologize this 0-point in space and time is simply to return to the dilemmas posed by Descartes’ non-extended subject. It is to revisit the question of how such a subject could ever come into contact with the material world.

To give this empty subject its own content is to make it “one of the appearing things.” It becomes one of the worldly realities that appear to the empty “transcendental subject.” As Patočka puts this: “The subject to whom everything shows itself is empty, while the subject that has content (*das erfüllte Subjekt*) exhibits neither advantage nor precedence over other worldly realties ….”[[114]](#endnote-114) In fact, “it appears as a living body (*Leib*) that belongs to the subject to whom everything shows itself.” This is a body that has kinesthesia (senses of its movement). [[115]](#endnote-115) Like other worldly realities, this “full” or “concrete” subject stands in casual relations to the rest of the world. As Patočka puts this: “Concrete subjects are things among things, which certainly stand in causal connections with other worldly things, and this connection is a specific one: it concentrates the effects [of the other things] in specific, highly differentiated, acting organs [those of the senses and the brain], and thereby actualizes the possibility of letting a perspectival world appear, a world that appears to someone.”[[116]](#endnote-116)

This full subject is, as obvious, the biological agent: the person composed of flesh and blood. Does this mean that there are actually two subjects—i.e., two distinct entities that somehow have to be brought into relation to each other? To assert this is to forget that the empty subject is actually not a being at all. It is a structure of appearing. It is something embedded in the “how” of appearing as it unfolds itself perspectivally through time. Embedded in this “how” is a spatial-temporal 0-point. The relation of the concrete subject to this structure is that of providing the conditions for its applicability. In their making possible the appearing of the world, the actions of our brains and senses simply make the structures of appearing applicable to us. As Patočka expresses this: “Causality in no way signifies the creation of the appearing as such, but rather the adaptation of the organic unity to the structure of appearing, which co-determines the world and in a certain partial sense grounds it.”[[117]](#endnote-117) The point Patočka is making can be put in terms of the distinction between the validity and applicability of a formal law. Different machines made of different materials can be constructed to do sums. The laws these machines obey are causal laws—be they the laws of electronics for an electronic calculator or those of the gear and lever for a mechanical adding machine. The arithmetical laws that such machines instantiate are, however, not causal, but formal. Patočka’s insight is that appearing itself has this formal character. It is “a specific world structure … without itself being actual” (i.e., without its being a being).”[[118]](#endnote-118) On the one hand, it represents “a lawfulness that … cannot be grounded or drawn from the object.” This follows because the lawfulness that is drawn from objects is causal, and the laws of this structure are formal. On the other hand, its lawfulness “determines experiential, natural and scientific knowing.”[[119]](#endnote-119) This is not because it gives the physical conditions for knowing, but rather because, as the lawfulness of appearing, it determines the knowing that is based upon appearing.

One way of putting the above is to note that if appearing is a world-structure, then the evolution of organic beings would take account of it. Their evolution would involve their adapting to this structure if such adaptation offered a survival advantage. The evolution of sensory organs and central nervous systems would, thus, provide them with the causally determined apparatus that would make the structure of appearing applicable to their organic functioning. Now, to derive the structure of appearing from this apparatus is, in Patočka’s view, rather like deriving the formal laws of mathematics from the causal mechanisms of a particular type of calculator. It is, in fact, to reverse the actual relation. The calculator was constructed to follow the laws of mathematics in giving correct calculations. Similarly, our brains and sensory organs were adapted to take advantage of the structures of appearing. This does not mean that their laws are the formal ones of this structure. There is no “explanatory” bridge that links the two. Thus, the laws of perspectival appearing that set up particular points of view—points in relation to which objects show first one side and then another—are not causal laws. The laws governing our putting together perspectives to grasp spatial-temporal objects are, however, causal. Given this, we can say that the “hard problem” of providing such an explanatory bridge is “hard” precisely because it is insoluble. It has no solution since it presupposes incompatible concepts.[[120]](#endnote-120)

The cognitive science that follows Patočka’s insight will avoid this problem. It will concentrate on the study of appearing qua appearing and then look to see how its structures might be made applicable to material objects through causal laws. The study of appearing makes a whole wealth of phenomenological insights available, insights that can be used as “clues” to investigate the kinds of problems that natural or artificial sentient beings face in constructing their worlds. The point, however, is not to confuse the laws that structure appearing with the causal laws through which such beings (or their human makers) solve these problems. Artificial intelligence research can succeed on its own without any ontological commitments regarding the nature of appearing as such. Availing itself of Patočka’s insight, it need not fall prey to the antinomy that has bedeviled philosophy since Descartes’ time. To see how, concretely, this might be accomplished is the subject of the next inquiry.

**Chapter 2**

The Question of Naturalizing Phenomenology

The previous chapter ended with a double assertion. Following Patočka, it claimed that the laws concerning appearing as such were formal, while the laws governing a sentient organism’s grasp of the appearing world were causal. While an explanatory bridge between the two types of laws is not possible, this does not mean that they are unrelated. This cannot be the case if, as Patočka claims, “[c]ausality … signifies … the adaptation of the organic unity to the structure of appearing.” Such a structure, he claims, “co-determines the world and in a certain partial sense grounds it.” [[121]](#endnote-121) Thus, if sentient organic beings evolved to take advantage of this world-structure, their own processes—in particular, those by which they apprehend the world—must in some sense be co-determined by this structure. There should be a correspondence between the two—one where the formal structures definitive of appearing qua appearing find themselves reflected in the processes of sentient beings.

This supposition seems to lie behind one of the most notable developments in phenomenology in the past two decades—namely, the attempt to use it to advance cognitive science. The reasoning behind this initiative—at least for its proponents—is relatively straightforward. They argue that cognitive science studies artificial and brain-based intelligence. But before we can speak of artificial intelligence, we must have some knowledge of natural intelligence, that is, we must understand our own cognitive functioning. Similarly, to understand how the brain functions, we need to grasp the cognitive processes that such functioning realizes. This, however, is precisely what classical phenomenology provides. It studies the cognitive acts through which we apprehend the world, observes the constitutive build-up of such acts, and attends to the temporal constitution at work in the genesis of every act, every intentional relation we have to the world. Its results, which have been accumulating since the beginning of the last century, thus, offer cognitive science a trove of information for its projects.[[122]](#endnote-122)

As obvious as this conclusion appears, it is not immune to some fundamental objections from the proponents of classical, Husserlian phenomenology. They point out that, for Husserl, phenomenology does not concern itself with the real, “psychological subject”—roughly equivalent to Patočka’s “concrete subject.” Instead, Husserl focuses on the “transcendental” subject. By virtue of the reduction that reveals it, this subject, Husserl writes, “loses that which gives it the value of something real in the naively experienced, pre-given world; it loses its sense of being a soul of an animal organism which exists in a pre-given, spatial-temporal nature.”[[123]](#endnote-123) As such, the transcendental subject no longer has its sense of being causally determined by this spatial-temporal nature. Given this, how can such a subject serve as a paradigm for understanding either artificial or organic, brain-based intelligence? As part of the world, the latter are causally determined entities, but the transcendental subject, Husserl asserts, has to be “considered as absolute in itself and as existing for itself ‘before’ all worldly being.”[[124]](#endnote-124) If this is true, then the attempt to marry phenomenology with cognitive science is bound to come to grief on the opposition of different accounts of consciousness: the non-causal, transcendental paradigm put forward by phenomenology in its study of transcendental subjectivity and the causal paradigm assumed by cognitive science.[[125]](#endnote-125) Any attempt to employ phenomenology in cognitive science must, then, reinterpret phenomenology’s results in terms of the causal account assumed by this science. In its attempt to use transcendental consciousness as a paradigm for understanding artificial or brain-based intelligence, cognitive science must transform transcendental consciousness into a part of nature. This naturalization of consciousness is, in fact, a denaturing of it. It is a transformation that makes us lose sight of what is essential to consciousness.

To answer this objection, we must turn from Patočka to Husserl. Patočka refuses to speak of cognitive processes and functions, preferring to concentrate on the structures of appearing as such. Such structures, for Patočka, do the work of transcendental subjectivity. They, rather than transcendental subjectivity, determine appearing.[[126]](#endnote-126) At the basis of this position is the conception of subjectivity as a being. To understand appearing in terms of subjective processes is, Patočka argues, to make an illegitimate ontological commitment. It is to speak about being rather than appearing. The question, however, is whether this argument applies to the transcendental subjectivity, which is stripped of its worldly being. If it cannot, then the argument loses its force. At issue here is the nature of transcendental subjectivity or consciousness. How are we to think of it as *not* an entity? Can we understand its structures as those of appearing—those, in other words, that determine the processes of the “concrete subject.” This is the subject to whom the world actually appears. Can we use Husserl’s insights to understand its processes without denaturing transcendent consciousness?

**Naturalizing Phenomenology and Transcendental Subjectivity**

Mathematics plays a crucial role in the attempt to naturalize phenomenology. The procedure begins with the phenomenological description of the performances of consciousness. An analysis of the invariant structures of these performances is followed by the development of a mathematical model for such constructions. Expressing this in mathematical algorithms, the cognitive scientist employs the latter in a naturalistic account of consciousness.[[127]](#endnote-127) For a simple example of this procedure, we can turn to the process of retention or short-term memory. According to Husserl, this memory is built up of a chain of retentions of retentions of … some original content. [[128]](#endnote-128) Thus, first there is an impressional consciousness, then this is retained, then this retention is itself retained, and so on for upwards of a minute or so. We can mathematically model this process by using parentheses to express retention. The use of parentheses surrounding parentheses would then express the retention of a retention. Thus a simple model of the retentional process would be given by the series, i, (i), ((i)) ..., each later member being taken as a retention of the earlier. A computational algorithm can be written for this model.[[129]](#endnote-129) A corresponding algorithm can also be written for the process by which we retain successive contents in the order we experience them. Feeding into it the successive contents, A B C D E, it would express their order through sets of increasing parentheses: (E (D (C (B (A))))).[[130]](#endnote-130) Now, to employ this model in a naturalistic account of consciousness would be to use these increasing parentheses as temporal tags for the successive contents. In terms of artificial intelligence, this would involve first accumulating the data provided by the machine’s transponders into defined temporal phases before its processing. As for brain-based intelligence, one would use this model to investigate the sequences of neuronal firing. Generally, whatever the model, the focus would be on the implementation of a given task: in this case, the task of responding to the world’s temporal givenness.

The most general objection to this procedure of naturalizing phenomenology is that it is actually a denaturing of it. To employ phenomenology in cognitive science is to miss its special focus. While the natural sciences, including cognitive science, aim at the understanding and manipulation of the external world, phenomenology’s focus is on the subjective performances that generate the natural sciences. It is not interested in contributing to their results, but rather in understanding how these results are achieved. Its focus, in other words, is critical rather than practical. It examines the evidence that a science has for its basic positions and shows how the basic sense structures that characterize the science relate to such evidence. Its critical function is that of limiting a science’s claims to the sense structures that its evidence supports.

The ready reply to this objection is that one may grant it without prejudicing the use of phenomenology. Regardless of the focus of phenomenology, its results stand on their own. As genuine insights into our cognitive processes, their validity does not depend upon the particular aims of phenomenology, but only on the accuracy of its accounts. This holds, in particular, for its descriptions of the subjective performances that characterize consciousness as such. Such performances are carried out by the same subjectivity that the cognitive and neurological sciences study, namely, our embodied subjectivity. Thus, given that *their subject matter is the same*, the results of phenomenology can be used by cognitive science.

This, however, is precisely what the objection will not allow. Following Husserl’s lead, it asserts that what phenomenology studies is not part of the world. It does not investigate the empirical subject, but rather the non-worldly, transcendental subject. As prior to the world, this subject cannot be described in worldly terms. To deny this is to deny the point of Husserl’s epoché. This epoché is what first allows us to do phenomenology. We perform it when we suspend our belief in the natural world. Such a suspension is not a denial, but rather an attempt to examine with unprejudiced eyes the evidence we have for it. This means that we cannot avail ourselves of any thesis that presupposes the existence of this world and this includes all the theses of natural science.[[131]](#endnote-131) Rather than employing these, phenomenology’s focus is on the evidence we have for them. In pursuing such evidence, phenomenology discovers the transcendental subject, the subject that constitutes the sense of the world from such evidence. We thus have the aforementioned distinction between the transcendental and the empirical subject. The empirical subject presupposes the world, the transcendental subject does not. Descriptions of the former employ causal terms, those of the latter avoid them since their use presupposes the causal intertwining of consciousness and the world and, hence, the thesis of the natural world. Given this, we cannot explain the transcendental subject by referring to our embodied empirical subject. In fact, the explanatory relation is the reverse. Phenomenology reveals the empirical subject as a sense structure constituted by the transcendental subject from the evidence available to it.

**The Functional View of Consciousness**

What exactly is the sense of subjectivity presupposed by this objection? Are we to think of the subject as a nonworldly agent, that is, as something ontologically prior to and, hence, independent of the world? Is its agency somehow responsible for the world? There are certainly passages in Husserl that would lead us in this direction. Husserl, in the *Cartesian Meditations* asserts that “transcendental subjectivity … constitutes both sense and being.”[[132]](#endnote-132) He writes that the project of phenomenology is to make “every being itself, be it real or ideal, … understandable as a constituted product (*Gebilde*) of transcendental subjectivity.[[133]](#endnote-133) As for the world, it is described in the *Crisis* as “a world whose being is being from subjective performances, and this with such evidence that another world is not thinkable at all.”[[134]](#endnote-134) Taken literally, such remarks would position transcendental subjectivity as a God-like agent, one that created the world from nothing. This, of course, is not Husserl’s position. Far from being independent of the world, transcendental subjectivity is dependent in its functioning on externally provided data. Such data he asserts, “are nothing produced by consciousness. They are … that which has come into being alien to consciousness, that which has been received, as opposed to what has been produced through consciousness’s own spontaneity.” This means that “consciousness is nothing without impression.”[[135]](#endnote-135) Externally provided impressions are the source of all its contents. As for the subject or ego of consciousness, it is, apart from such impressions, “an empty form,” one that is individualized through the contents provided by the impressions.[[136]](#endnote-136)

Given this, how are we to think of the subject? How can it be responsible for the sense and the being of the world and yet be simply a form for an inflowing content. To answer this, we have to first qualify the assertions of the *Cartesian Mediations* and take them as referring to sense and being *for us*. What is at issue is not being itself, but rather our action of positing being from the evidence it provides us. We do this by making sense out of a given material. This making (or constituting) sense is a many-layered process. Essentially, it is a matter of identifying a sense as one-in-many and positing this unity as a common referent for an originally apprehended multiplicity, be this a multiplicity of impressions, perceptions, perceptual objects, or states of affairs composed of these. As for consciousness itself, it is not a thing but a function. It is not a particular entity either within the world or prior to it, but rather this synthetic, interpretive function of identifying unities in multiplicities. It is as such a function that we can take consciousness as an empty form “informing” or shaping the material it receives. The view of phenomenology that results from this insight is given by Husserl when he asks, “is not consciousness function ...?” He continues, “What is necessary? … We have to examine [intentional] experiences as functions…. We have to ask ourselves: What is ‘accomplished’ in them? What kind of sense is present in them, what kind of sense is progressively forming itself in them? … How do functions synthetically, teleologically unite into the unity of a function, etc.?”[[137]](#endnote-137) As this passage makes clear, to take consciousness as a “function” is not to place it behind or beyond the world as if it were some creative agent. It is rather to define it in terms of those performances that allow it to form and progressively unite senses into greater and greater wholes—greater and greater unities in multiplicities. The intentional experience considered as such a function is that of taking our experiences as experiences *of* some common referent, a referent that stands as a unity for their multiplicity.

**Applicability and Validity**

In asserting that consciousness is a function, we preclude an objection that can be brought against the attempt to capture it mathematically. This is that consciousness, taken as a concrete entity, is not itself mathematical. The experiences that compose it are not mathematical idealities, but rather the concrete qualitative contents—the sights, sounds, tastes, smells and textures—of our daily lives. This point is undeniable. But equally certain is the fact that we can describe a function in mathematical terms without asserting that what performs this function is itself mathematical. To assert this would be to ontologize the description, making it the “true being” or reality of the thing described. This is the error that the *Crisis* criticizes in its account of modern science. Post-Galilean science takes its equations as expressing the reality of the world. At bottom, its error is the simple one of substituting the description for the thing described. Just as the law of gravitation is not the gravitating bodies whose relations it describes, so a mathematical relation is not itself the things it relates. This point, however, does not hold with regard to functions. Such functions are not things but rather formal relations and processes. As such, their reality can be caught mathematically. To call consciousness a function is to assert that what is essential to it are not the concrete qualitative contents of the experiences composing it, but rather its performances with regard to such material.

Because our consciousness is embodied, it does experience the world through its senses. Its contents are those of the tastes, touches, smells, sights and textures provided by our five senses. What is its relation to consciousness defined as a function? The answer can be found in a distinction, mentioned in the previous chapter, between conditions of validity and those of applicability.[[138]](#endnote-138) As Husserl observes in the *Logical Investigations*, the two involve very different laws. The formal laws of arithmetic, for example, give us the conditions under which additions are *valid*. Calculations which violate them are invalid. Quite different laws are at work when we make these laws *applicable* to adding machines. Thus, as we said, a mechanical adding machine uses the laws of the gear and lever, a modern calculator uses those of electronics. Yet both instantiate the same mathematical laws. A similar argument can be made with regard to our consciousness understood as a function. Such a consciousness represents a set of performances. For example, we apprehend objects by identifying perspectival patterns of appearing and assigning them referents. Doing so, we interpret the perceptions of a given pattern as perceptions of a given object—for example, a box that we turn in our hands, viewing it first from one side and then from another. Given that this is actually how we see objects, this process must be one that is instantiated in our embodied being, that is, in our embodied, *empirical subjectivity*. The laws of applicability for such interpretive functions are thus biological ones—those having to do with our brains. These, however, are not the laws of consciousness as a function. They do not apply to the *transcendental subjectivity* that is defined by such functions. It is, nonetheless, quite helpful to understand the functioning of transcendental subjectivity in attempting to find out how our brains work. The formal laws of its functioning can serve as clues to the biological basis of our interpretive activity. Now, only if we equate the two sorts of laws, could we be accused of ignoring the special nature of transcendental consciousness. Given that such a consciousness is not a thing, but a function, this would be to commit the same kind of fallacy as equating the laws of arithmetic with those of, say, a mechanical adding machine. The relation of our embodied, empirical subjectivity to transcendental subjectivity is the same as that between this adding machine and the laws that specify the validity of its operations. Our empirical “concrete” subjectivity embodies the transcendental by instantiating through its own organic processes the functions that characterize the transcendental.

**Transcendental Consciousness and Natural Science**

The distinction I have drawn between transcendental and empirical subjectivity allows us to meet another variant of the objection I have been considering. It is based on Galileo’s separation of the primary from the secondary qualities of matter. The primary are its quantifiable aspects such as its measurable distances, speeds, wavelengths, weights and so on. The secondary are its qualitative aspects, i.e., the tastes, sounds, colors and so on that our five senses reveal. Natural science, following Galileo, takes causality as pertaining to the quantifiable aspects of the material world. This means that before we can causally describe the world, we must first reduce its secondary qualities to its primary. Sound has to be understood as the frequency of the pressure waves reaching our ear, color to the wavelengths of light, and so forth. It is only in terms of such measurable qualities that we can mathematically formulate causal relations. The advantage we gain from this is not just greater precision. It is also the ability to make objectively verifiable (third person) claims based on objectively measureable data. The same cannot be said of the secondary qualities of matter. Each of us can experience them only through his own senses. Not directly quantifiable, they can claim only a subjective (first person) validity. Natural science gets beyond this by reducing the secondary to the primary. Concretely, this means explaining the sensuously appearing world in terms of its underlying physical processes. Given this, natural science stands unalterably opposed to phenomenology since phenomenology, by definition, studies appearances while science explains them away by reducing them to physical processes. The causality science employs presupposes this reduction, so do its mathematical descriptions. The implication here is that we conflate irreconcilable paradigms when we mathematise phenomenological descriptions and employ them in causal accounts of consciousness. The cognitive science that attempts this forgets that the causality employed by modern science is not a formalization of subjective experience, but rather a reduction of it to non-subjective processes.

As in the previous versions of this same objection, what is presupposed here is consciousness as a worldly reality rather than a function. The contents of our embodied consciousness are the tastes, touches, smells, sights and textures provided by our bodily senses. To reduce the secondary qualities presented by such contents to primary ones is to take them as the effects of the world on our embodied consciousness. The point is to relate them to the physical features of the world that produce these effects. The objection thus treats consciousness as a natural entity causally related to other natural entities, these being the objects affecting our bodily senses. Now, although such contents are understood in terms of such effects, they themselves are not explained away or reduced to them. The contents themselves do not suffer reduction, but only their claims to *directly represent* the features of the external world.[[139]](#endnote-139) What is reduced are the references of these contents. As Descartes formulates it, the attempt here is to move from variations in the secondary contents, for example those of a change in color, to the “corresponding variations” in the material world.[[140]](#endnote-140) Now, when we turn from our embodied, empirical consciousness to transcendental consciousness taken as a function, what is at issue is not the physical reference of these individual contents, but rather those synthetic, constitutive performances that place these contents in intentional relations. As I said above, such performances, rather than the particular contents composing it, are the defining elements of transcendental consciousness. What cognitive science attempts to draw from phenomenology is an account of such performances. Its first concern is with the performances as such, independent of their field of application.

It is, in fact, in terms of Husserl’s distinction between conditions of validity and those of applicability that we overcome the objection that the causality modern science employs presupposes the reduction of appearances to physical processes. Strictly speaking, the concept of causality has nothing to do with this reduction. As Hume and Kant showed, the concept expresses a formal relation, one involving necessity in the sequence of appearances. Thus, to say that “A causes B” is simply to assert that the experience of A is necessarily followed by the experience of B. One may either give such necessity a psychological force as Hume did or affirm it as an apriori category as Kant chose to do. In either case, however, the concept per se is silent on the relation of primary to secondary qualities. It only concerns conditions for *validly* drawing causal relations. Its strictly formal character does not mean that we cannot use it to guide us in discovering the causal relations of physical processes. Such relations, insofar as they involve necessary sequences, can be taken as *applications* of this formal law. These applications, as concerning physical processes, do concern the primary qualities of matter. This, however, does not mean that the concept of causality inherently involves the reduction of subjective experience to physical processes. Rather, since it concerns the sequence of experiences, it is open to phenomenological explication. As such, it forms part of the resources that phenomenology can offer cognitive science.

To employ these resources does not involve any denaturing of the consciousness that phenomenology studies. Rather, it clarifies the transcendental nature of such consciousness, allowing us to focus on it as a function rather than a thing. To employ these resources does not involve any denaturing of the consciousness that phenomenology studies. Rather, it clarifies the transcendental nature of such consciousness, allowing us to focus on it as a function rather than a thing. Such clarification necessarily includes the relation of consciousness with the world. But, here, a number of questions arise: What exactly is the role of this function in the manifestation of the world? In particular, how does this role relate to the embodiment that makes this function applicable to us? Such embodiment thrusts us into the world. It makes us part of it. But consciousness, taken as a function, allows us to internalize the world. As such, it makes the world part of ourselves. This double relation of being-in—our physically being in the world that is consciously in us—must be inherent in manifesting as such since its concept includes that to whom appearing appears, i.e., embodied subjects like ourselves. How are we to understand this in terms of appearing understood as a “world structure”? It is to these questions that we now turn.

**Chapter 3**

The Temporality of Merleau-Ponty’s Intertwining

Patočka’s fundamental insight is that appearing as such is not to be explained in terms of what appears. It is a world-form, one whose lawfulness “determines experiential, natural and scientific knowing.”[[141]](#endnote-141) Since such knowing is accomplished in and through empirical subjectivity, the structures of this world-form are reflected in the latter. Now, to think of transcendental subjectivity as filling out the content of this form is not to explain appearing in terms of a being. As the last chapter argued, transcendental subjectivity, so conceived, is a function rather than an entity. This can be put in terms of Patočka’s assertion that the subject “is a *role* in manifestation in which it must function.”[[142]](#endnote-142)  The “role” arises insofar as appearing implies a subject to whom things appear. This does not mean that the subject, considered as an entity, determines manifestation. If we conceive of this role in terms of the functioning of transcendental subjectivity, then such subjectivity has be taken as inherent in the structure of manifestation. Patočka expresses this insight when he writes that “cogito is not a being, but rather a component part of the structure of appearing.”[[143]](#endnote-143)

The question remains, however, regarding the nature of the relationship of the individual subject and the world in which it acts. What precisely is the structure of manifestation that links the two? The subject to whom the world appears is the embodied subject—the subject with its “specific, highly differentiated, acting organs.” How does such organic embodiment play itself out in the appearing of the world? The question does not concern the scientific, physiological account of perception. It concerns the world-form. How does this form involve our embodied being in the world? To answer these questions, we will have to broaden Husserl’s concept of transcendental subjectivity as a function to make explicit its character as the functioning of the world-form. We can do so by turning from Patočka to a philosopher who profoundly influenced him: Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the intertwining of the embodied self and its world is one that will continually occupy us as we pursue the question of our selfhood beyond the issues posed by cognitive science.

Historically speaking, the conception of intertwining is an attempt to come to terms with our dual relation to the world. Husserl, as we saw, speaks of the paradox of our twofold being—our possessing “both the being of a subject for the world and the being of an object in the world.”[[144]](#endnote-144) For Husserl, in his constitutive phenomenology, the paradox is expressed in the question, “How can human subjectivity, which is a part of the world, constitute the whole world, i.e., constitute it as its intentional product …?” This, according to Husserl, leads to the “absurdity” of having a *part* of the world constitute the *whole* of the world and, therefore, itself as a *part within* this whole.[[145]](#endnote-145) We need not embrace Husserl’s view of constitution to feel the force of this paradox. However we describe our apprehension of the world, it still remains a fact that the world and our selfhood are intertwined. By this, I mean that there is good evidence for both the world’s being within us and our being within the world. As Merleau-Ponty observed, this is the view of our ordinary “perceptual faith.” Our body appears as part of the world that we see and, hence, on the basis of such perceptual evidence, we believe that we are in the world that we see. The perceptual continuity between ourselves and the world here leads us to assume that we perceptually grasp things as they are in themselves. Yet, when we close our eyes, this perceived world vanishes. The dependence of the perceived world on our bodily condition, thus, equally convinces us that the world is in us. The question of such “perceptual faith” is: How can we hold on to both convictions?

To understand this intertwining as a structure of appearing qua appearing, I am first going to show how it answers this question. I shall do so by examining a number of examples. In each case, the appearing object “in itself” will turn out to be neither *within us* nor outside of us *within the world*, but rather at the intersection set by their intertwining. I will then turn to the different senses of “within” at work in this intertwining of self and world. I will conclude by noting what these different senses reveal about human temporality and, in fact, about the “role in manifestation” played by our selfhood.

**Levels of Intertwining[[146]](#endnote-146)**

The reason why I say that a perception is “mine” is that I perceive in and through my body. In my bodily being, I provide the venues for the world’s appearing. Merleau-Ponty’s striking metaphor for this is *tapiser*.[[147]](#endnote-147) By virtue of our possessing colored vision, we “wallpaper” over the world with colors; similarly, the fact that our ears can hear certain sounds, means that we also “line” it with audio qualities. Here, the world is within us since our embodied senses provide the “place” for its appearing. Since we can see and hear ourselves as we can see and hear other worldly objects, we also take ourselves as within the world. Now, our bodily senses do not function apart from our other bodily abilities. To perceive something involves being able to turn your head, focus your eyes, move forward to get a better look, grasp it, feel its weight, and so forth. In all this, the bodily “I can” functions as part of our perception. As Merleau-Ponty writes, “it is literally the same thing to perceive one single marble, and to use two fingers as one single organ.”[[148]](#endnote-148) Our perception of the marble is one with a set of bodily acts, those of reaching over, picking up and bringing close the marble. It is by rolling it between our fingers that we perceive its different colors and determine its hardness and smoothness. Such activities are part of the ways in which we “line” the world. They form part of the “place” of the disclosure of the world. As part of our bodily “I can,” this “place” is within us and also within the world.

The same point holds when we expand this “I can” to include our projects. The disclosure of the world’s senses is not simply a matter of beholding or manipulating objects. It also arises from the practical projects such abilities make possible. Thus, as we employ various objects for our projects, we get the sense of what they are for. Their pragmatic meanings are given by their purposes. A hammer, for example, is understood when we use it to drive in a nail; a glass reveals its sense when we use it to drink from. Engaging in such projects, we are both in the world and disclosive of it. Here, the place of such disclosure is our purposeful activity. It is both in the world and what “lines” the world by providing us with a new set of dimensions for its appearing.

**Objects in Themselves**

What is the status of the objects we disclose? Are they within us or external to us? Let me begin with the most immediate object, which is our body. As Merleau-Ponty notes, it is both internal and external. Thus, the hand that touches an object acts as an internal place of disclosure. It is the venue for the appearing of the external object’s tangible qualities. The same hand, as touched, however, is also part of the external world. “When,” as Merleau-Ponty writes, “my right hand touches my left hand while [the left hand] is palpating the things … the ‘touching subject’ passes over to the rank of the touched.” It “descends into the things, such that the touch is formed in the midst of the world.”[[149]](#endnote-149) This means that, in touching myself, I grasp the tangible “in itself” since I know *from the inside* what it is to be touched, i.e., be tangible. This knowledge, in fact, is what allows me to distinguish my body from the rest of the world. When I touch myself, I feel myself being touched. I have a double sensation of touching and being touched. No other object affords me this. When I touch objects, I do not feel *their* being touched. I, thus, exclude them from my sense of bodily selfhood. What this means is that the disclosed body that I recognize as my own is both within and without. To grasp it as it is “in itself,” I have to grasp it through the double sensation that makes it both internal and external. In itself, then, it exists at the intertwining of the two.

The same point holds with regard to the senses of the world that my bodily projects disclose. I can use paper to write and draw upon, as material to start a fire, or to make a paper airplane for a child. Each use gives me another sense of it. Similarly, water has the senses of something to drink, or to wash with, or to douse a fire, depending on my project. Are such senses within or without? On one level they are within me. They are what I have *in mind* when I employ various objects for particular purposes. On another level, they are external to me. When I use a hammer to drive in a nail, the pragmatic meanings I assign to these objects are apparent to others. The body-project that is guided by these senses thrusts into the public realm what I have in mind. They become senses inherent in a project that is there for others to observe. This example should not be taken as indicating that such senses are initially private, their public presence being dependent on what we have in mind as we engage in our projects. We were not born with the subjective understanding that guides these projects. We acquired it, by and large, from our others as they engaged in such projects. It was from observing them that we saw what they had in mind, thereby acquiring the senses of the objects they used. The question of what was first here, private subjective understanding or public presence, admits of no definite answer. The public presence internalizes itself within the subjective understanding. Such understanding, however, concerns how we use the objects of the world. As such, it is within the world. It has a public presence. Given this, the senses that compose it have to be grasped in terms of the intertwining of the subjective understanding and the world. To grasp them in themselves is to grasp them in the intertwining of the private becoming public and the public becoming private. Only as such are they seen as what they inherently are: the senses of the world that are both *disclosed by and internally guide* our various projects.

The process of showing someone how to do something is almost never accomplished in silence. Almost always, we tell them what we have in mind. In fact, when our caregivers taught us our initial projects, they accompanied them with a constant stream of verbal commentary. We first learned the word *spoon*, for example, when we learned how to use it to eat. Its meaning was given by its function, and its function was set by the particular projects that our caregivers and companions introduced us to. As is obvious, the more multiple the projects an object is involved in, the more multiple are its meanings. Thus, besides meaning something to eat with, a *spoon* can also mean something to ladle sugar with, to measure with, to stir with, and, for children, something to dig in the garden with. Each new use *discloses a new aspect of it* and adds to what comes to mind in connection with the word. This same holds generally. The basic senses that make up our language come from the projects that disclose the world. As such, language itself shares in the intertwining that characterizes these senses. It is both *within* us, capable of sustaining an interior monologue, and *without*, being the way that we exhibit what is within us. To argue for the priority of one over the other is to forget its tie to the world, that is, to the senses of it disclosed by our projects. It is also to forget that our ability to verify what others assert is tied to our ability to disclose the senses contained in their assertions, that is, to engage in the appropriate body projects.[[150]](#endnote-150)

The point just made concerns not just the senses of things and the language that reports them. It also touches what we mean by objective existence. When we say that something objectively exists, we assert that it is there not just for us, but for everyone else. It has, in other words, more than a private, merely subjective presence. This is what we mean when we say that it is *really* there. This basic sense of the *real* appears whenever we doubt our perceptions. To resolve this doubt, we ask others if they see what we are perceiving. We judge things to be real when others confirm our perceptions. The place of this confirmation is both within and without us.  It joins what is within each of us in a public declaration.  The “real,” in other words, is neither within us—that is, within our private perceptual experience—nor outside of us, i.e., present as some “real” feature or predicate of the external world.  It exists in the intertwining of the two. The place of this intertwining is our discourse.

This point can be put in terms of the fact that the presence of the objectively real is linguistic. The objectively real is what is there for all of us. It has an intersubjective presence. But since we cannot see out of each others’ eyes, the main way we share what we perceive is by speaking about it. Such verbal agreement is our touchstone for the real. It is the venue for its presence as “there” for us all. This agreement, however, is founded on the intertwining of the public and the private. It involves our representing to others through language what we have in mind, thus making it public. It also involves our internalizing the public report of others and regarding it in the light of our own experience. At the basis of this intertwining is the commonality of our projects and, hence, of the senses they disclose. We can confirm the report of others because we share a common context of making senses manifest. The common nature of our projects makes such senses capable of being designated by common words, words that we can use to report our experience. The intersubjective basis of these senses thus allows them to achieve the linguistic presence that is the touchstone of the real. Through it, they can be taken as the senses of real objects. Thus, by virtue of the projects that underlie the senses of its words, language, itself, “lines” the real, providing a dimension for its appearing. As tied to our projects, language envelops the world and is within it.[[151]](#endnote-151)

**Subjects in Themselves**

The intertwining of subjects with the world positions not just objects-in-themselves at the intersection set by this intertwining, but also subjects-in-themselves. Our subjectivity, as intertwined with the world, cannot be thought of as an ontologically independent, “private” realm. Rather, our possession of a private, hidden sphere is itself the result of an intertwining. To see this, it is best to begin with the sense we have of another person’s hiddenness. Genetically, this is prior to our sense of our own hiddenness. Small children do not know that their minds are hidden from others. They must learn this through their others. Others conceal their intentions from them and they learn that they can do the same.[[152]](#endnote-152) They need not tell the truth or at least the whole of it. As they develop, they learn to speak ambiguously. This points to the fact that the mistrust of another person’s words is often joined to the sense of his having a hidden, private realm. The thought that in speaking he is concealing his intentions makes us regard the latter as hidden. We say, “we don’t know what he is thinking,” thus making his intentions part of his interior, hidden life. Since his intentions are private, we cannot know in advance what this person will do. Here, the hiddenness of the other is one with his freedom, that is, his having different courses of conduct open to choose from.

Such hiddenness and freedom depend on the public realm. The language a person uses has a multiplicity of meanings available to its words. It gains this multiplicity from our different projects. Insofar as the same object can be the goal of different projects, its disclosed sense can be multiplied. Thus, in describing a situation, a person is not limited to a single meaning that each of its objects must bear. In the very multiplicity of meanings available to it, his language, rather than being the unambiguous recorder of intentions, has the ability to conceal. Given that we gained the knowledge of such projects from our others, the public realm is the origin of this ability and, hence, the privacy it points to. The same holds with regard to the freedom that expresses itself in the choice between different projects. Such projects form the content of our freedom. They give us the possibilities we choose from in engaging in one course of action rather than another. The knowledge of these, however, comes from our others. As adults, whatever we see others do tends to be regarded (whether favorably or unfavorably) as a human capacity.  As such, we regard it as one of our human possibilities.  Given our finitude, we cannot, of course, realize all such possibilities.  We are always capable of *more* than we express.  We thus appear free in the sense that we *exceed* what can be known and predicted from our past—i.e., from those possibilities we have already actualized.[[153]](#endnote-153)

As with the senses that express its content, the place of this freedom is both within and without.  It is both a function of the inner, hidden realm of the choices available to us and the public disclosure that first introduced us to such choices.  In fact, the very hiddenness of this inner realm—a hiddenness expressed by the fact that we cannot know in advance what a person will do—is, itself, a function of the public realm.  It is a function of others providing us with more possibilities than we can possibly exhibit, given our finitude.  Viewed in this light, our hiddenness is not a matter of intentional concealment. It is an ontological condition. Its origin is the fact that the others, who give us the content of our freedom, exceed us. In their very plurality, they present us with more than we could possibly actualize. Does this mean that the public realm is first and the private realm second? To assert this is to grasp only half of the intertwining. Each of the possibilities made available to us initiated in the “I can” of our others. Its origin was another person’s actualizing one of his inner possibilities. This holds, even though he received it through the public actions of his others.

The conclusion here is the same as that drawn from our earlier examples. If we want to grasp what a subject is “in himself,” we must look neither *within* him to his inner realm of hiddenness and freedom nor *outside* of him to the public realm. The subject exists in the intertwining of both worlds. Only through such intertwining can he have the privacy and freedom that characterize his subjectivity.[[154]](#endnote-154)

**The Temporality of the Senses of the “Within”**

Thus far, I have been analyzing the intertwining of ourselves with the world without focusing on the very different senses of “within” at work here. We are not *in* the world in the same way that the world is *in* us. The sense of our being *within the world* is spatial-temporal, while the sense of the world’s being within us involves its being *within our consciousness*. As a phenomenological analysis of their genesis indicates, such senses imply two different conceptions of the flow of time.

How do we arrive at our sense of being spatially-temporally located within the world? The initial sense of such being-in arises with the perspectival unfolding of our sensory experience. As I walk about a room, for example, the different objects in it show different sides to me. They visually “turn” as I pass them, with nearer objects having a greater apparent angular velocity than those further away. I also experience the same phenomenon when I look out of the window of a moving car. As I do, closer objects appear to fly by, while distant objects hardly seem to move. When I first learned how to see, I learned to take these different rates as indicative of distance. Doing so, I also learned to place myself within the world. I became the 0-point, the “here” from which the various distances were marked. The same “here,” I unconsciously learned, was also indicated as a view-point by the perspectival foreshortening of the objects about me.

Although I have just treated it separately, this sense of my being spatially in the world is not, in fact, distinct from its temporal analogue. This cannot be otherwise, given that it takes time to move from one place to another. I can grasp the time it takes because I can retain my previous experiences and anticipate what I will experience. Thus, I could gain no sense of the progressive unfolding of my sensory experience if I could not retain this in the order that I experienced it. To grasp the chair as visually turning and, hence, showing different sides, I have to retain the experience I have had of the different sides. This ability to retain along with the corresponding ability to anticipate makes my present experience a temporally locatable experience. It associates it with a now-point between a given past and an anticipated future. The result is not just my sense of the world as both spatial and temporal; it is also my sense of myself as a spatial-temporal 0-point. I am both a here and a now “within” a spatial-temporal world.

The temporality of this spatial-temporal world achieves a definite form when I take it as an objective world, that is, as a world that is there not just for me but also for others. As Kant realized, this involves assuming a specific interpretive stance: To take what I perceive as pertaining to the objective world, I interpret the flow of perceptions that determine an object as one proceeding *in the same sequence both for myself and for other observers*. The flow of perceptions being the same, the sense of the object they determine will, I assume, be the same for all of us. It will be part of the world that is there for all of us.[[155]](#endnote-155) Kant uses the perception of a house to illustrate this point. I can regard a house in any order I please: “my perceptions could begin with the apprehension of the roof and end with the basement, or could begin from below and end above.” When, however, I want to place what I perceive within the objective world, I have to assert that “the order in which the perceptions … follow on one another” is “a necessary order,” one that holds for *everyone viewing the object*.[[156]](#endnote-156) What is this “necessary order” that renders what I see “objective”? According to Kant, it is that given by “a rule in accordance with which the appearances in their succession ... are determined by the preceding state.”[[157]](#endnote-157) Thus, every appearing feature of the house is, I assume, in the state that I observe it to be by virtue of its previous state. It is there for a reason, which is given by this previous state. The stain, for example, that I observe on the ceiling is taken as having a cause. There must have been a leaking roof that caused it. Its present condition is determined by its having been wet, which itself was determined by water from the roof leaking on it. When I take up this interpretative stance, I interpret everything that I see as placed at a definite point in objective time. It is the way it is because of the way it was before. The “rule” that links the two is that of causality understood in its formal sense of the past state determining the present state, which determines the future state. Kant agrees with Hume that this rule is not something I discover in the objective world. For Kant, it is something that first gives me the objective world. It is, thus, something I assume each time I move from what is true for me—mere “subjective validity”—to what is true for everyone. Everyone, I assume, experiences the flow of perceptions in the same order. The objects synthesized through this flow are, hence, themselves the same for all of us. The interpretative stance that embodies this assumption thus transforms my private spatial-temporal world into a common one. Both I and my fellow subjects are spatial-temporal beings “within” this causally determinate world with its linear temporality of the future being determined by the present, which is determined by what was past.

A very different temporality informs the sense of something being within consciousness. To grasp this sense we have to note with Husserl that perception involves the interpretation of sensuous contents—the very contents that our flesh provides by “lining” the world.[[158]](#endnote-158) The distinction between such contents and their interpretation appears when we regard an optical illusion, for example, the vase that can also appear as two facing faces. As the appearing object shifts, the sensuous contents we receive remain the same. What changes when we first see the faces and then see the vase is our interpretation of these contents. We take them, first, as contents of the faces, then as contents of the vase. A slightly more complicated case arises when we turn an object in our hand and still apprehend it as the same object. Here, we experience a flow of different perceptual contents, but interpret them as referring to the same object. They all bear the sense of being contents *of* this one object and, as Husserl remarks, “the interpretation according to this ‘sense’ is a character of experience which first constitutes ‘the [perceptual] being of the object for me’”[[159]](#endnote-159) Such contents are *within* consciousness. As for the object, it has the status of a one in many that transcends such contents. It remains identical as their referent even as the multitude of contents that we take as referring to it change. In this sense of “within,” we say that the contents are within and the object is outside. “Within” here signifies serving as material for the act of interpretation, which is also considered as “within” consciousness.

If Husserl is correct, then as infants we learned how to see by learning how to interpret our sensuous experience. This involves, for example, learning how to pick out perspectivally arranged patterns of experience and refer them to particular perceptual objects.[[160]](#endnote-160) The interpretations we make can, of course, turn out to be wrong. If they do, our attempt to perceptually grasp an object will fail. Suppose, for example, you notice what seems to be a cat crouching under a bush on a bright sunny day. As you move closer to get a better look, its features seem to become more clearly defined. One part of what you see appears to be its head, another its body, still another its tail. Based upon what you see, you anticipate that further features will be revealed as you approach: this shadow will be seen as part of the cat’s ear; another will be its eye, and so forth. If your interpretation is correct, then your experiences should form a part of an emerging pattern that exhibits these features, i.e., that perceptually manifests the object you assume you are seeing. If, however, you are mistaken, at some point your experiences will fail to fulfill your expectations. What you took to be a cat will dissolve into a flickering collection of shadows. As this example indicates, *to interpret is to anticipate*. It is to expect a sequence of contents that will present the object. This expectation, even if we are not directly conscious of it, makes us attend to some contents rather than others. It serves, in other words, as a guide for our connecting our perceptions according to an anticipated pattern. It also allows us to see the perceptions we have as either fulfillments or disappointments of our interpretative intention. [[161]](#endnote-161)

This account returns us to a point made at the beginning of the Introduction. It shows that the interpretative intention to see a given object is the determining factor in the perceptual process. What we intend to see determines how we regard what we have seen. It makes us take it as material for our “project” of seeing a specific object. As such, it determines our present act of seeing with its horizon of anticipations. Given that what we intend to see as we move to get a better look is not yet fully there, it stands as a *goal* of the perceptual process. As such, it is something to be realized, that is, something future. What we have seen and retain is something past, while the present act of seeing is, of course, now. The teleological temporality of the perceptual process is, thus, that of the future determining the past and, thereby, determining the present.

According to the above, being “in” consciousness is not just serving as material for a perceptual interpretation. Given that this interpretation is directed to seeing a specific object, being “in” also signifies serving as material for a purpose, namely, to see this object. The same sense of being “in” occurs when we speak of the embodied consciousness that is occupied with its projects, for example, that of building a chair. Having this goal allows me to regard my past activities as furnishing the material for my present act of construction. Without this goal, I would not regard the wood, glue, and nails I have purchased as the means or material for my purpose. The same holds for what I intend to see. The expectation that this involves makes me take what I have experienced as fulfilling or failing to fulfill my perceptual interpretation. As such, it determines my present act of perception. Given this, we can say being “in” our consciousness has the same basic sense whether we take it as our sensuously perceiving consciousness or the consciousness that, through its projects, serves as a place of disclosure in an extended sense. In both cases, things are *in* consciousness as material for its purposes, whether this be to see an object or to practically construct one. In both cases, this sense of being “in” implies a teleologically structured temporality.

**The Intertwining of the Within**

This analysis of the different senses of the “within” should not lead us to believe that they are somehow prior to and independent of Merleau-Ponty’s concept of intertwining. For Merleau-Ponty, this concept designates an ontological form, one that, as a “style of being,” exists as “the formative medium of the object and the subject.”[[162]](#endnote-162) This implies that both senses of the “within” are inherently intertwined. As an ontological form, the intertwining undermines their supposed purity. We cannot understand one without the other. The same holds for the temporality they involve.

To see this, let us recall that the sense of things’ being objectively within the world assumes their public availability. The move to this sense of the “within” is often described as a move from a first-person, subjectively “private” perspective to a third-person public one. Both science and certain forms of analytic philosophy tend to absolutize this perspective.[[163]](#endnote-163) To do so, however, is to ignore the interpretative stance on which it is based. This involves taking our first person experiences and assuming that their temporal flow is the same for others. In Kant’s terms, it is assuming that the connections that characterize the flow are necessary and universal. Given that we cannot see out of each other’s eyes, this must remain an assumption. We are limited to confirming that things are objectively real by asking others to confirm our perceptions. Doing so, we must rely on their first person reports. This is because the objectively real, the real that claims title to being within the publicly available world, shows itself as such through no inherent predicate or real feature. Intersubjective confirmation does not change the appearance of what we see. It only concerns our interpretation of it. Thus, given its dependence on subjective interpretation, the sense of a something being objectively within the world is inherently intertwined with the sense of its being in consciousness. To reverse this, we can also assert that the sense of the world’s being within consciousness also involves the sense of consciousness’ being within the world. The latter sense is implied by the bodily nature of perception. Thus, the perceptual object’s sense as something we intend to see, i.e., its sense as a goal of the perceptual process, involves all the bodily activities that are involved in this process. As such, it involves our embodied being in the world. The sense of this embodied being is inherently dual. It involves both serving as a place for the world’s disclosure and being disclosed as part of the world.

This is the point of Merleau-Ponty’s example of the touching hand being itself touched. The sensations the touching hand receives are within it in the sense of providing the sensuous material for its perception of the felt object. As participating in the perceptual process, the touching hand has this process’s teleological temporality of the future determining the past and, thereby, the present. As touched, however, the same hand “descends into the things, such that the touch is formed in the midst of the world.” As such, it is subject to the interpretation that takes it as an objective part of the world. It thereby achieves its sense of one of the externally sensed objects linked in the nexus of objective causal determination. Its temporality is taken as that of the past determining the present determining the future. Since, in fact, my sense of my flesh as mine involves both its touching and being touched, both senses of the “within” and both corresponding temporalities are inherent within it. Both characterize my hand when I use it both to feel and to manipulate the objects of the world. Manipulating them, I employ the objective causality of the world to accomplish my tasks. This is the same world that is “within” me as I feel it.

The reason why this intertwining of the two senses of the “within” is often not noticed comes from our privileging the sense of sight. Only touch gives us the double sensation of sensing and being sensed. While I can feel myself being touched, I cannot see myself being seen.[[164]](#endnote-164)  As Husserl writes, when I look at myself in a mirror, “I do not see the seeing eye as seeing.” The eye I regard is like the eye of another. I have to employ empathy to indirectly judge that it is identical with my eye.”[[165]](#endnote-165)  The eye that regards me from the mirror is, in other words, experienced as an object. My seeing it does not give me a first person experience of its seeing. To have this I would have to directly experience its seeing as my seeing. Touch does this since the hand that is touched also feels. By contrast, the eye that I regard in the mirror is like the inanimate objects that I touch. I feel their properties, but I do not feel them feeling me. They do not return my awareness to me. Given this, visual objects seem to have an independence that touched objects do not have. This holds even when the visual object is our own body. In fact, as Husserl remarks, “A subject whose only sense was the sense of vision could not have an appearing body.”[[166]](#endnote-166)  He could not recognize this appearing body as his own.[[167]](#endnote-167) Limited to sight, such a subject would be tempted to take his body as just one among many objects in the world, all of which display only a single sense of “within”: the spatial temporal one of objective causal determination.

To submit to this temptation, however, is to ignore the sense of touch. It is to forget about the kinesthetic sensations that occur as we move our bodies. Such motion is part of our perceptual activity. Seeing is a bodily process that involves such things as focusing your eyes, turning your head, and, if necessary, moving to get a better look. As you engage in it, the optical sensations your eyes provide are mixed with the kinesthetic sensations that accompany these movements.[[168]](#endnote-168) The result is the “localization” of the optical sensations. They are recognized as belonging to you since they participate in the felt presence of your body that occurs during the perceptual process.[[169]](#endnote-169)  It is, in fact, because your visual body coincides with the tactual that it participates in this localization.[[170]](#endnote-170)  The body you see is also the body you feel. As such, it participates in the intertwining that identifies it as yours.

**The Role of the Self in Manifestation**

We are now in a position to return to our questions regarding the self’s role in manifestation. What do the two senses of being “in” that are involved in the intertwining tell us about the structure of appearing qua appearing? How do they clarify our role in appearing? This role is that of being a place for appearing, i.e., for the disclosure of being. What we need is an understanding of the relation of appearing as such to ourselves as such a place. This can be put in terms of Merleau-Ponty’s attempt to conceive of “a relation of the visible with itself that traverses me and constitutes me as a seer.”[[171]](#endnote-171) This relation constitutes me as a seer who is seen, that is, as consciousness that is embodied. Thus, it is a relationship that places the world in me, making me a seer, and places me within the world, making me bodily present. As such, it involves the two different senses of the “within” as well as the two corresponding temporalities.

To graphically illustrate it, we can let the line of linear temporal determination

past present future

represent the flow of causality as it occurs in the objective, spatial-temporal world. Its intertwining with the teleological causality that occurs in the perceptual process (and, indeed, in all our practical projects) can be represented by taking this line and bending it in a circle:

present

past future

Regarding this circle, we can view the line of determination as beginning with the past and proceeding through the present to the future. We can also view it as beginning with the future and proceeding through the past to the present. The circle includes both possibilities. As such, it represents our reality as disclosing the world, that is, as providing the place for its disclosure. To provide such a place is to be continually thrust into the world one internalizes.

Thus, both the goal-directed temporality, by which we internalize the world, and the objective temporality, which places us in the world, share in the fact of the past determining the present. What this signifies is that we realize our goals through the causality that our embodiment allows us to assume. We move closer to get a better look, we nail boards together to make a bookcase, etc. Doing so, we act as part of the world, the very world we internalize in setting our goals.[[172]](#endnote-172)

The world bears witness to the fact that both lines of determination are involved in the perceptions and practical projects through which it is revealed. The disclosed world’s sense is set by the intertwining of the teleological and the objective flows of time. This is why everything disclosed exists in the intertwining of the internal and the external (the private and the public). Our initial descriptions of appearing objects and subjects “in themselves” thus point to this intertwining as a form of appearing qua appearing, one prior to both the subjective and the objective. Viewed in this light, our disclosure of the world cannot be considered to be something “merely subjective.” To view it in this way is to raise the Kantian question of the remainder. It is to ask what things are “in themselves” and mean by this, what they are *apart* from the processes of our disclosure. If Merleau-Ponty is correct, this question of the remainder ignores the intertwining. Understood as “a relation of the visible with itself,” the intertwining is a structure of appearing qua appearing that leaves nothing out.

For Merleau-Ponty, this elimination of the remainder is a consequence of our embodied disclosure of being. When he speaks of the intertwining in terms of embodiment, he calls it “flesh.” Unlike Patočka, Merleau-Ponty does not shrink from speaking of it ontologically. “Flesh,” he writes, “is not matter, is not mind, is not substance.” It is, rather, “a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. Flesh in this sense is an ‘element’ of Being.” It is like the “earth, air, fire and water,” which were once thought to be elements, insofar as they designated styles of things.[[173]](#endnote-173) Flesh, he stresses, does not refer primarily to our flesh. Rather, “it is an ultimate notion … it is not the union or compound of substances”—for example, body and spirit—”but thinkable by itself.”[[174]](#endnote-174) The thought of flesh does, of course, involve us insofar as it expresses the relation of the sentient and the sensible that constitutes us as perceivers.[[175]](#endnote-175) But as such, it involves more than us. It is emblematic of a “general manner of being”—that of the intertwining—linking subjects and objects.[[176]](#endnote-176) If we grant this, then the question of the remainder is senseless. Ontologically, the object we disclose through our embodiment involves us as disclosing it.[[177]](#endnote-177) Given this, our selfhood achieves its status as a place that permits disclosure through what it is. It discloses by being structured by disclosure itself, that is, by being a “concrete emblem of a general manner of being”—namely, that of the intertwining.[[178]](#endnote-178)

As such language makes apparent, Merleau-Ponty is not here explaining appearing in terms of what appears. In speaking of “style” and a “general manner” of being, he is rather attempting to think of being in terms of appearing. The “style” or “manner” of being he refers to is that of appearing qua appearing. The latter becomes a manner of being when we see being as determined by appearing. The intertwining that relates the embodied subject to the world is the form that being must take if it is to be visible to itself. As such, it is a style imposed by appearing as such.

**Barbaras’ Critique**

This conclusion returns us to Barbaras’ critique, which was outline in the Introduction. Barbaras, it is fair to say, would accept neither our conclusion nor the interpretation that it is based on. Merleau-Ponty, in his view, cannot account for the subject’s continuity with the world. Such continuity is not established by speaking of our flesh as emblematic of a “general manner of being.” While our flesh is both sensible and sentient, this cannot be affirmed of the flesh of the world. For Barbaras, this signifies that “flesh is not a unity and that, therefore, it is impossible to think together the belonging of the subject [to the world] and its power to make it appear.” [[179]](#endnote-179) As belonging to the world, the subject shares its visibility. As making the world appear, it is distinct from the world—most of which is not, per se, sentient.

With this, we come Patočka’s “advance” over Merleau-Ponty, which springs from his use of motion to account for the subject’s identity with and difference from the world. For Patočka, according to Barbaras, “The world appertains to the subject to the point that its movement is the condition of phenomenalization [i.e., the subject’s making the world appear], but the subject appertains to the world in a profounder sense than [mere] things insofar as its own movement proceeds from the moment of the world, is inscribed in the processes of the world. The subject’s difference from and belonging to the world are conjoined in movement.”[[180]](#endnote-180) Movement, in other words, is the way to think the relationship that Merleau-Ponty designates as the intertwining or chiasm. [[181]](#endnote-181)

Yet, in spite of this praise of Patočka, Barbaras still has reservations. He writes that “to affirm that the unicity of movement overcomes the duality of its forms is certainly to affirm that their difference does not compromise its identity. But it is also to confront the task of taking into consideration the duality that begins in this identity, [the task] of generating the difference. It is not certain that this genesis is possible with the framework of a Patočkian cosmology.” This holds since “this division [between the movement of the subject and that of the world] is the source of subjective existence and thus cannot be founded on subjective existence as Merleau-Ponty and, to a certain extent, Patočka himself are still inclined to think.”[[182]](#endnote-182)

Barbaras’ attempt to take up this task was mentioned in the Introduction. Also mentioned was the fact that, for Patočka, appearing is always appearing to someone. This signifies that appearing as such requires a subject to whom things (and thus the world) appear. In Merleau-Ponty’s terms, it implies that the intertwining, understood as the form of appearing, involves both the sentient and the sensed. Intertwining, however, is not absorption. It is not the reduction of one side to the other. It is, as we have seen, a form involving two distinct lines of determination, a form that becomes concrete in the evolutionary adaptation of living flesh to the structures of appearing as such. Merleau-Ponty hints as this resolution. Having said, “[t]he flesh of the world does not sense itself as my flesh does. It is sensible and not sensing,” he immediately adds “I nevertheless call it flesh … in order to say that it is pregnant with possibilities, *Weltmöglichkeit*).” This signifies that “[t]he mode of being a mere thing is only a partial and secondary expression of this world.”[[183]](#endnote-183) Its flesh, understood as “a style of being”—i.e., as “the formative medium of the object and the subject”—is pregnant, I would say, with the possibilities that evolution realizes. As for the division in question between the sentient and the sensed, it is inherent in the very notion of the intertwining.

This, of course, does not answer the question of how the separation that distinguishes the subject is actualized by motion. To address this is to not simply to speak of the motion of evolution as actualizing the possibilities of the intertwining. It is also to understand the intertwining in terms of Patočka’s “motion of existence.” It is, in other words, to assert that the division in question does not have its origin in subjective existence but rather in the motion that is the origin of both being and appearing.

**Chapter 4**

The Intertwining as a Form of our Motion of Existence

Patočka and Merleau-Ponty, born but a year apart, are united in a double focus.  Both are interested in appearing as such, and both attempt to understand this in terms of the body.  With regard to appearing as such, they take this as prior to either subjects or objects.  Patočka expresses this priority in his claim that “manifesting is, in itself, something completely original.”[[184]](#endnote-184) As we cited him, such originality signifies that “manifesting in itself, in that which makes it manifesting, is not reducible, cannot be converted into anything that manifests itself in manifesting”[[185]](#endnote-185)—be this an appearing subject or an object that appears. Merleau-Ponty expresses a similar claim when he invites us to regard “experiences that have not yet been ‘worked over’ [by reflection], that offer us all at once, pell-mell, both ‘subject’ and ‘object’… and hence give philosophy resources to redefine them.”[[186]](#endnote-186) These experiences present to us “the visible” that “seems to rest in itself.”[[187]](#endnote-187) In them, we find that there are “not things first identical with themselves, which would then offer themselves to the seer, nor is there a seer who is first empty and who, afterward, would open himself to them.”[[188]](#endnote-188) What we find is something prior. Thus, the red of a red dress is not a subjective perception. Neither is it an objective content. As part of the visible, it is, he writes, “a momentary crystallization of colored being or of visibility.”[[189]](#endnote-189)

Their focus on visibility or appearing is matched by their belief that to understand this we must grasp our embodiment. As Patočka writes in praise of Merleau-Ponty, “This bodily character of existence, the body and holding sway in the body as … the true source of all its possibilities, is particularly forcefully stressed by Merleau-Ponty … Merleau-Ponty’s contribution to the phenomenology of the natural world, understood as the perceived world is, for this reason, exceptionally important.”[[190]](#endnote-190) It is important because it ties the body to disclosure. Merleau-Ponty writes in this regard, “it is literally the same thing to perceive one single marble and to use two fingers as one single organ.”[[191]](#endnote-191) Our perception of the marble is one with a set of bodily acts, those of reaching over, picking up and bringing close the marble. It is, as we said, by rolling it between our fingers that we perceive its different colors and determine its hardness and smoothness. The general principle here, as Patočka expresses it, is “that perception is not just accompanied by movement, but rather is a component of movement, that, in fact, it is itself movement.”[[192]](#endnote-192) Thus, the very foreground-background structure of our perception—i.e., the fact that it is horizonally structured—depends on our body’s capacity for movement, specifically, its ability to bring what is in the background into the foreground.[[193]](#endnote-193) Given this, we cannot study appearing without analyzing our bodily movement. Such movement, in both its capabilities and limits, structures the appearing of the world. As our example of attempting to see a cat crouching under a bush indicates, even our intention to see some object is, itself, to be understood in terms of motion. In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty puts this in terms of what he calls “motility as basic intentionality.” He writes in explanation, “Consciousness is, in the first place, not a matter of ‘I think that’ but of ‘I can.’”[[194]](#endnote-194) The I-can-move founds the intentionality of consciousness. This means that “[c]onsciousness is being-towards-the-thing through the intermediary of the body … to move one’s body is to aim at things through it.”[[195]](#endnote-195)  Our aiming at things through our bodily motion is the action that first makes them appear. Thus, it is not as if first we have a representation of an object and then we move towards this. Rather, he writes, “In the action of the hand which is raised towards an object is contained a reference to the object, not as an object represented, but as that highly specific thing towards which we project ourselves, near which we are, in anticipation, and which we haunt.”[[196]](#endnote-196) Thus, reaching toward the glass we are to drink from, we are in anticipation already there at the goal. The goal, which is our grasping the glass, is not a representation but a destination. It is, in its anticipatory kinesthetic presence, a guide for the motility that will disclose the glass.

Despite these agreements, there is a fundamental difference in how these philosophers describe appearing. For Merleau-Ponty in *The Visible and the Invisible*, the body’s determination of appearing is ultimately a function of its intertwining with the world. Indeed, its very status as an animated body or “flesh” involves the fact that, located in the world, it also is able to internalize the world that encloses it. This intertwining or “chiasm” is, in fact, its form as flesh. Patočka, by contrast, does not mention the intertwining. What is crucial for him is the body’s motility, a motility whose sense embraces all of its actions. He understands movement in the Aristotelian sense as actualization. His claim is that “movement is what gives things the being that they are; movement is a fundamental ontological factor.”[[197]](#endnote-197) The actualization of ourselves as living beings, for example, includes the flow of blood in our veins, the movements of respiration, of digestion, in short, all the organic movements that are essential for our being alive. Beyond this, it embraces the movements of our limbs, of our organs of perception, and so on. All are, in Patočka’s words, “movements tied to the fundamental functions of organisms.”[[198]](#endnote-198) A similar account of movement as actualization can be given for the things we perceive. In all cases, he writes, “movement … first makes this or that being *apparent*, causes it to manifest itself in its own original manner.”[[199]](#endnote-199) Beyond this, it is what actualizes our openness to this manifestation. It is, for example, our movement of reaching over, picking up and rolling a marble between our fingers that opens us up to its hardness and smoothness.

To bring these two approaches into dialogue, we have to see Merleau-Ponty’s chiasm, not just as the form of flesh, but also as the form of its movement. The chiasm or intertwining must, in other words, be seen as the style of the motility that actualizes our openness to the appearing of the world. This means that it has to embody the two senses of “in” that this openness involves—i.e., those which allow us to say that we are *spatially* “in” the world that, *perceptually regarded*, is “in” us. An additional condition is that motion be understood such that there is no remainder in the disclosure it occasions. Motion must be such as to make the object in itself manifest. For this to be the case, it must be determinative of its being.

**Motion as Actualization**

Patočka’s assertion “that perception is not just accompanied by movement, but … is itself movement” is made as tries to rethink phenomenology in terms of movement. He writes that his goal “is a philosophy of a distinct kind, one which takes movement as its basic concept and principle … What is distinctive about our attempt is our interpretation of movement; we understand it independently of the dichotomy between subject and object,” i.e., between “on the one hand, an objective world, complete, self-enclosed—and, on the other hand, a subject perceiving this world.”[[200]](#endnote-200) Prior to both is appearing as such. But such appearing is itself to be understood in terms of motion. To grasp it in these terms is not to explain it in terms of what appears, that is, in terms of individual, appearing beings. Such beings have distinct predicates. In Patočka’s words, the “concept [of an entity] tends to close up on itself with regard to its determination such that its existence requires only a finite number of terms.” It is because of this that it becomes an “ontological singularity,”—i.e., a definite being. Motion, however, “excludes such closure.” It “exceeds all determination in the direction of the in-finite, of the universe of everything that is.”[[201]](#endnote-201) Thus, “movement … is not itself a reality in the same sense as determinate realities.”[[202]](#endnote-202) It is, rather, the *realization* of such entities—this, regardless of their determinations. As Patočka puts this, “Movement is what makes a being what it is. Movement unifies, maintains cohesion, synthesizes the being’s determinations. The persistence and succession of the determinations of a substrate, etc., are movements.”[[203]](#endnote-203) Given this, he can describe manifestation as such in terms of movement—both the movement of entities and our movement in disclosing them—*without reducing manifestation to a feature of beings, i.e., without explaining it in terms of what appears.* With motion, we are on a level prior to being and appearing.

The goal here is not just to understand manifestation in terms of movement, but to do so such that there is no remainder, no “in itself” of the being, which remains undisclosed. It is to see motion as behind both the appearing and the existing of the entity. This can be expressed in terms of the etymological sense of the term “existence,” which is that of standing out—*ex* and *istimi* in the Greek. Things stand out, that is, ex-ist, by affecting their environment, such affection occurring through their motion. On the most basic level, living beings do this through engaging in metabolism, i.e., by exchanging material with what surrounds them. Inanimate objects do this through such motions as the vibration of atoms, the movement of electrons, the flux of subatomic particles, and so on. Without such motions, entities could not distinguish themselves from their environments; they could not affect them. Environmentally, then, without movement, they are indistinguishable from non-entities. If we accept this, then we can also say with Patočka, “movement is … what founds the identity between being and appearing. Being is being manifest.”[[204]](#endnote-204) This follows because the movement that makes something stand out or exist also makes it present to its environment. It appears in affecting it, and it affects it through its motion.

**The Aristotelian Background**

The historical context of this position is to be found in Patočka’s study of Aristotle, the results of which were published in his 1964 work: *Aristotle, His Predecessors and Successors*. As Erika Abrams, its translator, notes: “the problem of movement that was its particular focus [is] omni-present in the phenomenological writings of the 1960’s and 1970’s.”[[205]](#endnote-205) In Patočka’s words, the problem is that of seeing movement as “a fundamental ontological factor,” one that “gives things the being that they are.”[[206]](#endnote-206) His interest in Aristotle comes not just from Aristotle’s embracing a similar concept. It also stems from his seeing this as a key to his own project of establishing an asubjective phenomenology. This is why he writes, “In our days, when philosophy is again searching for an asubjective ontological foundation, an Aristotle, stripped of dogma, is therefore topical.” [[207]](#endnote-207) In Patočka’s view, Aristotle’s conception of movement provides this foundation. It shows how motion can result in both being and manifestation. As he expresses this:

Now, for Aristotle, manifestation is not the manifestation of something whose essence remains hidden. On the contrary, the entire being appears since “to be” signifies nothing other than to determine a substrate. But the determination of the substrate is movement and movement resides precisely … in manifestation. The movement is thus what founds the identity between being and appearing. Being is being manifest.[[208]](#endnote-208)

To see the Aristotelian basis for this statement, we need to understand what, for Patočka, is the key term of Aristotle’s metaphysics: *energeia*, which is often translated as functioning. This term, which Aristotle coined, is made up of two words, *en* and *ergon*. It means literally *being at work* and is sometimes translated as *being in act*. Thus, a builder functions when he is at work (or in the act of) building. Similarly, an eye functions when it is seeing. For Aristotle, such functioning involves movement. In fact, he defines movement as “the functioning of the potential as potential.”[[209]](#endnote-209) To explain this, he uses the example of building. He writes, “when building materials … are actually functioning as building materials, there is something being built; and this is [the process] of building.”[[210]](#endnote-210) Their functioning involves something being built; there is a transformation of the building materials, which realizes something beyond such materials—for instance, a house. As this example makes clear, such functioning is actualization. Through the process of building, the house is being built. At the end of the process, an actual house is there. Movement, then, is actualization. To reverse this, we can also say that actualization takes place through movement. In Aristotle’s words, not only has *energeia* “been derived from movements,” but “to be in act seems, above all, to be a movement.”[[211]](#endnote-211) As Patočka sums up Aristotle’s doctrine: “Motion is what makes the existent what it is.”[[212]](#endnote-212) It realizes the existent. Such realization, we should note, does not just concern the processes by which a being comes to be. It also concerns the movement by which it maintains itself. Thus, the metabolic processes that were at work in a sapling continue when it is a mature tree. Its actualization as a mature tree is itself an ongoing movement.

This motion is not random. In living creatures, it is organized around a goal, one specified by the organism’s essence. Aristotle’s word for “essence,” which he coined, is: τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι (*to ti ên einai*) which means literally: *what it was to be*.[[213]](#endnote-213) So regarded, the essence is what we grasp through a retrospective regard. Having observed an organism’s development from an embryo to an adult and then onward to its senescence, decline and death, we can ask, retrospectively, what was it supposed to be? What was the goal of this process? What did it aim at? The essence specifies both this goal and the order in which it is achieved. Broadly, speaking, it specifies the *how* of the movement by which the organism actualizes itself. In Patočka’s words:

the possible determinations [of an entity], which are initially absent, become present through movement. The movement synthesizes them, that is, makes them simultaneously present. It effects this synthesis conformably to the law and rule that characterizes the particular entity. These laws and rules are the entity’s essence. They determine what can and cannot be simultaneously actualized in the same entity. Thus, the essence of the plant is such that it can only accomplish its principle functions of growth and reproduction in a typically successive order.[[214]](#endnote-214)

In other words, the essence of the plant is what specifies this order in its reaching the goal.

As for the goal itself, it is that of the actualization of its potentialities to be a fully functioning plant: the plant that is bearing the seeds for the next generation. This goal, according to Patočka, is active (*effective*). The individual actions of the plant in reaching maturity are the means for its action. In this, the actions function “as the bearer and, at the same time, as the realizer of the goal.” This signifies, Patočka adds, “[t]he goal of a being is not to accomplish this or that, … [the goal] is everything that it accomplishes … it is its being itself that becomes the goal in everything that its essence brings together.”[[215]](#endnote-215) This effective, acting goal is, thus, present in all the being’s movements—both those that bring it to development and those that it engages in as a fully functioning organism. In stressing the unity of the action of this goal, Patočka intentionally runs together Aristotle’s distinction between *kinesis*, defined as movement towards a goal, and *energeia*, understood as an entity’s movement or functioning when it is at its goal. He writes: “Now, the entity as a goal [and] the goal as the entity itself are only possible if the entity exists through movement. Movement is not basically a progression from this to that, but rather a moving in place. Precisely as the actualization of that which is potentially—*dunamei*—already there, movement is simultaneously the presence of the goal and the progress toward it.”[[216]](#endnote-216) As the presence of the goal, movement is *energeia*, as progress towards it, it is *kinesis*. The key here is the fact that an entity exists through movement—the very movement that actualizes it and that maintains it when it is at the goal and is fully functioning. Such descriptions recall the poet, W. B. Yeats’ line, “How can you tell the dancer from the dance?” One dances just to dance, and the dancer exists in the dance. Similarly, according to Patočka, “Movement is not simply what realizes goals, it itself is a goal.”[[217]](#endnote-217) In other words, the goal of the movement is the movement that actualizes and then maintains the fully functioning organism.

It is interesting to note that this conception of movement being, itself, a goal finds a parallel in Hans Jonas’ description of the motion of “metabolism.” Living creatures, he observes, are both composed of matter and yet different from it. Since the matter composing them “is forever vanishing downstream,” they must constantly take in new matter to replace this. Thus, an organism is “independent of the sameness of this matter” but “is dependent on the exchange of it.”[[218]](#endnote-218) The underlying motion of all life is, then, that of metabolism (*Stoffwechsel*). To be, living beings must actively replace the matter they have lost. This means, Jonas writes, “organisms are entities whose being is their own doing ... the being that they earn from this doing is not a possession they then own in separation from the activity by which it was generated, but is the continuation of that very activity itself.”[[219]](#endnote-219) The underlying goal of this activity is, in other words, not particular objects, but the activity itself as the actualization of their being alive. This implies that in living organisms, need is more than a need for this or that object. It is, rather, an ontological condition. In Jonas’ words: “This necessity (for exchange) we call ‘need,’ which has a place only where existence is unassured and [is] its own continual task.”[[220]](#endnote-220) In fact, such need expresses its *relation to the future*. Thus, a living entity has a future insofar as its being is its doing, i.e., stretches beyond the now of its organic state to what comes next. Here, its “will be”—the intake of new material—determines the “is” as represented by its present activity. As such, it drives the motion that actualizes the organism’s existence. This teleological motion places the organism in the world as a material object. In Barbaras’ terms, it makes it “be at its heart.” Yet, it makes it more than a material component. It turns the organism into a goal, one that it has to actualize. Such actualization, as involving motion, is the organism’s disclosure. The organism appears as present in the world, as affecting its environment. It is also, correlatively, the disclosure of the world as it relates to the organism’s goals. The world is disclosed in and through the organism’s activity. Acting, it reveals its environment as predator and prey, sexual partner, competitor, etc. It Barbaras’ terms, it enables it “to belong to the world and make it appear.”[[221]](#endnote-221)

**The Intertwining as the Form of Actualization**

To express this conception of actualization in term of the intertwining, we need to see motion as embodying the two senses of “in” that this involves: our being bodily *in* the world that is perceptually *in* us. The first sense involves our material-causal connection with the world. As we saw in the last chapter, it has its distinct temporality with its leading point in the past. The second sense involves the teleological, goal-directed temporality that is characteristic of life. In the second case, Patočka writes, “existence as movement” means that “[t]he circle of existence—existing for the sake of oneself, for the sake of one’s being—always somehow includes the circle of life, the circle in which life engages in its vital function with the goal of returning in itself to itself, the circle where all of its individual functions are directed back to itself.” [[222]](#endnote-222) This self-directed motion, which Jonas described in terms of metabolism, embraces, according to Patočka, the whole of our functioning. On the organic level, it is dominated “by bodily need,” by the requirements “to renew and prolong bodily existence.”[[223]](#endnote-223) On the human level, it involves our concerns for the actualization of our human existence, that is, for how we shape it through our choices regarding the fulfillment of our needs.

On both levels, we have an intertwining of the two senses of “in.” Thus, as noted in the last chapter, as sentient beings, we line the world through our senses. They provided the dimensions by which we can gauge its sensuous aspects. Such lining, however, is part of a dynamic perceptual process, one where our interpretation of what we sensuously perceive is shaped by the goal of seeing something as some definite object. As the example of attempting to see a cat crouching under a bush illustrates, the accomplishment of this goal is not a matter of a static gazing at the object. It is a dynamic process that includes such motions as turning, focusing our eyes, moving forward to get a better look, and so on. Thus, the motion that results in the internalization of the object is both bodily and teleological; it, thus, involves both the temporalities that were illustrated by the circle in Chapter 3. The same point can be made with regard to the pragmatic disclosure of the world—i.e., our lining the world through our projects. As Patočka writes, such activities involve the level of our material existence. On this level, “every being is active, every being is embedded in its ‘causal’ contexts, every actuality is an acting, a changing” of what it acts upon.[[224]](#endnote-224) Through pragmatic disclosure, however, we are also active in “an eminent sense.” Our action “oversteps its framework.” In our pragmatic “acting and dealing [*Tun und Handeln*]” with the world, we exist as a place of disclosure, that is, as an “internalization of beings.”[[225]](#endnote-225) Thus, in fulfilling our needs, we disclose things as means for such fulfillments. The needle, for example, is disclosed as “the needle for sewing, the thread for threading through the needle, and so forth.” As Patočka describes the relation between such means and our bodily activity: “There is always, on the one side, the thing as a means.” On the other, there is always “the bodily mediated activity that endows the means with a sense.” As a result, “I understand the things from myself, from my activity, but I understand myself, my activity from the things. There is a mutual mediation.”[[226]](#endnote-226) This is the mediation that gives us the same double disclosure of self and world that we have in Merleau-Ponty—the mediation that involves both the teleological and the material-causal sense of being-in.

The same mutual mediation also affects our collective actions of disclosure, i.e., the actions through which we realize collective projects. Take, for example, the action of an aboriginal hunting party. The collective activities of its members, which include their efforts to track their quarry, to dispatch it and carry it home, disclose the world of the hunt, the very world that they are collectively in through their bodily mediated activity. Similarly, the activities of the members of a string quartet disclose the world of the music that they bodily inhabit as they play together. Here, it should be noted that this collective disclosure of the world is, in parallel, a disclosure of what can only be called a collective embodiment. In the movements of the members of the string quartet as they watch and gesture to each other, moving in tempo with the music, the performers exhibit a sense of embodiment that is founded on but distinct from that which is present when they play alone. The same holds for the members of the hunt. As in Merleau-Ponty’s example of seeing and grasping the marble, we can here speak of “two facets of one and the same act,” namely, the correlative disclosure of both the body and the objects it employs as it engages in various projects. Both are generated by our bodily motion. When this motion is social, that is, when it involves shared projects, so is the corresponding embodiment that is disclosed. Viewed as a social structure, it is correlated in its “I can” to a corresponding social world—the world, for example, of musical performances. It becomes an “I can” of the performers within this world. This, however, is the very world that appears because they collectively line the world through their activities, thereby providing the dimensions for its appearing. Such a world, with its forms of embodiment, is *in* them since they are the ones who disclose it through their actions.[[227]](#endnote-227)

We need not go through all the examples of the intertwining discussed in our previous chapter to draw a general conclusion: Insofar as all of the examples involved motion, this motion can, itself, be considered as intertwined. The intertwining, thus, can be regarded as the form of the motion though which both the appearing and being of the world for us achieve their actualization. The words “for us” should not be taken as indicating a remainder. Things both are and appear through their movement. This common ground is what allows us to break down the classic divide between appearance and reality. The “for us” simply indicates our part in their actualization. Thus, suppose that a person boils water for tea. Doing so, he sets the water in motion to realize his goal. Boiling, the water exists in the state he desires. Grasping it as boiling, he apprehends it as it actually exists and grasps it in the motion that actualizes it as boiling water. If this were not the case, if a person’s actions did not generally result in the actualization of the realities he desires, he could not make his way in the world. The same point holds for the motions of animals hunting for food or seeking mates. On the one hand, we can say that the prey the animal hunts is grasped simply as a source of nourishment, while the mate the animal seeks is apprehended primarily in terms of its readiness to breed. On the other hand, we have to affirm that these apprehensions, while partial, do disclose the reality of what the animal seeks. The prey is actually a source of nourishment, the sexual partner is really a means for the animal’s sexual satisfaction and for the continuation of the species. The motions that disclose them, the devouring of the prey, the mating with the partner, are essential to their actualization as prey or sexual partner. As embodied motions, they involve the physical sense of something being “in” the world. As goal-directed, they entail the disclosive sense of being-in. Both senses are intertwined in their action.

