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Disembodied Cogito and Embodied Subjectivity
With Special Reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty

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Abstract

This paper seeks to elucidate the discourse concerning the issue of the 'mind'. The inquiry begins with the issue of Cartesian Dualism and aims to investigate its problematic nature. This paper also seeks to examine the intricate distinctions between 'consciousness-in-itself' and 'awareness of' by analysing the meaning of consciousness. It additionally aims to investigate if the Cartesian cogito, commonly referred to as the Disembodied Cogito, may redefine this dualism when applied to Embodied Subjectivity. In this regard, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Body-Subject as purposeful has been introduced to demonstrate that the segmented definition of mind as res-cogitans and body as res-extensa cannot serve as the definitive classification. In reality, when we incorporate subjectivity and qualify it with embodiedness, the distinction between being within the box or outside of it becomes invalid, as we see that there is no box to strictly compartmentalise the body as res-extensa and the mind as res-cogitans. This work, therefore, seeks to ascertain whether the dichotomy of mind and body may be integrated within a broader holistic theoretical framework.

Keywords: Cogito, Descartes, Disembodied, Embodied, Subjectivity, Maurice Merleau-Ponty

1. 0 Introduction

1.1 Setting the stage

What is the problem of the mind? The problem for Descartes is two-fold. First, if humans are free, then that which is free is not subject to the laws of physics (extension). However, all physical things are subject to the laws of physics (by definition). Therefore, the mind (the source of free will) must not be physical in nature. It must be distinct from the body. Thus, human beings are composed of two parts - mind and body. This division of humans into two

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parts, i.e., the mind and the body, is known as Cartesian Dualism. The presence of a mind allows human beings to transcend their physical bodies and be free. In other words, Cartesian Dualism states that mind and body are two separate and independent substances (Descartes 1996).

Descartes defines a thinking thing or the cogito as:

> ‘A thing which doubts, understands, [conceives], affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels. For body or physical matter Descartes states, "By the body I understand all that which can be defined by a certain figure; something which can be confined in a certain place, which can be perceived either by touch, or by sight, or by hearing, or by taste, or by smell’ (Descartes 1996: 20–21).

Descartes was concerned about how the non-material could interact with the material and how the extended substance of the body could house the unextended substance called the mind. He held that the two components that constitute ‘man’ had an independent origin and are fundamentally different. The body could be divided up by the removal of a leg or an arm, but the mind was indivisible. The mind occupies the whole body in all its parts, but the reduction of the body in no way leads to the reduction of the mind. Descartes’s division of everything into the mental and the physical and his equation of the mental with the conscious form jointly one of the most damaging, as well as one of the most characteristic features of his developed system.

Descartes states this distinction between mind and body in the most clearly possible way in the following passage:

> ‘Thus, simply by knowing that I exist and seeing at the same time that absolutely nothing else belongs to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking thing, I can infer correctly that my essence consists solely in the fact that I am a thinking thing. It is sure that I may have (or, to anticipate, that I certainly have) a body that is very closely joined to me. Nevertheless, on the one hand, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thing, a non-extended thing; and on the other hand, I have a distinct idea of a body, in so far that is simply an extended, a non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am distinct from my body, and can exist without it’ (Descartes 1996: 54).

Descartes was convinced that embodiment need not be the sole criterion of existence and he explicitly pointed out that both body and mind are two distinct and separate entities that can exist on their own and function accordingly. The mind or the *res cogitans* has been given the edge over the body or the *res extensa* in the *Mediations* (Descartes 1996).

Thus, according to Descartes, the fact that we human beings are capable of doing various mental acts, i.e., thinking, calculating, comprehending, etc., makes us what we are: cogitative beings. Descartes, however, thinks that this distinction presupposes, amongst other things, an explanation of the union between the soul and the body, which he says ' I have not yet dealt with at all. But I will say, for your benefit at least, that the whole problem contained in such questions arises simply from a supposition that is false and cannot in any way be proved, namely that, if the soul and the body are two substances whose nature is different, this prevents them from being able to act on each other' (Descartes 1984: 275).

