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Philosophers in Depth

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Sartre on the Body

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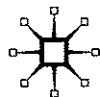
DERMOT MORAN

"Husserl, Sartre and
Merleau-Ponty on
Embodiment, Touch and
the 'Double Sensation'"

pp 41-66

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7. For example, 'To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world, as we have seen; our body is not primarily *in* space; it is of it' (PP 148). But this is not true world-making, and further the entire progression of the chapters on the body shows that Merleau-Ponty is not really interested in the question of the body's constitution of the world.
8. See Merleau-Ponty 1968. In his introductory remarks to this (liv), the translator Lingis notes the importance of flesh in *Phenomenology of Perception* and, as he says, 'The Flesh... is not just a new term for what the *Phenomenology of Perception* (but already Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*) brought to light.' He then continues to note the development of the notion. In my view of *Being and Nothingness*, flesh is the invisible through which the world is made visible. I do not think this is Merleau-Ponty's view, although, at present, I am not clear about this aspect of his thought. Also, in pushing Merleau-Ponty even slightly in the direction of the later Heidegger, I may be doing him an injustice. I am simply trying to make sense of his general view of interconnections that seem to arise from the body and yet are not to be limited to it.

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2

Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty on Embodiment, Touch and the 'Double Sensation'

Dermot Moran

No phenomenology of life, of body and the flesh, can be constituted without basing itself on a phenomenology of touch.

(Jean-Louis Chrétien 2004: 86)

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre includes an extraordinary, groundbreaking chapter on 'the body' which treats of the body under three headings: 'The body as being for-itself: facticity', 'The body-for-others' and 'The third ontological dimension of the body'. While the influence of this chapter on Merleau-Ponty has been acknowledged, Sartre's phenomenology of the body has in general been neglected. In this chapter, I want to examine Sartre's debt to Husserl and, in particular, how he departs from Merleau-Ponty especially in his critical treatment of the 'double sensation' (the experience of one hand touching the other) which is central to Merleau-Ponty's conception of 'intertwining', but which Sartre regards as a non-essential, merely contingent feature of our embodiment. I shall argue that Sartre, even more than Merleau-Ponty, is the phenomenologist *par excellence* of the flesh (*la chair*) and of intersubjective intercorporeality while emphasizing that touching oneself is a merely contingent feature and not 'the foundation for a study of corporeality'.

Sartre's phenomenology of embodiment

The famous chapter in BN entitled 'The Body' (*Le corps*), written in Sartre's customary dialectical style, is dense, difficult, at times confused, at times brilliant; but, it is also a groundbreaking and radical philosophical meditation on embodiment.¹ As always with Sartre, more literary genius than precise academic philosopher, difficult and even opaque technical philosophical analysis intertwines with rich, original and evocative phenomenological descriptions of experience. Its philosophical impact was soon eclipsed by

Merleau-Ponty's treatment of incarnation and Sartre's account has been neglected until quite recently.²

Sartre begins from, but creatively interprets the then available phenomenological treatments of the body, to be found, albeit quite scattered, in the phenomenological tradition, especially as Sartre could have encountered it in Edmund Husserl³ and Max Scheler,⁴ but also strongly influenced by his reading of Martin Heidegger's account of *Dasein's* situatedness and facticity in *Being and Time*.⁵ Sartre's achievement is all the more remarkable given that, at the time of writing, he would have had no direct access to the canonical Husserlian phenomenological discussion of the body in *Ideas II*,⁶ for instance, but managed to have a solid grasp of many of Husserl's views (presumably through his studies in Germany in 1933 and conversations with other French Husserlians such as Raymond Aron and Merleau-Ponty). In the background, of course, is an established, and predominantly French, tradition of physiological and psychological discussion of the body and its relation to the first-person experience of consciousness found in Descartes,⁷ Condillac,⁸ Maine de Biran,⁹ Comte,¹⁰ Bergson,¹¹ Maurice Pradines,¹² Gabriel Marcel,¹³ Gaston Bachelard,¹⁴ and others, with which Sartre (like Merleau-Ponty) was undoubtedly familiar, at least from his university studies.¹⁵

Sartre was strongly interested in empirical psychology as his earlier studies of the imagination¹⁶ confirm; but he appears less taken with Gestalt psychology than Merleau-Ponty. Indeed, Sartre's chapter provisionally maps out much of the ground that would later be retraced in more detail – albeit in a different register – by Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) and the posthumously published *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968, hereafter 'VI'): the Müller-Lyer illusion, the phenomenon of the supposed 'double sensation' (when one hand touches the other or when the opposing fingers of one hand touch each other), the Gestalt figure-ground structure of perception, the artificiality of the standard psychological concept of the sensation,¹⁷ the phenomenological nature of experienced pain, the temporality of experience, and so on. Crucially, Sartre introduces the very notion of 'flesh' (*la chair*), which is now more usually associated with Merleau-Ponty, and develops the flesh as that where intercorporeity is possible. For Sartre, flesh is the locus of contingency and intercorporeity. Flesh is 'the pure contingency of presence' (BN 343, EN 410).¹⁸ Fleshly incarnation is the living testimony to my contingency. Moreover, it is the experience of this flesh precisely in its sheer given contingency that gives rise to nausea. All flesh, for Sartre, has this nauseating character (BN 357, EN 425): 'A dull and inescapable nausea perpetually reveals my body to my consciousness' (BN 338, EN 404).¹⁹

Our deep sense of ourselves, for Sartre, is as a non-thingly living flesh, neither pure object nor pure consciousness. Furthermore, my flesh interacts with and even *constitutes* the other's flesh, especially in the acts of touching and caressing: 'The caress reveals the Other's flesh as flesh to myself *and to*

the Other... it is my body as flesh which causes the Other's flesh to be born [*qui fait naître la chair d'autrui*]' (BN 390, EN 459–60).

A three-fold ontology of the body

Sartre offers a many-layered analysis of the body as encountered from different perspectives, which he terms *ontological* approaches, in line with the general aspiration expressed in the subtitle of *Being and Nothingness* to be 'an essay on phenomenological ontology'. Sartre applies this formal structure on his reflections because he is convinced that the philosophical tradition has misunderstood the body due to the fact that the orders of *knowing* and the orders of *being* have been conflated or inverted. Confusion between different 'ontological levels' (*plans ontologiques*, BN 305, EN 367), 'orders of reality' (*ordres de réalité*, BN 304, EN 366) or 'orders of being' (cf. *l'ordre de l'être*, BN 305, EN 367)²⁰ is the cause of our philosophical problems concerning the nature of embodiment. Those who have made the objective body-for-others the basis of all understanding of the body have 'radically reversed the terms of the problem' (BN 358, EN 426). In effect, as Sartre evocatively puts it, this is 'to put the corpse at the origin of the living body' (BN 344, EN 411).

Sartre now wants to develop a set of reflections that follows the order of being, the *ontological* order, the various 'levels' (*plans*) of our understanding of the body. This 'ontological' approach is reflected in the tripartite structure of the chapter: 'The Body as Being-for-itself: Facticity' (*Le corps comme être pour soi: La facticité*); 'The Body-for-Others' (*Le-corps-pour-autrui*) and what Sartre awkwardly calls 'The Third Ontological Dimension of the Body' (*La troisième dimension ontologique du corps*).

The first two levels map the distinction between the body as grasped by oneself (for itself) and the body as perceived or seen by others (including the other's own body). I have one kind of knowledge of the body in my experience and another experience of the body given through the perspective of the other: the body as it is 'for me' and the body as it is 'for others' or 'for the other' (*pour l'autrui*). These two ontological dimensions in relation to the body have to be distinguished: they are, according to Sartre, 'incommunicable' and 'irreconcilable': 'Either it [the body] is a thing among other things, or else it is that by which things are revealed to me. But it cannot be both at the same time' (BN 304, EN 366). Sartre also characterizes these dimensions as '*le corps-existé*', the body as existed or lived, and '*le corps-vu*', the body as seen from the perspective of the other (BN 358, EN 426).