Such intertwining, it should be stressed, does not reduce either sense to the other. The distinction between them is not, as Barbaras suggests, “founded on subjective existence.”[[228]](#endnote-228) It is, in Merleau-Ponty’s terms, inherent in the fact that the world, taken as flesh, is “pregnant with possibilities,” possibilities that living flesh realizes in its self-directed motion. Patočka, as we have seen, turns to Aristotle to provide an ontological understanding of the style of being that Merleau-Ponty identifies with flesh. He interprets the intertwining in terms of motion. There is, however, a lacuna in Patočka's presentation. He never addresses in an extended fashion Aristotle's treatment of space and time—i.e., his derivation of them from motion. Space and time are generally taken as forms of appearing. In tracing them to motion, Aristotle underpins the continuity between the subject, understood as a place of disclosure, and the world that includes it. In his derivation, lies yet another expression of the intertwining.

**Chapter 5**

Aristotle’s Account of Space and Time

The focus of the last chapter was Patočka's assertion that movement is … what founds the identity between being and appearing.”[[229]](#endnote-229) It not only makes the entity be what it is, it is also “the foundation of all manifestation.”[[230]](#endnote-230) If things manifest themselves in space and time and if movement founds manifestation, this implies that space and time are *themselves* the result of movement. How are to understand this implication? Normally, we say that *to be* is to be in a definite place at a definite time. Descartes captured this sense in the Cartesian grid he employed in his analytic geometry, a grid that allows us to number and mathematically describe positions and figures on a plane. If we add a third, depth dimension and an axis delineating time, we have a set of axes and numerical co-ordinates that allow us to write formulae for definite positions, paths, and movements in spatial-temporal reality. Space and time here function as forms for both being and appearing. Modern science’s claim to grasp reality in terms of its mathematical formulae is based on this assumption. Patočka describes the transformation this view works on the notion of space by noting that Aristotle's conception of space “becomes impossible when one convinces oneself that geometry, far from being a simple schema relegated to the confines of the real, represents a fundamental, constitutive element of the real, i.e., something that no reality can oppose, something to which reality must accord.”[[231]](#endnote-231) Our description of the intertwining, however, has already violated this view. Patočka asserts, “I understand the things from myself, from my activity, but I understand myself, my activity from the things. There is a mutual mediation.”[[232]](#endnote-232) This is the mediation that gives us the same double disclosure of self and world that we have in Merleau-Ponty. Thus, where are we to locate the musicians that play together? How are we to explain their collective embodiment and the world that they inhabit in terms of the Cartesian grid? Similarly, if the objectively real has an intersubjective presence, one founded on our ability to use language, can such presence be reduced to the mathematical descriptions drawn from the Cartesian grid? If we answer in the negative, we must reconsider our concepts of space and time. To do so, we have to return to the concept of *energeia*.

**Being and Presence**

As noted in the previous chapter, *energeia* is coined from two words, signifying “at work.” Because of this, it is sometimes translated as *being in act* and, hence, as *actuality*. Actuality has, of course, a verbal sense of acting. It also, however, has an ontological connotation. It is what makes things stand out—i.e., exist. Through their actions they affect their environments, distinguishing themselves from them. Without this, they would be environmentally indistinguishable from non-entities. This holds not just objectively, but also subjectively. For example, when I stumble on an object in a dark room, the object stands out. It exists for me. The same holds, when I posit it, not directly, but through its influence on its environment, for example, when from the footprint, I deduce that someone has walked this way.

This conception of *energeia* immediately links being and presence. If the ontological sense of being involves at-workness, then being, through its working on its environment, is present to it. Such presence, it should be emphasized, is not, in the first instance, conceived subjectively, i.e., taken as presence to us. As Chapter 4 stressed, it a perfectly general term, involving as it does, every possible environment. The crucial fact in such presence is that it consists in the being-at-work of the entity. If we combine this with the fact that *to be* is *to be at work*, then we have to say, with Aristotle, that the entity that is at work *is where it is at work*. In other words, the at-workness *that makes it be* is located at the very place of its action. Thus, for Aristotle, “the functioning (*energeia*) of the sensible object” *is* “in the sensing subject.”[[233]](#endnote-233) It is where the perception of the object is actually operative. In fact, it is “one and the same” with the functioning of such perception.[[234]](#endnote-234) The same holds, according to Aristotle, for the functioning of the teacher. The functioning is “teaching,” and the place of this is where it is presently at work, i.e., “in the one taught.”[[235]](#endnote-235) It is there as the operation or functioning of the teacher’s power to have the learner learn. Given that the functioning of teaching requires that of learning, what we have are not two different functionings, but rather aspects of a single functioning, one which requires both teacher and learner. These aspects, we can say, are intertwined. Thus, the teacher, when at work teaching, is in the student. Similarly, the student, when actively learning, for example, when listening, questioning and responding to the teacher, is in the teacher. He is present actualizing her capacity to teach. In both cases, the functioning of both is their own and yet is received. The receptivity of each to the at-workness of the other is required for their own being at-work. The same holds for the functioning of the seeing eye and that of the visible object. The eye must be receptive to the at-workness of the object to see; and the visible object cannot be visible without the functioning of the eye.

**Space and Time**

Given this, where would we locate the teacher? From an Aristotelian perspective, the teacher is wherever her functioning has effect. Writing at the blackboard, pushing the chalk along, she is at the place of this physical functioning. Speaking and setting up the movements of perception and understanding, she is also present in her students’ perceiving and learning. In her books, she is present wherever and whenever she causes someone to grasp her meaning. As is obvious, the attempt to think of presence in terms of *energeia* demands that we abandon the definite description that the Cartesian grid permits. It, thus, leaves us with the tasks of conceiving space and time in terms of *energeia*. To do so, we have to return to Aristotle's concept of motion.

Motion, as we cited Aristotle, is “the functioning of what is potential as potential.” [[236]](#endnote-236) Thus, referring to the building of a house, he describes the functioning of the building materials to be made into a house. The house is actualized through their functioning, which realizes something beyond their being as mere materials. As Aristotle writes, “The functioning … of what is potential, where there is something being realized, not as itself, but as movable, is motion.”[[237]](#endnote-237) For example, “the functioning of bronze ‘as’ bronze” is not sufficient. Being bronze and being made into a bronze statue are not the same. What we need is the functioning of its capacity (or power) to be made into a statue.” Explaining this, he adds: “For any power may sometimes function and sometimes not, for example, building materials; their functioning as building materials is the process of building.”[[238]](#endnote-238) The Greek word for functioning in this translation is *entelechia*, which also signifies “actualization.” Motion, then, is the realization of something through the actualization of a given potentiality, for example, the realization of a house through the actualization of the capacity of the building materials to be made into a house. The same can be said of the relation of the teacher to the student. The student’s learning is the actualization of his capacity to learn. What actualizes him is the at-workness, the *energeia* of the teacher. Here, the student is, so to speak, the material that the teacher works on. To reverse this, we can say that the teacher is herself actualized by the student. His questions, his attempts to actively learn, work on the teacher. Each then works on the other, each serves as material for the other. The single functioning in the sense of *energeia* thus results in their mutual actualization.[[239]](#endnote-239)

To understand space in these terms is, according to Aristotle, to understand it in terms of motion.[[240]](#endnote-240) Aristotle understands space as place and defines place as “the first unmoved boundary of what surrounds [the entity].” [[241]](#endnote-241) Place answers to the question, “where,” and the answer to this depends on the entity’s motion. Thus, if I am seated writing at my desk, I am in my chair. If I get up and walk about my office, its walls are my first unmoved boundary. If I now pace the hallway, perhaps visiting other offices on the second floor, the appropriate answer to the question “where” is “on the second floor.” If I take the elevator and visit other floors, my “where” is the building itself. Similarly, during the day, I am at the university; during the week, I am in this city, and so on. The point is that the entity itself determines through its motion its first unmoving boundary and, hence, what constitutes the limits of its environment.[[242]](#endnote-242) This definition of place can be expanded beyond the physical presence caused by local motion. The place of the teacher is not just a result of the functioning of her ability to move about. It is, as we said, also an effect of her ability to teach. As such, her place is wherever her teaching is at-work, i.e., wherever it actualizes the student’s ability to learn.

Aristotle’s concept of place is very different from the modern view of space, which takes it as a receptacle into which things can be put. We tend to think of space as independent of entities—as a void that can continue to exist even when nothing fills it. For Aristotle, by contrast, an empty space or “void,” is impossible. Considered in itself, it is a kind of “nonbeing or privation,” which means that we can no more characterize it positively than we can find “differences in nothing.”[[243]](#endnote-243) Rather than being such a void, place is always occupied. It is not independent, but rather depends on the entities that define it. It is, for Aristotle, a function of their at-workness. More precisely, it is, as their “first unmoved boundary,” the presence of their at-workness.

Aristotle makes the same points with regard to time. Like place, it is not an independent reality. It is rather a result of the at-workness of entities. Apart from this, it is nothing at all. Thus, considered by itself, a stretch of time “consists in non-beings” since it “comprises the past, which no longer is, and the future, which is not yet.”[[244]](#endnote-244) As for the present or the now, it is not a part of time since “a part is a measure of the whole, whereas the present is not such a measure.” Given this, we cannot say that time is “composed of nows.”[[245]](#endnote-245) The necessity for this is more than the logical point that no number of atomic (partless) nows can be summed to produce an extended whole. It follows from the fact that time, like place, is not a substance in the Aristotelian sense: it is not something that exists on its own. Its actualization requires the at-workness of something else, which is not a part of time, but prior to it. This is the entity, whose presence is what time manifests. The present or the now that is not a part of time is the entity’s constant presence to the soul.[[246]](#endnote-246) This presence is one with the entity’s actualization of the soul’s potential to be receptive to the entity. Such actualization is brought about by the at-workness of the entity. As in the case of place, what is crucial here is motion. It is not the entity’s presence pure and simple that actualizes time but rather the change of its presence. Thus, the temporal result of an unchanging presence would be an unchanging present or constant now. But as Aristotle observes, “there would be no time” if there were “only a single, self-identical present.”[[247]](#endnote-247) This follows since “when we have no sense of change … we have no sense of the passing of time.”[[248]](#endnote-248) The entity, then, manifests itself as time through the change of its presence.

This does not mean that this presence exhibits a sheer otherness. It combines both identity and difference. The identity comes from the identity of the entity whose presence it is. The difference stems from the differences created by the entity’s movement. As Aristotle writes: “The moving body ... is the same ... but the moving body differs in the account which may be given of it.” In particular, it differs by being in different places “and the present corresponds to it as time corresponds to the movement.”[[249]](#endnote-249) This means that the present or now which “is not a part of time” is the unchanging presence of the body. This present “corresponds” to the body by virtue of being part of the body’s continuous self-manifestation, its continuous actualization of the capability of the soul to be receptive. The continuity of time depends upon this continuity, this lack of any gaps in the body’s presence.[[250]](#endnote-250) Similarly, the movement of time corresponds to the body’s movement insofar as it manifests the body’s shifting relation to its environment. Thus, “it is by reference to the moving body that we recognize what comes before and after in the movement.”[[251]](#endnote-251) We say, “before, the body was here, afterward, it was there.”

If, on reflection, we distinguish the before from the after, then the present appears as a division between the two: it is the presence of the body after it left one place and before it went to another. With motion comes the shift of the before and the after and, with this, the appearance of the flowing present or now. This shifting center of the temporal environment is simply a dimension (an attribute, an aspect) of the presence of the body as the shifting center of *its* environment. Time, thus, appears as a kind of stationary streaming. We experience it as a flow, that is, as a constant succession of the “before and after.” Yet, we also have to say that the present in which we experience this streaming is itself stationary and remaining. It is not part of time in the sense that it departs with its fleeting moments. Rather, it is always now for us. The constancy of this now is the constancy of the presence of the entity. We experience it as long as we are aware of the entity or, what is the same, as long as the entity is at work, manifesting itself to us. Our experience of time is, thus, the result of a duality in the presence of the moving body. The constant presence of the body that moves works on us such that we experience the constant now, while the shifting presence of its environment modifies the result so that we experience this now as shifting, i.e., as the now through which time seems to stream.

If we accept Aristotle’s view of space and time, then we cannot see them as an independent framework for appearing. They are the result of the being-at work of entities on their environment. Such being-at-work or *energeia* brings about the space and time through which spatial-temporal beings appear. Space and time here can be considered abstractly as materials for such appearing. But, they do not themselves appear. When actualized by the entity, they are part of its appearing. In this, they are like the Aristotle’s bronze being made into a statue: “Being bronze and being made into a bronze statue are not the same. What we need is the functioning of its capacity (or power) to be made into a statue.” Similarly, space and time require the functioning (the actualization) of their capacity to be that through which entities appear.[[252]](#endnote-252) Thus, in the absence of a soul to register motion, there would be no time. Only motion—understood as a sheer change—would remain.[[253]](#endnote-253) In the absence of motion, not just time but also place would vanish.

**The transformation of phenomenology**

In a passage in his “Phenomenology and Ontology of Movement,” Patočka, without referring to Aristotle, reflects the latter’s view when he writes, “Considered as originally given, space and time are distinct dimensions of ‘movement’ and ‘modification’; they are dimensions that are each time different [depending on the movement]. Taken as dimensions of the ‘change’ that provides the basis for both, they are only developments of the ‘possibility’ of movement or modification. They do not become actual space or time except through an actual movement or modification.”[[254]](#endnote-254) Unfortunately, he died before he could integrate this insight into his account of appearing as such. Had he done so, he would have taken appearing as the result of the reciprocal being-at-work that links subject and object. This linking transforms Husserl’s assertion that being is “according to its sense merely intentional being ... It is a being that consciousness posits in its experiences ... *beyond* this, however, it is nothing at all.”[[255]](#endnote-255) In Husserl’s idealistic phase, consciousness and its synthetic activity is first, the entity is second. As Husserl puts this, “the existence (*Dasein*) of the thing itself, the object of experience, is inseparably implicit in this system of transcendental connections [between experiences].” His claim is that “without such connections, it would, thus, be unthinkable and obviously a nothing.”[[256]](#endnote-256) We can reject this without denying that the presence of being demands the connections of experiences, which arise through our acts of synthesis. What is required is, rather to embrace Husserl’s call “to examine [intentional] experiences as functions.” We have to answer in the affirmative, when he asks “is not consciousness function ...?”[[257]](#endnote-257) We must also see such functioning as an instance of a functioning that embraces both consciousness and its objects. Here, we see the functioning of the subject as that-to-whom being appears in continuity with the functioning of the being that appears.

We can see this continuity in the fact that the functioning of the subject that apprehends time determines its being as a stationary streaming now. Husserl, we should note, describes the subject in similar terms. He writes that through the phenomenological reduction, “we come to the never before presented, let alone systematically interpreted ‘primal phenomenon,’ in which everything has its origin that may in any sense be called a phenomenon. This is the stationary-streaming self-present or the self-streaming, present absolute ego in its stationary-streaming life.”[[258]](#endnote-258) For Husserl, this “stationary-streaming self-present,” or now, is an absolute origin. From an Aristotelian perspective it is actualized by the presence of being. Its functioning as stationary is one with the continuity of the presence of being; its functioning as flowing is one with the shift of such presence occasioned by motion. Like the student’s learning in relation to the teacher’s teaching, we can speak of the functioning of this stationary streaming self-present as our own and yet received. From an Aristotelian perspective, it is neither subjective nor objective but rather part of a single functioning.

The same points can be made with regard to perception. Perception, we have emphasized, is a teleological process. It is guided by a goal, which is what we intend to see. The latter determines how we regard what we have seen. It makes us take it as material for our “project” of seeing a specific object. Given that what we intend to see as we move to get a better look is not yet fully there, it stands as a *goal* of the perceptual process. Such goal-directed activity characterizes constitution generally. It is also present in all our practical projects, where what we intend to accomplish determines our present activity. From a Cartesian perspective, which dismisses the concept of final causes, such activity is inexplicable. Since the goal is not yet actual, it has no position in the Cartesian grid. For Aristotle, however, goal-directed activity follows from the concept of *energeia*. He asserts that “everything that comes to be moves towards its source (ejp jajrcήn), that is, towards its goal (tevloς); for its wherefore [it final cause] is its source. Its coming into being is directed by the end, which is being-at-work (ejnevrgeia), and it is thanks to the end that potentiality (duvnamiς) is possessed.”[[259]](#endnote-259) Thus, in the process of perception the goal is given by the object. Its being-at-work (*energeia*) actualizes the potentiality that allows it to come to presence. The very same being-at-work yields the space and time that frame the entity’s appearing. As inherent in appearing, they are actualized along with the syntheses that make the object present to the subject. Here, the concept of being-at-work adds an ontological basis that prevents phenomenology from asserting that consciousness and its synthetic activity is first, while the entity is a mere result of this. Instead, we are required to say with Patočka, “There is not an identity because I synthesize, but I synthesize because I place my finger on an identity. Change, process, transformation are themselves identifications; they are material syntheses. My subjective synthesis of identification is simply the grasp, the recognition of this singular identity, this inner connection of things. There is not simply a chaos of phases, of moments, of aspects in a thing. There is their real connection, their interpenetration, their combination ….”[[260]](#endnote-260) The connection between subjective and objective synthesis is, we would say, the linking of the movement of the subject to that of the world. It is this that allows the subject to penetrate beyond the appearance of the world to grasp its reality.

**Embodiment**

The connection occurs because the subject is in the world even as the world, in actualizing the subject’s capacity to see, is perceptually present in the subject. Now, as involving motion, the intertwining of the two requires embodiment. Embodiment, here, has a double sense. *Ontologically*, it signifies realization through embodiment. Thus, through the motion it sets up in the embodied perceiver, color realizes itself in his eyes. Reciprocally, these eyes assume their reality as an eyes-seeing-color when the perceiver is in a world that affords him objects for his action. This is the world in which the perceiver acts and, hence, exists (stands-out) as a perceiver through his bodily actions. *Phenomenologically*, embodiment also signifies providing a place for disclosure. It signifies appearing through embodiment. It is in this sense that Merleau-Ponty says that “our flesh lines and even envelops all the visible and tangible things” through its bodily senses.[[261]](#endnote-261) This lining allows them to appear to us. The same lining, insofar as it presupposes our embodiment, also allows us to appear to others.

For Patočka, the essential feature here is the tie of motion to embodiment. He writes, “[e]xistence as movement … signifies: Existence is essentially bodily [*leiblich*]. The organic embodiment of existence pertains not just to its situatedness, to the situation that we are always in; rather, our whole acting and accomplishing is bodily. Our feeling as well as our behaving is bodily.”[[262]](#endnote-262) Given this, there is an essential lacuna in our description of the intertwining. We have spoken of it only in terms of the two types of temporality, those whose intertwining was represented in terms of a circle. In this, we followed the standard depiction of subjectivity—a depiction that understands it solely in term of temporal relations. If, however, our subjective functioning is embodied, it must involve spatiality. It must exhibit the apartness that characterizes spatial extension. What precisely is the relation of subjectivity, in its temporality, to the spatiality that its embodiment imposes on it? What does this tell us about the nature of time itself? These are the issues that have to be addressed.

**Chapter 6**

Arousal and Desire

The questions raised at the end of the last chapter can be approached by turning to two of the phenomena that link us to the external world: arousal and desire. I am going to use these phenomena to reexamine the relation of the “inner” to the “outer.” My object will be to see what arousal and desire imply with regard to both the continuity and difference of our selfhood with regard to the world. Aristotle, with his account of space and time as founded on motion, presents an ontological basis for their continuity—i.e., for that between subjective and objective syntheses. Here, however, I am going abstract from this in order to approach the issue from a fresh perspective.

**Arousal**

The standard account of arousal seems on the surface relatively straight-forward. Its basic meaning is to awaken someone, readying him for activity. Physiologically, this involves stimulating the cerebral cortex into a general state of wakefulness and attention. The aroused subject shows an increased heart rate and blood pressure. Psychologically, sensory alertness, mobility and readiness to respond all mark the aroused state. Arousal, of course, involves more than the simple presence of an external stimulation. It requires impulses that are both external and *internal* to the body. To be effective, the external impulses must find a corresponding response. Thus, it is no good trying to wake someone up by a sound outside of the range of his hearing. Similarly, the genital displays of one species will not cause sexual arousal in another. In neither case, can the external impulses activate the inner impulses or drives. This requires the presence of appropriate stimuli. Thus, the sight and smell of food arouses appetite. It awakens the drive of hunger, which is directed towards the food. Similarly, the sight, odor and touch of the sexual partner brings about sexual arousal and activation of the corresponding sexual drive. Even in the case of arousal from sleep by such varied stimuli as a light being turned on, a noise, or the touch of a person fit into the pattern of an inner impulse or drive being activated by an external impulse. The drive in this case is towards the various stimuli that our senses prime us to receive. Our need for such is as basic as that for food. Placed in a situation of sensory deprivation, the mind attempts to make up their loss by generating hallucinations. Such inner drives or impulses recall Husserl’s positing of “non-objectifying instincts.” They designate an instinctive “interest in the data and fields of sensation—before the objectification of sense data,” that is, before there is “a thematically actualizable object” for the drive to fasten on.[[263]](#endnote-263) In each of these examples, hunger, sex, or simple sensation, the external stimuli trigger internal processes primed to respond. Like the key fitted to the lock, they activate their mechanisms.

What could be clearer than seeing arousal as external impulses activating internal processes? Both psychological and physiological data can be advanced in support of it. The difficulty comes when we try to define “external” and “internal.” If we take a first person (subjective) perspective, then we can speak of the felt impulse or drive as internal and the stimuli that activate it as coming from the outside. The problem here is that the drive and the stimuli are both within experience. Both are “in” the subject understood as a field of experience or, more generally, as a place of disclosure. If we insist on speaking of an inside and an outside in this perspective, we can do so only in terms of time. On the inside are the momentary experiences that fill our consciousness. On the outside is the object taken as enduring through such experiences. Thus, suppose we take a box and turn it. At each moment a different view of it fills our consciousness. Turning it, we do not say that the box is different, but only that our momentary experiences of it are changing. Implicit, here, is a distinction between the box and the shifting contents that fill our perceptual field. The contents change, the box does not. “Within” are these momentary contents, “without” is their enduring referent, understood as the one thing that they are contents *of*.

If we shift our view to the third person (objective) perspective, within and without are not understood temporally, but rather spatially. Within is inside the brain, without is what originates outside of this location. Arousal is now viewed not as a subjective interest in and turning toward the arousing object, but rather as a causally determined stimulus-response mechanism. The paradigm for this can be illustrated by a thermostat. An increase in the external temperature causes a coiled wire within it to expand, tipping a small attached flask filled with mercury. This causes a contact to be made through the electrical leads entering the end of the flask where the mercury has now settled. The current passing through this activates the heater. This view of an external impulse (a rise in temperature) activating a series of internal events suffers from an overriding difficulty in explaining arousal. If the first person view never gets us outside of experience, i.e., outside of consciousness, the third person view never gets us inside of experience. Thus, the thermostat used to illustrate it has no consciousness. In looking within it, we never find anything resembling an experience of temperature. In fact, the very notion of an “inside” here is problematic. The difficulty we face in trying to access spatially the inside of a person is amply illustrated by a scene from the film, *A Man Facing Southeast*. In it, an inmate of an asylum assists in an autopsy. Taking the brain in his hands, he begins to part it, remarking that within it lie all the person’s memories, hopes, and desires—in short, the person himself.[[264]](#endnote-264) The “madness” of the inmate is his belief that he has actually accessed this inner realm. As we slice into the brain, an external surface lies exposed to our view. The same holds no matter how much we cut. We are always on the outside. What is uncut forms the realm of the inside. This inside retreats, always lying spatially on the other side of the surface we have exposed.

The question we face in trying to understand arousal involves both the inside and the outside. It is: how does the outside enter the inside so as to awaken it? The genuine outside involves spatiality. As indicated, the first person approach knows no outside. Everything for it is within experience. It can only consider the inside and the outside in terms of the temporal characteristics of experience. It cannot answer how the outside of experience, the genuinely spatial, enters the temporality of experience. Equally, the third person approach is also at an impasse. It cannot see how the inside of experience, the temporal, enters the outside of experience, i.e., the spatial. How does the subjectivity that we access in our first person perspective embody itself in the spatial? How does it cross the threshold of its passive experiencing and engage in spatially determinate causal action? The previous chapters answered this question in terms of the intertwining, i.e., in terms of our being “in” the world that is (in another sense) within us. Here, my guiding thread will be the fact that to arouse is to awaken our selfhood to the world. It is, in an Aristotelean perspective, to actualize our selfhood in its possibilities of acting in the world. My goal is to discover what the reality of the inner acting on the outer implies with regard to such possibilities

**Inner and Outer Perception and the Divide in Modern Philosophy**

The distinction between the inner and the outer is, as Kant noted, also one of perception. His insight, which was presented in the Introduction, is that we grasp time only when we inwardly intuit our memories and anticipations. Without this, we have no access to time. Thus, the world that is outwardly intuited is entirely spatial. Since we can see neither what is to come nor what has past, the world that we externally intuit is always now. We can, of course, recall previous spatial positions and can anticipate others. To do so, however, we must turn inward. When, we do so, however, we forfeit our access to measurable space. Thus, the house we regard may be so many meters high and so many meters distant from the next one, but such predicates do not apply to our experiences considered in themselves. This is why space, as a measurable quality, is a feature of external objects. Outer perception, rather than inward reflection, puts us in contact with it.

We, of course, have both inner and outer perception. Relying on the former, we believe the world is in us, that it comes to presence in our consciousness, understood as a place of disclosure. The sense of “within” that supports this belief is, as the third chapter showed, temporal. Objects are within us as enduring referents of our shifting experiences. Their presence is a function of our teleologically directed temporal synthesis—the synthesis that grasps a unitary referent for an unfolding pattern of perceptions, say, the perceptions that present us with a box. Relying on our outer perception, we also believe that we are in the world. We take ourselves as embodied and, hence, as one of the objects within the world revealed by outer perception. “Within,” here, is understood in a spatial sense. We believe we are definitely located within the world, so many meters distant from specific objects.

How can we believe that we are *in* a world that is *in* us? How can we accept Merleau-Ponty’s thesis? This thesis, it should be noted, is opposed by the two main currents of modern philosophy. Each takes the other to be based upon an illusion since each has a different notion of the subject. Idealism, taking the subject as that-to-whom-the-world-appears, understands the subject as a place of disclosure. Its focus is on inner sense, that is, on the temporal relations displayed by the contents of our consciousness. For it, the spatial is derived from the temporal. Spatiality is not a function of individual experiences, statically regarded; its sense comes from their rates of change. Thus, idealism observes that we interpret the different rates of the perspectival unfolding of the objects surrounding us as exhibiting their different distances from us. As the familiar experience of gazing from a moving car window shows, objects we take as close by have a higher angular rate of turning than those that we apprehend as further away. The three-dimensionality of our space is thus grasped through the time it takes for the objects surrounding us to exhibit their different sides. The main representative of this approach is Husserl’s “transcendental idealism,” which takes the subject’s synthetical activity as foundational.

Objectivism, by contrast, takes the subject, not as that-to-whom-the-world-appears, but rather as an object in the world. Its focus is on outer sense, i.e., on the spatial relations that this reveals. If idealism drains space from time, objectivism does the opposite. As noted in the Introduction, objectivism reduces time to the spatial positions of the hands on clocks. Using the numbers gained from clocks, it understands motion through the a-temporal expressions of mathematical formulae. Thus, the experience of the constant movement of an object, which subjectively involves our memories of its just past positions and our anticipations of those it is about to advance to, is expressed by the static relation, velocity equals distance divided by time (v=d/t). Similarly, a change of motion becomes acceleration understood as distance divided by time squared (a=d/t2). A more complicated motion with a changing acceleration is dealt with by a more complicated, yet equally timeless formula. These formulae do not yield motion, but rather snapshots of it. When we enter specific numbers into their variables, they give us the object’s position at the instant determined by these numbers. We, however, experience, not frozen images, but motion. This mathematization of our experience characterizes modern science with its focus on objectively measurable qualities. Its third person view, which is the view from the outside, is shared by its philosophical analogue: analytic philosophy. The “linguistic turn” that marks its approach is understood as a turn from inner experiences, which are private and subjective, to their linguistic expressions which are public. Unlike the experiences that they report, such expressions are capable of being objectively analyzed. Through the use of logical symbolism, their relations can be mathematically represented. Spoken and writing expressions are thus “third person” objects in the sense that they are externally, rather than inwardly present. In fact, they are designated as “third-person” because they are available to the “he” and “she” of others (the grammatical third person).

Both the idealistic, first person approach and its objective, third-person counterpart are obviously one-sided. Every “he” or “she” is ultimately an “I.” There are no third-person perspectives without first-person ones. Similarly, unless we are to embrace solipsism, every first-person, every “I,” must acknowledge other I’s, other selves that for it are a “he” or a “she.” What contradicts both approaches is the phenomenon of arousal. In it, the outer arouses the inner. Somehow, what is outside in the third-person, spatial sense arouses what is within in the first-person, experiential sense. It thrusts the subject outside of itself into the objective world of affecting, spatially distinct objects. The chief point here is that to be aroused is to be awakened. It is to be drawn out of oneself, to be, for example, pulled from the intimacy of sleep, of the world of dreams taken as a purely private, first person world, into the alterity of the external world. The resultant readiness for action presupposes our being “outside”—our being in the spatially differentiated world of arousing objects. Among them, we act on them. The fact of arousal is plain. The question is: how are we to understand this fact?

**Desire**

A second phenomenon that links us to the world is that of desire. From Aristotle to Husserl, the relation of desire to selfhood has been a persistent theme in philosophy. Aristotle writes that life and pleasure “are obviously interdependent and cannot be separated.” “There is,” he adds, “no pleasure without activity,” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1175a 20). In fact, “pleasure increases [our] activities” (1175a 35). This is because the self desires pleasure and strives after it. For Husserl, such striving is a response to the affection caused by the hyletic data encountered by the ego. He asserts that “the ego and its non-ego are inseparable; the ego is a feeling ego with every content.”[[265]](#endnote-265) The result is a certain identity between the two. It is one where we can say: “What from the side of the hyletic data is called the affection of the ego is, from the side of the ego, called tending, striving towards.”[[266]](#endnote-266) Thus, the data affects the ego, and the ego’s striving is one with its being affected. Husserl claims that affection *awakens* the ego as an ego.[[267]](#endnote-267) Such awakening is *the opening up* of the ego; it is the origin of its intentionality—of its directedness to the world. As with Aristotle, the principle of such directedness is desire—the desire that animates our striving. In fact, the equivalence between being awake and striving signifies for him that “[a]ll life is continuous striving, all satisfaction is transitory.”[[268]](#endnote-268) This means that “the ego is what it is essentially in a style of original and acquired needs, in a style of desire and satisfaction, passing from desire to enjoyment, from enjoyment to desire.”[[269]](#endnote-269) How are we to understand this opening up of the ego, an opening that manifests itself in its being directed to the world? What does desire say about our selfhood, understood as such openness? As in the analysis of arousal, our goal is to discover what the fact of the inner acting on the outer implies with regard to our selfhood as a unique ontological category, namely that of an openness that lets the world appear.

**Desire and Self-Certainty**

Hegel was the first modern philosopher to see desire as the principle of our openness. In his view, the condition for the appearing of the world is the distinction between the subject and its object. Their non-identity signifies that the subject *has*, rather than *is*, its world. There is an opening between them that gives the space for the object to appear *to* a subject. How does this opening arise? Hegel claims that organisms affirm themselves by negating each other: they feed on one another, and they fight for mates and territory. What distinguishes them from the world is the desire that drives them. In other words, at the origin of the subject-object dichotomy is the fact that the subject is *not* what it desires. Its self-presence is this sense of *lacking* the object. As such, it is felt as hunger, thirst or any of the other appetites. In Hegel’s words, “Self-consciousness, for the most part, is desire.”[[270]](#endnote-270) This is because desire is what first gives consciousness its sense of self, thereby giving rise to the distinction between itself and the desired object. Its sense of “self-certainty” is a sense of itself as different from and opposed to the object it desires to negate. The result, Hegel writes, is that “consciousness, as self-consciousness, has now a double object. One is immediate; it is the [external] object of sense-certainty and perception. It is, however, an object that bears *the character of the negative* for consciousness*.*” It bears this character since, as desired, the object is what the organism aims to negate, that is, to consume or overcome. The self is grasped only in opposition to this. As Hegel adds: “The other object of consciousness is itself, which is [its] true essence, and which is present only in opposition to the first object.”[[271]](#endnote-271)

The difficulty with this initial generation of self-consciousness is that it lasts only as long as the opposition. With the satisfaction of desire, the sense of self, which is simply that of oneself as lacking the object, collapses. In Hegel’s view, this intermittent self-consciousness never escapes the bondage of life. Its self-affirmation is ultimately only an affirmation of life as such. Thus, animals fight for territory, mates, or prey. Those that succeed, continue the species. Stag, for example, fights stag for a female, but the victor, after mating, falls asleep. This sleep is the image of death; it is the termination, for a time, of desire and, hence, of the animal’s sense of self. How, then, does our continuing self-consciousness arise? Hegel’s response is contained in the section “Lordship and Bondage.”[[272]](#endnote-272) Like Hobbes’ and Locke’s accounts of the state of nature, it presents a largely symbolic account of how we exit this state and enter into society.

An alternate answer is provided by Hans Jonas’ account of metabolism, which was described in the previous chapter. In this account, metabolism distinguishes the organic from the inorganic. Organisms live by exchanging materials with their environment. In contrast to the inorganic, an organism’s material state cannot be the same for any two instants. Were it the same, were its metabolism to cease altogether, it would become inorganic; it would die. Since it is organic, it *needs* the influx of new material. The “task,” so to speak, of the organism is to acquire this. For Jonas, this task designates an ontological condition. As need, as the necessity for exchange, the organism has a teleological structure, one that involves a future-directed *self*-affirmation. As corresponding this, its motion is *self*-directed. The underlying goal of such movement is not just the material that it needs to take in; it is the continued existence of the organism itself as engaging in this movement. Metabolism, in other words, underpins Hegel’s assertion that organisms affirm themselves by negating their objects.[[273]](#endnote-273)

If Jonas is correct, then we have an answer to Barbaras’ “task … of generating the difference” between the movement of the subject and that of the world. The origin of the difference is inherent in life itself. Moreover, as Jonas suggests, futurity is built into organic life: such life is always “ahead of itself.” Its very being means that it is stretched out in time. In sentient organisms of sufficient complexity, this “ahead of itself” is felt as desire. Desire, here, is the felt presence of the subject-object dichotomy. It is the registering of the gap between the two. We can think of this gap, this temporal distance, as the openness of the subject. As future directed, the desiring subject *has* rather than *is* its world. For it to *be* its world—that is, *be* the object that it strives to negate—the latter would have to cease to be ahead of it. It would have to cease being a goal and become a present fact. Negated, the consumed object enters into the organism’s present structure and becomes such a fact. Thus, from this perspective, what allows desire to begin and always recommence is its tie to the metabolic process. The continuity of desire is that of this process. It is because the process is essential to life—*is*, in fact, its condition—that Husserl can write: “All life is continuous striving, all satisfaction is transitory.”

**Selfhood and Time**

Does this mean that selfhood is essentially temporal, that its distinction from the world is simply a matter of the ahead-of-itself? There is certainly a long tradition in philosophy that affirms the essentially temporal nature of consciousness. Kant, as we cited him, asserts that “if we abstract from our mode of inwardly intuiting ourselves ... then time is nothing.” Given that time characterizes the relations of consciousness, without consciousness time loses its reality. Such consciousness is our appearing selfhood; the reality of time, for Kant, is to be found within it. Heidegger, to take another example, comes to a similar conclusion when he describes our selfhood as Dasein or human existence. He writes that the point of his descriptions is to exhibit “temporality as the meaning of the being that we call Dasein.” This involves “the repeated interpretation … of the structures of Dasein … as modes of temporality.”[[274]](#endnote-274) Such structures are those of our being-in-the-world as “care”—that is, as beings who face the choice of what sort of beings we shall become through our projects. In Heidegger’s account, the past is what gives us the resources for our projects. The future appears in our projecting ourselves forward in opting for some goal, while the present occurs in our actualization of this goal. Summing up his descriptions of these three modes, he writes: “The being of Dasein signifies being ahead of yourself in already being in the world as being there with the entities that one encounters within the world. This being fills in the meaning of the term care.”[[275]](#endnote-275) This complicated terminology should not conceal from us the basic phenomenon that Heidegger is pointing to: Someone is knocking at the door. Hearing this, we are already ahead of ourselves, already projecting ourselves forward to the moment when we answer the door. In our being, we *are* there at the door awaiting ourselves as we walk forward to open it. The insight, in other words, is that we are *in our being* temporally extended. This being ahead of ourselves is the origin of our sense of futurity. It is what allows futurity to appear. When, for example, I walk towards the door, I disclose the future by closing the gap between the self that awaits me and my present self. As Heidegger writes, “This … letting itself *come towards* itself [*auf sich Zukommen-lassen*] … is the original phenomenon of the *future.*”[[276]](#endnote-276)

What we confront here is a broadening of Hegel’s account of the origin of our openness. For Hegel, the original subject-object dichotomy is between the subject and the desired object. Our openness to the world involves not just continuity, but also discontinuity. With regard to the latter, it is a function of the gap between subject and object. For Heidegger, the desired object is the subject himself in the state that he chooses to actualize. Such a state does not just consist of his having negated some given object. It can be any of the possibilities that his given situation affords him. This means that the future appears because, in making a choice, “Dasein has already compared itself in its being with a possibility of itself.”[[277]](#endnote-277) Doing so, it separates itself from itself, opening the gap between itself and the possible self that it chooses to actualize. This separation is, in fact, but one dimension of Dasein’s openness. Another dimension is that of Dasein’s having-been, where Dasein is there with the resources (the possibilities) that its history, both personal and generational, offers it. Even in the present, Dasein is apart from itself since it is there with the things that it discloses as it actualizes its possibilities. Heidegger formulates his view of our openness when he compares this three-dimensional structure of our temporal apartness to a clearing—i.e., to a point in the woods where the trees part and light enters in. He writes, “The being that bears the title being-there [*Da-sein*] is cleared [*gelichtet*]…. What essentially clears this being, i.e., what makes it ‘open’ and also ‘bright’ for itself, is what we have defined as care” (p. 350). Since care is temporally structured, he clarifies this by adding: “ecstatical temporality originally clears the there [*Da*].”[[278]](#endnote-278) This clearing is our openness to the world. It is what allows the world to appear as we engage in our projects.

**Selfhood and Space**

As compelling as this account is, it suffers from an obvious difficulty. As both Merleau-Ponty and Patočka have pointed out, it ignores the bodily character of human existence. As such, it is silent on the nature that we share with all other organic beings. Thus, for Heidegger, openness is not really a function of desire, but rather of choice. His account of Dasein is oriented towards a freedom that is not limited by Dasein’s having a given (animal) nature.[[279]](#endnote-279) If, however, we take our embodiment seriously, we have to take account of the bodily, metabolic processes that make our existence possible. Such processes, to state the obvious, are spatially extended. Thus, the material that the organism needs for its metabolic processes is external to it. Similarly, the desired object is at a spatial remove from the animal that moves to consume it. If this is the case, then the ahead-of-itself, the futurity, that is grounded in need cannot be just temporal. It must show the trace of the spatially extended processes of our functioning. This implies that our self-presence must involve spatiality.

The same implication can be put in terms of Kant’s assertion that “if we abstract from our mode of inwardly intuiting ourselves ... then time is nothing.” If it is through our inner self-presence that we gain a sense of time, then the trace of space in time must show itself in our self-presence. The apartness of space must translate itself into the apartness of such self-presence. That there must be such a trace is indicated by the fact that without movement or change, we have no sense of the passage of time. The different moments of time register the changes we experience. Space, however, is what provides the framework for such change. In space, things change their positions, their shapes, their relations to what surrounds them, and so on. The condition of the possibility of such alterity is the externality of spatial relations. Such externality is thus the reason why motion does not occur all at once. In their distinction from each other, the moments that register the different positions of an object bear the trace of the spatial distinction of such positions.[[280]](#endnote-280)

Given this, the fact that we are embodied beings must play a role in our self-presence. The spatiality of our embodiment should condition the apartness that separates us as subject from ourselves as an object. A sign that this is the case is given by Husserl’s analysis of self-touch. As indicated in a previous chapter, touch, for Husserl, allows a person to distinguish himself from the world. Thus, I touch an object and I feel its various properties. I also feel my sensations of it. There is, Husserl remarks, a “double sensation.” For example, touching a cold object, I feel both “the coldness of the surface of a thing and the sensation of cold in the finger.” Similarly, when I press my hand on the table, I have the “sensations of my fingers pressing on it” and also have the sensations from the table itself, its hardness, smoothness, etc. [[281]](#endnote-281)In other words, I have not just the sense of the object, but also that of myself as sensing subject. Now, when I touch myself, for example, when one of my hands touches the other, each hand experiences this “double sensation.” The touched hand feels the touching hand’s smoothness, warmth, etc. as the properties of an external object. It also, however, feels *its own sensations* as it is being touched. The same holds for the touching hand. The hand that it touches is felt like an external thing; the touching hand also feels internally its sensations of touching, i.e., the pressure on its fingers. As a result, each hand is both sensing flesh and sensed object. As a sensed object, it has its real properties. As sensing flesh, it has its localized sensations that spread across its surface. Each hand *through the other* thus becomes aware of itself as a sensing object. Each is grasped as an object that, qua sensing organ, is also a *subject*. The ability of flesh to be taken as both subject and object gives us our bodily self-presence. This self-presence distinguishes us from the world since, when we touch other objects, we feel their qualities, but we do not feel *their* being touched.

Inherent in the self-presence established by self-touch is a certain openness. The self that is aware never collapses into the self it is aware of. The inner distance that characterizes the subject-object dichotomy is maintained. This is because on the level of touch, flesh’s relation to itself is not direct, but rather mediated: the touching through the touched and vice-versa. In other words, we must touch ourselves to grasp ourselves as both sensing subject and sensed object. In such self-touch, the hand that positions us as sensing subject is not the hand that it touches. The spatial distinction of one hand from the other—and more generally, the spatial extension of our body as it functions in our self-presence—maintains this presence’s openness.[[282]](#endnote-282) Here, we may recall Merleau-Ponty’s description of his left hand touching some object, while being touched by his right hand. He writes, “When my right hand touches my left hand while [the left hand] is palpating the things […] the ‘touching subject’ passes over to the rank of the touched.” It “descends into the things, such that the touch is formed in the midst of the world.” [[283]](#endnote-283) Touched, the touching subject is thrust into the spatial world. How is this possible? The answer is that it is already spatial. Spatiality is inherent in the alterity that characterizes our self-presence. We are, in our self-awareness, both sensing subjects and sensed objects with extended properties. The spatiality of our embodiment imposes this dichotomy on us.

**Openness as an Ontological Category**

As noted above, the debate between idealism and objectivism involves the relation between space and time. If idealism drains space from time, objectivism does the opposite. From a Kantian perspective, both tendencies are easily explained. They find their origin in the distinction between inner and outer sense. Idealism, focusing on inner sense, ignores the spatial relations that supposedly cannot be found within it. In its focus on external perception, objectivism does the opposite. Since temporal relations that characterize consciousness cannot be externally perceived, objectivism tends to dismiss consciousness altogether. Idealism, however, also fails to grasp consciousness since it cannot account for the spatiality that comes with its embodiment.

To grasp the category of consciousness, considered as an openness, we have to move beyond the sterile debates between these two camps. We have to recognize that we cannot have inner sense without external perception. This, of course, is the claim that Kant makes in his “refutation of idealism.”[[284]](#endnote-284) My position, however, is different than his. It is that the extended quality of time is to be taken as the presence of the outer in the inner. This means that the being of our selfhood, taken as openness, has to be understood in terms of such presence. In other words, *selfhood in its very temporality is this presence of the outer in the inner*. Such presence is what makes the dimensions of experienced time “ecstatic” in Heidegger’s sense of the term. What opens up the “clearing” in Heidegger’s sense is this trace of space in time. It is what gives time the apartness that allows things to appear.

The same point holds with regard to the “ahead of itself” quality of our desiring selfhood. The subject feels itself as the lack of the object insofar as its attainment is outstanding. Its self-presence is this sense of lacking the object. As such, it is felt as hunger, thirst or any of the appetites that form the content of desire. The goal of desire is to satisfy these. It is to close the gap between the future self, the self that is enjoying the object, and the self that is presently desiring it. Even in fulfillment, however, the very apartness of time, the very spatiality that is the condition of the temporality that separates the two, remains. The result is that desire can be satisfied but never be extinguished. This is because its ontological condition, the presence of the outer in the inner, remains. This can be put in terms of the process of metabolism. Because this is an extended process, the temporal ahead-of-itself that metabolism establishes as an ontological condition of organic life, implies space. The apartness of space, which is *potentially* the apartness of time, *actually becomes such* in the organism’s “having a future.” This means that as long as a sentient being is alive, that is, as long as its metabolic processes continue, it possesses the temporality of desire. As such, it continues, in the Hegelian sense, to be open to the world.

With this, we can return to the question of arousal. In arousal, what is outside in the objective, spatial sense arouses what is within in the first-person, temporal sense. Our question was: how does the outer enter the inner? The answer is that the inner is not just temporal, but also spatial. Arousal is the arousal of my capability, qua sensate flesh, of being both inside and outside of myself. In Merleau-Ponty’s terms, this capability is the result of my intertwining with the outside—i.e., the spatial world of the arousing object. As previous chapters showed, it is not the case that I first exist in myself and then become intertwined with this world. There is no self-subsistent selfhood. In the present context, this signifies that our selfhood exists only as awakened, as aroused flesh. It exists, in other words, as the intertwining that is our actualization as flesh. It exists as being *in* that which is *in* it—this being the world of the objects that arouse us. Only as such, can our selfhood both be *a* *place of disclosure* for the arousing object and be *a* *self who is disclosed* by this object. It can be both only as the intertwining of the inside with the outside that defines flesh. The intertwining that was described in the previous chapters thus designates our openness. It is an ontological category of our selfhood. Our selfhood exists as the presence of the outer in the inner, a presence that gives our temporality its ecstatic quality.

With this, we are in a position to move beyond the circle as a representation of the two different temporalities that characterize our intertwining with the world. We can gain an understanding of how time itself can support these different temporalities. The next chapter will show this by exploring in detail the dependence of time on space.

**Chapter 7**

Temporality and the Alterity of Space

Ever since philosophers began thinking about the nature of time, they have been confronted by paradoxes. Aristotle, as noted in Chapter 5, mentions several of them in his *Physics*. The first is that time’s parts cannot be said to exist. The past does not exist since it “has been and is not” and the future cannot claim existence since “it is going to be and is not yet.” What about the present, that is, the now? The paradox is that the now exists, but we cannot say that it is a *part* of time. A part measures the whole, which is made up of its parts. But the present has no extension. In this, it is like a point on a line. Neither nows nor points can be summed up to give a definite quantity.[[285]](#endnote-285) This leads to the paradox: If the moments of time do not have any extension, what prevents them from collapsing into each other? The question here is: What “spaces” them, as it were? What gives them the “outside of each other” that we associate with space? We also have the paradox concerning the relation of animate to inanimate temporality. As Chapter 3 stressed, animate temporality is teleological. For us, Heidegger writes, the future is primary.[[286]](#endnote-286) Our actions are determined by the future that we want to accomplish. We judge our past accordingly, seeing it as containing the resources for this accomplishment. Thus, our teleological temporality proceeds from the future, which determines our present activity through the resources that the past offers us. This, Jonas showed, is a temporality that we share with all animate existence, thereby distinguishing ourselves from the inanimate. The temporality of what is inanimate proceeds from the past to the present to the future. Rather than being goal-oriented, its determining factor is the past. What has happened determines what happens and this, in turn, determines what will happen. The paradox, then, is that of time supporting two different directions. How is this possible?

In Chapter 3, this possibility was expressed in terms of the circle, which was taken as illustrating the intertwining. One part of the circle, that proceeding from the past, represented inanimate temporality. The other, which begins with the future, represented the teleological temporality of living beings. The circle that included both thus illustrated the two senses of being “in” that character our being-in-the-world. We are “in” the world as a body among bodies. In terms of our corporal structure, our temporality appears as linear and causal. When, for example, we play billiards, we assume the corresponding causality and take our present action as determining the future position of the balls on the table. To play billiards, of course, we also have to internalize the world. The world is in us as an intentional object. The temporality of its perception is teleological, as is the goal-directed activity of trying to get a ball into a side pocket. Now, if temporality were, in itself, a self-subsistent entity, the problem of uniting the two senses of being “in” with their corresponding temporalities would be insoluble. A temporality that embraced both would be self-contradictory. What the second paradox indicates, however, is the non self-subsistent nature of time. What keeps time’s moments apart cannot be found within the essence of time. In Aristotle’s terms, time is not a substance, not something that can exist on its own. At its basis lies motion; but this, as we determined, presupposes space. This points to the impossibility of conceiving time, defined in terms of non-extended moments, apart from space. It indicates, in other words, that space is the alterity presupposed by time. It is what prevents time’s moments from collapsing into each other. In explaining this, we will see how, in its very indifference to the temporal flow, the externality of space provides the common framework that unifies the temporalities of the animate and the inanimate. In making possible both animate and inanimate motion, space lies behind the actualization accomplished by motion, whatever its nature.

**Time and Change**

Augustine resolved the paradox of the non-existence of the past and the future by reasoning that if to exist is to be now, then the past and the future, must, like the present, also be now. They are now, not directly, but in a modified manner in our memories and anticipations. This means, he writes, they “exist in the mind, and I find them nowhere else: the present of things past is memory, the present of things present is sight, and the present of things future is expectation.”[[287]](#endnote-287) Husserl follows Augustine’s lead.[[288]](#endnote-288) He asserts that extended time exists for us through retention and protention. To take his standard example, in hearing a melody, its tones sound and for a while remain present. Even though no sensuous contents are there to sustain their presence, we still have the experience of holding onto the tones, our grasp of them getting weaker and weaker. For Husserl, a “retention” is this experience. A retention is a consciousness of the dying away, the sinking down of what we impressionally experience.[[289]](#endnote-289) We have a corresponding protentional consciousness, which is a mirror of the retentional. Protentions (or anticipations) are “directed to what is coming as coming.” They are expectations “that catch it and bring it to fulfillment.”[[290]](#endnote-290)

For both Augustine and Husserl, then, the answer to the first paradox is that the past and future do continue to exist, though in a modified way. Their presence is a result of our subjective activity. One can think of this presence in analogy with the presence of sound. The sound we experience is not the same as the pressure ridges moving through the air that cause our ear drums to vibrate. It results from our response to this. The same holds with regard to color and the electromagnetic waves that impact our retinas. The general principle here is the Aristotelian one that the “actuality of the mover is in the moved.”[[291]](#endnote-291) The pressure ridges and electromagnetic waves become actual sounds and colors in the person hearing and seeing. This is where what causes them (the “mover” in Aristotle’s terms) has its actuality as sound and color. The same point holds with regard to time’s presence in us as the stationary streaming now. If we add Husserl’s insight to this, we can say that its presence in us as extended—as a continuum stretching from the past to the future—is there by virtue of our capacities for retention and protention.

To get to the stationary streaming now, Husserl engages in what he calls a “reduction within the transcendental reduction.”[[292]](#endnote-292) This, he writes, is “*the radical ‘limitation’ to the living present and the will only to speak about this*.”[[293]](#endnote-293) This limitation suspends our activity of retaining and protending. It leaves us with the streaming living present, the flowing constant now. Within this now, we encounter change pure and simple. We witness the constant otherness of the now’s content. What lies behind time, then, is just change. Aristotle, of course, does not just focus on time’s presence to us as our registering motion. He also gives an early version of the 3rd person, objective account of time. He asserts that time exists not just in our registering, but also in our measuring motion. Here, time is the “number” of movement, as when we look at the shadow on a sundial and say, “now it is 4:00,” and look again an hour later and say, “it is 5:00.”[[294]](#endnote-294) Through the numbers on the dial, we measure the motion of the shadow caused by the sun. Aristotle, in the context of this discussion, suggests that when there is no “soul” to apply numbers to this motion, the only thing that remains is the motion itself.[[295]](#endnote-295) Actually, insofar as we require a grasp of the past and the future to apprehend motion, all we have, phenomenologically, is the otherness of the now. Its content, for example, that of the shadow on the dial, has shifted. The underlying point, here, is that the inanimate world does not remember or anticipate. Stripped of the animate beings that can do this, all we have is simply otherness or change.

What, then, is change? How can we think of it? How does it provide a basis for time? Regarded in terms of the material world, change is not sheer change. It involves the accumulation of the effects of change: A plant grows, a planet traces its orbit, an animal chases its prey, catches and kills it. When we register such changes by comparing what we observe at different times, we have the directionality of time. Thus, the hand moves around the dial of the clock. Each advance adds itself to the position the hand had achieved. The accumulation of such advances gives us the directionality of time. Registering them, we say that time has moved, say, from 4:00 to 5:00. The thought of such an accumulation of changes is behind statements like “the universe is 13.75 billion years old.” During the vast majority of this time, there was no sentient life present to register and measure the accumulation of changes that brought about the present state of the universe. We compensate for this by projecting backward the processes we can measure, using these measurements to assign a number to the movement that brought the universe to its present stage. Thus, when we say that the universe is 13.75 billion years old, the number we use designates the number of times that the earth would had to have revolved around the sun for the accumulation of changes to have occurred that resulted in our present universe. One can call this 13.75 billion years “time,” but one cannot give it any lived, experiential sense. Not only were the earth and sun not present for most of this time, no living being was present from the beginning to number this motion. In the absence of sentient beings, the universe simply remains “now”—such a “now” being the scene of change and its accumulation. This, however, is not a “now” of time, i.e., a now between a past and a future. The past and future, *as not now*, are not existent in the strict sense. Throughout most of the 13.75 billion years, they also did not exist in a modified manner since there were no sentient creatures in whose minds they could be present. What did exist was an accumulating change. This is what, for beings that can compare the past and the present, sets the directionality of experienced time.

**Space and Change.**

As noted earlier, we experience time by registering change. Without change, time freezes; the now ceases to flow since the contents occupying it remain the same. Husserl expresses a version of this insight when he writes, “Consciousness is nothing without the impression … It is what is primally produced—the ‘new,’ that which has come into being alien to consciousness, that which has been received, as opposed to what has been produced through consciousness’s own spontaneity.”[[296]](#endnote-296) His point is that the impressions we receive are not the result of our activity of retaining or protending them. Such activities presuppose the givenness of impressions.[[297]](#endnote-297) For Husserl, impressional alterity yields the alterity of the now. Experiencing the now with every new content, we apprehend it as flowing.

The question that Husserl does not ask is: what is at the basis of this alterity? What does it presuppose? As the last chapter indicated, the alterity that we experience—say, the different positions of the clock hands—assumes the existence of space. What we register can be other because it occurs in space. Space in its extension, that is, in its having “parts outside of parts,” provides the framework for such change. It is what provides the backdrop for the alterity that we register as time. What this signifies is that the alterity of contents is not, itself, a sufficient condition for the separation of the different moments of time. We must bring in space to see why the moments, with their different contents, do not coincide. Thus, what distinguishes the appearances of a moving body are not the moments that they inhabit; it is the spatially distinct positions of its path. It is the outside-of-one-another of such positions, the *extension* of the path, that translates itself into the extension of time. Without this spatial extension, the path would collapse as would the moments presenting the appearances of the motion along it.

This original alterity of space structures the accumulation of change, the accumulation that sets the directionality of experienced time. As such, it is what allows this directionality to proceed either linearly or teleologically. In its quality of having parts outside of parts, it can sustain both. This is because this quality can assume different forms, and such forms structure the ways in which beings accumulate their changes. Inanimate beings accumulate their changes in a space that is uniform, a space where Newton’s first law applies. In the absence of external forces (including, Einstein would add, those provided by gravity), a body in this space continues to move in straight lines forever.[[298]](#endnote-298) The time that this uniform motion provides the basis for is, itself, uniform. Its moments flow from the past to the present to the future with perfect regularity. Traditionally, the ideal of such space has been represented by the perfectly smooth surface of the dial of a clock. Time has been correspondingly represented by the uniformity of the motion of the hands about the dial.

The space in which animate beings accumulate their changes is very different from this. Instead of being linear, it is reflexive. In the first instance, it consists in the body of the animate organism. Such space is reflexive because the goal of the organism is ultimately itself—i.e., its bodily continuance. Hans Jonas, as we noted, draws from this fact the distinct temporality of organic life. Engaging in metabolism, an organism’s “will be”—the intake of new material—determines the “is” as represented by its present activity. As need, as the necessity for exchange, the organism has a teleological structure, one that involves a future-directed self-affirmation. In contrast to the inorganic, its temporality goes from the future to the present by way of the past. The space of its self-affirmation, rather than being uniform, is thus *self-directed*. It is, as it were, *folded in on itself*. As such, it corresponds to the self-directed motion of the organism. The goal of its movement is the continued existence of itself as engaging in this movement.

The teleological temporality that corresponds to motion in this space characterizes all our practical, goal-directed activities, like building a bookcase. Having this goal allows me to regard my past activities as furnishing the material for my present act of construction. As we have stressed, the same pattern is found in our perceptual process. The determining factor in this process is the interpretative intention to see a given object.[[299]](#endnote-299) The intention makes us focus on some aspects and ignore others as we anticipate what we intend to see in moving forward to get a better look. As these anticipations are fulfilled, the object that is our goal becomes perceptually present. To take another example, this time from non-conscious life, the growth of a seedling is determined by the goal set by its DNA, this being the mature, fully functioning tree, one capable of bearing seeds and, thus, reproducing itself. The same pattern repeats itself on the level of an organism’s DNA. The switches that regulate the expression of its genes are determined by the goal of maintaining the organism.[[300]](#endnote-300) Their action bears witness to the fact that on all levels, the goal of the organism is itself as an active being, a being that is maintained through its activity. This implies that the bodily space of an organism is reflexive. It is folded in, or directed to, itself.

Such space is more complex than the three dimensional continuum that is sufficient to describe the motion of inanimate bodies. As shaped by embodiment, it includes many more dimensions. Mathematically regarded, a dimension is simply a variable determining a position. If we say that space has three dimensions, this means that three variables are required to fix a position within it. In this space, the shortest line between two points can be determined by the three variables (the x, y, and z coordinates) of these points. In classical physics, straight lines measure distances. In living-space, however, the shortest distance is determined by the living being’s body. Its muscular structure and size determine how it is able to move between points. Thus, the localized space of an adult human being is different than that of a child. Both are different from that of an insect. This means that the variables determining positions in such spaces and the shortest lines between them vary accordingly. As the French mathematician, Henri Poincaré, pointed out, it signifies that the space we live in has as many dimensions as the muscular determinants of our motion.[[301]](#endnote-301) This is very different from the space in which an inanimate body moves, such motion being controlled, not internally, but by external forces.

Animate organisms are, of course, also controlled by external forces. To state the obvious, they too are subject, for example, to the force of gravity. This is part of the condition of their being “in” the world that they bring to presence. The presence of the world that they are in, however, includes their embodiment. As such it is far more complex. This signifies that we cannot reduce the sentient to the non-sentient without the loss of the variables that would account for sentient, animate existence. To attempt to do this would be like trying to use Euclidian geometry to explain the multi-dimensional reality of a gravitational field. No one would say that Einsteinian and Euclidean space are unconnected. The space Einstein described becomes Euclidian in the absence of gravity. It is not opposed to, but only more complex than, Euclidian space. The same holds with regard to ourselves in comparison with inorganic, non-sentient matter. We are more complex, and we have to understand this complexity in terms that *include*, but are *not limited to*, those that describe the inorganic.

**Causality and Motion**

The space that we are describing here is by definition not self-sufficient. It is set by the motion of entities. In this, it recalls Aristotle’s definition of place. As also set by motion, there are, correspondingly two different types of temporality: linear for inanimate entities, teleological for animate beings. There are also two corresponding causalities. On the one hand, we have the material causality in which what occurs in the past determines the state of the present, which, in turn, determines what will occur in the future. On the other hand, we have the causality of living beings, which, corresponding to their temporality, is teleological, i.e., goal-directed. This duality seems to contradict the form of causality, which asserts that the prior causes the posterior. That prior is *before* the posterior signifies that the past, i.e., what has happened *before*, determines the present. How can we affirm this and also affirm the teleological causality of living beings? The cause, in their case, is not what occurs in the past, but rather what the living being, to the point that it is conscious, intends to happen in the future. Thus, if we ask a person why he is doing something, he generally points to the future that he intends to realize. This implies that what is posterior (i.e., the future) determines what comes before it—this being the present.

On one level, this objection can be answered through the empirical, Humean account of how we posit causality. We do so through our experience of the prior and posterior. When this sequence is repeated with the same items, we assume that the prior causes the posterior. Thus, in playing billiards, I constantly experience the ball I hit impact another ball, causing it to move. I, thus, naturally take the first ball’s motion, which I experience first, as the cause of the second ball’s motion, which I experience subsequently. I follow the same procedure when I experience my own actions. Here my intending to do something, like going to the store, is followed by the action. In this case, my intention is prior and the action is posterior. I, thus, naturally take the intention as the cause of the action. It explains “why” I am leaving my apartment. The point is that causality, considered empirically, does not, per se, rule out either form of causality.

The deeper response to this question is that, as the circle illustrating the intertwining implies, the temporality of causality includes both possibilities. So does the selfhood that, in its temporality, is the presence of the outer in the inner. The outer that “spaces” our temporality includes the spatiality of the animate and the inanimate. It is shaped by both. Our embodiment mediates but does not negate the inanimate world. This mediation is through the motion our embodiment affords us.

To pursue this matter further, we have to return to Patočka, specifically to his insight that motion is actualization. As we cited Patočka, “movement … is not itself a reality in the same sense as determinate realities” are.[[302]](#endnote-302) It is, rather, the *actualization* of such realities. Formally, this holds because material change involves the accumulation of the effects of change: a plant matures to a flowering individual, a child grows into an adult. The coming to be of these things is their actualization, such actualization being the accumulation of the changes that arise through motion. For Patočka, this equation between motion and actualization continues when an organic being reaches maturity. This is because the actualization of a living being is “everything that it accomplishes.” It is the “persistence,” the “very being” that such movements realize. Inorganic beings, we said, are also actual through their motions—for example, the vibration of atoms, the movement of electrons, the flux of subatomic particles, and so on. Like living beings, they ex-ist, in the etymological sense of standing out, by affecting their environments, such affection being accomplished through their motions. Motion, as actualization, thus, underlies both forms of being: It is the basis of both the animate and the inanimate and their different types of temporality. The *fact* of their motion gives them their existence. The *how* of their motion—i.e., the particular forms that it takes—determines their essence. On the most basic level, it specifies whether they are organic or inorganic.

Given that motion, as actualization, is the ground of both being and appearing, we can see how time, as the temporal form of appearing, can assume two different directions. The key is that time is not self-sufficient: the direction of its flow is determined, not by itself, but by the “how” of the being’s motion. This “how” is what makes it proceed either linearly or teleologically. Neither the two forms of temporalization nor the types of space that characterize the inorganic and the organic contradict each other. Both are possible because both spring from a common ground. This ground is motion, taken as actualization. Since motion requires space, it is also the alterity of space in its formal aspect having parts outside of parts. The otherness of such parts, their extensional alterity, is a necessary condition for motion and, hence, for temporality and actualization. The role of motion in actualization signifies that, in analyzing causality, we do not have to do with already given moving entities, but rather with their actualization. The actualization of living beings occurs through a teleologically directed motion that makes use of, but is not limited to, the motion that is directed by the past. As such, the causality of its own agency is more complex than that of an inanimate entity.

What prevents us from recognizing this complexity is a failure to grasp what unifies the organic and inorganic. This is the otherness, the outside-of -itself quality of the space that is required for motion and, hence, for actualization. To draw out the implications of the insight for our selfhood, we should examine more closely Husserl’s account of our apprehension of extended time.

**Chapter 8**

Embodied Temporalization and the Mind-Body Problem

Anyone who has written an extended letter, a paper, or a book knows how essential it is to confront one’s thoughts on paper or a computer screen. The experience is one of the silent processes of thought becoming present in a form that can be repeatedly made conscious. Moreover, reading what one has written affects the unconscious process and stimulates it to come forward with new thoughts, which, as conscious, affect in turn the unconscious process, provoking further thoughts. This experience runs counter to the view held by most cognitive scientists, who take our conscious representations as epiphenomenal. For Frank Jackson, for example, such representations have as much causal reality as a rainbow. “They do nothing, they explain nothing.” They are simply “a useless by-product” of our evolutionary development.[[303]](#endnote-303) His very experience of writing his famous article, “Epiphenomenal Qualia,” undermines this view.[[304]](#endnote-304) Such an experience involves a constant shifting back and forth from the anonymous brain processes that result in thought and the conscious presence of such thought. Without the latter, particularly in thought’s presence as written down, no extended process of thinking would be possible.[[305]](#endnote-305) In what follows, I am going to explore what this need for conscious presence tells us about our selfhood. My focus will be on the embodied temporalization that manifests our continuity with the world.

**Husserl’s Account of Temporal Consciousness**

David Chalmers writes that “the really hard problem of consciousness is the problem of ‘experience.’” It is the problem of the “subjective aspect” of our perceptions, for example, “the felt quality of redness, the experience of dark and light, the quality of depth in a visual field.” [[306]](#endnote-306) This “felt quality” refers to contents in their qualitative presence, contents that cognitive scientists term “qualia.” As felt, qualia are not just contents, but contents that we are aware of perceiving. The distinction, here, is that, for example, between a camera’s registering a color and the color’s perception by us. We not only bring this color to consciousness, but are aware of our seeing it. As a result, the quality is not just present, but *felt* to be so. The question is: how is this possible? What are the processes involved in this?

Husserl’s analyses of our inner consciousness of time present a detailed account of such processes. The account begins with our receiving impressions from the external world. They are the “source point” for our perceptual experience;[[307]](#endnote-307) without them, “consciousness is nothing.” This means that consciousness does not produce them, rather they are "received.” [[308]](#endnote-308) Now, the fact that we do receive externally provided impressions does not in itself produce a sense of time. A successive consciousness of such impressions is not consciousness of their temporal succession; something else is needed. Kant’s term for this is “reproduction.” He writes, regarding its necessity, “if I were to lose from my thought the preceding [presentations--*Vorstellungen*] ... and not reproduce them when I advance to those which follow, a complete presentation [*Vorstellung*] would never arise.”[[309]](#endnote-309) For the presentation of an extended temporal event, we have to retain our presentations or impressions. They cannot vanish with their moments into pastness, but must be reproduced. This reproduced presence cannot be that of an actual presence since what is actual is now, but what is reproduced cannot be now. If we are to have a consciousness of the temporal succession of impressions, the reproduced must be present as past, i.e., as having departed from the now. In Kant’s words, the necessity here is to “distinguish time in the succession of impressions [*Eindrücke*] following one another.”[[310]](#endnote-310) Husserl, in his own account, accepts these necessities.[[311]](#endnote-311) He responds to them through his doctrine of retention.

To introduce his position, Husserl describes the experience of listening to a melody. As new tones sound, within a certain margin of diminishing clarity, the previous tones continue to be present. This makes it possible for us to hear the melody, enjoying the relation of the tones. The already sounded tones are not present the way the sounding ones are; rather, they undergo continuous modification. They “die away,” they get fainter and fainter. This dying away is not a physical phenomenon. The tone that has sounded and yet is still present is not a “weak tone.” It is not an “echo” or a “reverberation.”[[312]](#endnote-312) Yet, even though no sensuous contents are there to sustain its presence, we still have the experience of holding it fast for a while, our grasp of it getting weaker and weaker. For Husserl, as we said, a “retention” is this experience. A retention is a consciousness of the dying away or sinking down of what we impressionally experience[[313]](#endnote-313)

As Husserl observes, there is a certain analogy between this dying away and the contracting of a physical object as it gets further away from us. Like the physical object, “[in] receding into the past, the temporal object also contracts and in the process becomes obscure.”[[314]](#endnote-314) Ultimately, it disappears altogether. Now, just as we learn to interpret the contracting and diminishing clarity of the physical object as its departure from us in space, so we come to interpret this dying away of a tone as its departure into pastness. As a result, “a primal interpretation” is attached to each successive phase of the dying away, one that takes it as having sunk down further into pastness.[[315]](#endnote-315)

What is the process that produces this dying away? Husserl asserts that it is a serial process. In his view, the retention of an impression, which presents the impression as having sunk down, cannot vanish with the moment it inhabits. It must be retained and “this retention itself is a now in turn, something actually existing.”[[316]](#endnote-316) With the expiry of its now, this retention of the impression is, itself, retained, and so on serially. Thus, the retention “changes into retention of retention and does so continuously.” The result is that “a fixed continuum of retention arises in such a way that each later point is retention for every earlier point.”[[317]](#endnote-317) What we have is a chain of retentions of retentions of retentions … of some original impression. The same holds for a temporal phase consisting of a sequence of successive impressions. Each of these impressions has its own continuity of attached retentions and the whole phase is retained in a continuity of such continuities “belonging to the different time‑points of the duration of the [temporal] object.”[[318]](#endnote-318)

Although Husserl speaks of “different time points” and distinct impressions, he is careful to note that this is an abstraction. He writes that the “running off phenomenon” of dying away “is a continuity of constant changes. This continuity forms an inseparable unity, inseparable into extended sections that could exist by themselves and inseparable into phases that could exist by themselves, into points of the continuity.” This means that the individual “parts,” “phases” or “points” “that we single out by abstraction can exist only in the whole running-off.”[[319]](#endnote-319) The claim here is that the retentions composing the running-off phenomenon are nothing for themselves. They do not function individually. Thus, when Husserl speaks of “retention” as the experience of the dying away of some content, he does not mean an individual retention. The reference, rather, is to the *process* in which retention “changes into retention of retention and does so continuously.” This process is one of constant “modification” of the retention. A retention’s reproduction of a previous retention is not a replication. Each successive retention is a fainter presentation than the last. The impression that is presented through the increasing chain of retentions contracts and becomes more obscure. The process is thus experienced as a fading away. We interpret this experience as the sinking into pastness of what we retain.

Husserl’s account of the genesis of this experience is far more detailed and complex than the brief summary provided here. It is accompanied by an equally detailed account of anticipation or as, he terms it, “protention.”[[320]](#endnote-320) As with retention, we can only indicate its main features. The chief of these is that anticipation or protention arises from experience. We learn from experience that the style of the past continues into the future. Objects that we have experienced as showing us first one side and then another continue to unfold themselves in this style of perspectival appearing. More generally, processes that unfold in a particular sequence tend to exhibit the same type of sequence. Thus, having learned to catch a ball, we anticipate where it will be when it reaches us and place our hands accordingly. This anticipation becomes more and more concrete—the anticipated position of the ball more and more definite—as the ball advances towards us. Thus, as Husserl observes: “The further the event advances, the more it offers for differentiated protentions, ‘the style of the past is projected onto the future’” and becomes more definite as the event advances.[[321]](#endnote-321) The experience here is the reverse of retention. The process of retention results in an object becoming more obscure, less detailed. The protentional process is experienced as presenting the anticipated object in a constantly clearer and more defined manner.

This continual modification of what we anticipate is, like retention, the result of a serial process. The projection of the style of the past on to the future is *a projection of the retentional chains* through which we grasp departure into pastness. Projected, the retentional chains become protentional series. The result, as Husserl writes, is that “[e]very preceding protention is related to every following one in the protentional continuum just as every succeeding retention is related to every preceding one of the same [retentional] series. The preceding protention intentionally contains all the later [protentions] in itself (implies them); the succeeding retention intentionally implies all the earlier ones.”[[322]](#endnote-322) All the relations are the same except that the projection reverses them. It takes the relations to the past as they are seen from the now and projects their order, starting from *the same now*, on to the future. This flipping over of their order makes the future a kind of mirror image of the past. Thus, the further in the *past* the retentional chain positions an impression, the more obscure it is. Conversely, the further in the *future* the protentional chain positions the impression, the more obscure it is. It achieves its clarity as it *approaches* the present, even as a retained impression loses its clarity as it *departs* from the present. The same reversal holds for the way these chains intentionally contain their impressions. While the retentional chain is an already-having of an already-having ... of an original impression, the protentional chain is a having-in-advance of a having-in-advance ... of a future impression. The retentional chain, which begins with an actual having of an impression, continually *lengthens*, while the retentional chain *decreases* until it ends in an actual having the anticipated impression. While we interpret the diminishing clarity of what we retain as departure into pastness, we take the increasing clarity of the protended as an approach to the now.

**Temporal Consciousness and Self-Awareness**

According to Husserl, self-awareness is built into the above. He puts this in terms of the fact that without the retentional and protentional processes, we only have the successive presence of impressions occupying the now. With these processes, these impressions appear to approach us from the future and depart from us into the past. The consciousness that contains them thus appears as a “stream of consciousness,” one that flows from the future through our now into the past. Husserl asserts that “the being of the flowing is a self-perceiving.[[323]](#endnote-323) In fact, it is “completely understandable” that a consciousness, structured so as to have “a backward reference to the old and a forward reference to the new … is necessarily a consciousness of itself as streaming.”[[324]](#endnote-324) The point follows since the awareness of receding into pastness and approaching from the future is an awareness of the results of the retentional and protentional processes. It is thus an awareness of consciousness’s own action of retention and protention. Thus, in regarding the streaming, consciousness regards itself. As Husserl also puts this, the retentional and protentional processes of consciousness result in its self-transformation. Through their action, its retained contents shift further into the past and its protended contents move further towards the now. This self-transformation, which is ongoing, gives us “a steady consciousness of streaming, of being in transformation.”[[325]](#endnote-325) A regard to the streaming is thus a regard to the transformation that is the very process by which consciousness constitutes itself as a temporal stream. Its awareness of this self-transformation is thus a self-awareness.

There is a certain auto-affection in this self-awareness. In grasping its transformations, which occur through its own processes, consciousness is affected by these transformations. Thus, the transformation of a retention into a retention of itself presents consciousness with a new datum. It is affected by the presence of this datum, a presence that it has, itself, produced. The presence of this datum is not that of an externally provided impression, whose immediate presence is one of nowness. The presence exhibits a diminished clarity. We experience it as a stage in the dying away of the impression, a dying away that we take as the impressional content’s increasing pastness. This affecting presence is thus part of consciousness’s self-presence as past. Moreover, all the simultaneous contents that form the momentary content of consciousness simultaneously expire and continue dying away at the same rate. In doing so they yield the data that presents perceptual consciousness to itself, not as it is, but as it was in a receding past moment. The same point holds with regard to the protended contents that form our anticipations and make present an anticipated consciousness of some event. They, too, affect the consciousness that generates them.

The consciousness that is affected is consciousness in the now. This consciousness consists of momentary impressions, retentions and protentions. The retentions and protentions position the nowness of the momentary impressions as a nowness between the past and the future. This is the same newness that Aristotle takes as the present of the entity. For Husserl, this presence is conveyed by impressions. For Aristotle, the constancy of this presence is that of the entity. It is what gives us the standing now. This now is simply the self’s actualization by the entity “at work” in it. What works on the self, according to Husserl, are the impressions. These are what awaken it, providing the material for its functioning—i.e., its production of retentions and protentions. Located by them, such nowness is “standing” since it always stands at the center of the temporal continuum. It is, however, also “flowing” since the impressional contents that define it as now are constantly being replaced. Their replacement is one with the shift of the now with regard to the continuum since the contents that did define it as now expire and are transformed into retentions. The now with new impressional content, thus, has, an increased past behind it. In fact all of the retentions that define this past have undergone retentional modification, becoming retentions of themselves. The same modification, in reverse order occurs with the protentional chains that define the future. Thus, the impressional now is grasped as advancing or flowing with regard to the temporal continuum.[[326]](#endnote-326)

Given the above, we can see how, from a Husserlian perspective, we do not just perceive an enduring object but are aware of our perceiving it. The perception of a temporally extended object requires retention and protention, these being the processes that produce self-awareness. To be conscious of the object is, thus, to be conscious of our perceiving it. Take, for example, a perception of a three-dimensional object. To grasp it as three dimensional, we have to successively view its different sides. We also have to assign a referent to the perspectivally arranged pattern of perceptions afforded by this experience. Picking out the perceptions that we take as having this single referent—say, a chair that we walk around—we take them as perceptions *of* this referent. Perception, here, is a synthetic process, which involves uniting different perceptions and taking them as perceptions of a given object. Now, such a process would be impossible if we did not retain the perceptions that we just had as well as anticipate those that we expect to have. Without retentions, we would have no material to unite. Without protentions, we could not make our way in the world, e.g., use our anticipations to guide us as we walked around the chair. Given this, the chair that we do perceive is present through the retentional and protentional processes. As such our perceiving of it is always accompanied by a background self-awareness. Our seeing, regardless of its object, is always self-aware. We do not just perceive the qualities of a given object; such qualities are grasped as qualia. Their presence to us is a felt presence, one that involves our own self-presence, our own auto-affection.

Writing extends this self-presence. The presence that writing enables, according to Husserl, is highly mediated. It begins with the perceptual process that gives us a given state of affairs, say the presence of furniture in a room. Each day, you enter the room, the same perceptual presence reoccurs and is recognized as such. Regarding the room, you can verbally describe this recurring presence of the furniture and their relative positions. Such action presupposes a linguistic community, where, as Husserl writes, “the product of one subject can be actively understood by the others.”[[327]](#endnote-327) Others can take your words and re-enact the perceptual experience the words express. Doing so, they can perceptually confirm your description of the room. If you write down this description, then you need not even speak to them. They can confirm your written description. As Husserl observes, writing “makes communication possible without immediate or mediate personal address.” Freed from the presence of the original author or auditor, a written text is, in Husserl’s phrase, “communication become virtual.”[[328]](#endnote-328) All that it requires is the capacity to reactivate the meanings that its words express. Such capacity extends beyond the perceptual confirmation of your words. Others, reading your description can imagine the room by drawing on their own perceptual experience. This capacity to reactive the meanings expressed by words is, in fact, behind any ended composition. By virtue of it, you can read what you write, correct it, and add to it. The ability to write down your thoughts and reactive them on reading is grounded in and shares the self-awareness of the perceptual process. It points to the fact that our presence as embodied can be extended beyond our physical embodiment to include objects in our surrounding world.