So, what is the Cartesian problem? The mind-body dualism in Descartes is problematic because the mind or the r*es-cogitans* is defined as that which is marked by consciousness; the mind is transparent in the sense that it knows its mental life without any mediation and is not subject to any change. On the other hand, the body or the *res extensa* is that which is physical or corporeal in nature, is extendable, is devoid of consciousness, and is subject to change. In other words, for Descartes every material thing is defined by having extension and thus occupies space. Each material object occupies a unique portion of space. Even water or gas e.g. can be reduced to particles where we find that they are extended things occupying space. So, the first substance, which he called *res-extensa,* refers to matter. On the other hand, our mind and the mental content like emotions and beliefs do not matter in this sense. They are not extended and do not occupy space. So, they must be non-material substances. Had the mind and the body been two independent and floating entities in a disembodied being or environment, the Cartesian problem would have never arisen. The problem arises because these two contradictory entities are present in human beings. How can a human being have both the mind and the body and thus possess contradictory properties? It is here that the problem of Cartesian dualism crops up (Barua 2016: 9).

Though the introduction of the pineal gland as Descartes had proposed did not make much progress, it would be false to conclude that Cartesianism is gone and dead. Remnants of Cartesianism are still alive and very much strong amongst many philosophers (Barua 2016:35). Modern Cartesians have defended the existence of a nonmaterial persisting conscious mind, justifying its persistence to account for continuity of experience, character and memory, and justifying its non-materiality by the fact that its contents such as qualia, feelings, thoughts, etc. which cannot be located in the physical world (Barua 2016: 36).

Descartes' search for certainty, which is indubitable, clear, and distinct, led him to the method of doubt. This methodology leads to the following positions:

Firstly, the external world does not exist. There is no guarantee that the world actually exists. This, however, does not mean that we are left with complete skepticism. Philosophical skepticism begins with the claim that the skeptic currently does not have knowledge. Some adherents maintain that knowledge is, in theory, possible. If nothing at all was true, clear, or distinct, then we would be left with a kind of global skepticism. This brings us to the second finding of the above arguments (Barua 2016) that the first principle, which we can be sure of and is indubitable, is that doubting exists. If doubt exists, then the doubter too must exist. Thus, he stated,

'I am, then, at least a thing that thinks' (Descartes 1996: 19).

Since doubting is nothing but thinking, the indubitable and certain principle that we can be sure of is that we think, and if thinking exists then the thinker too must exist. Thus, Descartes' dubito-ergo sum was soon replaced by his cogito-ergo sum. Thus, Descartes introduced a Method of Doubt that allows him to systematically doubt the structures of knowledge. So, we see that Descartes doubts anything and everything that the senses tell us. Descartes pushes his doubt one step further by doubting whether we are awake. The question that comes up is the reality of the external world. This is where the "evil genius" argument comes in. Although Descartes finds a way to doubt external reality, it leaves mathematics untouched. So, Descartes needs a way to doubt that too. He imagines there being an "evil genius" who tricks Descartes into thinking a certain mathematical falsehood is true (2 + 3 = 6, for instance) when it is not. This evil genius is not God. "Evil genius" is also sometimes called the "malignant demon" Descartes (1996:15). So, the dreaming hypothesis is aimed at the external world, while the evil demon hypothesis is aimed at the domain of sciences and mathematics. But the evil genius hypothesis breaks down. This is so because although the evil genius can manipulate one's abilities to reason, they cannot trick one into thinking 'I exist when I do not exist; after all, I must first exist to be deceived' (Descartes 1996: 20.). There is a "me" who is being deceived. So, Descartes reasons, whenever one thinks about existing, one necessarily exists in that moment (Descartes 1996).

