

# The texture of dreams

## Phenomenological approaches to “originary space”

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Certes, nous avons refoulé la magique dans la subjectivité, mais rien ne nous garantit que le rapport entre les hommes ne comporte pas, inévitablement, des composants magiques et oniriques.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et L'Invisible*

### Abstract

The following paper is a reflection on our manner of being in space, through the phenomenological approaches of M. Heidegger, M. Merleau-Ponty and Jan Patočka. Prior to field mathematizations, we inhabit and incorporate space as a place in which we feel its reverberations; we are, as corporeal beings, the place where the space of things and the world vibrates, a space that is emotionally textured and meaningful. Our inhabiting of space is, as Merleau-Ponty had already noted, much closer to the way we experience dreams than to the objective, geometrical conception of space. Finally, the movement of irradiation of affective space through our bodily rootedness is considered under Jan Patočka's conception of “movement”, a notion following the Aristotelian realization of possibilities, but radicalized through the suppression of the determining substrate.

### Keywords

Phenomenology, Space, Emotions, Merleau-Ponty, Patočka

Our existence is spatial, writes Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*. But the spatiality of our existence is of a special character: we *are* a place. The heideggerian expression for existence – Being-there (*Dasein*) – seems precisely to indicate something about being a place in the world.<sup>1</sup> *Being* a place is infinitely different from *having* a place. One could say that a chair has, or occupies, a certain place in the room. In speaking of the place a certain thing “has”, we are conceiving space as a geometrical field - definable and capable of being mapped in coordinates: it would be possible

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1. More recently, I have become aware, through the work of Jeff Malpas, that works by late Heidegger focus precisely on the conception of “space” (or, in the heideggerian terms, “place”) that I try to give a preliminarily exposition here. I will be excited to continue this research including those pathways.

to say that the chair occupies the position (for example) G4. By reflecting about what it means to “be a place” we come to a very different understanding of space itself. “Being a place” seems to indicate a dynamic structure; in so being we are, it seems, an incorporation, or an incarnation of space: instead of inhabiting a defined space we occupy, as if superimposed on it, we are space, inhabiting it in such a way that we are also its expression. We lose the notion of a impermeable object occupying indifferent surroundings; we lose, after all, the very distinction between object and surrounding: the relationship between what is in space and space itself loses rigid borderlines and loses, above all, the passive and placid character regarding both terms – being-space implies an interaction, almost a fusion between the terms.

Even when we consider some of the pre-theoretical ways we think of space, we realize that our originary conception of space is not of a physical, objective and objectifiable, geometrical field. We speak of the different spaces we ourselves inhabit, or the places something or someone has in our life, the space they occupy, and we mean not only their dimension or limits, but also the time, importance, and emotional meaning they have. These reflections lead to our relationship with space, to what Merleau-Ponty, Jan Patočka and M. Heidegger tried to explore as “the spatiality of our own existence”. In the end, to try to understand space itself not through a conceptual objective approach, but through the way we ourselves are (in) space, defending, besides, that we are only able to reach an abstract conception of space because we have this other and more originary relationship with space, one that is lived and affective.

## 1. Being (in) originary space

What is, then, our originary manner of being in space? We are in space always oriented, with a certain sense of orientation from the perspective of a “here”. That orientation, just as the idea of being a place, implies a body. A being without a body wouldn’t be anywhere, just as only with a body can we make sense of orientation expressions – basic in our relationship with space – such as up-down, right-left, near-far. The body, just as Merleau-Ponty has said, is our place. However, it’s important to note that, by saying this, we are not again falling to an objective conception of space, in which the body would be a mere object occupying a certain position in a matrix field, and this, in part, also because we are speaking of the personal or phenomenal body and not of the body as an object. Patočka writes: «The personal body is not a thing in objective space. It is a life which, in itself, *is spatially*, which *produces* its own localization, makes itself spatial.»<sup>2</sup>

2. Jan Patočka, *Papiers Phénoménologiques*, trad. Erika Abrams, Millon, Grenoble, 1998, p.59: «Le philosophy @ LISBON

*The body is the condition for being a place*, it is precisely what allows us to have a special relationship with space, of *being spatial*. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes that the body is what allows a sense of orientation and a “practical understanding” of space, in the same manner that my voice permits me to change tones without any technical knowledge of music.<sup>3</sup> Having personal corporeity as a necessary condition for our relationship with space already lets us extract some components of our manner of being spatial. In what way does our body produce its own spatialization?

