Fifth lesson - Philosophy of perception

Part II - The World as Perceived

THE THEORY OF THE BODY IS ALREADY A THEORY OF PERCEPTION

1. Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system. When I walk round my flat, the various aspects in which it presents itself to me could not possibly appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each of them represents the flat seen from one spot or another, and if I were unaware of my own movements, and of my body as retaining its iden tity through the stages of those movements. I can of course take a mental bird's eye view of the flat, visualize it or draw a plan of it on paper, but in that case too I could not grasp the unity of the object without the mediation of bodily experience, for what I call a plan is only a more comprehensive perspective: it is the flat 'seen from above', and the fact that I am able to draw together in it all habitual perspec tives is dependent on my knowing that one and the same embodied subject can view successively from various positions. It will perhaps be objected that by restoring the object to bodily experience as one of the poles of that experience, we deprive it of precisely that which consti tutes its objectivity. From the point of view of my body I never see as equal the six sides of the cube, even if it is made of glass, and yet the word 'cube' has a meaning; the cube itself, the cube in reality, beyond its sensible appearances, has its six equal sides. As I move round it, I see the front face, hitherto a square, change its shape, then disappear, while the other sides come into view and one by one become squares. But the successive stages of this experience are for me merely the opportunity of conceiving the whole cube with its six equal and simultaneous faces, the intelligible structure which provides the explanation of it. And it is even necessary, for my tour of inspection of the cube to warrant the judgement: 'here is a cube', that my movements themselves be located in objective space and, far from its being the case that the experience of my own movement conditions the position of an object, it is, on the contrary, by conceiving my body itself as a mobile object that I am able to interpret perceptual appearance and construct the cube as it truly is. The experience of my own movement would therefore appear to be no more than a psychological circumstance of perception and to make no contribution to determining the significance of the object. The object and my body would certainly form a system, but we would then have a nexus of objective correlations and not, as we were saying earlier, a collection of lived-through correspondences. The unity of the object would thus be conceived, not experienced as the correlate of our body's unity. (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London-New York, Routledge 2002, p. 235-236)

2. The synthesis of the object is here effected, then, through the synthesis of one's own body, it is the reply or correlative to it, and it is literally the same thing to perceive one single marble, and to use two fingers as one single organ. The disturbance of the body image may even be directly translated into the external world without the intervention of any stimulus. In heautoscopy, before seeing himself, the subject always passes through a state akin to dreaming, musing or disquiet, and the image of himself which appears outside him is merely the counterpart of this depersonalization. The patient has the feeling of being in the double outside himself, just as, in a lift which goes upwards and suddenly stops, I feel the substance of my body escaping from me through my head and overrunning the boundaries of my objective body. It is in his own body that the patient feels the approach of this Other whom he has never seen with his eyes, as the normal person is aware, through a certain burning feeling in the nape of the neck, that someone is watching him from behind. (Ibid p. 238)

3. The theory of the body schema is, implicitly, a theory of perception. We have relearned to feel our body; we have found underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body that other knowledge which we have of it in virtue of its always being with us and of the fact that we are our body. In the same way we shall need to reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us in so far as we are in the world through our body, and in so far as we perceive the world with our body. But by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourself, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception. (Ibid p. 239)

1 SENSE EXPERIENCE

4. Objective thought is unaware of the subject of perception. This is because it presents itself with the world ready made, as the setting of every possible event, and treats perception as one of these events. For example, the empiricist philosopher considers a subject x in the act of perceiving and tries to describe what happens: there are sensations which are the subject's states or manners of being and, in virtue of this, genuine mental things. The perceiving subject is the place where these things occur, and the philosopher describes sensations and their sub stratum as one might describe the fauna of a distant land—without being aware that he himself perceives, that he is the perceiving subject and that perception as he lives it belies everything that he says of perception in general. (Ibid p. 240)