1.2 Stage II: Defining Consciousness: Consciousness-in-itself

Explaining the nature of consciousness is one of the most important and perplexing tasks for philosophers of mind, as the concept is notoriously ambiguous. Consciousness is the adverb of the noun conscious, which implies 'awake and aware of one's surroundings' (Chalmers1996:4). No matter how much we "consciously" experience the various things around us, when it comes to defining the same, we realize it is not an easy task to think or conceptualise about "consciousness itself". Thus, the word, "consciousness" has etymological ties to one's ability to know and perceive and should not be confused with conscience, which has the more moral connotation of knowing when one has done or is doing something wrong. Through consciousness, one can know the external world or one's mental states. The primary contemporary interest lies more in the use of expressions 'x is conscious' or 'x is conscious of y'. The difference between these two ways of referring to consciousness is that the former is consciousness in isolation from its content, and the latter is consciousness as consciousness of something that is to do with the world (Chalmers1996).

The problem of consciousness has been captured in the words of Smith (Smith 2004). He is of the opinion that in course of time philosophers and scientists have been looking for the mind in all the wrong places. Physicalists of all stripes have focused primarily on the physical conditions of consciousness, from neural activity to computational function. Meanwhile, humanists-historicists, postmodernists, and culture critics have looked primarily to the cultural conditions of our discourse, as if consciousness did not exist in its own right but is "theorised" in a cultural tradition of phenomenology or scientific or humanistic discourse. However, much have to be learnt from the empirical sciences about bosons, atoms, organisms, evolution, and the brain and from humanistic observations in art, literature, and cultural history and criticism. But this learning is informed by further disciplines that are not "empirical" or "naturalistic" or indeed "humanistic" in the received ways. If one has to understand the mind, one must understand more clearly the philosophical disciplines of phenomenology and ontology because these disciplines define the place of mind in a world further detailed by the scientific disciplines of neuroscience, evolutionary biology, and quantum physics, as well as the humanistic disciplines of literary, artistic, and cultural criticism (Smith 2004).

The concept of consciousness has been captured in the words of Nagel as 'what it is like to be something' (Nagel 1979:435). This is perhaps the most fundamental and commonly used notion of consciousness by Nagel. In a conscious mental state, an individual experiences a unique subjective perspective. For instance, when engaging in the act of smelling a rose or undergoing a conscious visual experience, there exists a distinctive sensation or perception from one's viewpoint. An organism, such as a bat, is regarded as conscious if it can perceive the external environment through its echolocation senses. Thus, there is a qualitative aspect to the experience of being a conscious entity, in contrast to the absence of any such qualitative experience for inanimate objects like a table or a tree. This is the primary notion of phenomenal consciousness that we would like to understand in this article (Nagel:1979).

Taking a clue from Nagel's above passage, we can say that consciousness or to be in a state of consciousness constitutes the following characteristics (Nagel1979):

- An individual as being conscious can undergo feelings, emotions, sensations, etc. In other words, one who is capable of experiencing something, be it sensation, emotions, or perceptual experience.

- Experiencing a particular thing is unique to an individual. It is unique in the sense that the moment one claims to be aware of something or knows that consciousness is present, one knows that he or she is experiencing something, or it is his or her experience. The uniqueness of consciousness cannot be shared by anybody else. This unshareable aspect is the subjective dimension of consciousness. When one is not conscious or when consciousness is absent, it is true that one is not experiencing anything. Now, this unshareable, subjective, and unique experience constitutes the phenomenal content of consciousness.

- Elaborating it further we can say that whenever consciousness is present, phenomenal content is also present. And whenever consciousness is absent, phenomenal content is absent. This phenomenal consciousness is the subjective aspect, which is unique in itself. It is that aspect which cannot be shared with anybody. It is also called the qualia or the property of consciousness.

- For any phenomenally conscious experience E, there is something it is like to have E. Consciousness thus is that aspect of the mental phenomenon, which is recognizable yet vague, common yet inexplicable, and familiar yet mysterious. This feature of consciousness is what makes it an interesting and motivating subject to study, examine, and investigate. This consciousness has been variously defined as subjective experience, awareness, ability to experience feelings, wakefulness, having a sense of selfhood, or as the executive control symbol of the mind.