Our bodily orientation, the body’s dynamic of being in space, *where* we are, does not correspond to what we would call merely a physical orientation, but rather to a practical, profound, and overall rootedness in the world:

Human beings have the need to know where they are not only like animals, to not crash into something else, fall, or get themselves hurt, but to recognize themselves in the place they’re in, to be able to work, fulfill their most essential tasks, assume social roles these also being spatially articulated and connected to activities, that is, to movements.<sup>4</sup>

Merleau-Ponty’s examples, in *Phenomenology of Perception*, about reactions to orientation experiments – like visual perception reverted by glasses, or that of a person who can only see the room he is in through a mirror tilted 45° - show that our “coordinates” of orientation are indissociably connected to a world rooted corporeity, that is, that they are not absolute and indifferent coordinates, but that they adapt to the *necessarily bodily* lived experience of a subject, they are tightly connected to the body as the center of activities we are involved in.

According to the description of the experiment of visual perception reversal through the use of special glasses, after a short time, the perception loses its sense of unreality and regains its “normal” up-down orientation, and it’s the *body which seems to be inverted*. During repetitions of the experiment, after the initial phases, the body seems to readopt its normal disposition “especially when the subject is active”<sup>5</sup>, and even more so in habitual activities, like washing his hands. Our orientation in space is corporeally inscribed in the surrounding environment, and its proper dynamic is while actively immersed in space:

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corps personnel n’est pas une chose dans l’espace objectif. Il est une vie qui, par elle-même, *est spatialement*, qui *produit* sa propre localisation, qui se rend elle-même spatial.»

3. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la Perception*, Gallimard, Paris, 1976, p. 290.

4. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la Perception*, Gallimard, Paris, 1976, p. 290.: «L’homme a besoin de savoir où il est non seulement comme l’animal, pour ne pas se heurter à autre chose, tomber ou se faire écraser, mais pour se reconnaître dans le lieu où il demeure, pour pouvoir travailler, remplir ses devoirs les plus essentiels, s’acquitter de rôles sociaux eux aussi toujours spatialement articulés et liés à des activités, c’est à dire, à des mouvements.»

5. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p.283.



What matters for the orientation in the spectacle isn't my body as it is in fact, as a thing in objective space, but my body as a system of possible actions, a virtual body for which the phenomenal "place" is defined by its task and situation. My body is there where it has something to do.<sup>6</sup>

We are reminded, within the same idea, of the difference between "concrete" and "abstract movements", exposed in an earlier chapter of the same work<sup>7</sup>: concrete movements would be those that are a part of a certain situation, belong to a lived rootedness in space, such as washing the hands, or waving at a friend across the street. In contrast, abstract movements are those in response to a command of coordinate directives, for example, raise your arm 50cm. The patient in question, having suffered a cerebral lesion, showed difficulty in performing abstract movements, in which he had to adopt a "cognitive" attitude towards his own body and to space, but none in concrete movements. What is at stake in concrete movements is the originary relationship of body and space, the practical and lived communication which Ponty says is "older than thought".<sup>8</sup>

This older-than-thought relationship, which comprises our movements inscribed within our active living experience, reveals another tonality of our orientation in the world: it is affective. The very way in which our body is anchored in the world through its activities, its projects – made evident by the examples of how we are able to orient ourselves from an already rooted corporeity, whose directions are not independently determined, but in consonance with the world in which we are inserted – already points to this affective relationship to space (we move within familiar places, for example, recognizing this water basin here, or what it is for). "Where" we are indicates our global situation, not merely physical location. The "place" where I am at a given moment implies a project in which I am already involved, and appears thus with a certain emotional weight (as well as, we may notice, it also includes a notion of temporality). Both Merleau-Ponty and Patočka point to the meaning of the fact we use orientation expressions to describe emotional states, such as "being down in the dumps", or "up in the clouds".<sup>9</sup> The up of the clouds and that of exuberance, says Ponty, are «symbolic of one another because they both express the same essential structure of our being as a being situated in relation to an environment [...]»<sup>10</sup> The relationship is bilateral: it isn't only that our emotions

6. *Ibid.*, p.289: «Ce qui importe pour l'orientation du spectacle, ce n'est pas mon corps tel qu'il est en fait, comme chose dans l'espace objectif, mais mon corps comme système de actions possibles, un corps virtuel dont le "lieu" phénoménal est défini par sa tâche et par sa situation. Mon corps est là où il a quelque chose à faire.»

7. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, "La spatialité du corps propre", p.119.

8. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p. 294.