5. The whole system of experience—world, own body and empirical self—are subordinated to a universal thinker charged with sustaining the relationships between the three terms. But, since he is not actually involved, these relationships remain what they were in empiricism: causal relations spread out in the context of cosmic events. Now, if one's own body and the empirical self are no more than elements of the system of experience, objects among other objects in the eyes of the true I, how can we ever be confused with our body? How can we ever have believed that we saw with our eyes what we in fact grasp through an inspection of the mind; how is it that the world does not present itself to us as perfectly explicit; why is it displayed only gradually and never 'in its entirety'? In short, how does it come about that we perceive? We shall understand this only if the empirical self and the body are not immediately objects, in fact only if they never quite become objects, if there is a certain significance in saying that I can see the piece of wax with my eyes, and if correlatively the possibil ity of absence, the dimension of escape and freedom which reflection opens in the depths of our being, and which is called the transcen dental Ego, are not initially given and are never absolutely acquired; if I can never say 'I' absolutely, and if every act of reflection, every volun tary taking up of a position is based on the ground and the proposition of a life of pre-personal consciousness. The subject of perception will remain overlooked as long as we cannot avoid the alternative of natura naturata and natural naturans, of sensation as a state of consciousness and as the consciousness of a state, of existence in itself and existence for itself. Let us then return to sensation and scrutinize it closely enough to learn from it the living relation of the perceiver to his body and to his world. (Ibid p. 241-242)

6. I cannot ensure that my eyes and ears retain any cognitive power, for the notion of perception is ambiguous: they are instruments of bodily excitation only, and not of perception itself. There is no middle term between in itself and for itself, and since my senses, being several, are not myself, they can be only objects. I say that my eyes see, that my hand touches, that my foot is aching, but these naïve expressions do not put into words my true experience. Already they provide me with an inter pretation of that experience which detaches it from its original subject. Because I know that the light strikes my eyes, that contact is

made by the skin, that my shoe hurts my foot, I distribute through my body perceptions which really belong to my soul, and put perception into the thing perceived. (Ibid p. 247)

7. Let us be more explicit. The sensor and the sensible do not stand in relation to each other as two mutually external terms, and sensation is not an invasion of the sensor by the sensible. It is my gaze which subtends colour, and the movement of my hand which subtends the object's form, or rather my gaze pairs off with colour, and my hand with hardness and softness, and in this transaction between the subject of sensation and the sensible it cannot be held that one acts while the other suffers the action, or that one confers significance on the other. Apart from the probing of my eye or my hand, and before my body synchronizes with it, the sensible is nothing but a vague beckoning. 'If a subject tries to experience a specific colour, blue for example, while trying to take up the bodily attitude appropriate to red, an inner con f lict results, a sort of spasm which stops as soon as he adopts the bodily attitude corresponding to blue.' Thus a sensible datum which is on the point of being felt sets a kind of muddled problem for my body to solve. I must find the attitude which will provide it with the means of becoming determinate, of showing up as blue; I must find the reply to a question which is obscurely expressed. And yet I do so only when I am invited by it, my attitude is never sufficient to make me really see blue or really touch a hard surface. (Ibid p. 248-249)

8. We must stress this point. How have we managed to escape from the dilemma of the for itself and the in itself, how can perceptual conscious ness be saturated with its object, how can we distinguish sensible consciousness from intellectual consciousness? Because: (1) Every per ception takes place in an atmosphere of generality and is presented to us anonymously. I cannot say that I see the blue of the sky in the sense in which I say that I understand a book or again in which I decide to devote my life to mathematics. My perception, even when seen from the inside, expresses a given situation: I can see blue because I am sensitive to colours, whereas personal acts create a situation: I am a mathematician because I have decided to be one. So, if I wanted to render precisely the perceptual experience, I ought to say that one per ceives in me, and not that I perceive. Every sensation carries within it the germ of a dream or depersonalization such as we experience in that quasi-stupor to which we are reduced when we really try to live at the level of sensation. It is true that knowledge teaches me that sensation would not occur unless my body were in some way adapted to it, for example, that there would be no specific contact unless I moved my hand. But this activity takes place on the periphery of my being. I am no more aware of being the true subject of my sensation than of my birth or my death. Neither my birth nor my death can appear to me as experiences of my own, since, if I thought of them thus, I should be assuming myself to be pre-existent to, or outliving, myself, in order to be able to experience them, and I should therefore not be genuinely thinking of my birth or my death. (Ibid p. 250)

9. Sensation can be anonymous only because it is incomplete. The person who sees and the one who touches is not exactly myself, because the visible and the tangible worlds are not the world in its entirety. When I see an object, I always feel that there is a portion of being beyond what I see at this moment, not only as regards visible being, but also as regards what is tangible or audible. And not only sensible being, but a depth of the object that no progressive sensory deduction will ever exhaust. In a corresponding way, I am not myself wholly in these operations, they remain marginal. They occur out in front of me, for the self which sees or the self which hears is in some way a specialized self, familiar with only one sector of being, and it is precisely for this reason that eye and hand are able to guess the movement which will fix the perception, thus displaying that fore-knowledge which gives them an involuntary appearance. (Ibid p.251)