1.3 Stage III: Defining Consciousness: Consciousness 'of '

Each mental state or experience of, for example, physical objects, events, of our own selves, other persons, numbers, propositions, etc., is a representation of something other than itself and so gives one a sense of something. Intentionality is a central concept in the philosophy of mind and Husserl's phenomenology. Indeed, Husserl calls intentionality 'the fundamental property of consciousnesses' and the 'principle theme of phenomenology' (Husserl 1931: 117).

Husserl's intentionality not only talks about the existing objects of the world but also the objects that characterise our fantasies, predictions, recollections, etc. Both are intended, transcendent, and extra mental objects. The only difference between the two is whether the referent exists in reality or does not exist. This representational character of mind or consciousness, its being "of" or "about something," is called intentionality. So Husserl states, 'If we imagine a consciousness prior to all experience, it may very well have the same sensations as we have. But it will intuit no things, and no events pertaining to things, it will perceive no trees and no houses, no flight of birds nor any barking of dogs' (Husserl 1931:119). One important corollary of the mind-world relationship is that our mind does not become intentional through external influence, and it does not lose its intentionality if the external object ceases to exist. Intentionality is an intrinsic feature of consciousness; its openness to being in is inherent in it; its essential object-directedness is what marks it as an intentional structure with its inherent subject, i.e., being directed toward an object structure. When philosophers talk about phenomenological experience, they are drawing attention to the phenomenally conscious aspects of experience, i.e., to any qualia associated with the experience.

The need for accepting phenomenal content is significant when one talks about the subjective feel or more so when one looks into the broader horizon of the debate in the philosophy of mind. The need to accept phenomenal consciousness becomes necessary when one tries to study consciousness the way physicalists do. No matter how much empirical study the neurologists or the physicalists may carry out, the fact remains that some truths about human mental experience cannot be explained by the physicalist's theory. To cite an example, a blind man can be taught from his childhood all the propositional knowledge in the physicalist theory about colour and mental experience. The whole exercise becomes difficult when the teacher tries to explain to the blind student how it feels when one sees a certain colour, say, yellow, or when one has certain raw feelings of mental experience. The physicalists may use the study of neural firings and movement of neurons of the brain during a certain mental experience, while the other physiologists may do so by empirical means. But what it is to see the colour yellow will be incomplete and futile from this physicalist's stand. No amount of their study would be sufficient to objectively capture and study the raw feelings and share the same to the blind student. Thus, the argument for the need of 'consciousness-in-itself' can be understood when we realize that scientific or objective study alone cannot give us the knowledge of all that is to be known. There will remain a mystery, the mystery of subjectivity, which cannot be understood and calculated in objective terms. According to Puddefoot in his book *God and the Mind Machine*, he argued that people might observe some areas of their brain functioning in ways of perceiving sights, sounds, or smells. However, this knowledge won't help them understand what they are experiencing or what its impact would be on them (See Puddefoot 1996).