9. J. Patočka, *PP*, p. 69; Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p. 329.

10. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p. 329.



are inscribed in the structure of bodily being-in-the-world and, because of it, are inscribed in our orientation, it is the very orientation itself and all of our relationship to space that is emotional. Like in another example of *Phenomenology of Perception*, the primitive man that heads towards his tribe camp, does not do it with reference to any indication marker, but rather heads towards his natural place of peace or joy.<sup>11</sup> In his turn, Patočka writes:

[S]ubjective spatiality doesn't know precisely the external *parts extra parts*, characteristic of geometrical relations. Far from it, the spatiality *is* here metaphorical. The up and the down, the near and the far are characters all together *affective* and spatial, and the movement of dispositions acutely reveals something in the world like "places" of entwining, horizons in which one may enter to make explicit.<sup>12</sup>

Emotions, or dispositions, are what reveal this entwining of existence and world. They open and close horizons of possibilities, they are, writes Patočka, the contribution of the world to the movement we are; it is in them that we know where we are in the world.<sup>13</sup> According to Heidegger, for example, angst shows us the "being nowhere", the "not being at home" in the world. On the other hand, the experience of joy or love dissolves barriers; we become enchanted, permeable, our horizons opened in an enthusiastic being able of all possibilities. Disposition, in an indistinction of subject and world, colors the horizon of possibilities, disposes the world itself.

M. Heidegger introduced, in an innovative fashion, the emotions as belonging to the structure of being-in-the world, in contrast to the idea of emotions as subjective states which would then be imposed upon a neutral world. Dispositions arise here as the interpellation of the world itself, the way it speaks to us, what it says and, in turn, could only do from a structure which includes beings with the capacity for disposition, openness, to feel the "prose of the world". They belong neither to the subjective sphere, nor do they lie independently in the world; dispositions belong to the very relation that is being-in-the-world: «Tonality assails us. It comes neither from the "exterior", nor from the "interior" but rather, as a manner of being-in-the-world, it arises precisely from it.»<sup>14</sup> Both Merleau-Ponty and Patočka follow this intuition. However, because he did not explore (although he did indicate) the central role of corporeity in his analysis of existence, Hei-

11. *Ibid.*, p. 230

12. Jan Patočka, *PP*, p. 70: «[L]a spatialité subjective ne connaît justement pas le *partes extra partes* externe, caractéristique des relations géométriques. Loin de là, la spatialité *est* ici métaphorique. Le haut et le bas, le proche et le lointain sont des caractères tout ensembles *affectifs* et spatiaux, et le mouvement des humeurs dévoile gritamment dans le monde quelque chose comme des "lieux" des replis, des horizons dans lesquels on peut pénétrer pour les expliciter.»

13. Jan Patočka, *PP*, p.61.

14. M. Heidegger, *Être et Temps*, trad. E. Martineau, Éd. Hors-commerce, p.136.

degger also neglects the important character of the *corporeity of emotions*, which allows us to understand the phenomenon of our global insertion in the world, and the dynamic relationship with space. Hence, in Heidegger, the dispositions, as well as the general structure of being-in-the-world lose the character of being enmeshed, the dynamic of profound rootedness, because the author does not explore the corporeal intertwining of human existence in the world (as would, later, Merleau-Ponty in *Le Visible et L'invisible*).

## 2. The texture of dreams – illustration of primordial space

As Merleau-Ponty intuited, dreams could be used as (at least) an effective analogy for our experience in primordial space. «[T]he phantoms of dreams reveal even better the general spatiality within which clear space and observable objects are incrustated.»<sup>15</sup> In our dreams, space is stylized in accordance to our rootedness.

The spaces through which we move in dreams are covered without obeying rules of distance as in a map: we open our bedroom door unto a sea-side cliff; the train does not take us, really, from one point to the next, its movement is not through space understood objectively as distance. The running through spaces, like the atmosphere that drenches each one, is emotional. Space in dreams has a palpable texture: we leave the dense darkness of the bedroom to the clear-cutting atmosphere of the sea-side; the air of the forest is heavily sweet, the train suffocates us in its enclosed ambience. Things in dreams – and not only ambiances – also appear to us with a specter of color and texture; they are, in a way, exaggerated. In the same way that in “bad” movies we always know which is the wicked character by the clothes she wears, and the music and aura accompanying her when she comes on the scene, so it is in our dreams: what is scary is permeated by a dark light, the sweet appear in pastel colors and soft texture, the unknown is rough, cutting and crystalline, like a sea-side cliff. And what does appear does not undergo a cognitive judgment, it is *lived* as such. A muddy river with a strong current is *felt* as frightful aversion; the aversion does not follow from a judgment regarding the mud and the dangers of drowning. In a way, the river is nothing else but the emotion of frightful aversion. What is thus absent in dreams is the dividing distance between subject and the surrounding world, or between subject and object. Objects and space permeate us, wave-like.

I want to defend, with the help of Merleau-Ponty, that the relationship to space in dreams *corresponds* to our relationship, or manner of inhabit-

15. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p. 328: «[L]es fantasmes du rêve révèlent encore mieux la spatialité générale où l'espace clair et les objets observables sont incrustés.» [Eng. Version: p. 284]

ing, originarily in space, before any calculation or objectivation assuring us a geometrical space. «In dreams as in myths, we learn where the phenomenon is by feeling towards which our desire moves us, what frightens our heart, of what our life depends. Even in awake life, it doesn't happen otherwise.»<sup>16</sup>

This affirmation needs to be clarified, of course, if not qualified. We want to argue that our manner of being awake in space is significantly different than that of dreams. Our awake life does not happen like in a “bad” movie, we do not have obvious signs for what is beneficial or malefic, just as we have to obey rules of distance and of going across spaces.