The first 'ontological dimension' approaches the body from the manner in which, as Sartre puts it, 'I exist my body' (*J'existe mon corps*, BN 351, EN 428). This is the body as 'non-thing', as a transparent medium for my experience of the world, but also as somehow *surpassed* toward the world. The material objective body is the body as understood in an idealized way by the objective sciences (physics, biology, physiology, and so on); it is the body

one hears about from others. It is, in Sartre's pithy phrase, the 'body of others' (*le corps d'autrui*), the body in the region of the anonymous other. This second dimension includes the manner in which my body is utilized by the other (and utilized by myself occupying the role of third-person observer of my body), for example, the way I encounter my body as a 'tool of tools' in its instrumental interaction with things in the world. Sartre says: 'We do not use this instrument, for we *are* it' (BN 324, EN 388). Sartre has interesting things to say about this tool which is not experienced as a tool. Unfortunately, further exploration of this topic (and its connection to Heidegger's analysis of *Zuhandensein*) is outside the scope of this chapter.

The third dimension is the most complicated and difficult to grasp – it is exploring the manner in which 'I exist for myself as a body known by the Other' (BN 351, EN 419), what Martin C. Dillon has characterized as 'the body-for-itself-for-others'.²¹ This is the body in its intersubjective, intercorporeal, interactive dimension. The body, Sartre says, is a site of *action* – including interaction. According to this ontological dimension, I experience my own body not on my own, but as reflected in the experience of it by others, the dialectics of which Sartre has explored perhaps more than any other phenomenologist (with the exception of Levinas). For example, Sartre writes: 'I cannot be embarrassed by my own body as I exist it. It is my body as it may exist for the other which may embarrass me' (BN 353, EN 421). This third dimension of the body includes the manner in which I experience it under the 'omnipresent' – but often empirically 'absent' – *look* (*regard*) of the other, as in the case of shame, shyness or embarrassment, where I experience how the other sees me. I am, as Sartre says, 'imprisoned in an absence' (BN 363, 430). The other is a kind of 'internal haemorrhage' (BN 257, EN 315) in my world, which robs me of the total control I seek to exercise over it.

For Sartre, the body as I encounter it through others is a contested domain: 'Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others' (*Le conflit est le sens original de l'être-pour-autrui*, BN 364, EN 431). Despite the life-and-death struggle with the other, the other provides a necessary function: the other reveals to me something I cannot learn on my own: *how I really am* (see BN 354, EN 421). In fact, Sartre rejects the analogical constitution of the other's body on the basis of my experience of my own, since I must already have the other as object and have myself as object (which requires already being in the gaze of the other).

Sartre's threefold ontological distinction is awkward since the ontological categories appear to overlap (as the body can be experienced in two ways in relation to others – as instrument or object or by me as seen by the other) and also because there are not three bodies as the ontological distinction might imply. However, there is something both original and insightful about his approach. He claims that my experiencing my body in the gaze of the other does not make it a simple object to me; rather, I experience the 'flight of the body which I exist' (BN 354, EN 422). In other words, the other presents

me as I really am and also takes away control of my body-image from me. The other is entwined with my body from the start. Sartre begins not with the body seeing or touching itself, but with the body as seen or touched by the other. There is a co-constitution going on between my body and the other, which challenges more traditional approaches to the constitution of the other's body through empathy found especially in Scheler.²²

Le corps existé

Despite the priority science gives to the body-for-others, Sartre begins with the body as lived and experienced from the first-person perspective. In this sense, as he makes clear, the lived, experienced body (*le corps-existé*) – corresponding to Husserl's animate body (*Leib*) – is never to be construed as an 'object' at a remove from consciousness, and certainly not a *material* object. Hence, Sartre asserts: 'The body is the psychic object par excellence – *the only psychic object*' (BN 347, EN 414).²³ This is an important claim. The body permeates our psyche; it is present even in dreams, and the body we experience from within is itself psychically constituted.

Sartre distinguishes between this psychic body experienced from *within*, from which perspective it is, in a sense, invisible, 'impalpable', even 'ineffable' (*ineffable*, BN 354, EN 421),²⁴ and the body as object in the world (as seen from the perspective of the 'other'). Sartre here speaks about 'the physical point of view', the 'point of view of the outside, of exteriority' (*le point de vue du dehors, de l'extériorité*, BN 305, EN 367). I do not know *experientially* that I have a brain or endocrine glands (BN 303, EN 365); that is something I learn from others (even a 'headache' or 'brain-freeze' does not reveal the brain as an 'in itself'). Likewise, I do not know experientially the inner anatomy of my body. Of course, I have, to put it in different terms, a 'folk anatomy' – where I *think* I feel my heart, stomach, ribs, liver, and so on. This is guided by a kind of inner sense of our organs, the felt beating of the heart, the felt expansion of the lungs, and so on. This can be more or less well informed by science, more or less accurate, and this scientific map of the body structure, while it is superimposed on the felt body, does not necessarily coincide with the body *as felt*, as immediately *experienced* in what earlier psychologists misleadingly called 'inner perception'. Sartre makes this clear in his discussion of his experience of an ulcerous stomach:

At this level, however, 'the stomach' is an inexpressible; it can neither be named nor thought. Objective empirical thought... is the knowing of a certain objective nature possessed by the stomach. I know that it has the shape of a bagpipe, that it is a sack, that it produces juices... In any case, all this can constitute my illness, not as I enjoy possession of it, but as it escapes me. The stomach and the ulcer become directions of flight, perspectives of alienation from the object which I possess.

(BN 356, EN 424)

In contrast to this projected 'objective body' (the object of 'objectivating knowing', *savoir objectivant*, BN 355, EN 423), Sartre maintains there is an immediately, but somewhat indefinitely, *intuited* body²⁵ (akin to Merleau-Ponty's 'phenomenal body' with its *schéma corporel*) – one experiences it in attempting to walk a tightrope or learn to ski, or in the eye of the other who approves or disapproves.²⁶ Most of the time, this felt body is not objectified but rather is experienced in a diffuse, amorphous and almost invisible and impalpable manner (which is precisely its mode of appearing). This non-apprehended body swims in the world, as it were, unnoticed.

This intuitively felt body becomes obtrusive in illness (I become dizzy and lose my balance), failure (the stone is too heavy to lift), disability (I cannot feel my leg) or in psychosomatic conditions (in anorexia nervosa I *experience* my body as too gross),²⁷ or, as Sartre emphasizes with great force and originality, in the look of the other. In *Ideas* II, Husserl had already discussed the difference between normal cases and those where something gets in the way, – for example, touching a surface with a blister on one's finger (*Ideas* II §18, 66; Hua IV 61); seeing yellow after consuming the anthelmintic drug santonin (*ibid.*, 67; Hua IV 62). But Sartre's original contribution is to distinguish the felt body as experienced on one's own ('for itself') from the body as felt escaping from me in the gaze of the other (the third ontological dimension). Sartre's account of the second ontological category again has two aspects. First, there is the constitution of the 'objective' body as that which is the normal model of the body in the sciences. Second, and this largely follows Heidegger's account of *Zuhandensein*, there is the body that mediates the instrumentality of things in the world and itself (as hands, eyes, and so on) is revealed as an instrument of instruments, 'being-a-tool-among-tools' (BN 352, EN 420); a centre of reference in the world.