10. This new concep tion of reflection which is the phenomenological conception of it, amounts in other words to giving a new definition of the a priori. Kant has already shown that the a priori is not knowable in

advance of experi ence, that is, outside our horizon of facticity, and that there can be no question of distinguishing two elements of knowledge: one a priori and the other a posteriori. In so far as the a priori in his philosophy retains the character of what must necessarily be, as opposed to what in fact exists and is determinate in human terms, this is only to the extent that he has not followed out his programme, which was to define our cognitive powers in terms of our factual condition, and which necessarily com pelled him to set every conceivable being against the background of this world. From the moment that experience—that is, the opening on to our de facto world—is recognized as the beginning of knowledge, there is no longer any way of distinguishing a level of a priori truths and one of factual ones, what the world must necessarily be and what it actually is. The unity of the senses, which was regarded as an a priori truth, is no longer anything but the formal expression of a funda mental contingency: the fact that we are in the world—the diversity of the senses, which was regarded as given a posteriori, including the con crete form that it assumes in a human subject, appears as necessary to this world, to the only world which we can think of consequentially; it therefore becomes an a priori truth. Every sensation is spatial; we have adopted this thesis, not because the quality as an object cannot be thought otherwise than in space, but because, as the primordial contact with being, as the assumption by the sentient subject of a form of existence to which the sensible points, and as the co-existence of sen tient and sensible, it is itself constitutive of a setting for co-existence, in other words, of a space. We say a priori that no sensation is atomic, that all sensory experience presupposes a certain field, hence co-existences, from which we conclude, against Lachelier, that the blind man has the experience of a space. But these a priori truths amount to nothing other than the making explicit of a fact: the fact of the sensory experience as the assumption of a form of existence. (Ibid 256-257)

11. To sum up, once distinction between the a priori and the empirical, between form and content, have been done away with, the spaces peculiar to the senses become concrete ‘moments’ of a comprehensive configuration which is the one and only space, and the power of going to it is inseparable from that of cutting oneself off from it by the sequestration of a sense. When, in the concert hall, I open my eyes, visible space seems to me cramped compared to that other space through which, a moment ago, the music was being unfolded, and even if I keep my eyes open while the piece is being played, I have the impression that the music is not really contained within this circum scribed and unimpressive space. It brings a new dimension stealing through visible space, and in this it surges forward, just as, in victims of hallucinations, the clear space of things perceived is mysteriously duplicated by a ‘dark space’ in which other presences are possible. Like the perspective of other people making its impact on the world for me, the spatial realm of each sense is an unknowable absolute for the others, and to that extent limits their spatiality. (Ibid p. 257-258)

12. The unity of the object in binocular vision is not, therefore, the result of some third person process which eventually produces a single image through the fusion of two monocular images. When we go from diplopia to normal vision, the single object replaces the two images, one is clearly not superimposed on the other: it is not of the same order as they, but is incomparably more substantial. The two images of diplopia are not amalgamated into one single one in binocular vision; the unity of the object is intentional. But—and this is the point we are trying to make—it is not therefore a notional unity. We pass from double vision to the single object, not through an inspec tion of the mind, but when the two eyes cease to function each on its own account and are used as a single organ by one single gaze. It is not the epistemological subject who brings about the synthesis, but the body, when it escapes from dispersion, pulls itself together and tends by all means in its power towards one single goal of its activity, and when one single intention is formed in it through the phenomenon of synergy. We withdraw this synthesis from the objective body only to transfer it to the phenomenal body, the body, that is, in so far as it projects a certain ‘setting’ round itself, in so far as its ‘parts’ are dynamically acquainted with each other, and its receptors are so arranged as to make possible, through their synergy, the perception of the object. (Ibid p.270)

13. It is my body which gives significance not only to the natural object, but also to cultural objects like words. If a word is shown to a subject for too short a time for him to be able to read it, the word ‘warm’, for example, induces a kind of experience of warmth which surrounds him with something in the nature of a meaningful halo. The word ‘hard’ produces a sort of stiffening of the back and neck, and only in a secondary way does it project itself into the visual or auditory field and assume the appearance of a sign or a word. (Ibid p. 273)