Another possible argument would be that it is precisely when we are asleep that we are, so to speak, absent from space: there is an interruption of perceptive activity, we leave the world, nested within ourselves. All the arguments about the supposed essential corporeity of inhabiting space would seem out of place, contradictory, in face of a sleeping, inactive body. But we must remember that the body as a condition for living space is the phenomenal body and not the body as an object. And that one, intuited Patočka about the Descartes' meditations, is needed even in dreams:

One may find strange that Descartes did not realize that the dreamer also has a body. It is clearly a dreamt body, but the one who is dreaming is not without a body – the body is indispensable even to the onirical world. To have a general experience – even if it is a quasi-experience – I must be *somewhere*, which is impossible without a body. [...] It is true that if I fly in dreams, it's an unreal movement; but what is flying, or has the illusion of flying, is indubitably *my own body*, and not a strange body.<sup>17</sup>

Our dream living is fundamentally corporeal. We suffer aches, we move, we fall, we feel the pulsation of our surroundings; it is impossible to think of a dream in which we are not incarnate beings; dreams are what they are because they are lived corporally. The themes of flight and falling in dreams, Ponty points out, are associated to the bodily movements of breathing or of sexual desire<sup>18</sup>; they imprint in images the rising and falling of certain bodily pulsations – the corporeity of our existence is inscribed in the space of our dreams.

16. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p.330: «In dreams as in myths, we learn where the phenomenon is by feeling towards which our desire moves us, what frightens our heart, of what our life depends. Even in awake life, it doesn't happen otherwise.»

17. J. Patočka, *Le Monde Naturel et le mouvement de l'existence humaine [MEH]*, p. 144-145: «On peut trouver étrange que Descartes ne se rende pas compte que le rêveur lui aussi a un corps. C'est évidemment un corps rêvé, mais celui qui rêve n'est pas pour cela sans corps – le corps est indispensable même au monde onirique. Pour avoir une expérience en général – ne serait-ce qu'une quasi-expérience – je dois être *quelque part*, ce qui est impossible sans corps. [...] Il est certain que si je vole en rêve, c'est un mouvement irréel ; mais ce qui vole, ou qui a l'illusion de voler, est indubitablement *mon propre corps*, et non pas un corps étranger.»

18. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p. 329.



And in reply to the first objection, I wish to defend that the relationship we have to spaces and phenomena in our awake life is, in fact, permeated by emotional textures. The characters in our life are not accompanied by elucidating soundtrack, of course, but we feel the spaces of intimacy and distance, just as we feel the presence of those who are with us in life and the tones of the space they are in. A nightclub's door still open in the daylight has, for newly awakened eyes, a dark aura, contrasting with the bright colors of the morning. The people we love gain increased beauty, and a character flaw imprints ugly traits in the face of the other. I mean to say by this that we see people, phenomena and spaces permeated by emotion, they are emotionally inhabited: «We hardly perceive any object, just as we don't see the eyes of a familiar face, but its look and expression. There is a latent meaning there, diffused across the landscape or the town, that we find in a specific evidence without feeling the need to define it.»<sup>19</sup> We apprehend what Merleau-Ponty calls the "style" (in the sense of stylization) of each environment, each "space". And the style of each person, present in the features of their expression, also has an aura, a presence inundating her and ourselves.

A very simple and well known example, also given by Merleau-Ponty, is able to show this inhabiting of emotionally meaningful space: we don't see colors as in a sample of indifferent gradations. We feel the sensuality of the red dress, the comforting redness of a wool shirt. Reds, even in the same tone, are not all the same, just as the whites of the bride and the monk have nothing to do with each other, even though both symbolize purity; the emotional presence in each one is completely different from the other.

With perception training by the cognitive posture, and the "impartiality" of consciousness, we acquire a distance from this existential space, and that is precisely the distance that is lacking in the mental patient, or in hallucinogenic experiences:

What makes the hallucination and the myth, is the narrowing of the lived space, the rooting of things in our bodies, the vertiginous proximity of the object, the solidarity of man and world that is, not abolished, but repressed by every day perception or by objective thought and that the philosophical conscience recovers.<sup>20</sup>

19. Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, p. 325: «Nous ne percevons presque aucun objet, comme nous ne voyons pas les yeux d'un visage familier, mais son regard et son expression. Il y a là un sens latent, diffus à travers le paysage ou la ville, que nous retrouvons dans une évidence spécifique sans avoir besoin de le définir.»