According to Sartre, most of the time my orientation is not toward this vaguely felt, internally apprehended body; rather, my intention is to the 'world' or, more exactly, to *my* world in the first instance. In Sartre's language, the body (itself a transcendence beyond my immanence) is itself *transcended* in an act of intending toward the world; the body becomes a 'transcendence transcended' (BN 347, EN 414). Against this, Sartre argues, the psychologist's concept of subjectivity is of an immanence which cannot get outside of itself (BN 314, EN 377). Furthermore, while there is a profound sense that the body is available to me *as an object*, for Sartre, when I see and touch parts of my body I am, in these situations, still experiencing my body *from without*, from what Sartre calls the point of view of an 'other': 'I am the other in relation to my eye' (BN 304, EN 366). I can see my eye as a sense organ but I cannot 'see the seeing' (*ibid.*). I see my hand, Sartre acknowledges, but only in the way that I see the inkwell. (This experience is well documented in Sartre's other writings, for example, in *Nausea*.) For Sartre, I cannot see the *sensitivity* of the hand or even the 'mineness' of my hand: 'For

my hand reveals to me the resistance of objects, their hardness or softness, but not *itself*. Thus I see this hand only in the way that I see this inkwell. I unfold a distance between it and me...' (BN 304, EN 366). The notion of a 'distance' between the ego and the experience of the body is something that had already been discussed by Husserl and his student Edith Stein. Stein writes that sensation is always localized at a distance from the ego.²⁸ There is a kind of experienced distance between myself and my body yet my body cannot be separated from me.²⁹

Sartre is claiming – here in disagreement with Merleau-Ponty, as we shall see – that my sight, and indeed my touch, gives me my body in the same way as it is seen or touched *by another*. Husserl and Merleau-Ponty both emphasize the continued presence of the body felt from within in all cases of perceiving, whereas Sartre maintains that our perceivings *objectify*, externalize and alienate what we perceive and also displace us from ourselves. What Sartre calls 'thetic consciousness' is objectifying; for Husserl, it is reifying and objectifying. I see the bodies of others (in scientific textbooks, and so on) and conclude that I have a body like that of others. Physicians and others have an experience of my body, but they experience it as a piece of the world, 'in the midst of the world [*au milieu du monde*]' (BN 303, EN 365). This is the body in its 'being for others [*être-pour-autrui*]' (BN 305, Fr 367). Sartre's originality is his claim that my own body is present to me in this way most of the time. I see my hand as something relatively extraneous, at a distance from me, as an object in the world.³⁰

There is, then, a kind of 'for-others' objectivity of the body. Nevertheless, Sartre strongly rejects the traditional view that we should begin from this physicalist or second- or third-person view of the body as a body among other physical objects. In fact, Sartre's analysis begins with the recognition of the 'insurmountable difficulties' (BN 303, EN 365) involved in attempting to unite an account of experiential consciousness (arrived at from within) with the more common 'externalist' (*du dehors*) (BN 303, EN 365) account of the living body possessing organs, a nervous system, and so on. The failure of previous philosophy is that it has, mistakenly and indeed absurdly, attempted to unite the paradoxical first-person experience of one's consciousness³¹ with a conception of body that is in fact derived from others, or, as Sartre puts it, 'the body of others' (*corps des autres*) (BN 303, EN 365). This is a confusion of ontological levels, or, in Ryle's parlance, a 'category mistake'. For Sartre, one cannot begin (Cartesian-style) from the interiority of reflective consciousness and then attempt to graft on the physical body. One cannot assume that the third-person body belongs to the same ontological order as that of the transcendence-transcended.

Rejecting this attempt to unite mind and body as hopeless, Sartre maintains that the starting point for any phenomenological description has to be the recognition that our naive experience is first and foremost not *of the body* strictly speaking at all, but rather *of the world*, or the *situation*. As Sartre

asserts early in *Being and Nothingness*: 'Our being is immediately "in situation"; that is, it arises in enterprises and knows itself first in so far as it is reflected in those enterprises' (BN 39, EN 76). Sartre reiterates this claim in the chapter on the body: 'the body is identified with the whole world inasmuch as the world is the total situation of the for-itself and the measure of its existence' (BN 309, EN 372).

Sartre emphasizes in all his writings that we are first and foremost *in the world* or 'in the situation'. This 'in-the-worldness', so to speak, of our experience is the central lesson that Sartre believes phenomenology has given to correct both traditional empiricist and idealist approaches to the relation of subject and object. For instance, in his short but important essay 'Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea of Husserl's Phenomenology' (1939), Sartre declares that Husserl's phenomenology has put us in direct contact with the world and restored the world to us: 'Consciousness and the world are given in one stroke: essentially external to consciousness, the world is nevertheless essentially relative to consciousness.' And again: 'Husserl has restored to things their horror and their charm. He has restored to us the world of artists and prophets: frightening, hostile, dangerous, with its havens of mercy and love.'³² For Sartre, phenomenology has decisively rejected all efforts to give a *representationalist* account of knowledge whereby external reality is somehow represented in the mind of the knower. Sartre wants instead to empty out the knower into the world; to overcome the false concept of consciousness as a box with contents. (Husserl also rejects this conception of consciousness.) While, on one standard approach, consciousness may be considered an 'absolute interiority' (BN 305, EN 367), which somehow is directly accessible to itself (in illustration, Sartre quotes Descartes' *Meditations* claim that the soul is easier to know than the body), Sartre rejects this notion as a construction of idealism.

Furthermore, Sartre connects this, as it might be termed, 'externalist' orientation of intentionality as found in Husserlian phenomenology with Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* as 'being-in-the-world' (*In-der-Welt-sein*, *être-dans-le-monde*) (BN 306, EN 368) with its facticity and finitude. Sartre absolutely accepts the facticity of embodiment. I have the body I have in this place and time; that is an absolutely meaningless, contingent truth. That is 'facticity'. Sartre's adoption of the Heideggerian concept of being-in-the-world overcomes any kind of pre-Kantian conception of the world as divided into 'things in themselves' and subjects. For Sartre, all being is experienced in and through subjectivity; just as subjectivity is essentially and primarily world-directed. In BN Sartre writes: 'Man and the world are relative beings (*des êtres relatifs*), and the principle of their being is the relation' (BN 308, EN 370). Sartre, therefore, fully accepts and indeed emphasizes the revolutionary character of describing human existence as 'being-in-the-world'. Our experience is world-oriented; we find ourselves in the midst of worldly situations. We *transcend* or surpass (*dépasser*) ourselves toward a world.

Attempting to give his own twist to the Heideggerian conception, Sartre gives this notion of 'being-in-the-world' a more dynamic sense: 'to be is to fly out into the world'.³³ For Sartre the Husserlian phenomenological conception of 'transcendence in immanence' means essentially that the whole thrust of human subjectivity is to overcome or cancel itself out, 'nihilate' itself (*néantiser*, in Sartre's terminology) by *intending* toward the world. Intentionality is world-directedness; human desire and knowing is toward-the-world and already in the world. Sartre frequently speaks of the manner in which the embodied consciousness has to 'surpass' (*dépasse*) itself. This 'surpassing' constitutes the essence of intentionality understood as self-transcendence.³⁴ It is because of our intentional directedness to the world that we have to overcome, surpass, transcend the body. But, of course, this surpassing of the body does not by any means eliminate it: 'The body is necessary again as the obstacle to be surpassed in order to be in the world; that is, the obstacle which I am to myself' (BN 326, EN 391). For Sartre, our transcendence toward the world is part of what he takes to be our original 'upsurge in the world' (*surgissement dans le monde*).³⁵ 'But it is we ourselves who decide these very dimensions by our very upsurge [*notre surgissement*] into the world and it is very necessary that we decide them, for otherwise they would not be at all' (BN 308, EN 370). Throughout *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre speaks of this 'upsurge' (*surgissement*) of the *pour-soi* toward the world. This 'upsurge' has both a certain necessity and a certain contingency, the combination going by the name of 'facticity'.

A significant part of Sartre's claim is that by intending the world, humans also *constitute* or *make* the world. It comes into being at the same time as our intentional engagement with it. Sartre talks about the nature of the 'for-itself' as necessarily surpassing the world, but also as causing 'there to be a world by surpassing it' (BN 326–7, EN 391).³⁶ Indeed, it is my flesh that creates the flesh of the other, and so on.