1.4 Stage IV: The Possible way out between 'consciousness-in-itself' and consciousness 'of '?

The debate between the views of "consciousness-in-itself" and the "consciousness of" has resulted in two extreme positions with no plausible meeting ground between them. The problem has been so far to inquire if the phenomenal states supervene on the intentional properties or do the intentional properties exhaust themselves without being dictated by the phenomenal properties of consciousness. By re-visiting Merleau-Ponty's argument of body subject as intentional, we would try to show that the body subject is not solely phenomenal and subjective. It has its stance of being intentional in nature. The phenomenological investigation of the body is not the analysis of one object amongst others. It is not as if phenomenology, in its research of several different ontological regions, stumbled upon the body and then subjected it to scrutiny. With Merleau-Ponty, a shift in the focus from mind to body was traced. Merleau-Ponty holds that the traditional methodologies of both empiricism and rationalism are inadequate to describe the phenomenology of perception. In empiricism, experience is held to be the only true source of knowledge. Knowledge derived from sense-perception alone is true. On the other hand, the rationalist philosophers' view is that knowledge derived from reason alone is valid. However, Merleau-Ponty holds that empiricism does not explain how the nature of consciousness determines our perceptions nor does rationalism explain how the nature of our perceptions determines consciousness. As such, both these theories are inadequate for a proper understanding of the phenomenology of perception. The novel way of introducing our spontaneous and pre-reflective mode of being-in-the-world, the phenomenologists use the word "life-world" to highlight the fact that the spatiality of the life-world, of the world that we live in, is spatially captured not by geometrical measures, but structured by contexts of use. In daily life we do not interact with ideal theoretical objects, but with tools and objects of practical or emotional or aesthetic or personal value. The more fundamental way of being is, for Merleau-Ponty, the lived body and this is not a part of the causal order, nor is it a mechanist body. Merleau-Ponty observed that though the body subject is intentional, there are instances when the subject is conscious of his or her surroundings in a particular way. Though Merleau-Ponty has introduced the body subject as intentional, this intentionality should not be considered as being at par with that of intentionality as advocated by Tye (2008) and Crane (1998). The experience of the body reveals an ambiguous mode of existence.

The body is a notion that holds a double meaning: it can be viewed and understood as an object (corpse body) and as a subject (lived body). An experience of the body should give us both at once. However, the reflection of the body only gives us the thought of the body and not the experience of it. Therefore, the two perspectives on the body, the object and the subject, are separated when the individual only thinks of his body. This is why we have to emphasise "experience". There is no other way to know the body than to live it, as a subject and object, as the one who is perceived and who perceives (See Merleau-Ponty 1968).

This is where Merleau-Ponty deviates from Strong Intentionalists like Crane and Tye (see Tye 2008, Crane 1998) and others for whom all mental states, including pain, are object-directed and thus representational in nature. Merleau-Ponty says, "I am my body," and to live the body is also to live in space. (Merleau-Ponty 2012: xxxiii). Merleau-Ponty discusses "lived body" or "body as flesh" as a novel approach to deny that the body is a mere object in the world. Existence is a condition that includes the existence of both conscious beings and non-conscious things. Bodily experience is a mode of existence as the idea of the body cannot be separated from the experience of the body, and this is how Merleau-Ponty defined body subject as intentional (Merleau-Ponty 2012: xxxiv). Just as the mind and the body cannot be separated as subject and object, as both the mind and the body have their own being, in the same way, the perceptions of the bodily subject influence what is perceived by the mind. Husserl (See Zahavi 1998) distinguished between objective body and lived body, and in Merleau-Ponty, this is extended as flesh or body-subject as intentional in nature. The perplexity of the object and the subject is what Merleau-Ponty calls the "flesh". Merleau-Ponty thus defines flesh as:

> 'The flesh is no matter, in the sense of corpuscles of being… is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term "element", in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is fragment of being. The flesh is, in this sense, an "element" of Being (Merleau-Ponty1968: 138-139).

The flesh creates a common world based on a fundamental exchange of the perceptible between the world and the body. The flesh indicates at first the relation between the subject and the world, the interiority expressing it or the exteriority interiorizing. The flesh of the body participates in the flesh of the world. The lived body captures the body as it seems from an embodied first-person perspective; on the other hand, the corpse body or objective body. It seems, from an observer's point of view or that it has an object directional aspect. The lived body is the way the body structures our experience (See Merleau-Ponty 1968).

2.0 Merleau-Ponty on the Cartesian Cogito

Merleau-Ponty puts the concept of body in the following manner: 'How significance and intentionality could come to dwell in molecular edifices or masses of cells is a thing that can never be made comprehensible, and here Cartesianism is right' (Merleau-Ponty 2012: 409).

The Cartesian legacy had no doubt made the body, *res extensa* (Descartes 1996) thoroughly physical and extendable in its description so far. However, Descartes himself *conceded that there was something unique about human beings in that they are a subtle unity of* the two and the unity is not merely an accidental one. Merleau-Ponty rejects the claim by Descartes that the body is a machine manipulated by the mind. Merleau-Ponty, though, does not deny the physiological reality of the body as a set of separated parts that work together.