**Presuppositions of the Hard Problem of Consciousness**

Husserl’s account of our self-awareness would, I suspect, prove unsatisfactory to cognitive scientists. The “hard problem” for them involves not just the felt-quality of qualia and the self-awareness underlying this but also, more importantly, the physical processes underlying them. We know that this felt-quality has a physical basis, but, as Chalmers writes, “we have no good explanation of why and how it so arises.”[[329]](#endnote-329) The objection to Husserl’s account would thus be that he speaks only of conscious processes, but the really hard problem is to relate these to the physical processes from which they arise. What is required, in Chalmers’ view, is an “explanatory bridge” that would link conscious processes to “the structure and dynamics of physical processes.”[[330]](#endnote-330) So formulated, the hard problem of consciousness dates at least from John Locke’s time. As Locke states it, we can grasp how a change in “the size, figure, and motion of one body should cause a change in the size, figure and motion of another body.”[[331]](#endnote-331) But how do such motions “produce in us the idea of any color, taste, or sound whatsoever”? In fact, he asserts that “there is no conceivable connection between the one and other.”[[332]](#endnote-332) Leibniz makes a similar assertion. “Perceptions,” he claims “are inexplicable by mechanical causes, that is to say, by figures and motions.”[[333]](#endnote-333) The long history of this problem and its apparent insolubility are surprising since, on a practical level, we are always solving it. When we are awake, our embodied consciousness continually makes present the results of our brain processes. There is, as I initially observed, a continual shifting back and forth between such processes and our conscious representations. At issue, then, is not the *fact* of their connection, but our *understanding* of this fact. This suggests that what undermines this understanding is not so much the problem itself. It is, rather, the way we frame this problem. To see this, we have to grasp what the problem presupposes with regard to space and time.

We can do this by returning to Kant. Kant argues that if we want to grasp temporal relations, we have to turn inward, that is, regard our memories and anticipations. This is because outside of us, it is always now. The external perception that directs itself to the world cannot “see” either the past or the future. For Kant, this leads to the conclusion that “if we abstract from our mode of inwardly intuiting ourselves ... then time is nothing.”[[334]](#endnote-334) Without the consciousness whose relations it characterizes, time loses its reality. Such consciousness is, for Kant, our appearing selfhood; its reality is essentially temporal. As for the external world, it is, as revealed by external perception, essentially spatial.

To see how this division results in the hard problem, we have to recall how it informs the scientific account of the world. With the possible exception of psychology, science focuses on the world that we access through external perception. Doing so, it abstracts from the first-person experience given by introspection. What remains is what is called the “third-person” experience of the external, physical world. In this view, my first-person experience of these objects counts as valid only if it is confirmed by others. Now, if we limit the validity of our claims to the third person experience of the external world, we drain from it the temporal relations that we access through introspection. Doing so, we abstract from consciousness, whose reality, according to Kant, is essentially temporal. Science’s adoption of the view appears in the mathematical and logical formulae that it employs. Such formulae, as was noted, can include time as a variable, but the relations they specify are instantaneous. One can apply the formula, distance traveled equals velocity multiplied by the time traveled, for any time and velocity one chooses. Yet at whatever time one does choose, it presents you only with a snapshot. It gives you the way the world will be outwardly intuited at that point.[[335]](#endnote-335) In limiting us to a given now-point, science does not just drain time from the world, it also excludes the consciousness that subjectively regards it. Given this exclusion, it is by definition incapable of solving the hard problem of consciousness.

If we follow the Kantian paradigm, the same point holds when we focus on introspection, i.e., first person experience. Such experience presents us only with temporal relations. Its draining off of space from the world gives us only the flow of consciousness. Space, here, is grasped in terms of this flow. Thus, the rate at which an object seems to contract and become obscure is understood as the rate at which it departs from us. Similarly, relative distances are grasped in terms of the turning (the angular velocity) of different objects as I move through them. The strategy here is the reverse of that of the third person perspective with its mathematization of nature. If the latter, in its using static graphs to represent motion, engages in the “spatialization of time,” the first person perspective temporalizes space. It reduces space to temporal relations. Doing so, it also makes the hard problem insoluble. Excluding the external spatial world, it cannot position within this external world the consciousness that grasps it.

**The Interdependence of Space and Time**

Because of their respective exclusions of time and space, both positions are obviously one-sided. In point of fact, we cannot speak about space apart from time or time apart from space. Astronomical distances are given in terms of the time it takes light to cross them. Similarly, we judge distances on our human scale by the time we require to traverse them: a distant town is so many hours away by car; it takes us so many minutes to walk to place, etc. This dependence of space on time is equally apparent in the fact that we use angular velocity to grasp relative distances. Absent such temporal measures, we do not have space, but only geometry. We have the mathematical representation of space, not space itself with its definite distances. Only if we conflate the two, i.e., take the representation for the represented as we do when we take a mathematical description for the reality that it describes, can we say that space can be grasped without recourse to time.

To reverse this, it is also true that without space, we cannot have the sense of time that is given by the flowing of our consciousness. As John Locke observed, to experience this flow, we have to experience the change or succession of our “ideas” or perceptions.[[336]](#endnote-336) Thus, without change, our sense of time freezes. The now ceases to “flow” when the contents occupying it remain the same. It is only when we experience the present moment with an ever new content, that we apprehend it, by virtue of our retentional and protentional processes, as a streaming present. As previous chapters have pointed out, the alterity we experience presupposes space. In space, things change their color, their position, their shape, their relation to what surrounds them, and so on. Space, in its extension, that is, in its having “parts outside of parts,” provides the framework for such change. It supplies a necessary condition for the alterity that we register as time. This does not mean that the alterity of contents is itself responsible for separating the different moments of time. Space, rather, is the ultimate reason why the moments with their different contents do not coincide. Thus, what distinguishes the appearances of a moving body are not the moments that they inhabit; it is the spatially distinct positions of its path. It is the outside-of-one-another of such positions, the *extension* of the path, that translates itself into the extension of time. Without this spatial extension, as earlier noted, the path would collapse as would the moments presenting the appearances of the motion along it. The possibility of this collapse of moments shows that time cannot be conceived by itself. This can be put in terms of Aristotle’s argument that the now is not a *part* of time. A part measures the whole, which is made up of its parts. But the present has no extension. In this, it is like a point on a line. Neither nows nor points can be summed up to give a definite quantity.[[337]](#endnote-337) But if moments or nows do not have any extension, what prevents them from collapsing into each other? What “spaces” them, as it were? To answer this question, the previous chapter had to go outside of time to the “parts outside of parts” exhibited by space.

**Reinterpreting Husserl’s Account**

Admitting that space and time are inconceivable apart from one another, how are we to understand Husserl’s account of the temporal constitution of self-awareness? Consciousness is self-aware when it grasps itself as past or anticipates itself as future. Such self-awareness thus presupposes the temporal separation of the past and future from the now of their apprehension. It assumes, thereby, the “parts outside of parts” of time, i.e., temporal extension. Given that this cannot be provided by time itself, each constantly new now that becomes retained must depend upon space for its separation from the next now. The same dependence must also hold for the separation of the retentions and protentions that are successively generated with the expiration of each now. Does this dependence mean that these impressions, retentions and protentions are themselves spatial? To assert this would return us to the third-person perspective, i.e., to the abstraction that eliminates consciousness . To assert that they are simply temporal is also impossible since it would assume the first-person perspective that eliminates the external spatial world. In fact, even if we remain within the first-person perspective that Husserl adopts, there are difficulties in calling them temporal. Impressions, retentions and protentions constitute time in its apprehended reality, but as Husserl acknowledges: “Time- constituting phenomena are evidently objectivities fundamentally different from those constituted in time. They are neither individual objects nor individual processes, and the predicates of such objects or processes cannot be meaningfully ascribed to them.”[[338]](#endnote-338) The point follows since neither do they endure over time nor can they be said, as momentary, to change over time. Indeed, as momentary, i.e., non-extended, they cannot even be called “parts” of time in Aristotle's sense. What then are these phenomena? What is their relation to space and time, conceived as mutually dependent?

To answer these questions, we have to return to the fact that we perceive space externally and time internally. Husserl takes this divide as resulting from the two intentionalities, the two modes of presentation, that are at work in constitution. Engaging in what he calls “lengthwise intentionality” (*Langsintentionalität*), we focus on the “emerging, changing … and … becoming obscure” of what we perceive at each moment.[[339]](#endnote-339) Doing so, we attend not just to the fading of what we have perceived but also to emerging clarity of what we anticipate perceiving. The result is our grasp of the temporal aspect of reality. Engaging in a second “crosswise intentionality” (*Querintentionaliät*), we cut across these retentional and protentional chains, focusing on the contents that they present with varying degrees of clarity. Here, we grasp these contents’ patterns and assign them referents, taking, for example, a specific perspectivally arranged pattern as presenting a chair. The result of this focus is the external perception that grasps the spatial aspect of reality.[[340]](#endnote-340) As Husserl’s account makes clear, both types of perception, internal as well as external, depend on the serial processes that generate the retentional and protentional chains. Now, although we experience the results of these processes in the fading or increasing clarity of retained or protended contents, *the processes are not, themselves, experienced*. To actually apprehend the retentional process, we would have to apprehend successive retentions, the second emerging from the first as its reproduction. The same holds, inversely, for the protentional process. But for Husserl, as we have seen, the notion of an individual retention or protention is abstraction. What this signifies is that the “time-constituting phenomena” that Husserl speaks of cannot actually be phenomena. What actually appears are only the fading and increasing clarity that respectively pertain to the two processes. The status of the “time-constituting phenomena” is, then, the following: such phenomena appear only in their results. Taken in themselves, they are prior to the internal and external perception that they make possible and, hence, prior to the apprehension of space and time. As prior, they are, in fact, the link between the two.

The processes in question, thus, give us the “explanatory bridge” that cognitive scientists seek. The bridge that is required is that between the first and the third-person perspectives. But these refer, respectively, to internal and external perception. What makes the hard problem of consciousness “hard” is the divide between the two presupposed by the problem. If we follow this divide, we can take the retentional and protentional processes objectively, i.e., as part of the external world. Doing so, we can interpret them as formal structures of the physical processes underlying perception and seek their physical analogues in the functioning of the brain. Alternatively, we can adopt the first-person perspective and take them, as Husserl does, as referring to the temporal processes by which consciousness becomes self-aware. Here their analogue is the fading of the retained and the increasing clarity of the anticipated. Given, however, that external and internal perception have the same root, namely, the processes themselves, we cannot take them exclusively in either sense. To do so is to engage in the abstractions of the third and the first-person perspectives and attempt to think space apart from time or time apart from space. It is to ask how time affects space—i.e., how consciousness, conceived as essentially temporal, moves the external world. It is also to ask how space affects time—i.e., how the external spatial world, represented mathematically through the “spatialization of time,” moves consciousness. Such questions are not “hard,” but simply unsolvable. The only way to understand the interplay between the third person brain processes that result in thought and the first person conscious presence of such thought is to admit that time and space, conceived in isolation, are only abstractions. We experience the spatial and temporal aspects of reality through the retentional and protentional processes. But they, themselves, are neither spatial nor temporal, neither first nor third person. They are, rather, the processes behind both perspectives. In our embodied waking life, we constantly solve the mind-body problem by availing ourselves of them. As generative of the experience that links us to the world, these processes are examples of the original ontological motion that links our being and appearing to that of the world.

**Intertwining and Others**

It may seem that with our interpretation of Husserl’s account of time-consciousness, our inquiry has reached its conclusion. It began with Patočka’s distinction between appearing as such and the entities that appear. The former was initially seen as a form, a structure that being had to take on in order to appear. Subjectively, this structure manifested itself as the functioning of transcendental subjectivity, a functioning described in the second chapter. Objectively, it appeared in the intertwining that linked the embodied subject to its world. Following Merleau-Ponty, being in itself was understood in terms of this intertwining. Taken as a “style” or “manner” of being, the intertwining was seen as the way in which appearing determined being, i.e., determined it as including a subject to whom things appear. We then examined this determination in terms of the motion that, for Patočka, results in both being and appearing. The structure of appearing as such thus came to be understood as a “style” or “manner” of this motion. The fact that both space and time are regarded as forms of appearing, led us to trace both to motion. Guided by Patočka's use of Aristotle, we turned to the latter for an account of this. The result was a view of the intertwining of self and world, of the subject to whom the world appears and the world itself, that focused on Aristotle's conception of energeia or actualization. We then asked: What is the relation of subjectivity, in its temporality, to the spatiality that its embodiment imposes on it? The implication of space in the temporal relations that defined consciousness returned us to the problem that we began with: namely that of the mind’s relation to the body. In the course of the chapters, this had become the question of the original ontological motion—the motion which, in grounding being and appearing, was taken as the basis of the continuity of the self and the world. Reinterpreting Husserl’s account of time-consciousness in terms of this motion, we saw it as exemplified by the retentional and protentional processes. Following Husserl, we claimed that they are neither spatial nor temporal, neither first nor third person. Rather, they serve as their common ground and, thus, as the link between the mind and the body.

This brief summary of the course of our inquires points, in its abstractness, to their limitation. The intertwining that relates us to the world involves a range of things stretching from our bodily self-presence to what we mean by something being “objectively real,” i.e., being there for ourselves and our Others. Since, from our development in the womb, we are always actually or imaginatively with Others, our selfhood is essentially intertwined with them. Given this, no account of selfhood and intertwining can avoid the self’s relation to its Others. It must, if it is to claim any completeness, address the social and political relations that determine, through our common actions, the appearing and the being of the world that we are in. Our inquires now turn to these. To begin with, we have to ask: how, in fact, do we recognize our Others as other and yet as like ourselves?

Part 2: Intersubjectivity

**Chapter 9**

Self-Touch and the Perception of the Other

Husserl’s account of intersubjective recognition in the *Cartesian Meditations* seems to suffer from an obvious difficulty. It is based on the appearing behavior of Others, which the recognizing subject compares with his own behavior. If they are harmonious, then the recognition is successful. As Husserl writes in this regard, “The experienced animate organism [*Leib*] of the Other continues to manifest itself as actually an animate organism solely through its continually harmonious behavior ... The organism is experienced as a pseudo-organism [*Schein-Lei*b] precisely when it does not agree in its behavior.”[[341]](#endnote-341) “Harmonious” means harmonious with the observing subject’s behavior: I regard myself and my Other; and to the point that the Other behaves as I would in a similar situation, I recognize him as a subject like myself. The basis for this recognition is the similarity of our appearing bodies. Yet, as Lanei Rodemeyer has pointed out, “my experience of my own body is nothing like my experience of another person’s body.” Thus, the supposed “‘natural’ similarity between the two bodies would never be automatically given” as a basis for intersubjective recognition.[[342]](#endnote-342) The difficulty is not just that I always experience my body from the vantage point of the “here,” while the Other’s body is always regarded visually as over “there.” It is that the perceptions that allow me to grasp my body as my own are not part of my experience of the Other. I experience the Other’s body visually. I experience my own kinesthetically as I move my limbs. I feel my body when it is touched. When I touch other objects, I do not feel *their* being touched. Furthermore, they do not immediately respond to my will; only my body does. Thus, I experience myself moving it directly; I do not move my body by moving something else. All these experiences are not visual, they are, as Husserl argues, fundamentally tactile. For Husserl, as we saw, touch, rather than sight, lies at the basis of the sense that a subject has of his embodiment. As we cited him, “A subject whose only sense was the sense of vision could not have an appearing body.”[[343]](#endnote-343) The body that appears could not be recognized as his own.

How, then, do we resolve this difficulty? How do we go from our tactile perception of our body as our own to the visual grasp of the Other as an “animate organism” like ourselves? The solution, I am going to argue, is to be found in Husserl’s account of how we constitute the sense we have of ourselves as embodied. In this account, touch will turn out to be foundational, not just for the self-awareness that marks us as embodied subjects, but also for our awareness of Others as embodied subjects.

**Self-touch and self-awareness**

In its emphasis on touch, Husserl’s account is strongly reminiscent of Aristotle’s in *De Anima*. Both philosophers take touch as foundational. Aristotle understands its founding quality in terms of the “soul.” For him, the soul is what makes an animate organism actually animate. It is the actualization (*entelechia*) of the body’s capability to be alive—this, by virtue of the soul’s being its functioning (*energeia*) as a living body. [[344]](#endnote-344) In his words, “If the eye were a living creature, its soul would be its vision.”[[345]](#endnote-345) It would be “the seeing of the eye.”[[346]](#endnote-346) For Aristotle, the functioning of the living body is a layered affair, each further level presupposing the preceding. The basic level is the capacity to absorb food—i.e., metabolism. Both plants and animals share this functioning. Animals, however, also function as sensing beings. On this level, the primary functioning is that of touch.[[347]](#endnote-347) Touch is, in fact, the basis of all the other senses. “Without a sense of touch,” Aristotle writes, “it is impossible to have any other sensation.”[[348]](#endnote-348) This is because touch alone perceives immediately by contact.[[349]](#endnote-349) All the other senses perceive by contact as well, but through a medium. The medium is moved and it moves the body. For example, sound is first a motion in the air, which forms its medium, and then, by contact, a motion in the ear drum. The point is that the functioning of the other senses depends on the functioning of touch. If sensation distinguishes the animal, it follows “that deprived of this one sense alone, animals must die.”[[350]](#endnote-350) What makes them actual animals is no longer present. What, then, is touch? How does it mark our being alive? Aristotle remarks that without it, the animal could not avoid some things and seize upon Others. [[351]](#endnote-351) To state the obvious, incapable of sensing, it could not distinguish itself from its environment. The fundamental character of touch implies that it founds this distinction.

To understand how it does this, we have to turn from Aristotle to Husserl. We need to recall his description of the double sensation that characterizes touch. As he observes, when my hand touches an object, I do not just feel this object, I also feel my sensations of it. This does not imply two different sets of sensory contents, but rather a shift in attention and interpretation of the same contents. To cite Husserl’s example, “in the case of a hand lying on the table, the same sensation of pressure is at one time taken as [*aufgefaßt als*] a perception of the table’s surface (of a small part of it, properly speaking) and at another time, with a different direction of attention and another level of interpretation [*Auffassungsschicht*], it results in sensations of my fingers pressing on it.”[[352]](#endnote-352) I am aware of both the object touched and of my touching it. This doubling is not yet self-awareness. For this, I must touch myself. When I do so, the two parts of my body have a double functioning. Functioning as a physical object, “each [part] is, for the other, an external thing that touches and works upon it”.[[353]](#endnote-353) Functioning as flesh, each has touch sensations that it is aware of as its own. The ability of flesh to be both is what makes it self-aware. It grasps itself as a physical object that is also a sensing subject. Doing so, it distinguishes itself from its environment.

The radical nature of Husserl’s account of our self-awareness is apparent when we compare it to Kant’s. For Kant, we may recall, our consciousness and, hence, our self-consciousness involves temporal rather than spatial relations. To grasp these temporal relations, we must turn inward, that is, regard our memories and anticipations. Outside of us, it is always now; the external perception that directs itself to the world cannot visually “see” the past or the future. Granting this, external perception cannot present us with other subjects. The external perception that presents them as spatial objects excludes the temporal relations that structure their consciousnesses. How, then, do we grasp other subjects? Kant does not say. Husserl, however, does provide a bridge between the visual perception of them and their apprehension as subjects like ourselves. This is because the self-awareness that characterizes consciousness involves spatiality. Such spatiality, as we saw, is inherent in the alterity that characterizes this self-awareness: The fact that the touching hand is spatially distinct from the touched hand prevents the conflation of the self that is aware with the self that it is aware of. The same spatiality is what positions the self in the spatial world.

The spatiality of selfhood does not, however, mean that we can directly perceive it externally as an object in space. Even our self-perception has to be mediated by touch. As Husserl remarks, “I do not see my body, the way I touch myself. What I call the seen body [*gesehenen Leib*] is not something *seeing* that is seen, the way that my body, as touched, is something touching that is touched.” What is lacking here is “the phenomenon of double sensation,” a phenomenon that could only occur if “one eye could rub past the other”—that is, if one eye could touch the other.[[354]](#endnote-354) At that point, the eye that I see would feel itself being seen. It would experience the double sensation that it could take both as its sensations and as the sensations of the eye that touched it. For Husserl, this signifies I can only regard my eye as my own by touching it. Touched, it provides the “touch and kinesthetic sensations” that allow me to apprehend it as belonging to my body.[[355]](#endnote-355) Such sensations are crucial. Lacking them, we are like those patients that the neurologist Oliver Sacks describes who, on waking, attempt to make room for themselves by shoving one of their own legs out of bed.[[356]](#endnote-356) Deprived of the sensations of self-touch, they react to and move their limbs as if they were foreign objects. This can be put in terms of the “localization” that touch provides. The kinesthetic sensations of tension that I experience in moving my hand become localized because they are constantly “intermixed” with those given by the hand as it touches objects and is touched by them. It is through touch that I experience movement as my own. It is because the visual body coincides with the tactual that it participates in this localization, i.e., is recognized as my own.[[357]](#endnote-357) Part of this recognition involves my sense that my body, as opposed to other objects, is immediately responsive to my will. Because of the localization of my kinesthetic sensations, when I move myself, I feel myself being moved. The moved arm, for example, is sensed as both mover and moved. As such, I have a sense of *moving it immediately*. As Husserl writes: “the body as a field of localization is ... the precondition for the fact that it is taken as ... an organ of the will,” that is, as “the one and only object that, for the will of my pure ego, is moveable immediately and spontaneously.”[[358]](#endnote-358) In other words, I sense my hand as moving itself. It is, in itself, both subject and object of this motion. This is because the dichotomy that distinguishes between the two is inherent in the constitution of its sense as *my* hand, that is, as a part of my “animate organism.”[[359]](#endnote-359)

**The Double Pairing**

To apply these insights to our intersubjective recognition, we must first discuss the double “pairing” that such recognition requires. Husserl introduces it by speaking of “appresentation.” Appresentation (or “co-intending”) is an intending of the presence of one thing on the basis of the presence of another. Thus, on the basis of the presence of the front side of a chair, I can co-intend its back, which is not immediately present. The back, of course, can be made present. I can walk around so as to view the chair from the other side. For Husserl, however, appresentation can also occur in cases where I cannot make the co-intended originally present. This is because the intention to one thing on the basis of the other does not necessarily require the fulfillment of this intention. Thus, I can appresent things, such as the interior of the sun, which I cannot present. I also can be mistaken: what I appresent is not there; my appresenting turns out to be an “an empty pretention.” Pairing is a form of appresentation. It is based on two similarly appearing objects. As Husserl defines it, “two data are intuitively given and ... they phenomenologically establish a unity of similarity; thus, they are always constituted as a pair.” Such constitution means that the sense that is intuitively present in one of them can serve as a basis for the co-intending of the same sense with regard to the other. As Husserl expresses this, the thought of one member “awakens” that of the other. There is, then, an “intentional overreaching” that results in the “intentional overlapping of each with the sense of the other.”[[360]](#endnote-360) Suppose, for example, we experience a connection between a person’s appearance—his style of dress, etc.—and certain forms of behavior. When we encounter another person similarly dressed, we may “pair” him with the first individual. On the basis of a “unity of similarity,” there then can occur an associative transfer of sense. We assume, for example, that someone dressed as a postman will behave like one.

The first “pairing” at work in intersubjective recognition is not between my own and the Other’s body; it is between my body in the “here” and the “there.” I can move from where I am to somewhere else. “This implies,” Husserl writes, “that, perceiving from the there, I should see the same things, only in correspondingly different modes of appearance such as would pertain to my being there.”[[361]](#endnote-361) On the basis of what I presently experience, I can thus co-intend how things would look from another position. This also occurs with my own body. Tied to the possibility of my movement is the fact that “my bodily animate organism is interpreted and interpretable as a natural body existing in space and movable like any other natural body.”[[362]](#endnote-362) Given this, the presentation of my body in the here contains an implicit appresentation of the same body “existing in space” at a distance. In Husserl’s words, I have the possibility of appresenting “the way my body would look *if I were there*.” The first pairing, then, is between my body in the modes of the here and the there. It is with regard to the body interpreted in the latter mode—i.e., as there—that, in the second pairing, the Other’s body comes to be paired with my own.[[363]](#endnote-363)

At the basis of both pairings is, of course, the intertwining. I recognize my body as mine because of self-touch—the self-touch that defines me as both a sensing subject and a sensed object. Here, the body that is my own is both within and without. It is recognizably mine through the double sensation that makes it both internal and external. As external, it is part of the world. In Merleau-Ponty’s words, the touched subject “descends into the things, such that the touch is formed in the midst of the world.”[[364]](#endnote-364) With this, we have the possibility of pairing our intertwined subject in the here and the there; and, built on this, the possibility of pairing it in the there with the Other

For Husserl, both pairings function in what he calls an “analogizing apperception.” As the term, analogy, indicates, it is essentially a process whereby consciousness spontaneously acts to set up a proportion. In the first pairing, the first two terms of the proportion are my appearing behavior in the here and the there. The third and fourth terms are my experiences of myself as controlling this behavior. The proportion affirms that just as I determine my behavior in the here, I can also determine it in the there. This determination involves the sense I make of my surroundings, since I behave according to the sense I make of what I experience. In the first pairing, all the terms can become intuitively present. What I appresent with regard to the possibility of my being there can, if it is a real possibility, be transformed into an actual presentation by my moving there. I can, for example, go into the kitchen and make breakfast thus making actual the behavior and intentions that I appresented from the bedroom.

In the second pairing, which is at work in intersubjective recognition, this is not possible. I can only appresent and never present to myself what another person’s intentions are. What I do in such cases is fill in the fourth term of the proportion on the basis of the three that I can actually experience. Thus, regarding another person in the kitchen making breakfast, the similarity of our behavior allows me to transfer to him the intentions I would have were I in his situation. I cannot, of course, see the Others’ intentions. Here, Kant is correct. The memories and anticipations that form the basis of such intentions are not visually available to me. The pairing that I make, however, does not demand this. I can appresent what I can never make present. What verifies the pairing and its transfer of sense is the Other’s appearing behavior. As long as this behavior is similar to mine—i.e., similar to how I would behave were I there in his situation—the transfer runs smoothly.[[365]](#endnote-365) In this transfer, the actual otherness of the Other is constantly maintained. This is because he is actually there, while I am here. Since I cannot be in both places at the same time, his pairing with myself in the there demands that he have a set of experiences that is distinct from what I presently experience in the here. Thus, I always appresent the Other as actually other. In Husserl’s words, what is “primordially incompatible,” i.e., my simultaneously experiencing the world from two different standpoints, becomes compatible in granting the Other a distinct consciousness.[[366]](#endnote-366)

**Touch and Intersubjective Recognition**

I began this chapter by asking about the relation of touch to sight in our recognition of Others. Our experience of our own bodies is fundamentally tactile and immediate. Others, however, are regarded at a distance. Our experience of them is, thus, primarily visual. How do we go from the first to the second? What allows us to say that Others are “animate organisms” like ourselves? The answer is to be found in the intertwining that defines our self-experience. The bridge between the visual perception of the Other and our tactile self-presence is present in this. Thus, the self-touch that distinguishes us from the world is *inherently spatial*. Based as it is on the extended quality of our bodies, self-touch presents us as sensing subjects who are also extended objects. Doing so, it establishes our presence in the spatial, visually extended world where we encounter our Others. This presence signifies that the world is not simply something I represent in my consciousness, but rather something I encounter, something I engage in as part of the world. There is, as we said, an ontological continuity between myself and the world.

For Husserl, the phenomenological basis for asserting this continuity is provided by touch. It is what locates our senses as our own. All our sensations, the kinesthetic, the visual, the auditory, olfactory, etc., are interwoven with the tactile. Localized by the tactile, they become part of the flesh that, as Merleau-Ponty asserts, “lines” our world and thrusts us into it as a sensing subject that is also a spatially extended object. We can, thus pair our appearing body, as such an object, in the here and the there. In Husserl’s words, we can take it as “a natural body existing in space and movable like any other natural body.” We can appresent it as there since its visual presence, anchored by touch, remains, appresentatively, the presence of our flesh.

What about the pairing that links this appresented body to that of the Other? How do we deal with the difficulty that “my experience of my own body is nothing like my experience of another person’s body”? I experience my own body as a sensed object and as sensing flesh. Its identity is given by their intertwining. This identity is what I appresent as “there” in the first pairing. Objective exteriority and sensing interiority pertain to my appresented body. In pairing this with the Other’s body, I co-intend this sensing interiority. There is, in other words, *an associative transfer of the sensing interiority of my appresented body (my body in the “there”) to the visually appearing body of the Other*, who is also “there” in the spatially extended world. What allows me to go from the exterior appearance of the Other to the Other’s interiority is the fact that my appresented body has both aspects. I do not, of course, directly experience the other person’s sensing interiority. But this is the point of the transfer. Its basis is not just the similarity of our appearing behavior. It is my self-experience as a subject that is also an object, that is, in fact, an identity established by their intertwining. Taking the Other’s appearing body as also having this character, I can move from the Other as a visual object to the Other as a sensing subject like myself.[[367]](#endnote-367)

**Touch and the Genesis of Intersubjectivity**

Husserl’s analysis of intersubjective recognition is often taken as excessively formal. The immediacy of our recognizing Others seems to belie the complicated descriptions that we have just summarized. This sense of unnecessary complexity only increases when we note the context of his analysis. It is a response to the charge that the phenomenological approach inevitably leads to solipsism. In Husserl’s words, the objection is that “[w]ithout wishing to admit it, it falls into transcendental solipsism; and the whole step leading to other subjectivity and to genuine objectivity is only possible through an unconfessed metaphysics”—one that goes beyond the phenomenological description of our experiences.[[368]](#endnote-368) Solipsism, of course, is largely a philosophical problem. To wonder if Others really exist is not something most people do.

Husserl’s descriptions, however, have a wider, psychological bearing. This becomes apparent when we focus on the genesis of the dichotomy between sensing subject and sensed object that is inherent in our flesh. Originally, the developing embryo is part of the mother’s flesh. We have no real evidence that, in constant contact with the mother, it distinguishes itself from her. Even after birth, the infant’s sense of itself seems to include her. This can be expressed in terms of the three aspects of the self-Other relation involving touch: there is the infant as a *touching subject*, the infant as an *object touched by itself*, and the infant as an *object touched by its caregiver*. Originally, all three are in an undifferentiated unity; only later are they separated out. This means that, originally, the infant takes himself as a touched object in the same way as he takes the Other as a touched object. Similarly, he takes himself as an object touched by himself in the same way as he takes himself as an object touched by the other person. The caregiver’s body is, thus, taken as his own; together, they are differentiated from the world. In other words, the original assumption is that of a union of their sensing flesh. As the phenomenologist, Gail Soffer, describes this state, the infant does not *attribute* his sensations to the Other. Rather, “he expects to sense in the body of the other.” Similarly, he presumes “that the Other senses via *his* own body.”[[369]](#endnote-369) The breakup of this initial sense of identity with the caregiver occurs in stages. Gradually, the child gains a sense of the otherness of the Other. Only at the end of this process, according to Soffer, is the child capable of “individualized empathy, an empathy of the form, ‘if I were there and I were x,’ where x specifies traits of the other,” then I would experience what x experiences.[[370]](#endnote-370) At this point, the child fully realizes that the Other has his own experiences, which are distinguished by features of the Other that he does not possess —differences, for example, in gender, age and physical condition.

This increasing sense of the otherness of the Other is paralleled by a developing sense of the intentionality directed to the Other. This can be put in terms of its etymological sense, which comes from the Latin *intentio*, which signifies a “stretching out” and “straining towards” something.[[371]](#endnote-371) Its first object is normally the mother. The infant seeks to bond her to himself. Being held, he re-establishes the warmth and intimacy that he felt in the womb. The goal is a reestablishing of their identity. As the child develops, this goal continues, but in ways that increasingly acknowledge her alterity. A child, for example, will often begin by showing his mother or caregiver what he is reading by flipping the book over so that the text appears upside down. This indicates an incomplete sense of the Other as an embodied individual who sees from her (rather than from the child’s) perspective. The child must learn that she does not see things the way he sees them. Doing so, he reestablishes their identity by assuming that once things are properly positioned, she will see what he sees. As part of this, he also believes that by changing his place, he actually experiences what the Other experiences. According to Soffer, equivalent attempts to reestablish identity occur in the later stages of the child’s development. Each of these involves an increasing sophistication of how the Other is “like” him. This implies that the turning towards the Other (the intentionality) that underlies such attempts is built up, layer by layer, as the child matures. The adult’s relations to Others—in particular, his ability to recognize Others as like himself—is informed by this development.

Placed in this context, Husserl’s accounts of touch show why it is so important in the development of our intersubjective relations. As numerous studies have shown, infants deprived of touch suffer from anxiety.[[372]](#endnote-372) Prolonged deprivation can result in emotional and cognitive deficits that affect their adult relations to Others.[[373]](#endnote-373) Persons suffering from these have difficulties in bonding with them. In extreme cases, they seem to lack the ability to make the move from the visual exteriority of the Other to his sensing interiority. They can intellectually understand that their actions cause the Other pain, but they lack the ability to emotionally experience this. They have no empathy. From a Husserlian perspective, such deficits in our intentional life are ultimately those of touch. They affect both its role in our self-apprehension as well as in our apprehension of Others as like ourselves. This indicates that touch, in its foundational role, is something that must be fostered if it is to fully develop. In their unconsciously teaching the infant how to touch, parents and caregivers solve in a practical way the philosophical problem of solipsism. Touching him, they show him not only how to be self-aware, but also how not to be alone in the world that visually appears to him. Touching him, they initiate his education in the intertwining that allows him, through empathy, to internalize and participate in Others’ lives. This empathy is crucial for the intertwining that defines our social reality. To see how it functions, let us turn to an example of its breakdown.

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**Chapter 10**

The Intertwining of Generations

In 2008, a remarkable, but disturbing film won the Cannes Film Festival’s French Language prize. Using actual students as actors, Laurent Cantet’s *Entre les Murs* depicted the constant tug-of-war between them and their teacher.[[374]](#endnote-374) Demanding respect, but often showing none, the teenagers made the simplest teaching task a difficult and drawn-out enterprise. The final dialogue of the film is the most disturbing. A shy student, Henriette, is the last to leave the classroom at the end of the year. She approaches her French teacher and says:

Sir?

FRANÇOIS : Yes? What is it?

HENRIETTE : I didn’t learn anything.

FRANÇOIS : What? Why are you saying that? That

doesn’t mean anything.

……

HENRIETTE : But I don’t understand.

FRANÇOIS : What do you mean?

HENRIETTE : I don’t understand what we do.

FRANÇOIS : In French?

HENRIETTE : In everything.[[375]](#endnote-375)

She honestly does not know what is going on in the classroom. The school is an alien environment. Its purposes escape her. This is all the more remarkable given the efforts of the teacher to reach his students. Why couldn’t she understand what is supposed to happen at school?

This dialogue illustrates the breakdown of the relations between different generations. The school is one of the ways we bring children to the adult world. In imparting its skills, its history and culture, teachers show them how to become a part of it. But as the film makes clear, teenagers can insist on their own world. Limiting their relations to their peers, they can regard the adult world as alien territory—as something to be fended off and, if necessary, attacked. The intergenerational problem is not limited to children and adults. It also concerns relations to the aged. Like school children, the elderly are often confined to distinct institutional settings. Their world, too, can come to be regarded—this time by the adults—as an alien territory with its own rationality, rules and strictures, as something whose boundaries one should not cross.

This breakdown of relations bears witness to a failure of a particular type of empathy—that which links different generations. “Empathy,” broadly speaking, means feeling or undergoing something in another person. In this chapter, I am going to going to examine our intersubjective intertwining in terms of the empathy it presupposes. My claim will be that intergenerational empathy allows us to understand things from the perspective of another generation’s world. In placing us in this world, it intertwines us with it. Doing so, it creates the intergenerational reality and corresponding rationality, whose absence Cantet’s film so strikingly illustrates.

**The Intertwining of Empathy**

The nature of the world’s being “within” us is not limited to our bodily senses being the “place” of its disclosure. It includes, as we saw, all the ways that we line the world through the use of our “I can.” This includes the pragmatic senses that arise through our projects. It also includes the language that employs the basic senses that arise through such projects. Such senses are within us; they are what we have in mind when we employ various objects for our particular purposes. They are also, however, external to us since the body-project that is guided by these senses thrusts into the public realm what we have in mind. Enacted, they become senses inherent in a project that is there for others to observe. Regarded in themselves, such senses exist in the intertwining of the private becoming public and the public becoming private. This pattern, as we saw, determines our being-in-the-world. We have a relation to the world such that the result is neither simply public nor private, but rather exists in the intertwining of the two spheres. Since the world that we are in includes other human beings, this fact necessarily affects our relations to them. Not only do they internalize a world, but we in our relations with them also internalize *their* worlds. The reality that results is social. Existing through the intertwining of the public and the private, it is not reducible to either. It is rather a distinct level of reality.

The role of empathy in this intertwining can be traced by regarding the ways it functions. “Empathy,” etymologically, comes from the Greek *pathein*, “to suffer or undergo,” and *en*, signifying “in.” At its basic level, it is a *feeling* (a suffering or undergoing) of the world *in* and through another person. At its most basic level, empathy is bodily. Another person hurts his hand and we reach for our own. We see someone cut himself and we wince. In each case, we take on the Other’s embodiment. We incarnate ourselves in the other person. Doing so, we internalize the world that comes to presence through their wounded flesh. This world, strictly speaking, is neither ours nor theirs. It is not theirs since we are imaginatively assuming their flesh. It is not ours since, although we feel the cut, our flesh is not actually wounded. Our private bodily integrity remains intact. What comes to presence through this intertwining is a separate inter-personal reality. Our immediate, pre-reflexive empathy can, of course, undergo development. The body is not just its flesh. As animate, it expresses our “I can” on all its various levels. Empathy, in imaginatively taking on this “I can,” gives us a sense of embodying the Other’s action. A batsman swings his bat, a basketball player strains to place the ball in the hoop and we feel ourselves experiencing these exertions. The same imaginative processes are present when the field of empathy widens to the collective “I can” of a group. Our ability to be part of an ensemble relies on our imaginative ability to assume multiple perspectives.

Whether the object of our empathy is an individual or a collective, the reality that is constituted is social. At its basis is an “I can” that is, itself, neither private nor public. It is the “I can” that each of us bodily enacts, thus making the senses that internally guide it publicly available to others. It is also the “I can” we learn from the public practices of Others, practices that make such senses publicly available. In other words, the very “I can” that lines the world providing a place for the world’s subjective disclosure—the world’s inner presence in each of us—is, as a bodily ability, something occurring within the world. As such, it is available to the empathy that allows us to learn from others. The resulting intertwining of the internal and the external, the private and the public, is what gives rise to the reality of social life.

**Intergenerational Empathy**

The empathy that functions between the generations exemplifies this pattern. Here however, the worlds that we enter into and allow to come to presence in ourselves are those of the different stages of life. As such, they involve both memory and anticipation. Suppose, for example, I enter a kindergarten. Physically, I am in this world; perceptually, it is in me. I can also act as an adult and disclose the pragmatic senses that adult actions involve. I am then in the kindergarten as an adult “I can.” My projects provide a place for its pragmatic disclosure as an adult world. This, however, does not disclose it as the world of the kindergarten’s children. For this, I must recall the “I can” of the corresponding stage of my childhood. I have to remember what it was like to build a tower of blocks, pretend to be a fireman, regard adults that are at least twice my size. The empathetic identification between my remembered “I can” and the child’s actual “I can” then allows me to be in his world, that is, to grasp the pragmatic senses that pertain to it. Playing with the child, I can participate in his projects. I can also internalize and linguistically express the senses that these projects disclose to us when I speak to him. What about the child’s empathetic relation to the adult world? How does he enter into it? He does so not as a remembered, but as an anticipated “I can.” Thus, the child plays at being a fireman, a doctor, etc. Doing so, he enters the adult world through imitation and imagination. The empathetic identification here is between his prospective “I can” and the actual “I can” of the adult world. In a certain sense, the failure of the school in “*Entre les murs*” is a failure of this anticipatory imagination. Henrietta cannot imagine herself in the adult world she is supposedly being prepared for. She does not “understand what we do” there. None of its senses are imaginatively available to her. When, however, the empathy that permits the intertwining of the generations works, each side, either retrospectively or prospectively, recognizes the goals of the other’s projects. Each understands the meanings that their realization entails and, thus, each has access to the language expressing them.

The empathy that links the generations has a dual aspect. A parent teaching his child to tie his shoes remembers being taught this task by his parent. He experiences being the recipient of his action through the mediation of his memories. He learned how to tie his shoes by imitating his own parent, such imitation being based on his taking up his own parent’s perspective. Empathically, he was there with his parent as the latter knelt down, grasped his laces, and knotted them with his fingers. The result is an intertwining that links him to his parent even as his own child, in learning this task, is linked to hm. His child is “in” him in learning this task, even as he was “in” his parent. Reciprocally, we can say that he is “in” his child since, through the mediation of memory he has identified himself with him in learning this task. The intertwining here links three generations. It is based on the fact that in acting, we are, in our memories, also acted on. The intertwining that places us in active relation to someone (in this case the child) occurs along with a second intertwining where we remember ourselves as the recipient of such action. The pattern holds for all the actions we learn through empathetic imitation—the actions by which we learn and pass on our culture with its pragmatic senses. It involves not just parents, but also the teachers, relatives and elder siblings from whom we acquired the disclosive actions typical of our culture. Passing them on involves a double empathy, a double intertwining that knits us to the generational chain. Through it, we become part of the chain of generationally successive “I cans.”

Thus far, we have been considering the adult’s relation to the child. What about our relations to the elderly? As we might expect, it is the mirror image of the adult-child relation. As an adult, I share the child’s world retrospectively through my memories. The child shares mine prospectively, that is, through acts of anticipatory imagination. In my relation to the aged, this relation is reversed. It is the aged who now share my world retrospectively, while I share theirs prospectively. Doing so, I anticipate having their “I can.” Once again, we can speak of the break-down of intergeneration relations in terms of a failure of this prospective imagination. Just as Henrietta cannot imagine herself in the adult world, I myself may be unwilling to imaginatively place myself in the world of the elderly. To do so would be to take on an “I can” that is more limited than my own. It would mean abandoning many of my longer term goals. For a child, to anticipate an adult’s “I can” is empowering. But for the adult, this projecting himself forward can be disempowering. Imaginatively, it involves not just the increasing “I cannot” of the old person, but also a palpable proximity to the ultimate “I cannot” of death. The case is different when, in teaching my child, I remember my parent teaching me. The parent I recall is my present age. It is my parent as an adult in the full vigour of an adult “I can.” The empathetic identification with the aged, by contrast, involves the “I cannot”: my prospective “I cannot” and the actual “I cannot” of the older person. The fear of such an “I cannot” can prevent me from imaginatively placing myself in the old person’s world and, hence, prevent this identification. There is, of course, a parallel fear that prevents some adults from entering the world of children. To remember one’s parent teaching you is also to remember oneself being taught. It is to engage in an empathetic identification with one’s childhood “I cannot.” It is to recall one’s own helplessness as a child.

**The “I-cannot” and the Human**

The failure to imaginatively grasp the “I cannot” is a major cause of the difficulties of intergenerational relations. We begin our lives with the helplessness of infants. We end with the increasing incapacities of aging and illnesses that ultimately result in our deaths. Our commercial culture, however, necessarily focuses on those with the income and opportunity to consume. Thus, it presents us to ourselves as adults in the full vigour of our lives. Its preference, in fact, is for young adults since they have a lifetime of purchasing before them. To the point that this becomes our image of the human, we identify it with the “I can” of the full vigour of life. Doing so, we conceal from ourselves the humanity of children and the aged insofar as it involves the “I cannot.” We cover over the actual “I cannot” of the child with the prospective “I can” of the adult. We grasp him as a potential adult, rather than as an actual child. Thus, the teacher in “Entre le murs” responds to Henriette’s confession of her incapacities with the words, “What? Why are you saying that? That doesn’t mean anything.” A similar failure of empathy occurs when we view the aged through the lens of the “I can” of the adult. So seen, he appears, with his elapsed “I can,” as an elapsed adult. This concealment of the “I cannot” of the child and the adult brings with it a corresponding concealment of their respective worlds. The world of a small child includes, for example, the “I cannot reach the shelf” since it is too high for me. It includes the “I cannot write” since I cannot hold the pencil with any coordination. The diminished bodily and mental capacity of the aged involves a corresponding set of “I cannots.” Since the disclosure of a world involves both the “I can” and the “I cannot,” to enter their worlds, we have to grasp both. Without an empathetic identification that includes such “I cannots,” the practical and symbolic meanings of the child’s and the old person’s worlds are not fully accessible to us; neither is the rationality that is appropriate to such meanings.

The dependence of rationality on empathy follows from the fact that empathy, in allowing us to take up the standpoint of Others, gives us access to the common projects that disclose the senses of our common world. These are expressed by the common meanings of our language and, thus, form the basis of the rationality that is based on language. The rationality of a child follows this pattern. It, too, depends on the way that he discloses the senses of the world. Given his different projects, it is necessarily distinct from that of the adult. The same holds, in its way, for the rationality of the elderly. A failure of the empathy that would allow one to enter the worlds of the different stages of life thus leads to an inability to grasp the reasoning at work in them.

Rationality, of course, has a broader sense, one where we use it to question our own world. Here we ask: “Why are things the way we observe them to be rather than some other way”? This question, by definition, is never posed of things that cannot be otherwise: the question assumes their contingency. Such an assumption, however, also depends on the empathy that intertwines us with Others. This is because the perspectives of Others, which we internalize through empathy, often call our own views into question. They can be seen as asking why we disclose the world the way we do—i.e., through these particular projects rather than others. As such they rob our disclosed world of its necessity. Doing so, they prompt us to question our world, i.e., to ask for reasons for its disclosed character. Such questioning, which is absent in Cantet’s film, also points to a deficit in rationality. The same point holds with regard to reason’s claim to provide us with objective assertions that can be verified by everyone. This, too, is undermined by a deficit in the empathy that puts us in contact with Others with their differing perspectives. If Others were identical to ourselves, they would collapse into an undifferentiated identity with us. But then their confirmation would add nothing towards making our own perspective more than subjective and private.[[376]](#endnote-376)

When the ancients defined man as a “rational animal,” what they actually asserted was that he was an “animal possessing *logos*” (zw'/on lovgon e[con). Possessing language, he also possessed the rationality based on this. *Logos*, here, signifies both speech and reason. It specifies what sort of an animal humans are. Given that our humanity involves Others in all the stages of their lives, a deficit in the empathy that links us to Others is, then, a deficit in our humanity. To the point that our empathy is impoverished, so is the intertwining that is our reality. In terms of the linking of generations, impoverishment comes when we do not grasp the multiple stages of our embodiment: stages stretching from infancy to extreme old age with their various “I cans” and “I cannots.” As including both, a human lifetime includes both activity and passivity, both the ability to care for Others and the need to be cared for by them. The intertwining that results in our humanity links us to the generational chain of those who precede and those who follow us. It involves our being in one another as both active and passive, as both caring for and being cared for by Others. To be human, in other words, involves a double horizon, both prospective and retrospective, both anticipatory and memorial. The intertwining of these elements defines our humanity within the generational chain.

Since, in fact, we constantly age, we have a changing relation to this chain, one beginning with the prospective horizon overshadowing the retrospective and ending with the reverse of this when we are old. The empathy that makes us part of this chain must start with where we are, that is, with the balance of the “I can” and the “I cannot” that marks our position. The intertwining of our present state of life with the “I can” and the “I cannot” of those younger and older than ourselves fills out our humanity. Such humanity involves all the various relations between the “I can” and the “I cannot” that characterize the stages of life. As that which progresses through them, our humanity is a “motion of existence” that begins with the original “I cannot” and proceeds through all the stages of the “I can” that lead to the ultimate “I cannot” of death. To refuse the empathy that links us to the “I cannot” undermines this humanity. It makes us blind to the very motion of existence that we are.

To combat this, we need to practice the acts of empathetic imagination that link us to the generational chain. As a society, we need to foster these through a set of institutional practices aimed at placing each generation, at least for a time, in the Others’ worlds. In an earlier age, the mixing of generations happened automatically through the collective tasks of the farm and the workshop. “Service learning” and internships now serve, in part, as a replacement for this. Whatever method we choose, our efforts in this regard need to be broadened to include all the generations. At stake is nothing less than the role that our schools and other institutions play in shaping our humanity and the rationality of its practices.

Such practices extend beyond the social to the political. They affect the public space of political action. This is the space that we occupy as embodied individuals. It is shaped by us as we attempt collectively to meet the needs that our embodiment imposes on us through collective action. At issue here is how the intertwining shapes our political reality. Given that man is not just a rational, but also, as Aristotle writes, a “political” animal, we cannot understand our humanity without confronting this. To do so, I am going to turn to Hannah Arendt and her account of public space.

**Chapter 11**

Public Space and Embodiment

We have already considered, with Aristotle, how motion shapes our sense of place and time, taken as forms of appearing. For Aristotle, this motion is primarily bodily. Yet, motion is a broader category. It includes Patočka’s motion of existence, the motion that defines our being and appearing. When applied to our political activities, such motion gives rise to what Hannah Arendt describes as public space. For Arendt, this space is the place where individuals see and are seen by others as they engage in public affairs. It is, thus, the space of the town hall meeting, the legislative assembly or any of the other venues where public business is done. The appeal of this concept is that it gives us a way to analyze political freedom phenomenologically. Such freedom, as Arendt points out, is distinct from “the free will or free thought” that philosophers have traditionally discussed. Rather than being innate, it is “something created by men to be enjoyed by men” (*OR*, 124).[[377]](#endnote-377) This freedom requires public space since it is “manifested only in certain … activities,” namely, those “that could appear and be real only when others saw them, judged them, remembered them.” Thus, for the ancients, “the life of a free man needed the presence of others. Freedom itself, therefore, needed a place where people could come together—the agora, the market-place, or the polis, the political space proper” (OR, 31). This need points to the fact that the being of political freedom is correlated to its appearing. As Arendt writes, such freedom consists of “deeds and words which are meant to appear, whose very existence hinges on appearance” (OR, 92). Given this, a fruitful way to study political freedom is through the study of such appearing and the motion (the “deeds” and the publicly expressed “words”) that shape it. The freedom whose existence requires its appearing is, by definition, a subject of phenomenological inquiry.[[378]](#endnote-378)

Such inquiry, however, confronts an impasse when we attempt to apply Arendt’s insights to our present political situation. Arendt claims that public space and its corresponding freedom have largely disappeared from the modern world. This is because of their tie to “action,” that is, to the motion of conducting public affairs. Arendt sharply distinguishes this action, which consists in “acting and speaking together,” from “labor” and “work” (HC, p. 198). [[379]](#endnote-379) The domination of modern society by the latter leads to the atrophy and near disappearance of both public space and political freedom. “Labor,” which she takes as essentially private, has no place for public space, replacing it with the workplace of the factory or office. As for “work,” which is her term for fabrication, it reduces the public realm to the “the exchange market, where [the fabricator] can show the products of his hand,” this being, in today’s terms, the spaces of the market place and mall (HC, p. 160). Lacking a proper public realm, political freedom, whose “actual content … is participation in public affairs, or administration of the public realm,” becomes, itself, unavailable (OR, 32). It is replaced by a series of negative liberties that are “meant to institute permanent restraining controls upon all political power” (OR, 108). Freedom, in other words, comes to mean freedom *from* (rather than participation *in*) political power. In Arendt’s terms, genuine political freedom becomes the “lost treasure” of “the revolutionary tradition” (OR, 215).

I am going to argue that this pessimistic assessment follows from Arendt’s exclusion of labor and work from the public realm. Against Arendt’s claim that such activities are essentially private, I shall show that they, like action, manifest our embodied being-in-the-world. Arendt fails to see this because she adopts the ancient prejudice against embodiment. Once we do take account of our embodiment, however, there is a way of phenomenologically analyzing public space that includes the motion of both labor and work. The result is a much more inclusive version of the openness of public space, one that allows us see how it functions in modern, democratic politics. First, however, we must review Arendt’s account of labor, work, and action.

**Labor**

Arendt admits, her “distinction between labor and work … is unusual” (HC, 79). It is based on the anonymous, vanishing quality of manual labor (see (HC, p. 81). In this, it is distinguished from work or making, “which adds new objects to the human artifice” (HC, 88). As Arendt describes its motion: “It is the mark of all laboring that it leaves nothing behind, that the result of its effort is almost as quickly consumed as the effort is spent (HC, p. 87). Obvious examples of labor, so defined, are cooking and cleaning—in fact, all the myriad chores that are required to keep a household running. It is not just ourselves who consume the results of our efforts. Nature also does its part. The result is our “constant, unending fight against the processes of growth and decay through which nature forever invades the human artifice.” Thus, labor is required to maintain our human world. Roads have to be resurfaced, buildings refurbished, growth cleared away, and so on. In Arendt’s words, “The protection and preservation of the world against natural processes are among the toils which need the monotonous performance of daily repeated chores” (HC, 100).

The very repetitive quality of labor, the fact that it is no longer done than it needs to be done again, associates its processes with those of nature. Both our own biological processes and those “of growth and decay in the world” are, according to Arendt, “part of the cyclical movement of nature and therefore endlessly repetitive.” The same holds for the “human activities which arise out of the necessity to cope with them.” They “are bound to the recurring cycles of nature and have in themselves no beginning and no end” (HC, 98). Thus, our biological necessity to eat involves the endless cycle of cooking, eating and washing up. On a larger scale, it involves the planting and harvesting of crops that follow the cycle of the seasons. The root of these necessities is, of course, our embodiment. We labor because we are embodied and, hence, are subject to the body’s necessities for food, clothing, and shelter. In Arendt’s words “as the natural process of life is located in the body, there is no more immediately life-bound activity than laboring” (HC, 110). Because we labor with our body, we feel our bodily vitality as we labor.[[380]](#endnote-380) We also, however, share its privacy. As Arendt observes, “Nothing … is more private than the bodily functions of the life process” (HC, 111). Thus, no one can eat for you, sleep for you or perform for you a host of other organic functions. For Arendt, this privacy of our embodied functioning has two results. On the one hand, the “the privacy of appropriation” through labor that John Locke argued for receives its plausibility from the privacy of “the bodily functions of the life process.”[[381]](#endnote-381) It is, in other words, the privacy of the body that, mediated through labor, makes the products of labor the private property of the laborer. On the other hand, this very privacy makes the laborer—in Arendt’s terms, the *animal laborans*—to be “worldless.” In her words: “The *animal laborans* does not flee the world but is ejected from it insofar as he is imprisoned in the privacy of his own body, caught in the fulfillment of need in which nobody can share and which nobody can fully communicate” (HC, 118-19). The activity of labor, then, is incapable of producing public space because of its privacy. The fact that it maintains the world does not compensate for this. In Arendt’s’ view, even in such maintenance it leaves “nothing behind” to affect such space since “the result of its effort” is constantly being consumed.

**Work**

Work, or making, distinguishes itself from labor in being an activity that focuses on a product that outlasts the laboring process. The result of its activity is the “sheltering world,” consisting of all the more or less permanent objects forming this world. Thus, while the cutlery, dishes, table and chairs that we use while eating are part of this world, the food we consume is not. These relatively permanent objects humanize our world, distinguishing it from that of bare nature. For Arendt, then: “The reality and reliability of the human world rest primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they were produced, and potentially even more permanent than the lives of their authors” (HC, 94-5). Another distinction between work and labor is the fact that the work that makes things is guided by an “image or model” of the end product (HC, 140). This “does not disappear with the finished project,” but survives it “intact.” It, thus, can be used again and again. With this, we have the “potential multiplication inherent in work,” a potentially “infinite continuation of fabrication” (HC, 141). Now, the fact that fabrication is goal-directed means that it evinces a clear separation of means and end. The end, the mental image or model, is grasped by the mind. It is in terms of it that we grasp the means as means, these being the physical resources employed in the model’s realization. As Arendt admits, labor also produces for an end, that of consumption. This end, however, “lacks the worldly permanence of a piece of work.” Consequently, “the end of the process is not determined by the end product but rather by the exhaustion of the labor power.” What is produced serves to renew it. The products of labor become “means of subsistence and reproduction of labor power” (HC, 143). This, rather than the particular consumable products, is the true end.

In Arendt’s account, work or making stands halfway between labor and action. While labor is described as a bodily activity, work adds to this the notion of a goal separate from the laboring process. Unlike action, which works almost entirely on the level of speech, work does involve physical activity. But it also involves the conception of the end by the mind. This distinction is crucial. It marks the difference between the *animal laborans*, Arendt’s term for the laborer, and *homo faber*, her term for the worker or artisan who makes use of his intelligence to shape his world. Arendt calls the *animal laborans* “worldless” and, thus, “incapable of building or inhabiting a public, worldly realm” (HC, 160). By contrast, she writes, “*homo faber* is fully capable of having a public realm of his own, even though it may not be a political realm, properly speaking.” Although he physically labors in the privacy of his workplace, he leaves this behind to sell his wares. In Arendt’s words: “His public realm is the exchange market, where he can show the products of his hand and receive the esteem which is due him” (ibid.).

While work saves the laboring process from worldlessness, it, itself, is also in need of salvation. The difficulty it faces is aptly summed up by Aristotle when he writes that if we “make all our choices for the sake of something else … the process will go on infinitely” and “our desire would be futile.”[[382]](#endnote-382) Work faces this impasse because, as making, it is “entirely determined by the categories of means and end” (HC, 143). Given that the end is distinct from the means, this signifies that everything it encounters is understood under the category of what-is-it-for. In Arendt’s words, “the utility standard inherent in the very activity of fabrication” is such “that the relationship between means and end on which it relies is very much like a chain whose every end can serve again as a means in some other context” (HC, 153-54). Given that the chain is potentially unending and given, as well, that utilitarianism understands meaning as the what-is-it-for, or purpose, of something, what we face in the lack of any ultimate end is the meaninglessness of the entire chain. As Arendt describes this, we become “caught in the unending chain of means and ends without ever arriving at some principle which could justify the category of means and end, that is, of utility itself. The ‘in order to’ has become the content of the ‘for-the-sake-of’’; in other words, utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness” (HC, 154).

**Action**

The motion of action is what gives us a way out of this impasse. This is because action is performed for its own sake. In other words, it contains its purpose in itself. Since it exhibits its what-it-is-for (its meaning) in its performance, we need only regard the action itself to grasp its meaning or purpose. Action thus saves the world of work from its meaninglessness. It does this through its character of making things appear, not as means to something else, but rather as themselves. What we find here is a joining of means and ends. The actualization of the one is the actualization of the other. Arendt expresses this in terms of Aristotle’s conception of *energeia*—a term, whose literal signification, as earlier noted, is “being-at-work” or “being-in-act” (the root being *en ergon*). The special character of this actualization, she writes, “was conceptualized in Aristotle’s notion of *energeia* (‘actuality’), with which he designated all activities that do not pursue an end … but exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself.” This, holds in particular for the “the living deed and the spoken word” of political action. Here, as Arendt writes, “the end (telos) is not pursued [as something external] but lies in the activity itself” (HC, 206).

What this signifies is that political life is for political life. Such life, in other words, wills its own continuance. The same holds for the freedom that is its concomitant—the freedom whose “actual content … is participation in public affairs, or administration of the public realm.” The exercise of such freedom is for its own sake. Its goal is its own actualization. Patočka expresses the same sentiment when he writes, “The reason for the special position of politics is that political life in its original and primordial form is nothing other than active freedom itself.” This means that it is “from freedom” and “for freedom.”[[383]](#endnote-383) Its goal is precisely the same freedom that forms its content, the freedom from which it springs.

There is, in fact, a multiple actualization at work here. Arendt introduces it when she writes that in politics, “the ‘product’ is identical with the performing act itself.” In this it is like “the performance of the dancer” (HC, 207). On the one hand, we cannot tell the dancer from the dance. On the other, the point of dancing (the ‘product’ it produces) is the dance itself. Thus, both the dance and the dancer are simultaneously actualized. Now, for Patočka, this characterization applies to organic life itself. He writes that “Movement [for such life] is not simply what realizes goals, it itself is a goal.”[[384]](#endnote-384) According to Arendt, however, this double actualization occurs primarily in political life. In the “acting and speaking” that make up its action, she writes, “men show who they are, [they] reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world” (HC, 179). In other words, not only are speech and action “the modes in which human beings appear to each other” as political actors, they also constitute in this motion their substance as such (HC, 176). Given that these modes are intersubjective, that is, demand the presence of others, so is the being of the actors that they actualize. The result, as Arendt writes, is “the actualization of the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique being among equals” (HC, 178).

Political life makes this possible since it provides a set of rules and conventions whereby people who are naturally unequal confront each other as equals, that is, as equally entitled to participate in public life (OR, 30-31). Their actualization as participants, which is one with the motion of political life, brings with it the actualization of the public space they inhabit. Arendt expresses this in terms of the *polis*, understood as “the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together.” Its “true space,” she claims, “lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be.” This means that “action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost anytime and anywhere. It is a space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly” (HC, 198-99). This explicit appearing is also their existing as participants in political life. It is one with the freedom that forms the content of such life. All are actualized together. Here, Arendt writes, “reality, … humanly and politically speaking, is the same as appearance.” To be deprived of such appearing is, thus, “to be deprived of reality” (HC, 199).

**The Exclusion of Labor and Work**

We should not let our admiration for the brilliance of Hannah Arendt’s analysis blind us to the severe limitations she places on the concepts of political space and action. Like Patočka, she uses Aristotle’s concept of *energeia* to draw the connection between motion, actualization, and appearing. For her, however, the connection is such that it excludes *homo laborans* and *homo faber* from the public sphere. What animates the motion of political life, she writes, is “[t]he conviction that the greatest that man can achieve is his own appearance and actualization … Against it stands the conviction of *homo faber* that man’s products may be more—and not only more lasting—than he is himself, as well as *the animal laborans’* firm belief that life is the highest of all goods” (HC, 208). *Homo faber*’s conviction, in animating his motion, reduces his public space to the market place. Freedom, correspondingly, becomes freedom to trade as well as the freedom to choose between the products offered. For the purchaser, such products form the content—the appearing reality—of his freedom. As for *Homo laborans*, his fixation on life reduces freedom to the “welfare of the people,” which is understood in terms of their material needs—the needs that sustain life (OR, 60). Correspondingly, the domination of the laboring classes coincides with the demand “that the public realm—reserved, as far as memory could reach, to those who *were* free, namely carefree of all the worries that are connected with life’s necessity, with bodily needs—should offer its space and its light to this immense majority who are not free because they are driven by daily needs” (OR, p. 48). Given the worldlessness of the *animal laborans*, this is tantamount to the collapse of public space. For Arendt, neither *homo fa*ber nor the *animal laborans* share the basic belief that animated public life and action—the conviction, namely, “that no one could be called happy without his share in public happiness, that no one could be called free without his experience in public freedom and that no one could be called either happy or free without participating and having a share in public power” (OR, 255). Instead, both consider freedom as a license to pursue their private interests.

There are a number of reasons for Arendt’s exclusion of labor and work from the public realm. Beyond those cited, two stand out. The first concerns the temporality that can be ascribed to her description of them. Only action, which focuses on the future, possesses for her the temporality required for public life. Labor, by contrast, focuses on the present. In Arendt’s account, it has a circular temporality, which means that every point returns again and again. Every point thus can be regarded both as an end as well as a beginning. As such, it retains its claim to the present. It never really loses this claim since it will inevitably become present again. Labor manifests this focus on the present in the fact that “the result of its effort is almost as quickly consumed as the effort is spent.” What we have here is a collapse of means and ends in terms of the ultimate end, which is simply the ongoing, *present* continuance of life. It is because it focuses on this that it “leaves no trace behind.” Work, by contrast, opens the gap between means and ends in its production of something that outlasts the productive process. Its result is the “sheltering world,” the already-made world into which we are born and act. As the expression, “already-made” indicates, the emphasis here is on the past. My making—for example, my building a house, adds to the already-made world. But such additions are always in the context of my situatedness (my “thrownness”) in an already made world. By contrast, in political action the future is dominant. At issue in its words and deeds is how we should shape public space through our collective projects. Thus, the passage of a new law sets a rule for how people *shall behave* as they act in accordance with the law. At issue in such passage is not just their future behavior but also the future of the public space that is shaped by such behavior. Seen in this light, action’s collapse of ends and means, i.e., its acting from freedom for freedom, casts it permanently in the future.

The second reason for Arendt’s exclusion of labor and work from public life is to be found in her adoption of the traditional “contempt for labor.” (HC, 81). This contempt was for the “slavish nature of all occupations that served the needs for the maintenance of life” (HC, 83). Essentially, it was contempt for our animality. According to Arendt, for the ancients, “[w]hat men share with all other forms of animal life was not considered to be human.” They also believed that the condition of slavery, which was that of labor, “carried with it a metamorphosis of man into something akin to a tame animal” (HC, 84). Arendt’s adoption of these views is signified by her remarking “that the use of the term ‘animal’ in the concept of *animal laborans* … is fully justified. The *animal laborans* is indeed only one, at best the highest, of the animal species which populate the earth” (ibid.). Now, what unites the laboring animal with all the other animals is the fact of his embodiment. His labor is physical labor. The needs he sustains are physical needs. Like all other animals, “the *animal laborans*,” in Arendt’s view, “… is imprisoned in the privacy of his own body, caught in the fulfillment of need in which nobody can share and which nobody can fully communicate” (HC, 118-19). Like the animals, he is “worldless” and incapable of public life. The same contempt, though in a less marked form, marked the ancient attitude towards work or fabrication. Work adds to labor the explicit use of the mind since it is guided by a mental image or model of its end product. But this product’s fashioning still requires physical labor. It is also equally dependent on a physical substrate. Thus, the ancient contempt for the artisan once again comes down to an unease about our embodiment—an embodiment that is required if we are to interact with physical nature.

Only action escapes this embodiment. This is because its medium is, by and large, “speech as a means of persuasion.” “To be political, to live in a *polis*,” Arendt writes, “meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force” (HC, 26). In fact, “Aristotle’s definition of man as a *zöon politikon* [a political animal] … can be fully understood only if one adds his second famous definition of man as a *zöon logon ekhon* [‘a living being capable of speech’]” (HC, 27). This is because to be political is to engage in “a way of life in which speech and only speech made sense and where the central concern of all citizens was to talk with each other” (ibid.). Thus, it is through the persuasion of speech (logos) that collective projects are decided upon. The same holds for the laws that guide the behavior of the collective. They too are the result of the assembly being persuaded. The point holds even though political discourse depends upon the labor and the work to realize its projects. Its relation to them is summed up in Aristotle’s description of politics as a “master science.” For Aristotle, politics “uses the rest of the sciences”—that is, the knowledge that they provide—and “it legislates what people are to do and what they are not to do.”[[385]](#endnote-385) It, thus, controls the polis as the mind does the body. Its privilege, in fact, is that of the mind *over* the body. Consisting entirely of the mental activity of speaking and persuading through speech—i.e. through the words and reasoning that *logos* signifies—political action represents the “soul” of the city-state. The disregard of embodiment implied here is exemplified by Plato’s description of the state as the soul written large (*Republic* 368b-369a). To think of the state as a “soul” is, for Arendt, to exclude from its public life those elements that represent its embodied nature.

**Embodiment as Intertwining**

Given the nature of democratic politics, this exclusion is, of course, impossible today. To insist that public space demands such exclusion is to adopt Arendt’s pessimistic assessment of the possibilities of modern, political life. Such possibilities are those of public space, which in her view has all but disappeared. If we are to avoid this assessment, we must think this space anew. It must, in fact, be understood in terms of our embodied motion in the world. Such motion does not just characterize labor and work. Embodiment is also required for action. Only embodied beings can physically voice their thoughts. Only they can be physically present to each other. Behind Arendt’s ordering of the human condition into labor, work, and action is, as indicated, the ancient contempt for embodiment. Labor is conceived entirely in bodily terms; work, with its use of mental images, is described as occupying an intermediate position, while action is conceived as an essentially disembodied mental activity. In fact, however, all three activities are embodied. We are in the world as embodied: we are bodily present as one among many appearing objects in the world. It is also as embodied, that is, as possessing physical sense organs, that the world is sensuously in us, that is, comes to presence in our embodied consciousness. To think public space in terms of this embodiment is to understand how this intertwining of self and world shapes the public space we share.

With this, we return to the conclusions of the third and fourth chapters. As Chapter 3 noted, our perceptual faith is such that we believe that we grasp things as they are in themselves and that their apprehension is within us. The reason why we hold so firmly to this view is that we can understand neither side without reference to the other. To speak about my embodied perceptual life without referring to the world is impossible. The same holds in reverse. I must speak of the world in terms of my embodied perception of it. Each side, in other words, provides a place of the disclosure for the other. Thus, the reason why I claim that a perception is “mine” is that I perceive in and through my body. My body, through its sensuous activities—focusing my eyes, moving to get a better look, etc.—provides the place where the world can come to sensuous presence. The same embodiment, however, positions me in the world. My embodied, acting self can be examined as part of it. The pattern, here, perfectly general. It applies to my ability to engage in projects, both individually and collectively, and to communicate the senses that these projects reveal. All of these activities are expressions of our bodily “I can.” They are all disclosive of the world that we are in. In Merleau-Ponty’s phrase, they are ways in which we “line” the world—the very world that, as embodied, we are in and are disclosed as such.

What is crucial here is the the body’s motility, a motility whose sense embraces all of its actions. This motion takes the form of a series of embodied “I can’s,” which begins with our physical abilities to sense, manipulate and, hence, disclose the physical characteristics of objects and which ends in our disclosure of and participation in a given, collectively constituted, cultural world. In this series, each level serves as a foundation for the next. Thus, the “I can” that is correlated to the grasp of a violin as a sensuous, physical presence is required for the “I can” that discloses it as a musical instrument by playing it. This, in turn, is required for the “I can play with others” that discloses the violin’s role in a string quartet. Correlated to this last is the disclosure of the player as a member of this ensemble. It is, correspondingly, also the disclosure of a world, that of the music written for the players, which can only exist as a correlate of their activity. On each of these levels, the senses that we disclose can be described as both inside of us and external to us. For example, the colors that we see can be asserted as actualized within us and as present outside of us in the colored objects that we see. The same holds of the meanings that we collectively generate. On the one hand, they are within us as what we have in mind as we collectively function. On the other, they are also external to us, such externalization being a function of our actions. These actions, in exhibiting them, also manifest ourselves as within the world they structure. To ask whether the objects that are disclosed through our actions are within or external to us is, in fact, to miss the point of the intertwining. As Chapter 4 put this, the action or motion that discloses them is also their actualization. In Patočka’s words, “movement … first makes this or that being *apparent*, causes it to manifest itself in its own original manner.”[[386]](#endnote-386) In doing so, it is what actualizes our openness to this manifestation. It, thus, actualizes the self *in* which the world is present.

Speaking of the “space of appearance … where men … make their appearance explicitly,” Arendt writes that “[m]ost men … —the slave … the laborer or craftsman … the jobholder or businessmen in our world—do not live in it.” The fact that they do not means that they are “deprived of reality, which humanly and politically speaking, is the same as appearance.” As the basis of her claim is the fact that “the reality of the world is guaranteed by others, by its appearing to us all” (HC, 199). Her point is that such reality is intersubjective. Since we cannot see through one another’s eyes, the only way we can grasp the real is through the discourse that links us to others. In excluding labor and work from such discourse, she thus deprives them of the reality that is the same as appearance. At the basis of this exclusion is the embodied nature of their activities. The body they employ imposes a privacy that is incapable of discourse.

Here, we may note in passing, that such privacy is not absolute. It is prelinguistically accessible through empathy. Someone hurts his hand and we reach for our own. We see someone cut himself and we wince. Empathy is not limited to allowing us access to the inner distress (and pleasure) of Others. It is also at work in our teaching and learning from others. This is because it allows us to bodily take up their standpoint and, thus, imaginatively place ourselves in their action. A batsman swings his bat, a basketball player strains to place the ball in the hoop and we imaginatively feel ourselves experiencing these exertions. A similar experience occurs when we learned to tie our shoes by imitating those who first showed us how. Doing so, we observed the process *from their perspective*. Imaginatively, we were there with them as they knelt down, grasped the laces, and moved and knotted them with their fingers. The same empathetic embodiment is present in our learning all our basis projects. As such, it is crucial to our learning the senses such projects exhibit and, thus, to the pragmatic meanings of things that we express linguistically. Empathy, in fact, is a form of embodiment and an intertwining. Allowing us to be imaginatively present in each other, it intertwines us with Others and their “I can,” making each of us a place of disclosure for our Others. The intersubjective confirmation that gives us our sense of “the reality of the world” is, as Arendt correctly observes, established by discourse. What she misses is the fact that this sense is present through the intertwining that allows language to “line” the world, providing a place for its disclosure. In this, she forgets the role that empathy plays in establishing discourse. Through it, we begin the process of engaging in common projects and disclosing a common world, one that can be intersubjectively verified and, hence, be counted as real.

**The intertwining of labor, making, and action**

To apply these insights to Arendt’s account of public space is to see how the motion of the intertwining structures the elements that, for Arendt, make up the human condition: labor, work, and action. Viewed in terms of such motion, each is a way of disclosing the world. Each, correspondingly, is a way in which humanity is disclosed as part of the world. Given that our human condition is “plural”—that is, involves others and their modes of being in the world—such ways are not separate, but interwoven. In other words, the intersubjective nature of our human condition is such that the factors composing it are intertwined even as the humanity they form is intertwined with the world. To claim in this context that labor, work, and action are intertwined is to claim that they achieve their presence through embodying one another. Doing so, they serve as the place of disclosure for each other—i.e., as the places for their reciprocal appearing. This appearing occurs in conjunction with our disclosure of the world. We disclose the world even as we disclose the elements of our human condition. The public space we share is, in fact, the result of both forms of disclosure.

The intertwining of labor with work or fabrication is implicit in Arendt’s statement that labor involves the “constant, unending fight against the processes of growth and decay”—the processes “through which nature forever invades the human artifice.” Labor is required to maintain this artifice, which is the world that we fashion. But this means that labor is disclosive of the made world. It reveals it, in Arendt’s words, as in need of constant “protection and preservation” (HC, 100). The public presence of labor, thus, does not vanish the moment it is expended. It continues in the maintenance of the world we fashion. This world, reciprocally, discloses labor as historical. It is not the case, as Arendt claims, that “*laboring* always moves in the circle,” that it follows the ahistorical “recurring cycles of nature” (HC, 98). The laborer labors in an historical context, one that shapes his activity. Thus, today’s farmer, with his vast array of machinery, engages in a radically different activity than that practiced by the farmer in the ancient world. The same holds for the laborer in the factory in comparison with his counterpart in the workshops of antiquity. It also holds for all the activities that protect and preserve the made world. The reason for this is that labor occurs in the already made world. In fact, it is involved not only in the process of maintaining it, but also in that of making it. The made world embodies itself through such labor, the very labor that it discloses as historical.

A similar intertwining occurs between making and action. As Arendt writes, the freedom that characterizes political action requires “a place where people [can] come together—the agora, the market-place, or the polis” (OR, 31). Such a place is required for such action to appear. Its appearance, in other words, requires the made world. This holds in spite of her claim that action and speech, by themselves, can create the space where they can appear (HC, 198). Political action, in fact, requires a venue for its creation of such space. This venue can be the physical space of a public plaza or legislative assembly. It can also be the virtual space provided by the internet—the space, for example, that gave rise to the brief “Arab Spring.” Whatever its form, such space is part of our made world. Action comes to presence in this world, which means that this world can also be used to limit it. This involves not just the attempts to censor the internet. It also involves controlling the venues for our physical presence to one another. The commercial control of architecture can, for example, limit these venues to the workplace and the mall. In such environments, action becomes reduced to working and shopping. Our corresponding freedoms shrink to the choice of jobs and products.

The need of action for a place to appear points to the fact that action embodies itself in the made world—the world that serves as the place of its disclosure. As intertwined with action, this made world, in turn, embodies itself in action. Action, as the place of its disclosure, exhibits the made world in terms of the decisions that shape it. It does so because of the openness or freedom of action’s discourse. The subjects of such discourse are the possibilities we have of shaping our surrounding world. What is revealed here is that this world is subject to our decisions. As made by us, it is exhibited as the result of our choices, choices that could have been otherwise and could, in fact, be different in the future. Thus, action reveals that the made world need not be shaped simply by commercial decisions—that it can include non-commercial, public places. The fact that the made world is itself intertwined with that of labor transfers this revelation to the latter. It, too, is the result of our choices. The conditions of the laboring world are not set in stone, but are rather fixed by our decisions. In other words, the historical context in which the laborer labors is as much a result of politics as it is of economics. This is because the economics of the made world is intertwined with both the necessities of labor and the freedom of political action.

**The discourse of public space: one-sidedness and calling into question**

The freedom of political action is not unlimited. It is subject to the made world and the venues this offers for the creation of public space. It is also subject to the necessities of the labor that it requires to actualize its projects. Action cannot undermine either without impairing itself. The same mutual dependence holds for the other elements of the human condition. All are necessary for the public space that manifests our humanity. When properly functioning, such space serves as the place where each of these elements can call the others into question. What is called into question is the one-sidedness of each element, when regarded by itself.

Arendt’s descriptions, which attempt to isolate these elements from their intertwining, depict such one-sidedness. Considering labor apart from the role it plays in the productive process, she sees it as marked by the fact “that it leaves nothing behind, that the result of its effort is almost as quickly consumed as the effort is spent” (HC, 87).  This means that everything, from its perspective, is a consumer good, something to use up almost as soon as it is made.  Thus, when it becomes preeminent, we have the consumer society whose dominant mode “consists in treating all use objects as though they were consumer goods, so that a chair or a table is now consumed as rapidly as a dress and a dress is used up almost as quickly as food” (HC, 124).[[387]](#endnote-387) Work, with its focus on products that outlast the laboring process calls this perspective into question. It points out that the very transience that marks it means that it leaves no sheltering world behind. Work, in its fashioning our lasting, human environment, saves the laboring process not just from transience but also, in Arendt’s view, from worldlessness. Work, of course, also has its own one-sidedness. Everything, from its perspective, is reduced to being a means to an end. In making, things have value if they can be used to make something else. From the perspective of the production process, value is use-value. A tree, for example, is seen as having value if it can be used as wood, which, in turn, is valued if it can be used to fashion some object, which, in turn, has value if it can be put to some further use. If, however, everything is useful only in terms of something else, nothing has any intrinsic value. There is only an endless chain of means and ends in which each thing has value only through being useful for the next. In Arendt’s words, if we let the utility “standards which governed its coming into being” rule the world that the production process builds, then “the same world becomes worthless as the employed material, a mere means for further ends” (HC, 156).