Nevertheless, despite the fact the object of our experience is *the world* (things, events, projects), it is also true that the world is experienced *in and through the lived body*. Sartre, following Husserl's phenomenological tradition, insists that consciousness can only be consciousness as *embodied* or *incarnate*: the body is the 'condition of possibility' for the psyche (BN 338, EN 404). Embodiment situates and locates consciousness, gives it the orientation and point of view that makes it possible as consciousness, as for-itself: 'the very nature of the for-itself demands that it be body, that is, that its nihilating escape from being should be made in the form of an engagement in the world' (BN 309, EN 372). I am in contact with the world through my body: things are experienced as heavy or light, near or far. There is a visual scene because I have eyes that can see and also be seen. As Merleau-Ponty says: 'to see is to enter a universe of beings that display themselves, and they would not do this if they could not be hidden behind each other ... in other words to look at an object is to inhabit it.' Moreover: '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' (PP 214, Fr. 248). The room feels warm because we are sensitive to heat. Other living bodies too present themselves in a special way. We experience them as *sensitive*. (Sartre claims, however, that we distance ourselves from that experiencing in our ordinary behaviour.) In pre-reflective, normal consciousness we are entirely oriented to and in the world. We are *worldly* through and through. We are, in Husserl's words, 'children of the world' (*Weltkinder*). For Merleau-Ponty, we are 'con-natural with the world' (PP 217, Fr. 251). Sartre too emphasizes that the world is a world that has been humanized: 'the world is human' (BN 218, EN 270). Everywhere in the world, all one encounters is oneself. The world is coloured because we have eyes that pick up colour. The steps appear as something we can climb. As Sartre puts it: 'The body is the totality of meaningful relationships to the world... The body in fact could not appear without sustaining meaningful relations with the totality of what is' (BN 344, EN 411).

Sartre's claim is that consciousness is primarily an active engagement with the world, which is not necessarily *explicitly* conscious of itself at the same time. Explicit, reflective self-consciousness is not a part of our original, 'unreflected' or 'pre-reflective' conscious engagement with the world. As he puts it, if I am chasing a tram, there is only consciousness of the tram-having-to-be-overtaken, nothing else.³⁷ There is a tram *to be caught*; a road surface *to be walked*, and so on. I experience all instrumentalities (handles, tools) because I have a body and yet I do not encounter my body. Rather, I encounter objects that are to be lifted, that are to be walked around. There is, Sartre says, a quality to reality that is well captured by the Latin gerundive or future passive participle: *Carthago delenda est*; Carthage is 'to be destroyed' (for the Romans), or 'to be served' (for the Carthaginians). Reality is always revealed in the intentional project of the subject engaged in the situation. Sartre's insistence on the lack of self-consciousness of our original 'positional' or 'thetic' consciousness requires him to play down the level of immediate consciousness of our body and our perceivings. He claims instead that we have an 'immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself' (*rapport immédiat et non cognitive de soi à soi*) (BN xxix, EN 19).

Merleau-Ponty makes a similar – if somewhat more carefully modulated – claim concerning our preoccupation with the world and our mutual embodied belonging with it. For Merleau-Ponty, as for Sartre and Husserl, consciousness is essentially embodied:

In so far as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world.

(PP 408, Fr. 467)

Merleau-Ponty goes on to make an important point which is relevant also for Sartre's ontological exploration of the body:

The ontological world and body which we find at the core of the subject are not the world or body as idea [*le monde en idée ou le corps en idée*] but on the one hand the world itself contracted into a comprehensive grasp, and on the other the body itself as a knowing body [*comme corps-connaissant*]. (PP 408, Fr. 467)

The usual concepts of objective world in itself and objective body as such have to be replaced by the phenomenological concept of an animate, lived embodiment in the world as the living context for the embodied subject who has an immediate but almost impalpable sense of itself.

Moreover, as Merleau-Ponty emphasizes in PP, even in moments where our intimate consciousness of our body takes the upper hand, this by no means cancels out *the world*:

Even if I become absorbed in the experience of my body and in the solitude of sensations, I do not succeed in abolishing all reference of my life to a world. At every moment some intention springs afresh from me, if it is only toward the things round about me which catch my eye, or toward the instants, which are thrown up, and which thrust back into the past what I have just lived through. I never become completely a thing in the world; the density of existence as a thing always evades me, my own substance slips away from me internally, and some intention is always foreshadowed.

(PP 165, Fr. 192–3)³⁸

Merleau-Ponty goes on to talk, in terms reminiscent of Sartre, about the manner in which the body becomes prey to an 'active nothingness' (*un néant actif*, PP 165, Fr. 193) when it reaches forward to its projects, to its temporal futurity.

The problem as it will emerge in Sartre is the following: given that each of us creates the world through our intentional engagements, do we – and if so how do we – all belong to the one world? Does not each of us have his or her own projected world, his or her 'gerundive'? Sartre's third ontological level, the body as seen by others and as I see others seeing it, is his attempt to introduce this necessary intersubjectivity to the discussion of the body; but the notion of 'the' world remains something contested in Sartre's account, except that he insists that we always experience it as a mute, resistant, monistic 'being-in-itself'.

The lived body: omnipresent but inapprehensible

For Sartre, in our experience the body is somehow 'inapprehensible' and yet always present. It is this 'inapprehensible given' (*cet insaisissable donné*) (BN 327, EN 392). 'I exist my body' (BN 329, EN 394; see also BN 351, EN 418), yet the body in itself is 'inapprehensible' and 'ineffable'. This is another Husserlian position, one that is repeated by Merleau-Ponty: the body is somehow present in all perception.³⁹ It escapes our consciousness and is not objectified in our incarnate acting and doing. In fact, the body as lived is difficult to localize. Sartre recognizes that the body spreads itself over everything with which it is in contact. When I enter a room, I see the person's desk, the chair he sits it, and so on. His bodily presence in a sense infects the room. The body is somehow omnipresent, as Sartre writes:

My body is everywhere: the bomb which destroys *my* house also damages my body in so far the house was already an indication of my body. This is why the body always extends across the tool which it utilizes: it is at the end of the cane on which I lean and against the earth; it is at the end of the telescope which shows me the stars; it is on the chair, in the whole house; for it is my adaptation to these tools.

(BN 325, EN 389)

Sartre describes the body as omnipresent because it is our way of being inserted into the situation. When I am manoeuvring my car through narrow gates, my awareness is outside myself and along the surface of the car. When reversing, my consciousness is out at the rear of the car.

The body is the for-itself

Throughout *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre invokes the distinction between the 'in-itself' (*en-soi*) and the 'for itself' (*pour-soi*) in different and sometimes incompatible ways. This distinction, inherited from Hegel, cannot be read as a simple, ontological one of two orders of being. Sartre, following Heidegger, insists that ontology can only be done *through* phenomenology. The in-itself is always experienced through the for-itself; likewise the for-itself is supported by the in-itself. Sartre takes an important step forward when the body is identified with the for-itself: 'The body is nothing other than the for-itself; it is not an in-itself *in* the for-itself; for in that case it would solidify everything' (BN 309, EN 372).

Sartre, therefore, identifies the lived body (my body – not the objective body of the other) with the *for-itself*. The body as a for-itself 'is never a given (*un donné*) that I can know' (BN 309, EN 372). It is everywhere something that is surpassed and hence, in Sartre's language, 'nihilated'. The body is that which I nihilate (*ce que je néantise*) (BN 309, EN 372). On the other

hand, the body provides the 'situation' of the for-itself as the foundation of its possibilities. It 'indicates' my possibilities of being in the world. Sartre's strong claim is that the body is the very order of the world as ordered by the *for-itself*. It is the body which gives the subject its orientation and point of view. However, Sartre repeatedly points out that we 'surpass' or 'transcend' the body in seeking to experience the world. We go beyond our sensations and limb movements to apprehend the world directly. This leads Sartre to explore some essential 'paradoxes' (Merleau-Ponty's term in *The Visible and the Invisible*) or oppositions that belong to our embodiment.