14. Let us return to the perceptual experience. I perceive this table on which I am writing. This means, among other things, that my act of perception occupies me, and occupies me sufficiently for me to be unable, while I am actually perceiving the table, to perceive myself perceiving it. When I want to do this, I cease, so to speak, to use my gaze in order to plunge into the table, I turn back to myself who am perceiving, and then realize that my perception must have gone through certain subjective appearances, and interpreted certain of my own ‘sensations’; in short it takes its place in the perspective of my individual history. I start from unified experience and from there acquire, in a secondary way, consciousness of a unifying activity when, taking up an analytical attitude, I break up perception into qualities and sensations, and when, in order to recapture on the basis of these the object into which I was in the first place blindly thrown, I am obliged to suppose an act of synthesis which is merely the coun terpart of my analysis. My act of perception, in its unsophisticated form, does not itself bring about this synthesis; it takes advantage of work already done, of a general synthesis constituted once and for all, and this is what I mean when I say that I perceive with my body or my senses, since my body and my senses are precisely that familiarity with the world born of habit, that implicit or sedimentary body of know ledge. If my consciousness were at present constituting the world which it perceives, no distance would separate them and there would be no possible discrepancy between them; it would find its way into the world’s hidden concatenations, intentionality would carry us to the heart of the object, and simultaneously the percept would lose the thickness conferred by the present, and consciousness would not be lost and become bogged down in it. (Ibid p. 276-278)

15. If we are to solve the problem which we have set ourselves—that of sensoriality, or finite subjectivity—it will be by thinking about time and showing how it exists only for a subjectivity, since without the latter, the past in itself being no longer and the future in itself being not yet, there would be no time—and how nevertheless this subject is time itself, and how we can say with Hegel that time is the existence of mind, or refer with Husserl to a self-constitution of time. For the moment, the preceding descriptions and those which are to follow serve to make us familiar with a new type of reflection from which we await the solution of our problems. For intellectualism, reflecting is distancing or objectifying sensation and confronting it with a subject without content capable of ranging over this diversity and for whom the latter can exist. In so far as intellectualism purifies consciousness by delivering it of all opacity, it makes a genuine thing out of the hylé, and the apprehension of any concrete contents, the coming together of this thing and the mind, becomes inconceivable. If it be objected that the material of knowledge is a result of analysis and should not be treated as a real element, it has to be recognized that in a corresponding way the synthetic unity of apperception is also a theor etical version of experience, that it should not be given any first-hand value and, in short, that the theory of knowledge has to be begun all over again. (Ibid p. 280)

2 SPACE

15. We have just recognized that analysis has no justification for positing any stuff of knowledge as an ideally separable ‘moment’ and that this stuff, when brought into being by an act of reflection, already relates to the world. Reflection does not follow in the reverse direction a path already traced by the constitute act,

and the natural reference of the stuff to the world leads us to a new conception of intentionality, since the classical conception,1 which treats the experience of the world as a pure act of constituting consciousness, manages to do so only in so far as it defines consciousness as absolute non-being, and correspondingly consigns its contents to a 'hyletic layer' which belongs to opaque being. We must now approach this new intentionality in a more direct way by examin ing the symmetrical notion of a form of perception, and in particular the notion of space. Kant tried to draw a strict demarcation line between space as the form of external experience and the things given within that experience. There is naturally no question of a relationship of container to content, since this relationship exists only between objects, nor even a relationship of logical inclusion, like the one exist ing between the individual and the class, since space is anterior to its alleged parts, which are always carved out of it. Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things becomes possible. This means that instead of imagining it as a sort of ether in which all things float, or conceiving it abstractly as a characteristic that they have in common, we must think of it as the universal power enabling them to be connected. Therefore, either I do not reflect, but live among things and vaguely regard space at one moment as the setting for things, at another as their common attribute—or else I do reflect: I catch space at its source, and now think the relationships which underlie this word, realizing then that they live only through the medium of a subject who traces out and sustains them; and pass from spatialized to spatializing space. In the first case, my body and things, their concrete relationships expressed in such terms as top and bottom, right and left, near and far, may appear to me as an irreducibly manifold variety, whereas in the second case I dis cover a single and indivisible ability to trace out space. In the first case, I am concerned with physical space, with its variously qualified regions: in the second with geometrical space having interchangeable dimen sions, homogeneous and isotropic, and here I can at least think of a pure change of place which would leave the moving body unchanged, and consequently a pure position distinct from the situation of the object in its concrete context. (Ibid p. 283-284)