Action is what calls this view into question. Just as the laboring process needs the perspective of work to save it from worldlessness, so work needs another expression of the human condition if the world it constructs is to keep its value. It must, in other words, be apprehended from a perspective distinct from the one that rules the production process. This is provided by action, with its focus on activities that are performed for their own sake. For Arendt, the end of action “lies in the activity itself” (HC, 206). This is because the end of action is the person it manifests. Thus, the actions that reveal the actor are not a means to some end external to themselves. They are rather the actuality of the actor: they are the acting person’s ongoing being-in-act. With this, we have an alternative to the means-ends relationship that renders things valueless by always placing their value in something else. In action, there is no higher end or value than the person manifested through action. Action thus calls the utilitarian perspective of work into question by pointing out, as Arendt cites Aristotle, that the “work” of man is “to live well.” “This specifically human achievement,” she writes, “lies altogether outside of the category of means and ends” (HC, 207). The means to achieve it, the virtues, are part of the actuality of the end. They are inherent in living well. The “life” of such living, along with its concomitant freedom, is an end in itself. It is pursued for its own sake.

Arendt is notably silent on the limitations of action. She does not see the one-sidedness of action, which springs from the disdain of ancients for labor and work. In the societies where it dominates, both the producer and laborer are devalued. Thus, in classical Athens, craftsmen were treated with aristocratic contempt, while labor was degraded to the point of slavery. Not just slaves, who made up a majority of the population, were considered as incapable of action. The women who carried out the work of the household were, with the household slaves, denied any public presence. This separation of action from making and labor deprives societies of the permanence and organic vitality necessary for their continuance. At the extreme, it pits the few, who have the leisure to engage in political life, against the many that are excluded. The only remedy for this is to open up public space to their interventions. More precisely, labor and work must be allowed to play their part in the discourse that creates such space. They must be free to call action, as well as one another, into question. Thus, work must be allowed to point out to labor that its focus on consumption results in a meaningless consumerism. Left unchecked, it results in a disposable society that would untimely disposes of itself, a society that would efface itself as it consumed its products, leaving behind a historical blank. Similarly, labor must be permitted to point out that productive work demands the labor that sustains the world it fashions. Action, in turn, must be allowed to remind work that not all value is use value. Generally speaking, to make work’s perspective dominant is to devalue such “unproductive” labor as the nurture and education of the young. Since they do not make things, their only value is that of creating “productive” individuals—i.e., narrowly fitting them for the work force. Insofar as action does not fit into this utilitarian paradigm, it too is devalued by work as mere “politics” and unproductive “talk.” Politics, when viewed from the perspective of the production process, is regarded as a problem rather than as a way of resolving the collective difficulties that we face.

**The temporality of public space**

Such views are prevalent in contemporary, commercial society. To counter them, the discourse that shapes public space has to include their being called into question. For this, however, we have to expand the notion of public space. Abandoning the ancient prejudices against labor and work, we must open it up to all the forms of our embodied presence—in particular, to their different temporalities.

If we focus, like Arendt, on action, then the dominant temporality of public space is that of the future. This is because, in determining our collective projects, the political process determines the future shaped by them. At issue in its debates is the effect that legislation will have on our behavior and hence on our public space this informs. This orientation to the future determines a corresponding concept of citizenship. Viewed in terms of action, citizenship abstracts from issues of ethnic, religious or economic identity. It does not regard them as qualifications for participating in public affairs. What is important is the participation itself. To be a citizen in a state is to take part in its shared projects. It is to participate though public discussion and voting in its decision-making process. It is also to commit oneself to fulfill the obligations such decisions entail. So conceived, the identity of a citizen is not based on the past. Its focus is on the future as present in the projects of political action. Those who participate in this action gain their identities from it, i.e., from the roles they play in the accomplishment of the agreed-upon goals.

This concept of identity overlooks the social and economic divisions that can rend the social fabric.[[388]](#endnote-388) Not only does the concept ignore labors’ focus on the present with its continuing demands for maintenance and replenishment, it also forgets the past’s presence in the form of the already given world. What is forgotten is the fact that the realization of our political decisions relies on the accumulated resources it offers. While it is in terms of a project that such resources are seen as such (seen as means for achieving the project’s goal), this does not mean that having a project is, itself, sufficient. A goal without appropriate resources is just an aspiration. Action, then, is as dependent on what the past offers as it is on the presence of the labour that employs such resources. This dependence on the past is not just material, it also involves the decision-making process itself. Without the accumulated experience offered by the past, this process loses its essential context. It cannot access the historical reasons for its proposed action or the history of its previous attempts to achieve the goals it proposes. This history is embedded in the already given world, understood as a residue of the successes and failures of our past political actions. This world bears witness to the economic and social interests that shaped it as well as to the labor and the work that went into its creation. A citizen’s identity within it is shaped by the intertwining of all these factors. As such, it requires all the temporal modes: the futurity of action, the pastness that gives action its context, and the present of the ongoing process of laboring and consuming.

Public space, if it is to function properly, also requires them. They must be included in the discourse that shapes it. The temporality that includes all three is, in fact, the temporality of the action of decision making. We choose the future that we wish to realize in the light of the experience and the resources offered by our past. Doing so, we understand our present as the place of actualization, the place where the future becomes reality by virtue of employing the resources we have accumulated. This place, by definition, is where we verify the correctness of our assumptions. This can be put in terms of the fact that the failure to actualize a proposed future is also a failure to take account of what the past actually offered us to fulfill our goals. It shows itself, concretely, in the mismatch between laboring and consuming in societies that strive to realize ill-conceived goals. The excesses of the former and the deficits of the latter, which characterized the “five year plans” of communist regimes, verify such failure.

In public space, each these three temporal modes depends upon and, in fact, is intertwined with the others. Thus, the past requires the future as the place of its disclosure since it is only in terms of the future that the past is revealed as what it is in practical life—namely, as the storehouse of means for our ends. We can also say that the future in its presence as a practical goal exhibits the past as potentiality—the potentiality to realize this goal. To reverse this, the past serves as the place of disclosure for the future by giving it its essential context. It discloses it as a goal that has been proposed to meet historically given needs. Similarly, both the past and the future serve to disclose the present that always lies between them as the place of actualization and, hence, of verification. All of these disclosures are required for public space. Concretely regarded, they are the temporalities of the elements that Arendt takes as composing our human condition. Their intertwining mirrors the intertwining of labor, work, and action. Given this, we cannot subordinate the past and the present to the future. To do so would ignore the complex reality of political life. All three temporalities, with their distinct stresses, are required for the public, political space of appearing.

**The democratization of action**

Given the above, public space is not a “lost treasure” of “the revolutionary tradition,” but rather a demand for inclusivity. The crisis of public space involves inclusion. Arendt writes, in discussing the “lost treasure” of the revolution, “The relationship between a ruling elite and the people, between the few, who among themselves constitute a public space, and the many, who spend their lives outside it and in obscurity, has remained unchanged … The trouble lies in the lack of public spaces to which the people at large would have entrance and from which an elite could be selected, or rather, where it could select itself” (OR, 277). As the protests that fueled the occupy Wall Street movement and the abortive Arab Spring indicate, the difficulty is not with the lack of physical (and virtual) public spaces, but with the exclusion of the protestors by the tradition of conceiving the political action as reserved for the elites—that is, for the leisured few who have the financial means and personal connections required to run for office. The narrowness of this elite, when combined with the non-public nature of much of its business, leaves it, as the protesters claimed, open to corruption. Arendt admits this when she writes, “the only remedies against the misuse of public power by private individuals lie in the public realm itself, in the light which exhibits each deed enacted within its boundaries, in the very visibility to which it exposes all those who enter it” (OR, 253). It is one thing for these “private individuals” to be part of such space, engaging in its debates. It is another thing for them to control its discourse by gifts and contributions to the few who are part of it. The point holds not just for individuals, but also for the groups that form the elements of the human condition. Their attempts to compensate for their exclusion by private influence lead inevitably to the distortion of public space. This distortion is that of appearing as such and, hence, of what counts as our public reality.

That so many people feel excluded from such reality—that they do not recognize it as their own—is, in fact, a mark of the crisis of our times. The only remedy for it involves the rehabilitation of public space. We need to democratize the debates that constitutes the public space of appearing. What is required is the democratization of “action” in the most fundamental of the senses that Arendt assigns to it—that of showing who and what those who engage in it are. The future of such showing undoubtedly involves the internet as well as its as yet unimagined successors. These have, for many observers, the potential to democratize action. In fact, as the multiplication of electronic media indicates, public space, like labor, work, and action, is not static. Neither is freedom understood in Arendt’s sense as the freedom to participate in public life. Both share the history of appearing as well as its future.

What remains the same in this history is Patočka’s and Aristotle’s conception of motion as the ground of actualization and appearing. Such motion is often mediated. The shaping of public space that occurred through political pamphlets, the press, and television now often occurs through the internet. The latter, however, brings its own problems. While before a reader would confront a variety of views in regarding the offerings of a newsstand or magazine rack, the internet is frequently the home of sealed off virtual communities, where participants move and are moved by each other within the range of narrow concerns. Public space, by definition, implies a common frame for the confrontation of differing views. Thus, virtual reality, like physical space, is not public when we are limited (or limit ourselves) to the presentation of a single position. In fact, the division of public space into competing, non-communicating forums always leads to its destruction. How can phenomenology come to grip with this? How can it proceed from the theoretical study of appearing qua appearing to the practical problems presented by the history of appearing? How is it in a position to provide insights for the problems that confront us?

What is needed here is a transformation of phenomenology, one which focuses on our responsibility for the multiplicity of appearing. This is a task that will occupy the next two chapters. The first will consider the relation of Patočka's asubjective phenomenology to his political engagement. At issue will be the freedom that is both the origin and the goal of political life. The second will focus on his treatment of human rights and the selfhood that they presuppose.

**Chapter 12**

Patočka’s Transformation of Phenomenology

To understand Patočka's transformation of phenomenology, we must confront the paradox presented by his philosophical and personal legacies. Philosophically, he is known for his advocating a new version of phenomenology. In traditional Husserlian phenomenology, Patočka writes, “[t]he appearing of a being is traced back to the subjective (to the ego, experience, representation, thought) as the ultimate basis of its elucidation.” [[389]](#endnote-389) But, for Patočka, as we have seen, appearing as such is the ultimate basis. It “is, in itself, something completely original.” By this, he means that “manifesting in itself, in that which makes it manifesting, is not reducible, cannot be converted into anything that manifests itself in manifesting.”[[390]](#endnote-390) It is not some objective material structure. It is also not the structure of subjectivity. Both exist and both can show themselves. But “showing itself is not any of these things that show themselves, whether it is a psychic or physical object.”[[391]](#endnote-391) In fact, if such showing is “the ultimate basis,” then we must, Patočka writes, “take the subject, like everything else, to be a ‘result” of appearing. Its presence results from the same “apriori rules of appearing” as govern other things.[[392]](#endnote-392) In Patočka's view, then, phenomenology’s focus is not on subjectivity but on appearing as such.

Personally, Patočka's legacy is political. He is known for his actions as a spokesmen for the Charter 77 movement, which affirmed the priority of human rights. It was in defense of such rights that he died after an eleven-hour police interrogation on March 13, 1977.[[393]](#endnote-393) Such an end was not unexpected. The Charter 77 document issued on January 13th spoke of a need to accept “a certain risk” out of “respect for what is higher in humans.”[[394]](#endnote-394) By March 8th, this risk was clear. In a document issued on this date, Patočka asserted “that there are things for which it is worthwhile to suffer,” namely, “those which make life worthwhile.” Without them, “all our arts, literature, and culture become mere trades leading only from the desk to the pay office and back.”[[395]](#endnote-395) His reference is to our human rights. It is because they are essential to our humanity that it is worthwhile suffering for them. Confronting them, we encounter a moral imperative.[[396]](#endnote-396) Here, the legacy is one of praxis, of political engagement.

The question is: How do we conjoin these different legacies? Does Patočka’s personal engagement follow from his philosophical position or are they simply two disparate elements? To continue our inquiry, I am going to argue for their connection: For Patočka, the fundamental character of human rights is inherently linked to the ultimate character of appearing as such. Both are to be understood in terms of Patočka's transformation of phenomenology. This is a transformation that conjoins the theoretical with the practical by seeing them in terms of the freedom definitive of humanity.

**Practical Philosophy and the Freedom of the Epoché**

Aristotle, in his description of practical wisdom or *phronesis* (φρόνησις) gives us the clearest definition of practical philosophy. The praxis aimed at in such wisdom is not a *technē*. It is not a system of crafts and rules directed at making a product. Its focus is on action itself, i.e., on how we should act. In ethics, its inquiries concern the actions that are most suited to realizing our individual and collective potentialities. In politics, they concern how we should govern ourselves. In economics they raise the question of how best to organize the system of exchange of goods and services that our interdependent nature requires. The aim of all these inquiries is practical rather than theoretical, since at issue is: what should we do? The focus of this question is on the future. As Aristotle notes, we do not deliberate about what is past or what is always the case. We only do so with respect “to the future and to what is possible.”[[397]](#endnote-397) This means that practical wisdom is distinct from *epistemē* (ἐπιστήμη) or knowledge in the strong sense. Such knowledge concerns what “cannot be otherwise than it is.”[[398]](#endnote-398) As such, it is teachable. We can pass it on without fear of its having changed since we learnt it. Thus, we can teach what is always the case—for example, a law of nature—or what is past, for example, the winner of a battle. These are items that can be known. But the future, given that it does not yet exist, exists only as a subject for deliberation. This is why “action,” in Arendt’s sense of the term, is so problematic. At issue, in the practical deliberation that informs it, is our conduct. We deliberate concerning this conduct and, hence, the future, which we choose through acting to actualize. Such deliberation, must, of course, be informed by the other temporal modes. But however much we gain from them, the choice that confronts us in deliberation is never completely determined.

Can phenomenology engage in such deliberation? Can it focus on the practical aspects of our lives? For Husserlian phenomenology, the practice of the epoché seems to prevent this. When we perform the epoché, we suspend every thesis we have regarding the natural world. This means that we “‘put it out of action,’ we ‘exclude it,’ we ‘bracket it.’”[[399]](#endnote-399) The result, Husserl declares, is that the epoché “*completely closes off for me every judgment about spatiotemporal existence*.”[[400]](#endnote-400) Its focus is not on such existence, but on the *evidence* we have for it. Its endeavor is epistemological rather than practical. Does this mean that phenomenology is forever shut off from the realm of praxis—that it cannot concern itself with the ethical and political issues that confront us? For Patočka, this conclusion holds only if we accept Husserl’s limitation of the epoché. Husserl writes that were the epoché to have a universal application, “there would not remain any area for unmodified [non-bracketed] judgments.” Given this, “the method of bracketing” must be “definitely restricted.” [[401]](#endnote-401) It cannot apply to the consciousness engaging in the epoché. If it did, then all judgments concerning its contents would also be suspended.[[402]](#endnote-402) At this point, even the epistemological task of examining the evidence for our judgments would have to be abandoned.

What this argument fails to grasp, according to Patočka, is the freedom presupposed by the epoché. In attempting to answer how the epoché is possible, Husserl writes that “the attempt to doubt everything pertains to the realm of our *perfect freedom*.”[[403]](#endnote-403) This means that “we can with complete freedom employ the epoché on every thesis,” setting it “out of action”—i.e., suspending our belief in it.[[404]](#endnote-404) Such statements point to the fact that freedom is not a thesis of consciousness; it is not something that the epoché can bracket. It is, rather, something inherent in the epoché. As Patočka expresses this: Husserl, in proposing the epoché, “is far from suspecting that the step of the epoché is not a negation, but rather more negative than any negation, that it contains the negative, the not in the *non*-use, in the *dis*-connection” of a thesis. [[405]](#endnote-405) This means that its use implies the “unique freedom of humans with regard to entities.” [[406]](#endnote-406) Such freedom manifests “the negative character of a distance, of a remove” from entities.[[407]](#endnote-407) The epoché, Patočka claims, does not create such a remove. Rather “the act of the epoché, taken as ‘a step back from the totality of entities,’” is “grounded in our inherent freedom to step back, to dissociate ourselves from entities.”[[408]](#endnote-408) Patočka’s point is that such freedom is not some act of consciousness.[[409]](#endnote-409) It is, rather, our ontological condition. Freedom is “what characterizes humans as such.”[[410]](#endnote-410) Granting this, the practice of the epoché actually opens up phenomenology to praxis. If the epoché presupposes our freedom—the freedom that is at issue in praxis—then the epoché cannot suspend the engagement—the being-in-the-world—of such praxis. This engagement must, in other words, remain as a residuum of the epoché.

**Pragmatic Disclosure**

Given the above, we have to say that Husserl’s question—the question of the evidence for our judgments—cannot be abstracted from the question of our engagement with the world. Concretely, this means that such engagement is disclosive, is a source of evidence. Heidegger’s adoption of this position is well known. Because of its freedom, human existence—Dasein—“is care.”[[411]](#endnote-411) This means that “Dasein exists as an entity for whom, in its very being, such being is an issue.”[[412]](#endnote-412) It has to freely choose what it will do and, as a consequence, the being that it will be as the author of its actions. As Heidegger expresses this: “[The statement] ‘The Dasein is occupied with its own being’ means more precisely: it is occupied with its *ability* to be. As existent, the Dasein is free for specific possibilities of its own self. It is its own most peculiar able-to-be.”[[413]](#endnote-413) Now, in realizing its choices, it does not just exhibit its own possibilities, it also exhibits the world in which it acts. Concretely, this means that its projects disclose the things it employs in their “what is it for” and “in-order -to.”[[414]](#endnote-414) Thus, Heidegger writes, “The wood is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water-power, the wind is wind ‘in the sails.’”[[415]](#endnote-415) Our “circumspective concern” focuses on the uses which we can put the forest, mountain, river, and wind to. For example, it is because we want to sail across a lake that the wind exhibits itself as “wind in the sails.” As we gain more skill in making our way in the world, the world itself becomes more practically meaningful. We “understand” it in the sense of knowing the purposes of its elements. According to Heidegger, “interpretation,” defined as the “considering ... of something as something” articulates this understanding. It makes explicit the purposes of the objects I encounter. In Heidegger’s words, interpretation “appresents the what-it-is-for of a thing and so brings out the reference of the ‘in-order-to,’” i.e., its use in a particular project.[[416]](#endnote-416) As a result, the world becomes articulated in the evidence it provides us.

**The Ontological Difference and the Question of Appearing as Such**

Heidegger thus brings us to a position where we can say that phenomenology is the study of the evidence provided by our freely chosen practical engagements. The difficulty, for Patočka, is that he does not remain with this position. His conception of the ontological difference between entities and Being positions the latter as ultimately controlling our disclosures. Being does so by successively determining our understanding of entities. Our conception of the “real”—of the Being of entities—guides our disclosures. It privileges some projects over others. It also determines the area of relations that we take as suitable for exhibiting the reality of entities. If, for example, we understand Being as mathematically quantifiable nature, the area of relations will be given by the modern scientific laboratory with its various instruments and procedures. If it is power, then the relations given by the various technologies of power, from the technologies of the financial markets to the those of political manipulation, will serve as the frameworks for our disclosures. For Heidegger, each epoch is characterized by a dominant conception of being. Taken as a standard, it informs the epoch’s understanding of the purposes of things.[[417]](#endnote-417) Such conceptions, however, conceal the ontological difference. Following them, we understand Being in terms of the entities that we disclose through our standards. The result, Patočka writes, is that “the historically determined person … can only view Being as the Being of entities, can only thematize it [in relation to entities]; Being as such, as the origin of light (of the truth, of appearing as such) hides itself from him.”[[418]](#endnote-418)

The difficulty here is that, in taking Being as the “origin … of appearing as such,” we are no longer engaged in phenomenology. Since Being conceals itself in entities, it cannot itself be an object of phenomenological description. Only entities—the ontic—can be so described. In Patočka’s words: “We must, methodologically, hold fast to the fact that only the ontic can be an object of phenomenological description, for only the ontic can be present, and only what is present can be intuitively grasped. By contrast, the ontological can never be seen. It can only, interpretively, be explicated indirectly; it can never, itself, become present.”[[419]](#endnote-419) Given this, the ontological difference, which is *not* a difference between entities, is not a phenomenological concept. It is not intuitively based. The result, then, is that the account of appearing that appeals to the ontological difference appeals to what cannot appear. Instead of being phenomenological, the account must be hermeneutical—i.e., a matter of interpretively explicating our relation to Being.[[420]](#endnote-420)

The question Patočka faces in his rejection of Heidegger is *how to understand pragmatic disclosure in terms of appearing as such*. Patočka's response to this question is essentially threefold. The first involves his questioning Heidegger’s assertion that “Dasein is free for specific possibilities *of its own self*” (italics added). Exercising this freedom, Dasein projects as practical goals the possibilities that it finds in itself. In the projects that realize these goals, it actualizes these possibilities thereby disclosing both the world and itself. Is Dasein the origin of such possibilities? As the last chapter noted, having a project is not sufficient. A goal without appropriate resources is just an aspiration. For Patočka, the world is the source of these resources. In his words, “Against Heidegger, there is no primary *projection* of possibilities. The world is not the project of [our] liberty, but simply that which makes possible finite freedom.”[[421]](#endnote-421) The focus, here, is *on the world*, not on the self. Thus, Patočka asserts, “I do not create these possibilities, but the possibilities create me. They come to me from outside, from the world that is a framework where the things show themselves as means and I show myself as the one who realizes the ends served by such means.”[[422]](#endnote-422) His point is that our freedom to disclose the world is tied to the world’s ability to offer us the means for our projects. In his words, “I would not have the possibilities [for disclosing things] if the means for such possibilities, for my goals, did not exist, which means that I could not appear to myself, ‘open myself,’ understand myself [without such means], just as things could not show themselves, if my action [of disclosing them] did not exist.” [[423]](#endnote-423) Disclosure here is limited by the world. Such limitation is what makes it a *genuine disclosure* of the world in which Dasein acts. Since the possibilities that it actualizes come from the world, their actualization exhibits this world.

To see this limitation as springing from appearing as such, we must turn to Patočka’s second response to our question about pragmatic disclosure’s tie to such appearing. According to Patočka, “[t]he original possibilities (the world) are simply the *field* where the living being exists, the field that is co-original with [this world].”[[424]](#endnote-424) As for “my totality of possibilities,” this is just “a selection” made from this. [[425]](#endnote-425) While the former possibilities signify appearing as such, understood as set of “legalities,” the selection designates appearing to me. On the level of appearing as such, we thus have, “the impersonal order of the totality of possibilities, possibilities not pertaining to any being in particular.” On the level of appearing to me, we have “my totality of possibilities as a selection made from the sphere of the first.”[[426]](#endnote-426) Thus, the “impersonal order” of appearing as such involves pure possibility. It forms “a simple field of specific legalities.” [[427]](#endnote-427) The human totality of possibilities understands these legalities in relation to us, i.e., in terms of our possible experience.

Patočka's account of pragmatic disclosure thus differs substantially from Heidegger’s. Both agree that things appear as means— in Patočka's words, as “the needle for sewing, the thread for threading through the needle, etc.” [[428]](#endnote-428) But, for Patočka, the possibilities that such means express are traced not to Being in its determination of a standard for disclosure. Their origin is the world, understood as “the impersonal order of the totality of possibilities.” This is the order of appearing as such. As for appearing to me, this involves my bodily action—my action, example, of using the needle for sewing. Here, as Patočka writes, “[t]here is always, on the one side, the thing as a means.” On the other, there is always “the bodily mediated activity that endows the means with a sense.” As a result, “I understand the things from myself, from my activity, but I understand myself, my activity from the things. There is a mutual mediation.”[[429]](#endnote-429) It is, in other words, my embodiment—both my bodily senses and the behavior embodiment affords me—that makes a selection from the possibilities of appearing as such so as to bring about appearing for me. Pragmatic disclosure is related to appearing as such through a selection of the possibilities of the latter.

With this we come to Patočka's third response to our question. For Patočka, we recall, there is a “field of self-showing, a field that must have its own definite structure if the thing itself is to present itself and appear.”[[430]](#endnote-430) Pragmatic disclosure, here, is linked to appearing as such insofar as it must embody this structure. Thus, no matter what means we choose for our end—e.g., the hammer for driving in the nail or the needle for sewing—this implement, if it is a spatial-temporal object, must appear perspectivally. A similar necessity holds for the horizonal character of experience with its structures of near and far, presence and absence. The objects that we encounter have their internal horizons—the sets of appearances that are required to determine their features ever more closely. They also have their external horizons of appearances that link them together as we move between them. Such horizons are a structural feature required if they are to appear as part of a field of things—and, ultimately, as things that are part of the appearing world.[[431]](#endnote-431) A crucial element in the structure of appearing is, of course, the subject—understood as that to whom things appear. Thus, things cannot appear perspectivally except as related to a definite view-point. The same holds for the horizonal structures of appearing. Given that these structures consist of connected sets of perspectivally ordered appearances, they also require a subject occupying a view-point. Patočka asserts that this requirement for a subject is “a fundamental law of appearing,” according to which “there is always the duality between what appears and the one to whom this appearing appears.” This means that “appearing is appearing only in this duality.”[[432]](#endnote-432) As Patočka also writes, “appearing requires man, he is appearing’s *destination*.”[[433]](#endnote-433)

**Care For Appearing**

When we recall Patočka’s assertion that freedom is “what characterizes humans as such,” this requirement becomes more than a demand for a passive point of view. Appearing, in requiring man, requires his freedom. *Freedom, in other words, is a structural component of appearing as such.* What differentiates the human totality of possibilities of appearing from “the impersonal order of the totality of possibilities” is what we *choose* to disclose through our actions. The “selection” that is necessary for a coherent, appearing world is, in other words, not simply dependent on our embodiment—i.e., on the senses and abilities afforded by our embodied motion. It also requires our choices in employing these. Such choices, thus, signify our responsibility as “appearing’s destination.” In our freedom, we bear a responsibility for the appearing of a definite world.

This point can be put in terms of Patočka's transformation of Heidegger’s conception of care—the care, that Heidegger claims, *is* Dasein. In Heidegger’s account, Dasein’s actions are its own responsibility. It has to choose what it will do and, as a consequence, what it will be as it realizes the possibilities that it finds in itself. Care, here, is care for its own being, and Dasein is responsible for this. For Patočka, by contrast, the possibilities at issue are not just Dasein’s, but also those of the world. In realizing them, Dasein exhibits itself and the world: it makes both appear. In this case, responsibility is responsibility for such appearing. This is the object of our care. In Patočka’s words, it becomes the “care that follows from the proximity of man to manifesting, to the phenomenon as such, the manifesting of the world in its whole, that occurs within man, with man” as he confronts his own freedom.[[434]](#endnote-434)

**The Transformation of Phenomenology**

The next chapter will examine the link between this care for appearing and what Patočka calls “care for the soul.” Our current focus is the transformation that Patočka has worked on phenomenology. Theoretically, he has shifted its focus from subjectivity to appearing qua appearing. The study of the latter leads to the human freedom that is a structural component of appearing as such. It thus leads to our responsibility for appearing and the questions of praxis. Such questions do not concern the means for reaching our ends, but rather these ends themselves. To raise them is to realize that our goals are not set in stone. They are not “the decisive instance of possibilities.” They exist through our choices. Recognizing this, we also confront what Patočka calls “the plasticity of reality.”[[435]](#endnote-435) Such plasticity signifies that the possibilities of appearing as such—those of the world—are not limited to those we have actualized. Thus, the questioning, which praxis engages in, makes problematic the certainties that have guided our lives. There is here, in Patočka’s words, “a shaking of what at first and for the most part is taken for being in naïve everydayness, a collapse of its apparent meaning.”[[436]](#endnote-436) Such questioning, Patočka writes, is not “a subjective caprice” or “something arbitrary.”[[437]](#endnote-437) It is, rather, the response that is called for in confronting the excessive quality of appearing as such—its character of exceeding our ability to actualize all the possibilities that it offers. Appearing as such, here, demands freedom since, first of all, we must choose which possibilities to actualize. Secondly, it requires freedom since the openness of freedom corresponds to the openness of the possibilities of appearing as such. Both are open, and yet both are constrained by the structural necessities of appearing.

Given this, our responsibility for appearing is also a responsibility for our freedom. Only when the openness of freedom is preserved do we fulfill our duty to appearing as such. Patočka's political commitments follow from this. As we cited him, “political life in its original and primordial form is nothing other than active freedom itself.” It is a life “from freedom for freedom.”[[438]](#endnote-438) It is a life *from* freedom since it proceeds from the openness of political discourse. Here, the views of one side are called into question by the other. Political life presupposes this questioning. It exists in the clash of opinions, in the differing interpretations of a given situation and in the opposing views on how to handle it. The debates in which these are aired exhibit the openness of the future, since the future deliberated on depends on the choice of action to be engaged in. As such, it exhibits the public presence of the freedom from which political life lives. This is a life *for* freedom insofar as beyond all the special issues it debates, it maintains itself through such openness. It is, in other words, for freedom insofar as it wills its own continuance and, as such wills the openness of public space.

In terms of the issues raised by the last chapter, we can say that such openness is not served by simply opening the internet to every possible voice. What is essential is the confrontation of one view by another. This requires the elimination of the virtual walls that separate different domains, different Facebook communities and different Twitter feeds. The “fake news” that flourishes in walled off domains has to be confronted by its opposite. It has to be called into question by reference to the facts. Philosophically, the issue is responsibility for appearing—in particular the appearing of public space on the internet and elsewhere. For Patočka, “the Idea of Man is the idea of human freedom.”[[439]](#endnote-439) But as such, it can be called into question, called to be responsible for the appearing of public space and the concomitant public freedom. We are responsible for the choices that make such freedom possible.

Patočka's work for human rights follows from an acknowledgement of this responsibility. Political freedom requires the rights to freely assemble, discuss, petition, publish on the internet and elsewhere. Patočka thought that such rights were worth dying for since, in the words of a Charta 77 document, they assured “the humanity of humans.”[[440]](#endnote-440) That such freedom is inherent in appearing as such makes Patočka's political commitments a part of his commitment to phenomenology. In the next chapter, we will explore what this involves with regard to subjects of such rights.

**Chapter 13**

Human Rights and the Motion of Existence

Patočka’s conception of human rights has a certain paradoxical quality. In his writings, he seems to present his defense of them in traditional—even, old-fashioned—terms. He speaks, for example, of the “soul,” its “care,” and of “living in truth.” Such concepts are conjoined with an insistence on the unconditional character of morality. Yet, as noted, his “asubjective” phenomenology seems to undermine the notion of a subject of such rights. The previous chapter resolved this paradox by showing how care for appearing was also care for public space. Such care involved responsibility for our freedom and hence for the public, political life that we shaped through our decisions. Left unanswered, however, was the question of the subject of such rights. What is the conception of selfhood that allows him to affirm both human rights and deny what has been traditionally conceived as the subject of such rights? The answer lies in his redefinition of the language of the questions—those concerning self, soul, subject and rights—in terms of the motion of existence.

**The Paradox of the Subject of Human Rights**

To understand this redefinition, let us sharpen the paradox it is meant to resolve. For Patočka, such rights represent a moral imperative. He asserts in a Charter 77 document: “The idea of human rights is nothing other than the conviction that even states, even society as a whole, are subject to the sovereignty of moral sentiment: that they recognize something unconditional that is higher than they are, something that is binding even on them, sacred, inviolable.”[[441]](#endnote-441) This unconditionality comes from the priority of the moral standpoint. For Patočka, “the point of morality is to assure not the functioning of society but the humanity of humans. Humans do not invent morality arbitrarily to suit their needs, wishes, inclinations, and aspirations. Quite the contrary, it is morality that defines what being human means.”[[442]](#endnote-442) Thus, such rights claim our unconditional allegiance because they express a moral standpoint that is prior to us. Were such rights posterior, it would be senseless to risk one’s life in their defense. Were we to die for them, we would be sacrificing our humanity for the sake of one of its effects or products. As definitive of our humanity, however, they have a claim on us as humans. The moral sentiments that they embody are not optional, not something we can dispense with and still maintain our humanity.

This can be put in terms of their relation to Patočka’s account of the “care of the soul.” Such “care,” in Greek philosophy, assumed a number of forms. In the Platonic version, its goal, Patočka writes, was “to render our soul [into] that firm crystal of being … in view of the eternity” that is one of the soul’s possibilities.[[443]](#endnote-443) In the Aristotelian version, the goal was not personal immortality, but rather to “care for the soul so that it could undertake its spiritual journey through the world … in complete purity and undistorted sight and so, at least for a brief while, achieve the mode of existing proper to the gods” (ibid.). For the Greeks in general the purpose of morality was to engage in such care. Its object was the “health” of the soul, morality being what maintains this. Thus, starting with Democrates, we have the conception of the soul facing a choice: “The soul … can either, in its care for itself, give itself a fixed shape [*feste Gebilde*] or it can, neglecting itself and eschewing all education [έ, abandon itself to the indefinite, to the lack of limits of desire and pleasure.”[[444]](#endnote-444) When it chooses the latter course, the soul undermines itself. Abandoning itself to its desires, it loses its health. Like a diseased body, it no longer maintains its figure.[[445]](#endnote-445) This implies that moral values and the soul must be thought together. In Patočka’s words, “The soul is that for which good and evil have a sense. The soul can exist only if the good exists, for its basic movement is towards the good. But, to reverse this, the good, as the goal and endpoint of striving, only has a sense if there is such a movement of the soul.”[[446]](#endnote-446) Such conceptions did not end with the Greeks. They continued, in different forms, to shape the reality that became Europe. For the Romans, care took on the form of “striving for the rule of law” throughout their empire.[[447]](#endnote-447) The good striven after was the universal sway of law. The healthy soul submitted to its civilizing influence. In Christianity, care assumed a religious form directed to the soul’s salvation. The healthy soul merited an eternal reward. According to Patočka, the continual practice of the soul’s “care” across its different epochs and civilizations shaped European self-consciousness. In his words, “The care of the soul … gave rise to Europe. This is a thesis that we can maintain without exaggeration.”[[448]](#endnote-448) In fact, for Patočka, care has a universal sense. He writes: “What makes humans just and truthful is *their care for their soul.*”[[449]](#endnote-449)

The relation between these conceptions and Patočka’s insistence on the unconditional character of the morality underlying human rights seems readily apparent. When we conceive such morality as care for the soul, its character of assuring “the humanity of humans” is clear. Such humanity is the very health of the soul. As such, it is the point of human rights. The violation of human rights is, then, the violation of such care; furthermore, the states that violate these rights undermine the object of such care, this being the very humanity of their own citizens. The imperative to resist them comes, then, from this humanity. Such humanity, understood in terms of the soul’s “fixed shape,” stands as a clear guide for our moral obligations.

What, then, is this “soul”? How can we understand it? One thing that it is definitely not is Husserlian subjectivity. It is not Husserl’s transcendental observer of the world. Contrasting his asubjective, with Husserl’s subjective phenomenology, Patočka writes that for Husserl “[t]he appearing of a being is traced back to the subjective (to the ego, experience, representation, thought) as the ultimate basis of its elucidation.” By contrast, as the last chapter noted: “In asubjective phenomenology, we take the subject, like everything else, to be ‘result.” Its appearing results from the same “apriori rules of appearing” that govern other things.[[450]](#endnote-450) One of these rules is that appearing demands a subject to whom things appear. For Husserl, this subject is the pure transcendental observer. But for Patočka, this “in no way signifies a real entity, but only a definite position that an entity occupies; it signifies a *role* in manifestation that the entity assumes.”[[451]](#endnote-451) It is simply a structural feature demanded by the notion of appearing. Thus, the perspectival appearing of the world demands, as a correlate, a definitely situated observer. The flow of perspectives gives this viewpoint “a definite position.” As for the entity that has this viewpoint, his or her “role” is to apprehend the world. This is the “concrete subject.” Is such a subject a subject of human rights? Does it possess the “soul,” which is the object of “care”? It hardly seems so, given its causally determined nature. As the first chapter cited Patočka, “Concrete subjects are things among things, standing, in fact, in a causal context with the other things of the world; and this context is a specific one: it concentrates the effects [of other things] in specific, highly differentiated, acting organs [those of the senses and the brain], and thereby actualizes the possibility of letting a perspectival world appear, a world that appears to someone.”[[452]](#endnote-452)

The difficulty of combining these remarks with Patočka’s championship of human rights is obvious. The subject, understood as a structural feature of appearing, has no rights. It is not, in fact, even a reality. But “the concrete subject, taken as a causal factor,”[[453]](#endnote-453) is equally unqualified to be the subject of such rights. As causally determined, it is not free. Thus, it can neither be said to resist the imposition of tyranny nor can it be considered to be capable of sacrificing itself for something higher than itself. As a causally determined entity, it is, in fact, incapable of self-reflection. It has no more access to the inner workings of its mind than it has to the workings of its digestive system. In Patočka’s words, “the concrete subject as a causal factor does not appear to itself” through reflection. It only appears as a perspectivally given thing among things.[[454]](#endnote-454) The subject of human rights must, then, be thought in different terms than these. Neither the Husserlian, transcendental observer of the world—which, in Patočka’s view, is not a reality, but only a position demanded by appearing—nor the causally determined subject of natural science is appropriate for its description. How then are we to think of the subject of human rights? The same question, of course, can be asked with regard to the soul. As is obvious, the soul that is the object of our care is neither the “empty” nor the “concrete” subject. The solicitude for the soul that makes us just and truthful can hardly be a care for either an empty reference point or a causally determined entity. If the subject of human rights is the soul, then we need a different conception of it.

**Patočka’s Conception of the Soul as the Motion of our Existence**

To grasp Patočka’s concept of the soul, we have to return to Aristotle’s account of it. Patočka’s attempt to develop his asubjective phenomenology occurs in the context of his study of Aristotle. In his words, “In our days, when philosophy is again searching for an asubjective ontological foundation, an Aristotle, stripped of dogma, is … topical.”[[455]](#endnote-455) Aristotle’s appeal comes, in part, from the fact that his concept of the soul is not that of a “subject” in any modern sense of the word. Such a conception, Patočka remarks, is absent “in ancient philosophy.” He adds “psyche is never understood as a subject … but always in the third person, [it is understood] impersonally, as a vital function”.[[456]](#endnote-456) It is, in fact, the vital functioning of the living body. As such, it is the actualization of its capacity to be alive.[[457]](#endnote-457) Aristotle uses the example of the eye to illustrate this: The seeing of the eye is its functioning; it actualizes it as a seeing eye. This means that, “If the eye were a living creature, its soul would be its vision;”[[458]](#endnote-458) it would be “the seeing of the eye.”[[459]](#endnote-459) Now, for Aristotle such functioning (and, hence, actualization) occurs through motion: “to be in act seems, above all, to be a movement.”[[460]](#endnote-460) For Patočka, this signifies that, as the actualization of the human body, the soul is the motion that realizes it as such. It involves, in other words, all the motions that actualize us as existent individuals—from the unconscious metabolic processes that sustain our bodily being to the movements by which we physically and intellectually engage with the world. The ultimate goal of such movements is our ongoing existence, the very existence such movements actualize. This is why Patočka asserts, “Movement is not simply what realizes goals, it itself is a goal.”[[461]](#endnote-461)

Understood in these terms, *the soul is our self-directed movement*. It is the actualization of our living body *as living* by virtue of being the self-directed movement through which such actualization takes place. Aristotle calls the soul “the *arche* [ajrchv] of living beings.” It is their “principle” or “origin.” [[462]](#endnote-462) Patočka takes this definition in the most radical sense possible. For Aristotle, as he notes, movement or change is always change of something, this being an underlying substrate. Such a conception of movement, however, ill accords with the fact that it is through motion—particularly the movements involving the genesis and growth of the organism—that the bodily substrate of movement is *itself* realized. To be faithful to this insight, Patočka proposes “*radicalizing* Aristotle’s conception and understanding of movement as the original life that does not receive its unity from an enduring substrate but rather, itself, generates its own unity as well as that of the thing in movement.” Only this, he claims, “is the original movement.”[[463]](#endnote-463) Such movement, he claims, is “ontological” since it results in the being—the *ontos*—that is actualized. If we grant this, then the motion of existence is the “asubjective ontological foundation” that philosophy is searching for. *The soul, itself, can be defined asubjectively by taking it as the movement that results in living beings*.

**The Three Motions**

Patočka describes the asubjective, ontological foundation of our human being as a threefold motion of existence. Each of the motions composing it gives us a distinct way of standing out. In doing so, each has a distinct temporal orientation.[[464]](#endnote-464) In the first movement, which Patočka calls the “instinctive-affective movement of our existence,” the accent falls on the “already.”[[465]](#endnote-465) Here, the future is “passively accepted as a coming”; it is something that “merely repeats and activates an already given potential.”[[466]](#endnote-466) Thus, the infant has no initial projects. Its initial potentialities are those it is born with. They are activated in response to its nurturing environment. The potentialities to walk upright or to speak a human language, for example, are not possibilities a child takes as goals to be realized in a Heideggarian sense. As innate, their realization is a repetition of what preceding generations have realized. This realization involves, Patočka writes, “our own acceptance by that into which we are placed.” It is only as accepted by our caregivers that we can “develop our own possibilities, those which are inherently given.” We need them to teach us how to talk, walk, dress and feed ourselves. Through them we actualize our human potential. They mediate our relation to the world, supplying our needs. In Patočka’s words: “The accepted being is initially a mediated being; the world, for it, is its parents, those who take care of it.”[[467]](#endnote-467) The dominant feature of this state is that of enjoyment.[[468]](#endnote-468) It evinces, Patočka writes, “the blissful bonding, which assimilates the outside without which we could not live.”[[469]](#endnote-469) What disturbs this initial state is not just our growing control and mastery of our body’s potentialities; it is also the contingency that is inherent in such dependency. Patočka writes: an “essential *contingency* … is rooted here. No one is master of the situation that sets him into the world.”[[470]](#endnote-470) One can call for one’s parents and they may not come. One’s needs, as mediated by them, can find an uncertain fulfillment.

Seen as a response to such contingency, the second motion of our existence attempts to overcome it through our own agency. It is, Patočka writes, the “movement carried out in the region of human work.”[[471]](#endnote-471) Its emphasis is on the present, on the tasks at hand. In working to fulfill our needs, we take on “[t]he service and bondage of life to itself.”[[472]](#endnote-472) We labor to acquire what we need to live. If our first motion of existence uncovers the world primarily in its sensuous aspects, the second deals with it as pragmata. In Patočka’s words, this movement “is concerned only with things, sees only things, albeit purely in their utensility and not in their independence.” It knows them only in terms of their use values. For it, “there are always only networks of instrumental references, every ‘here’ serving merely to refer beyond itself, to the connections—both personal and object-connections—of the undertaking.”[[473]](#endnote-473) The same holds for the grasp of other persons in the second movement. While the first movement discloses Others as caregivers, as responding to our passivity with an activity that manifested the inwardness of a *you*,[[474]](#endnote-474) the second tends to see Others as use values. This vision overlays an acknowledgement of them “as movements of existence” like ourselves.”[[475]](#endnote-475) Yet, immersed as we are in an endless cycle of means and ends, the constant temptation is to forget this and interpret persons as means for our ends. Thus, the “second movement” comes to be “characterized by the reduction of man *to his social role*.” Viewed as such, the “other can be exploited, turned into a provider on a one-time temporary basis or enduringly and systematically.” Thus, there is here an “ever-present impulse to exploit the other wherever possible, since we ourselves are under the same pressure.”[[476]](#endnote-476) The second movement is, thus, categorized as one of “*work* and *struggle* … in work, man confronts things; in struggle, he confronts his fellows as virtually enthralled or enthralling.” The link between the two is our seeing our fellows in terms of work and, hence, as reduced to social roles that can be appropriated for our purposes. Like the things that we use for our projects, we fail to grasp them in their autonomy. This means, Patočka writes: “Nothing independently disinterested and dedicated, neither the authentic self nor an authentic undertaking, can develop in this sphere.”[[477]](#endnote-477)

In Patočka’s account, the first two movements of existence are marked by concealment. The sheltering world of the first movement conceals the harshness of the world beyond the home. In his words: “Concealment has here the peculiar form of screening, shelter, safety.” It exists in the form of protection “by the protectors in their unprotected adult life.”[[478]](#endnote-478) Not that the child’s life is without its tensions. It has its own “antagonisms, jealousies and hatreds.”[[479]](#endnote-479) What rules within the home are instinctual affections and drives, the very things that suffer concealment in the second movement. Thus, when the second movement dominates, “the sphere of the instinctual, affective movement is repressed and forgotten.”[[480]](#endnote-480) This means, he writes: “The whole sphere of the dramas of primitive bonding with its attachments and hatreds, its fusionality and harshness is now relegated into the darkness.”[[481]](#endnote-481) What is ultimately repressed is the world of our “having been,” the world of the inborn possibilities that we are instinctively driven to actualize. Thus, in the second movement, the present represses the past. Engaged in the practical business of earning a living, we focus on the present: “It is no longer the overall relationship to what is *already* but rather a relation to this or that present matter which requires our whole commitment.”[[482]](#endnote-482)

In contrast to the first two movements, the third attempts to break through such concealments. It is, Patočka writes, “[t]he movement of breakthrough, or actual self-comprehension.”[[483]](#endnote-483) He adds, “What is at stake in this movement is … the encounter … with one’s own being … In the last movement, the true movement of existence, the point is to see myself in my own most human essence and possibility.”[[484]](#endnote-484) Thus, rather than losing oneself in one’s instinctive, affective life or in the world of work, one confronts oneself as a multi-level motion of existence, as a person who realizes possibilities through his or her activities. At issue is this realization of possibilities. In the third movement, we face our responsibility for such realization. This can be put in terms of the fact that the third movement shifts the horizonal emphasis of our standing out to the future. In this change of focus, the future is not regarded in terms of the possibilities of our given situation—possibilities that we can project forward as goals to be realized. In Patočka’s words, “The accent on the future requires, on the contrary, that the *already* existent cease to be regarded as the decisive instance of possibilities.”[[485]](#endnote-485) The reference, here, is to “the mass of these particular possibilities” that our given situation affords us.[[486]](#endnote-486) The point is not to let them “conceal the essential,” which is our action of realizing them. In this motion, I confront my responsibility not just for realizing and, hence, manifesting these possibilities, I also confront myself—namely my “possibility either to disperse and lose myself in particulars or to find and realize myself in my properly human nature.”[[487]](#endnote-487) Thus, in the third movement, we break our “bondage to the particular” and face our freedom with regard to its appearing.

Patočka writes in regard to such bondage: “The third movement is an attempt at shaking the dominance of the earth in us, shaking what binds us in our distinctness.”[[488]](#endnote-488) This dominance of the earth is our “bondage to the particular”—i.e., to our roles in life with all the particular certainties that our personal and professional lives afford us. Such certainties define us, they give us our “distinctness” as, for example, a business person, a journalist, a craftsman or a professional politician. Overcoming this bondage involves the shaking of our certainties, the very shaking that Socrates introduced to Athens. Such shaking occurs through the problematization of our existence—i.e., through the undermining of its certainties by continually questioning them as Socrates did. Directed towards the political order, this questioning opens up a community to its freedom, i.e., to the fact that the decisions facing it are ultimately its own. In the back and forth of political debate that it creates, it opens up the public space for political action. In parallel with Arendt’s description of it, Patočka takes this as the space in which things are considered in the light of the multiple, contending possibilities for their disclosure. The debates reveal the different uses they can be put to. The political life that is carried out in this open sphere is, for Patočka, “from freedom” and “for freedom.” (*Heretical Essays*, p. 142). It is from freedom, since it proceeds from open debate. It is for freedom since it wills itself, that is, wills the continuance of the motion of existence (the shaking) through which such public, political space appears in genuinely free debates.

**Care for the Motions of our Existence**

There are two ways to read the above descriptions. The first is in terms of the “essence” of humanity, the second is in terms of the care of the soul. As Chapter 4 indicated, Patočka takes the essence as specifying both the goal and the order of organic development. As specifying the latter, it delineates the “how” of the motion through which an organism realizes itself. It gives “the unitary framework for all the movements that occur in a being.” A plant, for example, Patočka writes, “can only accomplish its principle functions of growth and reproduction in a typically successive order.”[[489]](#endnote-489) The essence is what specifies this order. Understood as an account of the essence of humans, the descriptions of the three motions specify how we actualize ourselves. They give the successive order through which we reach our existence as fully functioning beings. Such existence is the goal of our development. Now, although the goal specified by the essence is different for different species, it is, in a broad sense, the same for all living beings. It is the actualization of all that the being can be within the framework of its essence. In Patočka’s words, the goal is “the maximum of the qualifications simultaneously determining the same substrate, the maximum of presence.” It is also “the most stable or durable presence.”[[490]](#endnote-490) This is the presence, for example, of the mature tree, the tree capable of flowering and bearing seeds season after season. For a human being, it is the adult who has reached maturity, who is capable of actualizing in a harmonious manner all his or her innate and acquired potentialities.

The relation to the soul springs from the fact that *the soul is the motion of existence through which we realize ourselves—*i.e., attain the goal specified by our essence. Understood in these terms, the description of the motions of existence through which we actualize ourselves can be read as Patočka’s account of our souls. The care for our souls is, then, care for these motions. Thus, the care provided by our parents and guardians is crucial to our development. It shapes the motion by which we actualize ourselves. Failure, here, can damage the further development of our potentialities. The care for the first motion of our existence is, in fact, the care for our growing and developing souls. Similar assertions can be made about the second motion. In the world of work, we realize our social existence. We stand out as embodying our social and professional roles. Care for the soul as care for this motion involves caring for the workplace environment. As such, it involves all the advances in labor legislation that have taken place in the last 150 years. From the shortening of the work week to the introduction of rules regarding workplace safety, such advances aim at humanizing our working environment. This involves not just the stipulation of a minimum “living wage,” which Adam Smith, among others advocated. It also involves our attempts to provide full employment. As numerous studies show, long-term unemployment has a crippling effect. People experiencing it feel less than fully human. In Patočka’s terms, we have to understand our attempts to combat it as care for our souls.

The third motion of existence is, as indicated, that of “problematization.” Its exemplary figure is Socrates, whose motion was that of constantly questioning the assumptions of his time. The problematization that such questioning occasions is, Patočka writes, “something fundamentally different from negation.” Rather than being “a subjective caprice” or “something arbitrary,” the questioning that problematizes “is something founded on the deepest basis of our life, only *here* do we stand our ground,” rather than on the certainties that we previously assumed.[[491]](#endnote-491) This ground is the freedom that was the focus of the previous chapter. Problematization demands that we take responsibility for it, that we acknowledge that the certainties that we assume are not something fixed, but are, in part, the result of our choices. According to Patočka, “the spiritual life” based on such problematization “is precisely also action based on the insight that reality is not rigid,” that we act “recognizing [the] plasticity of reality.”[[492]](#endnote-492) His point is that in the human world, “reality” results from our decisions. We construct our social and political worlds. Care for the soul in this context is care for our freedom as we engage in this. This is because to problematize something is to place it in the context of its alternatives. It is to ask why we have shaped our world in the way we have, rather than in some other fashion. Such a questioning robs our given world of its necessity. It points to its appearing as a result of our own motion, a motion that results from our choice to actualize one (rather than another) of our collective possibilities. What we care for, in this instance, is the motion by which we stand out from the world by exercising our freedom. This is the motion that manifests the world that we choose to realize. To be responsible for our freedom is to be responsible for this and, hence, to be responsible for such manifestation. Here, as Patočka writes, “Care of the soul is fundamentally care that follows from the proximity of man to manifesting, to the phenomenon as such, to the manifesting of the world in its whole that occurs within man, with man.”[[493]](#endnote-493)

**Care and Human Rights.**

Viewed in this perspective, Patočka’s defense of human rights can be seen as a form of care for the soul—i.e., care for the motions by which we actualize our humanity. The rights associated with the third motion of our existence are primarily negative and value neutral. Their negative character is exemplified by the phrase used by the American Bill of Rights: “Congress shall pass no law”—no law, for example, that limits the citizens’ rights to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, association, and so on. Their neutral quality is equally apparent. The Bill does not specify the content of the speech, the theology of the religion or the purpose of the assembly or association. In leaving the choice up to the individual, the statement of these rights intentionally abstracts from the content of this choice. The rights concern freedom *from* the powers of the state. Positively regarded, such rights are conditions for our ability to call into question the existing interpretations—be they social, economic, moral or political—that define our relations to Others. To defend such rights is to defend the motion of problematization that actualizes us as political and social beings.

This motion, however, is intertwined with the other two motions. As such, it cannot be considered apart from them.[[494]](#endnote-494) The 1949 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be seen as recognizing this fact when it speaks of a person’s rights “to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.”[[495]](#endnote-495) For a society to honor these rights involves specific choices with regard to its social commitments and collective organization. Such choices embody a particular value—in the UN’s words, that of the “social security” of the individual.[[496]](#endnote-496) Such security involves the “instinctive-affective movement of our existence,” which is prominent in our childhood and youth. Rights, in this case, concern the conditions of our flourishing. We require them to reach the goal specified by our essence, that of being a fully functioning adult, one that is capable of actualizing his or her potentialities. They include the rights to shelter, nourishment and education—all the things commonly listed under the title of “children’s rights.” The second motion of existence, which is that of our working life, has its own corresponding rights. These include the rights to a safe workplace, a living wage, and a ban on excessive work hours. Beyond this, there is the right to a gainful and meaningful employment, a right that in most countries is hardly ever honored. To politically ignore it is to exclude labor and work from public space. It is to forget the intertwining that links their presence to “action” in Arendt’s sense.

The political import of Patočka’s three motions of existence is readily apparent. It gives a conception of human existence demanding both positive and negative rights. For Patočka, the defense of such is a moral imperative. The Charter for which he was a spokesman asserts that “[t]he idea of human rights is nothing other than the conviction that even states, even society as a whole… recognize something unconditional that is higher than they are, something that is binding even on them, sacred, inviolable.”[[497]](#endnote-497) For Patočka, this means that “it is morality that defines what being human means.”[[498]](#endnote-498) To sacrifice oneself in the defense of such rights, as Patočka did, is to do so in defense of the motions of existence that make us fully human. It is, in fact, the ultimate expression of our care for the soul.

The contemporary lack of concern for such care shows itself in the declining fortunes of those engaged in labor and work. It also appears in their increasing alienation from a political process that seems incapable of halting the ever increasing share the national wealth owned by the few.[[499]](#endnote-499) This sense of alienation can lead to a reaction against the political process itself. It can also result in the unravelling of public space and, in extreme cases, to its complete collapse. The next part of our inquiry will begin with a case study of such a collapse. From there, we will explore the relation of violence to the political order. For Hannah Arendt, this relation is entirely negative. She writes, “violence itself is incapable of speech …. Because of this speechlessness political theory has little to say about the phenomenon of violence and must leave its discussion to the technicians” (OR, p. 18). This, I hope to show, is not the case. We cannot study public space, without also examining violence.

Part 3: Violence and the Political

**Chapter 14**

Violence and Blindness: The Case of Uchuraccay

Only rarely does life imitate art in the starkness and directness of its message. When that message is a tragic one the effect becomes indelible. Such was the impact on Peru of the events of Uchuraccay, a small village located in its central highlands. Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission called it “an emblematic referent of the violence and pain in the collective memory of the country” (TRC, 121).[[500]](#endnote-500) In the twenty-year turmoil that engulfed Peru at the end of the last century, 69,280 violent deaths were recorded. What makes Uchuraccay emblematic of this carnage is not just its own destruction; it is the web of misunderstandings that entangled the participants. On January 23, 1983, eight journalists from Lima were caught in this web. Mistaken for terrorists, they and their guide were attacked by the natives of the village. Remarkably, one of the journalists left a photographic record of their slaughter. There also exists a photograph of the bodies of the journalists after they were exhumed a few days later. In it, their eyeless sockets are clearly evident.[[501]](#endnote-501) The photo brings to mind the moment in Greek tragedy that is called “recognition.” This is the point when the veil of illusion is stripped from the characters. The most striking example of this is Oedipus’ appearance after he has blinded himself. In his eyeless state, the audience recognizes his previous blindness to his unnatural condition. This moment of recognition is a public exhibition. It is a disclosure of the way things actually were during the events depicted. In what follows, I am going to take this final image of the journalists as a disclosure of the communal blindness that engulfed Peru. My aim is to relate this blindness—this collapse of public space—to the violence that was its tragic correlate.

**Events and Misunderstandings**

The background to the events of Uchuraccay is long and tragic and can only be mentioned in the briefest of terms. The Spanish conquest of Peru was catastrophic for the natives and ended in their being reduced to the condition of indebted servitude. Working on large haciendas, they owned neither their land nor the products of their labor. Even the houses that they built were not their own. In the Andean highlands, this situation led, in the 1950’s and 1960’s, to a series of strikes and occupations. But it was not until 1968 that the military government of general Velasco began to dismantle this system. Progress, however, was sporadic and largely ceased with the general who replaced him in 1975.[[502]](#endnote-502) This was the milieu in which Abimael Guzman, a philosophy professor at a university in the highlands, founded the Shining Path Movement in the late 1960’s. Embracing a radical form of Maoism similar to that advocated by the Khmer Rouge, it began military action on May 17, 1980. The Movement joined with the natives in their struggles with the landlords and corrupt government officials and, by 1981, had spread throughout the villages of the central highlands. An essential part of its strategy was to attack and overrun the local police stations, thus leaving the rural areas defenseless.

The effect of all of this on Uchuraccay was that by 1982, its inhabitants found themselves under the authority of both the Shining Path and their local governing council (TRC, 127). Such a situation could not long continue. The tensions between the two came to a head with the attempt by the Shining Path to establish a “Peoples School” for women and to raise its red flag during a religious festival. The council reacted by expelling their six resident members. Returning in force and determined to show their authority, the Shining Path publicly executed the council presidents of Uchuraccay and Huaychao, a neighboring village (TRC, 129). In the general revolt that followed, several dozen guerillas were killed by the natives. The district was then put under direct military rule, with the general in charge, Roberto Noel, commending its inhabitants for the “courage and virility” of their revolt. The President of the Republic added his wishes that their “presence and valor” would be sufficient to re-establish peace (TRC, 131). In a gesture of support, a helicopter with troops spent the night at Uchuraccay. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Report, the message of the soldiers to the village, which was not reachable by road, was clear: “continue with this action; kill every foreigner who enters the village on foot” (TRC, 132). Three days later, on January 26, 1983, the reporters from Lima walked into the village. After fruitless attempts to explain who they were and desperate appeals to be taken to the police, they were beaten to death. According to the report, “the killing was cruel” since lacking guns, the natives used their farming implements. It lasted, however, “no more than thirty minutes” (TRC, 135).

Although widely publicized, the slaughter of the journalists was but one event in the process that led to the destruction of Uchuraccay. In the days following this event, the attacks on the Shining Path terrorists continued. As for the journalists, their deaths were initially reported as those of terrorists. In the subsequent inquiry, the natives laid stress on the fact that they were told that the Armed Forces would arrive by helicopter, while the terrorists would come on foot. The problem, however, was: who was a terrorist? The inhabitants of Uchuraccay attacked a neighboring village suspected of harboring them. Retaliations followed. The Shining Path, meanwhile, repeatedly assailed Uchuraccay and other villages in its attempts to crush the revolt (TRC, 141-3). In the years that followed, the villagers were subject to increasing assaults. The various self-defence committees set up by villages in the region sent out patrols to ferret out members of the Shining Path. In the indiscriminate fighting that followed, Uchuraccay was repeatedly overrun. As one survivor described the situation,

… the Shining Path, the members of the Self-Defense Committees and the military all came and burned the houses. They took our belongings, robbed us of our livestock, sheep, llamas and horses. They respected neither man, woman nor child, subjecting them to public beatings. They raped and killed the women; moreover, when they wanted, they killed the children. No one could protest without being killed. Because of this, we lived hidden in the hills (TRC, 145).

This condition was clearly unsustainable. Having lost 135 of its original 470 inhabitants, the village was abandoned in 1984 (TRC, 146).

As the accounts of the final years of Uchuraccay make apparent, the question of who was a terrorist became paramount. In the internecine struggle that engulfed the region, the participants struck blindly at each other. Natives accused natives of being Shining Path supporters and were themselves accused of being such by the army and paramilitary groups. Even the terrorists in their incursions were unsure of who their opponents were. As for the journalists, who were mistakenly killed for being terrorists, they unknowingly chose a suspected terrorist as their guide. They were also blind to the nature of the Shining Path movement. As noted by the Report, it was viewed at the time as a “group that was misguided, but driven by the desire for the social transformation of the country” (TRC, 155). The focus of the urban press was not on its excesses but rather on “the abuses committed by the forces of order.” Thus, the “context” of their visit was “a certain urban legitimacy for the Shining Path and an increasing loss of prestige for the police” (TRC, 156). Even after the journalists’ death, sections of the press continued to view what happened in terms of their “political battle against the government” (ibid.). This was, in part, because the military’s punitive actions often equalled those of the terrorists. Both were indiscriminate to the point of blindness. Such blindness extended to the government’s attempts to try the natives responsible for the killing of the journalists. After a year of judicial inquiry, the prosecutor asked in vain that the case be thrown out because “they had not succeeded in proving the participation of the accused in the massacre” (TRC, 165). The difficulty was not just that of singling out particular individuals in a mass action. What the court authorities found hardest to accept was, in the words of the Report, “the possibility that the peasants could be capable of violently defending themselves” (TRC, 169). They could not come to terms with their acting on their own. This attitude continued throughout the trial. During its five years, according to the Report, “the voices of the inhabitants were never even heard” (ibid.). As for the terrorists, they also suffered from a practical and ideological blindness. Attempting to impose a Maoist form of communism that had already been discredited in China, they viewed the Inca descendants dwelling in the highlands through the lens of their vision of an idealized Chinese peasantry. The failure of the natives to live up to this ideal was probably behind much of their brutality.

**The Transparency Public Space**

This web of misunderstandings, this inability to recognize friend or foe, can only be classified as a general public blindness, a collapse of the public space discussed in Part II. This, broadly speaking, is the space in which people see and are seen in their public identities. How are we to understand its relation to the violence that consumed Uchuraccay? To answer this question, we have to recall our remarks on the visibility and on what may be termed the “light” of public space. Aristotle defined light as the actualization of the visible, as that which makes the air transparent. Since it allows things to appear, its absence makes us blind. The question of public blindness is, thus, that of the failure of this actualization. Ordinary light gives things their bare physical presence; but what gives this presence its practical significance is the use we put these things to. This use is the “light” of public space. Each project is, in fact, a disclosure. It makes things appear in a definite light. It works to provide a “clearing,” where the “light” can enter in and make things appear in their “what” and their “how.” The *water* of a river, for example, appears as *water-to-drive-the-electric-generator-in-the-dam* when we use it for this purpose. It gains its sense and appearing reality through such employment. The same use or employment illuminates our public identities. It actualizes an individual’s identity as the accomplisher of some action. Since we learnt our projects from Others, we have a sense of the purposes that animate different individuals—purposes that are correlates of the senses that they wish to disclose through their actions. These, too, are included in their identities. They are available to all those who share in the culture that includes their projects. The same points hold with regard to collective action. As was earlier noted, in an aboriginal hunting party, each member has his own tasks and weapons. Each, through his actions, engages in an individual disclosure of himself, his purposes and the world that includes them. But founded on this, there is the disclosure of the collective world of the hunt. The pragmatic senses of this world are co-generated by its members. So is the identity and purpose animating the group.

This collective identity is, of course, based on each member playing his part. It requires his ongoing commitment to his assigned role. The same holds for identity in the public, political sphere. Political commitments would be useless if the participants in negotiations did not keep their word. To give and keep one’s word is to respond to the self that originally authorized the commitment by taking responsibility for it, that is, for the promise one made. The person maintains the authority of the agreement by holding fast to it. Doing so, the person both preserves and embodies this authority. In realizing it across time, she generates it. In other words, the identity she creates across time is that of herself as the *author* of her word. The result is a public identity that is distinct, say, from that of gender or race. We cannot choose these inherited factors, but we can choose to bind ourselves to our chosen agreements. So conceived, authority is the pubic presence of the “I can” that binds itself to its word. The root of the authority of political agreements is our collective ability to bind ourselves over time.[[503]](#endnote-503) This ability is also part of the ‘light’ of public space.

Public visibility, thus, is much more than the bare sensuous presence that Aristotle has in mind in speaking of light. It involves the appearing identity of actors and of the things that individuals disclose through their actions. Such disclosure is not just pragmatic—i.e., that of things in their “what is it for.” In religious and cultural practices, it can, for example, include the symbolic references of the red banner that the Shining Path raised at Uchuraccay. Insofar as disclosure involves both the objects disclosed and the agents who disclose them, public visibility has essentially two sets of conditions. We have to be able to grasp the meanings (the purposes) of the objects that occupy the public realm. This requires a sense of the projects that disclose them. We also have to apprehend the agents who disclose themselves through such projects. This requires that the agent keep to the purpose of his project. This does not just allow him to complete it, but also gives him an identity over time. When the purpose is collectively arrived at through negotiation, this identity has a political dimension that extends to all those bound by the negotiated settlement.

**Blindness and Violence**

Public blindness occurs when these conditions cannot be fulfilled. Experiencing it is rather like entering a totally foreign culture where the practical and symbolic meanings of its objects are not at all apparent. This involves a blindness to the purposes of its agents. In a real sense, this was the state of affairs when the urban journalists entered Uchuraccay. Neither they nor the villagers could grasp each other’s purposes. They thus were blind to the practical and symbolic meanings correlated to these. The journalists, for example, could not see that the farming tools the inhabitants carried would be the means of their destruction. This general blindness soon extended to the military’s relation to the natives and, indeed, to the natives’ relation to each other. No one could be sure who was a terrorist and who was not. There was a general blindness to the public identities of those involved in the conflict. Symbolic of this loss of identity was the fact that the military took to wearing ski-masks to prevent their being identified and held responsible for their often brutal actions. Even the judges who ultimately tried Guzman, the Shining Path leader, wore hoods to conceal their identities. In this climate of anonymity and suspicion, it is easy to see how the public realm took on a menacing quality. It is a well-known psychological truth that we tend to project on the unknown Other those aspects of ourselves that we cannot tolerate. In Lacanian terms, he becomes the censored chapter of our consciousness. The Other is taken as harboring our darker desires.[[504]](#endnote-504) In a situation of high tension, this can be disastrous. Seemingly threatened by the Other, we react with violence.

Such violence does not only result from public blindness. It also engenders it. It does so when it attacks the conditions for public visibility. At their basis is the “I can” in its ability to shape the world and, thus, to disclose its presence and significance. As shaped by multiple agents, public space is characterized by its openness to multiple projects. Violence narrows it by enforcing a single form of the “I can.” In normal political life, the problem of conflicting projects is solved through negotiation. When violence enters the scene, agreement is secured by force. Those with the greatest physical force determine what can be done and, hence, what can be disclosed. With this, authority becomes identified with power backed by violence. Those who are subject to it have no authority. The difficulty here is that authority is a public identity. It is the public presence of the “I can” that, through self-binding, preserves (and, hence, generates) an agent’s identity across time. When, however, the binding of the “I can” is through violence, such identity becomes problematic. We cannot know how the individual will react in the absence of compulsion. Given this, the person becomes an object of suspicion. The only thing we can see is his enforced identity.

Even this becomes problematic in a situation of competing violences. The residents of Uchuraccay were subject to violence from the Shining Path, the military, and the rural patrols sent out by the surrounding villages. They thus were caught between competing impositions of the “I can,” competing sets of disclosure with their corresponding practical and symbolic senses. In such a situation, an individual finds himself constantly in a foreign land. Unsure of the identity of agents and, hence, ignorant of the practical and symbolic meanings that mark public space, he experiences the public blindness that characterized the events of Uchuraccay. What is missing is the “light” of public space. This light requires the ongoing identity or “authority” of agents. It is premised on the voluntary, negotiated agreement of the agents on permissible projects, both individual and collective. The public presence of these agents manifests their “I can” as it voluntarily binds itself over time to such disclosure. Without this, there is no public disclosure of a multiply determined public space. Whatever is disclosed is essentially private. It is subject to the whim of whomever *presently* commands the greatest violence.

**Memory and Sight**

In the confined spaces of the ancient democracies, public actors met face to face and argued for their positions before the voting public. As I cited Hannah Arendt, for the ancients, “the life of a free man needed the presence of Others. Freedom itself needed, therefore, a place where people could come together—the agora, the market-place, or the polis, the political space proper” (OR, 31). Only there could the voting public hear the arguments for the contending positions. In our modern mass democracies, this space has been provided by the press and the internet. Their mere presence, however, is insufficient to provide the light for this space. They can be divided into separate, non-communicating forums. They can be riddled with misleading or outright “fake” reports. In such circumstances, the press and internet contribute to public blindness. Controlled by the powerful, they have, like the individual actors in Uchuraccay, only an enforced identity. As such, they undermine the shared disclosure that is based on voluntary agreement.

According to an Amnesty International Report, the state of Peru at the beginning of the insurgency was characterized by a lack of public visibility. The soil from which this blindness grew was the “chronic social exclusion and racial, ethnic and gender discrimination” that characterized Peru. The Report finds that the “negative stereotypes” attributed to the natives “were … used by all the actors in the internal conflict, both State officials and armed opposition groups, to justify the violence” against them.[[505]](#endnote-505) In fact, none of the participants grasped the others. All were caught in a web of misunderstanding. The only way to break free from this is to engage in shared disclosure. To do this, one must break down the exclusions, both social and economic, that prevent people from participating in public action. The stereotypes that divide society and prevent its agents from recognizing each other must also be dismantled. Only then can there be a genuine intertwining, one where each group can serve as a place of disclosure of the others, calling their particular perspectives into question.

Crucial to this task is the work of remembering. Given what Patočka calls the “plasticity of reality,” we cannot take the past as determinative. Equally, however, we cannot disregard it in determining our projects. When, for example, I intend to build a house, I rely on my accumulated experience not just for the knowledge of the means by which to reach my goal. The goal itself is informed by such experience. Given that projects are the ways we disclose, shared disclosure requires a sharing of our experience. The first work of healing a divided society is, thus, the restoration of a common memory, a shared history whose events all can agree on. This requires that each side be allowed to tell its story, that a public narrative be arrived at through the intertwining (and calling into question) of the perspectives of the participants. The goal here is nothing less than the establishment through public testimony of the memory that provides a depth dimension, as it were, to the public space that the participants are trying to restore. Like such space, it will be multiply determined by different perspectives, different interpretations of the events in question. As in the actual formation of public space, the establishment of this public memory will involve an openness to the perspectives of Others as well as a continual return to the events at issue. In a real sense, the establishment of this public memory is, like that of public space, an ongoing task.

The painstaking labors of Peru’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission have been dedicated to this public memory. Several generations will probably be required to see whether its work will bear fruit, that is, whether Peru’s inhabitants will continue its task to act out of a restored memory to heal Peru’s social and racial divisions. The goal of such work is nothing less than generating the public visibility that is the antidote to the tragedy that engulfed this country. To engage in it is to give Oedipus back his eyes. It is to make whole the journalists whose blind corpses were emblematic of the events of Uchuraccay.

What of the violence that caused their deaths? What is the temptation that draws so many, from the Shining Path to the Army and the various militias, to engage in it? In speaking of violence, I have not yet considered its intrinsic characteristics, the particular traits, that make violence so attractive to so many. For some, violence lies at the origin of all political formations; for others, it is destructive of such. To decide, we must have some concept of violence itself.

**Chapter 15**

Selfhood and Violence

The concept of violence is deeply ambiguous. As James Dodd observes in his remarkable book, *Violence and Phenomenology*, “Violence is situated in a world of sense, but in a manner that seems to hold it apart from all sense.”[[506]](#endnote-506) Regarding violence, we oscillate between considering it as an essentially senseless instrument and as constitutive of sense. As an instrument, we take it as drawing its sense from the tasks on which we employ it. Outside of the context set by such tasks, it has no sense. This means, in Dodd’s words, that violence “can neither be, nor result in anything *lasting* when pursued for its own sake.”[[507]](#endnote-507) When, however, we regard its inherent senselessness as something active, its constitutive properties seem to appear. Here, violence, becoming a principle in its own right, exhibits its inherent senselessness in its destruction of sense—a destruction that leads us to ourselves as the origin of sense.

To see this, we have to note that violence destroys sense by attacking our ability to make sense. It succeeds because such sense-making is, by and large, pragmatic. In daily life, it is a function of the projects we engage in. In the context of these projects, things gain their meaning through our use of them. When we employ them to reach some goal, then their meaning or purpose is exhibited. The meaning of a hammer, for example, is manifest as I use it to drive in a nail; that of a microscope is apparent as I peer through it to regard a cell. If I cannot engage in these activities, I cannot exhibit the corresponding meanings. In destroying our individual and collective abilities, violence thus places out of play the pragmatic meanings or senses that are correlated to these abilities. This includes our sense of ourselves. Thus, having lost the bodily or physical means—such as eyes or microscopes—required for such projects, those affected can no longer define themselves accordingly. Their lives, as defined by the contexts set by their individual and collective projects, are undermined. [[508]](#endnote-508)

To understand this destruction as creative is to regard it as a clearing of the ground. It is to view the destruction violence wreaks as wiping the slate clean of the contexts that cluttered our lives. Such a clearing opens a space where the new can appear. In Heideggarian terms, we can say that violence allows us to *stand out* from our previously constraining environment, an environment we previously *stood in* or insisted upon, in order to *stand open* to a new sense of being, one that would determine a new set of projects and, correspondingly, a new sense of the things of our world.[[509]](#endnote-509) One can also, following Patočka, put this in terms of the “shaking of what at first and for the most part is taken for being in naïve everydayness, a collapse of its apparent meaning.”[[510]](#endnote-510) This shaking reveals to us that “[h]umans in their inmost being are nothing other than this ‘openness’” to the sense of being.[[511]](#endnote-511) Patočka spoke of this shaking in relation to Socrates’ constant questioning of accepted meanings. But it can also be thought of in terms of violence. Given that we are essentially an openness, the violence that makes us aware of this seems to reveal us as the origin of sense. Destroying our accustomed contexts, it makes us realize that sense-making is up to us, that it depends on our free choice regarding how to disclose both the world and ourselves through our projects. It is when we are open to the sense of being as a whole, a sense that cannot be confined to our accustomed standards, that we are ready for renewal, that, in fact, we take responsibility for such renewal.

How do we resolve this ambiguity? Is violence senseless or is it at the origin of sense? Does its destruction of meaning disclose the origin of meaning? Or is it the case that it leaves in its wake only a barren field? Does it result in renewal or only in a sense of dead loss? To answer these questions, I am going to begin with Hegel’s argument that violence is at the origin of what it means to be human. This contention, which is found in his “Lordship and Bondage,” is paradigmatic for the attempts to see violence as revelatory—attempts that ignore the limitations that Hegel himself places on this view. My analysis of “Lordship and Bondage” is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to make a philosophical point. Through the use of counter-examples and then, by an analysis of self-affirmation and self-restraint, I am going to sketch out two different views of our selfhood. I shall then show that the openness at our core can function as an origin of sense only in terms of a surrounding context. The violence that destroys this context renders this openness essentially barren.

**The Escape from the Bondage of Life**

James Dodd is deeply suspicious of the revelatory character of violence. In his view, “Violence can be constitutive of meaning only by leaving in its wake, or at least promising, some cogency of the self, some sense of ‘who one is,’ precisely by bringing this question inexorably to a head.”[[512]](#endnote-512) This means that, tested to the limits, in a decisive action, you show who you really are by using violence to break an impasse. In Dodd’s example, you end an argument by throwing a punch. Doing so, you show your character by revealing what you will fight for. For Dodd, then, “the promise of violence lies in the possibility of summing up all of that which the self represents in a moment of pure breakage, of pure suspension of the need for an ongoing, open-ended self-articulation.”[[513]](#endnote-513) The difficulty with this, he notes, is that this self-articulation is illusionary. In attempting to settle, once and for all, who we are, we forget the fact that, as an openness, the question of who we are can never be terminated.[[514]](#endnote-514) To insist on the snapshot of the self that violence reveals is to reduce yourself to the status of an unchanging thing—an *in itself* in Sartre’s terms. But this would be abandoning your freedom to continue to shape yourself and your world through your projects. It would be an abrogation of the responsibility that makes you human.

This critique holds for the assertion that violence reveals us as having a given, objective content. It does not, however, stand when we assert that what is revealed by violence is our lack of such content. It is, however, precisely this lack that Hegel points to in his account of the violent origin of our selfhood. For Hegel, such violence reveals our selfhood as “a pure negation of its objective mode.” It shows “that it is not attached to any determinate *existence* [*Dasein*], not tied to the individuality that universally characterizes existence as such.” The violence referred to is that exhibited by two individuals as they confront each other. As they risk their lives in their struggle, they show that their selfhood “is not tied to life.”[[515]](#endnote-515) To be tied to life is to hold it as one’s highest value. Taking life and its continuance as one’s ultimate goal, one takes oneself as grounded in life, as having an objective content determined by its demands. To transcend this is to hold’s one’s life as naught. It is to assert that one’s selfhood is worth risking one’s life for, that this selfhood is not bound to life nor, indeed, to any determinate existence.

Given that without life there is no selfhood, the idea of risking one’s life for the sake of one’s selfhood seems paradoxical. To understand it, we have to return to Hegel’s analysis of desire. For Hegel, as we noted, “Self-consciousness, for the most part, is desire.”[[516]](#endnote-516) In desiring an object, we are conscious of ourselves as lacking it. Thus, we do not just sense the object we wish to eat, we also sense the hunger that directs itself to it. Here, as Hegel writes, “the object … bears *the character of the negative* for consciousness*.*” It is that which we wish to negate by consuming. This negation, for Hegel, is our self-affirmation. On the level of mere life, both self-consciousness and self-affirmation are intermittent. This cannot be otherwise given that consciousness “is present [to itself] only in opposition to the … object” it wishes to negate.[[517]](#endnote-517) Both, then, last only as long as desire lasts. In fact, what is actually affirmed as animals feed on one another and fight for mates and territory is the process of life itself. Thus, when stag fights stag to impregnate a female, the real victor is the species that continues through the impregnated doe. Nature, then, uses desire not to affirm the individual, but rather to affirm itself in its species. In the web that it weaves, even though the end of an individual life is death, this death contributes to life as a whole. The result, in Hegel’s description, is life as a “fluid substance of pure movement within itself.”[[518]](#endnote-518) Within it, individuals arise and perish; they prey and feed upon each other, mate, and give birth. “Thus, the simple substance of life is the splitting up of itself into shapes and at the same time the dissolution of these.”[[519]](#endnote-519) In itself, as Hegel concludes, life is a “self-developing whole that … in this movement simply preserves itself.”[[520]](#endnote-520) Being its own goal, everything engendered by life serves this end, including consciousness.