20. *Ibid.*, p. 337: «Ce qui fait l'hallucination comme le mythe, c'est le rétrécissement de l'espace vécu, l'enracinement des choses dans notre corps, la vertigineuse proximité de l'objet, la solidarité de l'homme et du monde, qui est, non pas abolie, mais refoulée par la perception de tous les jours ou par la pensée objective et que la conscience philosophique retrouve.»

What dreams (and the experiences of some mental illnesses or hallucinogenic effects) show, or so I wish to defend, is the originary – emotional – inhabiting of space. Patočka describes the primitive relationship to space as “originary within” (in the French, accepted translation: “*dedans originaire*”).

The originary “within” still doesn’t have the character of a univocal localization, characteristic of all positions in the systemic space. [ ] [It] is a ‘within’ that is more an enmeshment of oneself in the things and of the things in oneself than a precise delimitation of space occupied by this or that. In short, the originary ‘within’ is not a relation purely and simply exterior, geometrical. It is what directs all our affairs to realities by defining what will be near and far from us. [ ] It is the originary disposition and the availability for that with which we come into contact.<sup>21</sup>

Patočka seems to consider originary space as the same as our own orientation within it, the emotive pulse that directs us. Originary space would then be indistinct from the pulsating of meaning that embraces us, disposes us in the spaces in which we are and draws them around us, entwining us, inviting or closing us off. It would be nothing else but this same pulse that radiates through things and is made in the place which we are. The link that connects and unites us in the feeling of the river *as* repulsive danger, is this pervading that is originary space, lived meaning, uniting subject and world, through corporeal rootedness.

But unlike in dreams and some (severe) hallucinogenic experiences, our way of being-in-the-world is not reducible to this type of uterine experience; space, understood “classically”, cannot be completely done away with, or we lose the dimensions of practical activity, of project, of realization of possibilities, and an entire scope of perceptual experience (horizon, near-far, etc.), that in phenomenology has come to reveal so much and so well of what it is to be in the world. However, what may come of this is to defend that those dimensions are supported and enmeshed in this one, and would thus benefit from our being aware of it. The awareness of this synergetic belonging could affect the manner in which we face, choose and realize our possibilities, for example. It may change and tonalize the manner in which we already *are* in the world, by revealing this shared emotional tissue that binds us. This is what is meant by “originary”.

Glen Mazis, an American philosopher mostly dedicated to Merleau-

21. Jan Patočka, *Qu'est-ce que la phénoménologie?*, p. 56: «Le “dedans” originaire n’a pas encore le caractère de localisation univoque, propre à toute position dans l’espace systémique. [...] [C’est] un “dedans” qui est plutôt une *immixtion* de soi dans les choses et des choses dans soi-même qu’une *délimitation* précise de l’espace occupé par ceci ou cela. En bref, le “dedans” originaire n’est pas une relation purement et simplement extérieure, géométrique. Il est ce qui *dirige* tous nos rapports aux réalités en marquant ce *qui* nous sera proche ou lointain. [...] Il est la disposition originaire et la disponibilité pour ce avec quoi nous entrons en contact.»

Ponty's work, defends that this pulse that is space itself, the dynamic of the "flesh of the world" that runs through us like the "systole and diastole" of our own existence, is something he calls "e-motion". Meaning that the tissue in which we are laced through is precisely a pulse – an emotional pulsating – that *moves* us, that is a type of *movement*, running through space like a current, continuously transforming and in transformation.

In the following and last section, I will explore Mazis notion of "e-motion" and try to find if there are any similarities with, or light to be shed by Patočka's central conception of "movement".

### 3. Pulsating space – Glen Mazis' "e-motion" and Jan Patočka's "movement"

With Merleau-Ponty's philosophy at its base, specially his posthumous work, *Le Visible et L'invisible*, Mazis describes the flesh of the world like the intertwining of meanings uniting subject and world and – he suggests – propelled by "e-motion", like the heart that pumps this entwining of meaningful veins.<sup>22</sup> "E-motion", for Glen Mazis, points to the essentially human dynamic of being-in-the-world in which we are *moved*; we are moved by, or in, a certain situation in such a way that the situation is transformed, the "reality" is altered, and ourselves with it.