For Sartre, paradoxically, while the body is that which necessarily introduces the notion of perspective and point of view, at the same time the body is a *contingent* viewpoint on the world. Our body is the very *contingency* of our being: our facticity. Consciousness never ceases to have a body (or to be a body) even when that body does not intrude, as in the case of being in pain. This perpetual apprehension of the body is what Sartre calls 'nausea' and which he takes to be there prior to all feelings of disgust, vertigo, etc. (BN 338, EN 404). This nausea is a kind of ontological unease with having a body, with being limited to a point of view.

The for-itself is not closed off from the in-itself but is already in the world, it is a 'relation to the world' (*rapport au monde*, BN 306, EN 368). The body belongs to a lived space, where there is left, right, here, there, up, down, and so on. These lived mutual relations (from which the subject cannot be abstracted) can only be suspended in an abstract scientific view of space, a 'world without men' (BN 307, EN 369). Let us now explore Sartre's sense of bodily experience in more detail.

Vision, touch and the 'double sensation'

Sartre's phenomenological discussion of the body focuses on the concept of the living flesh, especially as experienced in touching and being touched as well as in being seen (which has priority over seeing). Sartre in particular singles out the phenomenon of the double sensation. The phenomenon of the 'double sensation' was a recurrent theme in nineteenth-century German psychology.⁴⁰ Indeed, recognition of the peculiarity of touch can be traced back to Aristotle who, in *De anima*, accorded an extremely important place to touch among all the senses. Aristotle discusses a 'touch illusion' whereby one crosses the fingers of one hand and touches an object with the outside of the fingers and has the sense of touching two distinct objects. Aristotle's illusion is taken up and discussed by E. H. Weber in his groundbreaking studies of touch.⁴¹ It is possible that Husserl learned of the concept of 'double sensation' from the Göttingen psychologists as he employs the term 'double sensation' (*Doppelempfindung*) in *Ideas* II §36 (152–4; Hua IV: 144–7), and, indeed, had discussed the phenomenon even earlier in his *Thing and Space* lectures of 1907.⁴² There he discusses the

example of one hand touching the other, and the manner in which sensations of touching can be reversed into sensations of being touched. Husserl here speaks of this 'intertwining' and of the constitution of the physical object with the constitution of the 'ego-body' (*Ichleib*).

Indeed, in the twentieth century, phenomenology was to the forefront in the exploration of the sense of touch.⁴³ Husserl, in several studies but especially in *Ideas II*, is interested in unpacking the role of the five senses in building up our sense of the physical world, spatiality and of our embodiment within the world.⁴⁴ In particular he is interested in the interaction between the sense of vision and that of touch in the manner in which they build up and disclose the unified spatial world we experience.⁴⁵

In *Thing and Space* §47, as part of a general discussion of the phenomenon Husserl calls 'kinaesthesia', he discusses what 'sensations' contribute to the experience of spatiality. In the previous section he had discussed whether visual and touch sensations separately underpin differing conceptions of space, that is, visual space or tactile space. He also discusses the sensations that give the sense of movement. In *Thing and Space* §47 he claims that the 'ego-body' (*Ichleib*) is a kind of object that is different from physical objects. Husserl's first point is that visual experiences (seeing the visual scape) are not experienced as 'localized' in the body in contradistinction to the way in which I locate touch sensations in the body. Vision in this sense is 'transparent'. Husserl then discusses the fact that although I touch the smoothness or roughness of the object, I also have a sense of that smoothness 'on or in the appearing finger tips'. He goes on:

If with my left hand I touch my right, then along with the touch sensations and the kinaesthetic sensations there is constituted, reciprocally, the appearance of the left and right hands, the one moving over the other in such and such a manner. At the same time, however, i.e., with a reversal of the apprehension, the self-moving appears in an other sense, which applies only to the body, and in general the same group of sensations which have an objectivating function are apprehended, through a reversal of the attention and apprehension, as subjectivating and specifically as something which members of the body, those that appear in the objectivating function, 'have' as localized within themselves.

(*Thing and Space* 137; Hua XVI 162)

Husserl claims only to be interested in the 'intertwining' (*Verflechtung*) between the experiences. He sees the sensations as having an objectivating function of allowing the object (smooth surface) to appear, as well as manifesting the body touching it (fingertips), and the appearance of the sensation of the body as a 'bearer of sensations'. Husserl's analysis is very complex. He denies that certain 'kinetic sensations' have any 'matter', but they do allow for an apprehension that transforms them in a more determinate

way. Husserl returns to these meditations on the various 'strata' in the constitution of 'visual space' and 'tactile space'.

In *Ideas II* §36 he is interested in the manner in which the lived-body (*Leib*) is constituted as a 'bearer of localized sensations'. These 'localized sensations' he also calls 'sensings' (Husserl uses the neologism *Empfindnisse*), which are not directly sensed but can be brought to attention by a shift of apprehension. 'Localization', for Husserl, means both that the sensations are somehow distinguished with regard to a certain place in the body, and present the body as objectified in space in a specific 'fleshly' way (see *Ideas II* 153; Hua IV 145). In this section (§36) Husserl introduces the situation of one hand touching the other: in this case, the right hand touching the left. The touching hand has to move in order to feel the smoothness and soft texture of the touched hand. This touching gives rise to sensations, which Husserl calls 'indicational sensations' of movement, and with them come the 'representational' sensations or 'appearances' of smoothness. These representational senses of smoothness in fact belong to the touching right hand but they are 'objectivated' in the touched left hand. But Husserl goes on to say that in the touched left hand I also have sensations which are active and 'localized' within it. In other words, the left hand is *sensitive to being touched* and this sensitivity is its own peculiar kind of sensation complex. 'If I speak of the physical thing, "left hand," then I am abstracting from these sensations... If I do include them, then it is not that the physical thing is now richer, instead it *becomes Body [Leib]*, it *senses*' (*Ideas II* 152; Hua IV 145). As with Sartre, to grasp the hand as a hand is to abstract from or, as Sartre would put it, 'surpass' this field of sensory experiences and objectify the hand as a distinct object on its own. If I apprehend the hand with its sensings, Husserl continues, then I am apprehending a living body (*Leib*).

In this context, Husserl speaks of the sensation being 'doubled' (*Ideas II* 153; Hua IV 145) when one hand touches or pinches the other. Furthermore, Husserl (like Katz and later Merleau-Ponty, as we shall see) notes that the sensations can linger after the touching ceases and the hand or fingers have been removed. Husserl distinguishes between sensations that are interpreted as properties of the object and the sensings themselves, which he speaks of as 'indicational or presentational' (*Ideas II* 154; Hua IV 146). Husserl claims that each hand experiences this 'double sensation'. Each hand has a sensing and a sensed and both occur simultaneously. Moreover, Husserl makes this 'double sensation' to be a part of touch but not of vision: 'in the case of an *object constituted purely visually* we have *nothing* comparable' (*Ideas II* §37 155; Hua IV 147). Likewise, we see colours, but there is no localized sensing of the experiencing of colour or of the eyes that are doing the seeing: 'I do not see myself, my body, the way I touch myself' (*Ideas II* §37 155; Hua IV 148). I do not constitute my eye as an external object in the same way I constitute the touching hand as an object over and against a second touched object. All

Husserl will allow is that the eye can also be a centre for touch sensations (the eyeball can be touched, we can feel the movement of the eye in the eye socket, through 'muscle sensations', and so on). Husserl concludes: 'The role of the visual sensations in the correlative constitution of the body and external things is thus different from that of the sensations of touch' (*Ideas* II §37 156; Hua IV 148).