This view of life is strikingly similar to Darwin’s. Comparing the results of natural selection to those effected by domestic breeding, he writes, “Nature, if I may be allowed to personify the natural preservation or survival of the fittest, cares nothing for appearances, except in so far as they are useful to any being. She can act on every internal organ, on every shade of constitutional difference, on the whole machinery of life. Man selects only for his own good: Nature only for that of the being which she tends.”[[521]](#endnote-521) This notion of this “being which she tends” and its benefit becomes highly ambiguous once we bear “in mind how infinitely complex and close-fitting are the mutual relations of all organic beings to each other and to their physical conditions of life.”[[522]](#endnote-522) If, as Darwin suggests, every being is ultimately defined by every other, the “being” tended by “nature” can only be life itself understood as the whole web of relations and entities. This holds not just for nature’s shaping the physical features of organisms, but also for its action on their sensate, conscious lives. These, too, are ultimately selected for in terms of the whole of life.

Whether we take life as Hegel’s “fluid substance” or as Darwin’s web, the point holds that a consciousness defined by it cannot really be conscious of itself as something apart from and independent of life. To break the bondage of consciousness to life, the very force that chains it to life must, according to Hegel, be turned against itself. This force is desire, understood as the inner (the subjective self-certainty) of the organism. Now, behind all the organism’s particular desires, there is the desire to continue its own natural life. To break the bondage to life, then, desire must somehow be brought to exceed this basis. In Hegel’s version of our emergence from the “state of nature,” this occurs in our struggle for recognition. Recognition, in his view, returns our selfhood to us. The self-certainty that arises when we desire an inanimate object collapses when this object is consumed. This does not occur when our object is another self. As Hegel writes, a human self, in confronting another self, “has come out of itself.” On the one hand, “it has lost itself, for it finds itself as another being.” On the other hand, this loss is actually a gain, since “in the Other it sees its own self.”[[523]](#endnote-523) This seeing itself in the Other is actually a seeing itself *through the Other* when the Other recognizes it as a self. Rather than being consciousness of oneself as desiring the object, one now grasps oneself as the object of the Other’s consciousness. This object is one’s “I” or ego as recognized by the Other. As Hegel puts this, through the Other’s recognition, “a self-consciousness, in being an object, is just as much ‘I’ as ‘object.’”[[524]](#endnote-524) Thus, the division that marks self-consciousness, that between the I that is conscious and the I that is its object, comes from the Other. His recognition is what presents one’s selfhood (one’s I) to oneself as an object.

To move from this account of recognition to the violent origin of our human selfhood is to note that what is at issue is not the mere presence of oneself to oneself. It is this presence *as liberated from the bondage to life*. The selfhood returned to one must be one that is not tied “to any determinate existence.” It has to be recognized as self-determined. According to Hegel, this recognition can come about only through “the trial by death.”[[525]](#endnote-525) Initially, the two selves confront each other simply as determinate parts of nature, i.e., as animals that fight over prey, territory, or mates.[[526]](#endnote-526) They are, however, animals that can grasp themselves through one another’s recognition. Now, the recognition they need in order to see themselves as not tied to life is distinct from that of themselves as a husband, father, sister, or provider. It is not that accorded to the biological and social roles that are focused on life and its continuance. For it to arise, the contending parties have to transcend such roles in risking their lives. Their desires to overcome each other must become pitched to the extreme. Only then can each manifest himself as “not tied to life,” i.e., show that his “essential being is not just being, not the *immediate* form which it appears, not its submergence in the expanse of life.” In other words, in risking his life, each manifests “that there is something present in him which could not be regarded as a vanishing moment [of life].” Rather than being-for-life, each self shows “that it is only pure *being-for-self*.”[[527]](#endnote-527)

Of course, if they continue in this way, the fight will end in the death of one or both of the parties, and the recognition will not occur. One side has to give way. According to Hegel, the side that yields recognizes the Other, in his willingness to risk his life, as not attached to life. At the same time, he acknowledges his own dependence on life. He does by acknowledging his dependence on the Other as the one who can decide whether he lives or dies. The result, then, is “two opposed shapes of consciousness; one is the independent consciousness whose essence is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essence is to live for or be for the Other. The first is the lord, the second is the bondsman.”[[528]](#endnote-528)

The bondsman’s recognition of the lord is a complex affair. It is, first of all, a recognition of the lord’s inordinate desire. This desire was such that the lord set his life as naught in his struggle to overcome the bondsman. Because of this, the lord’s desire manifested itself as transcending his individual life. It, thus, showed itself as the desire that transcends the individual lives that compose life’s “fluid substance” and, hence, *as the desire that animates life as such*. Tied to this recognition is the recognition of the lord as holding the bondsman’s life in his hands. In his unwillingness to risk his life, the bondsman affirmed that life was his highest value. This value is now placed in the hands of the lord, who, in manifesting the desire that animates life, takes on the value of life for the bondsman. In other words, the lord is now implicitly recognized by the bondsman as the desire that is the inner of life as such, i.e., the desire that drives the process of individual lives. The self-certainty that the lord acquires through the bondsman’s recognition is, then, that of “the genus as such”—i.e., that of the life that, through desire, preserves itself in the different species.[[529]](#endnote-529) The overcoming of the bondage to life is, then, through the victor’s assuming its role. He takes on life’s role of preserving or sacrificing individual lives for the sake of itself.

Hegel’s account of the origin of our human self-consciousness is presented in the same vein as Hobbes’ or Locke’s description of how we emerged from the “state of nature.” It is not meant literally, but rather as a myth depicting an essential fact. For Hobbes, this fact is that man is a dangerous animal and that a strong sovereign is needed to protect us from this danger, that is, to protect us from ourselves. For Hegel, what is essential is the optic of violence. The violence that initiates human self-consciousness exhibits the latter’s origin in the desire that animates life. The negativity of such desire shows us the openness at our core, i.e., it exhibits us as lacking, qua desire, any determinate being. Goaded by desire to risk our lives, we confront this openness and, with this, our freedom. Thus, for Hegel, “it is only through staking one’s life that freedom is won; only thus is it proved that for self-consciousness, its essential being is … not its submergence in the expanse of life.”[[530]](#endnote-530) What is won here is the openness that, in allowing us to choose, frees this choice from the determination of life.

In Hegel’s account, the initial recognition that affords us this sense of our freedom is undermined by the fact that the bondsman who recognizes the lord is not, himself, recognized by the lord as an independent subject. The bondsman’s recognition is thus implicitly devalued. What we have, then, is “a recognition that is one-sided and unequal.”[[531]](#endnote-531) To overcome this, a long history, itself steeped in violence, is required. The “slaughter bench of history” must do its work. The mutual recognition that stands at the end of this process need not concern us. What is at issue is the key claim that violence opens us up to the openness that grounds our freedom, that violence alone frees us from the bondage to life that marks us as merely organic beings.

**Two Counter-examples**

As compelling as this account of violence and selfhood is, a number of counter-examples can be brought up against it. Peg Birmingham, for one, points to Socrates in her review of James Dodd’s *Violence and Phenomenology*. As she notes, Socrates’ defense in the *Apology* is non-violent and yet is a self-affirmation.[[532]](#endnote-532) Moreover, as the text of this dialogue makes clear, Socrates’ self-affirmation transcends his tie to life. In reply to the accusation that he ought to be ashamed of having lived a life that has led to a trial on capital charges, he replies: “You are wrong, sir, if you think that a man who is any good at all should take into account the risk of life or death.” The only thing that should concern such a person is “whether what he does is right or wrong, whether he is acting like a good or bad man.”[[533]](#endnote-533) Similarly, when considering the offer of acquittal on the condition that he not engage in philosophy, he replies: “as long as I draw breath and am able, I shall not cease to practice philosophy.”[[534]](#endnote-534) It is clear, then, that his self-affirmation involves not his life, but rather a practice that makes this life worthwhile. The same point can be made with regard to his refusal of his friend, Crito’s offer to secure his escape from prison. His consideration of this offer explicitly excludes the fact that his life is at stake. As he says to Crito regarding his escape, “If it is seen to be right, we will try to do so; if it is not, we will abandon the idea.” He adds: “If it appears that we shall be acting unjustly, then we have no need at all to take into account whether we shall have to die if we stay here.”[[535]](#endnote-535) At issue is not his life, but the justice of his actions. What frees him from the bondage of life is not his inordinate desire, but rather his vision of justice. In the “Apology,” he manifests an integrity—a self-affirmation—that is based on this vision. Not being against the Other, this self-affirmation does not rely on violence.

A second, more striking counter-example is provided by the figure of Christ at the beginning of his public life. In Mathew’s account, he is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he fasts for forty days. The “tempter” comes to him and asks him to turn stones into bread to satisfy his hunger. Jesus refuses. The devil then takes him to the Temple in Jerusalem and suggests that he provoke the angels to rescue him by throwing himself from the parapet. Again Jesus refuses. Finally, he takes him “to a very high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory.” He offers them all to Jesus if he will give him homage. With Jesus’s third refusal, the tempter leaves him.[[536]](#endnote-536) Jesus’s action in this account is a non-action. He refuses to act either to alleviate his hunger or to manifest invulnerability or to gain the world’s kingdoms. On offer to him is not just worldly recognition, but also freedom from physical need and bodily harm. In refusing these, Jesus affirms himself as beyond them. The path he takes will end on the cross where again he will be tempted to act to save himself. In Mathew’s account, the chief priest, the lawyers, the elders, and those who are crucified with him taunt him by saying “come down from the cross and save yourself, if you are indeed the Son of God.”[[537]](#endnote-537) But again he refuses to exhibit his power. In these and other passages, Mathew seems to imply that a show of worldly power would conceal him. The self that it would affirm would not be his but rather a worldly self—a self on the level of the charge that Pilate put on his cross, that of being “the king of the Jews.” Rather than being such a self, Jesus at the end seems to manifest an emptiness.

In Philippians 2:7, Paul describes this emptiness as a *kenosis*. “Christ Jesus,” he writes, being in his very nature God … made himself nothing.” The verb he uses means “to empty out” or “make void.”[[538]](#endnote-538) To take this literally is to see the incarnation as the progressive emptying out of God, one that culminates in the cross. This is because such self-emptying is the only way that God can manifest his *non-worldly* being. He shows himself *as he is* by exhibiting a lack of such being—i.e., by being outside of what can be called the “earthly economy.” Broadly speaking, this term designates the system of exchange through which things come to us. Our bodily metabolism with its organic needs is an example of this economy; so are our normal, everyday commercial transactions. They point to our dependence on the world, i.e., to the fact that we live only through a constant process of exchange with it. The God who created the world and, as such, is ontologically prior to it cannot be described in these terms. He can only manifest himself *in* the world by giving himself as *not*-being-able-to-be-given in the terms of this economy—that is, in its terms of worldly power and might. To accomplish this, he has to empty himself. He must, in Paul’s words, take on “the form of a slave” and identify himself with the powerless and oppressed. This self-emptying or becoming nothing comes to completion with his crucifixion.

Mathew gives a striking example of the relation between the incarnation and kenosis. In the last judgment, according to Matthew, Christ will admit into his kingdom those who fed him when he was hungry, who gave him drink when he was thirsty, who clothed him when he was naked, who made him welcome when he was a stranger and visited him when he was in prison. When asked by the elect, “When did we do this?” he replies that it was when they did it “to one of the very least”—that is, to the hungry, the naked, and the rejected of society.[[539]](#endnote-539) For Christ, the completion of this self-emptying is his appearance on the cross where he cries out, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?”[[540]](#endnote-540) In Christ’s very nakedness and exposure, Christians are supposed to see God. If we take the assertion of desertion literally, they are supposed to see God in Christ’s being abandoned by God. The vision, in other words, is that of God’s self-abandonment. The incarnation of God in man involves God’s complete self-emptying or kenosis in worldly terms. Christ’s self-affirmation as the Son of God breaks the bondage of life not through violence, but through this kenosis.

**Selfhood and Self-Restraint**

There are many other counter-examples that could be used to exhibit this alternate approach to our selfhood. The Buddha, for one, comes to mind with his meditative practices aimed at self-forgetfulness through the stilling of desire. There is also the self-affirmation through the self-surrender to the will of God that is advocated by Islam. The point that they illustrate, however, is already clear. The conception of selfhood they exemplify is the opposite of the one brought forward by Hegel. The selfhood uncovered by violence affirms itself in expressing its power. Freed from the fetters of life, it assumes life’s self-affirmation. Not bound to any determinate existence, it negates such existence in affirming itself. By contrast, the selfhood affirmed in our counter-examples refuses to express its power. Its liberation from the bondage of life is a freedom from its imperatives. This freedom does involve the risk of life; but it does not involve violence. This is because the imperative of violence, like that of sex, stems from life itself, i.e., from the struggle for existence that nature imposes on its members. In our counter-examples, the refusal of these imperatives is not a shrinking back from this struggle in an acceptance of the bondage to life. It is, in fact, *a denial of this bondage*—a refusal to participate in its demands. The selfhood here affirmed claims a self-worth independent of these demands. It claims a value that transcends the struggle for recognition that is based upon them.[[541]](#endnote-541)

What we confront here are two different types of selfhood. The first affirms itself through the power of violence. The second’s self-affirmation involves self-restraint: Christ will not act to turn stones to bread or to make himself invulnerable. Socrates will not escape from prison if it means being unjust. Such self-restraint is, of course, at the heart of ethics. Those who restrain themselves from wrong-doing only out of the fear of the consequences are not really ethical. Were these consequences absent, they would do wrong. This restraint through the fear of the consequences characterizes the imperative of life with its emphasis on struggle. Restraint, in this context, comes from the power of the Other. We restrain ourselves from mistreating someone out of fear of his reaction. In terms of the imperative of ethics, however, restraint is self-imposed. Irrespective of his power, we treat the Other with respect. For Kant, this is to treat him as an end in himself. Respecting his freedom, we do not impose upon him ends that he would not himself will. Christ’s relation to this comes in his identification with those who have no power—the hungry, the naked, the prisoners in Mathew’s parable. Their lack of power signifies that nothing, in natural terms, prevents us from mistreating them, of using them simply as implements or means for our purposes. His identification with them as the Son of God does not give them power. It does, however, claim for them an authority that demands our restraint.

**Violence and Context**

The alternative to this restraint is violence. It is, in Levinas’s terms, the suppression of the *alterity* of the Other. Such suppression does not allow the Other to respond as an independent person. It prevents him from calling us and our actions into question. The result is that the self that is affirmed through violence lacks any restraining context. A couple of examples will illuminate the nature of this self. The first comes from Joseph Conrad’s depiction of Kurtz in his novella, *The Heart of Darkness*, a fictionalized account of colonialism in the Belgian Congo. Kurtz, an ivory trader, is described as “a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear.”[[542]](#endnote-542) Kurtz not only lacks self-restraint, he is placed in a situation where his power over the natives is practically absolute. A manuscript he leaves behind begins by observing that “we whites from the point of development we had arrived at ‘must necessarily appear to [the natives] in the nature of supernatural beings—we approach them in the might of a deity.’”[[543]](#endnote-543) It ends with the assertion, “Exterminate all the brutes.”[[544]](#endnote-544) Kurtz does not just massacre the natives, he also, Conrad suggests, allows himself to be worshipped as a deity with human sacrifices.[[545]](#endnote-545) Kurtz, in Conrad’s depiction, while remaining a frail human being (who, in fact, dies of malaria), sets himself up as a deity transcending the human context. This situating of oneself beyond the human context can lead to violence on a wide scale. This is witnessed not only by the millions of deaths caused by colonialism in the Congo, but also by the genocide practiced by the Nazis. Hannah Arendt writes that the Nazis assumed the “right to determine who should and should not inhabit the world.”[[546]](#endnote-546) Doing so, they stood outside of the context of the world. In other words, their “crime against humanity” involved their assuming a standpoint outside of humanity. Such a standpoint should not be confused with that assumed by Socrates and Christ, whose transcendence of the imperatives of life contributed to humanity’s ethical and religious ideals. The standpoint assumed by the Nazis transcended these. Given that all moral justification draws its sense from the human framework—the framework that includes its ethical and religious ideals—to stand outside of this, as the Nazis did, is to exceed such sense. It is to enter into a realm of senselessness that incapacitates moral judgment.

There is, of course, a contradiction in humans’ assuming a standpoint outside of humanity. Conrad depicts this in the contrast between Kurtz’s extreme physical weakness and his attempts to assume the role of a deity. Expressed in the formal terms of the ground and the grounded, it involves decision makers, situated within the human framework and, hence, *grounded* in humanity and its relations, assuming the position of a *ground* of humanity. Any group that decides what humanity should be—i.e., decides not just its future, but on the “nature” of the humanity that is to have a future—makes a decision whose justification cannot be drawn from the existing human framework. The contradiction, then, is between being grounded by such a framework and assuming a position whose justification necessarily stands outside of it. If moral justification draws its sense from the human framework—in particular, from the relations to the Others one encounters—then to leave this is, essentially, to leave ethics behind. It is to enter a moral vacuum where the call to justify one’s actions is undermined by the absence of justification implicit in occupying a standpoint beyond humanity.

This is similar to the contradiction that Hegel’s “Lordship and Bondage” leaves us with. At the end of the struggle for recognition, the master assumes the status of life. Determining for his own ends who should live and who should die, he transcends the lives he controls. Yet, in fact, he is within their context. As Hegel makes clear, he requires the bondsman both to provide him with the fruits of his labour and the recognition of his lordship. This is why, in Hegel’s dialectic, he is at a dead end. Devaluing the very recognition that sustains him, he cannot actually create anything. He is not an origin of sense since the very context that would allow him to make sense—the context on which he himself depends—is unavailable to him. He cannot recognize this context since his only relation to it is that of negation and consumption. As a result, the violence that clears the ground to show his essential openness is ultimately unproductive.

This is not the case with the bondsman. He, too, as Hegel observes, also had to face his lack of any determinate content. In Hegel’s words, “servitude … does in fact contain within itself this truth of pure negativity.” As a result of the struggle, servitude’s “whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute lord. In this experience, it has been inwardly dissolved, has trembled in every fibre of its being and everything fixed in it has been shaken.”[[547]](#endnote-547) What separates him from the lord is the *context* of the truth of this negativity. Unlike the lord’s desire, which negates by consuming this context, the bondsman’s is productive of it. Fear of the lord restrains his desire as he refashions the world on behalf of the lord. In creating the human world through his work, the bondsman’s negativity acts within a context that the bondsman constructs. Doing so, he generates sense through his projects. He fashions a human world that returns his human subjectivity to him. For Hegel, then, it is the bondsman, rather than the lord, who continues the historical journey towards the emergence of genuine human selfhood.

We need not accept details of this dialectic with its complicated reversal of the roles of lordship and bondage as they appear on the various epochs of history to grasp its main point. This is that the openness at our core can function as an origin of sense only as an openness to a greater context. The violence that suppresses this context leaves it essentially unfruitful. This is why violence, per se, while promising new beginnings always disappoints the hopes that it raises. What it does is undo the intertwining that links the agent to his context, giving sense to each.

We forget this because we tend to conflate the self we affirm in overcoming the Other and the self that is affirmed when we risk our lives for another person. In both cases, the risk of life confronts us with the nothingness of our death. In the former case, however, it is isolating; in the latter, it has a context. Thus, the self-affirmation that is against the Other sees the Other as alienation of one’s selfhood. The Other appears simply as a desire opposed one’s own. By contrast, the self-affirmation that is for the Other affirms itself in affirming the Other. Socrates exemplifies this when he defends himself in his trial. He explicitly refuses to manipulate his jurors by appealing to their emotions. He has not, he tells them, “begged and implored the jury with many tears.” Neither has “he brought his children and many of his friends and family into court to arouse as much pity as he could.” Rather, as he says, “I do none of these things even though I may seem to be running the ultimate risk.”[[548]](#endnote-548) The reason for this is that he is arguing for their sake. In his words, “I am far from making a defense now on my own behalf, as might be thought, but on yours, to prevent you from wrong-doing” in committing an injustice.[[549]](#endnote-549) Given this, he will not, himself, commit an injustice by corrupting them. As he sums up the manner of his defense, “I do not think it right to supplicate the jury and to be acquitted because of this, but to teach and persuade them. It is not the purpose of a juryman’s office to give justice as a favour to whomever seems good to him, but to judge according to law .... We should not accustom you to perjure yourselves, nor should you make a habit of it.”[[550]](#endnote-550) Here, his defense of himself is intertwined with his defense of his jurors. The fact that he risks and loses his life in this defense does not make his self-affirmation less valid. In fact, the context in which he risked his life continues to allow his action to bear fruit. The action remains intertwined with the world, provoking and revealing it.

The same holds for Christ whose kenosis generated a religious sense among those he died for. In inviting his followers to recognize him in the destitute, in those who, in worldly terms, have nothing to offer, he both calls the earthly economy into question and discloses it in its limitations. His self-affirmation is intertwined with the world since it obligates the believer to aid those in distress. That self-sacrifice, rather than violence, characterizes this self-affirmation is something that the history of the faith that was founded on him has often obscured. It is, however, what makes his message a permanent challenge to those who conflate power and authority. Like Socrates, Christ had no power over those who judged him. His authority, like his selfhood rested on another basis. It is only by regarding it that we can avoid the illusions that cloud our vision of violence.

**Schmitt’s Challenge**

For Hegel, human selfhood originally arises in the willingness to kill or be killed in a violent confrontation. This, however, is only a first stage in its development. For Carl Schmitt, by contrast, this stage is never surpassed. Thus, as James Dodd writes, “Schmitt’s challenge is to insist that we must accept the significance of violence,” i.e., accept its “uniquely constitutive role with respect to human existence generally.” [[551]](#endnote-551) A separate chapter will be required to examine Schmitt’s arguments. For the present, however, it is sufficient to note that his conception of political sovereignty places the sovereign outside of the human context. Schmitt claims that the decision of the sovereign is “absolute and independent of the correctness of its content.”[[552]](#endnote-552) There is nothing behind it. In fact, “[l]ooked at normatively, the decision emanates from nothingness.”[[553]](#endnote-553)  It is simply an act of the pure spontaneity of the sovereign’s will. It is an act of his unconditional freedom. The figure of the sovereign is, thus, that of someone lacking any restraining context. In this, he is similar to Joseph Conrad’s fictional character, Kurtz. He also brings to mind the Nazis in their claim “to determine who should and should not inhabit the world.” It, thus, returns us to the contradiction involving the ground and the grounded. Even though the sovereign, as a human being, is grounded in humanity and its relations, he assumes a stance that is essentially outside of this—namely, that of an absolute and independent ground. As such, he eliminates any possibility of normatively justifying his actions. Normatively, his decisions emanate from a “nothingness.” Because of this, a similar lack of content marks the selfhood affirmed in his actions. Conrad describes this lack of content as a devouring emptiness. As he has Marlow describe Kurtz speaking, “I saw him open his mouth wide [to speak]—it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him.”[[554]](#endnote-554) What such rapacious emptiness actually consumes is the context that would link the sovereign to those he would address. This cannot be otherwise, given that the sovereign undermines this context by his claim to act with an unconditional freedom.

This can be put in terms of the public space that his actions destroy. As we cited Arendt, this “is a space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly.”[[555]](#endnote-555) For such explicit appearing mutual recognition is required. But this is what the absolute sovereign cannot tolerate. Like the master in Hegel’s *Lordship and Bondage*, he does not recognize the recognition that forms the context that he depends on and in relation to which his actions have their sense. Given this, violence’s claim to show us something—to reveal some aspect of ourselves—is highly problematical. In fact, it undermines the public space in which this could appear. This, however, does not mean that “political theory has little to say about the phenomenon of violence” as Arendt claimed.[[556]](#endnote-556) The examination of the space of public life involves studying what undermines it. This holds, in particular, for the form of violence that in the past decades has held public attention, making this space more secret and fearful, namely, the violence practiced by terrorists. If we are to understand the intertwining that informs our contemporary reality, we must attend to it.

**Chapter 16**

Senseless Violence: Liminality and Intertwining

The mass shootings and terrorist attacks that often fill the news are remarkable for the random quality of their violence. On December 2, 2015, 14 people were killed and 22 seriously wounded at the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. The victims were attending a holiday party after a staff meeting. None of them had a connection with ISIS or the events in Syria—the alleged motivation of the shooters. The same can be said of the 130 people who were killed in Paris three weeks earlier. The concert goers in the Bataclan theater were random victims, as were those sitting at the restaurants that were targeted. Similarly, those who perished in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 had no connection to the Waco siege of 1993, the supposed cause of the terrorists. Regarded in terms of the accidental nature of their victims, one is tempted to say, with the 2012 Aurora shooter, James Holmes, “The message is, there is no message.”[[557]](#endnote-557) If the action is to illustrate the cause, i.e., make its sense concrete, then the connection here is as tenuous as that of Holmes’ victims to the Batman paraphernalia that decorated his walls. In the month before the shooting, Holmes saw the trailer for “The Suffocator of Sins,” which depicts a vigilante shooting criminals. He twice called the writer and director, Dave Aragón. [[558]](#endnote-558) But his victims in the movie house were not criminals. They bore as little resemblance to the perpetrators hunted by Batman or the vigilante in Aragón’s movie as the victims in the Paris shootings did to the causes espoused by their killers.

If we limit our focus to those immediately involved, these acts were senseless in a specific sense. Regarded instrumentally, violence can have sense if its purpose is to force or prevent someone from doing something. A gunman forces a clerk in a robbery to hand over the cash. The police stops his action by threatening armed violence. Both the perpetrator and the victim exist imaginatively and actually in a common world, one that links them together in a relation of cause and effect. The clerk hopes, in handing over the cash, to prevent the gunman from shooting her. The policewoman acts to bring about the end of the robbery—an end that she hopes can be achieved by the threat of armed violence. The robber can surrender at gunpoint. The clerk can give the gunman the money. But in the examples cited, nothing the victims could have done would have prevented their murder. They had, as victims, nothing to offer their assailants. A reason for this is that they did not inhabit the world that motivated the assailants’ actions. The movie goers were not characters from “The Suffocator of Sins.” The victims in the Oklahoma bombing, having no relation to the FBI, could neither apologize for nor act to prevent another Waco siege. Similarly, the concert goers in the Bataclan theater, though taken as representatives of the West in its struggle against ISIS, neither thought of themselves as such nor had any power to take on such a role.[[559]](#endnote-559)

Expanding one’s focus, one could, of course, argue that the fact that the victims were taken as representatives of ‘western’ secular culture gave the terrorists’ actions an instrumental sense. The point of the attack on the concert-goers would presumably be to force French society to abandon this culture. In this kind of magical thinking, an attack on the symbol is understood as an attack on the reality symbolized. Yet, the very tenuousness of such understanding points, in fact, to the lack of connection between perpetrators and victims. The perpetrators were, on one level, in the same world as their victims. They shared a causal reality that allowed them to act against their victims. On another imaginative level, however, they acted outside of the world of those they murdered. The Bataclan theater was not the Middle East; neither was the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. Both could only be symbolically related to the actual conflict raging there. Given that the victims did not share the symbolism imposed upon them, their relation to this region was purely in the perpetrators’ heads. The latter stood outside of the world of those they murdered, drawing their motivations from an alternate reality—one in which their victims could stand as symbolic targets. This externality recalls the account of the last chapter, which focused on the relation between self-affirmation and the claim to be independent of the context in which one acts. Violence, there, was seen in terms of a lack of restraint. It was taken as senseless since it destroyed the context that could give it sense. Here, however, our focus is broadened to include the *liminality* of the perpetrators of violence. Being both inside and outside of the world in which they act, they exist on the *border* between the two. Beyond any destruction of their context, such liminality renders their actions impervious to sense. Because of it, their actions can be understood in terms neither of the *actual reality* of their victims nor of the *imagined reality* that the perpetrators placed them in. Sense, here, fails, for the lack of a common frame.[[560]](#endnote-560)

To understand the nature of this failure, we need to grasp the liminality of the perpetrators. In doing so, our inquiry necessarily expands beyond the examples just cited. This is because liminality exists in a number of forms: economic, religious, and political—each with its potential for violence. Such forms can be combined, as in the case of terrorists coming from economically deprived backgrounds. Here the marginality of the terrorist includes economic marginality. One form of liminality can also take on characters of another form. Thus, political liminality, while distinct from the religious, can manifest a religious dimension. What distinguishes political liminality is the scale of its violence. As we shall see, the liminal sovereign or ruler is both inside and outside the state, employing its means for violence even as he is unconstrained by its laws. As such, he exists in a continuum with the terrorists just mentioned. The claim of this chapter is that liminality, itself, is the key element in senseless violence. It is what frustrates our attempts to find a common frame that would allow us to make sense of much of the violence that confronts us. To grasp this liminality, we must first understand this frame. We can do so by returning to the intertwining through which a common frame arises. In discussing the breakdown of this intertwining, we will also consider the breakdown of the recognition that would link the perpetrator to his victims.

**Intertwining and Liminality**

Non-liminal actions are those where we are unequivocally in the world that we share with Others. This sense of being in a common world is built up in the stages that intertwine us with the world. What marks these stages is a double placing, a double sense of being in, one where *what we are in* is also taken to be *in us*. This signifies that at each stage, each of us implicitly asserts, “I am in the world and the world is in me.” [[561]](#endnote-561) The reason why we believe both that *the world is in us* and that *we are in the world* is that neither affirmation is intelligible without the Other. Thus, we grasp the sensuous world through its sensuous presence in us. Our senses provide *the place* where it can appear. Yet, the very embodiment that such senses presuppose positions us as an appearing part of the world. Combining both, we understand the world in terms of its sensuous presence, and we understand such presence in terms of the world. This intertwining repeats itself in the projects through which we individually and collectively disclose the senses of the world—i.e., the meanings of the things that sensuously appear. Our actions constitute the place where such pragmatic meanings manifest themselves. But the world is where such actions manifest themselves. It contains them not just physically but as a horizon of sense. The senses that our actions manifest are part of the world that we are in. Such senses also include that of the objective reality of the world. Given that we cannot see out of one another’s eyes, such reality, as we noted, is a matter of verbal agreement. It involves our representing to Others through language our private perceptual experience, thus making it public. It also involves our internalizing the public report of Others and regarding it in the light of our own experience. As based on such agreement, the real exists in the intertwining of the public and the private. Here, language is the place where the objective world—the world that is there for all of us—makes its appearance. This world, in turn, is the place where we appear as objectively real.#

As these examples indicate, the progressive exhibition of the senses of the world is matched by a parallel exhibition of the senses we have of ourselves. Thus, the lining of the world by our bodily senses provides not just a place for the disclosure of the world in its sensuous presence; it also reveals ourselves as a sensible part of this world. The same holds for the disclosure of the world through our projects. Our being in the world that we disclose reveals us as agents and authors of such projects. We are the person rolling the marble between our fingers, the person hammering the nail in the wood, the person who works with Others, who speaks with them and is the author of his words. The senses we generate through our speaking and acting thus place us in the world that we share with Others. The breakdown of the generation of these senses is, correspondingly, an exclusion from this world.

There are multiple causes of such exclusion.[[562]](#endnote-562) Economically, the most frequent is unemployment. Losing one’s job involves losing an important component of one social identity. Employed, one is in the world as a teacher, a bus driver, a computer technician, and so on. The answer to the question, “who are you?” exemplifies this identity. A person identifies himself with his profession, saying, for example, “I work at the steel mill,” “I am a product manager,” etc. Unemployed, a person cannot avail himself of such answers. He becomes, in terms of the economy, placeless. He loses the world and the norms of the workplace. There is no longer a set time for him to wake up, no longer a fixed routine to order his day. The collective embodiment that comes through cooperative projects is no longer present. The activities of the workplace no longer line his world providing a place for the collective appearing that includes his presence.

One way to grasp this exclusion is to note the standard of value inherent in economic life. Such life consists of an unending series of exchanges of goods and services. Within it, as Patočka and Arendt stress, value is use value. It is the ability to serve as a member of this series, i.e., as a means for an end. Since the chain of means and ends cannot have a terminus—if it did, the economy would stop—the notion of an end is strictly relative. An end has its value only as means for a further end. Now, in such a system, to state one’s occupation is to state one’s value. It is to state one’s ability to serve as a means in the functioning of the economy. Thus a doctor has an economic value in his healing of patients, such patients being valued for the services that they, in turn, render. This reduction of individuals to their use values tends to assimilate them to the status of objects. Like the latter, they have their sense in their “what is it for,” their use in various projects. As unemployed, however, individuals become objects without any sense. From the perspective of the economy and the society that defines itself in its terms, they achieve the senseless presence of mere things. In the case of becoming permanently unemployable, there occurs a radical disconnect between such individuals and the social existence that excludes them. As the political philosopher, Bertrand Ogilvie, writes, in such cases “a threshold that is inseparably real and imaginary is crossed, excluding [the individual] from that which defines him, in his own view, as someone who has a place, and leaving him to confront social existence as something alien.”[[563]](#endnote-563) This signifies that “society is no longer representable for this class, which can no longer see the source of its existence in it; and this class is no longer representable for society, which literally does not know what to do with it.”[[564]](#endnote-564) This incapacity of society is tied to its failure to make sense of the unemployable. They do not fit into its system of means and ends. Not fitting in, they become liminal figures. They both belong and do not belong to society. Physically present in it, they are nonetheless excluded.

Étienne Balibar remarks that “[t]his situation of exclusion leads by its very nature to violence.”[[565]](#endnote-565) Violence is, in fact, implicit in individuals’ exclusion from the norms that regulate economic functioning. Placed in the world of such functioning, individuals internalize it along with its norms. Their own functioning is guided by its restraints. Such restraints do not just include the norms of the workplace, norms involving such things as punctuality, meeting deadlines, taking initiative, etc. They also involve the more general standards that are required for people to function together. Mutual functioning would be impossible if individuals habitually lied, stole from one another, or did not control their sexual and aggressive impulses. But for individuals who “confront social existence as something alien,” such restraints do not obtain. Unrestrained, they are open to violence.

**Matters of Faith**

For Marxist philosophers like Balibar and Ogilvie, economic exclusion is the prime cause of violence. Such exclusion is the fate of the “surplus populations” created by the imperatives of global capitalism. In parts of the Third World, there are, in fact, large populations of the unemployed. Such individuals do not form what Marx called “the reserve army of the unemployed”—i.e., the job seekers that capitalism holds in reserve to depress labor costs. The individuals in question have never been able to find steady work or are those who, having lost their jobs, find that their skills are no longer needed. A large and growing class of such individuals also exists in the West, notably in the banlieues or suburbs of the major cities of France, Belgium, and other countries with depressed economies and large, non-integrated immigrant populations. In the West, as in the Third World, such populations can provide a ready source of terrorist recruits. Yet, the economic explanation of violence is not sufficient to explain the spread of terrorism. [[566]](#endnote-566) Only a small fraction of the economically excluded resort to violence. Those who do often have motives that are not only economic, but also religious.

For those who have fallen out of the economic system, religion gives a way to overcome the deficits of sense they have experienced. By means of it, they no longer feel placeless. They become intertwined again with a shared world—the world of their faith community. This intertwining distinguishes itself from that of the economy insofar as what determines it are not standards of utility but rather a relation to a religious figure. The relation is that of imitation. One can, for example, imitate Christ in his charity, or the Buddha in his mindfulness, or Mohammed in his submission to the will of God. Doing so, one assumes a life practice. This practice both discloses a world and gives one an identity within it, e.g., as a Christian, or a Buddhist, or a follower of Islam. For most believers, this world is part of a larger world, the world in which they function economically and, on this basis, enjoy what their incomes allow them to afford: marriage, children, and an extended social life. But for those on the economic margins of society, the religious world becomes primary. So does the exclusivity of their religious practice.

To understand this exclusivity, we have to note what Kierkegaard called the “paradox of faith.” This is “that the individual is higher than the universal, that the individual … determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute.”[[567]](#endnote-567) This absolute is “not a doctrine.” Rather, “[t]he object of faith is the actuality of another person.”[[568]](#endnote-568) The object, in other words, is the religious figure whose life practice informs our own. Our relation to the “universal”—i.e., to the concepts or senses that articulate our world—is determined through the relation we have to this individual. For Kierkegaard as for Martin Buber, exclusivity comes from this singular relation to an individual. As Buber expresses this, “Every actual relationship to another being in the world is exclusive. Its thou is freed and steps forth to confront us in its uniqueness. It fills the firmament—not as if there were nothing else, but everything else lives in its light.” Since everything else does live in its light, this exclusivity also involves a certain inclusivity. And Buber adds, “In the relation to God, unconditional exclusiveness and unconditional inclusiveness are one. For those who enter into the absolute relationship … everything is included in the relationship.”[[569]](#endnote-569) It is included because everything is seen in terms of the life practice imparted by the religious figure—the “thou”—that imparts the will of God. By determining everything through a particular practice, the relation to the figure tends to exclude alternate disclosures.

The ethical nature of this exclusion can be seen by contrasting it with Kant’s conceptual approach to the divine. For Kant, to reverse Kierkegaard’s phrase, the universal—i.e., the ethical rule—is higher than the individual. It is, in fact, that by which we recognize the absolute. Thus, for Kant, “Even the holy one of the Gospel must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before he is recognized as such.”[[570]](#endnote-570) Jesus, in other words, is simply an example of moral perfection. It is our conception of the moral ideal that allows us to recognize him. For Kant, this ideal consists in a set of universal laws that apply to everyone. We grasp these laws by universalizing the principle or “maxim” of our actions. Thus, if I want to know if it is moral to make a false promise—for example, promise to repay a debt when I cannot—I ask: what would happen if everyone did this? Could I universalize the maxim that it is permissible to make a false promise to get out of financial difficulties? Doing so, I see that nobody would believe this promise and, hence, a universal law with this as its content is impossible.[[571]](#endnote-571) This reasoning process is not something imparted by a particular religious figure. We are innately capable of it. For Kant, we can employ reason to discover the rules for ethical behavior just as we can use it to discover the laws of nature.

The case is quite different when an exclusive, one-to-one relation with a thou guides our behavior. At this point, we are no longer within the realm of ethics understood as a set of universal rules accessible to everyone. According to Kierkegaard, faith imposes a “teleological suspension” of the ethical in favor of the relation to the absolute.[[572]](#endnote-572) This absolute can require an action that cannot be universalized such as God’s demanding that Abraham kill Isaac. Seen in the light of faith, this appears as a “sacrifice.” Grasped in terms of ethics, it appears as “murder.”[[573]](#endnote-573) Which is it? According to Kierkegaard, we confront here a paradox. It is not just that the individual “determines his relation to the universal [understood as the ethical] by his relation to the absolute.” It is also that “there is an absolute duty toward God; for in this relationship of duty the individual as an individual stands related absolutely to the absolute.[[574]](#endnote-574) The paradox, then, is that of a duty—a maxim of action—that cannot be universalized, a duty that transcends duty in the Kantian sense. To resolve this paradox, we would have to find some perspective that would embrace not only faith’s one-to-one relation to the absolute but also ethics’ demand that we relate ourselves to the universal. Barring this, we are open to what Kierkegaard calls the “demonic.” In his words, “The demonic has that same property as the divine in that the individual can enter into an absolute relationship with it.” This is because, “by means of the demonic,” one can “aspire to be the single individual who, as the particular, is higher than the universal.”[[575]](#endnote-575) Both the relationship to God and that to the demonic are one-to-one relations. Both stand outside of the universal. Thus, the person who enters into them is outside of the intelligibility imparted by the universal concepts of reason.[[576]](#endnote-576)

**Recognition and Violence**

The demonic in the religious context appears in the actions of intolerance, which can, as history shows, assume a violent form. In them, the religious suspension of the ethical leads to the active suppression of the Other. The Other, here, is the person who does not share one’s faith practices, who discloses the world through a different religious practice, one informed by a relationship to a different “thou.” This encounter with the Other is unsettling. The “foreign gods” of such alternate practices call into question one’s own thou. They rob it of the exclusivity of its claims. As such, they touch the identity of the world revealed through a religious practice and, correspondingly, threaten the selfhood of the believer, who finds his place in this world. The situation is especially fraught for those whose economic exclusion has led them to seek an alternate identity in their faith community. The fact of there being other “thous,” other faith practices signifies the contingency of their own. There is, as it were, a “shaking” of their identity, once it is positioned as one of many possible alternatives. With this, the temptation grows to suppress such alternatives. For the threatened believer, this suppression is a matter of self-defence since what is at stake is the certainty of his world and his place within it.[[577]](#endnote-577)

One way to understand his actions is through the truncated nature of the threatened believer’s recognition of Others. There are two basic aspects of intersubjective recognition, only one of which is available to this person. All recognition of the Other has to deal with a fundamental limitation: we cannot see out of the Other person’s eyes and, hence, cannot grasp directly the way the world appears to this person. The same holds for the memories and expectations that grow from the Other’s perceptional life and history. Our recognition must, then, as Chapter 9 indicated, be indirect. Engaging in it, I, first of all, imaginatively fill in the Other’s conscious life on the basis of my own. Concretely, this means transferring to the Other the intentions and interpretations that underlie my behavior. Thus, I act in terms of the sense I make of a given situation. For example, making dinner, my actions in the kitchen are determined by my goal. Seeing the Other act in a similar manner, I assume that she has a similar goal and grasps the senses of the objects in the kitchen—the food and the utensils—in a similar manner. In other words, when her behavior is like my own, I assume that her conscious life is also similar and I take her to be a subject like myself.[[578]](#endnote-578) Now, genuine recognition of the Other must go beyond this. It must grasp the Other in her *alterity*. If it did not, the recognition would only be a self-recognition: the Other who was recognized by me would simply be a mirror image of my own subjectivity. This would mean that my own interpretations could never be corrected by hers. I could never learn from her that I was mistaken. In fact, in speaking with the Other, I expect that she will add something new to our conversation—not simply repeat what I say. Thus, normally, I assume that she will bring to our conversation a different perspective, one shaped by different experiences. This is the second aspect of intersubjective recognition. Engaging in it, I do not expect that the Other’s behavior will always be harmonious with my own.

This does not mean that I abandon my own interpretative standards. It does, however, signify that I allow these to be called into question by the Other. Thus, in my encounter with the Other, I do not just assume that she will behave as I would in her situation, thereby taking *myself as a standard*; I also have to assume that were I in her situation, I might, given her set of experiences, act differently. Doing so, I also take *her behavior as a standard* for verifying my own selfhood. Thus, to recognize another person as a subject like myself is to assume that, like me, she also uses her own behavior as a standard of verification. The necessity, here, follows analytically. If I take myself as bestowing sense on the world through my actions and projects, then to take her as a subject like myself is to accept she does the same. It is, then, to see myself as an object rather than a subject of sense bestowal. Concretely, this means that for mutual recognition to occur, we must imaginatively place ourselves in the situation of the Other. Each has to regard the world not just in terms of his own categories, but also in terms of the Other’s ways of making sense of the world.

The intertwining that places us in a shared world thus demands that individuals overlay the senses of the world that they disclose with those senses exhibited by the disclosures of their Others. The necessity, here, springs from their finitude. As finite, their projects are limited, as are the senses resulting from their actions. To recognize alternate modes of disclosure flowing from alternate behaviors is inherent in the intertwining that places one in the world as a finite subject. As for the world itself, it appears not just as one’s own world, but as a world that exceeds one, a world whose senses are greater that any individual or group can exhibit. In this context, the incomplete coincidence of the senses disclosed by oneself and the Other does not just exhibit the otherness of the Other. It also discloses the finitude and contingency of one’s own perspective. It is finite since a person’s interpretation does not exhaust the senses that can be made of a given situation. It is contingent since his very ability to imaginatively take up the Other’s standpoint shows him that his own standpoint could have been different. The interpretation that expresses his perspective is thus deprived of any inherent necessity. It is situated as one of many possible interpretations.

A person’s ability to sustain this awareness is a measure of his tolerance. Negatively such tolerance signifies that she lets the Other be other, that she does not force him to behave as she does. Positively, it demands that she affirm the Other’s ideals, his standards of sense-making, as his. As Husserl puts this, in mutual tolerance, I affirm “his ideals as his, as ideals which I must affirm *in him*, just as he must affirm my ideals—not, indeed, as *his* ideals of life but as the ideals of *my* being and life.”[[579]](#endnote-579) The tolerance” that functions in this recognition recalls its Latin root, *tolerare*, which signifies to bear, support, sustain, and endure.[[580]](#endnote-580) This involves our sustaining not just each other’s ideals, but also our bearing or enduring the contingency and finitude of our own. Toleration, thus, signifies a recognition of our humanity as capable of possessing multiple ideals, multiple standards of sense-making, multiple modes of disclosure. To be tolerant is to affirm that disclosure can have a plurality of conditions resulting in a plurality of possible behaviors and life practices, all of which can characterize the intertwining of self and world.[[581]](#endnote-581)

Tolerance, so defined, is not an easy virtue to practice. To have one’s standards for being and behaving called into question can be disturbing. At the extreme, it is felt as traumatic, as a shaking of one’s identity. In such cases, our sense of self-protection prevents us from granting the Other an authority equal to our own. It prompts us to insist on our own categories, that is, to refuse to see our own modes of disclosure as contingent and finite. Doing so, we refuse to recognize as genuine subjects those not following our standards. In other words, limiting ourselves to the first aspect of recognition, we become intolerant. We do not bear or sustain the alterity of Others. Rather than acknowledging humanity as capable of multiple ideals, multiple ways of making sense of our common world, we see such alterity as a threat to ourselves. At stake in our insistence on our way of disclosing the world is, we feel, the very selfhood that enacts this disclosure.

It is not the success but rather the failure of our attempt to exclude the Other that leads to actual violence. Behind every nonrecognition of the Other, there lurks a hidden recognition. As Levinas remarks, if I did not recognize the subjectivity of the Other, “the deployment of violent force would reduce itself to labor.”[[582]](#endnote-582) My action on him would reduce itself to the labor I employ on an inanimate object, for example, a tree that I cut down and make into boards. In fact, it is only as a subject that the Other’s alternative faith can threaten my own. I must already have assumed his world as a possibility open to me to find it threatening.[[583]](#endnote-583) My non-recognition of him must, then, be active. It must involve the suppression of the identity that I secretly recognize. Concretely, this occurs through projection. The thou that determines my life practice gives me a set of moral norms.[[584]](#endnote-584) I project upon the other those aspects of myself that I find to be incompatible with this desired condition. Since these aspects lack any sanctioned mode of disclosure, they are normally repressed. They represent what I cannot acknowledge, what, in fact, I am called upon to hate by the thou informing my religious practices. When I project them on the Other, I both recognize and do not recognize him as a subject like myself. He is like me insofar as I transfer to him my intentions and interpretations. He is unlike me insofar as these are repressed. They are, in Lacan’s words, “the chapter of my history … that is the censored chapter.” They are my “unconscious.” Projecting them, they reappear in the Other.[[585]](#endnote-585) The result is the reverse of the religious injunction to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Here, I hate the Other *as I hate myself*. He has the intentions and interpretations that I cannot acknowledge. So regarded, the alterity he assumes is not his own. It does not spring from his ideals, his modes of making sense of the world. Failing to recognize these, I replace them with the censored chapter of my own consciousness. He is seen as actively engaging in those activities that I experience as “temptations.”

In the case of those excluded from the workplace—the unemployed who serve as a basis for terrorist recruits—this projection of what one hates in oneself has an additional force. One also projects the self-hatred occasioned by one’s exclusion. Rather than acknowledging this self-hatred, one transfers it to the Other. One hates the Other as one hates oneself for being excluded. The blame for being excluded no longer falls on oneself, but rather on the Other, whom one takes as somehow responsible. The structural violence of the international economic order that results in “surplus populations” here expresses itself in the violence directed at this Other. He becomes responsible and one’s violence, at least on the symbolic level, becomes a kind of “counter violence.” The result is the mixture of economic, political and religious motives that often characterize terrorist actions today. The infidel targeted by the Islamic extremist, for example, is not just the Other with a different faith practice. He also represents moral decay and, as a member of the West, economic violence. In acting against him, the terrorist does not, in his own eyes, take the initiative. He responds to an existential and economic threat. His action is altruistic—involving as it often does the sacrifice of his own life. He dies for his faith community—that is, for the world that gives him his place. [[586]](#endnote-586) That the Other whom he kills does not match his stereotypes only increases the necessity for his elimination. The counterevidence offered by the Other threatens the projection that maintains his sense of self-worth.[[587]](#endnote-587)

**Senselessness and Liminality**

Balibar notes with regard to the phenomena of violence that there are “a whole set of kindred behaviors and conditions of existence that are not, properly speaking, public or private, but are inscribed in a gray zone.” Those in this zone “find themselves strangely incapable of configuring the ‘whole,’”—i.e., finding their place within it. [[588]](#endnote-588) They are, in our terms, liminal figures. The senselessness of the violence they engage in comes from the fact that it cannot be placed in any defining whole. It makes sense neither in terms of what they imagine nor in terms of the public whole that includes their victims. Others may interpret their mental life as engaging in projection. But for such projection to work, the perpetrators cannot acknowledge it. Since the public whole in which they act does not match the private one that motivates their actions, it, too, fails to account for what they do. The sense that could embrace both the public and the private would have to come from the intertwining of the two. As earlier noted, only in terms of such intertwining does anything like “objective existence” have any lived, psychological sense. But for such intertwining to occur, there would have to be the recognition that gives them a shared public world—a world that includes their victims. Baring this, there is no objective referent that would give sense to their actions.

Those, then, who limit their recognition to similar subjects, remain in the “gray zone.” They are both inside and outside the plurality of the actual intersubjective world. They act within it; yet, since their actions do not conform to the norms that structure its sense-making activities, such actions appear publicly senseless. The same incomprehensibility characterizes the morality that religious terrorists profess. Insofar as this springs from a one-to-one relationship to a religious absolute, it stands outside of ethics considered as a system of rules which apply unconditionally to everyone. This holds even when we take these rules, not as Kantian imperatives, but simply as empirically generated norms for cooperative action within a genuinely plural, intersubjective world. Being external to these, the terrorist does not acknowledge the restraints they impose. As such, his actions appear publicly senseless. As noted, the same lack of sense characterizes his internal world. The unacknowledged repression that supports the terrorist’s world prevents our finding within his world the motives that would explain his actions. The terrorist, if called upon, would explain them in terms of those he targets. But the successful elimination of these would leave him without enemies. As such, it would require the repression that structures his private world to seek new subjects for the transfer of the repressed material. Viewed in terms of this repression, the actual enemy of the terrorist is himself. His hatred of the Other is a self-hatred. This is why his actions so often end in his self-destruction. The suicide bomber manages to destroy both his external and his internal enemy. In his very liminality, he cannot distinguish them. The externality that marks his being inside the public world ultimately undermines both the public and the private leaving him in a senseless “gray zone.”

**Sovereign Violence**

No account of senseless violence would be complete without a mention of the forms it assumes in state power. Once again the chief factor is the liminality of the agents. Intertwined with the world, they are largely within it. Yet on an important level, they stand outside of it and the restraints it imposes. As exemplified by Conrad’s character, Kurtz, this externality and lack of restraint characterized the colonial experience in the Belgian Congo. Marlow, the fictional narrator of Conrad’s tale, can hardly overcome the disbelief of his shipmates. He remarks in exasperation, “This is the worst of trying to tell [you] .... Here you all are, each moored with two good addresses [the ship and their homes], like a hulk with two anchors, a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another.”[[589]](#endnote-589) Were they to violate their society’s norms, a neighbor would catch them up. For those in the Congo, however, such restraints were lacking. The ideology of imperialism that structured their mental life was as far from the reality of the natives that they exploited as the fantasies of the mass shooters were from the lives of their victims. In each case, there was an inequality of power. Since the perpetrators could do everything, they, in fact, stopped at nothing. In the Belgian colony, millions died as a result of the occupation that Conrad describes.[[590]](#endnote-590)

The same liminality is present in the concept of sovereignty that is present in a tradition that stretches from Hobbes to Carl Schmitt.[[591]](#endnote-591) Here, the sovereign himself is the person in the gray zone. As before, there is an inequality in power—that is, in the access to the means of violence. Moreover, the sovereign in this tradition stands outside of the state while exercising power. Acting within it, he is unconstrained by its laws. Thomas Hobbes bases this liminality of the sovereign on what he takes to be the natural condition of man, “which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man.”[[592]](#endnote-592) For Hobbes, the only way to get out of this condition, where the life of man is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short,” is through each person’s laying down his right to use violence to defend himself. This is done by his transferring this right to the sovereign. To found a state, in other words, involves the sovereign’s monopolizing the means of violence.[[593]](#endnote-593) This inequality of power is matched by the exclusion of the sovereign from the constraints of the laws he imposes. This exclusion follows from the fact that in the state of nature, there is no law. In such a state, “nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place.” The reason for this is clear: “Where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice.”[[594]](#endnote-594) Given that the sovereign represents this common power, he grounds the law. But as such, he is outside of it. Thus, as Hobbes states, “there can happen no breach of covenant on the part of the sovereign.”[[595]](#endnote-595) He is unrestrained by it. Both within the state and external to it, he represents within the state the natural violence that is prior to it. As the Italian philosopher, Georgio Agamben, sums up this position: “in Hobbes the state of nature survives in the person of the sovereign who is the only one to preserve its *ius contra omnes*. Sovereignty thus presents itself as the incorporation of the state of nature in society.”[[596]](#endnote-596)

Carl Schmitt, the Nazi legal theorist, whom Herman Goering appointed as State Counselor for Prussia, presents a similar version of sovereignty. For him, the state of nature in society reveals itself in the “state of exception.” This occurs when there is “a case of extreme peril, a danger to the existence of the state.”[[597]](#endnote-597) At issue in the state of exception is not the violation of this or that law, but rather the situation where the laws themselves can have a field of application. In Schmitt’s words, “The exception appears in its absolute form when a situation in which legal prescriptions can be valid must first be brought about. Every general norm demands a normal, everyday frame of life to which it can be factually applied and which is subjected to its regulations.” In the state of exception, this frame is absent. We are once again thrown into the lawless state of nature and, for Schmitt, “[t]here exists no norm that is applicable to chaos.”[[598]](#endnote-598) Now, the crucial point for Schmitt is that the sovereign is the one who decides whether or not this exceptional situation obtains.[[599]](#endnote-599) Doing so, he represents the state of nature in society. This follows since, in declaring a state of exception, his decision is necessarily outside of the law. In Schmitt’s words: “The decision [that a state of exception exists] frees itself from all normative ties and becomes in the true sense absolute.” The decision that the conditions for legality no longer exist is one that, if correct, is necessarily *not bound* by such conditions. The “suspension of the entire existing order,” thus implies the sovereign’s “unlimited authority.”[[600]](#endnote-600)

The liminality of Schmitt’s sovereign is, here, apparent. In the last chapter, we concentrated on the externality of his relation to those he ruled. In fact, he is both outside *and inside* of the existing civil order. As Schmitt puts this, “Although he stands outside the normally valid legal system, he nevertheless belongs to it, for it is he who must decide whether the constitution needs to be suspended in its entirety.”[[601]](#endnote-601) This liminality signifies that the sovereign has complete authority with regard to the legal system, being himself unconstrained by it. Under the sovereign, “order in the juristic sense still prevails even if it is not of the ordinary kind.”[[602]](#endnote-602) The order now comes from the sovereign will: What the sovereign decides becomes law. Thus, “[t]he sovereign produces and guarantees the situation in its totality.”[[603]](#endnote-603)  Standing outside of the legal framework, he belongs to it by founding it. Thus, his “authority proves that to produce law, it need not be based on law.”[[604]](#endnote-604) The basis of this authority is not the content—the particular regulations—that the sovereign proclaims; rather, as I cited Schmitt in the last chapter, the sovereign’s decision is “absolute and independent of the correctness of its content.”[[605]](#endnote-605) Its basis is simply the sovereign’s unconditioned freedom.

Schmitt’s theory of sovereignty laid the basis for Hitler’s actions, when by use of the Reichstag Fire Act and the Enabling Act, he instituted a permanent state of exception. Not limited by existing laws and norms, his actions assumed the form of the “demonic” in Kierkegaard’s and Buber’s sense. Buber realized that the demonic can achieve a political dimension. The I-thou relation can focus on an individual whose “mission requires him to know only his association with his cause and no real relation to any thou, no present encounter with any thou, so that everything around him becomes [an] it and subservient to his cause.” Such, according to Buber, was the case with Napoleon. “He was the demonic Thou for the millions and did not respond; to ‘thou’ he responded by saying: ‘It.’”[[606]](#endnote-606) The “it” was his cause, his world-view. This provided the standard for his followers’ actions and corresponding disclosures. As Buber emphasizes, there is no reciprocity in the relation to the demonic thou. The person embodying this thou does not see things in the light of those who follow him; rather “a thousand relations reach out toward him but none issues from him. He participates in no actuality, but Others participate immeasurably in him as in an actuality.”[[607]](#endnote-607) As such, he is external to the “thou” of these Others.

What Buber wrote of Napoleon in the 1920’s proved prophetic with regard to Hitler in the 1930’s. Again we find the political expression of the religious “thou.” With Hitler, political liminality assumed a religious dimension. As Denis de Rougement wrote regarding a Nazi rally in 1935, “I thought I was participating in a mass meeting, a political rally. But they were celebrating their cult. A liturgy was being celebrated, the great sacred ceremony of a religion that I was not a member of and that rolled over me and forcefully pushed me back” like a wave. The force he experienced was greater than the mere “physical force” of “all those terribly tightly packed bodies.”[[608]](#endnote-608) It was religious. In fact, as he reports, Hitler’s followers had an essentially religious relation to him.[[609]](#endnote-609) Replacing its Christian analogue, this relation shaped their “world-view (*Weltanschauung*).”[[610]](#endnote-610)

The relation here between the followers and the political-religious “thou” is a complex one. On the one hand, the leader is outside of the world of his followers. As Buber notes, his world is the world of his cause, not that of his followers. On the other hand, his followers participate in him “as in an actuality.” Georges Bataille, in “The Psychological Structure of Fascism,” argues that this relation of exclusion and inclusion, where *the excluded include the leader*, characterizes fascism. The mass of the adherents of the fascist movement come, he notes, from the economically excluded.[[611]](#endnote-611) The solution to their distress is their association with the fascist leader. Arising, as Hitler did, from their dispossessed class, the leader channels their affective energies.[[612]](#endnote-612) If they are the repressed elements of society, he himself represents the return of the repressed in an authoritarian form.[[613]](#endnote-613) Like the general in an army, the leader is characterized by his “assuming *in complete freedom* the imperative character of action.”[[614]](#endnote-614) As such, he is other than the dispossessed members of society. At the same time, through their affective attachment to him—an attachment informed by their common origin in the dispossessed classes—they are in him. In Bataille’s words, “In actuality, this negated mass has ceased to be itself in order to become affectively …the chief's thing and like a part of the chief himself.”[[615]](#endnote-615) The followers, thus, provide a “place” for the sovereign, not by including him among themselves, but rather by identifying themselves with him. In essence, they assume his liminality. Adopting his cause, enter with him into Balibar’s “gray zone.” Doing so, they participate in the demonic.

In an organized, fascist state, this participation is structured by the leader’s commands. Bataille, in fact, takes as his model for this state a soldier’s identification with the commander. The affective identification with the latter, is enhanced “by the parade, by the uniform, and by the *geometric* regularity of cadenced movements.” Such elements negate the “disorder” of the dispossessed classes that make up the ranks of the army.[[616]](#endnote-616) The same cannot be said of those who see themselves as “soldiers” of the Caliphate. Their affective identification is explicitly religious. Their actions are largely individual and voluntary. What is the same is their identification with the cause of their leader and their assumption of his liminality. What we face here is not simply Schmittian sovereignty, but rather its pluralization. Drawn into the gray zone, individual terrorists pluralize the senseless violence inherent in political liminality.

**Conclusion**

The common theme of all the examples I cited is that of the liminality of the perpetrators of senseless violence. They act within a world, yet their action is unconstrained by its norms. This liminality, as our initial remarks indicated, characterized the shooters who acted alone or in tightly knit groups. From James Holmes to the perpetrators of the Bataclan killings, they were both inside and outside of society. The same liminality characterized Hitler and the essentially senseless violence he introduced into the conduct of war—a violence that often undermined its prosecution. It can be argued that it also characterized the actions of Stalin and Mao Zedong. In their senseless purges of their own movements, they were both within and yet unconstrained by the parties they led. To the point that liminality characterizes the relation to the divine, it too opens itself to a violence that runs counter to the sense of the religions in whose name the perpetrators claim to act. Thus, the Qur’an proclaims, “let there be no compulsion in religion.”[[617]](#endnote-617) It advises that one should manifest mercy even as one desires this for oneself.[[618]](#endnote-618) The terrorists who kill in the name of Islam act unconstrained by such surahs. The same can be said for those who perpetrate religious violence in the name of Christianity, with its doctrine of forgiveness.

In all such cases, the cure for senseless violence is the inclusion of the agents into the world in which they act. It can only come through the reestablishment of the intertwining that joins the self and its Others in a world of shared senses. To establish a common frame is, of course, not easy. It is one thing to integrate the unemployed into the world of work by providing them with jobs. It is another to question the very system of values that views individuals in purely economic, utilitarian terms. The same holds for the liminality of those who claim an absolute relation to a religious figure—a relation that transcends the ethical realm. It is one thing to point out that the founders of the major religions, from Christ to Mohammed, preached love of one’s neighbor as an absolute value.[[619]](#endnote-619) It is another to practice tolerance in the sense of seeing our own modes of disclosure as contingent and finite. Inherent in such a view is an intertwining with a world that we acknowledge exceeds such disclosures. It is an intertwining that places us in a common, yet open-ended world of sense. It is only through the continuous effort to establish this world that liminality can be overcome.

For many readers, this injunction may seem like a pious hope. They would point to the role of violence in the establishment of the political order. From the foundation of the Roman Republic to the French and American Revolutions, war has constantly presided over the birth of states. This “founding violence” is continued in the “sustaining violence,” which maintains the political order through the actions of the police and the various security services. Reflecting on this situation, Levinas wrote, “Does not lucidity, the mind’s openness upon the true, consist in catching sight of the permanent possibility of war?” The attitude he is confronting is that “[w]ar … renders morality derisory.” War is the ultimate reality. This means that “[t]he trial by force is the test of the real.”[[620]](#endnote-620) (*TI*, p. 21). For Schmitt and, at times, for Heidegger, this is the case. The trial by force is the ultimate shaping force of our political reality. It lies behind the disclosure of who and what we are in this reality. It is ultimately what makes us “exist,” that is, stand out. There is, here, a notion of existence that must be examined if our claims regarding the intertwining are to be secured. We can do so by examining the existential basis for Schmitt’s position.

**Chapter 17**

Violence and Existence-- Schmitt’s Concept of the Political

On August 22, 1933, Heidegger wrote to Carl Schmitt, “Thank you for having sent me your text [*The Concept of the Political*], which I already knew in the second edition and which contains an approach of the greatest importance. I would be most appreciative if I could speak with you about this personally someday.” The newly appointed Rector then issues the invitation, “I am counting very much on your decisive collaboration, when it comes to the entire rebuilding, from the inside, of the Faculty of Law, in its educational and scientific orientation.”[[621]](#endnote-621) What was behind this praise for his book (which originally appeared in the same year as *Being and Time*)? What was the reason for the invitation? Both philosophers were equally critical of liberalism and democratic politics. Both had joined the Nazi party in 1933 and both had benefited from it in terms of their careers. Beyond this, however, there was a deeper, philosophical connection. For all his claimed affinity with Hobbes, Schmitt, in fact, radicalizes and transforms the tradition that follows from him. At the basis of this transformation is a conception of human existence, one that Schmitt shares with Heidegger. In what follows, I am going to analyze this. I will then present an alternative conception, one stemming from Patočka, to show how it, rather than Schmitt’s, opens up the possibility of political life.

**Violence and Empty Identity**

Schmitt’s political philosophy can be summed up in a fundamental claim, namely, that violence is creative of identity. For James Dodd, we recall, “Schmitt’s challenge is to insist that we must accept the significance of violence.” It is not just that Schmitt sees “the possibility of violence as an origin, thus a principle that forms the foundation for the logic of political relations.”[[622]](#endnote-622) The challenge also consists in “the idea that [war’s] violence plays a uniquely constitutive role with respect to human existence generally.” He continues:

The challenge lies in the suggestion that the very possibility of combat determines the genuine horizon in which “what is at stake” in our actions ultimately becomes decided. If knowing what is at stake in who we are, and being who we are, are co-determinative, then Schmitt’s thesis is that to know what is at stake is possible only within the horizon of signification opened by our awareness of the extreme case, for therein lies the definitive circuit of an authentic engagement with our being.[[623]](#endnote-623)

The “extreme case” referred to is that of conflict with the enemy, a conflict for Schmitt that involves, by definition, “the real possibility of physical killing … the existential negation of the enemy.”[[624]](#endnote-624) It is the possibility of such violence that confers an identity on a people as a whole, transforming them into a political entity.

What is remarkable about this claim is its empty, formal character. Neither the political entity nor the enemy is given any positive content. The concept of the political is not drawn from that of the state. The latter, in fact, has no inherent content. In Schmitt’s words: “It may be left open what the state is in its essence—a machine or an organism, a person or an institution, a society or a community, an enterprise or a beehive, or perhaps even a basic procedural order.”[[625]](#endnote-625) This cannot be otherwise, given that “[t]he concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political” and the latter has no inherent content.[[626]](#endnote-626) According to Schmitt, this lack of content comes from the uniqueness of the concept of the political, which rests “on its own ultimate distinctions.”[[627]](#endnote-627) Thus, one can “assume that in the realm of morality the final distinctions are between good and evil, in aesthetics beautiful and ugly, in economics profitable and unprofitable.”[[628]](#endnote-628) But the political distinction is different from these. It “is independent, not in the sense of a distinct new domain, but in that it can neither be based on any one antithesis or any combination of other antitheses, nor can it be traced to these.”[[629]](#endnote-629) It is neither a new domain nor based on any other antithesis because of the opposition on which it is based. According to Schmitt: “The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.[[630]](#endnote-630) The very distinctness of this opposition from all others drains it of any positive content. Thus, as Schmitt observes, “The political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions.”[[631]](#endnote-631)  Similarly, “the morally good, aesthetically beautiful, and economically profitable need not necessarily become the friend in the specifically political sense of the word.”[[632]](#endnote-632) Both the friend and enemy, ally and opponent, as empty of content, are defined by whatever situation happens to obtain.[[633]](#endnote-633) The enemy is the “Other,” but this Other is such by the situation. The only thing that defines him and, hence, the political “is the most intense and extreme antagonism.”[[634]](#endnote-634) This is the antagonism that opens up the “real possibility” of his “existential negation.”

The question that arises in terms of this definition is whether the enemy is forced upon us. Is it the case that one must fight him to maintain one’s existence? Or is Schmitt’s meaning that the enemy must be sought out for the purposes of the community’s self-definition? Heidegger’s answer to this question appears in his interpretation of Heraclitus. In the letter to Schmitt cited above, he writes: “On the topic of your quotation of Heraclitus, I especially appreciated the fact that you did not forget the *basileus*, which alone gives the whole saying its full content, when it is fully interpreted. For years I have had such an interpretation ready, concerning the concept of truth — *edeixe* and *epoiçse* [reveals and makes]—which appears in fragment 53.” Fragment 53 contains Heraclitus’ statement about *polemos*, which Heidegger translates as “war.” It runs: “War is the father of all and king (*basileus*) of all; and some he shows (*edeixe*) as gods, others as men; some he makes (*epoiçse*) slaves, others free.”[[635]](#endnote-635) Heidegger’s concept of truth is that of manifestation. It is that of things’ showing or revealing what they are.[[636]](#endnote-636) War, in manifesting the distinctions between things, exemplifies this notion of truth. It is what gives things their manifest identity. As Heidegger writes in commenting on this fragment:

The essence of being is struggle; all being passes through decision, victory, and defeat. One is not simply either a god or a man, but with being in every case there falls a combative decision that places struggle in being; one is not a serf because that exists among other things, but because that being harbors within itself a defeat, a lack, an insufficiency, a cowardliness, and perhaps even a wanting to be inferior and weak. Hence it becomes clear: struggle is that which places within and maintains within being; it is what decides on the essence of being. [[637]](#endnote-637)

The struggle, in other words, reveals the serf as a serf. It manifests his being as “inferior and weak.” If we accept this, then struggle is necessary for identity.

The same necessity holds for the adversary, against whom we struggle: To affirm our identity, we have to seek him out. In Heidegger’s words, “The enemy is one who poses an essential threat to the existence of the people and its members. The enemy is not necessarily the outside enemy, and the outside enemy is not necessarily the most dangerous. It may even appear that there is no enemy at all. The root requirement is then to find the enemy, to bring him to light or even to create him, in order that there may be that standing up to the enemy, and that existence not become apathetic [*Stumpf*].” Without him, the struggle that reveals a people’s selfhood cannot occur. Given this, the task is “to seek out the enemy as such, and to lead him to reveal himself, to avoid nurturing illusions about him, to remain ready to attack, to cultivate and increase constant preparedness and to initiate the attack on a long-term basis, with the goal of total extermination.” This task is all the more difficult since “[t]he enemy may have grafted himself onto the innermost root of the existence of a people, and oppose the latter's ownmost essence.”[[638]](#endnote-638) Here, our identity requires that we decide on an internal enemy. This also seems to be Schmitt’s position. In his view, “The political entity presupposes the real existence of an enemy.”[[639]](#endnote-639) The enemy unifies it, gives it an internal cohesion. It assures the political entity its internal peace. For Schmitt, “this requirement for internal peace also compels it in critical situations to decide upon the domestic enemy.”[[640]](#endnote-640)  For both Heidegger and Schmitt, then, the enemy, if not forced upon one, must be sought out. For both, struggle “shows” and “makes” identity. Schmitt extends this thesis to our political identity.

This necessity, however, does not carry over to any given content: Neither Heidegger nor Schmitt present us with characteristics of the enemy, which, if modified, would eliminate the causes of conflict. Given this, the conflict itself has no normative basis. Schmitt puts this in terms of the political entity’s right to wage war. This right, he observes, “implies a double possibility: the right to demand from its own members the readiness to die and unhesitatingly to kill enemies.”[[641]](#endnote-641)  We cannot, however, normatively justify this right. In Schmitt’s words, “no program, no ideal, no norm, no expediency confers a right to dispose of the physical life of other human beings.” The only thing that justifies this is the survival of the state itself. As Schmitt writes: “War, the readiness of combatants to die, the physical killing of human beings who belong on the side of the enemy—all this has no normative meaning, but an existential meaning only, particularly in a real combat situation with a real enemy.”[[642]](#endnote-642)  This “existential meaning” refers to the existence of the state. Its preservation is what justifies war. As Schmitt continues: “If such physical destruction of human life is not motivated by an existential threat to one's own way of life, then it cannot be justified. Just as little can war be justified by ethical and juristic norms. If there really are enemies in the existential sense as meant here, then it is justified, but only politically, to repel and fight them physically.”[[643]](#endnote-643)  With this, we have Schmitt’s concept of the state as defined by the political. It is formed when there are people who are willing to die in its defense. This resoluteness in the face of death is what gives them a political identity.

**Death and our Identity as Simply Existing**

This conclusion recalls the role that death plays in Heidegger’s concept of human identity. Heidegger introduces it by bringing up the difficulty that arises when we say that Dasein’s “being is care [*Sorge*].”[[644]](#endnote-644) This signifies, we noted, that Dasein’s being is an issue for it.[[645]](#endnote-645) It is the result of its projects, of the choices it makes in deciding not just what it will do but (as inherent in this) who it will be as the accomplisher of these projects.[[646]](#endnote-646) Now, for Heidegger, “the primary element in care is the ‘ahead-of-itself.’” In my projects, I am ahead of myself. My being is not yet accomplished. There is always some “potentiality for being” that remains “outstanding.”[[647]](#endnote-647) The difficulty is how I can grasp my Dasein as a whole. In Heidegger’s words, given that “as long as Dasein exists, it must, as such potentiality for being, not yet be something,” how can I grasp it “as a total being [*als ganzes Seiendes*]”?[[648]](#endnote-648) His answer is to see the solution in *the very statement of the problem*. The not-yet, which apparently makes it impossible to grasp Dasein as a totality, is what characterizes its totality. More precisely, the not-yet of death does this. As long as I am alive, my death remains “outstanding.” As my “uttermost possibility,” which cannot be realized in my life time, it remains “not-yet.” Constantly remaining such, it characterizes the *totality* of my being as marked by the not-yet.[[649]](#endnote-649)

To transform this insight into the way I grasp my own human identity, two further factors are necessary. The first is the fact that my death cannot be shared.[[650]](#endnote-650) It is not a “not-yet” in the sense of some project that I could hand over to another to accomplish. My death can only be realized by myself. The same holds for my experience of death. In Heidegger’s words, “We do not experience the dying of others in a genuine sense; at most we are always there only at their side.”[[651]](#endnote-651) His point is that our being with the dying is relational. It involves more than ourselves. By contrast, the dying that we genuinely (personally) experience is non-relational. It lays claim to us as individuals and, as such, individualizes us.[[652]](#endnote-652) The second factor is that this individualization comes through the contingency that death exposes. When we experience something as contingent, we grasp it as something that could have been otherwise. This prompts us to ask for a reason why it is the way it is. Death, as touching our life as a whole, raises this question about each of its elements. It points to us—to our actions—as responsible for them. Facing death, we are moved to ask why we have shaped our lives as we have, why we have engaged in the actions that have defined us as their accomplishers. As such, death makes us face our unique identity as having chosen to actualize some possibilities rather than others of our being. So regarded, the nothingness of death makes Dasein face its “ownmost possibility to be” in the sense that it points out that Dasein, in its being as “care,” is uniquely responsible for its being. It also reveals that, apart from its choices, Dasein is nothing at all. It has no given essence, no pregiven set of characteristics that would give it an identity. For Heidegger, then, “[t]he ‘nothing’ that anxiety [in the face of death] confronts us with, reveals the nothingness that determines the very basis of Dasein.”[[653]](#endnote-653) Not having an identity like a thing, Dasein affirms its uniqueness in its decisions regarding what it will be. This affirmation is also that of Dasein’s freedom to make such choices.[[654]](#endnote-654) This is a freedom unconstrained by its having any determining nature. Resoluteness in the face of death is actually facing this unconditioned responsibility for one’s being.

Resoluteness (*Entschossenheit*), for Heidegger, is an ambiguous concept. On the one hand, he emphasizes its disclosive nature. He writes, “Resolution [*Entschluß*] does not withdraw itself from ‘actuality,’ but discovers first what is factually [*faktisch*] possible.”[[655]](#endnote-655) Here, it indicates our openness to the situation that we find ourselves in. It discovers what is possible for us in our historically given world—a world that we did not create but rather have been “thrown” or cast into. On the other hand, resoluteness is not a passive gazing into a situation to calculate the possibilities it affords us. It is the active carrying out of what we resolve that discloses what is possible. Heidegger makes this point in response to the questions: “But on what basis does Dasein disclose itself in resoluteness. What should it resolve on?” His reply is: “Only the resolution can provide an answer.” Enacting it discloses the situation. In his words, “The resolution is precisely the disclosive projection of and determination of what is factually possible at the time.”[[656]](#endnote-656) What Heidegger is saying is that we cannot know before we attempt it whether the possibility we project as our goal can, in fact, be realized. In fact, “[t]he lack of determination that characterizes every factually-thrown potentiality of Dasein to be [something] necessarily pertains to resoluteness.”[[657]](#endnote-657) What resolves this indeterminacy is our attempting to carry out what we resolve on.

Heidegger’s account of resoluteness is, then, one with his association of the “nothingness” at our core with “Dasein’s being-free for its existential possibilities.”[[658]](#endnote-658) Such freedom is, of course, constrained by the facts of our given situation. It is, however, not determined by them, but rather is what first discloses these constraining factors. Given this, we cannot say that facticity gives our existence some determining content. For Heidegger, “facticity [*Factizität*] is not factualness [*Tatsächlichkeit*] of the brute fact of something present to hand.” It is rather “a character of Dasein’s being.” As distinct from the facts that can be seen, “the that [it is] of facticity is not something we can perceptually encounter.”[[659]](#endnote-659) This is because facticity does not refer to the facts, which would give Dasein some empirical content. Its reference is to a character of Dasein’s being: namely that of its being thrown into a factually given world. The “that of facticity” refers to this thrownness—not to the particular facts of the world into which it has been placed. The latter remain indeterminate until Dasein discloses them.

Once again, we are confronted with the purely formal character of the terms being defined. We cannot appeal to the facts to decide on what we should resolve on. “Only the resolution can provide an answer” to what we should do. Facticity is not the facts (*Tatsachen*) of our situation. It is our acknowledgement of the “that it is and has to be” of our thrown situation, a situation that becomes determinate only when we enact our resolution.[[660]](#endnote-660) The death that confronts with the nothingness at our core is equally formal. As annihilation pure and simple, it has no positive content. It does not touch some particular aspect of our being in the world, i.e., some particular project or accomplishment. It undoes “our being in the world as such.” Facing death, we confront “the possibility our not being able to be there” in the world at all.[[661]](#endnote-661) This means that nothing worldly can give it its content. Given its essential privacy, we cannot even speak of it in terms of our relation to others. As Heidegger writes, describing our relation to death: “When Dasein stands before itself as this possibility [of not being], it is *completely* referred back to its ownmost possibility to be. All its relations to any other Dasein are undone when it stands before itself in this way.”[[662]](#endnote-662) So regarded, death is a complete cipher. It has as little content as the enemy that threatens one with annihilation. Both simply function by throwing one back on oneself. They impose the demand that one take responsibility for oneself. The self that one does take responsibility for is equally formal. Not having a nature, it has no essential content. Whatever content it happens to have depends on one’s enacting what one resolves on. Heidegger’s concern, in fact, is not this content *per se*. It is with its “authenticity,” i.e., with our authorizing it, our making it our own through our decisions.

The lack of content points to the fact that Heidegger’s focus is on existence. In his reworking of the Medieval distinction between essence and existence, Heidegger’s existential analytic privileges the bare fact that we are—our existence in its factual givenness—over any claims regarding our having a nature or essence. Thus, death threatens our existence as such, irrespective of its content. The same holds when, with Schmitt, we speak of our *collective* facing of death. As Karl Löwith remarks, Schmitt’s defining the political in terms of “the exigent circumstance of war” means that he

is in agreement with Heidegger's existential ontology, according to which Dasein's ‘fundamental disposition’ consists in its ‘that it is’ … This ‘that’ I am at all rather than not being, or rather that there is a political unity at all, counts here as in Heidegger as what is authentically fundamental, because it is the total and radical, in relation to which all what-ness [*Was-Sein*] is a matter of indifference.[[663]](#endnote-663)

For both Heidegger and Schmitt, Löwith adds, “[d]eath is that Nothing in the face of which the radical finitude of our temporal existence manifests itself.” The struggle that confronts us with death functions as “truth” in the Heideggarian sense of “revealing” and “making.” What it reveals, however, is simply that we are, that we exist. In Löwith’s words:

“Freedom toward death,” which in *Being and Time* is printed in italicized boldface, and on the basis of which the Dasein that is always one's own and is individuated unto itself achieves its “capacity-for-Being-whole,” corresponds in [Schmitt’s] political decisionism to the sacrifice of one's life for the total state in the exigency of war. In both cases the principle is the same: the radical return to something ultimate, namely the naked *that*-ness of facticity, i.e., the return to what remains in life when one does away with every kind of inherited life-content or *what*-ness.[[664]](#endnote-664)

Given this, we can say Schmitt’s use of the “extreme situation” to define our collective identity is based on a specific notion of human existence, one that he shares with Heidegger. This is the conception of existence as a bare fact. The identity that violence generates is that of our existence stripped of any what-ness, any inherent essence. This is why it has no content, why it is describable only in terms of the decisions that shape it. Such identity is personal only if we take responsibility for our decisions.