He argues that the body is more than just a machine since it is a lived body. As Merleau-Ponty breaks away from the dualism of empiricism and rationalism, he sees the body as existing in a third state, that is, between subject and object. His epistemology gives primacy to perception. Merleau-Ponty argues that a subject-object dialogue is the foundation of the human experience. Merleau-Ponty prefers to characterize perception as a subject-object dialogue experienced through a "lived body" by which consciousness is experienced. However, the phenomenologist's emphasis on the body does not entail an endorsement of some kind of Cartesian materialism. It is not to overcome dualism by retaining the mind–body distinction and then to do away with the mind. The notion of embodiment, or embodied mind or a minded body, is to replace the ordinary notions of mind and body, both of which are derivations and abstractions (Merleau-Ponty:1968).

Merleau-Ponty developed the concept of the body-subject as an alternative to the Cartesian "*cogito*". This distinction is especially important in that Merleau-Ponty perceives the essence of the world existentially, as opposed to the Cartesian idea that the world is merely an extension of our minds. Consciousness, the world, and the human body as a perceiving thing are intricately intertwined and mutually engaged. One perceives the world through one's bodies; everyone is embodied subjects, involved in existence. So, Merleau-Ponty states, 'the world is not what I think, but what I live; I am open to the world. I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it; it is inexhaustible. "There is a world" or rather, "There is the world"' (Merleau-Ponty 2012: xxxi).

Merleau-Ponty ascribed to the perceptual mode of experience for the simple reason that the first encounter with the world is through perception. Only after having known the perceptual world does somebody reflect or philosophize. Merleau-Ponty's perception is not restricted to the narrower version of sight alone but is used to mean a whole array of experiences, tactual, olfactory, among others. What is characteristic of his account of perception is the centrality that the body plays in perception. Perception for him is not the mere reflection of sensory data but more than that. The world that we encounter in perception is a "lived experience". Merleau-Ponty points out, 'My field of perception is constantly filled with a play of colours, noises and fleeting tactile sensations which I cannot relate precisely to the context of my perceived world, yet which I nevertheless immediately "place" in the world, without ever confusing them with my daydreams' (Merleau-Ponty 2012: xxiv). Merleau-Ponty came up with the concept of the world or the "lived world" as opposed to the Cartesian "Cogito". The world is there and we are very much in contact with it in our day-to-day lived experience. Just as the introduction of the cogito assured Descartes of his existence, similarly, the introduction of the world assured Merleau-Ponty of his existence. Merleau-Ponty argues for a naturalistic picture of the body, as a chemical structure or an agglomeration of tissues, is formed, by a process of impoverishment, from a primordial phenomenon of the body-force, the body of human experience or the perceived body (Merleau-Ponty 1968).

The body as it is lived is, therefore, a phenomenon at the very beginning and acts as a ground for any conceptualization we make of the body as a physical thing. Our experience of embodiment teaches us a new mode of existence, which is neither simply a pure subjective being-in-itself, such as Descartes' self-contained mind, nor a pure objective being-for-itself, such as the body-object that this conception of mind stands over against but is a mixture of two. Merleau-Ponty defines body as flesh which is made of the same flesh of the world, and so we can easily know and understand the world, whereas worldly and embodied beings are not mechanically separated from our body and our world. Our body is not a machine, if a part of the machine is eliminated, the machine would simply go without using its limb or part. The lived body opens onto a world and allows the world to be ours. This perspective implies that our bodies are not mere machines; rather, they serve as the medium through which we engage with and comprehend the world. Consciousness, according to Merleau-Ponty, is not confined to the mind but is experienced through our embodied interactions. Consciousness is not something that goes on in our heads; our intentional consciousness is experienced in and through our bodies. This shows how experience is always a dialogue with the subject. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy emphasizes the *lived body* (*le corps propre*) as the foundational basis for experiencing and understanding the world. He challenges Cartesian dualism, which separates mind and body, by proposing that our bodily existence is neither purely subjective (as in Descartes' concept of a self-contained mind) nor purely objective (as in viewing the body solely as a physical entity). Instead, he introduces the concept of the *flesh* (*la chair*), suggesting that the body and the world are made of the same "flesh," facilitating an intrinsic connection between the two. This is how Merleau-Ponty brings intentionality to avoid the pitfalls of reductionism and dualism of a Cartesian kind (Merleau-Ponty 1968).