Husserl's reflections on the sensory constitution of embodiment and spatiality had an immediate impact in Germany. During Husserl's sojourn at Göttingen (1901–16), he had a younger student and colleague, the Gestalt psychologist David Katz,⁴⁶ there.⁴⁷ Katz developed the most detailed phenomenological analysis of the sensation of touch in his classic 1925 study *Der Aufbau der Tastwelt* (*The World of Touch*). In Göttingen, Katz carried out extensive empirical examination of the sense of touch, the different movements of the hand, the difference between touch in sighted and blind persons, and so on. Katz was influenced by Ernst Heinrich Weber's earlier studies of touch. In *Der Tastsinn*, for instance, Weber discussed whether two sensations arise when sensitive areas touch each other. He claimed that the two sensations do not merge into one: a cold limb touching a warm limb reveals both heat and cold; or a hand touching the forehead.⁴⁸ Weber is concerned with which body part feels like the subject and which the object. In one hand touching the other (palm touching the back of the hand) he explains the object as that which has a thinner epidermis. Katz emphasized the formative role of movement in touch and criticized the assumption of what he called 'temporal atomism' in regard to touch.

In the section entitled 'One's own body as a tactual object' in the *World of Touch*, Katz makes note of the distinction between the objective and subjective poles of such experience, the motionless part of the body generally being experienced as the object. But the subjective experience associated with either pole may stand out as a whole and, through attentional effort, one can also make both tactile experiences equally present. Near the end of the section Katz remarks:

I have found that the greatest difficulties occur in analyzing those double impressions that are obtained when the fingers of one hand touch the same fingers on the other hand, or when the fingers of one hand oppose each other and thus mutually touch.

Katz, unlike Husserl, does not appear to have a clear analysis of what happens when the fingers touch each other.

Both Katz and Merleau-Ponty maintain that movement is as essential to touch as light is to vision. Movement is, as it were, the *medium* of touch. Merleau-Ponty relies heavily on Katz's study in his discussion of touch in PP (see esp. 315–17; Fr. 366–8). For instance, Merleau-Ponty draws on Katz to support the claim that temporality is an integral aspect of touching.

Not only must the fingers be moved over a surface in objective time, but the temporal extension of the touched sensation is an important feature in our sense of the spatial continuity of the surface. As Merleau-Ponty writes: 'Movement and time are not only an objective condition of knowing touch, but a phenomenal component of tactile data' (*des données tactiles*) (PP 315, EN 364). Katz particularly emphasized the role of the hand and the range and complexity of its various modalities of touching, stroking, grasping, poking, rubbing, and so on. Katz also distinguished the sense of something vibrating and the sense of pressure. And Merleau-Ponty, following Katz, emphasizes the hand as a tool for exploring space. However, as Merleau-Ponty says, it is not strictly speaking the hand which touches but the whole body. Nevertheless, a point Husserl and Edith Stein both make, there is a sense in which I keep the sense of touch at a distance from myself: 'It is not I who touch, it is my body' (PP 316, 365).

In contrast to Husserl, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the parallels and continuities between touch and vision which are more usually contrasted in regard to constituting the sense of materiality and spatiality. For instance, it is often thought that the sense of touch disappears when one lifts one's hand off one kind of surface before touching another. Merleau-Ponty, on the contrary, thinks that a kind of indefinite sense of touch remains. It is not, he says, 'a tactile nothingness' but 'a tactile space devoid of matter, a tactile background' (PP 316, Fr. 365). Similarly, for both Katz and Merleau-Ponty, a tactile memory lingers. When I touch the surface of a material (for example, silk or fur), I have a sense of what that surface feels like and I will expect that sense in future contacts with the material. There is a kind of 'memory' in my body for what it feels like to lean against a wall, to have my back touching a chair, and so on. Through this memory I gain a sense of the 'constancy' of the object (PP 317, Fr. 366).

Katz distinguishes between the subjective (I feel my finger being pricked) and the objective (I am touching something sharp) dimensions of touch (and sight), and believes this varies in different experiences. Normally, one is oriented to the objective but, in the case of pain for instance, the subjective predominates. Touching a surface with gloved fingers still gives an impression of a surface outside the glove.

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the manner in which touch brings body and world literally into contact with one each other, unlike the situation of sight, which gives me the sense that I am 'everywhere and nowhere':

Tactile experience, on the other hand, adheres to the surface of the body; we cannot unfold it before us and it never quite becomes an object. Correspondingly, as the subject of touch, I cannot flatter myself that I am everywhere and nowhere; I cannot forget in this case that it is through my body that I go to the world.

(PP 316, Fr. 365)

Sartre and the 'double sensation'

As we have seen, Sartre clearly distinguishes between my body as it is experienced (ambiguously and non-objectively) by me and the body as it is for the other or even for myself but now occupying the perspective of another. These different 'bodies' are in opposition and in fact are, for Sartre, irreconcilable. That two different views of the body are incompatible is reinforced by Sartre in his discussion of the phenomenon of the double sensation. Sartre claims that this phenomenon is not essential to my embodiment, for it is contingent.⁴⁹ It can be inhibited or entirely removed through morphine making my leg numb and insensitive to being touched. The anaesthetized leg is not the same leg which belongs to my possibility of walking, running, playing football, and so on. To touch and be touched belong to different orders of reality according to Sartre, and it is philosophically pernicious to conflate these different 'orders' or 'levels' of being.⁵⁰ When one hand touches the other, I directly experience the hand that is being touched first. It is only with a certain reflection that I can focus on the sensation in the touching hand. Sartre maintains that this constitutes ontological proof that the 'body-for-me' and the 'body-for-the-other' are different intentional objectivities.

Sartre is challenging fundamental aspects of Husserl's account, which is focused on the sensational 'matter' involved in perception and the differences between seeing and touching. Sartre, on the other hand, sees the 'double sensation' as a misleading phenomenon, which occludes the true *ontological* situation of the different phenomenological bodies. Furthermore, Sartre departs from Husserl in not thinking that vision and touch differ in regard to this doubling. The seeing is not the same as the object seen, for Sartre, and indeed, the two are incomparable dimensions of being. Moreover, for Sartre, mutual sensing cannot take place simultaneously and can be frustrated by an anaesthetic. This 'double sensation' is not an essential characteristic of embodiment.

Interestingly, in the later Merleau-Ponty there is an effort to develop a more metaphysical or indeed ontological approach, an attempt to overcome traditional dualisms in philosophy and to project the 'flesh' as the ambiguous and unitary first principle, an 'element' (in the sense of the four elements) of being (VI 139). Merleau-Ponty writes:

If we can show that the flesh is an ultimate notion, that it is not the union or compound of two substances, but thinkable by itself, if there is a relation of the visible to itself that traverses me and constitutes me as seer, this circle which I do not form, which forms me, this coiling over of the visible upon the visible, can traverse animate bodies as well as my own.

(VI 140)

In his famous chapter on 'The intertwining – the chiasm' in VI, Merleau-Ponty tries to articulate that phenomenological sense in which we find

ourselves as perceivers in a world of the visible. The visible seems to have its own 'in itself' character: 'The visible about us seems to rest in itself' (VI 130), yet we form part of it. We do not have any sense that we create the visible, yet we ourselves are visible within this sphere of visibility: 'my seeing body subtends my visible body, and all the visibles with it' (VI 138). Merleau-Ponty's answer is to try to express this 'intertwining' of visible and vision which for him is at the heart of the notion of flesh and at the heart of the body-world relation.

Merleau-Ponty's metaphysical use of the double sensation, however, is the opposite of Sartre's. Merleau-Ponty wants to claim, paradoxically and counter-intuitively, that both vision and touch have this doubleness. This is a very important point. Seeing our body is a way of orienting to other things in a visible way. My particular orientation is contingent but there must be some orientation in my 'upsurge' in the world.