This view of our identity is an important element in Schmitt’s critique of liberalism. Leo Strauss remarks that the reason “why Schmitt affirms the political … is shown most clearly in his polemic against the ideal that corresponds to the negation of the political.” This is the ideal of liberalism. Its ideal is that of a world that banishes decisions by replacing them, as far as possible, with legal and bureaucratic procedures. By engaging in endless negotiations, it also attempts to banish the friend-enemy antagonisms that lead to war. As Strauss quotes Schmitt, the result of this banishment is “*weltanschauung*, culture, civilization, economy, morals, law, art, *entertainment*, etc., but … neither politics nor state.”[[665]](#endnote-665) This means, Strauss writes, “what the opponents of the political want is ultimately tantamount to the establishment of a world of entertainment, a world of amusement, a world without *seriousness*.”[[666]](#endnote-666) For Strauss, this seriousness means “asking the question of what is right,” a question we cannot raise if our ideal is to avoid all conflict.[[667]](#endnote-667) Beyond this, however, such seriousness has a Heideggarian cast. Given the essential lack of content of our existence, seriousness means taking responsibility for the decisions that shape it and, hence, affirming our identity through such responsibility. For Heidegger and Schmitt, what forces us to do this is the enemy that confronts us. For both, then, seriousness involves a readiness for conflict, a need to seek out the enemy.

**The Sovereign Decision**

Heidegger takes our confrontation with death as primarily individual. For Schmitt, by contrast, both death and the enemy that threatens it are thought in terms of the collective. “The enemy,” he writes, “…is not the private adversary whom one hates. An enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity.” The reason why “the enemy is solely the public enemy” is because the relationship to an enemy is what constitutes the public, i.e., makes a group of individuals into a political unit.[[668]](#endnote-668) Given this, who decides on the identity of the enemy? A private person cannot make this decision. He may have his personal dislikes, but “[t]he enemy in the political sense need not be hated personally.”[[669]](#endnote-669) What remains, then, is that the collective itself makes the decision. Constituted by its opposition to the enemy, it, itself, decides on the enemy that constitutes it. There is here a certain paradox, one that is not resolved when Schmitt asserts that the political entity requires “the political power of a class or of some other group … to assume the state's power and thereby decide on the friend-and-enemy distinction.” For Schmitt, “[t]his grouping is therefore always the decisive human grouping … and it is sovereign.”[[670]](#endnote-670) Its sovereignty consists in its ability to decide for the state; but its very decision is what constitutes the state, making the state a sovereign political entity. In constituting the state, it thus makes the class or group representing it—namely, itself—“sovereign.”

What this circularity indicates for Schmitt is the self-grounding nature of sovereignty. In his view, sovereignty is ultimate. Nothing beyond it provides a ground or reason for its actions. The group, class, or individual possessing sovereignty embodies the *ultimo ratio* of the political. In his *Political Theology*, Schmitt puts this in terms of the “state of exception.” The exception, as we saw, is a situation of existential threat, one where the state itself is threatened and, with it, the possibility of the legal order it sustains. For Schmitt, even though the law has broken down, sovereignty remains. In a state of emergency, the sovereign’s decision thus exhibits itself as beyond the law. In the absence of law, the sovereign rules by decree and does “on the basis of [the state’s] right of self-preservation.”[[671]](#endnote-671) The right of self-preservation is also asserted in the sovereign decision regarding the enemy. It is what justifies the real possibility of war and the taking of human life. There is nothing prior to this right, which is as absolute as the authority it grants the sovereign. The same holds with regard to the authority that prevails in the state of exemption. In Schmitt’s words: “What characterizes an exception is principally unlimited authority, which means the suspension of the entire existing order. In such a situation it is clear that the state remains, whereas law recedes.”[[672]](#endnote-672) It remains as an *ultimo ratio* that is prior to all law. Such laws describe the character of the state; they tell us what kind of state it is. Prior to all of this, however, is the state’s factual existence. The sovereign, in expressing this, assumes a status that is prior to law, a status that, in fact, serves as its ground. Thus, once again we come to the privileging of the bare fact of existence. Such a fact serves as an unconditioned condition for all that follows. The result is a focusing, not on the content of existence—in this case, the laws—but on the free decisions that shape this content.

Schmitt, as we saw, expresses the unlimited authority of the sovereign in terms of his being a liminal figure: he exists on the boundary between two different orders. As Schmitt writes: “He decides whether there is an extreme emergency as well as what must be done to eliminate it.” He does so as *external* to the legal order, which has broken down, and, yet, as *internal* to it in his legal ability to suspend the constitution. This being both inside and outside the legal system means that the sovereign has complete authority with regard to it. In his power to declare a state of emergency, he acts in accordance with the law. Such action, however, is unconstrained by legal norms or rules, which, in a chaotic situation, no longer have a field of applicability. The sovereign, thus, “produces and guarantees the situation in its totality.”[[673]](#endnote-673) Public order comes from his will. What he decides becomes the law. Schmitt’s claim, then, is that the sovereign’s “authority [in an extreme situation] proves that to produce law it need not be based on law.”[[674]](#endnote-674)

On what is this authority based? What is the content, the conception of this authority? Schmitt’s answer recalls Heidegger’s response to the question of the “basis” for Dasein’s decisions. To the question, “What should it resolve on?” Heidegger replies: “Only the resolution can provide an answer.” The factual circumstances that will reveal its correctness or incorrectness can only be disclosed by enacting the resolution. The enactment is a function of our freedom, which, itself, is tied to the nothingness at our core. Schmitt gives an analogous, if more radical, answer when he writes that the decision of the sovereign is “absolute and independent of the correctness of its content.”[[675]](#endnote-675) It follows no norm. This means that, “normatively, the decision emanates from nothingness.”[[676]](#endnote-676) Its origin is simply the will of the sovereign—taken as unconditioned and absolute.

What we confront here is a pure decisionism. The nothingness that is its source is, in fact, the political equivalent of the nothingness of death. It is the potential annihilation of the state. This forces the state to confront the bare fact of its existence. Considered as prior to the laws that give it its content, it is devoid of any given character. For Schmitt, this points to the unconstrained decisions that give it its character. With this, we return to Schmitt’s claim that violence determines identity. In his view, the annihilation that violence confronts us with forces us to confront the bare fact our “existence,” in the etymological sense of the word. The existential threat forces us to ex-ist, to stand out from the everyday world. Deprived of its support, we are thrown back on ourselves. Through our decisions, we take responsibility for our identity, both our individual and, through the sovereign, our collective identity.

Schmitt’s focus on the decision has a Christian parallel. In support of his definition of sovereignty in terms of the state of exception, Schmitt quotes Kierkegaard: “The exception explains the general and itself. And if one wants to study the general correctly, one only needs to look around for a true exception. It reveals everything more clearly than does the general.”[[677]](#endnote-677) For Schmitt, the exception is the threat of annihilation. It shows that the origin of law is the sovereign decision. Such a decision, as “absolute and independent of the correctness of its content,” is not based on knowledge, but on an act of the will. For Kierkegaard, the parallel is the decision to become a Christian. At issue here is not what one knows, but what one is. The statement, “I am a Christian,” is not the same as “I know the content of Christian theology.” It is a statement regarding one’s existence. For Kierkegaard, the belief that shapes this existence cannot be gathered from the world. Faith involves the contradiction of the eternal and the temporal: of the non-worldly, non-temporal God being present in the historical figure, Jesus.[[678]](#endnote-678) Since it involves a contradiction, faith is a matter of decision rather than of knowledge. The contradiction jolts one into awareness, and the advantage of this shock is “that one enters into a state in which the decision manifests itself even more clearly.”[[679]](#endnote-679) What makes one a Christian, then, is one’s decision for Christ. For Schmitt and Heidegger, who are both lapsed Catholics, we have a parallel stress on the decision. The shock for them is not provided by our relation to the radically other and, hence, unknowable God.[[680]](#endnote-680) It comes from our relation to death, which, as our total negation, cannot be grasped. Death, rather than God, is what pulls us out of the world, forcing us to ex-ist and, hence, in a decisive moment, to choose.

**The Question of Existence**

Is our human Dasein such that it can be shaped by a decisive moment? Schmitt’s, (if not necessarily Heidegger’s) claim is that it can.[[681]](#endnote-681) Violence, for Schmitt, determines our identity by forcing us to confront our existence in just such a moment. For James Dodd, as we saw, the difficulty with this view is that it forgets the fact that the shaping of our lives through our decisions is an ongoing process. In his words, “Violence simply promises us too much protection from having to continue to pursue the problem we are for ourselves.”[[682]](#endnote-682) The problem is never solved by a single decision.

What does this inability to finally determine who we are tell us about the nature of our existence? Kant famously remarked that existence is not a real predicate. By this, he meant that existence is not a predicate descriptive of real objects. It is not, for example, some color, shape or sound of actual objects.[[683]](#endnote-683) All the contents that we can draw from the actual world can also be used to describe imaginary objects. Thus, an imaginary hundred dollars has the same number of pennies as a real hundred dollars. The difference is that it is not actual. The insight here is that the actual *stands out* from the possible. Here, standing out has a different sense than that employed by Heidegger. To exist, in the sense of standing out from the merely possible, means to have a concrete, temporal presence—a presence shared by *all* worldly entities.[[684]](#endnote-684) Correspondingly, to actualize something is to make it present in time. To put this in terms of our own existence is to note that our Dasein is none of the features that our experience presents to us. Our existing selfhood is not some color, shape or sound of objects. When we reflect upon these elements of our experience, we fix them. We grasp them at a particular point in time; but the self is ongoing; as actual, it is temporal. Thus, it is not the contents that fill our consciousness, but rather their *flow* that makes our consciousness exist. It is what actualizes it as a consciousness of something.

If to exist means to be present through the flow of time, then existence, as temporal, presupposes motion. Thus, the flow of the contents that fill our consciousness presupposes our own motion—for example, our entering a room, taking a chair, turning our heads, and so on. With each new movement, new contents appear. The motion of such contents points to our motion, to our existence as moving ourselves. With this, we return to Patočka’s account of movement as actualization. The actualization of ourselves involves not just the motions tied to our organic functioning—the flow of blood in our veins, respiration, etc.—or the motion that we accomplish by moving our limbs. For Patočka, it also includes “language, the movement that by its composition and decomposition, seizes upon or lets escape the real relations between things and their qualifications.” It includes as well the movements of “artistic mimesis,” for example, those of singing, dancing, drawing, etc.[[685]](#endnote-685) All these movements, and many others besides, go into making a person *exist* as what he or she is.

In the 1970’s, Patočka adopted this view as a counter to Heidegger’s existential analytic. To apply it to Dasein, he abandoned Aristotle’s position that motion presupposes an underlying substrate. For Aristotle, he writes, “Change, movement is possible only because something persists through it.” But, “[t]he movement of our existence cannot be understood that way.” It cannot because there is no underlying, persisting subject of our movement. In Patočka’s words, “The possibilities that ground movement have no pre-existing bearer, no necessary referent standing statically at their foundation.”[[686]](#endnote-686) Thus, while “[a] movement … is a possibility being realized, [a] transiting into reality, … it is not,” he writes, “a possibility belonging to something that already exists but rather of something that is not yet present.” In this, it is “reminiscent of the movement of a melody.”[[687]](#endnote-687) The melody does not just consist in its notes. Rather it exists in their movement. The movement realizes the melody. Thus, the melody does not exist before the movement. We perceive it in the movement of the notes.[[688]](#endnote-688) To translate this into our grasp of a person is to assert that we apprehend him through the style of his movement. This style is what makes his existence unique. With regard to ourselves, such movement consists not just in our broad life projects, such as attaining some profession, being a parent, etc. The “notes,” so to speak, that make it up are all the little gestures and phrases that fill our daily lives—a characteristic way of smiling, a certain way of saying something: all of this contributes to a person’s existence in its uniqueness.[[689]](#endnote-689)

The critique of Schmitt implicit in this concerns the decisive moment of existence, the moment when we actualize our being through decision. The error here is that of associating existence with the now. [[690]](#endnote-690) For Patočka, existence is not a matter of the now, but the flow of the now. It involves what he terms the “motion of existence.” It is only in terms of such motion that existence is actualization.[[691]](#endnote-691)

Given this, the “decision” that shapes our being must be understood in terms of motion. Rather than being momentary, the resolution to maintain it must be spread out over time. What this involves is something more than James Dodd’s view that we need to continually revisit the question of who we are, i.e., “continue to pursue the problem we are for ourselves.” It involves our keeping to the decisions that identify us. Such decisions are understood as promises. The keeping of a promise binds one over time. It gives one a persisting identity as the keeper of the promise. In this view, authenticity, that is, taking responsibility for one’s decision, is a temporal process, one that actualizes a person as an author.[[692]](#endnote-692) The process is one where the person, in keeping his word, responds to the self that made the promise by responding to the demand of the word he has given. In responding, i.e., in carrying out what he has promised, he both preserves and embodies his authority with regard to the promise. In fact, in realizing the promise across time, he generates (actualizes) such authority. The same holds collectively. Collectively, the founding promise is an agreement that all agree to abide by. The authority of this agreement lasts as long as the participants hold to it, that is, as long as they bind themselves to the founding promise. The basis for this authority is not power, but rather the promising, i.e., the individual and collective self-binding to a common purpose, that first creates power. Such self-binding results not in a transfer of individual powers, but rather in their combination. Those who do combine their powers are, as Hannah Arendt observed, “allies” rather than subjects.[[693]](#endnote-693) It is their alliance, rather than their subjection to a sovereign, that is at the root of their collective power.

**Sovereignty and Self-Binding**

To translate this into political terms, we can say that a state’s constitution is an expression of collective self-binding. Its members bind themselves to abide by its provisions, i.e., to embody in their political conduct the rules that it specifies. Its authority rests in their reaffirming this promise, that is, in their consulting the agreement when questions arise and guiding themselves accordingly. In most states, the constitutional courts embody this authority. The sessions of such courts preserve the authority of the original constituting assemblies. They decide whether a law and the action it authorizes agree with the constitution. Doing so, they reaffirm the state’s commitment to it. This reaffirmation is a re-promising, a grounding again of the power that springs from agreement. As such a grounding, it is prior to the power it grounds and, hence, is distinct from it. In terms of existence, this priority is not that of a Schmittian sovereign, but rather that of a style of existence. What is prior is that style of motion that, when shared, gives the nation its collective character by actualizing it. The constitution, with its rules and procedures, is the formal expression of this style. It is actualized by the citizens binding themselves to its provisions, such binding being their own actualization as a political entity.

Viewed in this light, the state of exception is a breakdown of this self-binding. When the citizens no longer feel obligated to obey the law, then, in Schmitt’s words, they lack the “situation in which legal prescriptions can be valid.” For Schmitt, the only remedy is to declare a state of exception and suspend the constitution. In the form of the sovereign, “the state remains, whereas law recedes.” The power of the state, here, consists in the force of its arms. Through the use of the army and the police, the sovereign re-establishes the situation where legality is again possible. Jacques Derrida aptly expresses Schmitt’s view in this regard by referring to Pascal’s statement that “justice without force is impotent.”[[694]](#endnote-694) For Derrida, this means that “justice demands as justice recourse to force.” [[695]](#endnote-695) Force, however, is outside of justice. Its violence is “neither just nor unjust.” As something presupposed, it cannot be contradicted or validated by any prior justice or law.[[696]](#endnote-696)

Against this view is the fact that force, per se, does not result in the self-binding of subjects. It replaces their self-binding by the binding by the police. The result, in other words, is the replacement of the constitutional order by the police state. For Schmitt, of course, this replacement simply reveals the fact that all binding is ultimately through force. The founding violence of the state is matched by the violence that preserves the legal order through the police. This, however, implies that, in the visible absence of a policeman, citizens would immediately break the law. Were this the case, the civil order would require an overwhelming police presence. Given practical limitations, this need could only be covered by a secret police and paid informers. Not knowing who was actually a policeman or who would inform on them, people would be forced to obey the law. This consequence points out the problem with Schmitt’s view. The replacement of the constitutional order by the police does not, in fact, restore the “normal, everyday frame of life.” Instead of re-establishing the state by re-establishing the condition of legality, it destroys the motion of existence that actualizes legality. It does so by replacing with force the *self*-binding that gives this motion its style.

Such self-binding is, in fact, what ties the sovereign to the state. For Schmitt, as I noted, the sovereign is a liminal figure, being both inside and outside of the state. He both belongs to its legal order by representing it and stands outside of this in his unconditioned authority. This unbounded authority points to the fact that his sovereign decision is what first constitutes the state as a political entity. As was indicated, the difficulty with this view is that his sovereignty exists only in terms of this entity. It presupposes the state as already given; it exists as representing it in its sovereign authority. This, however, makes the sovereign part of the state; it binds him to what he represents. We thus confront the paradox of the sovereign’s being both bound and unbound. What breaks this paradox is the self-binding that characterizes both the sovereign and the community he represents.

This can be put in terms of their intertwining, an intertwining that situates each “in” the Other. So situated, neither can be thought apart from the other. Each, in a Heideggerian sense, “shows itself,” has its “truth,” through the other. Thus, the legal-civil order—concretely, the community as constituted by its laws—is the place where the sovereign shows himself. It gives him his sense. His authority (and, ultimately, his power) come through the self-binding of the community’s members to follow the laws and, hence, to obey the legally constituted authorities. Contrariwise, the sovereign is the place where the community manifests itself as a political entity. He manifests its collective will. Binding himself to represent it, he gives it expression by executing its legally constituted decisions. There is, here, not just the intertwining of the sovereign and the community in terms of their appearing. The intertwining of the motion of their existence as binding themselves underlies this. What we confront here is the political instance of the general principle stated in Chapter 4: namely, that the intertwining is the form of the motion though which both the appearing and being of the world achieve their actualization.

**Civil Society and Self-Binding**

Conceived as a motion of existence, the notion of self-binding avoids the lack of content that characterizes Schmitt’s account of the friend-enemy distinction and Heidegger’s description of resoluteness. Taken as a style of existence, a style of motion that involves the small gestures that determine identity, such content is implicit. Self-binding, so conceived, implies content in the same way that a melody implies the notes that compose it. Civil society, the very society that a police state destroys, provides an example of such content. It has a general as well as a specific sense. Generally, civil society consists of the plurality of relations that bind people together—those, for example, involving family, friends, and voluntary organizations of all kinds, i.e., those organizations where people associate to pursue a particular interest or pleasure. The binding of individuals together through such groups is also a self-binding. By participating in the activities of the group, individuals bind themselves to adhere to the relations and goals set by the group. The more specific sense of civil society is given by the elements that link its members, with their various interests and demands, to the formal structures of government. Thus, the constitutions of most states do not mention political parties. Such parties, however, are inevitably present. They are required to link the interests and views of the broader segments of society to the functioning of government. The same holds for the lobbies that represent various special interest groups. Lawyers, who represent clients rather than the judicial system, also figure in here. They link individuals to this system. All these elements have their own rules of procedure. Those who make use of them bind themselves to follow these. This self-binding is also a binding to the government. It contributes to the motion of existence that actualizes its formal structures. As such, it maintains its intertwined appearing.

The important point is that such self-binding, when carried out over time, becomes habitual. These habits form the style that gives our collective motion of existence its particular identity, its particular way of showing itself. Like any habits, they can be bad or good. They can be such as to impede this motion or such as to insure its efficacy or smoothness. In this they are like the desires that Aristotle also considered as habitual. Many people, he notes, have contradictory desires that lead them in opposite directions. They cannot, as it were, get their “act” together. Because of this they cannot function well.[[697]](#endnote-697) For the individual as well as the state, the remedy is the reform of such habits. It is not their destruction, since such habits, rather than violence, preserve the style of our individual and collective motions of existence. To start at zero by suspending the constitution is, then, not to begin the path to its restoration. It is to abandon civil society for the police state. Schmitt, as is well known, supported Hitler’s suspension of the constitution and seizure of power. But, as the consequences proved, this cure was far worse than the disorder that preceded it.

It may seem that with the conclusion of our account of public, political space, our inquiry into selfhood and appearing has reached a natural conclusion. This, however, would be to disregard an aspect that has characterized human existence from earliest recorded times. This is our relationship to the sacred, a relationship in terms of which selfhood itself has often been conceived. Thus far, in our account of terrorism, we have considered this relation negatively. We have described it in terms of the liminality it imposes and, consequently, its disruption of the intertwining of self and society. Yet the relation to the sacred must involve more than this. To have permanently marked human history, it must answer to something in our selfhood. As such, the challenge is to think of it in terms of the intertwining through which we are and appear. Our concluding chapters attempt to meet this challenge.

Part 4: Religion

**Chapter 18**

Binding and Unbinding in the Religions of the Book

The religions of the book, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, share the belief, expressed in Genesis, in a God who fashioned the world. From this belief they draw two very different lessons. The first is a universal claim drawn from the conception of a unique creator of the universe. They assert that the laws that express his creative will are all-encompassing. Philosophically, this translates into a sense that things are “true” to the point that they conform to God’s creative conception of them. As Heidegger observes, when we understand being as created being, then the notion of truth as correspondence is based on a prior conception of truth. Truth as the adequation of the human intellect to the thing is based upon both being adequate expressions of God’s creative intentions.[[698]](#endnote-698) To the point that both minds and things accord with this, they are “true.” “Truth,” here, is equivalent to “being” since things have being to the point that they accord with the idea God has for them.[[699]](#endnote-699) If we accept this, then we can also say that there is a measure of their being true examples of their kind. What underlies this measure is God’s wisdom, that is, his reasons for creating us and our world. God’s laws, as expressed in the sacred scriptures, lay out the standards for the ways things should be. What violates these laws is “unnatural.” It goes against God’s creative intentions in fashioning the world. The universal claim that is drawn from the conception of creation is, thus, that of universally binding laws, laws whose coherence can be traced back to their having a single source.

A second lesson drawn from the story of creation is the opposite of this. If, in fact, God created the world out of nothing, then his creative action cannot be bound by the world. As occurring prior to the world, it cannot, by definition, be determined by the world. Since it is prior, it is radically distinct from it. This means that we cannot impose on God’s action the relations that we find in the world. Thus, in the world, nothing exists without a cause, which means that for every event that occurs, one will always find a *prior* event that brought it about. But there is nothing prior to God’s causation. As the first cause of the world, God cannot be in the before and after of time. Thus, God escapes our conception of causality, which presupposes this worldly before and after. The same argument can be made with regard to each of our attempts to interpret God’s creative actions in terms of the relations we find in the world. The second lesson, then, is that there is a radical alterity in the heart of being. God’s being and action is different than that of the world he creates.

This alterity undoes all our standards, all our worldly certainties. Regarding it, we face, in Patočka’s words, the *Mysterium Tremendum,* the mystery before which we tremble.[[700]](#endnote-700) This trembling shakes us loose from our everyday world in a much more radical sense than that imposed by philosophy. For Patočka, the questioning initiated by Socrates brings about “an upheaval aimed at the former meaning of [our] life as a whole.” It confronts us with “the problematic nature, the *question* of the ‘natural’ meaning” we previously took for granted.[[701]](#endnote-701) The result is a shaking of our world-view. Socrates, for example, makes us ask why we have understood the world in the way we have rather than in some other way. Why have we arranged our lives, our politics, our societies in the ways we find them? His invitation is to ask, politically and culturally, whether the reasons we give can withstand examination. But, despite its radicality, this inquiry remains on the level of the world. The perspectives it calls into question are *those of the world*. Socrates invites us to pass from one such perspective to another. By contrast, the shaking induced by the *Mysterium Tremendum* calls the world itself into question. It confronts us with a perspective that is radically non-worldly. The question, “Why is there a world rather than nothing?” could not occur to the ancients with their belief in the eternity of the world. But for those who accept creation, it remains a permanent puzzle.

These two apparently contradictory lessons alter the West’s sense of “religion.” Its original sense can be traced to the Latin *religare*, which signifies “to bind fast.” Religion in the Roman world bound people to the social practices and observances of their cults. With the belief in creation, we have the universalization of this binding. God’s law is seen to hold universally, without exception. Yet, we also have a universal unbinding, an emphasis on the God who, in his creative action, transcends all our practices and laws. This transcendence leads us to assert, with Anselm of Canterbury, that God is not just “that than which nothing greater can be conceived.” God is “also something greater than can be thought.”[[702]](#endnote-702) Thus, on the one hand, we have the binding insistence on justice, on the punishment of the offender, on the payment of the transgressor’s debts to God and society. On the other hand, we have an equally insistent emphasis on the unbinding of mercy, on the forgiveness of all debts. How can these two perspectives be combined? How are we to grasp this binding that is also an unbinding?

**Religion as Binding**

The notion of religion as binding, when pushed to extreme, has a remarkable consequence. It understands God in terms of his wisdom or creative reason. Seeing God’s wisdom expressed in nature, it ends up conflating God and nature. Descartes, for example, in defending the proposition that “all that nature teaches me contains some truth,” writes in the “Sixth Meditation,” “For by nature, considered in general, I now understand nothing else but God himself, or else the order and system that God has established for created things.”[[703]](#endnote-703) If we accept this, then reading the book of nature can be understood as reading the mind of God. For Spinoza, the identification of God and nature is even closer. He writes in his *Ethics*: “Individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a fixed and definite manner.”[[704]](#endnote-704) In fact, there is only one substance; and this is God. Everything else has its being from God. As a mode of an attribute, an individual thing cannot exist independently of that attribute; equally, the attribute itself cannot exist independently of the substance of which it is an attribute. Hence, the thing cannot be a substance, taken as an independent being.

The scientific parallel to this view speaks, not of nature as expressing the substance of God, but simply as a system of laws. A thing is defined in its being through such laws. Kant, here, is an interesting transition point. He writes: “By nature, in the empirical sense, we understand the connection of appearances as regards their existence according to necessary rules, that is, according to laws. There are certain laws which first make a nature possible, and these laws are *a priori.*”[[705]](#endnote-705) The chief among these laws is that of causality. It is: nothing happens without its being caused. Without this, Kant writes, “there would be nothing that could be entitled nature.”[[706]](#endnote-706) In fact, without it, we could not even speak of natural things. What places things in nature are their relations of mutual causation.[[707]](#endnote-707) Now, for Kant, the definition of things in terms of laws does not point back to God. It refers, rather, to our subjective understanding. Thus, Kant traces causality to “the rule of the understanding through which alone the existence of appearances can acquire synthetic unity as regards relations of time.”[[708]](#endnote-708) This synthetic unity is that of ourselves as unitary experiencers. To violate the rule of understanding by which we place events in a definite temporal order, making one event prior to another, is, Kant attempts to prove, to violate the temporal unity of experience and, hence, the unity of ourselves as coherent subjects. Here, subjective unity replaces the unity of God. If, previously, the coherence of the laws of nature could be traced back to nature’s having a single creator, for Kant, it is in ourselves, in our own unity as experiencers, that the source of this coherence must be found. The same holds for the apriori universality of such laws. Their universal, apriori status with regard to experience is found in the fact that they are necessary conditions for *our* having a coherent experience of the world.

Kant is a transitional figure. Scientists nowadays simply speak of nature as a system of laws. What violates these, what does not fit in with them, cannot exist. This, incidentally, includes our consciousness. The philosopher of science, Donald Dennet, has famously remarked: ‘“we are all zombies. Nobody is conscious.”[[709]](#endnote-709) The point holds insofar as consciousness in its felt, qualitative aspects, cannot be causally explained. If consciousness does not fit in with the world, if it cannot fall under the universal laws definitive of nature, then it has neither being nor truth. Behind this claim is, ultimately, the view that being is one, that it does not admit any alterity. In Levinas’ words, what is at work here is “the ancient privilege of unity, which is affirmed from Parmenides to Spinoza and Hegel.”[[710]](#endnote-710) This privilege, in fact, can be seen in the first lesson that the religions of the book draw from creation. God’s unity and omnipotence are here taken as the source of the universal laws of nature. Such laws include those that deal with our nature and conduct. Thus, from the biblical books of Leviticus and Numbers to all the various forms of religious law like the Sharia of Islam and the canon law of the Catholic church, we see the same universal claims. The divinely sanctioned laws are asserted to guide conduct without exception. Again and again, we encounter the same intervention of religion in politics; we find the same uncompromising stance. The attempts of various religious groups in the United States to prevent the public funding of birth control exemplify this stance.

**Religion as Unbinding**

This ancient privilege of unity is, however, undermined by the second lesson drawn from creation. The transcendence of the creator with regard to the created implies that he cannot be defined in its terms. The same holds in reverse. The alterity at the heart of being signifies that the being of the creature is distinct from that of creator. As Levinas expresses this, “The great force of the idea of creation such as it was contributed by monotheism is that … the separated and created being” is “not simply issued forth from the father, but is absolutely other than him.”[[711]](#endnote-711) What we face here is “the paradox of an Infinity admitting a being outside of itself, which it does not encompass.” Creation, he adds, gives us an idea of “an infinity that does not close in upon itself … but withdraws … so as to leave a place for a separated being.”[[712]](#endnote-712) This is the opposite of the vision that Spinoza presents. We are not part of God; we are not dependent modes of attributes of his divine substance. God’s perfection is not to be all encompassing. Rather, the infinite shows its perfection by creating beings that are distinct from itself. As Levinas writes, “multiplicity and the limitation of the creative Infinite are compatible with the perfection of the Infinite. They articulate the meaning of this perfection.”[[713]](#endnote-713)

The result of this alterity does not just undermine any attempt to conflate God with nature. In the two accounts of creation in Genesis, it also separates humans from nature. In the first account, God creates by dividing—light from dark, day from night, waters above from waters below, land from earth, living from nonliving, and finally humans from animals, their separation being witnessed by their “rule” over them. After each creation, God proclaims the result to be “good.” The one exception is the creation of man. He is not said to be good, but rather to be the “image” of God. The use of the word “image” implies that the ultimate creative division is between humans and the world. This implication is driven home by the fact that the first account repeats three times that man was created in God’s image and likeness. Like God, he is not defined by the laws of nature as a thing is. In the second account, after Adam and Eve choose not to follow his law, God remarks that man “has become like one of us, knowing good and evil.” They know and they can choose between the two. Thus, in the story of Cain and Abel, God tells Cain, who is contemplating the murder of his brother: “Sin couches at the door. Its urge is toward you. Yet you can be its master.”[[714]](#endnote-714) Cain chooses to murder his brother. The fact that he violates God’s will does not affect his freedom. The alterity that separates God from creation also separates man. Both man and God are, in Levinas’s phrase, “other.” Neither can be defined as a thing can—as determined in its being through the necessary laws that relate it to other things. It is this very freedom that man shares with God that allows him to choose not to follow God. Creation, in Levinas’s phrase, involves God’s withdrawal, his leaving “a place for a separated being.”

Given such alterity, how do God and man relate? How can God move man and yet respect his freedom? The religious response to this question is varied. In important ways, however, it appeals to the notion of love. As John writes in his first letter, ‘“everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.” The point follows because, “God is love” (John I, 4:4). Thus, if one loves, one can do what one will. One has no need of the law. Both Judaism and Christianity, for example, ask that we love God and our neighbor as ourselves. What this signifies for Christianity is given by Jesus’ response to the lawyer’s question: “who is my neighbor” (Luke, 10:29). Jesus replies with the story of the good Samaritan. In it, the man who bound up the wounds and looked after the Israelite was neither his co-religionist nor a member of his race. The neighbor, in his account, was simply a fellow human being. For the Koran, this generalization of the concept of the neighbor follows from the fact that we are all children of Adam and Eve.[[715]](#endnote-715) The social reflection of this view is an emphasis on mercy rather than justice. One should manifest mercy even as one desires this for oneself. Thus, rather than seeking justice, the Koran advises, “let them rather pass over and pardon the offence. Don’t you desire that God should forgive you? And God is gracious and merciful!”[[716]](#endnote-716) This view also finds expression in the tolerance that recognizes the alterity of the Other, that will not impose upon the Other what the Other would not himself freely will. With regard to religion, such tolerance signifies, as we cited the Koran, “let there be no compulsion in religion.”[[717]](#endnote-717) One can as little compel faith as one can love.

**The Intertwining of Binding and Unbinding**

Both lessons drawn from the story of creation are one-sided. By this I mean that neither can function on its own. On the one hand, we have the failure over the long run of all the communities that have attempted to realize the ideal of complete freedom, of their members’ loving and doing what they will. On the other hand, the notion of religion as binding ultimately fails since, were its ideal realized, a person would be reduced to a “thing” in the Kantian sense. Here, the loss of religious liberty becomes the loss of religion itself. In the attempt to ward off the shaking brought about by the openness of freedom, the temptation of the religions of the book is to endlessly multiply the laws that bind their adherents until they embrace all the details of life. The result is a kind of “autoimmune reaction.” In biology, this term refers to the body’s turning its immune reaction on itself.  Systems designed to protect the body by immunizing it from biological attacks from without turn inward attacking its own structures. The religions of the book suffer this fate when they take as “other” what is actually part of themselves—this being the freedom that is inherent in the alterity described by the story of Genesis.[[718]](#endnote-718)

The one-sidedness of both lessons comes from the fact that we are both free and not free: we are both an “image” of God and a creature of God. Our self-alterity is such that we span both sides of the divide. Both are intertwined in our identity. For Merleau-Ponty, the intertwining concerns our relation to the world. It is such that each of us has to assert: “I am in the world and the world is in me.”[[719]](#endnote-719) Each side serves as a place of disclosure for the other. The religious analogue of this intertwining places *God and the world inside of each other*. If man is, indeed, the “image and likeness” of God, one can say that God, through man, is present in the world. This world, however, is God’s creation and, as such, is in God. This intertwining implies that, as present in man, God reveals himself as vulnerable. In his identity with the poor and the unfortunate, God shows himself as subject to the assaults of the world. Humans, here, are the place of disclosure of God. Present in his image, he appears as bounded by the impersonal forces of causality, forces that threaten to reduce this image and likeness to a mere thing. When, however, we see humans in God, then God becomes their place of disclosure. He discloses them as transcending the impersonal forces controlling the world. He exhibits them as free. Christianity explicitly embraces this intertwining in its doctrine of the Incarnation, which is the subject of a later next chapter. The same pattern, however, is also implicit in Islam and Judaism since they, too, assert that, as the image of God, man has a transcendent quality.

The above implies that in the Mosaic tradition, religious selfhood is constituted through the intertwining of binding and unbinding. This selfhood is such that the binding and unbinding provide for each other a place of disclosure. Thus, the religious laws give a space for freedom. They disclose it as in the world, as necessarily operating within its constraints. The laws concerning marriage, for example, place the freedom of choosing a partner within the restraints of the relations of the family and the need to rear the young. Similarly, the rules regarding justice, of specifying the penalties for our offences against each other, limit the freedom to take revenge by taking account of the constraints incurred by our need to live together. Freedom, in turn, discloses the rules that religion imposes as fundamentally distinct from the laws of nature. They appear, not as expressions of the blind forces of nature, but rather as laws that we have to impose on ourselves. They would have no applicability if we could not control our impulses. Ultimately, their basis is the freedom that allows us to practice self-restraint.

Crucial here is the acceptance of the account of *Genesis*, which shapes the peculiar optic of these religions. Inherent in their vision of a creator God is a recognition of the alterity, the transcendence, that undoes the unity of being. The intertwining that includes such transcendence is both that of the religions of the book and that of ourselves. To follow their teachings is to engage both in a binding that unbinds and in an unbinding that binds itself. It is to live both sides of the alterity that we ourselves are. The next chapter will explore the transcendence implicit in this alterity.

**Chapter 19**

Transcendence and Intertwining

As previously noted, the religions of the book are defined by their acceptance of the account of Genesis. They believe in a God who created the world out of nothing and, who, thus, existed before creation. Accordingly, they distinguish themselves from pantheism by asserting the transcendence of the divinity. Having existed prior to the world, God, they claim, cannot be accounted for in its terms. Such a position naturally raises the question of how we are to understand the transcendent God. What is the nature of God’s transcendence? David Hume in his *Dialogues* focuses on the difficulty such transcendence raises. For Hume, if we cannot say what God is, i.e., what the object of our belief is, then can we say that we believe in anything at all? He has his protagonist, Philo, ask how those “who maintain the absolute incomprehensibility of the Deity, differ from Sceptics or Atheists, who [also] assert that the first cause of all is unknown and unintelligible?”[[720]](#endnote-720) According to Hume, we are caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, “If we abandon all human analogy, … we abandon all religion and retain no conception of the great object of our adoration.”[[721]](#endnote-721) On the other, if we embrace such analogy, we slip very easily into an absurd anthropomorphism.[[722]](#endnote-722) We assert that God has a gender, gets angry, has to be reminded of his promises, and so on.

Hume’s argument works by radically opposing transcendence and immanence. Transcendence, in his argument its polar opposite, signifies the absorption of the divine into the human context, the result being a nonsensical anthropomorphism. Transcendence, however, does not signify complete otherness. Etymologically, it basic sense is that of “surpassing” or “going beyond.” It comes from the Latin, *transcendere*, which combines the senses of “beyond” (“*trans*”) and “*scandere*,” “to climb.” The sense here is that of “surmounting” or “overstepping.” As such, it involves both limits and their surpassing. Taken in these terms, transcendence is part and parcel of our experience of the world. It is an ontological feature of our being-alive. So understood, the transcendence that characterizes the divine does not point to what is beyond the world, but rather to what is immanent. Immanence, however, does not mean absorption. What we confront here is the intertwining of categories that are mutually transcendent in the sense that each surpasses the limits of the other. Given that such intertwining is also a mutual disclosure, to apply this to the divine is to overcome Hume’s dilemma.

**Transcendence and Metabolism**

As our frequent references to Jonas have shown, transcendence is built into living beings. It is inherent in the metabolic process that distinguishes them from inorganic entities. Organisms live by exchanging materials with their environment. They must reach out beyond themselves to the material world that surrounds them. There is, here, both a limit—in the simplest instances, the cell membrane—and that which surpasses it, namely, the external world that the organism lives from. In reaching out to the latter, the organism transcends itself. This transcendence is not just spatial, it is also temporal. It involves the futurity that surpasses the present. Thus, the organism, in its constant need of new material, stretches beyond the now of its organic state to what comes next. Insofar as it exists by directing itself beyond its present condition, it is ahead of itself: it has a future.[[723]](#endnote-723)

Several points follow from this analysis. The first is that futurity is built into organic life. Such life is always “ahead of itself” and, thus, is temporally self-transcendent. Unlike an inorganic being, which exists completely in the now, a living being is stretched out in time. To grasp it as alive—as engaging in metabolism—we must go beyond its present state. The second point is that a living being has a teleological structure, one that involves a future-directed self-affirmation. Its motion, as corresponding to this, is also self-directed. Thus, the underlying goal of such movement is not just the material that it needs to take in; it is the continued existence of the organism itself as engaging in this movement. As such a goal, the organism transcends itself.

A third point concerns the relation between metabolism and intertwining. Merleau-Ponty’s statement, “I am in the world and the world is in me,” applies to every living being. As embodied, an organism exists in the world. It has its environment. Engaging in metabolism, it selectively internalizes this environment. The world it is *in* becomes, through metabolism, its internal, physical, spatial-temporal structure. To see how extensive this internalization is, we can turn to Darwin’s description of the “the web of complex relations” binding different species together. This web, he writes, is such “that the structure of every organic being is related, in the most essential and yet often hidden manner, to that of all the other organic beings with which it comes into competition for food or residence or from which it has to escape or on which it preys.”[[724]](#endnote-724) According to Darwin, the individual features that make up a living being’s structure, from the shape of its legs to the type of eyes it has, are actually a set of indices. Each points to the specific features of the environment in which it functions, and which, for the purposes of survival, its evolutionary history has internalized as part of its structure.[[725]](#endnote-725) This internalization is, thus, a physical disclosure of the world it is in. Disclosure, of course, also occurs through the world it brings to presence through the structures of its sense organs and mental apparatus.

**Transcendence and Consciousness**

The term most used for this bringing into presence is “consciousness.” Although we cannot ascribe self-awareness to all sentient beings, to the point that they are aware of the external world, such awareness involves the intentionality that characterizes consciousness. Consciousness, as Husserl emphasized, is consciousness *of* the world. The relation indicated by the word “of” involves transcendence since the world is other than consciousness. Thus, the three-dimensional object we perceive cannot be reduced to our perceptions of it. The series of such perceptions is necessarily finite, but the object distinguishes itself in constantly affording us more perceptions. Transcendence, in other words, is built into the perceptual series through which the object shows itself since the series offers us no final view; it affords no perspective that somehow could internally distinguish itself as the last possible view. The object’s transcendence, however, does not prevent us from internalizing it by bringing it to presence. The same holds for all the objects composing our world. We internalize that which transcends us—this being the very world that we are in (and disclose) as embodied perceivers.

Once again we have the relation of intertwining and transcendence. In the examples I have given, the two are naturally paired. The world of predator and prey that the organism internalizes and discloses through its bodily structures surpasses the organism. The same holds for the world that we internalize through perception. Internalization is not identification with what transcends one. It signifies here the relation of our being-in that which we internalize and disclose. Now, the surpassing that characterizes the relation of intertwining is actually mutual. What we disclose surpasses our disclosure; it is not to be derived from it. The same holds in reverse order. Thus, neither the living nor the non-living offers a sufficient explanation for the other. One reason for this is their distinct temporalities. Living beings, as opposed to the non-living, have a future. Their temporality is teleological. To assert that their being is the result of their doing is not just to assert that their actions are self-directed. It is also to take their being as a goal, that is, as something future. This signifies that they are, ontologically, ahead of themselves. We cannot pin them down to the present, since their present existence is dependent on a doing that directs itself to a future state. This future state is an animating goal; but, as future, it does not yet exist. The most we can say is that it exists in the process of continuous realization and yet is, itself, always future, always outstanding. The case is quite different with non-living entities. The laws of physics that describe their relations are incapable of capturing the teleologically, self-directed nature of life. This follows, not just because the entities that they deal with are all present and actual. It is also because the laws of physics are temporally reversible. Since they hold, whether we run the time process forward or backward, the directedness of living time is inexplicable in their terms.

This, of course, does mean that we cannot give a physical, chemical account of metabolism. The living organism is, as embodied, part of the world. Its metabolic processes obey the world’s causality. Such causality, however, is incapable of accounting for the goal-directed nature of such processes. The same holds for our pragmatic activities. Engaging in these, we employ physical laws. We depend upon the laws of force and momentum, for example, when, gripping a hammer, we drive a nail into a board. Such laws of physical causality, however, do not suffice to describe our activity. They do not grasp its goal-directed causality, which, as we said, is that of the future determining the past to determine the present. What is future here is the goal that we set out to accomplish. What is past is the material we have accumulated—the nail and the board. The future in the form of our goal determines these as materials for our project. As for the present, it is our action of driving the nail into the board, an action that presupposes teleological determination. Now, these two different causalities—material-causal and teleological—cannot be reduced to each other. Yet, they are intertwined. Thus, when we start a project, our goal does not yet exist as something within the world. It exists only within us, that is, in the purpose we have in mind. The world that includes this purpose is within us. To realize what we have in mind, however, we must employ the causality that includes us in the world. Employing it, we disclose what we have in mind. The level of description that grasps our activity is, then, that which speaks of the intertwining of self and world. It presupposes the disclosure of each in terms of the other.

The same points can be made about our perceptual life. It can be described in material causal terms as well as teleologically. Thus, we can speak of the physical and chemical processes of our senses and our brains. We can also describe the material processes that allow us to focus our eyes and physically approach an object to get a better look. But this is not sufficient. As embodying an interpretative intention, perception is an inherently teleological process. This intention expresses what we intend to see and guides our interpretation of what we actually do see. It makes us take the latter as material for our “project” of seeing a specific object. As such, it determines our present act of seeing with its horizon of anticipations. Given that what we intend to see as we move to get a better look is not yet fully there, it stands as a *goal* of the perceptual process. As such, it is something to be realized, that is, something future. What we have seen and retain is something past, while the present act of seeing is, of course, now. Once again, we have the teleological pattern of the future determining the past and, thereby, determining the present. This pattern is distinct from that of material causality, which, despite the temporal reversibility of the laws of physics, is generally taken to be that of the past determining the present, which determines the future. An adequate description of the perceptual process must embrace both patterns without reducing one to the other. The description, then, must be that of their intertwining. We have to say that insofar as the world is perceptually present in us, teleological temporality and causality must obtain. The disclosure of the world must be understood in their terms. But insofar as we are embodied perceivers within the world, physical causality and temporality must also hold. They frame the disclosure of the perceiver. The double relation of being-in also characterizes these different causal accounts. Each transcends the other; and yet, in actual perception, each is implicit in the other.

**The Transcendence of Intersubjective Relations**

Transcendence also characterizes our relations to other persons. As Sartre has remarked, to truly grasp the Other, I would have to grasp him “as he obtains knowledge of himself.” My goal would be to grasp how the world appears to him, that is, to apprehend what he sees, feels and thinks. As part of this, it would include his memories and the anticipations that are based on his past experiences. As is obvious, were this intention fulfilled, our two consciousnesses would merge. A consciousness that was fully present would not be other, but would rather be part of my own. In Sartre’s words, it “would in fact suppose the internal identification of myself and the Other.”[[726]](#endnote-726) This means that the very success of my intention in finding a corresponding fulfillment would rob it of its intended object, which is, after all, not myself but rather someone else. Given this, I cannot say that such self-presence is the object of my intention. Rather, the Other that I intend is someone who escapes the intentions directed to his self-presence. The Other is the person whose consciousness I can never bring into presence. This does not mean that, as Sartre has argued, to intend the Other as other is to intend “a full intuition of an absence.” [[727]](#endnote-727) Were the Other truly absent, he could neither be intended nor known. The result would be a complete solipsism. Once again, transcendence signifies a limit and its surpassing. The limit is the evidence I do have for the Other as a self-conscious individual. The surpassing manifests itself in my sense that the Other in his self-presence exceeds such evidence.

The evidence I have for the Other as a self-conscious individual like myself comes, as we saw, from the Other’s behavior and speech. Generally speaking, the Other behaves as I would in a similar situation. I thus ascribe to her a set of conscious intentions similar to my own. Thus, seeing her morning activities in the kitchen making coffee, boiling an egg, and so on, I take her as making her breakfast. I transfer to her the intentions that guide me when I engage in similar activites. This works well enough in everyday life, but were it to be totally successful, the Other would be entirely predictable. She would not be other, but simply myself as differently embodied. To grasp her as other, this limit must be surpassed. The evidence that confirms her as a subject like myself, i.e., as having the same interpretative intentions and understanding of her world as I do, cannot be complete. The same point holds for the evidence we gain by talking with the Other. A conversation with someone who mirrored our every thought, who agreed with every interpretation of the world that we ventured, would not just be extremely boring. It would raise the question of whether we were talking to a person or to a machine designed to mimic our speech.

A genuine Other behaves as we do, but not entirely. There is an element of unpredictability, of the surprising in what she says and does. Concretely, this means that to intend a person is to expect that not all of our expectations will be confirmed. The intuitive confirmation of our intention must, then, be provided by an evidence that goes beyond the interpretation that is embodied in our own intentions. The excess consists of the *Other’s interpretation* of the situation we share. This is always somewhat different from our own. Guided by it, the Other always behaves differently than we would. There is a margin of difference between us based on the difference of our apprehensions. Thus, insofar as I intend the Other as like me but different than me, I must at a certain point suspend my interpretation till the Other gives the lead. Her exceeding me is her interpretation, the very interpretation that, in motivating her behavior, meets mine and calls on me to respond. Thus, my intending the Other as other involves a responding both to her and to her distinct interpretation of our common situation.

Levinas describes such exceeding in terms of the temporal diachrony of the Other. This diachrony exists within the teleological temporality that characterizes our conscious life. At its basis is the fact that, since we do not share the same past, the expectations that grow out of this, i.e., the future that we project, must also differ. My encounter with the Other is, thus, Levinas writes, “without the future being given in the to-come [*ad-venir*], where the grasp of an anticipation—or a protention—would come to obscure the dia-chrony of time.”[[728]](#endnote-728) What I confront, then, is the alterity of the Other as a temporal field. This alterity introduces a novel sense of the future. It is not the future that I project from my experience of the past. It is the future that “is not grasped,” the future that contains the “surprising.”[[729]](#endnote-729) Facing the Other, then, I face a future that is not my own, one that grows out of a different perspective. Enacted, the anticipations that give content to this future introduce the new, the surprising into our common world.

The same points hold with regard to our conversation. There is, here, as Levinas remarks, a constant surplus of “the saying” over “the said.” Each time I attempt to grasp what the Other says from my perspective the Other adds something new or corrects me from his perspective. As Levinas describes this correction, “his speech consists in ‘coming to the assistance’ of his word—in being *present*. This present is not made of instants mysteriously immobilized in duration, but of an *incessant* recapture of instants that flow by”—this “by a presence that comes to their assistance, that answers for them.”[[730]](#endnote-730) Thus, the Other replies to my interpretation of what he *said* by amending it with a new *saying*. In this correction, the Other *redoes the past*. Doing so, it is as if “the presence of him who speaks inverted the inevitable movement that bears the spoken word [the *said*] to the past state.” This means, Levinas adds, that the “present” of the speaking Other “is produced in this struggle against the past.”[[731]](#endnote-731) The temporality of conversation thus contains both the new (the unforeseen *saying* as grounded in the Other’s interpretation) and a reworking of the past—i.e., of the *said*. In response to my comments, he can say “this was not what I had in mind” and explain what he said. His explanation is part of the surplus of the saying over the said. This surplus is inevitable given the diachrony that characterizes our temporalities.

Once again the response to this transcendence is not the Humean alternative of absorption or total alterity. It is, rather, rather intertwining. Thus, on the one hand, we can say that we are *in* society. As social political animals, we are always found with Others. Not only do we require an extended period of care until we reach maturity, even as adults we require their activities to fulfill our basic needs for food and shelter. On the other hand, such Others are brought to presence by our internalizing them. Given that the Other that we encounter transcends us, this internalization cannot be absorption. The result is, rather, the internalization of an alternate perspective, one that can call our own into question. This calling into question is a call for us to stand outside of ourselves, to confront ourselves, to ask ourselves, for example, “what are you doing?” In saying such, who speaks, who listens? There is here a split in our identity, one that allows us to be a “for-itself,” i.e., to disclose ourselves by being an object for ourselves. Levinas expresses this in terms of the temporal diachrony of the Other. Internalizing the Other, a person experiences “a relationship in which diachrony is like the *in* of the other-*in*-the-same—without the Other ever entering into the Same.”[[732]](#endnote-732) The result of such relations is “an awakening of the for-itself [*éveil du pour-soi*] . . . by the inabsorbable alterity of the other.”[[733]](#endnote-733) Awakening me, the Other “confers on me an identity.” He does so, Levinas writes, by “placing my I in question.”[[734]](#endnote-734) This is a “questioning where the conscious subject liberates himself from himself, where he is split by ... transcendence.”[[735]](#endnote-735) It is this transcendence that allows the subject to confront himself and, thus, be a for-itself. Here, his disclosure as a for-itself is through the Other. If the Other is, in fact, a subject like myself, the same must hold in reverse order. With this, we have a level of self-transcendence and self-disclosure that is built upon, and yet surpasses, that given by consciousness’ being intentionally directed to the world. The mutual intertwining and disclosure of self and world is supplemented by the intertwining and disclosure brought about by its relation to the Other.

**The Transcendence of the Divine**

Transcendence in all the examples listed involved both limits and their surpassing. In metabolism, the limit at the basic level was the cell membrane; the surpassing involved the cell’s taking in material from the external world. The limit in perception was the finitude of our actual perceptual experience; the surpassing occurred in our grasp of the object as affording more than what we experienced. In our pragmatic (and perceptual) activities, the limit was the material-causal nature of our embodiment. We surpassed this in our goal-directed activities. Finally, in our apprehension of another person, the limit was our interpretation of her actions as based on our own past experience; the surpassing involved grasping an alternate perspective based on her past experience. In all these examples, surpassing implies what is surpassed. Thus, teleological temporality implies the temporal dimensions of material relations. The dimensions of past, present, and future are the same for both material and teleological causality. The latter, however, surpasses the causality of inanimate nature by giving these dimensions a different ordering. Similarly, in transcending oneself to grasp the Other, the notion of having a perspective (an interpretation of a given situation) is the same, even if the perspective internalized is not one’s own. A further feature of our examples is the fact that their reality involves the intertwining of the surpassing and the surpassed. Thus, the individual living being cannot be thought apart from its environment. Its physical structure internalizes it. Similarly, the self as a for-itself bears witness to its intertwining with the Other. Finally, in all cases, this intertwining was a mutual disclosure. Being in something meant being in a place of disclosure.

Can we see the same pattern in the relation of the divine to the human? To do so would be to overcome Hume’s dilemma. Given that transcendence implies what is transcended, the divine would not be the *toute autre*. Rather than being unknowable, the human would be the place of the presence of the divine. This, of course, supposes that there is something common to the human and the divine, a commonality witnessed by this presence. Certainly, the thrice repeated claim of *Genesis* that man is created in the image of God seems to imply this. The previous chapter took the freedom that sets us apart from the world as something that we share with God and, hence, as the basis for our being this image. The limit that God surpasses would, in this analogy, be the finitude that our embodiment imposes on our freedom. This limitation expresses itself in the use of our freedom to satisfy our bodily needs. It is its ordering towards the earth and the set of mutual exchanges that define us in relation to it. The surpassing would be the overcoming of this. Here, the use of our freedom would not express the self-directed and self-affirming character of our natural life. Rather, it would be directed towards Others and their affirmation. As such, it would transcend the exchange of mutual benefits and be employed without the expectation of a compensating benefit.

In terms of the intertwining, such non-self-directed freedom would indicate the presence of God in us. Its employment would mirror the autonomy and generosity attributed to him. In its autonomy, this freedom would exemplify Levinas’ “paradox of creation … the paradox of an infinity admitting a being outside of itself, which it does not encompass.” In its generosity, the employment of this freedom would exemplify God’s generosity in acting without the possibility of recompense. For Christianity, the paradigmatic figure here is Jesus. Intertwined with God, he claims to be the place of God’s disclosure. In his words, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” Hume, of course, would object to our bringing up Christianity. He would remark that the book where he poses his dilemma is entitled, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. At issue in the *Dialogues* is what we can know apart from scripture. If, however, transcendence is part of our being alive, it is inherent in the intertwining that defines us. This implies that the account of Christianity can serve as a clue to our ontological condition. To see this, however, we need to consider this account on its own terms. We have to turn to the doctrine of the Incarnation of God.

**Chapter 20**

Incarnation as Embodiment.

The central fact of Christianity is the Incarnation, literally “the taking on flesh” by God. The result of God’s embodiment, Christianity claims, is Jesus Christ. Yet, in the long history of Christian hermeneutics, the Incarnation is hardly ever addressed as embodiment. It may be that the early influence of Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy contributed to this. Plato, for example, asserted that “the philosopher more than other men frees the soul from association with the body” (*Phaedo* 65a). This is because the body is taken as the realm of error. In Plato’s words, the philosopher frees “himself as far as possible from … the whole body, because the body confuses the soul and does not allow it to acquire truth” (*Phaedo* 66a).[[736]](#endnote-736) We can see the same prejudice in Descartes, who writes that it is not through our bodily senses, but through “the understanding alone” that we attain truth.[[737]](#endnote-737) These philosophical positions are matched by an extended history of Christian asceticism emphasizing the denial of the body. Yet to assert, as Christians do, that “the Word became flesh” is to claim that God, himself, became embodied. This implies that, to understand the Incarnation, we have to understand embodiment. Since the Incarnation is also an intertwining, we must grasp embodiment in terms of this. The task, in other words, is to interpret the Incarnation in terms of the intertwining definitive of embodiment.

**Embodiment as Intertwining**

By definition, to embody is to incarnate or enflesh. As such, it means to provide a place for the presence of the embodied. For sentient beings, this is to give it a place for its appearing. This can be put in terms of Merleau-Ponty’s assertion that “our flesh lines and even envelops all the visible and tangible things” through its bodily senses.[[738]](#endnote-738) This lining, which is an incarnation, allows them to appear to us. Does this mean that the color that we see is only in the eye or that the sound that we hear is just in the ear? What prevents us from saying this is that embodiment, as providing a place of presence, is always twofold. The embodiment that allows the world to come to presence in our flesh positions us in the world. The result is an intertwining taken as a reciprocal placing: a being placed in what one is placed in. Such placing is also a reciprocal disclosure. Our embodied selfhood does not only allow the world to appear to us; selfhood, as embodied can also be examined as part of the world. It appears, is present, as part of the world that appears both to us and to other sentient beings.

Given that appearing presupposes twofold embodiment taken as a double placing, the beings that appear have to be understood in terms of it. This means that the world that appears and the embodied selfhood to whom it appears are essentially intertwined. As such, neither is intelligible without the other. Thus, we cannot understand the world’s being in us except in terms of our being in the world, and vice versa. This implies that color exists neither in the eye nor in the colored object, but rather in the intertwining of the two. It is neither inside nor outside of us; its reality is, rather, constituted through the intertwining of the inside and the outside. The same holds for our body, which as *our* body, is both internal and external, both a place of disclosure and a disclosed object. The body, itself, is structured by the intertwining of both sides. According to Merleau-Ponty, at work here is “a relation of the visible with itself that traverses me and constitutes me as a seer.”[[739]](#endnote-739) This relation involves more than the form of our embodied selfhood. What we confront here, Merleau-Ponty writes, is “the formative medium of the object and the subject,” which means that “we must think of it … as an element, as the concrete emblem of a general manner of being.”[[740]](#endnote-740) The “manner” is the *world*-form of being’s appearing. This form (which is that of the intertwining) both informs our own bodily appearing and determines our body’s role in the appearing of the world. The relation between our embodiment and this general manner of being can be specified by saying that our embodiment, as an instance of the intertwining, is the condition of the possibility of our *knowing* this world-form—knowing it as the rule, of which our embodiment is a particular instantiation. Reciprocally, the world-form is the condition of the possibility of the *being* of our embodiment as a place of disclosure.

If the reality of what appears is constituted by the intertwining, then we avoid the question of the remainder. This is the question: what is the entity in itself, once we subtract the categories that we impose on it? The question assumes that our categories only serve to conceal the entity in itself. If we pursue this Kantian line of reasoning, we are left with the thing as an empty “X.”[[741]](#endnote-741) It becomes an essentially unknowable referent of our thought. We can, Kant claims, only “think” or intend this referent; we cannot really “know” it.[[742]](#endnote-742) To know it, we would have to grasp it in terms of its inherent categories. If, however, the intertwining is a world-form, then the question of inherent categories is moot. The very presence that allows us to say that something exists or “stands-out” from its environment is unthinkable apart from the intertwining.

**Incarnation as Intertwining**

Given that the Incarnation is an embodiment, it should exhibit the reciprocal disclosure that characterizes the latter. The intertwining allows us to say that “the world and I are within one another” and that each side appears in terms of the other. Christianity does, in fact, have texts that express this relation in theological terms. St. Anselm of Canterbury, for example, describes the Incarnation as follows: “The whole universe was created by God, and God was born of Mary. God created all things, and Mary gave birth to God. The God who made all things gives himself form through Mary, and thus he made his own creation” as part of the world.[[743]](#endnote-743) Thus, given that Mary gave birth to God, we have to say that God is in Mary. Mary, however, was created by God. She is in God’s creation. God’s being in Mary in the person of Jesus is, therefore, his being in the world he creates, the very world that is within God as his creative conception. Anselm’s description recalls the account that we find in the Gospel of John. To Philip’s demand, “Show us the Father,” Jesus answers “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” The claim is that God is present in the world as Jesus himself. We find the assertion of the intertwining when Jesus challenges Philip, “How can you say ‘show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” (John 14:8-10).[[744]](#endnote-744) This claim, which appears here as a question, is later repeated as a definite assertion (14:11).

If God is in Jesus, then to see Jesus is to see God. Jesus, in other words, is the place where God is disclosed. The same holds if Jesus is in God. God would be the place where Jesus is disclosed. The world-form of the intertwining demands this reciprocal disclosure. The reality that is set by it is the being-in-the-world of that which is disclosed. For Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, the premier example of this is, as we saw, that of hand touching hand. The touching hand reveals the touched hand as a touched object, an object among other tangible objects that are part of the world that is disclosed by touch. The touching hand does this by bringing the touched to presence within itself. The touched hand, insofar as it senses its being touched, is not just a tangible body, but an embodied sensing, a place of presence. As such, it also places the touching hand within the same tangible world. Both hands thus serve as places of disclosure for the other. In the back and forth of their disclosive intertwining they reveal themselves as parts of an incarnate subject. Each displays its inherent identity as part of an embodied sensing, that is, as a place of presence *within the world*. In the theological parallel, God as a subject can initially be thought of as the touching hand that brings the touched hand to presence. God as object can be thought of as the hand that is touched. Sensing its being touched, the touched hand brings the touching hand to presence within itself. It also becomes a subject. As a subject, God, initially, is the Father; as an object, he is the Son. As God-incarnate, he exists as the intertwining of the two. As embodied, his identity is analogous to that of the animate body.

To see the Biblical parallel to this view, we must first note the opposition between what may be called the earthly and heavenly economies. By the former, is meant that system of exchange whereby our flesh maintains itself in the world. Our bodily metabolism with its organic needs is an example of this economy; so are our normal, everyday commercial transactions. They point to our dependence on the world, i.e., to the fact that as embodied we live only through a constant process of exchange with it. As self-directed, our freedom expresses this dependence. The heavenly economy dispenses with this *quid pro quo*. Transcending it, this economy manifests action without reciprocity. The paradigm here is the act of creation. To assert that God created the world from nothing is to claim that the freedom of his creative action cannot have worldly constraints or conditions. He is both prior to and independent of the world he creates. His creative act thus transcends the world’s economy. It is an act of free generosity. The heavenly economy that manifests this thus exceeds the economy of the world. Ontologically, it transcends the categories of created being. Morally, is consists of free acts of selfless generosity.

God’s incarnation is his entrance into the earthly economy; it is his assumption of flesh, both in its needs and vulnerabilities. This is the flesh that is hungry and thirsty, that is subject to the assaults of the world. As such, it is the flesh that is capable of suffering and dying on the Cross. Entering into the earthly economy, God exhibits himself as Jesus. Jesus, thus, becomes the place of his disclosure as human. Intertwined with this presence of God in Jesus is the presence of Jesus in God. The Incarnation is, thus, also Jesus’s entry into the heavenly economy. It is his exhibition as divine. Here, flesh reveals itself as more-than-flesh. This more-than-flesh that is revealed by flesh is flesh as exceeding the categories of created being. It is Jesus’s being more than the abandoned wretch that dies on the Cross. It is the flesh that is capable of resurrection. The entrance into the heavenly economy also expresses itself in the deeds of Jesus. He says to his disciples, “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or else accept the evidence of the deeds themselves” (John 14:11). Here, all his acts of unselfish generosity come into play: his feeding the multitudes, his curing the sick, and his raising the dead.

A related way to think about Jesus’s entrance into the heavenly economy is in terms of his being in the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit that descended on him after his baptism by John (Luke 3:21-22). John recognizes him by its presence. He says, “I did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize in water had told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit descending and abiding … is God’s Chosen One’” (John 1:33-34). The nature of John’s recognition can be seen by noting that the Holy Spirit or holy breath (a{gion pneu'ma) refers back to God’s creative breath (*ruah*).[[745]](#endnote-745) This is the breath that hovered over the waters as he began creation (Genesis 1:2). It is also the breath God breathes into Adam’s nostrils to make him a living being (Genesis 2:7). God expends this breath when he says, “Let there be ...” pronouncing the name of what is to be created or made alive. As God says to Moses, explaining why the Sabbath or seventh day is holy, “Between myself and the sons of Israel the Sabbath is a sign forever, since in six days God made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he rested and drew breath” (Ex, 31:17).[[746]](#endnote-746) This drawing in of breath is a complement to God’s expending breath on the first six days of creation. The fact that such breath abides with Jesus means that he possesses its creative generosity. Exhibiting it, he manifests his being in God. God becomes the place of Jesus’s disclosure as divine.

In John’s Gospel, the concept of intertwining is not limited to the relation of Jesus to the Father. It is also extended to his disciples. Thus, the Spirit that witnesses Jesus’s presence in God will also be sent to his disciples after Jesus’s death (John 14: 16-17). Announcing this, Jesus adds: “When that day comes, you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you” (John 14:20). They too will share God’s creative breath. They will also, by being in Jesus, be in God. What this means is expressed by Jesus when he tells them that “he who has faith in me will do what I am doing, indeed, he will do greater things still” (John 14: 12). Thus, Jesus acts to feed the hungry. Those who believe in him, will do likewise. They will also give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, and visit those in prison. Doing so, they will participate in the intertwining of Jesus and God. Jesus and, hence, God will be their place of disclosure. Being in Jesus and hence in God, they will be disclosed as such in their generosity to those whose situation prevents them from offering them any worldly recompense. As a complement to this, Jesus will be in them. Just as God in Jesus manifested his human vulnerability, so Jesus in us will manifest himself in our needs and vulnerabilities. Matthew puts this in terms of the second coming. Jesus, when he comes again, will admit into his kingdom those who fed him when he was hungry, who gave him drink when he was thirsty, who clothed him when he was naked, who made him welcome when he was a stranger and visited him when he was in prison. When asked by the elect, “When did we do this?” he will reply that it was when they did it “to one of the very least” of society—i.e., to those who had no possibility of recompensing them (Matthew 25: 33-40). The notion of the intertwining makes it clear that the object of their action is Jesus in us. In Paul’s terms, their intertwining with Christ makes them part of the body of Christ. The tenderness that the body shows to itself is manifested in the compassion of those who believe in Christ.

These examples could be multiplied. Their point, however, is clear. It is that we can understand the embodiment of God through embodiment as such, in particular, through the intertwining that constitutes its reality. In John’s Gospel, the reality of God incarnate is given by the intertwining of God, Jesus, and ourselves. When we interpret it in this way, the Incarnation refers us back to the alterity that we ourselves are. We are both bound and unbound, we are vulnerable and determined, but also capable of acts of spontaneous creative generosity, acts that allow us to exceed the earthly economy. This, then, is the “clue” to our ontological condition offered by the account of Christianity.

The question that remains is: how does this condition express itself in our contemporary social and political context? This context is one where the account of Christianity has largely been replaced by that of modern science. Under its pressure, not only has the conception of the sacred been reduced to the margins of our culture, the concept of embodiment has also been transformed. Medical science understands it in terms of biological functions that can be understood and manipulated to achieve desired ends. The impulse to the sacred, understood as the unconditioned or unlimited, has become, correspondingly, an impulse towards the unlimited mastery that technical science seems to afford us over the processes of life itself. What do such beliefs imply with regard to the transcendence that is part of our being alive, the transcendence that is inherent in the intertwining that defines us? The question concerns our selfhood and our representation of the transcendence that defines it. Is this a possible or impossible representation?

**Chapter 21**

The Animal and the Divine—The Alterity that I Am

According to psychologists, our response to representations that we cannot bear involves repression and replacement. The replacement is a substitution of a possible representation for an impossible one. In place of the repressed representation, we present to ourselves, through dreams and symptoms, a symbolic substitute, one that we can bear. This action can be seen in the alterity that defines us. Neither our flesh nor the divine, which our embodiment embraces, can be directly represented. As Exodus reminds us, no one can see God face to face and live. A direct encounter with the face of the divine is an impossible representation. The same holds, we shall argue, with regard to our flesh. Each, then, must be represented in terms of something else. Since we include both, each must be represented in terms of the Other. In other words, the only possible representation we can have of ourselves is given through an intertwining of both aspects of our alterity.

This implies that the intertwining exemplified by the Incarnation is paradigmatic for our grasp of ourselves. This conclusion, of course, assumes that a relation to the divine is part of our ontological condition. But can we assert this when, for many in the West, belief in the divine has largely vanished? Does its absence not show that the alterity that we are does *not* include the transcendence of the divine? It may be, however, that the absence of such belief does not affect the presence of this transcendence. It simply leaves us in a position where we have no stable, possible representation of ourselves. Here, it is the very lack of such a stable representation that argues for the intertwining that includes the presence of the divine.

**Flesh as an Impossible Representation**

There are two ways to see how a direct view of our flesh is an impossible representation. The first is ontological and has to do with the unique singularity of our flesh. To be a unique singular is to exist in only one example. It is the opposite of being one among many possible instances, each of which is essentially substitutable for another—like, for example, apples in the store. Now, the body’s non-substitutability is apparent in its organic functioning. It shows itself in the fact that no one can eat for you, sleep for you, breathe for you, or perform for you any of your bodily functions. Unlike our beliefs and convictions, the body constitutes the sphere of the private that cannot be shared and, hence, genuinely escapes linguistic expression. This can be put in terms of Aristotle’s assertion that the particular in its uniqueness can be sensed, but cannot be expressed in a language that we share with Others.[[747]](#endnote-747) Such sharing involves the common meanings that express the common features of objects. But my body, *as mine*, cannot be common. As mine, it is the flesh that individualizes me, making me this particular person and not anybody else. At the level of its inability to be substituted for anything else, it exhibits, as Arendt indicates, an “unspeakable” privacy. In this, it is different from my body as performing some function. Somebody else can go to the bank for me, tie my shoes for me, and so on. Since such functions are common, they can be linguistically expressed. So can the body that engages in them. Such expression, however, limits itself to what is common, not to that aspect of ourselves that is organically private. This aspect, in its very privacy and unspeakability, transcends us in the sense that it is other than all the levels of our embodied selfhood that gain their reality through intertwining. It is, in terms of them, an impossible representation. A sign of this is the fact, as Heidegger stresses, that no one can die for another.[[748]](#endnote-748) Death, as the cessation of organic functioning, is irremediably private. It is also, by definition, a representation that we cannot directly entertain.

The second way of understanding the impossibility of representing our flesh is psychological. Freud gives a depiction of this in his account of the unconscious, which he identifies with our flesh. Describing it as the “it” (the “id” in the standard translation), he claims that it “contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution—above all the instincts, which originate from the somatic (bodily) organization.”[[749]](#endnote-749) The instincts, he adds, “represent the somatic demands upon the mind.”[[750]](#endnote-750) They originate in the embodied existence that we share with the other animals. For Freud, this existence—which is that of our unique flesh—*is the unconscious.* This is, in fact, his first hypothesis. As he states this: “We assume that mental life is a function of an apparatus to which we ascribe the characteristics of being extended in space.”[[751]](#endnote-751) The processes of this apparatus (which is our somatic organization) continue uninterrupted even when our conscious processes leave off. This leads him to assume “that there are physical or somatic processes which are concomitant with the psychical ones and which we should necessarily have to recognize as more complete than the psychical sequences, since some of them would have conscious processes parallel to them but others would not.”[[752]](#endnote-752) With this, we have his “second fundamental hypothesis”—namely, “the idea of something psychical being unconscious.” This hypothesis “explains the supposedly somatic concomitant phenomena as being what is truly psychical, and thus in the first instance disregards the quality of consciousness.”[[753]](#endnote-753) In other words, what we take to be psychical or mental phenomena are actually the more continuous bodily processes—processes that are, in themselves, unconscious. The claim, here, is that the “psychical is the unconscious.”[[754]](#endnote-754) To apprehend it directly is to apprehend the unconscious somatic processes that give rise to consciousness.

Why does Freud reduce the psychical to the unconscious and, thus, to the somatic processes of our flesh? He replies that the claim that “the psychical is the unconscious” enables “psychology to take its place as a natural science like any other.”[[755]](#endnote-755) Just as the other natural sciences describe what cannot be known in itself (the materiality of nature) by weaving a garment of concepts, such as force, inertia, and so on, that are appropriate to what we can observe, so also psychology deals with the materially unknown by coining concepts that are appropriate in its domain. As Freud expresses this:

The processes with which [psychology] is concerned are in themselves just as unknowable as those dealt with by other sciences, by chemistry or physics, for example; but it is possible to establish the laws which they obey and to follow their mutual relations and interdependencies unbroken over long stretches—in short, to arrive at what is described as an ‘understanding’ of the field of the natural phenomena in question. This cannot be effected without framing fresh hypotheses and creating fresh concepts.[[756]](#endnote-756)

The particular concepts that Freud employs need not concern us. What is of interest to us is his claim that the unconscious, taken as flesh, cannot be directly represented, that it is, in terms of our conscious life, an impossible representation, one that can be made present only through symbolic substitution. Freud writes, in this regard, the unconscious’s “psychical processes and psychical material must be inferred, recognized and translated into conscious form … For such material we reserve the name of the unconscious proper.”[[757]](#endnote-757) This is not just an epistemological necessity. The actual appearance of the unconscious as it is in itself would yield a “psychotic state.”[[758]](#endnote-758) Its unvarnished presence would be tantamount to the destruction of the ego. What we face here is an unbearable alterity, one that we can come to terms with only by substituting for it what we can bear. Doing so, we represent it indirectly through dreams, symbols, and behavioral symptoms.

Freud’s procedure in analyzing this material differs in a crucial respect from that of the natural scientists—the chemists and physicists—he wishes to join. Unlike the “natural phenomena” that other scientists analyze, the phenomena that the psychologist studies are not explicable by reason. The order that its sequences follow is not logical, but rather symbolical. At its basis is our organic existence—in particular, the unconscious drives that manifest themselves in our instinctual life. Freud divides the latter into “*Eros* and *the destructive instinct*.” “The aim of the first of these basic instincts,” he writes, “is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them.” Its action is one of binding, whether this be internal, as in the action of self-preservation, or external, as in the instincts that drive us to mate and to bind others to us. The goal of the second is the opposite of this. It is “to undo connections and so to destroy things.”[[759]](#endnote-759) Both instincts manifest themselves in a multitude of dreams, behaviors and symptoms, whose symbolic relations the psychologist studies. As for the instincts themselves, they are common to ourselves and the other animals, who also face the necessities of finding mates and competing with others for mates, food, etc. They are part of our evolutionary inheritance and, as such, have their basis in our flesh. Now, the fact that this instinctive life can be described and studied does not mean that its origin can be confronted without psychosis. For Freud, a direct view of this origin, were it possible, would fatally disorganize the self.

**The Divine as an Impossible Representation**

Plato gives an account of *Eros* that is the opposite of Freud’s. While Freud speaks of it as an instinct originating in our somatic alterity—an alterity that is essentially non-representable—Plato traces its origin to an equally non-representable, divine alterity. His account begins with the claim “that the mortal does all it can to put on immortality.”[[760]](#endnote-760) This is why animals are “obsessed … with the desire, first to mate, and then to rear their litters and their broods.” It is also the reason why they are ready to endure hunger and even die for love of their offspring.[[761]](#endnote-761) Driven by the erotic impulse, they will even sacrifice for them their own animal existence. Explaining the impulse for the mortal to “put on immortality,” he writes: “And how can it do that except by breeding, and thus ensuring that there will always be a younger generation to take the place of the old.”[[762]](#endnote-762) For Plato, the real driver here is the idea of beauty. Our modern conception, following Darwin and Freud, sees bodily beauty as a result of the process of sexual selection. The idea is traced to our material existence. From a Platonic perspective, however, the compelling force of such selection is the beauty shining through our embodied existence. The force or impulse exerted by beauty pervades our life. To follow it, for Plato, is to mount “the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung—that is, from one to two, and from two to every lovely body, from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning, and from learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful.” This lore is philosophy; following it, a person “comes to know what beauty is” by examining its pure idea or form.[[763]](#endnote-763) Behind the etymological sense of philosophy as “love of wisdom,” there is, then, a transcendent drive. It comes from our erotic attachment to the ideas (εἴδη) and, ultimately, to “the Good (τὸ ἀγαθόν) beyond being” who is also the God (ὁ θεός).[[764]](#endnote-764)

A remarkable, modern variant of the account of this drive comes from Levinas. He asserts that the drive directs itself towards “the good beyond being,” taking this phrase from Plato. According to Levinas, the concept of this good “announces a rigorous concept of creation,” pointing to the God that cannot be identified with his creatures.[[765]](#endnote-765) We experience the impulse directed towards this good as “metaphysical desire.” This is not a desire for something we can possess. In Levinas’ words, “The other metaphysically desired is not ‘other’ like the bread I eat, the land in which I dwell, the landscape I contemplate.” Such things are part of the totality of the world. I can possess them. In becoming mine, he writes, “[t]heir alterity is … reabsorbed into my own identity as a thinker or a possessor.” By contrast, “metaphysical desire tends … towards something else entirely, towards the absolutely other.”[[766]](#endnote-766) Not being based on my natural (animal) needs, it is, he writes, “a desire that cannot be satisfied” by the fulfillment of a need.[[767]](#endnote-767) Water, for example, satisfies or completes thirst; food does the same thing for hunger, and so on. But metaphysical desire desires “beyond what could complete it.” It is a “desire that nourishes itself … with its hunger.” The closing of the gap between the desire and the desired does not occur. They form a “relationship that is not the disappearance of distance.” What we confront is “a desire without satisfaction, which … understands the remoteness, the alterity, the exteriority of the other.”[[768]](#endnote-768)

For Levinas, our primary access to this desire is through the face of another person. Something, impelling us, shines through the face. This means, he writes, that “in the access to the face there is certainly also an access to God.”[[769]](#endnote-769) Our response to this is not knowing, but rather what he calls “witnessing.” As Levinas puts this*,* “The face signifies the Infinite.”[[770]](#endnote-770) It does this because the appeal of the face is “insatiable.” Its infinity manifests itself in always demanding more, that is, in imposing a non-finite, unending responsibility on us. We indicate the infinite in attempting to meet this. Our actions, which never can be sufficient, point to it.[[771]](#endnote-771) In Levinas’ words, “one only testifies to the infinite, to God, about which no presence or actuality is capable of testifying” by an action that is never enough and knows itself as never enough.[[772]](#endnote-772) We experience such testimony in the actions of certain individuals like Raoul Wallenberg or Mother Teresa. Their actions exceed what we would normally expect of human goodness, this, even though they themselves felt that they could never do enough.