16. The question is applicable not only to an empiricist psychology which treats the perception of space as the reception, within ourselves, of a real space, and the phenomenal orientation of objects as reflecting their orientation in the world. It is equally relevant to intellectualist psychology in which the 'upright' and the 'inverted' are relationships dependent upon the fixed points chosen. As the axis of co-ordinates selected, whatever it may be, is as yet situated in space only in relation to another guide-post, and so on, so the task of taking the world's bearings is indefinitely postponed. (Ibid p.288)

17. The spatial level tilts and takes up its new posi tion. It is, then, a certain possession of the world by my body, a certain gearing of my body to the world. Being projected, in the absence of anchoring points, by the attitude of my body alone, as in Nagel's experiments—specified, when the body is inert, through the demands of the spectacle alone, as in Wertheimer's experiment—it normally makes its appearance where my motor intentions and my perceptual f ield join forces, when my actual body is at one with the virtual body required by the spectacle, and the actual spectacle with the setting which my body throws round it. It comes to rest when, between my body as the potentiality for certain movements, as the demand for certain preferential planes, and the spectacle perceived as an invitation to the same movements and the scene of the same actions, a pact is concluded which gives me the enjoyment of space and gives to things their direct power over my body. The constitution of a spatial level is simply one means of constituting an integrated world: my body is geared onto the world when my perception presents me with a spec tacle as varied and as clearly articulated as possible, and when my motor intentions, as they unfold, receive the responses they expect from the world. (Ibid p. 291-292)

18. The possession of a body implies the ability to change levels and to 'understand' space, just as the possession of a voice implies the ability to change key. The perceptual field corrects itself and at the

conclusion of the experiment I identify it without any concept because I live in it, because I am borne wholly into the new spectacle and, so to speak, transfer my centre of gravity into it. At the beginning of the experiment, the visual field appears both inverted and unreal because the subject does not live in it and is not geared to it. In the course of the experiment, we notice an intermediate phase in which the tactile body seems to be inverted and the landscape upright because, since I already live in the landscape, I see it accordingly as upright, the disturbance brought about by the experiment being concentrated in my own body, which thus becomes, not a mass of affective sensations, but the body which is needed to perceive a given spectacle. Everything throws us back on to the organic relations between subject and space, to that gearing of the subject onto his world which is the origin of space. (Ibid p.292-293)

19. My ability to understand convergence as a sign of distance is con ditioned by my visualizing my gaze as the blind man's two sticks, which run more sharply together in proportion as the object is brought nearer; in other words, by my inclusion of my eyes, body and the external world into one and the same objective space. The 'signs' which, ex hypothesi, ought to acquaint us with the experience of space can, therefore, convey the idea of space only if they are already involved in it, and if it is already known. Since perception is initiation into the world, and since, as has been said with insight, 'there is noth ing anterior to it which is mind', we cannot put into it objective relationships which are not yet constituted at its level. That is why the Cartesians spoke of a 'natural geometry'. (Ibid p.299-300)

20. One cannot, therefore, speak of a synthesis of depth, since a syn thesis presupposes, or at least, like the Kantian synthesis, posits discrete terms, and since depth does not posit the multiplicity of perspective appearances to be made explicit by analysis, but sees that multiplicity only against the background of the stable thing. This quasi-synthesis is elucidated if we understand it as temporal. When I say that I see an object at a distance, I mean that I already hold it, or that I still hold it, it is in the future or in the past as well as being in space. It will perhaps be said that this is so only for me; in itself the lamp which I perceive exists at the same time as I do, that distance is between simultaneous objects, and that this simultaneity is contained in the very meaning of perception. (Ibid p.308-309)

21. The 'order of co-existents' is inseparable from the 'order of sequences', or rather time is not only the consciousness of a sequence. Perception provides me with a 'field of presence' in the broad sense, extending in two dimensions: the here-there dimension and the past-present-future dimension. The second elucidates the first. I 'hold', I 'have' the distant object without any explicit positing of the spatial perspective (apparent size and shape) as I still 'have in hand' the immediate past without any distortion and without any interposed 'recollection'. If we want to talk about synthesis, it will be, as Husserl says, a 'transition-synthesis', which does not link disparate perspec tives, but brings about the 'passage' from one to the other. Psychology has involved itself in endless difficulties by trying to base memory on the possession of certain contents or recollections, the present traces (in the body or the unconscious) of the abolished past, for from these traces we can never come to understand the recognition of the past as past. In the same way we shall never come to understand the percep tion of distance if we start from contents presented, so to speak, all equidistant, a flat projection of the world, as recollections are a projec tion of the past in the present. And just as memory can be understood only as a direct possession of the past with no interposed contents, so the perception of distance can be understood only as a being in the distance which links up with being where it appears. (Ibidem)