Conclusion

Sartre's account of the body is subtle, complex and many-layered. Although he is often criticized for his metaphysical claims concerning the gulf between different orders of being (*for-itself* and *in-itself*), in fact his phenomenological account of the body cuts across this crude 'Cartesian' dualism and promotes the inseparability of embodied-being-in-the-world. Sartre invites confusion by using the term 'ontology', but in fact he is speaking about matters as they are phenomenologically manifest. Sartre's account of the body is not as deeply informed by psychological studies as Merleau-Ponty's,⁵¹ but in some respects his account of intersubjective embodied relations (shame, desire, the erotic caress) is more concrete and dynamic. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre disagree to a certain extent about the role of our self-perceivings. Whereas Merleau-Ponty, following Husserl, emphasizes the ineliminability of the felt body in all perceiving, Sartre maintains that our perceivings *objectify* what we perceive. Hence, for Sartre, the phenomenon of 'double sensation' or 'touching-touched' is contingent, irrelevant and indeed falsely described in psychology. For Sartre, the ability to touch oneself or see oneself is a merely contingent feature of our animality and cannot provide 'the foundation of a study of corporeality' (BN 358, EN 426), whereas for Merleau-Ponty, especially in his unfinished *The Visible and the Invisible*, following Husserl, it becomes the very essence of flesh and our 'entwinement' (*l'entrelacement*) in the world.

Notes

1. Of course, one should not assume that everything Sartre says about the body is to be found in the chapter bearing that title. In fact, the body pervades the whole of *Being and Nothingness*. In particular, the discussion of hunger and desire

(for instance, in the chapter on 'Concrete Relations with Others') continues the analysis of the experience of one's own body and of the *fleshy presence* of the other.

2. For recent Sartre studies that include discussion of his treatment of the body, see K. J. Morris 2008 and Wider 1997; see also Mui (this volume). Earlier discussions include Monasterio 1980, P. S. Morris 1976; Catalano 1974.
3. Sartre was familiar with Husserl's published works, especially *Logical Investigations*, *Ideas I*, *Lectures on Internal Time Consciousness*, *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and *Cartesian Meditations*, but it is highly unlikely that he had read Husserl's *Ideas II*, although he presumably learned about it from conversations with Merleau-Ponty, who had read a typescript of the work in the Husserl archives in Leuven in 1939. Similarly, Sartre does not appear to know the *Crisis* essays, which had been published in an obscure journal, *Philosophia*, edited in Belgrade, in 1936. In fact, Sartre is remarkable for his ability to reconstruct Husserl's position successfully on the basis of little direct familiarity with Husserl's primary texts. Sartre's discussion of the role of the image in imagination and memory (for instance, in *The Psychology of Imagination* 1940) has to be distilled from scattered remarks found in *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I* rather than based on the material subsequently published in the Husserliana series and recently translated as Husserl 2005. Sartre obviously also learned a great deal about Husserl and the phenomenological approach to the lived body from his reading of Max Scheler. For instance, at BN 330; EN 395, Sartre discusses Scheler's distinction between the pain of a toothache and the intention toward it (wishing it would end, rejecting it, accepting it with resignation, and so on).
4. For an interesting survey of the role of the body in Scheler's writings, see Vallega-Neu 2004.
5. Of course, the body as such is hardly made thematic by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. For an interesting discussion, see Levin 1999. Nevertheless, Sartre takes his concept of facticity from Heidegger and also discusses the practical encounter with tools and use-objects in a typically Heideggerian way. Heidegger's description of how the friend one encounters on the street is closer than the feeling of one's feet walking would also be confirmed by Sartre (Heidegger 1962 §23: 141; German 107).
6. Husserl 1989, hereafter '*Ideas II*'. Sartre, of course, read Husserl's published writings, but had little access to the unpublished drafts, except through conversation with his close friend Maurice Merleau-Ponty who was receiving material from Herman Leo Van Breda, Director of the Husserl Archives in Leuven even during the German occupation. See Van Breda 2007.
7. Especially in his correspondence with Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia; see Hoffman 1986 and 2002.
8. Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–80) took holy orders at Saint-Sulpice in Paris and became abbé de Mureau; much of his life was devoted to philosophy. He was strongly influenced by John Locke's empiricism, but in his best-known work, the *Traité des sensations* (1754), he went beyond Locke by positing not two sources of ideas (sensation and reflection) but just one: sensation. In a remarkably modern thought experiment, he asked the reader to imagine a marble statue endowed with only one sense-modality at a time; Condillac tried to show that all the mental faculties (judgement, volition, attention, memory, and so on) could come about from any one of the five senses. The sense of touch is of particular importance in giving rise to the idea of external objects, since when the statue touches

itself, it simultaneously feels itself touching and being touched, but when it touches things other than itself, it does not have that 'double sensation'. See Le Roy 1937 and O'Neal 1996.

9. François-Pierre Maine de Biran (1766–1824) was a dilettante philosopher and psychologist who published little in his lifetime but became known posthumously as a result of editions of his works published by Victor Cousin in 1834. He is best known for his treatise *The Influence of Habit on the Faculty of Thinking*, tr. Margaret Donaldson Boehm (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, reprint of 1929) and his *Essai sur les fondements de la psychologie*. He was initially influenced by the sensationalism of Condillac, but rejected it in favour of a view that the self knows itself through its inner self-apprehension and through the sensation of effort whereby it encounters resistance in the world as opposed to the Cartesian intellectual self-apprehension in the *cogito*. See Couailliac 1905 and Moore 1970. Sartre rejects Maine de Biran's claim that a 'sensation of effort' exists (BN 304; EN 366).
10. Sartre cites Comte's 'the eye cannot see itself' at BN 316; EN 379.
11. Bergson, esp. 1889, discusses the self in terms of its immediate experiences and the seamless unity of its complex parts.
12. Maurice Pradines (1874–1958) was a French philosopher, a follower of Bergson, at Strasbourg, who taught Levinas, among others. See 1928 and 1932. The 1928 volume is a source listed by Merleau-Ponty in the bibliography to his *Phenomenology of Perception*. Against a narrow sensationalism, Pradines emphasized the intentionality of sensation as already a kind of intelligence; living things have an interest in what is apprehended. See Grappe 1949 and Guendouz 2003. Pradines distinguishes between the sense of need and the sense of defence in organisms and discusses the five senses under the heading of what he calls 'sensoriality'.
13. 1935; see Mui (this volume) for a discussion of Sartre and Marcel on the body.
14. Toward the end of BN, Sartre comments on Bachelard 1938.
15. Sartre also appears to have been inspired by his former teacher, the idealist Léon Brunschwig (1869–1944); see Brunschwig 1922 and 1927, both of which studies are also cited by Merleau-Ponty. Brunschwig was particularly interested in Maine de Biran. On the 'spiritualist' tradition in French philosophy, see Gutting 2008.
16. Prior to BN, Sartre published two studies on the imagination (1936 and 1940).
17. For Sartre, as for Merleau-Ponty, the very notion of an objectified 'sensation' as found in traditional psychology is an 'absurdity' (cf. BN 314; EN 377).
18. Sartre develops the notion of the 'flesh' (*la chair*) from Husserl's conception of *Leibhaftigkeit*, the bodily presence of the object in perception. Indeed, Sartre already talks about the 'flesh of the object in perception' in earlier 1940 study, *L'Imaginaire* (15 of 1972 tr.). The French translation of '*leibhaftig*' in Husserlian texts (as also cited by Merleau-Ponty and Levinas) is '*en chair et en os*', meaning literally 'in flesh and bone'.
19. It is clear that Sartre genuinely experienced a kind of nausea in encounters with the body and with the external environment. These experiences are described in fictional form in Sartre 1938.
20. Merleau-Ponty, too, frequently speaks of the 'order of being'. The distinction between the 'order of knowledge' and the 'order of being' is frequently found in Scholasticism. Things as they are encountered first in knowing may not have ontological priority.
21. See Dillon 1998, esp. 126.
22. For a discussion of empathy in the phenomenological tradition, see Moran 2004.