This inability to adequately testify to God points not just to the divine alterity. It also indicates that we cannot directly represent the origin of our desire. To do so would, in fact, result in the destruction of our selfhood. Plato puts this in terms of the alterity of the ideas. Socrates, in his account, testifies to the presence of the Good beyond being in his practice of philosophy, that is, in his love of the wisdom that he can never attain while alive. The impossibility of such attainment is, for Plato, a function of the fact that the ideas are other—i.e., have none of the properties of the objects, of which they are the ideas. Thus, the idea of tallness is not, itself, a tall idea. It does not possess this property. Similarly, the idea of smallness is not itself small[[773]](#endnote-773)—or, to take an example from Frege, the idea of black cloth is not itself a “black” idea or made out of cloth.[[774]](#endnote-774) The point is that the objects to which these ideas apply are in space and time. The ideas are not. We only see them when we are out of time, when we have an unchanging relation to the unchanging.[[775]](#endnote-775) We can do this in this life only momentarily. To actually grasp them face to face, we must leave our bodies. In Plato’s words, “if we are ever to have pure knowledge of anything, we must get rid of the body and contemplate things by themselves with the soul by itself.” This means that “the wisdom that we desire and upon which we profess to have set our hearts will be attainable only when we are dead, and not in our lifetime.”[[776]](#endnote-776) This point holds a fortiori for the God who is the Good that is beyond being and, hence, beyond the being of the ideas. It indicates that the presence of the divine is an impossible representation, one whose direct presence demands the loss of our embodied selfhood.

In asserting that our access to the divine comes through the face of the Other, Levinas arrives at a similar conclusion. He puts this in terms of the traumatic effects of our encounter with the Other. According to Levinas, I have my identity in my responding to the Other, i.e., in the inescapable responsibility that the Other imposes upon me. In his words, “The I ... rises up in its unicity in responding to an Other in an inescapable responsibility.”[[777]](#endnote-777) This unique responsibility makes me unique. As ultimately directed to the divine, such responsibility, however, becomes all-embracing. It moves me from a responsibility for what *I* do to a responsibility for the actions of all Others. As Levinas puts this, “I am ‘subject’ essentially in this sense … I am responsible for a total responsibility, which answers for all the Others and for all in the Others, even for their responsibility.”[[778]](#endnote-778) The ultimate result of this responsibility for what the Other does is my “substitution for the Other.” In this, I experience a “passivity without the *arche* [principle] of identity,” one where my selfhood, my “ipseity is a hostage” to the Other.[[779]](#endnote-779) The result, here, is the loss of my selfhood as defined by my action. It is, Levinas writes, “the putting into question of the self, posing itself directly as de-posed, as for the Other.”[[780]](#endnote-780)

For Levinas, then, as for Plato, a direct contact with the divine results in loss of selfhood as this is normally understood. It is, at least in this life, an impossible representation. This signifies that, like our somatic existence for Freud, the divine can only be endured in an indirect, symbolic representation. Yann Martel, in *The* *Life of Pi*, makes this claim for the divine when he describes Pi’s religious practices. Pi, in this novel, becomes successively a Hindu, a Christian and a Muslim, adding to each the practice of the next religion. In a comic scene, Pi’s pandit, priest and imam encounter him during a walk with his family. His parents have no idea that he practices all three faiths and listen amazed as he is successively praised for being a good Hindu, Christian, and Muslim.[[781]](#endnote-781) The three religious figures then begin to quarrel. The imam tells Pi, “Hindus and Christians are idolaters. They have many gods.” The pandit responds, “And Muslims have many wives,” while the priest asserts: “there is salvation only in Jesus.” Soon insults are being traded: Christians are called the “flunkies of a foreign god,” the pandit is referred to as “the slave driver of the caste system,” while the priest calls their beliefs “myths from a cartoon strip.”[[782]](#endnote-782) Pi, himself, is appalled at their quarrelling. He later reflects, “There are always those who take it on themselves to defend God, as if Ultimate Reality, as if the sustaining frame of existence, were something weak and helpless.”[[783]](#endnote-783) The fact that these religious figures act as if their God were “weak and helpless” points to a truth that they both accept and conceal from themselves. This is that what they are trying to represent through the symbolic forms of their practices is, in itself, unrepresentable. It is an impossible representation, one whose presence would result in our annihilation. Martel expresses this insight when he has Pi, marooned on a raft, gaze at the “fierce, contained brilliance” of the stars. Seeing them, Pi feels “like the sage Markandeya, who fell out of Vishnu’s mouth while Vishnu was sleeping and so beheld the entire universe, everything that there is. Before the sage could die of fright, Vishnu awoke and took him back into his mouth.”[[784]](#endnote-784)

**Failures of Representation: Flesh as the Animal within Us**

According to the above, neither side of the alterity that we are is directly representable. Each must be thought in terms of a symbolic substitute. The question is: how are we to arrive at a representation of ourselves, given that we involve both? My claim is that this is possible only through an intertwining, where each side is viewed in terms of the other. Apart from this, any self-representation becomes unstable, since it fails to account for our alterity. The collapse of this self-representation may be compared to the breakdown of public space in Uchuraccay, discussed in Chapter 14. There, the issue concerned the space of mutual recognition and the intertwining that established this. Here, it concerns the intertwining required for our self-recognition.

There are two ways to see the collapse of the representation of ourselves—each corresponding to a different side of our self-alterity. We can begin by asking about the possibility of the representation of ourselves as flesh when this is not intertwined with the divine. Such flesh is that of our animal existence. Given that our incarnate existence cannot be directly presented, how do we represent our animality? The Italian theorist, Giorgio Agamben, provides a telling answer. In his book, *The Open, Man and Animal*, he traces our current attitude to our animality to Linnaeus, the founder of modern taxonomy. Linnaeus writes that “as a naturalist,” he “hardly knows a single distinguishing mark which separates man from the apes.”[[785]](#endnote-785) Confronted with this problem, Linnaeus asserts that man “becomes man only if he raises himself above man,” i.e., above what his physiology reveals.[[786]](#endnote-786) This means, in fact, distinguishing himself from the animal. The animal becomes, in other words, the designator of the non-human. Here, the representation of ourselves involves not just a symbolic substitution. It involves projection: we project upon the animal the attributes that we cannot acknowledge about ourselves. As corollary, we also project upon humans, whom we wish to exclude from our humanity—blacks, Jews, and gypsies, for example—these animal attributes. Doing so, we exclude them from the rights we normally assign to humans.[[787]](#endnote-787)

The censorship and projection at work here recall Lacan’s remark cited in Chapter 16. For Lacan, the unconscious is not just, as in Freud, another name for our somatic existence, which Freud views in term of its effects on our conscious life. Broadening its concept, he writes: “the unconscious is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter.” The censored material reappears in “the distortions necessitated by the linking of the adulterated chapter to the chapters surrounding it.”[[788]](#endnote-788) It appears in symptomatic language—i.e., language that in its distortions points back to what has been censored. For Lacan, what has ultimately been censored is “the Other.” In his words, “the unconscious of the subject is the discourse of the Other.” For Lacan, then, the unconscious is this censored discourse—a discourse that is also a chapter in the patient’s own history. The censorship of the Other is, thus, a self-censorship, one where the patient’s symptoms point to the Other’s presence in his selfhood. [[789]](#endnote-789) Not willing to admit the traits that he and the Other share, the patient cannot recognize himself. His censored chapter, which contains such traits, has been projected on the Other, whose role becomes that of representing this.

For Agamben, this point holds, in particular, with regard to the flesh—the animal existence—that we share with our embodied Others. He claims that the censorship and projection of our animality has assumed an unstable, open-ended form—that of the “anthropogenic” machine. Linnaeus, he writes, begins the process of defining the animal negatively as the non-human. This implies, for Agamben, that “*homo sapiens*, then, is neither a clearly defined species nor a substance; it is, rather a machine or device for producing the recognition of the human.”[[790]](#endnote-790) Given that the focus of this recognition is the distinction of man from the animal, this machine functions by defining the human by the exclusion of the animal. The animal is the nonhuman in the pejorative sense. Thus, the machine also works to animalize what we no longer wish to consider human—i.e., the being that we previously considered to be human. In this case, as Agamben writes, “it functions by excluding as not (yet) human an already human being from itself, that is, by animalizing the human, by isolating the nonhuman within the human.” The result of this process, Agamben adds, is “the slave, the barbarian, and the foreigner, as figures of the animal in human form.”[[791]](#endnote-791) Thus, in the 19th century, the blacks’ “animal nature” justified their slavery. In the 20th, with the Nazis, we have “the Jew, that is, the non-man produced within the man.”[[792]](#endnote-792)

The question that arises here is: what do we mean by the human? There is an obvious circularity in the anthropogenic machine. The attempt to define the human by the exclusion of the nonhuman demands that we have some notion of the human. Without this, we cannot know what to exclude. In fact, the notion of the machine, like Linnaeus’s original definition of *homo sapiens*, suffers from an obvious lack of content. Lacking any definite concept of the human, the machine attempts to define it by exclusion. As such, it lacks any natural limit. Not knowing what the human is, we cannot know how much to exclude, how much to place in the animal realm. The human, in the context of this machine, can, in fact, have only a functional definition. He becomes the being that exercises power over the animal. As a pure, contentless functionality, this power has no limit. The result, for Agamben, is that its exercise over the animal reduces the animal to “bare life.” The animal’s separation from the human separates its life from any sense of inviolability.[[793]](#endnote-793) It becomes the life of the animals bred for slaughter—in particular those raised in “factory farms.” “Bare life” is also exemplified by the life of the Jew in the camps, whom anyone could kill with impunity,[[794]](#endnote-794) and the life of the comatose patient, whose organs lie ready for removal. It is also life in the form of the genetic material, be it plant, animal, or human, that is open to manipulation. Since such life is also our own, the anthropocentric machine, with its lack of limits, does not just reduce the animal to “bare life”; it also undoes the notion of the human as something more than “bare life.” The result, then, is an essentially unstable representation of ourselves. The human is taken as that which exercises power over the animal and that which, as bare life, is subject to such power.

**Failures of Representation: Power as the Divine within Us**

A similar sort of split occurs with regard to the divine when this is not intertwined with our flesh. Here, we exclude the impulses from our flesh in our attempt to see ourselves in terms of the sacred. Patočka, in his account of religion as excluding our instinctive impulses, presents a telling picture of the result. For him, the point of the sacred is the meaning it offers. It is a response to our need to overcome the meaninglessness (and consequent boredom) of daily life. The ancient religions, with their orgiastic ceremonies, satisfied this need by giving us an experience “where something more powerful than our free possibility, our responsibility, seems to break into our life and bestow on it a meaning that it would not know otherwise. It is the dimension of the demonic and of passion.”[[795]](#endnote-795) Thus, in the ancient festivals, the experience “of the erotic, of the sexual, of the demonic, of the dread of the holy” was felt as “capable of penetrating and transforming our life.”[[796]](#endnote-796) In our terms, such festivals present a possible, collective representation of the somatic impulses originating in the unconscious. For Patočka, however, they also represent a loss of self-conscious selfhood and, hence, of self-responsibility. He writes, “The problem of the individual, the problem of the human person, was from the start the problem of transcending the ordinary and the orgiastic.”[[797]](#endnote-797) It was that of integrating the instinctive, somatic level of our selfhood with an ability “to live in a humanly authentic way.”[[798]](#endnote-798) To live authentically is to take responsibility for our choices and, hence, for the life, both individual and collective, that we shape through them.

Such thoughts lead him to distinguish “the sacred” from religion. Religion is what binds the sacred, overcoming its orgiastic character. In his words:

Religion is not the sacred, nor does it arise directly from the experience of sacred orgies and rites; rather, it is where the sacred qua demonic is being explicitly overcome. Sacred experiences pass over to religious as soon as there is an attempt to introduce responsibility into the sacred or to regulate the sacred thereby.[[799]](#endnote-799)

This responsibility offers meaning, not in self-forgetfulness, but through our individual efforts to respond to the drawing power of the divine. The paradigm, for Patočka, is Plato’s “heavenly ladder” mentioned above. Each individual must climb it himself. He, himself, is responsible for his progress. What impels us is not the erotic, which leads to self-forgetfulness, but rather the Eros that draws us from beautiful bodies to the idea of beauty and ultimately to the “Good.” In our climbing this ladder, Patočka remarks, “responsibility triumphs over the orgiastic [and] incorporates it as a subordinate moment.” It subsumes it as the “Eros that cannot understand itself until it understands that its origin is not in the corporeal world, in the cave, in the darkness, but rather that it is only a means for the ascent to the God with its absolute claim and its hard discipline.”[[800]](#endnote-800) In Plato, then, the Eros that leads to “the Good” or “the God” is substituted for the Eros of the orgiastic festivals. The vision of the Good that is taken as the reward for engaging in the ascent from the cave does not represent the body’s instinctive presence in consciousness, but rather the presence of the divine.

This view becomes widespread through Christianity’s transformation of Platonism. In Patočka’s account, Christianity takes the goal of the “heavenly ladder,” not as an abstract, impersonal Good, but rather as “a self-forgetting and a self-denying (not orgiastic) love.”[[801]](#endnote-801) This “infinite love,” which originates in the divine, demands a response from the individual, who must work out his salvation in relation to it. Responsibility is, thus, responsibility for the salvation of one’s soul. Accordingly, “the truth for which the soul struggles is not the truth of [Platonic] intuition, but rather the truth of its own destiny.”[[802]](#endnote-802) With this, we have a transformation of the Platonic “care of the soul.” In Plato, it involved the discipline of rational inquiry and discourse. Its goal was “to render our soul [into] that firm crystal of being … in view of the eternity” of the Good.[[803]](#endnote-803) In Christianity, “[t]he overcoming of everydayness assumes the form of the care for the salvation of the soul.”[[804]](#endnote-804)

Patočka ends the fifth of the *Heretical Essays* by sketching the interrelated decline of both forms of care. On the one hand, Christianity was undermined by the rise of the new (Galilean) sciences. On the other, such sciences transformed Platonic rationality into modern technical science. As a result, “[w]hat had originally, in Plato, been a bulwark against orgiastic irresponsibility has now passed into the service of everydayness.”[[805]](#endnote-805) This is a service to life’s needs. Science’s public presence now becomes that of its practical applications. This, however, leaves unresolved “the problem of the human person”—namely, “the problem of transcending the ordinary and the orgiastic.”[[806]](#endnote-806) In Patočka’s pessimistic assessment, the failure of “religion”—both in its Platonic and Christian versions—to present a transformative, meaningful experience, left only the orgiastic alternative possible. Its return, however, was combined with the technical means that science now affords us. Modern “total war,” with its vastly increased technical powers of destruction, thus, becomes, in Patočka’s eyes, the new collective representation of our instinctive impulses. In his words, “War is simultaneously the greatest undertaking of industrial civilization … and a release of orgiastic potentials that could not afford such extreme intoxication with destruction under any [other] circumstance.”[[807]](#endnote-807) In Freud’s terms, it is the ultimate expression of the death instinct.

Patočka, himself, does not offer any solutions for this impasse. The pessimistic vision he leaves us with is indicated by the title of the final essay, “Wars of the Twentieth Century and the Twentieth Century as War.”[[808]](#endnote-808) From our perspective, the impasse testifies to the inability to represent our relation to the divine when we exclude its intertwined relation to our flesh. This inability affects our self-representation, making it unstable. The result is the same split that Agamben depicts: that between ourselves as exercising power and ourselves as subject to it. To see this, we have to recall, with Patočka, that the Christian transformation of the Platonic Good involved its replacement by the God of the Hebrew scriptures—the God that commands humans to “subdue” the earth and “rule over” its creatures.[[809]](#endnote-809) This, according to Patočka, was followed by the modern transformation of Platonic rationalism into “a rationalism that wants to master things and is mastered by them.”[[810]](#endnote-810) Such a rationalism becomes that of our technical science. On the one hand, this gives us extraordinary powers to exercise dominion over nature. On the other, this science transforms our conception of the divine. The correlative of technical rationality is no longer the Good; it is the power that such rationality affords us. More, precisely, the modern, highly unstable representation of the divine is “will-to-power.” Power, according to Patočka, rather than any vision of the Good, becomes the goal of rational endeavor. This splits our conception of ourselves. As in Agamben’s account, humans are conceived in terms of the power or force that they exercise. In Patočka’s words, with the rise of modern technical science, “humans … have become a force, a mighty one … Especially in their social being, they became a gigantic transformer, releasing cosmic forces accumulated and bound over the eons.” This does not mean that in making use of such forces, they stand apart. They are “themselves integrated into the same process, accumulated, calculated, utilized, and manipulated like any other state of energy.”[[811]](#endnote-811) Exercising power, they are subject to it.

**Intertwining and Incarnation**

What is common to Agamben’s and Patočka's accounts is will-to-power. For Agamben, will-to-power characterizes the “anthropogenic machine,” which defines the human by excluding the non-human. At the end of its operation, the animal is reduced to “bare life,” and, with it, the human. Both life and the human are here subject to a process that lacks any inherent limits. The power that acts on them has no content that could serve as a specific goal. Lacking this limit, it can only will itself—i.e., its own increase. As such, it exhibits itself as will-to-power.[[812]](#endnote-812) The same holds for the process of total war as described by Patočka. It, too, knows no inherent limits. Behind this lack of limits is, for Patočka, the modern conception of the divine as power. Our desire for the Good or God transforms itself into a desire for power. As will to power, it both splits and destabilizes our self-representation.

At the heart of this destabilization is a lack of limits. To overcome it, we must think of the intertwining that defines our nature not just in terms of mutual representation but also as mutual limitation. Here, flesh and divinity would not just provide a place for one another’s presence, they would also thereby limit it. To embrace this solution, we would, however, have to abandon Patočka’s acceptance of Nietzsche’s view that Christianity is Platonism for the masses.” For Nietzsche, this conception is negative. For Patočka, however, to call Christianity a form of “Platonism” is a positive assessment.[[813]](#endnote-813) It signifies its acceptance of the Platonic repression and replacement of the orgiastic Eros. It also, however, leads to total war once this acceptance no longer holds. To avoid this analysis, we have to take Christianity on its own terms—i.e., not as a diluted Platonism, but rather as a doctrine of Incarnation.

So regarded, repression is not inherent in Christianity. Instead, it demands that we grasp the alterity that is our flesh in terms of the alterity of the divine, and vice versa. In the figure of Christ, this involves thinking of the divine in terms of flesh and flesh, and the reverse of this. Thus, in the account of Christ’s passion, we are meant to understand the divine in terms of his suffering the assaults that his embodied existence makes him liable to. In the account of his life, the frame of divine is provided by Christ’s attachments and disappointments. This frame, as is obvious, is a limitation of the unlimited character of the divine. A parallel limitation occurs when the frame of flesh is the divine. Here, flesh transcends its self-directed needs in its service to Others. It is taken as the flesh that exhibits itself in acts of self-forgetful love: feeding the multitude, curing the sick, raising the dead. What is limited in this regard is the unlimited egotism of flesh. This, to cite Levinas, is the egotism of the ‘famished stomach that has no ears.”[[814]](#endnote-814)

To see such limitations in our own intertwining is to note how the intertwining of our flesh with the divine mirrors itself in the impulses that we are subject to. Intertwined with the impulses from below, those from above can be thought of as drawing us out of our flesh, of introducing an alterity between ourselves and our embodied animal existence. Such an alterity limits its claims on us. Left to itself, however, this action of the divine Eros is insufficient. As Agamben shows, the distinction from ourselves of our animality leads to the reduction of the latter to “bare life.” We become the beings that exercise power over it. Here, our conception of the divine—and, hence, of ourselves as manifesting its presence—becomes that of power. To avoid this, the impulses from the divine have to be intertwined with those from our flesh. The latter must be seen as drawing us out of our divinity, of introducing an alterity between ourselves and the divinity that lays claim to dominion over nature (and, hence, over ourselves as part of nature). Once again, this introduction of alterity is a limitation. The instinctive impulses originating in our flesh—hunger, thirst, sex, and aggression—here serve to remind us that we are part of nature, that the total mastery of nature would result in our own elimination. That we not be lost in nature, that we not forget ourselves in (an orgiastic) union with it, requires, of course, the opposing impulses from the divine.

So conceived, the figure of the Incarnation conjoins the two forms of Eros that lay claim to us. The intertwining, in which each is viewed in terms of the other, transforms both. Its transformation of the orgiastic Eros does not involve its Platonic repression, but rather the placing of this Eros in the frame of the self-forgetting love that characterizes the divine. Similarly, the divine Eros is transformed into care, not for the abstract Good, but for our embodied animality with its needs and desires. This double placing of each Eros in the other gives each a definite content, thereby limiting it. The care for our embodied animality directs us to specific Others with their definite needs. Similarly, the orgiastic Eros, understood as self-forgetting love, places limits on the unbounded self-assertion that characterizes our instinctive desires.

Such double placing, as Chapter 18 implies, is also an unbinding. It undoes, in part, the constraints that characterize each form of Eros. This can be put in terms of the alterity that is at the heart of our selfhood. This alterity is such that neither of its aspects can be directly presented. Each, rather, can only be present through something else, be this the divine or the flesh that is our animal existence. As intertwined, neither aspect can be absorbed by or reduced to the other. The result is a loosening of the constraining unity of being, whether this be conceived in terms of the divine unity of the One or the material unity of the orgiastic. Instead of unity, we have intertwining—the very intertwining that conjoins both forms of Eros into a stable, possible representation. Whether or not we embrace the specifically Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, the need for such a representation is clear. Patočka and Agamben, with their respective concepts of total war and bare life, indicate our failures in this regard. Both our collective sanity and the world that we have come to dominate require that we form a representation that includes both aspects of the alterity that we are. In the end, then, the message of the intertwining concerns nothing less than our collective future.

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**Endnotes**

1. **Introduction**

   Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1028b4, my own translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. William James, “Does Consciousness Exist,” in *The Writings of William James* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 173. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. As the cognitive scientist Riccardo Manzotti writes of neurons: “They are cells doing what cells do best, namely, keeping entropy low by generating flows of ions such as sodium, potassium, chloride, and calcium and releasing neurotransmitters as a consequence. All of that is wonderful but far removed from the fact that I experience a light blue color when I watch the morning sky. That is, it’s not easy to see how the physical activity of the neurons explains my experience of the sky, let alone a process like thinking.” [Riccardo Manzotti](https://www.nybooks.com/contributors/riccardo-manzotti/) and [Tim Parks](https://www.nybooks.com/contributors/tim-parks/), “The Challenge of Consciousness,” *The New York Review of Books Daily*, Nov. 23, 2016, available at: https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/11/21/challenge-of-defining-consciousness/. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. See ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Plato, “Phaedo” 98c-d, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 80. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid., 99a, p. 80. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid., 99a-b, p. 80. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian ( The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. L. LaFleur (New York: Macmillan, 1990), p. 36. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid., p. 37. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. . Ludwig Wittgenstein describes a parallel situation of a person "looking for an object in a room. He opens a drawer and doesn't see it there; then he closes it again, waits, and opens it once more to see if perhaps it isn't there now, and keeps on like that" (Wittgenstein*, On Certainty*, §315, trans. D. Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe [New York: Haarper & Row, 1972], p. 40). This attitude makes sense if each look can only be verified by the next. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1964), p. 91. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid., pp. 91-92. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. “Thoughts of a biological order intrude. We are reminded of the modern theory of evolution, according to which man has evolved in the struggle for existence and by natural selection, and with him his intellect too has evolved naturally and along with his intellect all of its characteristic forms, particularly the logical forms. Accordingly, is it not the case that the logical forms and laws express the accidental peculiarity of the human species, which could have been different and which will be differ­ent in the course of future evolution? Cognition is, after all, only human cognition, bound up with human intellectual forms, and unfit to reach the very nature of things, to reach the things in themselves” (Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, pp. 16-17). [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Cited by Husserl in his *Logische Untersuchungen*, ed. Ursula Panzer, in *Edmund Husserl, Gesammelte Schriften*, 8 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), vol. 2, p. 152 n. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Husserl*, Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch*, §49, ed. R. Schuhmann (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 106. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German are my own. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., §51, p. 109. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. The claim here is “that the existence [*Dasein*] of the thing itself, the object of experience, is inseparably implicit in this system of transcendental connections [between experiences] and that without such connections, it would, thus, be unthinkable and obviously a nothing” (*Erste Philosophie, 1923/24, Zweiter Teil: Theorie der phänomenologische Reduktion*, ed. R. Boehm [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959] p. 404). [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Descartes, *Cartesianische Meditationen*, ed. S. Strasser (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), p. 118. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Husserl, “Die Paradoxie der menschlichen Subjektivität: das Subjektsein für die Welt und zugleich Objektsein in der Welt” (*Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, ed., W. Biemel [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962], p. 182. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Husserl, “How can human subjectivity, which is a part of the world, constitute the whole world, i.e., constitute it as its intentional product …? The subjective part of the world swallows up, so to speak, the whole world including itself. What an absurdity!” (*Krisis*, p. 183). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Husserl, “Nachwort,” *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Drittes Buch*, ed. M. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 150. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid., p. 145. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge with the First and Second Introductions, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. *Krisis*, p. 265. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 37 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1998) p. 97. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid., B51, p. 110. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid., p. 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 93. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. M.C. Dillon, “Merleau-Ponty and the Reversibility Thesis,” in *Phenomenology, Critical Concepts in Philosophy*, 2 vols., eds. Dermot Moran and Lester Embree (New York: Routledge, 2004), vol. 2, p. 298. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Ted Toadvine, “The Chiasm,” in *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology, ed. Sebastian Luft and Soren Overgaard* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 340. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. “Merleau-Ponty and the Reversibility Thesis,” p. 295. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. “Merleau-Ponty and the Reversibility Thesis,” p. 299. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. See ibid, p. 300. This holds even though, as Merleau-Ponty quotes a painter, “In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who was looking at the forest. I felt, on certain days, that it was rather the trees that were looking at me ...” (L’Oeil et l’esprit [Paris: Galimard, 1964], p. 31). Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French are my own. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. “Merleau-Ponty and the Reversibility Thesis,” p. 305. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Ibid., p. 300. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Ibid., p. 140. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid., p. 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid., p. 135. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. “Merleau-Ponty and the Reversibility Thesis,” p. 302. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p 136. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Renaud Barbaras, “L’Autonomie de l’apparaître,” *Chiasmi International* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2013), p. 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. The citation is from “Chair du monde—Chair du corps—Être, May 1960” of the “Notes de travail” to *Le visibile et l’invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), p. 304). This note is not included in Lingis’s English translation. Barbaras cites it in “L’Autonomie de l’apparaître,” p. 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Referring to the same note, Barbaras asserts that “the split between the subject that makes things appear and what appears exterior to it divides [the sense of] flesh itself into a proper and a merely metaphorical sense” (“L'ambiguïté de la chair, Merleau-Ponty entre philosophie transcendentale et ontologie de la vie,” in *Merleau-Ponty aux frontiers d l’invisible, Chiasmi International*, 1 [Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2003], p. 187. This split signifies that Merleau-Ponty has not advanced beyond the position of the *Phenomenology of Perception*: “Autant dire que nous n'avons pas avancé d'un pas par rapport à la *Phénoménologie de la perception*. En ce sens, la philosophie de Merleau-Ponty demeure une philosophie de l'incar­nation plutôt qu'elle n'est une philosophie de la Chair — incarnation de la conscience dans un organisme et, partant, du sens dans une extériorité — et elle demeure en cela une philosophie de la conscience” (ibid., p. 188). Merleau-Ponty, thus, leaves us suspended between a transcendental phenomenology and an ontology of flesh: “J'en conclus d'abord que la philosophie de Merleau-Ponty, en raison de sa radicalité phé­noménologique ou, comme on voudra, de sa non-radicalité ontologique, est une philosophie essentiellement instable, dans laquelle on ne peut demeurer. Elle nous projette nécessairement en-deçà ou au-delà d'elle-mê­me : en-deçà, dans une phénoménologie transcendantale qui demeure sa vé­rité la plus profonde, ou au-delà, dans une ontologie de la Chair ou de la Vie au seuil de laquelle elle a été conduite sans pouvoir l'assumer” (ibid.). [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. *The Visible and the Invisible*, pp. 4-5. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid., p. 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid., p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid., p. 103. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid., p. 103. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid. Emphasis added. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid., p. 138. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Jan Patočka, *Plato and Europe*, trans. Petr Lom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. “Showing is not then, as it may seem, merely an objective structure, because the objective, material structure is that which shows itself. Showing is also not mind and it is not the structure of mind, because that is also just a thing; it is also something that is and that eventually can also manifest itself…. showing itself is not any of these things that show themselves, whether it is a psychic or physical object … and yet it is still the showing of those things” (ibid., p. 22). [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Patočka, “Der Subjektivismus der Husserlschen und die Möglichkeit einer ‘asubjektiven’ Phänomenologie” in *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz*, ed. K. Nellen, J. Nemic, and I. Srubar (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991), p. 278. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. *Plato and Europe*, p. 164. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Patočka, “Epoché und Reduktion in den ‘Fünf Vorlesungen’ in *Vom Erscheinen als solchem: Texte aus dem Nachlaß*, eds. Helga Blaschek-Hahn and Karel Novotny (Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, 2000), p. 119. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Ibid., p. 126. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. Ibid., p. 153. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. “Nachwort,” p. 243. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Patočka, “La conception aristotélicienne du mouvement: signification philosophique et recherches historiques,” in *Le monde naturel et le mouvement de l’existence humaine*,  ed. and trans. Erika Abrams (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), p. 129. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Merleau-Ponty, *Papiers Phénoménologiques*, trans. Erika Abrams (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1995), p. 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid., p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. L’autonomie de l’apparaître, p. 33. See also Barbaras, *L’ouverture du monde, lecture de Jan Patočka* (Lonrai: l’Editions de la Transparence, 2011), p. 35, where he repeats this claim. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Barbaras, “La vie de la manifestation,” in *La vie lacunaire* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2011) p. 146. For a more complete presentation of Barbaras’ position see his *Le désir et la distance. Introduction à une phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999). This is also available in an English translation*:* Barbaras, *Desire and Distance: Introduction to a Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Paul Milan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005). [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Ibid., p. 149. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid., p. 155. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Ibid., p. 156. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid., p. 157. Regarding this “event of separation,” we go beyond the level of phenomenology to the “metaphysical” (ibid.). [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid., p. 156. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Chapter 1: Patočka and Artificial Intelligence

    David Chalmers, “Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness,” electronically published at <http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~philos/papers/chalmers.consciousness.html>, 1996, p. 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Amherst [New York: Prometheus Books 1995], p. 444. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. “Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness,” p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. See *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 445. Leibniz makes the same point in his analogy of the mill. “Perceptions,” he writes “... are inexplicable by mechanical causes, that is to say, by figures and motions. Supposing that there were a machine whose structure produced thought, sensation, and perception, we could conceive of it as increased in size with the same proportions until one was able to enter into its interior, as he would into a mill. Now, on going into it he would find only pieces working upon one another, but never would he find anything to explain perception” (Leibniz, “Monadology” in *Basic Writings*, trans. George Montgomery [La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962], p. 254). [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. “Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness,” p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. Donald Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), p. 406. Part of the difficulty in reading Dennett’s *Consciousness Explained* is that while denying qualia, he often seems to imply them. Thus, on the one hand he feels compelled to offer an explanation for why secondary qualities, for example, colors, turn out to be so ‘ineffable,’ so resistant to definition” (p. 382). The reason is that “[c]olors ... are the product of biological evolution, which has a tolerance for sloppy boundaries” (p. 381n. 2). On the other hand, the conclusion of this and other similar arguments is the dismissal of qualia as “mere complexes of mechanically accomplished dispositions to react” (p. 386). [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. Frank Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 32: 135, 134). [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, p. 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. See note 4 above. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1982), p. 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature,* Bk. I, Part I, sec. 7 (Minneola: New York, 2003), p. 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch*, p. 106. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. Ibid., p. 105. See also ibid., p. 120 and the comments of the “Nachwort,” p. 146. A later expression of the same position occurs in the assertion: “The absolute has its ground in itself; and, in its non-grounded being [grundlosen Sein], it has its absolute necessity as the single, ‘absolute substance’ [‘absolute Substanz’] … All essential necessities are moments of its fact [Factum], are modes of its functioning in relation to itself—its modes of understanding itself or being able to understand itself” (Husserl, Ms. E III 9, Nov. 5, 1931, in *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität, Dritter Teil: 1929-1935*, ed. Iso Kern, the Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, p. 386). [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, p. 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. *Plato and Europe*, pp.142-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B531, p. 597. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. For Kant this condition was the assumption that the appearing world was the world “in itself.” See ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. *Plato and Europe*, p. 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. “Showing is not then, as it may seem, merely an objective structure, because the objective, material structure is that *which shows itself*. Showing is also not mind and it is not the structure of mind, because that is also just a thing; it is also something that is and that eventually can also manifest itself…. showing itself is not any of these things that show themselves, whether it is a psychic or physical object … and yet it is still the showing of those things” (ibid., p. 22). [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. As Patočka writes: “… the world of phenomena, the world of phenomenal lawful order, is independent of the world of realities, of the world of actuality. It is never possible to deduce manifesting as such, as we said, either from objective or psychical structures. It cannot be done” (ibid., p. 31). [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. “Der Subjektivismus der Husserlschen und die Möglichkeit einer ‘asubjektiven’ Phänomenologie,” p. 278. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. See ibid., pp. 287-296. [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. *Plato and Europe*, pp. 146-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. How far this view is accurate is not an issue here. Husserl’s conception of subjectivity, discussed in ch. 2, involves an aspect of functionality that Patočka does not take account of. [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. Ibid., p. 164. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. “Epoché und Reduktion in den ‘Fünf Vorlesungen’”, p. 119. [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
111. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967), p. 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
112. “Epoché und Reduktion,” p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
113. *Plato and Europe*, p. 142-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
114. “Das Subjekt, dem das All sich zeigt, ist leer, während das erfüllte Subjekt weder Vorzug noch Vorrang vor anderen Weltrealitäten aufweist ...” (“Epoché und Reduktion …,” p. 123). [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
115. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
116. Ibid., p. 126. [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
117. Ibid., p. 132. [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
118. Ibid., p. 125, n. 174. [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
119. Ibid., p. 125. Phenomenology’s task, Patočka writes, is to investigate this determining lawfulness: “die Phänomenologie untersucht schauend die Grundstrukturen, aufgrund deren überhaupt Welt erscheinen kann und aufgrund deren etwas wie natürliche, d.h. nicht schauende, sondern hypothetisch erwägende, formal-leere und erst Voraussicht aufgrund der Erfahrung verbürgende Erkenntnis möglich ist. Das von der Phänomenologie Geleistete wäre zugleich eine neue Wissenschaft vom anschauungszugänglichen Apriori, ein Beitrag zur Metaphysik als Wissenschaft vom Aufbau der Weltstrukturen und eine Grundlage für die objektiven Wissenschaften” (p. 126). [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
120. The incompatibility is not just between causal and noncausal (or formal) lawfulness, but also, more basically, between appearing at such, with its lawfulness, and all causal processes. There are forms of formal lawfulness—such as those of Dedikind’s number theory—that have no connection to appearing as such. [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
121. Chapter 2: The Question of Naturalizing Phenomenology

     “Epoché und Reduktion …,” p. 132. [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
122. As Dan Zahavi writes in this regard, “Phenomenology also offers detailed analyses of various aspects of consciousness, including perception, imagination, embodiment, memory, self-experience, tempo­rality, etc. In offering such analyses, phenomenology addresses issues that are crucial for an understanding of the true complexity of consciousness and might even offer a conceptual framework for understanding the mind that is of consider­ably more value than some of the models currently in vogue in cognitive science” (“Naturalized Phenomenology,” in *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, eds. Shaun Gallagher and Daniel Schmicking [Dordrecht: Springer Verlag, 2010], p. 8). [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
123. “Nachwort,” p. 145. [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
124. Ibid., p. 146. [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
125. Husserl speaks of transcendental consciousness and transcendental subjectivity often interchangeably. Strictly speaking, however, transcendental consciousness is the consciousness of the transcendental subject. As such, it is the consciousness pertaining to transcendental subjectivity. [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
126. See “Epoché und Reduktion …,” pp. 123-6. [↑](#endnote-ref-126)
127. For a detailed discussion of this procedure, see David Marr, *Vision* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1982, pp. 25ff and Terence Horgan and John Tienson, *Connectionism and the Philosophy of Psychology* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 24-45. [↑](#endnote-ref-127)
128. In Husserl’s words, the retention of the original content “changes into retention of retention and does so continuously.” The result is that “a fixed continuum of retentions arises in such a way that each later point is a retention for every earlier point” (*Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893-1917),* ed. Rudolf Boehm, [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966] p. 29). [↑](#endnote-ref-128)
129. Expressed in LISP the function is:

     (Defun Retention (X Impression)

     (cond ((= X 0) Impression)

     (T (Retention (- X 1) (list Impression)))).

     For an explanation of this function, see James Mensch, *Postfoundational Phenomenology: Husserlian Reflections on Presence and Embodiment* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 108-09. [↑](#endnote-ref-129)
130. See ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-130)
131. As Roman Ingarten observes, the logical point of the epoché is to avoid the fallacy of the *petitio principii*, i.e., of assuming as part of the evidence for a thesis something that presupposes this thesis. To do so is to “beg a principle” and assume what one was trying to prove (*On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, trans. A. Hannibalsson [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975], p. 12). [↑](#endnote-ref-131)
132. *Cartesianische Meditationen*, p. 118. [↑](#endnote-ref-132)
133. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-133)
134. *Krisis*, p. 100. [↑](#endnote-ref-134)
135. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893-1917),* p. 100. [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
136. As Husserl expresses this, “One can say that the ego of the cogito is completely devoid of a material, specific essence, comparable, indeed, with another ego, but comparable only as an empty form that is ‘individualized’ through the stream: this, in the sense of its uniqueness” (Ms. E III 2, 1921, p. 18). I am grateful to the director of the Husserl Archives in Leuven, Belgium for giving me permission to quote from the unpublished manuscripts. [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
137. The extended quote is: “... ist nicht Bewußtsein Funktion, ... ? Was ist also notwendig? Es sind intentionale Erlebnisse, Erlebnisse als Funktionen, als relativ geschlossene Funktionen betrachten, sie betrachtend nachleben, neu durchleben, Akte vollziehen und sie wiederholend nachvolziehen und sich dabei befragen, was darin ‘geleistet’ wird, was für Sinne darin liegt und sich fortgestaltet, was man dabei tut und was dardurch für Sinnesleistung geleistet wird im Übergang zu den umfassenden Zusammenhängen in der Einheit des Lebens, wie Funktionen mit Funktionen sich zur Einheit einer Funktion synthetisch teleologisch einigen, usw.” (Ms. A VI 31, p. 19a). [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
138. Husserl makes this distinction with regard to the logical laws. For such laws to be applicable to us, we have to be able to keep propositional meanings stable. Children, before the “age of reason,” cannot do this. If we fail to distinguish the validity from the applicability of this law, we would have to call the law of noncontradiction *invalid* whenever, through age, illness or infirmity, we could not fulfill the condition of holding meanings stable. See *Logische Untersuchungen,* ed. cit., vol. 2, pp. 107-108. [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
139. Were the contents themselves to undergo a reduction, science would lose its observational (empirical) basis. [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
140. In Descartes’ words, “from the fact that I perceive different kinds of colors, odors, tastes, sounds, heat, hardness and so on, I very readily conclude that in the objects from which these various sense perceptions proceed there are some corresponding variations” (*Meditations on First Philosophy*, p. 77). [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
141. Chapter 3: The Temporality of Merleau-Ponty’s Intertwining

     “Epoché und Reduktion,” p. 125. Phenomenology’s task, Patočka writes, is to investigate this determining lawfulness: “die Phänomenologie untersucht schauend die Grundstrukturen, aufgrund deren überhaupt Welt erscheinen kann und aufgrund deren etwas wie natürliche, d.h. nicht schauende, sondern hypothetisch erwägende, formal-leere und erst Voraussicht aufgrund der Erfahrung verbürgende Erkenntnis möglich ist. Das von der Phänomenologie Geleistete wäre zugleich eine neue Wissenschaft vom anschauungszugänglichen Apriori, ein Beitrag zur Metaphysik als Wissenschaft vom Aufbau der Weltstrukturen und eine Grundlage für die objektiven Wissenschaften” (ibid., p. 126). [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
142. Ibid., p. 120. [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
143. Ibid. Given this, I cannot agree with Bruce Bégout when he describes Patočka’s asubjective phenomenology as a decapitation of phenomenology. Bégout writes, “C’est en ce sens-là que la ‘phénoménologie asubjective’ est d’une certaine manière une phénoménologie décapitée. Coupant la tête du sujet percevant et philosophant, qu’elle associe toujours sans nuance à l’épouvantail cartésien ou husserlien, elle ne prend jamais en considération les moyens philosophiques de son propre discours, ni de ses propres conditions d’effectuation, mais nous projette d’emblée dans l’origine sans nous expliquer comme elle fait, et sans pouvoir, chose plus grave, justifier à quel type de connaissance (perceptive, logique, conceptuelle) ses affirmations se réfèrent” (“La phénoménologie décapitée?” in *Perspectives et difficultés de la phénoménologie asubjective de Jan Patočka*, *Chiasmi International*, 2002, no. 4, p. 404). Asubjective phenomenology does not eliminate the subject, but sees the “function” that defines subjectivity in terms of appearing as such. [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
144. “Die Paradoxie der menschlichen Subjektivität: das Subjektsein für die Welt und zugleich Objektsein in der Welt” (*Krisis* p. 182). [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
145. “How can human subjectivity, which is a part of the world, constitute the whole world, i.e., constitute it as its intentional product …? The subjective part of the world swallows up, so to speak, the whole world including itself. What an absurdity!” (*Krisis*, p. 183). [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
146. These levels correspond to the types of chiasm that Douglas Low speaks of: “that between the body and the world (that is, between the perceiver and the perceived); that between the perceiver and language; and that between a word and its meaning.” Low describes the second and third in terms our gestures, writing: “I live the world and gesture in it and toward it, and others see what I live and couple with my gestures. In addition, the human body has the power to appropriate the gestures; witnessed in others and to use these gestures to express” (*Merleau-Ponty’s Last Vision, A Proposal for the Completion of The Visible and Invisible* [Evanston: Northwest University Press, 2000], p. 34). In our account, rather than speaking of gestures, we use Heidegger’s conception of pragmatic disclosure. Such disclosure first opens us up to the meanings that we linguistically share with others. For Barbaras’s summary of the levels of chiasm, see *De l’Être du phénomène, Sur l’ontologie de Merleau-Ponty* [Grenoble: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2001], p. 352. [↑](#endnote-ref-146)
147. “… notre chair tapisse et même enveloppe toutes les choses visibles et tangibles dont elle est pourtant entourée” (*Le visible et l’invisible* [Paris : Editions Gallimard, 1964], p. 164). [↑](#endnote-ref-147)
148. *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 205. [↑](#endnote-ref-148)
149. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-149)
150. This founding of language on our body projects avoids the objection that Pierre Cassou-Noguès raises regarding the unity of the “I.” There is an I who sees, an I who touches, and an I who speaks. While our flesh unites the first two such that “les champs sensibles, le visible et le tangible, se reportent l'un dans l'autre, de sorte qu'un visible détermine un tangible et qu'un tangible détermine un visible,” it is not clear how we can relate the seeing, touching subject to the subject that speaks. The question is that of “l'unité du sujet dans la parole et dans la perception” (“La définition du suject dans *Le visible et l’invisible*,” in Merleau-Ponty aux frontières de l’invisible, eds. Marie Cariou, Renaud Barbaras and Etienne Bimbenet [Milan: Mimesis, 2003], pp. 175-176). To attempt to relate them, according to Cassou-Noguès, is to assert that just as the seeing subject is tangible and can be touched, so “the seer [le voyant] is inscribed in the field of language and the speaking subject could describe the seer in his discourse.” (176). But this “reflexive discourse” would “correspond to a kind of consciousness” and return us the Cartesian-Husserlian paradigm of the self-conscious perceiver, the perceiver that can immanently grasp his operations—i.e., grasp them independently of the world. This difficulty is avoided when we ground language in our being-in-the-world. [↑](#endnote-ref-150)
151. Barbaras also sees the relation of language to the world “comme chiasme,” understood as “réversibilité.” For, him, however, what ground this relation is not our common projects. It is rather that the sensible and intelligible are two aspects of Being. In his words, “Ce qui vaut pour le sensible vaut pour l'expression, pour «l'intelligible». Il ne s'agit pas, en effet, de fonder celle-ci sur le sensible comme sur un sol solide, mais au contraire de saisir l'expression et le sen­sible comme deux «éléments» derniers, comme deux modes de présentation de l'Être, par lesquels sa profondeur demeure, dif­féremment, préservée” (*De l’Être du phénomène, Sur l’ontologie de Merleau-Ponty*, p. 348). The “final chiasm” of Merleau-Ponty involves the relation of these two aspects. As such, it also involves the relation of Being to beings in their intelligible and sensible aspects. In his words, “Telle est la signification du chiasme dernier : le monde sensible et le monde intelligible enveloppent l’Être, en ceci qu'il n'est pas autre qu'eux ; mais c'est là le moyen pour lui de préserver son absolue profondeur, de sorte que sen­sible et intelligible sont tout autant enveloppés en lui. En se distinguant de ce qui le manifeste, l’Être déchoierait au rang d'un étant où se perdrait son absoluité : il n'est donc lui-même qu'en demeurant compris dans ce qu'il contient. Il ne se dis­tingue pas de la phénoménalité et de l'expressivité qu'il nourrit; celles-ci se confondent plutôt avec sa profondeur, en tant qu'elle est profondeur retenue, non déployée” (ibid., p. 351). The Heideggerian tone of Barbaras’s remarks is apparent. [↑](#endnote-ref-151)
152. See Gail Soffer, “The Other as an alter ego: A Genetic Approach,” *Husserl Studies* 15: 151-166. [↑](#endnote-ref-152)
153. For the political implications of the position, see James Mensch, “Politics and Freedom,” *Idealistic Studies*, 36:1, 2006, 75-82. [↑](#endnote-ref-153)
154. As all these examples indicate, the same holds generally: being as such is established by the intertwining. As Merleau-Ponty writes, “what we seek is a dialectical definition of being that can be neither the being for itself nor the being in itself [neither subject nor object].” We “must rediscover the being that lies before the cleavage operated by reflection, about it, on its horizon, not outside of us and not in us, but there where the two movements cross, there where ‘there is’ something” (*The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 95). As Ted Toadvine stresses, the chiasm or intertwining is defined as the crossing between ourselves and nature: “To reconsider the being of nature is also to reconsider our own being, and the moment where the being of nature and of the human cross. It is this moment of crossing, the becoming-nature of humanity and the becoming-human of nature, to which Merleau-Ponty applies the term chiasm” (*Merleau-Ponty’s Philosophy of Nature* [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009], p. 109). What this signifies is that the reality exists at this crossing. Here, as Toadvine writes, “being is not primordially self-identical but an event of originary non-difference of which the divergence between touching and touched is the exemplar. The duplicity of the thing is the reverberation of the duplicity of the body and, ultimately, of being (ibid., 125). [↑](#endnote-ref-154)
155. This, of course, assumes the equivalence of objective and universal validity. According to Kant, the first implies the second, “for when a judgment agrees with an object, all judgments concerning the same object must agree with each other.” The second implies the first, for otherwise “there would be no reason why other judgments would necessarily have to agree with mine, if it were not the unity of the object to which they all refer and with which they all agree, and for that reason must agree amongst themselves” “Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik” in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 23 vols., (Berlin: Georg Reiner, 1955) vol. 4, p. 298. This means, as Eugen Fink writes, when we assume that others can experience the same objects, we implicitly define “... the objectivity of objects by the character—if one will—of intersubjectivity.” Their connection is such, he adds, “that one cannot establish between objectivity and intersubjectivity a relationship such that one or the other is prior; rather, objectivity and intersubjectivity are indeed co-original” (“Discussion—Comments by Eugen Fink on Alfred Schutz’s Essay, ‘The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl,’” in Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III*, ed. I. Schutz [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966], p. 86). [↑](#endnote-ref-155)
156. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 238, ed. cit., p. 291. [↑](#endnote-ref-156)
157. Ibid., B240, p. 293. [↑](#endnote-ref-157)
158. In his words, “It belongs to perception that something appears within it, but *interpretation* [*die* *Interpretation*] makes up what we term appearance—be it correct or not, anticipatory or overdrawn. The *house* appears to me through no other way but that I interpret [*interpretiere*] in a certain fashion actually experienced contents of sensation. I hear a *barrel* *organ—*the sensed tones I take [*deute*] as *barrel organ tones.* Even so, I perceive via interpretation [*interpretierend*] what mentally appears in me, the *penetrating joy, the heartfelt sorrow,* etc. They are termed “appearances” or, better, appearing contents precisely for the reason that they are contents of perceptive interpretation [*perzeptiver Interpretation*]” (*Logische Untersuchungen*, ed. cit., vol. 4, p. 762. [↑](#endnote-ref-158)
159. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 397. [↑](#endnote-ref-159)
160. This implies that those who have been born blind and who gain their sight in later life must go through this learning process if they are to perceive objects. The neurologist, Oliver Sacks, writes that these individuals face “great difficulties after surgery in the apprehension of space and distance—for months even years.” (“To See and Not See,” [*New Yorker*, May 10, 1993], p. 63). Reporting on one particular individual, Virgil, he writes: “He would pick up details incessantly—an angle, an edge, a color, a movement—but would not be able to synthesize them, to form a complex perception at a glance. This was one reason the cat, visually, was so puzzling: he would see a paw, the nose, the tail, and ear, but could not see all of them together, see the cat as a whole” (ibid, p. 64). “Moving objects,” he goes on to observe, “presented a special problem, for their appearance changed constantly. Even his dog, he told me, looked so different at different times that he wondered if it was the same dog” (ibid., p. 66). Frequently unable to perform the syntheses which would give him individual objects, his sense of space would also go. In Sacks words, “surfaces or objects would seem to loom, to be on top of him, when they were still quite a distance away” (ibid., p. 63). A rewritten version of this account appears in *An Anthropologist from Mars, Seven Paradoxical Tales* (New York: Vintage Press, 1996), pp. 244-296. [↑](#endnote-ref-160)
161. This account is taken from *Die Bernauer Manuskripte über das Zeitbewusstsein (1917/18)*, ed. R. Bernet and D. Lohmar (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), pp. 20ff. [↑](#endnote-ref-161)
162. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-162)
163. W. V. O. Quine is a good example of this tendency. See his “Epistemology Naturalized,” in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 69-90. [↑](#endnote-ref-163)
164. Neither, of course, can I hear myself being overheard, smell myself being smelt, etc. Only touch is characterized by the phenomenon of double sensation. [↑](#endnote-ref-164)
165. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, ed. W. Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), p. 148, n. 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-165)
166. Ibid., p. 150. [↑](#endnote-ref-166)
167. For a clinical account of this failure to recognize one’s body as one’s own, see Oliver Sacks, “The Man Who Fell Out of Bed,” in *The* *Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), pp. 55-65. [↑](#endnote-ref-167)
168. Describing their relation, Husserl writes: “the running off of the optical and the change of the kinesthetic [sensations] do not occur alongside each other, but rather proceed in the unity of an intentionality that goes from the optical datum to the kinesthetic and through the kinesthetic leads to the optical” (Ms. C 16 IV, p. 40b in *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934), Die C-Manuskripte*, ed. Dieter Lohmar [Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2006], p. 229). [↑](#endnote-ref-168)
169. See *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, pp. 150-1. [↑](#endnote-ref-169)
170. In Husserl’s words, “Obviously, the body is also to be seen just like any other thing, but it becomes a *body* (*Leib*) [that is mine] only by incorporating tactile sensations, pain sensations, etc.—in short, by the localization of the sensations as sensations” (*ibid.*, p. 151-2). [↑](#endnote-ref-170)
171. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-171)
172. What this sigifies is that we cannot, in our intertwining with the world, take ourselves as either active or passive with regard to it. As Pascal Dupond writes, speaking of the reversibility that allows us to be in the world as both subject and object—i.e., active and passive, “l'actif et le passif ne sont pas deux ter­mes *pour soi* opposés et *en soi* identiques … mais deux termes tels que chacun se renverse en son contraire en se reconnaissant comme même que l'autre … la passivité survient à l'activité ou l'activité à la passi­vité non pas comme un accident, mais comme l'envers de sa pro­pre nature. Passivité et activité sont inséparables dans la réversi­bilité” (*La Réflexion Charnelle, La Question de la subjectivité chez Merleau-Ponty* [Brussels: Éditions OUSIA, 2004], p. 110). [↑](#endnote-ref-172)
173. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 139. [↑](#endnote-ref-173)
174. Ibid., p. 140. Thus, Merleau-Ponty writes: “We must not think the flesh starting from substances, from body and spirit—for then it would be the union of contradictories …” (ibid., p. 147). [↑](#endnote-ref-174)
175. Ibid., p. 140. [↑](#endnote-ref-175)
176. Ibid., p. 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-176)
177. The radical, yet scientifically verifiable nature of this claim is apparent when we apply it to the worlds of the very large and the very small. Thus, in quantum mechanics the electron “is” where it is observed to be when it is observed. Its position is not just uncertain before its measurement. It has no definite position. The most we can calculate is its probability of being detected at some position. It “exists” at a location as a probability density. Similarly, in relativity theory, we cannot speak of absolute time or spatial extent. The length and observed clock time of an object is nothing in itself. It only has a value in terms of the object’s speed relative to an observer. That the observer is intertwined with the observed points to the fact that the structure of disclosure is also that of being. [↑](#endnote-ref-177)
178. “Barbaras draws the ontological consequences of this when he writes: “Il n'y a pas les consciences car, si elles étaient vraiment consciences, elles ne feraient plus qu'une seule et la solidité du monde s'évanouirait dans l'inconsistance d'un pur pensé ; il n'y a pas le monde ou l’Être car, coupé de sa phénoménalisation, il ne serait pas même un monde, il s'évanouirait dans le néant.” This means that “La réalité ultime réside bien dans cet «Ineinander», ce «tissu conjonctif» qui n'est «ni objet, ni sujet»” (*De l’Être du phénomène, Sur l’ontologie de Merleau-Ponty*, p. 291). [↑](#endnote-ref-178)
179. “L’Autonomie de l’apparaître,” p. 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-179)
180. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-180)
181. Ibid., p. 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-181)
182. Ibid., p. 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-182)
183. *Le visibile et l’invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), p. 304. [↑](#endnote-ref-183)
184. Chapter 4: The Intertwining as a Form of our Motion of Existence

     “Manifesting in itself, in that which makes it manifesting, is not reducible, cannot be converted into anything that manifests itself in manifesting. Manifesting is, in itself something completely original” (*Plato and Europe*, p. 24). [↑](#endnote-ref-184)
185. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-185)
186. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 130. [↑](#endnote-ref-186)
187. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-187)
188. Ibid., p. 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-188)
189. Ibid., p. 132. Thus, “there is no anteriority of *percipere* to *percipi*” or vice versa. Both perceiver and perceived exist as such in their intertwining (ibid., p. 123). [↑](#endnote-ref-189)
190. Jan Patočka, “‘Přirozený svět’ v meditaci svého autora po třiatřiceti letech,” in *Přirozený svět jako filosofický problém*, 2d aug. ed., Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1970. All citations from this work are from Erika Abrams’ as yet unpublished translation, “‘The Natural World’ Reconsidered Thirty-Three Years Later,” in *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem*. To assist the reader, I will reference these citations from the Czech original to the German translation of this work: “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” in *Die natürliche Welt als philosophisches Problem*, ed. Klaus Nellen und Jiří Němec (Vienna: Klett-Cotta, 1990), p. 235. [↑](#endnote-ref-190)
191. *Phenomenology of Perception*, ed. cit., p. 205. [↑](#endnote-ref-191)
192. “Zur Vorgeschichte der Wissenschaft von der Bewegung: Welt, Erde, Himmel und die Bewegung des menschlichen Lebens” in *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz*, Phänomenologische Schriften II, ed., K. Nellen, J. Němec, and I. Srubar, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 136. [↑](#endnote-ref-192)
193. Ibid, pp. 135-6. [↑](#endnote-ref-193)
194. *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 137. [↑](#endnote-ref-194)
195. Ibid., pp. 138-39. [↑](#endnote-ref-195)
196. Ibid., p. 138. [↑](#endnote-ref-196)
197. “La conception aristotélicienne du mouvement : signification philosophique et recherches historiques,” in *Le monde naturel et le mouvement de l’existence humaine*,  ed. and trans. Erika Abrams (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), p. 129. [↑](#endnote-ref-197)
198. Ibid., 128. [↑](#endnote-ref-198)
199. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe,” p. 243. [↑](#endnote-ref-199)
200. Ibid., p. 153*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-200)
201. *Papiers* *Phénoménologiques*, p. 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-201)
202. Ibid., p. 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-202)
203. Ibid., p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-203)
204. “Le mouvement est le fondement de toute manifestation. Or la manifestation pour Aristote n’est pas manifestation de quelque chose dont l’essence demeurerait en retrait. Au contraire, l’être tout entier entre dans le phénomène, car «être» ne signifie rien d’autre que déterminer un substrat; la détermination du substrat est mouvement et le mouvement réside précisément, comme nous venons de le voir, dans la manifestation. Le mouvement est ainsi ce qui fonde l’identité de l’être et de l’apparaître. L’être est être manifeste” (ibid.). [↑](#endnote-ref-204)
205. Aristote, ses devanciers, ses successeurs, trans. Erika Abrams (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2011), p. 7. This work is a translation of *Aristoteles, jeho předchůdci a dědicové. Studie z dějin filosofie od Aristotela k Hegelovi*, Prague, 1964. [↑](#endnote-ref-205)
206. “La conception aristotélicienne du mouvement,” p. 129. [↑](#endnote-ref-206)
207. “Pourtant, les moyens ontologiques d’Aristote sont une chose. Autre chose est son projet de pensée fondamental - comprendre l’être de l’étant fini comme faisant partie d’un mouvement global d’accroissement de l’être. Que ce projet de pensée soit inséparable de l’empirie grossière de départ ou des propres moyens conceptuels du penseur, cela n’a pas été prouvé. De nos jours, alors que la philosophie cherche derechef un fondement ontologique asubjectif, un Aristote dédogmatisé est, pour cette raison, actuel” (*Aristote, ses devanciers, ses successeurs*, p. 253). [↑](#endnote-ref-207)
208. “Le mouvement est le fondement de toute manifestation. Or la manifestation pour Aristote n’est pas manifestation de quelque chose dont l’essence demeurerait en retrait. Au contraire, l’être tout entier entre dans le phénomène, car «être» ne signifie rien d’autre que déterminer un substrat; la détermination du substrat est mouvement et le mouvement réside précisément, comme nous venons de le voir, dans la manifestation. Le mouvement est ainsi ce qui fonde l’identité de l’être et de l’apparaître. L’être est être manifeste” (ibid.). [↑](#endnote-ref-208)
209. “Since any kind of being may be distinguished as either potential or completely realized, the functioning of what is potential as potential, that is ‘being in movement’: thus, the functioning of the alterable as alterable is ‘qualitative alteration’; … the functioning of that which can be generated or destroyed is ‘generation’ or ‘destruction’; the functioning of what can change its place is ‘local motion’” (*Physics*, 201a10-15, trans. Richard Hope [Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1961], p. 42). [↑](#endnote-ref-209)
210. Ibid., 201a 16, Hope trans., p. 42. Here, the motion involves coming to be or generation. [↑](#endnote-ref-210)
211. *Metaphysics*, 1047a 30-33, in *Aristotle-Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Hope (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p 185. [↑](#endnote-ref-211)
212. “Le mouvement est donc ce qui rend l’étant ce qu’il est” (“Phénoménologie et ontologie du mouvement,” in *Papiers Phénoménologiques*, p. 31). [↑](#endnote-ref-212)
213. In Latin, it was translated as *quod quid erat esse*, which was shortened to *quiddity*. [↑](#endnote-ref-213)
214. “La conception aristotélicienne du mouvement,” p. 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-214)
215. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-215)
216. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-216)
217. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-217)
218. Hans Jonas, *Mortality and Morality--A Search for the Good after Auschwitz*, ed. Laurence Vogel, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996, p. 86. [↑](#endnote-ref-218)
219. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-219)
220. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-220)
221. L’Autonomie de l’apparaître,” p. 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-221)
222. Nachwort, p. 245. [↑](#endnote-ref-222)
223. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-223)
224. Ibid, p. 244. [↑](#endnote-ref-224)
225. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-225)
226. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-226)
227. What this signifies is, as Barbaras notes, the overcoming of the opposition between culture and nature. In his words, “En d'autres termes, c'est le principe d'une opposition origi­naire entre nature et culture qui se trouve ici dépassé .... Leur rapport est donc de chiasme : le monde naturel enveloppe toujours le monde culturel qui cependant l'exprime et l'enveloppe” (*De l’Être du phénomène, Sur l’ontologie de Merleau-Ponty*, p. 304). As he also puts this: “Il faut parler d'un chiasme entre les consciences expressives et le monde culturel, tout comme il y avait un chiasme entre les consciences sen­sibles et le monde perçu. En un sens, le monde culturel n'est pas autre que ce qu'elles formulent en commun : en ce qu'il ne procède pas de la spatialité objective, il appartient bien à «l'espace» des consciences” (ibid., p. 339). [↑](#endnote-ref-227)
228. L’Autonomie de l’apparaître,” p. 34 [↑](#endnote-ref-228)
229. Chapter 5: Aristotle’s Account of Space and Time

     “Le mouvement est le fondement de toute manifestation,” *Papiers* *Phénoménologiques*, p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-229)
230. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-230)
231. “L’espace et sa problématique,”in *Qu’est-ce que la phénoménologie?* trans. Erika Abrams (Paris: Jérôme Millon, 2002), p. 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-231)
232. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-232)
233. *De Anima*, III, 2, 426a 10, my translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-233)
234. Ibid., 425b 27, my translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-234)
235. *Physics*, 202b 7-8, my translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-235)
236. *Physics*, 201a 10-15, *Aristotle’s Physics*, p. 42. This text will be cited as *Physics*, Hope trans. [↑](#endnote-ref-236)
237. Ibid., 201a 29, Hope trans., p. 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-237)
238. Ibid., 201b 9, Hope trans., p. 43. [↑](#endnote-ref-238)
239. In Aristotle’s example of the teacher and the student, the action is not mutual. But anyone who has taught and has experienced how students can, as it were, shut one off experiences this mutuality. Similarly, the mere passive reading of a textbook is not sufficient to learn to material. One must actively engage with it. [↑](#endnote-ref-239)
240. Aristotle writes, “we must keep in mind that, but for local motion, there would be no place as a subject matter of investigation” (*Physics*, 211a 13, Hope trans., p. 64). [↑](#endnote-ref-240)
241. Ibid., 212a 20, Hope trans., p. 66. [↑](#endnote-ref-241)
242. Only if we ignore the issue of motion can we define “place” as the interface between the body and what immediately surrounds it. Once we do consider motion, then as Aristotle notes, this definition has to be modified. We have to say that “place is a receptacle which cannot be transported” (*Physics*, 212a 15, Hope trans., p. 65). Thus, the place of a motionless boat is given by the surrounding water, but once we consider the boat as moving down the river, “it is the whole river which, being motionless as a whole, functions as a place” (ibid., 212a 19, Hope trans., p. 66). As the example of the boat suggests, the place of a body need not be continuous with the body itself. [↑](#endnote-ref-242)
243. Ibid., 215a 11, Hope trans., p. 72. [↑](#endnote-ref-243)
244. Ibid., 218a 2, Hope trans., p. 77. [↑](#endnote-ref-244)
245. Ibid., 218a 7-8, Hope trans., p. 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-245)
246. Failure to grasp this point makes Aristotle’s derivation of time circular. If the present is part of time, then to use it to derive time from motion by noting the different presents (nows) associated with the different positions of the moving body is to derive time from itself. [↑](#endnote-ref-246)
247. *Physics*, 218b 28, Hope trans., p. 79. [↑](#endnote-ref-247)
248. Ibid., 218b 24, Hope trans., p. 79. [↑](#endnote-ref-248)
249. *Physics*, 219b 20-23, Hope trans., p. 81. [↑](#endnote-ref-249)
250. The same point can be made about the continuity of motion. As Aristotle writes in *On Generation and Corruption*, motion is not continuous “because that in which the motion occurs is continuous,” but rather “because that which is moved is continuous. For how can the quality be continuous except in virtue of the continuity of the thing to which it belongs?” (337a 27-29, my translation). [↑](#endnote-ref-250)
251. *Physics*, 219b 24, Hope trans., p. 81. [↑](#endnote-ref-251)
252. The analogy with bronze fails, of course, because even before it is actualized as a statue, it continues to appear. Bronze, as a material, is not pure potentiality. It has its own actuality and hence its own appearing as material. [↑](#endnote-ref-252)
253. See ibid., 223a 25-29, Hope trans., p. 87. [↑](#endnote-ref-253)
254. “Phénoménologie et ontologie du mouvement,” in *Papiers Phénoménologiques*, p. 38 [↑](#endnote-ref-254)
255. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch*, p. 117. [↑](#endnote-ref-255)
256. *Erste Philosophie (1923/24), Zweiter Teil, Theorie der phänomenologischen Reduktion*, ed. R. Boehm, p. 404. [↑](#endnote-ref-256)
257. Ms. A VI 31, p. 19a. [↑](#endnote-ref-257)
258. “So stoßen wir bald vor auf das nie herausgestellte, geschweige denn systematisch ausgelegte ‘Urphänomen’, in dem alles, was sonst Phänomen heißen mag und in welchem Sinn immer, seine Quelle hat. Es ist die stehend-strömende Selbstgegenwart bzw. das sich selbst strömend gegenwärtige absolute Ich in seinem stehend-strömenden Leben” (Ms. C 7, p. 38a, June 1932 in *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution [1929-1934], Die C-Manuskripte* ed. Dieter Lohmar [Dordrecht: Springer Verlag, 2006], p. 145). [↑](#endnote-ref-258)
259. *Meta*physics IX, viii, 1050a 8-10, my translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-259)
260. “Phénoménologie et ontologie du mouvement,” in *Papiers Phénoménologiques*, p. 32 [↑](#endnote-ref-260)
261. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-261)
262. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe,” p. 245.

     Chapter 6: Arousal and Desire [↑](#endnote-ref-262)
263. “Interesse an Sinnesdaten und Sinnesfeldern - vor der Objektivierung Sinnesdaten ...” (Ms. C 13, p. 11b, Feb. 1934 in *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934), Die C-Manuskripte*, p. 258). [↑](#endnote-ref-263)
264. *Man Facing Southeast*, Director, Eliseo Subielo, 1986. [↑](#endnote-ref-264)
265. The full quote in German is: “Das Inhaltliche ist das Ichfremde, das Gefühl ist schon ichlich. Das ‘Ansprechen’ des Inhaltes sei nicht Anruf zu etwas, sondern ein fühlendes Dabei-Sein des Ich und zwar nicht erst als ein Dabeisein durch Hinkommen und Anlangen. Das Ich ist nicht etwas für sich und das Ichfremde ein vom Ich Getrenntes und zwischen beiden ist kein Raum für ein Hinwenden. Sondern untrennbar ist Ich und sein Ichfremdes, bei jedem Inhalt im Inhaltszusammenhang und bei dem ganzen Zusammenhang ist das Ich fühlendes” (Ms. C 16, p. 68a, Sept. 1931; *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934): Die C-Manuskripte*, p. 351). [↑](#endnote-ref-265)
266. “Was von Seiten der hyletischen Data Affection auf das Ich heißt, heißt von Seiten des Ich Hintendieren, Hinstreben” (Ms. B III 9, pp. 70a-70b). [↑](#endnote-ref-266)
267. In Husserl’s words: “Wach wird das Ich durch Affektion von Nicht-Ichlichem, und wach wird es, weil das Nicht-Ichliche von Interesse ist, instinktiv anzieht etc., und das Ich reagiert kinästhetisch, als unmittelbare Reaktion” (Ms. B III 3, p. 5a). In translation: “The ego is awakened by affection from the non-egological because the non-egological is ‘of interest,’ it instinctively attracts, etc; and the ego reacts kinesthetically as an immediate reaction.” [↑](#endnote-ref-267)
268. “Alles Leben ist unaufhörliches Streben, alle Befriedigung ist Durchgangsbefriedigung” (Ms. A VI 26, p. 42a). [↑](#endnote-ref-268)
269. “Das Ich ist, was es ist, und wesensmäßig in einem Stil von ursprünglichen und erworbenen Bedürfnissen, in einem Begehrungs- und Befriedigungsstil von begehrend zu Genuß, von Genuß zu begehrend übergehend” (Ms. E III 10, p. 8a). As Husserl also puts this: “Leben ist Streben in mannigfaltigen Formen und Gehalten der Intention und Erfüllung; in der Erfüllung im weitesten Sinne Lust, in der Unerfülltheit Hintendieren auf Lust als rein begehrendes Streben oder als sich im erfüllenden Realisieren entspannendes Streben und sich erzielend im Prozeß der Realisierung der in sich entspannten Lebensform der Lust.” (Ms. A VI 26, p. 42b). In translation: “Life is striving in the manifold forms and contents of intention and fulfillment; in the broadest sense, [it is] pleasure in fulfillment; in the lack of fulfillment, [life is] a tending towards pleasure as a pure striving that desires or as a striving that slackens off in the realization that fulfills it, and that accomplishes its purposes in the process of the realization of the life-form of pleasure with its release of tension.” [↑](#endnote-ref-269)
270. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2006), p.121. All translations from Hegel are my own. The qualification, “for the most part” (*überhaupt*) is made since, for humans, self-consciousness is more than desire. The point of “Lordship and Bondage” is to show how this “more” comes about. [↑](#endnote-ref-270)
271. Ibid., pp. 121-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-271)
272. This response, as the remaining chapters of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* make apparent, is shaped by Hegel’s political concerns. A more detailed account of “Lordship and Bondage” is presented in Chapter 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-272)
273. It also underpins Hegel’s assertions with regard to consciousness and desire. RenaudBarbaras, who has a very different interpretation of Jonas, opposes desire to need. He writes: “Vivre consiste à se maintenir en vie; la vie est survie et son activité propre est alors celle du besoin, grâce auquel le vivant se reconstitue sans cesse. Notre démarche s'oppose radicalement à celle-ci. … Contrairement au besoin, la vie n'assimile pas des substances, contrairement à la connaissance, elle n' intuitionne pas des objets. Elle fait paraître la transcendance du monde en s'avançant en lui: voilà pourquoi nous l'avons caractérisée comme désir” (“La vie de la manifestation,” p. 147). Barbaras opposes desire and need to avoid “une perspective naturaliste” (ibid.). In my view, such a perspective is not at all inherent in the phenomenological conception of need. Need expresses a formal relationship (an existentiell) that characterizes life as such. [↑](#endnote-ref-273)
274. *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1967), p. 17. [↑](#endnote-ref-274)
275. Ibid., p. 192. [↑](#endnote-ref-275)
276. Ibid., p. 325. [↑](#endnote-ref-276)
277. Ibid., p. 191. [↑](#endnote-ref-277)
278. Ibid., p. 351. [↑](#endnote-ref-278)
279. Heidegger’s opposition to considering Dasein as an animal is apparent in his critique of the definition of man as the *animal rationale*—which, he reminds us, is the Latin translation of the Greek, ζωόν ‘εχόν λογόν, the “animal possessing logos. (Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” in *Pathmarks*, ed. and trans. William McNeill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 245-6). He asks: “are we really on the right tract towards the essence of the human being as long as we set him off as one living creature among others?” Even when we attempt to distinguish humanity through the specific difference, “rationality,” we still “abandon the human being to the essential realm of *animalitas*” (ibid., p. 246). [↑](#endnote-ref-279)
280. This also, of course, holds for the vibratory movements that we perceive as sound. In fact, the perception of sound always involves a spatial element. We hear directionally: Sounds are peceived as coming from in front of us or behind us. We alse take the diminishment of sounds, say those of someone speaking to us, a correlated to spatial departure. This spatial quality of sound is a consequence of our being embodied perceivers. As embodied, we experience the data of proprioception and kinesthesia. Both give us a sense of the spatiality of embodiment—a sense that arises even for the blind as they extend their arms and touch objects, measuirng them against their bodies. [↑](#endnote-ref-280)
281. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, p. 153. [↑](#endnote-ref-281)
282. There is here, as Maria Villela-Petit observes, a radical reformulation of our ability to transcend ourselves. Its ultimate foundation is not, as Heidegger claims, our temporality. It is our spatiality, i.e., our incarnate status. Refering to “la structure ekstatique du *Dasein* dans *Sein und Zeit*,” *she writes, “*Chez Merleau-Ponty, cependant, le «hors-soi» ne renvoie pas originairement à la seule temporalité comme chez Heidegger. Il renvoie tout aussi originairement à la spatialité inhérente à l'incarnation” (“Le soi incarné. Merleau-Ponty et la question du suject,” in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, ed. Emmanuel de Sainte Aubert [Paris: Hermann Éditeurs, 2008], p. 106). [↑](#endnote-ref-282)
283. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 134. As the register of the Husserl Archives in Leuven, Belgium shows, Merleau-Ponty read Husserl’s *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch.* [↑](#endnote-ref-283)
284. Kant’s refutation of idealism is based on the claim that without the categories, no transcendental unity of apperception, no unified self-consciousness is possible. Thus, the category of substance, where we refer our changing perceptions to some unchanging referent “is also the condition of the possibility of all synthetic unity of perceptions, that is, of experience” *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B229, pp. 283-284. This means that without the possibility of unifying our changing perceptions by referring them to some referent, we have no sense of our own existence as something that is unified, a perceiver that remains or endures over time. This unchanging referent is not our changing perceptions. It is that of which we are claiming to have such perceptions. Thus, it is external to us. If we distinguish it from our perceptions, then it reduces itself to the object = X. It is simply a referent that is demanded by the category of substance. Kant seems to identify this referent as matter. He writes, “we have nothing permanent on which, as intuition, we can base the concept of a substance, save only matter.” This, however, does not mean that we intuit this “matter.” As Kant continues: “Even this permanence is not obtained from outer experience, but is presupposed a priori as a necessary condition of determination of time” (ibid., B278, p. 323). In other words, the whole notion of the conservation of matter is simply a presupposition required for the “determination of inner sense in respect of our own existence through the existence of outer things” (ibid.). It is a consequence of the category of substance.

     Chapter 7: Temporality and the Alterity of Space [↑](#endnote-ref-284)
285. Aristotle, *Physics,* 218a, 5-10, 18-19, “Aristotle, ‘Time’ from the *Physics*,” in *Time*, ed. Jonathan Westphal and Carl Levenson (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993), p. 61. [↑](#endnote-ref-285)
286. “Die primäre Phänomen der ursprünglichen und eigentlichen Zeitlichkeit ist die Zukunft” (*Sein und Zeit*, p. 329). [↑](#endnote-ref-286)
287. “Book X of the *Confessions*,” in *Time*, ed. cit., p. 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-287)
288. As Rudolf Bernet writes, “The personal copy of the *Confessions* kept at the Archives shows that Husserl carefully read Book XI. This is not surprising since, in his phenomenological description of internal time-consciousness, he is so inspired by the observations and implicit presuppositions of Augustine’s analysis of time that one may candidly speak of Husserlian ‘marginalia’ to Augustine” (Rudolf Bernet, “Einleitung” in *Edmund Husserl, Texte zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893-1917), Text nach Husserliana, Band X*, ed. Rudolf Bernet [Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1985], xi). Husserl himself remarks: “Even today, anyone occupied with the problem of time must still study Chapters 14‑28 of Book XI of the *Confessiones* thoroughly. For, in these matters, our modern age, so proud of its knowledge, has failed to surpass or even to match the splendid achievement of this great thinker who grappled so earnestly with the problem of time” (*Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins,* ed. Rudolf Boehm, [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966], p. 3). [↑](#endnote-ref-288)
289. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins,* ed. Rudolf Boehm*,* p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-289)
290. ibid., p. 52. [↑](#endnote-ref-290)
291. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1035a 35, my translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-291)
292. “Um in reicherer Weise die strömende immanente Zeitigung und Zeit, die Urzeitigung, Urzeit konkret mit ihrem Inhalt zu erfassen, in ihrer Reinheit, bedarf es einer Reduktion – innerhalb der transzendentalen Reduktion. Das ist die Reduktion auf die strömende Ur-’Immanenz’ und darin sich konstituierenden Ureinheiten” (Ms. C 7, p. 14b, Jan. 7, 1932; *Zur Phänomenologishen Reduktion, Texte aus dem Nachlass (1926-1935)*, ed. Sebastian Luft. [Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers*,* 2002],p. 385). [↑](#endnote-ref-292)
293. “So besagt die radikale ‘Einschränkung’ auf die lebendige Gegenwart und der Wille, nur über sie auszusagen, soviel wie Vollzug der phänomenologischen Epoché hinsichtlich der Welt - und überhaupt aller irgend für uns im Voraus bestehenden (vorurteilenden) Geltungen” (Ms. C 3, p. 3b, summer 1930; *Zur Phänomenologishen Reduktion*, p. 186). See also Ms. C 7, p. 14a, Jan. 7, 1932; ibid*.*, p. 384. [↑](#endnote-ref-293)
294. See Aristotle, *Physics*, 219b 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-294)
295. See ibid., 223a, 28-29. [↑](#endnote-ref-295)
296. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, ed. Rudolf Boehm*,* p. 100. [↑](#endnote-ref-296)
297. Ibid., p. 34. In fact, it is an “*a priori* necessity that a corresponding perception, or a corresponding primal impression, precede the retention” (ibid., p. 33). [↑](#endnote-ref-297)
298. Gravitation, of course, curves space. Here, however, we are abstracting from the considerations that Einstein brings forward in his theory of general relativity. [↑](#endnote-ref-298)
299. See above, p. 40. [↑](#endnote-ref-299)
300. Steve Talbot discusses this research in his article, “Getting Over the Code Delusion,” *The New Atlantis, A Journal of Technology & Society,* Summer 2010, No. 3. It implies, he writes, that we cannot reduce the organic to the inorganic. In his words, “The central truth arising from genetic research today is that the hope of finding an adequate explanation of life in terms of inanimate, molecular-level machinery was misconceived” (p. 6). In fact, what such research shows, he concludes, is that: “It’s life all the way down” (p. 25). [↑](#endnote-ref-300)
301. In Poincaré’s words, “Each muscle gives rise to a special sensation which may be increased or diminished so that the aggregate of our muscular sensations will depend upon as many variables as we have muscles. From this point of view, motor space would have as many dimensions as we have muscles” (*Science and Hypothesis* [New York: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1905], p. 64). [↑](#endnote-ref-301)
302. Ibid., p. 42.