The body for Merleau-Ponty is much more than just an entity to be treated as an inert object whose behaviour is to be explained exhaustively in terms of science as a “second order expression of the world”. But neither is it a pure, transparent subject. It exhibits “ambiguously” both aspects and functions. He thus rejects the claims of behaviourism and naturalism. The body must be seen as a conscious “subject” actively situated in the perceptual milieu, the presupposition for all conceptual thinking, rationality, value, and existence. Therefore, the situation that the body-subject finds itself thrown into is one of constant change, i.e. its relationship to the world and other persons and also its dialogue with them is what makes the body-subject dialectical. This is the basic distinction missed by the Cartesian tradition: the body as a subject, as an experiencer, as an agent, rather than the body as an object, as a thing experienced.

The embodiment, however, is not simply spatial. One can feel sluggish after having a heavy meal, feel energetic and attuned to my surroundings after exercise, etc. This entire embodiment shapes the way one perceives the world. It is the lived body with which one perceives and act, it is in constant connection with the world. To be situated in a world does not simply mean to be in a physical environment but to be in rapport with bodily meaningful circumstances. The human body is an expressive space that contributes to the significance of personal actions. The body is also the origin of expressive movement and is a medium for the perception of the world. Bodily experience gives perception a meaning beyond that established simply by thought. Descartes’ dictum, *Cogito ergo Sum*, does not account for how consciousness is influenced by the spatiality of a person’s own body. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, human beings do not exist in isolation from others; hence, experience is lived and full. With Merleau-Ponty, therefore, we may remain phenomenological explorers of a kind of embodied thinking in humans and others that will put flesh back on her bones, grounding the subject and making the embodied thinker a lived body in turn. We may thus try to dismiss the old Cartesian subject and its detached and disembodied worldly adventures from above. To conclude, it seems that in rediscovering the lived body, we must also revise our understanding of the relation between the body itself and the world. We have already discussed the internalism and externalism debate regarding the content of the mind in the previous chapters. This debate enables us to comprehend Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body and the world as not exclusive but mutually inclusive of each other. The environment is not simply a place where we mechanically perform our actions. The environment directly and indirectly regulates the body so that the body is, in some sense, the expression or reflection of the environment (Merleau-Ponty: 2012).

The "internal environment" of the body, which functions homeostatically and automatically and is constituted by innumerable physiological and neurological events, is simply an internalised translation and continuation of the "external environment". Changes in the "external" environment are always accompanied by changes in the 'internal' one. It is also the case that when there are changes in the "internal" environment, the "external" environment can suddenly take on a different significance, i.e., the environment can become experientially different .This idea aligns with the phenomenological of perception and embodiment, particularly as explored in the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty as discussed in this article.

3.0 Conclusion

Thus, our conventional understanding of the body based on an empirical analysis of causal connections must be replaced by an understanding based on a phenomenological analysis of a primordial dialogue of mutual implication between body and world. This would help us in redefining the scope of the "subjective", "objective" domains and depict that neither the disembodied mind nor the mindless body alone can be the way out. What is needed is the synthesis of both the embodied mind and the minded body in a lived environment, making it embodied subjectivity. Consequently, our traditional comprehension of the body, based on an empirical study of causal relationships, must be supplanted by an understanding rooted in a phenomenological examination of a fundamental discourse of mutual implication between body and world. This would assist us in re-establishing the parameters of the "subjective" and "objective" domains, illustrating that neither the disembodied mind nor the mindless body can provide a solution independently. The synthesis of the embodied mind and the thinking body within a lived world is essential, resulting in embodied subjectivity.

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