22. Once the distinction has been established between the body in motion and movement, there is no movement without a moving body, no movement without an objective landmark, and no absolute movement. Nevertheless this idea of movement is in fact a negation of movement: to distinguish strictly between

movement and the moving object is to say that strictly speaking the ‘moving body’ does not move. If the stone-in motion is not in some way different from the stone at rest, it is never in motion (nor for that matter at rest).(Ibid p.312-313)

23. he identity to which we refer is, therefore, anterior to the distinction between movement and rest. Motion is nothing without a body in motion which describes and provides it with unity. Here the metaphor of the dynamic phe nomenon leads the psychologist astray: it seems to us that a force itself ensures its unity, but this is because we always suppose that someone is there to identify it in the development of its effects. ‘Dynamic phe nomena’ take their unity from me who live through them, and who effect their synthesis. Thus we pass from an idea of movement which is destructive of it to an experience of movement which tries to provide it with a basis, but also from this experience to an idea without which, strictly speaking, the experience is meaningless. (Ibid p. 317)

24. The phenomenon of movement merely displays spatial and temporal implications in a more striking way. We know of move ment and a moving entity without being in any way aware of objective positions, as we know of an object at a distance and of its true size without any interpretation, and as we know every moment the place of an event in the thickness of our past without any express recollection. Motion is a modulation of an already familiar setting, and once more it leads us back to our central problem, which is how this setting, which acts as a background to every act of consciousness, comes to be constituted. (Ibid p.321)

25. We have so far considered, as do traditional philosophy and psycho logy, only the perception of space, that is, the knowledge that a disinterested subject might acquire of the spatial relationships between objects and their geometrical characteristics. And yet, even in analysing this abstract function, which is far from covering the whole of our experi ence of space, we have been led to bring out, as the condition of spatiality, the establishment of the subject in a setting, and finally his inherence in a world. In other words, we have been forced to recognize that spatial perception is a structural phenomenon and is comprehen sible only within a perceptual field which contributes in its entirety to motivating the spatial perception by suggesting to the subject a pos sible anchorage. The traditional problem of the perception of space and perception generally must be reintegrated into a vaster problem. To ask how one can, in an explicit act, determine spatial relationships and objects with their ‘properties’, is to ask a second order question, to give as primary an act which appears only against the background of an already familiar world, to admit that one has not yet become conscious of the experience of the world. In the natural attitude, I do not have perceptions, I do not posit this object as beside that one, along with their objective relationships, I have a flow of experiences which imply and explain each other both simultaneously and successively. Paris for me is not an object of many facets, a collection of perceptions, nor is it the law governing all these perceptions. Just as a person gives evidence of the same emotional essence in his gestures with his hands, in his way of walking and in the sound of his voice, each express perception occurring in my journey through Paris—the cafés, people’s faces, the poplars along the quays, the bends of the Seine—stands out against the city’s whole being, and merely confirms that there is a certain style or a certain significance which Paris possesses. And when I arrived there for the first time, the first roads that I saw as I left the station were, like the first words spoken by a stranger, simply manifestations of a still ambiguous essence, but one already unlike any other. (Ibid p. 327-328)

26. The novelty of phenomenology does not lie in denying the unity of experience, but in finding a different basis for it than does classical rationalism. For objectifying acts are not representations. Natural and primordial space is not geometrical space, nor, correspondingly, is the unity of experience guaranteed by any universal thinker arraying its contents before me and ensuring that I possess complete knowledge of, and

exercise complete power over it. It is merely foreshadowed by the horizons of possible objectification, and it frees me from every particu lar setting only because it ties me to the world of nature or the in-itself, which includes all of them. We must contrive to understand how, at a stroke, existence projects round itself worlds which hide objectivity from me, at the same time fastening upon it as the aim of the teleology of consciousness, by picking out these 'worlds' against the background of one single natural world. (Ibid p.242-243)