     Chapter 8: Embodied Temporalization and the Mind-Body Problem [↑](#endnote-ref-302)
303. Frank Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia,” pp. 135, 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-303)
304. As does a passage in Victor Klemperer’s memoire of living as a Jew in Nazi Germany. It concerns a pencil and paper that a guard gives him half-way through his week of imprisonment. Sentenced for violating the blackout regulations, he is plunged into despair. He feels surrounded by nothingness: “the nothingness around me because I am cut off from everything, the nothingness inside me because I think nothing, I feel nothing but emptiness” (Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness, A Diary of the Nazi Years* *1933-1941,* trans. Martin Chalmers [New York: Random House, 1998], p. 409). Receiving the pencil and paper, he recounts, “At that moment my life was just as much transformed as when the prison door slammed shut. Everything was lighter again, indeed had become almost light” (ibid., p. 412). As he also relates: “On my pencil I climb back to earth out of the hell of the last four days” (413). The action of writing saved him “from the obsessive search for thoughts.” Writing, he “felt this relief again and again” (414). [↑](#endnote-ref-304)
305. This is true for the modern age that relies on writing. In mnemonic cultures such as those of ancient Greece, the permanent conscious representation was held in memory. [↑](#endnote-ref-305)
306. David Chalmers, “Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness,” p. 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-306)
307. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, ed. Rudolf Boehm*,* p. 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-307)
308. Ibid., p. 100. [↑](#endnote-ref-308)
309. “Kritik der reinen Vernunft, 1. Aufl.” A102, in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4, p. 79. [↑](#endnote-ref-309)
310. Ibid. A99, 4:77. [↑](#endnote-ref-310)
311. For an account of Kant’s extensive influence on Husserl see Iso Kern, *Husserl und Kant* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964). [↑](#endnote-ref-311)
312. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins,* p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-312)
313. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-313)
314. Ibid., p. 26. [↑](#endnote-ref-314)
315. Ibid., p. 92. [↑](#endnote-ref-315)
316. Ibid., p. 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-316)
317. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-317)
318. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-318)
319. Ibid., p. 27. [↑](#endnote-ref-319)
320. For an extensive presentation of Husserl’s description of retention and protention see James Mensch, *Husserl’s Account of our Consciousness of Time* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010) pp. 59-113. [↑](#endnote-ref-320)
321. *Die Bernauer Manuskripte über das Zeitbewusstsein (1917/18)*, p. 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-321)
322. Ibid., p. 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-322)
323. Ibid., p. 44. [↑](#endnote-ref-323)
324. Ibid., pp. 47-48. [↑](#endnote-ref-324)
325. Ibid., p. 47. [↑](#endnote-ref-325)
326. The difference between these accounts should not conceal the similarity of their premise, which is that time is not self-sufficient, but rather is actualized in us by the presence (and motion) of the world. [↑](#endnote-ref-326)
327. *Krisis,* p. 371. [↑](#endnote-ref-327)
328. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-328)
329. “Facing up to the Problem of Consciousness,” p. 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-329)
330. Ibid., p. 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-330)
331. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 444. [↑](#endnote-ref-331)
332. Ibid., p. 445. [↑](#endnote-ref-332)
333. “Monadology” p. 254. [↑](#endnote-ref-333)
334. “Kritik der reinen Vernunft, 2. Aufl.” B 51, in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-334)
335. The theoretical physicist, Lee Smolin, notes that this exclusion of time from the world also occurs when we record motion as positions at different times. In his words, “the process of recording a motion, which takes place in time, results in a record, which is frozen in time—a record that can be represented by a curve in the graph, which is also frozen in time” (*Time Reborn, From the Crisis in Physics to the Future of the Univer*se [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013], p. 34. The result is what he calls “the spatialization of time” (p. 35). This occurs when we “conflate the [mathematical] representation with the reality [of motion] and identify the graph of the records of the motion with the motion itself” (p. 34). From a Kantian perspective, which limits external perception to spatial relations, this conflation is inevitable once we adopt the attitude that abstracts from inner perception. [↑](#endnote-ref-335)
336. See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Ch. 14, pp. 122-3. Hume makes the same observation. See *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, Book I, Part II, section iii, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-336)
337. Aristotle, *Physics,* 218a, 5-10, 18-19. See “Aristotle, ‘Time’ from the *Physics*” in *Time*, p. 61. [↑](#endnote-ref-337)
338. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, p. 75. [↑](#endnote-ref-338)
339. Ibid., p. 116. [↑](#endnote-ref-339)
340. See ibid, p. 117. For an extended account of these two intentionalities, see *Husserl’s Account of our Consciousness of Time*, pp. 125-135. [↑](#endnote-ref-340)
341. Chapter 9: Self-Touch and the Perception of the Other

     *Cartesianische Meditationen*, p. 144. [↑](#endnote-ref-341)
342. Lanei Rodemeyer, *Intersubjective Temporality: It’s About Time* (Dordrecht: Springer Verlag, 2006), p. 163. [↑](#endnote-ref-342)
343. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, p. 158. [↑](#endnote-ref-343)
344. *De Anima* trans. W.S. Hett (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 412 a 28. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Greek of this text are my own. [↑](#endnote-ref-344)
345. Ibid., 412b 19 p. 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-345)
346. Ibid., 413a, p. 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-346)
347. Ibid., 413b 5, p. 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-347)
348. Ibid., 435a 13, p. 199. [↑](#endnote-ref-348)
349. Ibid., 435a 20, p. 201. [↑](#endnote-ref-349)
350. Ibid., 435b 5-6, p. 201; here I follow Hett’s translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-350)
351. See 434b 18-21. [↑](#endnote-ref-351)
352. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, p. 154. [↑](#endnote-ref-352)
353. Ibid., p. 153. [↑](#endnote-ref-353)
354. Ibid., p. 155. [↑](#endnote-ref-354)
355. Ibid., p. 156. [↑](#endnote-ref-355)
356. Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*, p. 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-356)
357. In Husserl’s words, “Obviously, the body is also to be seen just like any other thing, but it becomes a *body* (*Leib*) [that is mine] only by incorporating tactile sensations, pain sensations, etc.—in short, by the localization of the sensations as sensations” (*Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, pp. 158-9). [↑](#endnote-ref-357)
358. Ibid., p. 159. [↑](#endnote-ref-358)
359. Here it is to be noted that for Husserl, the pure ego, i.e., the ego as the “pole” of our various acts, is itself constituted. In Husserl’s words, “Der Ichpol ist konstituiert in der Ichsynthese, die alle aktuellen und potentiellen Akte beständig und ohne jede identifizierende Aktivität zur einheitlichen Deckung bringt, alle, die in einer lebendigen Gegenwart als primordiale auftreten können und auftreten, auch schon die Aktphasen in den kontinuierlich sich zeitigenden Akten” (“Beilaage XXIV,” *Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925*, 2nd ed. by Walter Biemel [Martinus Nihoff, The Hague, 1968], p. 481). This constitution includes that of the ego as a lasting and remaining ontical unity. As Husserl later writes, “Das Ich selbst ist konstituiert als zeitliche Einheit. Es ist die schon als stehendes und bleibendes Ich erworbene (und im Forterwerben immerfort weiter erworbene) ontische Einheit: identisches Ich meines zeitlichen Lebens als dasselbe seiende Ich all meiner Vergangenheiten, meines innerhalb der kontinuierlichen Einheitsform der Zeit verlaufenen und jetzt noch fortströmenden Lebens, das fortströmend in sich und für sich immer neue Vergangenheit als verharrende konstituiert” (Ms. C 17, Sept. 20, 1931 in *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität: Dritter Teil*, p. 348. Cf. also the second volume of the *Ideas*, where Husserl asserts that the ego is “constituted as unity” in relation to the stream of experiences, which itself “is constituted as a unity in unending, immanent time” (*Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Zweites Buch*, p. 112). What this doctrine signifies is that we cannot think of the “pure ego” apart from the constitution of the sense that we have that we move our body directly, i.e., without any intermediaries. The body’s presence is itself a part of the constitutive process resulting in the ego. [↑](#endnote-ref-359)
360. *Cartesianische Meditationen*, p. 142. [↑](#endnote-ref-360)
361. Ibid., p. 146. [↑](#endnote-ref-361)
362. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-362)
363. Ibid., p. 147 [↑](#endnote-ref-363)
364. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-364)
365. In this sense, intersubjective recognition is part of a much wider process of analogizing apperception. In normal life, whenever data are paired through a recognition of their given similarity, any additional sense that is attributed to the first is transferred associatively to the second. This process goes on more or less continuously. In Husserl’s words, “Each everyday experience involves an analogizing transfer of an originally established sense to a new case, with its anticipative interpretation of the object as possessing a similar sense” (*Cartesianische Meditationen*, p. 141). [↑](#endnote-ref-365)
366. As he puts this, “my primordial ego, through appresentative apperception, constitutes for itself another ego which, according to its own nature, never demands or allows fulfillment through direct perception” (ibid., p. 148). It does not, for the appresented perception involves a there *actually different* from my here. [↑](#endnote-ref-366)
367. Dan Zahavi comes to the same conclusion. He writes “… my bodily self-exploration permits me to confront *my own* exteriority … . It is exactly the unique subject-object status of the body, the remarkable interplay between ipseity and alterity characterizing body-awareness that provides me with the means of recognizing other embodied subjects” (“Beyond Empathy,” in *Between Ourselves, Second-Person Issues in the Study of Consciousness*, ed. Evan Thomson, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 8, nos. 5-7, 2001, p. 161. [↑](#endnote-ref-367)
368. *Cartesianische Meditationen*, p. 174. [↑](#endnote-ref-368)
369. “The Other as an alter ego: A Genetic Approach,” p. 160. [↑](#endnote-ref-369)
370. Ibid., p. 163. [↑](#endnote-ref-370)
371. “Stretching out,” “straining,” and “tension” are the three basic meanings listed by Lewis and Short for *intentio*. From there, its meaning comes to be “a directing of the mind towards anything.” See *A Latin Dictionary*, eds. C. Lewis and C. Short (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 976. [↑](#endnote-ref-371)
372. See e.g., [Katherine Harmon](http://www.scientificamerican.com/author.cfm?id=1822), “How Important Is Physical Contact with Your Infant?” *Scientific American,* April 30, 2010—Available online at http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=infant-touch. [↑](#endnote-ref-372)
373. The classic cases of this occur in poorly run orphanages. Lou Agosta writes, “after the fall of the Soviet Union, Romanian orphanages were understaffed, bare bones institutions that rigged up mechanical, assembly line-like ways of delivering bottled milk to infants, like feeders in a bird cage. The results were the production of symptoms developmentally similar to neurological damage, autism, and infantile psychosis (M. A. Diego and N. A. Jones 2007:161; Spitz 1946). Many of these symptoms were able to be reversed by adoptive, caring, nurturing parents, but, depending on the duration of the neglect, not all” (“Empathy and Sympathy in Ethics,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/emp-symp>). The references he cites are M. A. Diego and N. A. Jones, “Neonatal antecedents for empathy*,” Empathy in Mental Illness*, T. Farrow and P. Woodruff, eds. (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 161 and R. A. Spitz, “Hospitalism: a Follow-up Report,” *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1946, 2: 113-117. [↑](#endnote-ref-373)
374. Chapter 10: The Intertwining of Generations

     The film’s English release title was “The Class.” [↑](#endnote-ref-374)
375. My translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-375)
376. I am here speaking of human rationality understood as the rationality of embodied individuals in what Husserl called the “lifeworld.” Scientific rationality abstracts from such individuals in its attempt to provide us with objective assertions. It enacts on a practical level Descartes’ famous separation of the mind from the body when it asserts that the features that distinguish us as embodied must not enter into our scientific observations. Stripped of the features that specify our embodiment, be they those of our race, gender, birth or personal history, scientific observers become mutually replaceable. The result is that each investigator becomes an ideal witness whose observations are repeatable by every other properly trained observer. This abstraction from our embodied individuality is matched in the hard sciences by a corresponding abstraction from the qualitative particularities of nature as presented by our five senses. To the universal, disembodied scientific observer corresponds a nature that is the same for everyone, a nature that is grasped in terms of its universal, mathematically formulable laws. Objectivity, here, in the sense of being true for everyone, has, as is obvious, a restricted sense. [↑](#endnote-ref-376)
377. Chapter 11: Public Space and Embodiment

     Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), cited throughout as OR. [↑](#endnote-ref-377)
378. As an example of such a study, see James Mensch, “Public Space,” *Continental Philosophy Review*, 40:1, March, 2007, 31-47. [↑](#endnote-ref-378)
379. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1958, cited throughout as HC. [↑](#endnote-ref-379)
380. In Arendt’s words, “The blessing of life as a whole, inherent in labor, can never be found in work … The blessing of labor is that effort and gratification follow each other as closely as producing and consuming the means of substance, so that happiness is a concomitant of the process itself, just as pleasure is the concomitant of the functioning of a healthy body’ (HC, 108). [↑](#endnote-ref-380)
381. In her words: “Nothing, to be sure, is more private than the bodily functions of the life process … labor … is still close enough to the life process to make plausible the argument for the privacy of appropriation” (HC, 111). This means: “The body becomes indeed the quintessence of all property because it is the only thing one could not share even if one wanted to” (112). [↑](#endnote-ref-381)
382. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-382)
383. *Heretical Essays,* p. 142. [↑](#endnote-ref-383)
384. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-384)
385. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094b 5, trans. Martin, Ostwald (New York: Macmillian/Library of Liberal Arts, 1962), p. 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-385)
386. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” p. 243. [↑](#endnote-ref-386)
387. According to Arendt, “the industrial revolution has replaced all workmanship with labor, and the result has been that the things of the modern world have become labor products whose natural fate is to be consumed, instead of work products which are there to be used” (HC, 124). [↑](#endnote-ref-387)
388. It is not to our purpose to discuss the divisions arising from our ethical and religious differences, differences that can only be understood in terms of the already given world. For a discussion of these, see Mensch, “A Theory of Human Rights,” February 12, 2010, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/james-r-mensch/theory-of-human-rights> [↑](#endnote-ref-388)
389. Chapter 12: Patočka’s Transformation of Phenomenology

     “Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparation,” p. 127. [↑](#endnote-ref-389)
390. *Plato and Europe*, p. 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-390)
391. Ibid., p. 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-391)
392. “Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparation,” p. 127. [↑](#endnote-ref-392)
393. See Erazim Kohák, *Jan Patočka, Philosophy and Selective Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-393)
394. Patočka, “The Obligation to Resist Injustice,” in *Jan Patočka, Philosophy and Selective Writings*, ed. cit., p. 343. [↑](#endnote-ref-394)
395. Patočka “What We Can and Cannot Expect from Charta 77,” in *Jan Patočka, Philosophy and Selective Writings*, ed. cit., p. 346. [↑](#endnote-ref-395)
396. See “The Obligation to Resist Injustice,” p. 341. [↑](#endnote-ref-396)
397. Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1139b 8, p. 149. [↑](#endnote-ref-397)
398. Ibid., 1139b 20, p. 150. [↑](#endnote-ref-398)
399. Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch*, p. 63. [↑](#endnote-ref-399)
400. Ibid., p. 65. [↑](#endnote-ref-400)
401. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-401)
402. For Husserl, the restriction of the epoché, thus, leaves us with “‘pure experiences,’ ‘pure consciousness’ with its pure ‘correlates of consciousness’ and, on the other hand, its ‘pure ego’” (ibid., p. 67). [↑](#endnote-ref-402)
403. Ibid., p. 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-403)
404. Ibid., p. 64. [↑](#endnote-ref-404)
405. Jan Patočka, “Die Gefahren der Technizierung in der Wissenschaft bei Edmund Husserl und das Wesen der Technik als Gefahr bei Martin Heidegger,” in *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz*, *Phänomenologishe Schriften II,* ed. Klaus Nellen, Jiří Němec, and Ilja Srubar, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991, p. 346. [↑](#endnote-ref-405)
406. Patočka, “Die Gefahren der Technizierung,” p. 347. [↑](#endnote-ref-406)
407. Jan Patočka,, “Negative Platonism,” in *Jan Patočka, Philosophy and Selective Writings*, ed. Erazim Kohák (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 203. [↑](#endnote-ref-407)
408. Patočka, “Die Gefahren der Technizierung,” p. 347. [↑](#endnote-ref-408)
409. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-409)
410. Patočka, “Die Gefahren der Technizierung,” p. 346. [↑](#endnote-ref-410)
411. *Sein und Zeit,* p. 284. [↑](#endnote-ref-411)
412. Ibid., p. 406. [↑](#endnote-ref-412)
413. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology,* trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 276. [↑](#endnote-ref-413)
414. See ibid., pp. 164-65. [↑](#endnote-ref-414)
415. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit, p.* 70. [↑](#endnote-ref-415)
416. Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 261. [↑](#endnote-ref-416)
417. For a list of the philosophical expressions of such standards, see Martin Heidegger “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics,” in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 66. Heidegger’s “Vom Wesen der Wahrheit,” in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann) 1967), pp. 79-80 describes the notion of an area of relations or *Bezugsbereich*. [↑](#endnote-ref-417)
418. Patočka, *Die Gefahren der Technizierung*, p. 350. [↑](#endnote-ref-418)
419. Patočka, “Von der Epoché als Ausschaltung,” in *Vom Erscheinung als solchem*, *Texte aus dem Nachlaß*, eds. Helga Blaschek-Hahn and Karel Novotny. Freiburg/München: Verlag Karl Alber, p. 190. [↑](#endnote-ref-419)
420. See Jan Patočka, “Phänomenologie als Lehre vom Erscheinen als solchem,” in *Vom Erscheinen als solchem*, pp. 159, 161. [↑](#endnote-ref-420)
421. Patočka, “Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparation,” p. 122. [↑](#endnote-ref-421)
422. Ibid., p. 120. [↑](#endnote-ref-422)
423. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-423)
424. Ibid., p 124. [↑](#endnote-ref-424)
425. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-425)
426. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-426)
427. Ibid., p. 126. [↑](#endnote-ref-427)
428. Jan Patočka, “Leib, Möglichkeiten, Welt, Erscheinungsfeld,” in *Vom Erscheinen als solchem*, p. 89. [↑](#endnote-ref-428)
429. Ibid. As Patočka makes clear, this mediation is also historical. It involves what he calls our “nonorganic body,” the body, whose disclosive “I can” is enlarged through such technical means as the microscope, etc. This affects the history of appearing. On this point see, James Mensch*, Patočka's Asubjective Phenomenology: Towards a New Concept of Human Rights* (Würzberg: Könighausen & Neumann, 2016), pp. 121-122. [↑](#endnote-ref-429)
430. Patočka takes this field as “the authentic discovery of the *Logical Investigations.*” See, “Der Subjektivismus der Husserlschen und die Möglichkeit einer ‘asubjektiven’ Phänomenologie” in *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz*, p. 274. [↑](#endnote-ref-430)
431. As Huserl writes in this regard, “The individual—relative to consciousness—is nothing for itself; perception of a thing is its perception in a *perceptual field*. And just as the individual thing has a sense in perception only through an open horizon of ‘possible perceptions,’ ... so once again the thing has a horizon: an “external horizon” in relation to the “internal”; it has this precisely as a thing of a *field of things*; and this finally points to the totality, “the world as a perceptual world” (*Krisis* p. 165). [↑](#endnote-ref-431)
432. Patočka, “Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparation,” p. 127. What we confront here is, in fact, a “world-structure,” one embracing both things and subjects. In Patočka's words, “Und da dies Erscheinen von der Präsenz der Dinge und der Welt im Original nicht abzutrennen ist, ziehen wir es vor, das Erscheinen als eine Dinge und Subjekt umspannende und umfassende Struktur aufzufassen. Die einzige Dinge und Subjekte umfassende Struktur ist aber die Welt selbst, und deshalb möchten wir sie als Weltstruktur aufgefaßt wissen” (“Epoché und Reduktion,” p. 123). [↑](#endnote-ref-432)
433. “L’homme est requis dans l’apparition : il est le destinataire de l’apparition” (Patočka, “Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparation,” p. 122. [↑](#endnote-ref-433)
434. Patočka, *Plato and Europe*, p. 27. Such care for Patočka is Patočka's transformation of the ancient “care for the soul.” [↑](#endnote-ref-434)
435. Jan Patočka, “The Spiritual Person and the Intellectual,” in *Living in Problematicity*, trans. and ed. Eric Manton (Prague: Edice Oikúmené, 2007), p. 66. [↑](#endnote-ref-435)
436. Jan Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohák, ed. James Dodd (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1996), p. 49. [↑](#endnote-ref-436)
437. Patočka, “The Spiritual Person and the Intellectual,” p. 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-437)
438. Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, p. 142. [↑](#endnote-ref-438)
439. The extended quote, here, is: “the Idea of Man is essentially continuously the same, only the historical situation in which it is realized changes, only the main front against which the Idea resists is always different. The Idea is human freedom; the Idea of Man is the idea of human freedom” (Jan Patočka, “Ideology and Life in the Idea,” in *Living in Problematicity*, p. 47). The text is from 1947, but Patočka never changed this fundamental position. [↑](#endnote-ref-439)
440. In the words of the Charter 77, “The idea of human rights is nothing other than the conviction that even states, even society as a whole, are subject to the sovereignty of moral sentiment: that they recognize something unconditional that is higher than they are, something that is binding even on them, sacred, inviolable.” (“The Obligation to Resist Injustice,” p. 341). This unconditionality comes from the absolute priority of the moral standpoint. For the Charter, “the point of morality is to assure, not the functioning of society, but the humanity of humans. Humans do not invent morality arbitrarily to suit their needs, wishes, inclinations, and aspirations. Quite the contrary, it is morality that defines what being human means.” (ibid.). [↑](#endnote-ref-440)
441. Chapter 13: Human Rights and the Motion of Existence

     “The Obligation to Resist Injustice,” p. 343. [↑](#endnote-ref-441)
442. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-442)
443. *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohák, ed. James Dodd (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1996), p. 82. [↑](#endnote-ref-443)
444. Jan Patočka, “Europa und nach-Europa. Die nach europäische Epoche und ihre geistigen Probleme” in *Ketzerische Essais zur Philosophie der Geschichte und ergänzende Schriften*, ed. Klaus Nellen und Jiří Němec (Vienna: Klett-Cotta, 1988), pp. 267-68. [↑](#endnote-ref-444)
445. Plato expresses the same point in his dialogue, *Gorgias*, 479 b-c. He writes, for example, that those who seek to avoid the justice that “cures” the soul “do not realize that to be chained to an unhealthy body is a far less miserable fate than the companionship of an unhealthy, rotten, wicked, impure soul” (*Plato, Gorgias*, trans. Walter Hamilton [London: Penguin Books, 1960], p. 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-445)
446. “Europa und nach-Europa,” p. 268. [↑](#endnote-ref-446)
447. *Heretical Essays*, p. 83 [↑](#endnote-ref-447)
448. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-448)
449. Ibid., p. 82. [↑](#endnote-ref-449)
450. “Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparation,” p. 127. [↑](#endnote-ref-450)
451. “Epoché und Reduktion …,” pp. 119-20. [↑](#endnote-ref-451)
452. Ibid., p. 126. [↑](#endnote-ref-452)
453. Ibid. p. 126. [↑](#endnote-ref-453)
454. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-454)
455. *Aristote, ses devanciers, ses successeurs*, p. 253. [↑](#endnote-ref-455)
456. Patočka, *Body, Community, Language, World*, trans. Erazim Kohák, ed. James Dodd (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-456)
457. See Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412 a 28. [↑](#endnote-ref-457)
458. Ibid., 412b 19, trans. W.S. Hett, p. 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-458)
459. Ibid., 413a, p. 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-459)
460. *Metaphysics*, 1047a 30-33, in *Aristotle-Metaphysics*, p 185. [↑](#endnote-ref-460)
461. “La conception aristotélicienne du mouvement,” p. 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-461)
462. *De Anima*, 402a 8, my translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-462)
463. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” pp. 242-43. Another motive for this position is, of course, Patočka’s attempt to transform Heidegger’s account of care. [↑](#endnote-ref-463)
464. “The emphasis—laid now on the past (on what we passively accept as given), now on the present (which we actively modify), and now on the future (in regard to which the modifying takes place)—is what gives each of the three movements its distinct sense” (ibid., p. 246). [↑](#endnote-ref-464)
465. *Body, Community, Language, W*orld, p. 148. [↑](#endnote-ref-465)
466. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” p. 246. [↑](#endnote-ref-466)
467. Ibid., pp. 248-49. [↑](#endnote-ref-467)
468. There is a strong parallel here with the analysis of Levinas. See, for example, *Totality and Infinity, An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 141. [↑](#endnote-ref-468)
469. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” p. 249. Patočka also calls it “the movement of our instinctive life.” This is the life we share with animals. He writes, describing it: “Le mouvement premier et fondamental, celui sans lequel les autres ne seraient pas possibles, est ainsi quelque chose de relativement autonome. C’est le mouvement de la vie instinctive — mouvement initialement dépourvu de rapport au mode d’être, qui n’englobe ce rapport que secondairement et existe aussi, comme tel, de manière indépendante. L’être humain est lui aussi, comme l’animal, un être instinctivement sentant et affectif, qui s’ouvre au monde dans la passivité et la consonance et répond dans un mouvement réflexe aux stimulations qu’il en reçoit. Dans notre mouvement d’ancrage ou d’enracinement, qui du début à la fin figure la basse fondamentale dans la polyphonie de la vie, il y a également une consonance avec l’aspect global du monde, une impulsion vers l’attachement, la chaleur vitale, la fusion, le bonheur, loin de l’étranger, du froid et de l’aversif, impulsion qui se réalise dans les mouvements accomplis par notre corps et organisés en modalités du comportement, en rythmes tant de l’activité répétée que de l’action qui est tout à la fois résolution” (“Leçons sur la corporéité,” *Papiers Phénoménologiques*, p. 108). [↑](#endnote-ref-469)
470. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” p. 250. [↑](#endnote-ref-470)
471. *Body, Community, Language, World*, p. 148. [↑](#endnote-ref-471)
472. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” p. 256. [↑](#endnote-ref-472)
473. Ibid., p. 256. [↑](#endnote-ref-473)
474. See ibid., p. 251. [↑](#endnote-ref-474)
475. Ibid., p. 257. [↑](#endnote-ref-475)
476. Ibid., p. 259. [↑](#endnote-ref-476)
477. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-477)
478. Ibid., p. 249. [↑](#endnote-ref-478)
479. Ibid., p. 250. [↑](#endnote-ref-479)
480. *Body, Community, Language, World*, p. 158. [↑](#endnote-ref-480)
481. “Nachwort des Autors zur tschechischen Neuausgabe (1970),” p. 255. [↑](#endnote-ref-481)
482. Ibid., pp. 255-56. [↑](#endnote-ref-482)
483. Ibid., p. 261. [↑](#endnote-ref-483)
484. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-484)
485. Ibid., p. 246. [↑](#endnote-ref-485)
486. Ibid., p. 261. [↑](#endnote-ref-486)
487. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-487)
488. *Body, Community, Language, World*, p. 159. [↑](#endnote-ref-488)
489. “La conception aristotélicienne du mouvement,” p. 131. This account of essence is Patočka’s reworking of Aristotle’s static concept in terms of motion. [↑](#endnote-ref-489)
490. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-490)
491. “The Spiritual Person and the Intellectual,” p. 60. The text of this and the following “Discussion” is from a transcript of a tape recording of a private seminar given on April 11, 1975. It was initially published in *samizdat*. [↑](#endnote-ref-491)
492. “Discussion,” in *Living in Problematicity*, trans. and ed. Eric Manton (Prague: Edice Oikúmené, 2007), p. 66. [↑](#endnote-ref-492)
493. *Plato and Europe*, p. 27. [↑](#endnote-ref-493)
494. All three motions are intertwined to form the multi-level motion of our existence. Drawing an analogy of the motion of our existence to that of a polyphonic melody, Patočka writes: “De même qu’une composition polyphonique est un mouvement unitaire, composé derechef de mouvements dont chacun possède son sens autonome, modifié de manière spécifique par le sens des autres mouvements — de même le mouvement de notre existence se déroule lui aussi dans plusieurs zones de mouvement relativement autonomes dont aucune ne peut être prise en vue exclusivement pour soi, mais qui se modifient et exercent une influence les unes sur les autres” (“Leçons sur la corporéité,” *Papiers Phénomenńologiques*, p. 108). [↑](#endnote-ref-494)
495. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Art 25. The text of this 1949 document can be found at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>. The Declaration also references the negative, value neutral rights to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, association. See Articles 18-20. [↑](#endnote-ref-495)
496. Ibid., Art 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-496)
497. “The Obligation to Resist Injustice,” p. 341. [↑](#endnote-ref-497)
498. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-498)
499. The two are connected. In America, the collapse of the “American Dream” of earning more than your parents did was an important factor in the 2016 presidential election. See David Leonhardt, “The American Dream, Quantified at Last,” *New York Times*, Dec. 8, 2016 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/08/opinion/the-american-dream-quantified-at-last.html?src=me>. [↑](#endnote-ref-499)
500. Chapter 14: Violence and Blindness: The Case of Uchuraccay

     *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, 9 vols., was released on August 28, 2003. All citations in this paper are taken from volume V, Chapter 2, section, 2.4, “El Caso Uchuraccay,” which is cited throughout as TRC. All translations from the Spanish are my own. Section 2.4 can be accessed at: http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ifinal/pdf/TOMO%20V/SECCION%20TERCERA-Los%20Escenarios%20de%20la%20violencia%20(continuacion)/2.%20HISTORIAS%20REPRESENTATIVAS%20DE%20LA%20VIOLENCIA/2.4%20UCHURACCAY.pdf. [↑](#endnote-ref-500)
501. The photographs were part of an exhibition commemorating the release of The Truth and Reconciliation Report. According to my guide, the natives removed journalists’ eyes so that their spirits could not come back to haunt them. [↑](#endnote-ref-501)
502. For an excellent brief account of this period, see the Library of Congress Country Report on Peru at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/petoc.html#pe0005. [↑](#endnote-ref-502)
503. To make this concrete, we can think of the founding covenant as a national constitution. The promise is to abide by its provisions, i.e., to embody in our political conduct the rules that it specifies. Authority rests in reaffirming this promise, that is, in our consulting the agreement when questions arise and guiding ourselves accordingly. In most nation states, the constitutional courts embody this authority. In their sessions, they preserve the authority of the original constituting assemblies. They decide whether a law and the action it authorizes agree with the constitution. Doing so, they reaffirm the state’s commitment to it and hence generate its identity over time. [↑](#endnote-ref-503)
504. See Jacques Lacan, “Function and Field of Speech and Language,” in *Écrits, A Selection* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977), p. 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-504)
505. *Peru: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission – A First Step Towards a Country without Injustice* (AMR 46/003/2004: August 25, 2004), pp. 30-31. Available at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR46/003/2004/en/4beb9e93-d5e6-11dd-bb24-1fb85fe8fa05/amr460032004en.pdf>. The 1992 Library of Congress Country Report on Peru remarks, “The word *indio*, as applied to native highland people of Quechua and Aymara origin, carries strong negative meanings and stereotypes among non-native Peruvians…. The ingrained attitudes and stereotypes held by the *mistikuna* (the Quechua term for mestizo people) toward the *runakuna* (native people--the Quechua term for themselves) in most highland towns have led to a variety of discriminatory behaviors, from mocking references to ‘brute’ or ‘savage’ to obliging native Americans to step aside, sit in the back of vehicles, and in general humble themselves in the presence of persons of higher status.… The regions and departments with the largest populations of native peoples are construed to be the most backward, being the poorest, least educated, and less developed.” All of this manifests “the perpetuation of colonial values with respect to autochthonous peoples.” See the entry for “Indigenous Peoples” at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/petoc.html#pe0005. [↑](#endnote-ref-505)
506. Chapter 15: Selfhood and Violence

     James Dodd, *Violence and Phenomenology* (New York: Rutledge, 2009), p. 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-506)
507. Ibid., p. 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-507)
508. For a fuller account of how violence is destructive of sense, see James Mensch, “Violence and Embodiment,” *Symposium, Journal of the Canadian Society for Continental Thought*, 12:1, Spring 2008, pp. 4-15. [↑](#endnote-ref-508)
509. For the three moments of *standing out*, *standing open*, and *standing* *in*, see Martin Heidegger, “Vom Wesen der Wahrheit,” in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967), pp. 80-83, 92-93. [↑](#endnote-ref-509)
510. *Heretical Essays*, p. 49. [↑](#endnote-ref-510)
511. Ibid. p. 5. As Patočka expresses this, “The constant shaking of the naïve sense of meaningfulness is itself a new mode of meaning, a discovery of its continuity with the mysteriousness of being and what-is as a whole” (ibid., p. 61). [↑](#endnote-ref-511)
512. *Violence and Phenomenology*, p. 138. [↑](#endnote-ref-512)
513. *Violence and Phenomenology*, p. 139. [↑](#endnote-ref-513)
514. Violence, in other words, cuts short this question. In Dodd’s words, “violence is a kind of collapse of the question (where I stand, my honor, what I believe, what ‘needs to be done’ to protect my interests, and so on) into a decisive moment in which the subject seeks to extricate itself from the process of mediations that inevitably comes with the determination of selfhood” (ibid., pp. 138-9). [↑](#endnote-ref-514)
515. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 130. [↑](#endnote-ref-515)
516. Ibid., p. 121. [↑](#endnote-ref-516)
517. Ibid., pp. 121-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-517)
518. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-518)
519. Ibid., p. 124. [↑](#endnote-ref-519)
520. Ibid., p. 125. [↑](#endnote-ref-520)
521. Charles Darwin, “The Origin of the Species,” in *The Origin of the Species and the Descent of Man* (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 65. [↑](#endnote-ref-521)
522. Ibid., p. 63. [↑](#endnote-ref-522)
523. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 128. [↑](#endnote-ref-523)
524. Ibid., p. 127. [↑](#endnote-ref-524)
525. Ibid., p. 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-525)
526. Ibid., p. 130. [↑](#endnote-ref-526)
527. Ibid., p. 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-527)
528. Ibid., p. 132. [↑](#endnote-ref-528)
529. Ibid., p. 126. [↑](#endnote-ref-529)
530. Ibid., p. 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-530)
531. Ibid., p. 133. [↑](#endnote-ref-531)
532. See Peg Birmingham, “Review of James’s Dodd’s *Violence and Phenomenology*,” *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=23589>. [↑](#endnote-ref-532)
533. Plato, “Apology,” 28b, in *Plato, Five Dialogues, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1990), p. 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-533)
534. Ibid., 29d, p. 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-534)
535. “Crito,” 48a-d, in *Plato, Five Dialogues*, pp. 50-1. [↑](#endnote-ref-535)
536. Mathew, 4:1-10. [↑](#endnote-ref-536)
537. Matthew, 27:40-41, *The New English Bible*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 41. [↑](#endnote-ref-537)
538. The translation is that of The New International Version of the Bible, which is available online at http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2&version=NIV. [↑](#endnote-ref-538)
539. Matthew 25: 33-40. My translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-539)
540. Matthew 27:46. My translation. [↑](#endnote-ref-540)
541. In the case of the Buddha, this self-affirmation limits itself to the nothingness at our core. What exceeds this is taken as illusion. The self-worth claimed by this self-affirmation thus points in a different direction than that of a Socrates or a Christ. For Christ, such nothingness is understood in worldly terms. In emptying himself, he affirms himself as having a worth that transcends the world. The same holds for Socrates with the vision of the afterlife he puts forward in the *Phaedo*. The self of this afterlife is, in some sense, identified with the ideas (eidei) and, hence, with philosophy. [↑](#endnote-ref-541)
542. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Paul O’Prey (London: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 108. [↑](#endnote-ref-542)
543. Ibid., p. 86. [↑](#endnote-ref-543)
544. Ibid., p. 87. [↑](#endnote-ref-544)
545. See ibid., pp. 86, 96-97. [↑](#endnote-ref-545)
546. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 279. [↑](#endnote-ref-546)
547. *Phänomenologie des Geistes,* p. 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-547)
548. “Apology,” 34c, p. 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-548)
549. Ibid., 30d, p. 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-549)
550. Ibid., 35c, p. 39. [↑](#endnote-ref-550)
551. *Violence and Phenomenology*, p. 135*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-551)
552. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-552)
553. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-553)
554. *Heart of Darkness*, p. 99. [↑](#endnote-ref-554)
555. *The Human Condition*, pp. 198-99. [↑](#endnote-ref-555)
556. On Revolution, p. 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-556)
557. Chapter 16: Senseless Violence, Liminality and Intertwining

     See <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/26/us/james-holmes-trial-notebook/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-557)
558. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\_Holmes\_(mass\_murderer). [↑](#endnote-ref-558)
559. The same holds for the pedestrians killed on Bastille Day 2016 in Nice, France and the Christmas shoppers in Berlin in December of the same year. [↑](#endnote-ref-559)
560. This lack of common frame applies even to the actions where the instrumental character is less tenuous—such as the 2015 attacks on tourists in Tunisia. The supposed purpose of these attacks was the destruction of the tourist trade, the ultimate object being the creation of an Islamic caliphate that would somehow arise from the economic and social chaos caused by terrorist actions. If we assume this, then the perpetrators stand outside the economic and social order of Tunisia. Willing its destruction, they have as little in common with it as they do with the beach-goers they murdered. [↑](#endnote-ref-560)
561. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-561)
562. For the exclusion caused by bodily disability, see Mensch, “Violence and Embodiment,” pp. 4-15. Such exclusion is tied to the loss of the “I can,” that is, the loss of the various bodily abilities by which we “line” the world, thereby making sense of it. [↑](#endnote-ref-562)
563. Bertrand Ogilvie, “Violence et représentation: La production de l’homme jetable,” in Ogilvie, *L’homme jetable, Essai sur ‘exterminsim et la violence estrême* (Paris: Éditions Amsterdam 2012), p. 126. Cited in Étienne Balibar text, *Violence and Civility, On the Limits of Political Philosophy*, trans. G.M. Goshgarian (New York, Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 54. It is precisely to prevent this that many societies, most notably, the United Kingdom, make considerable efforts to extend employment possibilities to the disabled. The tacit violence that Ogilvie and Balibar see at work in the exclusion of the unemployed naturally does not refer to the failures of such efforts. [↑](#endnote-ref-563)
564. “Violence et representation,” p. 127. Cited in *Violence and Civility,* p. 54. [↑](#endnote-ref-564)
565. *Violence and Civility,* p. 54. [↑](#endnote-ref-565)
566. An example of this insufficiency is the San Bernardino shooter, Syed Rizwan Farook, who lacked any apparent economic motives. He had worked as a [food inspector](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_safety) for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health for five years before the shooting and became a permanent employee on February 8, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-566)
567. *Violence and Civility,* p. 54. [↑](#endnote-ref-567)
568. Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), vol. 1, p. 326. [↑](#endnote-ref-568)
569. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 127. [↑](#endnote-ref-569)
570. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 76. [↑](#endnote-ref-570)
571. In Kant’s words, “I then become aware at once that I can indeed will to lie, but I can by no means will a universal law of lying; for by such a law there could properly be no promises at all since … others … would not believe my profession” (ibid., p. 71). [↑](#endnote-ref-571)
572. Soren Kierkegaard*, Fear and Trembling*, trans. Alastair Hannay (London: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 85. [↑](#endnote-ref-572)
573. Ibid., p. 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-573)
574. Ibid., p. 98. [↑](#endnote-ref-574)
575. Ibid., p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-575)
576. To demand an intelligible account of his actions, as Kierkegaard writes, is to involve oneself in “the most absurd contradiction, namely that the single individual who stands precisely outside the universal be brought in under universal categories when he is expressly to act as the single individual outside the universal” (ibid., p. 99). Here, it should be noted that Kierkegaard penned *Fear and Trembling* under the name of Johannes de Silentio. How far the position represented here is Kierkegaard’s own is a matter of dispute. Certainly, orthodox Christianity advocates, in the name of love of neighbor, more than simply a one-to-one relation to God. [↑](#endnote-ref-576)
577. Slavoj Žižek commenting on Dostoyevsky’s claim, “If God does not exist, then everything is permitted,” remarks: “He couldn’t have been more wrong: the lesson of today’s terrorism is that if there *is* a God, then everything, even blowing up hundreds of innocent bystanders, is permitted to those who claim to act directly on behalf of God, as the instruments of his will, since, clearly, a direct link to God justifies our violation of any ‘merely’ human’ constraints and considerations. … In the absence of any ethical standards external to your belief in and love for God, the danger is always lurking that you will use your love of God as the legitimization of the most horrible deeds” (*Violence* (London: Profile Books, 2009, p. 116). [↑](#endnote-ref-577)
578. For Edmund Husserl, intersubjective recognition is based on this agreement of behavior: “The experienced animate organism of the other continues to manifest itself as actually an animate organism solely through its continually harmonious behavior ... The organism is experienced as a pseudo-organism precisely when it does not agree in its behavior” (*Cartesianische Meditationen*, p. 144). “Harmonious,” here, means harmonious with my own behavior. The Other’s actions must “agree” with this in order to establish the similarity necessary for the transfer. As Husserl expresses this, the Other’s ego is “determined as thus governing his body (and, in a familiar way, constantly confirms this) only insofar as the whole stylistic form of the sensible processes that are primordially perceivable by me must correspond to what is known in type from my own governing my body” (*ibid*. p. 148). This is also the case with the “higher psychical occurrences”—such as verbal behavior. They have “their style of synthetic connections and their form of occurring which can be understandable to me through their associative basis in my own style of life, a style empirically familiar to me in its average typicality” (*ibid*., p. 149). All translations from the German in this article are my own. [↑](#endnote-ref-578)
579. Husserl, Ms. E III 1, p. 7. The same point holds with regard to different societies. Societies are “not egotistical” — i.e., *not intolerant* —Husserl writes, if they can affirm one another’s “particular goals and particular accomplishments” (Ms. A V 24, p. 4). I am grateful to the Husserl Archives in Leuven, Belgium for permission to quote from the *Nachlass* of Husserl. [↑](#endnote-ref-579)
580. See Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 1876. [↑](#endnote-ref-580)
581. Tolerance so defined does have its limits. Understood as a positive ideal, its goal is the “fullness” (or filling out) of the possibilities of being human through the maximum of cultural diversity consistent with social harmony. By “social harmony,” I mean that such possibilities must be compossible, that is, that their mutual actualization must not be impossible. The limits of tolerance involve those actions that do undermine such actualization. A few common examples will make this clear. Tolerance, understood negatively as a prohibition—ultimately, as a prohibition of intolerance—forbids lying and theft. The first, to the point that it is collectively actualized, undermines the possibility of speech to communicate verifiable information. Thus, lying undermines those human possibilities, such as civil society, which presuppose this possibility. Theft, when collectively actualized, has a similar effect on the possibility of possession and, hence, on the possibilities, such as commerce, springing from this. Insofar as lying and theft cut off such possibilities, they result in a narrowing of human potentialities and are actually acts of intolerance. For a more complete account of this, see the chapter, “Sustaining the Other: Tolerance as a Positive Ideal” in Mensch, *Embodiments: From the Body to the Body Politic* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009). [↑](#endnote-ref-581)
582. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 223. [↑](#endnote-ref-582)
583. As Žižek notes, “The problem is not cultural difference … but the opposite fact that the fundamentalists are already like us, that, secretly, they have already internalized our standards and measure themselves by them” (*Violence*, p. 730). This identity, however, is not acknowledged by them. [↑](#endnote-ref-583)
584. These are an analogue to the norms of the workplace, from which the unemployed have been excluded. [↑](#endnote-ref-584)
585. See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits, A Selection* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977), pp. 50, 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-585)
586. It is this radical division that is necessary for altruistic violence. In Jonathan Sacks’ words, “Suicide bombings, the targeting of civilians and the murder of school children are not normal. Violence may be possible whenever there is an Us and a Them. But radical violence emerges only when we see the Us as all-good and the Them as all-evil, heralding a war between the children of light and the forces of darkness. That is when altruistic evil is born” (*Not in God’s Name, Confronting Religious Violence* [New York: Schocken Books, 2015], p. 48. [↑](#endnote-ref-586)
587. It is at this point that what Balibar calls “ultraobjective” and “ultrasubjective violence” meet. The former results from the economic “reduction of human beings to the status of useless and, therefore, superfluous or redundant objects.” The latter arises from “an obsession with identity or introducing this obsession ‘into the real’” (*Violence and Civility*, p. 74). [↑](#endnote-ref-587)
588. Ibid.,p. 69. [↑](#endnote-ref-588)
589. Ibid., p. 84. [↑](#endnote-ref-589)
590. The exact number has been a matter of dispute. See, e.g., http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/jul/18/congo.andrewosborn. [↑](#endnote-ref-590)
591. Modern ‘western’ states by and large trace their origins to Locke rather than Hobbes. This does not mean, however, that there are not traces of the Hobbesian tradition present in them. Derrida, referring to Pascal’s statement that “justice without force is impotent,” argues that the force of law is prior to the law. As such, it cannot be limited by the law (Jacques Derrida, “Force of law, The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority,’” trans. Mary Quaintance, *Cardozo Law Review* 11 (1989-1990), p. 943). An example of what Derrida is pointing to was provided when the Canadian prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, invoked the War Powers Act in 1971. Although the Act, which suspended civil liberties, was of short duration, it did exhibit, in the military presence in Montreal and the ensuing multiple arrests, the unlimited, extra-legal character of such force. [↑](#endnote-ref-591)
592. Thomas Hobbes, *Hobbes’s Leviathan: Reprinted from the Edition of 1651* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 96. The spelling has been modernized in all quotes from Hobbes. [↑](#endnote-ref-592)
593. p. 131. The founding thus occurs when the sovereign “has the use of so much power and strength conferred on him that by [the] terror thereof he is enabled to form the wills of them all to peace at home and mutual aid against their enemies abroad” (ibid., p. 132). [↑](#endnote-ref-593)
594. Ibid., p. 98. [↑](#endnote-ref-594)
595. Ibid, p. 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-595)
596. GiorgioAgamben, *Homo Sacer, Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-596)
597. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, p. 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-597)
598. Ibid., p. 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-598)
599. “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception” (ibid., p. 5). [↑](#endnote-ref-599)
600. “What characterizes an exception is principally unlimited authority, which means the suspension of the entire existing order. In such a situation it is clear that the state remains, whereas law recedes” (ibid., p. 12). [↑](#endnote-ref-600)
601. Ibid., p. 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-601)
602. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-602)
603. Ibid., p. 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-603)
604. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-604)
605. Ibid., p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-605)
606. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 117. Here as elsewhere, I have altered Kaufman’s translation by substituting “thou” for “You.” [↑](#endnote-ref-606)
607. Ibid., p. 118. [↑](#endnote-ref-607)
608. Denis de Rougement, *Journal aus Deutschland, 1935-1936*, trans. Tobias Scheffel (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001), p. 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-608)
609. Ibid., p. 61. George Bataille also comments on this. He writes, “the religious value of the chief is really the fundamental (if not formal) value of fascism” (“The Psychological Structure of Fascism,” trans. Carl R. Lovitt, New German Critique 16 (Winter, 1979), p. 81. [↑](#endnote-ref-609)
610. *Journal aus Deutschland, 1935-1936*, pp. 73-4. [↑](#endnote-ref-610)
611. They form part of what he calls the “heterogeneous” elements of society. Its opposite, “[h]omogeneous society is productive society, namely useful society” (“The Psychological Structure of Fascism,” p. 65). [↑](#endnote-ref-611)
612. In Bataille’s words, the fascist leader “derives his profound meaning from the fact of having shared the dejected and impoverished life of the proletariat” (ibid., p. 82). [↑](#endnote-ref-612)
613. See ibid., p. 68. [↑](#endnote-ref-613)
614. Ibid., p. 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-614)
615. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-615)
616. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-616)
617. Muhammad, *The Koran,* Surah 2, v. 256 in *The Koran*, trans. J. M. Rodwell (Dutton: New York, 1978), p. 367. [↑](#endnote-ref-617)
618. Thus, rather than seeking justice, the Qur’an advises, “let them rather pass over and pardon the offence. Don’t you desire that God should forgive you? And God is gracious and merciful!” (Muhammad, [Surah 24](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Nur), v. 22, in *The Koran*, p. 445). [↑](#endnote-ref-618)
619. Both Judaism and Christianity, for example, ask that we love God and our neighbor as ourselves. What this signifies for Christianity is given by Jesus’ response to the lawyer’s question: “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke, 10:29). Jesus replies with the story of the good Samaritan—the man who bound up the wounds and looked after a person who was neither his co-religionist nor a member of his race. The neighbor, in this account, is simply a fellow human being. For the *Koran*, this follows from the fact that we are all children of Adam and Eve. In the words of the *Koran*: “O mankind! Allah created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you despise each other),” (Muhammad, Surah 49, v. 13). An Islamic commentator writes: “we are all made the same way. We have the same basic makeup. We all need, want, and feel. We all frown, cry, smile, laugh, hate, love … We worship differently, talk differently, dress differently, judge differently, and are taught differently, but we are all still human.” For this text and commentary see: <http://hubpages.com/religion-philosophy/What-Islam-says-about-loving-thy-neighbor>. [↑](#endnote-ref-619)
620. *Totality and Infinity,* p. 21. [↑](#endnote-ref-620)
621. Chapter 17: Violence and Existence-- Schmitt’s Concept of the Political

     Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges (1910–1976)*, ed. H. Heidegger (Gesamtausgabe, 16) (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 2000), p. 156. A translation of this appears in Emmanuel Faye, Heidegger, *The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-1935* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 155. Faye includes the original German in his endnotes on p. 373. [↑](#endnote-ref-621)
622. *Violence and Phenomenology*, p. 135*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-622)
623. Ibid., p. 46. [↑](#endnote-ref-623)
624. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-624)
625. Ibid*.*, p. 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-625)
626. Ibid*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-626)
627. Ibid., p. 26. [↑](#endnote-ref-627)
628. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-628)
629. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-629)
630. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-630)
631. Ibid., p. 27. [↑](#endnote-ref-631)
632. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-632)
633. As Karel Löwith puts this conclusion: “What Schmitt defends is a politics of sovereign decision, but one in which content is merely a product of the accidental *occasio* of the political situation which happens to prevail at the moment” (*Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, ed. Richard Wolin, trans. Gary Steiner [New York: Columbia University Press, 1995], p. 144). [↑](#endnote-ref-633)
634. Ibid., p. 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-634)
635. *The Presocratic Philosophers*, trans. and ed., G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 195. [↑](#endnote-ref-635)
636. See *Sein und Zeit*, pp. 218-220. [↑](#endnote-ref-636)
637. Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit/1. Die Grundfrage der Philosophie (Summer semester 1933), 2. Vom Wesen der Wahrheit (Winter semester 1933/34),* ed. H. Tietjen (*Gesamtausgabe*, 36/37), (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 2001), p. 90. A translation of this appears in Emmanuel Faye, op. cit., p. 169, the German original is on p. 376. [↑](#endnote-ref-637)
638. Ibid., 36/37, 90-91. A translations of this appears in Emmanuel Faye, op. cit., p. 168, the German original is on p. 376. [↑](#endnote-ref-638)
639. *The Concept of the Political,* p. 53. [↑](#endnote-ref-639)
640. Ibid., p. 46. [↑](#endnote-ref-640)
641. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-641)
642. Ibid., pp. 48-49. [↑](#endnote-ref-642)
643. Ibid., p. 49. [↑](#endnote-ref-643)
644. *Sein und Zeit*, p. 282. [↑](#endnote-ref-644)
645. Ibid., p. 325. [↑](#endnote-ref-645)
646. In Heidegger’s words: “‘The Dasein is occupied with its own being’ means more precisely: it is occupied with its ability to be. As existent, the Dasein is free for specific possibilities of its own self. It is its own most peculiar able-to-be” (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 276). [↑](#endnote-ref-646)
647. *Sein und Zeit*, p. 236. [↑](#endnote-ref-647)
648. Ibid., p. 233. [↑](#endnote-ref-648)
649. Through death, then, “Dasein is essentially disclosed to itself, and disclosed, indeed, as ahead-of-itself” (ibid., p. 294). [↑](#endnote-ref-649)
650. As Heidegger puts this: “In so far as it ‘is,’ death is essentially, in every case, mine,” (ibid., p. 240). [↑](#endnote-ref-650)
651. Ibid., p. 239. [↑](#endnote-ref-651)
652. See ibid., p. 263. [↑](#endnote-ref-652)
653. “… die Nichtigkeit, die das Dasein in seinem Grunde bestimmt …” (ibid., p. 308). [↑](#endnote-ref-653)
654. In Heidegger’s words, “the nothingness meant here belongs to Dasein’s being-free for its existential possibilities” (ibid., p. 285). [↑](#endnote-ref-654)
655. *Sein und Zeit*, p. 299. [↑](#endnote-ref-655)
656. Ibid., p. 298. [↑](#endnote-ref-656)
657. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-657)
658. Ibid., p. 285. [↑](#endnote-ref-658)
659. Ibid., p. 135. [↑](#endnote-ref-659)
660. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-660)
661. Ibid., p. 250. [↑](#endnote-ref-661)
662. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-662)
663. *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, pp. 149-50. [↑](#endnote-ref-663)
664. Ibid., pp. 160-161. [↑](#endnote-ref-664)
665. The quotation is from *The Concept of the Political,* p. 53. Strauss’s remark is from “Notes on *The Concept of the Political*,” in *The Concept of the Political,* p. 115. [↑](#endnote-ref-665)
666. “Notes on *The Concept of the Political*, p. 116. [↑](#endnote-ref-666)
667. See ibid., p. 118. [↑](#endnote-ref-667)
668. In Schmitt’s words, “The enemy is solely the public enemy, because everything that has a relationship to such a collectivity of men, particularly to a whole nation, becomes public by virtue of such a relationship” (*The Concept of the Political*, p. 28). [↑](#endnote-ref-668)
669. Ibid., p. 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-669)
670. Ibid., p. 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-670)
671. Ibid., p. 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-671)
672. Ibid., p. 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-672)
673. Ibid., p. 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-673)
674. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-674)
675. Ibid., p. 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-675)
676. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-676)
677. *Political Theology*, p. 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-677)
678. With this, we have Kierkegaard’s definition of “that happy passion which we call faith, the object of which is the paradox.” According to Kierkegaard, “the paradox specifically unites the contradictories” by “the eternalizing of the historical and the historicizing of the eternal” (“Philosophical Fragments” in *Philosophical Fragments and Johannes Climacus*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985], p. 61. [↑](#endnote-ref-678)
679. Ibid., p. 93. [↑](#endnote-ref-679)
680. See ibid, p. 37, where Kierkegaard claims that “the ultimate paradox of thought [is] to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think.” [↑](#endnote-ref-680)
681. Certain passages in Heidegger’s 1933 *Rectoratsrede* indicate that he embraces the view that Hitler’s ascension to power was, in fact, such a decisive moment. He writes, for example, “*are* we, the body of teachers and students of this ‘high’ school, truly and jointly rooted in the essence of the German university? Does this essence have genuine strength to stamp our being *(Dasein)?* No doubt, only if we most deeply *will* this essence” (“The Self-Assertion of the German University and The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts,” trans. Karsten Harries, *Review of Metaphysics*, 38:3 [1985:Mar.], p. 470). “The self-assertion of the German university is the primordial, shared will to its essence. … The will to the essence of the German university is the will to science as will to the historical mission of the German people as a people that knows itself in its state” (ibid., p. 471). “Out of the resoluteness of the German student body to be equal to the German fate in its most extreme distress, comes a will to the essence of the university. This will is a true will in that the German student body, through the new Student Law, places itself under the law of its own essence and in this way for the first time determines that essence” (ibid., p. 475). Here the use of the terms “will” and “resoluteness” assumes a political cast. The determination of the students’ essence (or identity) comes from its resolute will to embrace the new situation. [↑](#endnote-ref-681)
682. Ibid., p. 139. [↑](#endnote-ref-682)
683. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B273. [↑](#endnote-ref-683)
684. It is interesting to note that Edmund Husserl also held this view. He writes in his early work, the *Logical Investigations*: “What is real is the individual … Temporality, for us, is a sufficient characteristic of individuality” (*Logische Untersuchungen*, ed. Ursula Panzer in *Edmund Husserl, Gesammelte Schriften* [Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992], 3:129). The same position is expressed at the end of his career in the C manuscripts: “Thus, in an original sense, existent = original, concrete presence. It is persisting presence which ‘includes,’ as non-independent components in the stream of presences, both past and future” (Ms. C 13, III, p. 31b, March 1934 in *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934), Die C-Manuskripte,* p. 274). [↑](#endnote-ref-684)
685. Ibid., 128. [↑](#endnote-ref-685)
686. Patočka, *Body, Community, Language, World*, pp. 146-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-686)
687. Ibid., p. 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-687)
688. As Patočka expresses this, in a melody, “every component, tone, is part of something that transcends it; in every component something is being prepared that will form the meaning and the nature of the composition, but is not a movement of something that exists already at the start” (ibid.). For a detailed account of our motion of existence and its political implications, see chap. 5 of James Mensch’s *Patočka’s Asubjective Phenomenology: Toward a New Concept of Human Rights* (*Orbis Phaenomenologicus Studien*, vol. 38), Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-688)
689. As Barbaras points out, Merleau-Ponty also employs the analogy of a melody. For him it is crucial for understanding both life and nature. What is crucial for Merleau-Ponty is the fact that the melody is totally composed of its notes and yet is other than the notes—it transcends them. To grasp life in the form of an organism is to grasp this melody. In Barbaras’ words, “If the theme of animal melody is nothing other than its realization without coinciding for this reason with any of its stages, we must conclude that its existence is transversal to temporal multiplicity. In the same way, if the organic whole is not the sum of its local parts, without referring to a transcendent principle, we must recognize that it exists in a ubiquitous mode, as that which crosses and connects the local parts (“Merleau-Ponty and Nature,” in *Merleau-Ponty, Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, ed. Ted Toadvine [New York: Routledge, 2006], pp. 106-7). The point is that “We grasp life only by refusing to restrict our­selves to the analytical point of view and to local phenomena” (ibid., p. 105). We have to be attentive to the melody that organizes the local phenomena. Thus, with regard to life, “in the same way that the reality of the notes is insepar­able from the reality of the melody; the reality of any event situated in time and space depends on what happens to the whole” (ibid.). Barbaras repeats this point in “A Phenomenology of Life,” p. 229. [↑](#endnote-ref-689)
690. To the point that we accept Löwith’s “decisionist” interpretation of Heidegger, this critique applies to him as well. For Heidegger, of course, our existence is not limited to the now. Dasein “stands out” through its three temporal ecstasies. In its projects, it is ahead of itself. In its being in its thrown situation, it exhibits the past; in the present, it is there with the things that it discloses (*Sein und Zeit,* p. 327). These three temporal modes form the “clearing”—*Lichtung*—through which Dasein makes the world and itself present (ibid., p. 133). The question is whether this clearing can be shaped by a moment of decision. Heidegger’s emphasis on the future argues for this. He writes: “the future has a priority in the ecstatical unity of primiordial and authentic temporality.” This means that “[p]rimordial and authentic temporality temporalizes itself in terms of the authentic future” (ibid., p. 329). The point follows from the fact “Dasein is already ahead of itself in its being. Dasein is always [in considering what it will do] ‘beyond itself’ [‘*über sich hinaus’*] (ibid., p. 192). This holds for the present as well the past. We are with the things that we discloses as we act to accomplish our goals. They are present either as means for our project or as not being useful. A similar point is made with regard to the past. For Heidegger, “Dasein ‘is’ its past in the manner of *its* being, which roughly speaking, occurs from its future … Its own past—and this always implies the past of its ‘generation’—does not follow after Dasein, but rather is always in advance of it” (ibid., p. 20). Thus, we also regard the past in terms of what it offers for our projects. The possibilities it offers us are such only in relation to what we choose to accomplish. If we accept this, then we have to say with Heidegger, “Dasein can authentically *be* past only insofar as it is futural [*zukünftig*]. Pastness originates in a certain way from the future” (ibid., p. 326). Given this, the “clearing” seems to be set by our decision of what we want to accomplish. If so, the moment of decision is crucial. [↑](#endnote-ref-690)
691. Kierkegaard also comes to this conclusion. He writes: “Existence without motion is unthinkable” (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, vol.1, p. 308. Motion, however, demands continuity. In Kierkegaard’s words: “Inasmuch as existence is motion, it holds true that there is indeed a continuity that holds the motion together, because otherwise there is no motion” (ibid., p. 312). If we see such continuity as a style of movement, then the decision to become a Christian is a decision to take up Christ’s style of motion, this by imitating him. [↑](#endnote-ref-691)
692. This conception of identity recalls the opening sections of the second essay in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*, where he speaks of breeding “an animal with the right to make promises” (*Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House,1967] , p. 57). As Richard Schacht writes, “What is here at issue is not the sort of identity we each possess by virtue of` the spatio-temporal continuity and discreteness of our bodily existence. Rather, it is that which is purportedly characteristic of each human being as a single person persisting as the same thinking, feeling, choosing, acting, responsible subject throughout the course of its life” (*Making Sense of Nietzsche, Reflections Timely and Untimely* [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995], p. 111). [↑](#endnote-ref-692)
693. As Arendt writes, “The mutual contract by which people bind themselves together in order to form a community is based on reciprocity and presupposed equality; its actual content is a promise, and its result is indeed a ‘society’ or ‘consociation’ in the old Roman sense of *societas*, which means alliance. Such an alliance gathers together the isolated strength of the allied partners and binds them into a new power structure by virtue of ‘free and sincere promises’” (*On Revolution*, p. 170). Human plurality is implicit in this view of allies. For Arendt, it is not man, “but men that inhabit the earth,” (*The Human Condition*, p. 234). Individuals are, in fact, different. We are not “endlessly reproducible repetitions of the same model, whose essence or nature [is] the same for all.” Our condition is rather that of “plurality” (ibid., p. 8). Because of this plurality, our interests do not completely overlap. Some things are more important to one group rather than another. This is the premise of political negotiation and the formation of alliances that include different groups. [↑](#endnote-ref-693)
694. “ “Force of law, The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority,’” trans. Mary Quaintance in the *Cardozo Law Review*, 11 (1989-1900), p. 927. [↑](#endnote-ref-694)
695. Ibid., p. 937. [↑](#endnote-ref-695)
696. Ibid., p. 943. [↑](#endnote-ref-696)
697. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1099a, 11-13, p. 21. [↑](#endnote-ref-697)
698. Chapter 18: The Intertwining of Binding and Unbinding

     In Heidegger’s words: “Die Möglichkeit der Wahrheit menschlicher Erkenntnis gründet, wenn alles Seiende ein ‘geschöpfliches’ ist, darin, daß Sache und Satz in gleicher Weise ideegerecht und deshalb aus der Einheit des göttlichen Schöpfungsplanes aufeinander zugerichtet sind. *Die veritas als adaequatio rei (creandae) ad intellectum (divinum)* gibt die Gewähr für die veritas als *adaequatio intellectus (humani) ad rem (creatam). Veritas* meint im Wesen überall die *convenientia*, das Übereinkommen des Seienden unter sich als eines geschaffenen mit dem Schöpfer, ein »Stimmen« nach der Bestimmung der Schöpfungsordnung” (“Vom Wesen der Wahrheit,” pp. 76-7). [↑](#endnote-ref-698)
699. In Christianity, their lack of truth and being is traced to the Fall. See Paul, Romans 5:14, 8:21-22. Augustine expands on this theme in Chapters 26-27 of his *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope and Love*. [↑](#endnote-ref-699)
700. *Heretical Essays,* p. 108 [↑](#endnote-ref-700)
701. Ibid., pp. 141-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-701)
702. “Therefore, Lord, not only are you that than which nothing greater can be thought, but you are also something greater than can be thought (*quiddam maius quam cognitari possit*). For since it is possible to think that there is such a one, then, if you are not this same being, something greater than you could be thought—which cannot be” (*St. Anselm’s Proslogion*, p. 137). [↑](#endnote-ref-702)
703. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, p. 76. [↑](#endnote-ref-703)
704. Spinoza, “The Ethics, Prop. XXV, Corollary, *in Works of Spinoza*, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), Vol. II, p. 66. See also ibid., Prop. XXVII. [↑](#endnote-ref-704)
705. *Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, B263, trans. Norman Kempt Smith (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 237. [↑](#endnote-ref-705)
706. Ibid., B280, p. 245. [↑](#endnote-ref-706)
707. See Ibid., B258, p. 234. This means, Kant concludes: “Each substance, therefore, must contain ... in itself the causality of certain determinations in the other” (ibid., B259, p. 235). [↑](#endnote-ref-707)
708. Ibid., B262, p. 237. [↑](#endnote-ref-708)
709. *Consciousness Explained*, p. 406. [↑](#endnote-ref-709)
710. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 102. [↑](#endnote-ref-710)
711. Ibid., p. 63. [↑](#endnote-ref-711)
712. Ibid., p. 104. [↑](#endnote-ref-712)
713. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-713)
714. Genesis 4:7 in *The Torah, The Five Books of Moses* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962). p. 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-714)
715. See endnote 63 for chapter 16. [↑](#endnote-ref-715)
716. [Qur’an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%E2%80%99an), [Surah 24](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Nur), v. 22, in *The Koran*, trans. J. M. Rodwell (Dutton: New York, 1978), p. 445. For other Islamic expressions of the Golden rule see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\_Rule. [↑](#endnote-ref-716)
717. Surah 2, v. 256 in *The Koran*, p. 367. [↑](#endnote-ref-717)
718. This autoimmune reaction is not limited to the freedom that these religions presuppose; it also embraces what Freud called the narcissism of small differences. In their attempts to distinguish themselves from their rivals, the religions of the book do not just repress the similarities they share with each other; they stigmatize their rivals by projecting traits that are designed to emphasize their differences. We find this in Judaism’s relation to the Semitic religions in Canaan. It also appears in Christianity’s relation to Judaism. Here, what is repressed are the Jewish origins of this faith and, more specifically, Christ’s existence as a Jew. The fact that Jesus was executed by gentiles—that is, Romans—becomes transformed and projected so that the Jews become Christ’s killers. Similar instances of transformation and projection can be found in Islam’s conception of Christianity and Protestant conceptions of Roman Catholicism. Such examples recall Jacques Lacan’s doctrine that the “unconscious” is that aspect of myself I refuse to recognize. In his words, it is “the censored chapter of my history.” My refusal does not just result in my projecting what I repress on to the other.  Insofar as what I project is actually part of my identity, it results in a distorted self-knowledge.  What I project on the other results in a gap. In Lacan’s words, my self-knowledge is marred by “the distortions necessitated by the linking of the adulterated chapter to the chapters surrounding it” (“Function and Field of Speech and Language,” in *Écrits, A Selection* [New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977], p. 50). The anti-Semitism of Christianity, given that it was originally a Jewish sect, can be considered an example of such distortions. Since what such anti-Semitism targets is actually inherent in Christianity, it is an example of the autoimmune reaction. [↑](#endnote-ref-718)
719. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-719)
720. Chapter 19: Transcendence and Intertwining

     David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1966), p. 32. [↑](#endnote-ref-720)
721. Ibid., p. 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-721)
722. See ibid., pp. 40-42. [↑](#endnote-ref-722)
723. *Mortality and Morality—A Search for the Good after Auschwitz*, pp. 86-89. [↑](#endnote-ref-723)
724. Darwin, “The Origin of the Species,” Ch. IV, in *The Origin of the Species and the Descent of Man* (New York, 1967), p. 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-724)
725. See ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-725)
726. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes, New York: Washington Square Press, 1968, p. 317. [↑](#endnote-ref-726)
727. Ibid., p. 318. [↑](#endnote-ref-727)
728. Emmanuel Levinas, “Diachrony and Representation,” in *Time and the Other, and Additional Essays*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994), pp. 112-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-728)
729. Levinas, “Time and the Other,” in *Time and the Other, and Additional Essays*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994), p. 76. [↑](#endnote-ref-729)
730. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 69. [↑](#endnote-ref-730)
731. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-731)
732. Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-732)
733. Ibid., p. 22, translation modified. [↑](#endnote-ref-733)
734. Ibid., p. 110, translation modified. [↑](#endnote-ref-734)
735. Ibid., translation modified. [↑](#endnote-ref-735)
736. Chapter 21: The Hermeneutics of the Incarnation

     “Phaedo” in *Plato, Five Dialogues* p. 101. [↑](#endnote-ref-736)
737. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, p. 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-737)
738. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 123. [↑](#endnote-ref-738)
739. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-739)
740. *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-740)
741. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A250. [↑](#endnote-ref-741)
742. See Kant, ibid*.*, B110-111. [↑](#endnote-ref-742)
743. Oratio 52, *Ad sanctum virginem Mariam*, in *Patriologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, Paris, 1862, vol. 158, p. 956. An English translation can also be found in *The Liturgy of the Hours* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975), vol. 1, p. 1229. [↑](#endnote-ref-743)
744. Unless otherwise noted, the translations from the Bible are taken from *The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* (Avon: Bath Press, 1989). [↑](#endnote-ref-744)
745. On the relation between a{gion pneu'ma and *ruah*, see James Mensch, *The Beginning of the Gospel According to Saint John: Philosophical Reflections* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), pp. 64-67). [↑](#endnote-ref-745)
746. *Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), p. 118. [↑](#endnote-ref-746)
747. Chapter 21: The Animal and the Divine—The Alterity that I Am

     In fact, it cannot be defined: “But when we come to the concrete thing, e.g. … one of the individual circles … of these there is no definition, but they are known by the aid of intuitive thinking or of perception; and when they pass out of this complete realization [of being perceived] it is not clear whether they exist or not” (“Metaphysics,” 1036a, trans. T. D. Ross, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon [New York: Random House, 1941], p. 799). [↑](#endnote-ref-747)
748. “Keiner kann dem Anderen sein Sterben abnehmen” (*Sein und Zeit*, p. 240). [↑](#endnote-ref-748)
749. Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Pscho-Analysis*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), p. 14. [↑](#endnote-ref-749)
750. Ibid., p. 16. [↑](#endnote-ref-750)
751. Ibid., p. 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-751)
752. Ibid., p. 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-752)
753. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-753)
754. Ibid., p. 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-754)
755. Ibid., p. 30. [↑](#endnote-ref-755)
756. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-756)
757. Ibid., p. 32. [↑](#endnote-ref-757)
758. Ibid., p. 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-758)
759. Ibid., p. 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-759)
760. Plato, *Symposium*, 207d, trans. Michael Joyce, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 559. [↑](#endnote-ref-760)
761. Ibid., 207 a-b, p. 559. [↑](#endnote-ref-761)
762. Ibid., 207d, p. 559. [↑](#endnote-ref-762)
763. Ibid., 211c, pp. 562-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-763)
764. See Plato, *Republic*, 509b. We find parallel expressions of this view in the Middle Ages. Aquinas, for example, begins with the premise that all creatures desire their own existence. For him, the ultimate referent of their desire is the God who is pure existence and is the source of the existence of his creatures. See Thomas Aquinas,  *De Ente et Essentia*, ch. 4, ed. Rolland-Gosselin, Kain, 1926, p. 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-764)
765. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 292. [↑](#endnote-ref-765)
766. Ibid., p. 33. [↑](#endnote-ref-766)
767. Ibid., p. 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-767)
768. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-768)
769. Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), p. 92. [↑](#endnote-ref-769)
770. Ibid., p. 105. [↑](#endnote-ref-770)
771. This indicating is also an exhibition if we take the “infinite” in Levinas’s sense. For Levinas, the infinite signifies the “unending” in that sense that a further addition can always be made. On this point see James Mensch, *Levinas’ Existential Analytic, A Commentary on Totality and Infinity* (Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press, 2015), pp. 20-22. [↑](#endnote-ref-771)
772. Ibid., p. 108. [↑](#endnote-ref-772)
773. See Plato, *Parmenides*, 131d-e. The premise of this argument of Parmenides against the ideas is that the idea of largeness is a large idea. If we grant this, then the idea of largeness will share the same spatial extension as the things that participate in this idea. Such participation, thus, will imply that the idea of largeness will itself be divisible. Participation will be having a spatial “part” of the idea, which, of course, is nonsense. [↑](#endnote-ref-773)
774. See *Gottlob* Frege’s reprise of Plato’s argument in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings* *of Gottlob Frege,* ed. and trans. by Peter Geach and Max Black (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), p. 145. [↑](#endnote-ref-774)
775. Plato, *Phaedo*, 79d. [↑](#endnote-ref-775)
776. Plato, *Phaedo* 66e-f, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, p. 49. [↑](#endnote-ref-776)
777. Emmanuel Levinas, *Dieu, La Mort, et le Temp*, ed. Jacques Rolland (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1993), p. 29. Levinas adds: “The I is a self identity that has engendered itself by the impossibility of replacing itself” (ibid.). As he also expresses this: “This turning to the Other responds according to a multiple intrigue to the Other, my neighbor. [It is] an inaccessible responsibility whose urgency identifies me as irreplaceable and unique” (ibid., p. 127). These translations are my own. [↑](#endnote-ref-777)
778. *Ethics and Infinity*, p. 99. [↑](#endnote-ref-778)
779. Emmanuel Levinas, “Substitution,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. A. Peperzak, S. Critchley and R. Bernasconi (Bloomington, Illinois: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 90. [↑](#endnote-ref-779)
780. Emmanuel Levinas, “Ideology and Idealism,” in *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-780)
781. Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 2001), p. 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-781)
782. Ibid., p. 75. [↑](#endnote-ref-782)
783. Ibid., p. 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-783)
784. Ibid., p. 196. For an extended account of the intertwining of animalilty and divinity in Martel’s *Life of Pi*, see James Mensch, “The Intertwining of Incommensurables: Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*,” in *Phenomenology and the Non-human Animal*, ed. Corinne Painter and Christian Lotz (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), pp. 135-147. [↑](#endnote-ref-784)
785. Carolus Linnaeus, *Menniskans Cousiner*, ed. Telemak Fredbärj, Uppsala: Ekenäs, 1955, pp. 4-5; cited by Giorgio Agamben in *The Open, Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Atell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-785)
786. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open, Man and Animal*, ed. cit., p. 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-786)
787. Herman Melville depicts this attitude in his novella, *Benito Cerino*. Its main character, Captain Delano, boards a slave ship unaware that the blacks on it have taken control. Again and again, we are confronted by animal imagery in Delano’s reflections on the blacks. Thus, Delano describes a sleeping Negress as a “doe,” her child being a “fawn.” In his words, “Sprawling at her lapped breast was her wide-awake fawn, stark naked, its black little body half lifted from the deck, crosswise with its dam’s; its hands, like two paws, clambering upon her; its mouth and nose ineffectually rooting to get at the mark; and meantime giving a vexatious half-grunt.” (“Benito Cerino,” in *Billy Budd and Other Tales* [New York, New American Library, 1979], p. 172) The sight gratifies Delano as does the sight of blacks under an overturned longboat. These he sees as a “social circle of bats sheltering in some friendly cave, at intervals ebony flights of naked boys and girls three or four years old darting in and out of the den’s mouth” (p. 182). The narrator remarks, “These natural sights somehow insensibly deepened [Delano’s] confidence and ease” (p. 173). They undo any suspicions he might have regarding the conduct of the blacks. A revolt of the blacks seems to him as implausible as a revolt of the animals. He considers it only to dismiss it. Particularly telling are his thoughts when he wonders if the slave ship’s captain: “could … be any way in complicity with the blacks? But they were too stupid. Besides, who ever heard of a white so far a renegade as to apostatize from his very species almost, by leaguing in against it with Negroes” (p. 175). [↑](#endnote-ref-787)
788. “Function and field of speech and language,” p. 50. [↑](#endnote-ref-788)
789. Ibid., p. 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-789)
790. *The Open, Man and Animal*, ed. cit., p. 26. [↑](#endnote-ref-790)
791. *The Open, Man and Animal*, ed. cit., p. 37. [↑](#endnote-ref-791)
792. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-792)
793. Agamben develops the notion of “bare life” from the entry for “homo sacer” in Pompeius Festus’s dictionary. Festus defines “homo sacer” as a person who can be killed with impunity and who cannot be sacrificed (*Homo Sacer,* p. 71). He is, in Agamben’s view, the person who is outside of all laws, political (which rule over homicide) as well as sacred (which rule over sacrifice). In Agamben’s words, the term “indicates … a life that may be killed by anyone—an object of a violence that exceeds the sphere both of law and of sacrifice” (ibid., p. 86). [↑](#endnote-ref-793)
794. The camp was set up to ensure such impunity. As Agamben notes, “after the decrees of February 28, 1934, the camp’s absolute independence from every juridical control and every reference to the normal juridical order was constantly reaffirmed” (*Home Sacer*, p. 169). [↑](#endnote-ref-794)
795. *Heretical Essays*, pp. 98-99. [↑](#endnote-ref-795)
796. Ibid., p. 99. [↑](#endnote-ref-796)
797. Ibid., pp. 114-5. [↑](#endnote-ref-797)
798. Ibid., p. 117. [↑](#endnote-ref-798)
799. Ibid., p. 101. [↑](#endnote-ref-799)
800. Ibid., p. 105. [↑](#endnote-ref-800)
801. Ibid., p. 106 [↑](#endnote-ref-801)
802. Ibid., p. 107. [↑](#endnote-ref-802)
803. Ibid., p. 82. [↑](#endnote-ref-803)
804. Ibid., p. 106. [↑](#endnote-ref-804)
805. Ibid., p. 112. [↑](#endnote-ref-805)
806. Ibid., p. 115. [↑](#endnote-ref-806)
807. Ibid., p. 114. [↑](#endnote-ref-807)
808. Ibid., p. 119. [↑](#endnote-ref-808)
809. Genesis 1:28. [↑](#endnote-ref-809)
810. *Heretical Essays*, p. 110. [↑](#endnote-ref-810)
811. Ibid., p. 116. [↑](#endnote-ref-811)
812. In Nietzsche’s words, the will-to-power is “an insatiable desire to manifest power” (*Will-to-power*, §619, trans. Kaufmann and Hollingdale, New York, 1968, p. 333). Its “struggle, be it great or small, turns everywhere on predominance, on increase and expansion, on power” (*The Joyful Wisdom*, §349, in *The Complete Work of Fredrich Nietzsche,* trans. A.M. Ludovici, 18 vols., New York, 1964, vol. 10, p. 290). The struggle, in other words, “aims at the *extension of power*” (ibid., p. 289). [↑](#endnote-ref-812)
813. See *Heretical Essays*, p. 107. [↑](#endnote-ref-813)
814. *Totality and Infinity*, p. 118. [↑](#endnote-ref-814)