23. Sartre refers to the body of the other person as a 'psychic object' (BN 393; EN 463).
24. Merleau-Ponty makes a similar claim about the inapprehensibility of my body in PP: 'Insofar as it sees or touches the world, my body can therefore be neither seen nor touched. What prevents its ever being an object, ever being "completely constituted" is that it is that by which there are objects' (PP 92; Fr. 108). Here Merleau-Ponty is referring to Husserl's claim in *Ideas II* that the body is always incompletely constituted.
25. Sartre frequently emphasizes that this body is immediately intuited. See, for instance, BN 357; EN 424 where Sartre speaks of the stomach as 'present to intuition'.
26. Underscoring this theme, Merleau-Ponty writes: 'We have relearned to feel our body; we have found underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body that other knowledge we have of it in virtue of its always being with us and of the fact that we are our body' (PP 206; Fr. 239).
27. There is a vast literature on the manner in which anorexics relate to images of their own and others bodies (as shown in photographs), see, for instance, Smeets and Kosslyn 2001.
28. Stein 1917: 46 (tr. 42).
29. Of course, this experienced distance can become pathological as in those cases of body dysmorphic disorder where the person experiences part of his or her body as an alien adhesion. See, for example, Phillips 1996.
30. Sartre describes this feeling of distance from his hand very evocatively in Sartre 1938.
31. Paradoxical, because our immediate first-person experience of the body is not actually of *the* body but rather of the *transcending* of the body, its having been surpassed.
32. Sartre 1947: 32 (tr.: 4–5; repr.: 383).
33. Sartre 1947 repr.: 383.
34. For further analysis of Heidegger's reading of intentionality as transcendence, see Moran 2000.
35. Merleau-Ponty also speaks of the 'unmotivated upsurge' (*le jaillissement immotivé du monde*) of the world in PP xiv (Fr. viii).
36. This is what Joseph Catalano calls the 'world-making' capacity of humans, in the essay reprinted in this volume. Catalano characterizes Sartre's account as 'anthropocentric'.
37. Sartre 1959: 49; Fr.: 94.
38. The claim that our experience is primarily *world-oriented* is now commonplace in much philosophy of mind and cognitive science. Recently, for instance, Prinz (2004) has argued that even emotional 'bodily' feelings do not have the body as their intentional object; rather, these feelings, although *caused* by bodily changes and *felt* 'in' the body, are primarily *about* significant events or objects in the world. As Prinz puts it, emotional bodily feelings *register* bodily changes but *represent* things going on outside the body.
39. For an interesting discussion of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty on the body, see Carman 1999.
40. The phenomenon of fingers touching each other or one hand touching the other is discussed by Weber and also by Wilhelm Wundt and others. There is also a mention of it in Titchener 1901: Vol. I: 'Qualitative Experiments', part 2: Instructor's Manual §56, 383–4.
41. E. H. Weber (1795–1879) published two studies of touch (1834 and 1846). Weber and Gustav T. Fechner (1801–87) were founders of psychophysics, the attempt to systematically relate physical phenomena, for example, sound or weight, with the perception of them. Psychophysics can be considered the earliest form of experimental psychology in the modern sense. Weber carefully documented the different sensitivities to touch in various parts of the body, the perception of weight, heat, cold, and so on, and the ability of the perceiver to distinguish when being touched by two points of a compass at the same time. In *Der Tastsinn* (1846), for instance, Weber discusses the issue of whether two sensations arise when sensitive areas of the body touch each other. This is elaborated below.
42. Husserl 1973 §47, 137; Hua XVI 162.
43. For a general summary of nineteenth-century empirical psychological studies of touch (including discussions of Wundt, Weber, James, et al.), see Dresslar 1894. Dresslar discusses studies of the accuracy of space as revealed by active touch, the assessment of weights, and other typical themes of empirical research of the time.
44. For a good discussion of Husserl's account of the body in *Ideas II*, see Welton 1999.
45. For a useful recent overview of the phenomenology of touch which discusses Merleau-Ponty's hand-touching-hand scenario in the light of current analytic philosophy of mind, see Ratcliffe 2008. See also Paterson 2007, which contains a good review of classical and contemporary approaches to touch. For an eclectic set of studies on the concept of touch in different disciplines, see Classen ed. 2005.
46. David Katz (1884–1953) was born in Kassel and studied at Göttingen, where he was primarily a student of the extremely important experimental psychologist and psychophysicist and researcher on colour perception Georg Elias Müller (1850–1934), himself a student of Wilhelm Wundt. However, Katz also attended Husserl's lectures and seminars, and Husserl was one of his doctoral thesis examiners in 1907. Katz continued to work on experimental and developmental psychology at Göttingen until 1919 when he moved to Rostok. He was close to the Gestalt psychologists, but was forced to leave Germany in 1933, first for England, until, in 1937, he took a position at the University of Stockholm where he remained. He was a major influence on J. J. Gibson; see his obituary (Arnheim 1954). See also Krueger 1982.
47. For Katz's relations with Husserl, see Spiegelberg 1972: 42–4. Katz initially played down the influence of Husserl, although he acknowledged attending his lectures and seminars and learning the phenomenological method of unprejudiced description from him; see Katz's autobiography (1952), esp. 194. Katz also acknowledges the influence of Scheier.
48. Weber 1996: 207.
49. Sartre's account of the double sensation is rarely discussed, but see Murphy 2006: 491 and Welton 1999: 48. I believe Welton misses the originality in Sartre's account.
50. See the interesting discussion by David Vessey, 'The Body as *Anstoss* in Sartre's Account of Constitution'. Paper presented at the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy Boston, 1998.
51. Merleau-Ponty is deeply influenced, as we have seen, by Katz's studies of vision and touch, and also by studies such as Lhermitte 1939, which introduces the idea of the 'body image' which Merleau-Ponty refers to as '*le schéma corporel*'

(translated by Colin Smith as 'body image'). For further discussion of this concept, see Gallagher 2005, who explains Merleau-Ponty's '*schéma corporel*' as the 'dynamic functioning of the body in its environment' (20).

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3

Sartre and the Lived Body: Negation, Non-Positional Self-Awareness and Hodological Space

Adrian Mirvish

Sartre's analysis of negation covers a number of complex phenomena and lies at the heart of his ontology. Crucially important, the choice of term is typically Sartrean: dramatic and insightful, but sometimes obscure. Moreover, the difficulty of trying to understand what is meant by 'negation' is compounded by the fact that it is closely tied in with what is said about nothingness. In fact, it seems to me that this double-barrelled negativity often gets commentators off on the wrong foot when they try to explain his idea. So, for instance, one writer notes that negation allows us to experience absence in a uniquely human fashion as lack or failure. Indeed, 'it is because men are capable of being separated from the world that they are capable of having a language. The nature of the for-itself is such that it brings nothingness and hence negation and all that follows from it into the world.'¹ Besides making a major assumption about the genesis of language, we are not told what precisely is meant by nothingness and why negation follows from it. In addition, it is never established that negation is, ontologically, first and foremost a manifestation of lack. And even if this were true, what is the precise mechanism that allows consciousness to experience lack as such? This question too is never answered.

To explain negation, a second group of critics relies on being able to hone the reader's philosophical sense or intuition. One gains some deepened insight for what Sartre wishes to convey, although what exactly he means is not made explicit as such. For example, Flynn writes that 'freedom as nihilation and nonself-identity constitutes the ontological basis for Sartre's claim that consciousness is "empty" ... and likewise is the immediate implication of the basic thesis that consciousness is the internal negation of the nonconscious, that it is a no-thingness.'² Using freedom to explain consciousness as not being identical with itself, while at the same time it nihilates or negates the in-itself, is helpful. It gives us an intuitive sense of what consciousness's activity is like, but the actual mechanism at work is not explained further.