I now *am* something different in this situation: namely, the-one-angry-and-hurt-about-the-spoiled-dinner. I am now something new, but *in terms of the world*, drawn out into its meaning as having become my ownmost identity at that moment. [...] Becoming has occurred: my emotional apprehension, which has transformed me, also has re-turned or transformed the situation into a new one, which now includes my anger as part of it. My being at this moment of e-motion is in no sense external to this situation. This is the sense in which e-motion throws us palpably, dramatically into the world, into a place of happening.<sup>23</sup>

"E-motion", just like Heidegger's dispositions, are not subjective states imposed on the world, nor are they states-of-affairs about the world, but they are rather the structure that composes the "happening", the meaningful tissue, that is subject and world. "E-motion" not only constitutes the situation, but the subject in the situation, uniting them in the becoming, perpetual and perpetually changing, of a meaningful situation. To conceive human experience in this way is to leave behind the conceptual model – associated to Cartesianism - of an insular mind and of a world composed of dead matter. "To be moved" in a certain situation implies an emotional

22. Glen Mazis, *Emotion and embodiment. Fragile Ontology*, Peter Lang, NY, 1993, p.99.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 66.



current that isn't purely subjective; that precisely assaults us, transforms us, in a way we do not freely choose. A pairless shoe seemingly abandoned on a sidewalk may raise a number of different dispositions in different situations, but which it will be is not a product of choice. We may even feel impatient with feeling uncomfortable or sad faced with an image that more easily would seem absurd, or even funny, but we can't "shake off" the anguished perplexity that suddenly assailed us. At the same time, however, we are not passive victims of the mood swings of a capricious world. The emotions *are* our rootedness in the world; they are, therefore, integrated in the history and meaningful experience of each one, they arise within the context of one's experience, they are not identical replicas from one person to the next, and they are expressive of the world (understood as already relational) which may then explain why the meaning may escape us in a first impression: a pairless shoe is, in fact, quite sad, we may realize, and we had tried to ignore or avoid this sadness in our first, immediate, meeting. The shoe may raise completely different dispositions in two different persons, but each one of them is "true" of the pairless-shoe-on-the-sidewalk situation itself. The tissue that is weaved in our experience is, for this reason, changing; it arises from something like a synergy, a circulation, or emotional current of meaning. That this model seems so strange is perhaps a symptom of the strong influence of modern tradition, with its atomistic models of independent units, making this a difficult conceptual exercise. But in any case, our emotional rootedness in the world is easily made evident by the anguishing fact that there may occur – indeed, throughout our lives, they do occur – cuts in this connection, that our emotional tie to the world is severed, and we find ourselves disconnected from the world, from the possibilities of meaning, from the warmth and texture that – we discover then – normally characterize our experience. At those moments we find the despair of a loneliness that far surpasses that of the personal one.<sup>24</sup>

In a parallel project to Patočka's, Glen Mazis tries to bring together the heideggerian emotions as composing the structure of being-in-the-world, with the corporeity and the theory of tissue of meaning in Merleau-Ponty's work. The capacity for openness, of being a "clearing of meaning", would arise from bodily rootedness, from the organic tie – like veins – that tie us, that have always already tied us, to the world:

Although Merleau-Ponty did not focus on the specific role of emotion to bring to palpable registration the circulation of meaning, within becoming,

24. Jan Patočka discusses the "experience of loss of meaning" in his work, *Essaies Herétiques*, trad. Erika Abrams, Verdier, LaGrasse, 1981, p.68-ff. The emotional charge is not as explicit, but the model of a meaning that is a *relation* between subject and world is the same (as it is in Merleau-Ponty).

he did articulate a new sense of embodiment, spatiality, temporality, depth, and what he called the “flesh of the world”, which is Being seen as relatedness, process, and interweavement. These notions form much of the inspiration of this study of e-motion, and if followed can begin to bring us further down the path opened by Heidegger in uncovering the “openness to the world” allowed by e-motion.<sup>25</sup>

Our enmeshment in the world, the organic nature of our tie to the world permitting the circulation of emotions, can only be conceived through a corporeal existence and the corporeity as flesh, flesh of the world. At the same time, this same reflection points to the essential corporeity of the emotions themselves, contradicting the manner of conceiving emotions as merely psychic or brain events in face or reaction to an objective state of affairs. The “e-motion” Glen Mazis wants to propose as the event of meaning is made, or happens, in the body. The event of meaning is a bodily one. We are thus not speaking of the mind’s or consciousness’ openness, nor – even less – of some kind of cognitive operation. At the same time, of course, we are not taking it to the opposite extreme: the body is the body-subject, the body as a subject, not the body (or the emotions) in a physicalist reductionist sense. We are such beings that we are bodily and it is in and because of this (specific way of being) body that we have a connection to the world that we can feel and become the pulsating of emotional space.

