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The Synthesis of the Body Itself*

and

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The Body in its Sexual Being

We have seen that the body as incarnate intentionality inhabits space and projects itself towards a perceptual world. In perception the various senses do not function as factors to be co-ordinated, but as indivisible powers structuring the world in a unified experience. Further, just as bodily spatiality is constitutive of the very being of the phenomenal body, so the spatiality of perceived things is inseparable from their being as things. Subject and world form an organically related whole, as the existential analysis of habit reveals so well. The consideration of our lived experience shows us that the body is not a mechanistic system consisting of parts externally related to one another in objective space. The body's parts do not impinge upon each other in a stimulus-response chain reaction; nor are they 'hooked up' into various patterns by the synthesizing activity of an intellect. While it is true that we can experience our body in this fashion, we have seen that such experience is abnormal, and that it is itself based on a primordial experience of the body as pre-objectively present to the world. At this pre-objective level, there is a fundamental dialectic,

* As in the previous chapter, I have translated 'le corps propre' as 'the body itself'.