"This is to say that the "sensible quality," the spatial determinations of the perceived, and even the presence or absence of a perception are not effects of the factual situation outside of the organism, but rather represent the manner in which the organism comes to anticipate stimulations and in which it relates to them" (77)

In the quote above, Merleau-Ponty claims that (unless I have fallen victim to his dialectical approach and am attributing one of his critiques as one of his opinions) the way in which we perceive a sensible quality, whether it be heat or weight or the gentle brushing of a hair along my arm, is not determined by the so to speak material things around me or the positions they may in fact inhabit, but is instead perceived in a manner as my anticipation and relation to the stimulus would have me perceive it.

The example he provides to illustrate this point is that of a piece of hair stimulating a particular region of my skin. To make matters easier and draw us collectively into a shared experience, we will suggest that the particular region is my forearm (or your forearm, as it were). According to Merleau-Ponty, the first few times the hair is brushed against my forearm I experience a clear perception of it; exactly where along my forearm it is and for how long it is maintaining contact. With repeated brushes comes a diminishing of the initial clarity of perception, along with perceptions not initially associated with the brushing (such as heat or cold or particular patterns of brushing) until finally the stimulation is beyond my perception.

Merleau-Ponty then goes on to claim that "A stimulation is not perceived when it reaches a sensory organ that is not "attuned" to it" (77), and thus the function of the organism (myself) in receiving sensory input is in a sense to 'understand' the stimulation (although he is none to clear about what he means by this – would I not feel the hair brush up against my arse because my arse was not attuned to it?)

I do not intend to give his claim, at least as I understand it, an uncharitable view, so I will see if anything in my experience testifies for it.

Suppose I am babysitting a rather raucous child, who takes pleasure in annoying me by sticking his finger as close as he can to my eye without actually making contact. The immediacy of the finger (along with his dirty fingernail) not above an inch from my precious perceptor warrants alarm on my end and a jerking back of my head. Contact was not established, yet my eye begins to irk me, I find keeping the eye open difficult as it begins to water, and I feel the urge to rub it affectionately as I direct my available eye scornfully towards my assailant.

Now of course, nothing actually touched my eye, yet my anticipation of the pain true contact would have surely awoken within me awakens it nonetheless; I react as though my eye were really gouged (barring of course poking the child right back – an eye for an eye after all).

So I have a case which attests to Merleau-Pontys claim about anticipation. The question which now comes to mind is to ask how anticipation first comes to reside within me? My anticipation of pain upon receiving a digit to the eye is motivated by past experiences of foreign objects hitting me there, or perhaps more generally, the idea that anything pointy making contact with a sensitive area of my body is a cause for pain. Yet surely the initial time my eye-space was invaded, or I was poked with a sharp stick to the nether regions, I had perceived a pain without having any precedent to make reference to?

My point of contention then is that anticipation itself must have had a genesis, and that the genesis of anticipation must have resided in an experience which itself could not have been anticipated, for the sensation natural to the stimulus would have been unknown to me prior to

acquaintance. Apart from this, Merleau-Ponty's rather obscure reference to a sense organ being 'attuned' requires clarification, for as he has it in lieu of the preceding statements allows me only the reaction of cynical retort.