Because it is a continuous interchange, this tissue of meaning is in permanent becoming. Mentioning Bergson, Mazis recognizes the permanent instability of this event structure: just as there isn’t an emotion or disposition that isn’t in constant mutation (even when remaining joyful or sad, the emotion goes through continuous and constant changes, it never really stays the same), so does the structure of being-in-the-world, emotionally weaved, renew and transform continuously. «[H]e [Merleau-Ponty] sees this lace-work as one made up of strands ever becoming and returning to themselves, always transforming, a temporality of radical embodiment.»<sup>26</sup>

It is in regard to this idea of being in continuous becoming that Patočka’s concept of “movement” comes in fruitfully. Jan Patočka’s “movement” tries, initially, to define human existence, understood in the heideggerian sense of realization of possibilities. Inspired in Aristotle’s concept of movement, it is precisely a movement of becoming, but without the stable substrate defining the possible alterations between determined contraries; that is, the patočkian movement would create its own unity and identity instead of merely revealing it – a movement that would be constitutive of the very thing that *is* in movement. In this way, the sense of human existence

25. Glen Mazis, *Emotion and embodiment. Fragile Ontology*, Peter Lang, NY, 1993, p.73.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

as an open project would be preserved.

Aristotle defined movement as the being-in-act of the possibility, while it is in possibility. The possibilities of existence differ from the Aristotelian *dunamis*, determined by the presence or absence of certain determinations of the substrate within the interval between two contraries. [...] The movement of existence is instead the project of possibilities *as* their realization; they are not possibilities given in advance in a previously determined area determining a “substrate”. The “I” is not a passively determined substrate by the presence or absence of a certain *eidos*, by a “figure” or “privation”; he is something that freely determines himself, and in that sense, freely chooses his possibilities.<sup>27</sup>

From the idea of a “movement of existence” arises another and more originary movement: the movement of the appearing itself, the movement of phenomenalization of the world. Although seldomly explicitly thematized in Patočka, it arises from the reflection of the primordially of the phenomenal sphere in his conception of an “asubjective phenomenology”. Although we freely determine ourselves and, “*in that sense*, we freely choose our possibilities”, the possibilities themselves are not product of our choice, just as neither is our freedom, or that we are the ones to whom the appearing appears. In this manner, our movement of existence is not only intertwined to the movement of the appearing, but it arises from it.

The world, that is, the possibilities of our own being as an essentially “ekstatische” being, is not given to us by our own freedom. That very freedom is opened by the understanding of being, along with all the phenomenality of the world. It is not us, or our *Dasein*, who in a project in the world, decide with which beings we may relate to and in what way, but is rather to the understanding of being, to the phenomenon as such that we owe such understanding [...] <sup>28</sup>

27. Jan Patočka, *Le Monde Naturel et le Mouvement de l'Existence Humaine*, trad. Erika Abrams, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1988, p.263: «Aristote a défini le mouvement comme être-en-acte de la possibilité, pour autant qu'il est dans la possibilité. Les possibilités de l'existence diffèrent de la *dunamis* aristotélicienne, déterminée par la présence ou l'absence de certaine détermination du substrat dans l'intervalle compris entre deux contraires. [...] Le mouvement de l'existence est en revanche le projet des possibilités *en tant que* leur réalisation; ce ne sont pas des possibilités données à l'avance dans une zone préalable déterminant un “substrat”. Le “moi” n'est pas un substrat passivement déterminé par la présence ou absence d'un certain *eidos*, par une “figure” ou une “privation”; il est quelque chose qui se détermine soi-même et, en ce sens, choisit librement ses possibilités.»

28. J. Patočka, “Le subjectivisme de la phénoménologie husserlienne et l'exigence d'une phénoménologie asubjective”, in: *Qu'est-ce que la phénoménologie?*, Millon, Grenoble, p. 247-248 : «Le monde, c'est-à-dire, les possibilités de notre propre être comme être essentiellement “ekstatische”, ne nous est pas ouvert par notre liberté propre. Cette liberté même est ouverte par la compréhension de l'être, avec tout le reste de la teneur phénoménale du monde. Ce n'est pas nous, ou notre *Dasein* qui, dans un projet sur le monde, nous donne à entendre à quel étant nous pouvons nous rapporter et de quelle manière, mais c'est à la compréhension de l'être, au phénomène comme tel que nous sommes redevables de cette entente [...]»



According to Renaud Barbaras, there is also present in *Le Visible et l'Invisible* the idea of a phenomenalization of Being which, to be better understood, would benefit from the idea of the patočkian movement.<sup>29</sup> Rather than Being remaining attached to the determination of substance, Being would *be becoming*. Even in *Phenomenology of Perception*, we already read: «The mobile, or rather, like we have said, what is moving, is not identical *beneath* the phases of movement, it is identical *in* them.»<sup>30</sup> Movement here is genesic; it proposes a conception of Being that rather than being previously determined, is *as* becoming. Movement rather than modifying a being through the alteration of one determination to another while always maintaining its identity throughout those alterations, it would form the very being of the being in question – the being *is* movement.

In Mazis, this movement has an explicitly and core emotional character. Curiously, we discover in Patočka a notable resonance: «It is a domain [that of the contact with the world] in which, more than moving ourselves as free beings, we are *moved*. For that reason, it is also the proper sphere of emotionality, of *emotio*, in which etymon is already contained the idea of movement, as being moved, emotion.»<sup>31</sup>

All of the tissue of experience would then be a part of this incessant becoming, permanent transformation – our existence enmeshed in an emotional pulsation. The originary space we would then *be*, would be this way sea of meaning, which we go on revealing as we also reveal ourselves. The “curve of the movement of our existence”, according to Patočka, is precisely this one: movement out of ourselves and, through the world, back to ourselves.<sup>32</sup>

But this place that we are and come back to is never – could never be – a protected reservoir, as if we could discover *what* we are – as essence – through the activities we realize in the world. The place we are *is* world, and by realizing possibilities we are simultaneously realizing the movement of our own existence and we are also participating in the movement of the world's realization – movements which are really only one. In Glen Mazis, we find an idea similar to this return to the place we are, by the movement that both includes and surpasses us: the e-motions are that which, at the same time, most profoundly root us in the world, and most closely reveal

29. R. Barbaras, *Le Tournant de l'Experience*, Vrin, Paris, 1998, p.29: «Comme le voit très bien Patočka, qui thématise ici ce qui demeure implicite chez Merleau-Ponty, la découverte d'une puissance propre de la phénoménalité correspond à une radicalisation de la thèse aristotélicienne dans la mesure où elle suspend et interroge la détermination catégoriale de l'Être, dominée par la substantialité.»

30. Merleau-Ponty, *La Phénoménologie de la Perception*, Gallimard, Paris, p.316 : «Le mobile ou plutôt, comme nous avons dit, le mouvant, n'est pas identique *sous* les phases du mouvement, il est identique *en* elles.»

31. Jan Patočka, *PP*, p.102.

32. *Ibid.*, p.71.

us to ourselves, something which is revealing of the structure in which we are inserted:

If we followed the e-motions *in their own trajectory* we might find an image of some dimension of our being and the being of the world in which it is *precisely because we are most thrown outside ourselves in emotion that we are most thrown back and into ourselves*. [...] [I]t is the invitation of e-motion itself, as the name literally means, to “move away” from the self in order to find the locus of e-motion, which is also a locus of the self, perhaps a decentered one, a wordly one.<sup>33</sup>

In the words of Patočka, we are “the place where the world comes to appearance and to words”.<sup>34</sup> Let’s remember that these “words” (*logos*) are not restricted to the linguistic sense, but instead, they express the articulation of meaning; it does not lead us to a notion of subjectivity centered on the consciousness, but instead to this global being-rooted, to an expression and assimilation of meaning that is essentially bodily, since the realization of possibilities could not be otherwise. The “locus” we are is the place of expression of meaning. «Merleau-Ponty saw human being as a being whose *body* is the locus of the unfolding of meaning.»<sup>35</sup>

From this bodily rootedness we also arrive at an understanding of space itself as dynamic and organic, as opposed to the sterile conception of a field on which objects are disposed. Originary space, like the emotional pulsing of meaning, like the idea of movement, forces the dividing line between subject and world.

The originary “within” is not a simple position, but a gaze that encompasses the group of our possibilities and a relation to those possibilities [...]. Their constant presence constitutes an environment that no longer has a purely objective character – an environment which is exterior to the dividing line between subject and object, or more (perhaps) that is at the base of that demarcation.<sup>36</sup>

Like in dreams, we live space by incorporating it. The idea that everything in dreams is an expression of ourselves acquires here a new, and richer, meaning.

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33. Glen Mazis, p. 67.

34. Jan Patočka, *PP*, p. 72.

35. Glen Mazis, p. 75.

36. Jan Patočka, *Qu'est-ce que la phénoménologie?*, p. 57: «Le “dedans” originaire n'est pas une simple position, mais un regard qui embrasse l'ensemble de nos possibilités et un rapport à ces possibilités. [...] Leur présence constante constitue un “environnement” qui n'a pas encore un caractère purement objectif - un environnement extérieur à la ligne de partage entre sujet et objet, ou plutôt (peut-être) qui fonde cette démarcation.»

## Conclusion

Our manner of inhabiting space, which is loosely what was meant here by “originary space”, has come to reveal structures poignantly absent from a mathematized, geometrical or “objective” conception of space. Space is affective, it is permeated and *moved* emotionally, and this motion occurs through our bodily rootedness in the world, in the organic *being space*. What is revealed, or defended, is an underlying shared tissue of meaning – emotionally twined – that circulates through organic existence – ours and wordly – thus opening the path for a different conception of being, each and as one.

Reflecting upon significant experiences while allowing for the confusing and often dismissed aspects – the muddy emotions, what seem to be projection, anticipation, or plain illusory – may open a new spectrum or dimension of existence and of our relationship with the world.

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