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Kantian Themes in Merleau-Ponty's Theory of Perception

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Abstract: It has become typical to read Kant and Merleau-Ponty as offering competing approaches to perceptual experience. Kant is interpreted as an 'intellectualist' who regards perception as conceptual 'all the way out', while Merleau-Ponty is seen as Kant's challenger, who argues that perception involves non-conceptual, embodied 'coping'. In this paper, however, I argue that a closer examination of their views of perception, especially with respect to the notion of 'schematism', reveals a great deal of historical and philosophical continuity between them. By analyzing Kant's theory of schematism, the interpretation of it by the Neo-Kantian Pierre Lachière-Rey, and Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body schema, we find that aspects of Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception are better understood as a development of Kant's theory of perception.

1 Introduction

A centerpiece of both Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* is an analysis of perceptual experience. On the face of it, Kant and Merleau-Ponty appear to be approaching perception from diametrically opposed positions: whereas Kant's explanation of perception turns on an analysis of how our *minds* process various representations, like intuitions and concepts, Merleau-Ponty eschews talk of representation altogether and argues that perception is a function of our direct *bodily* contact with the world. Given these dissimilarities, it has now become common to read Kant and Merleau-Ponty as offering two *competing* characterizations of perceptual experience.¹ This trend is illustrated especially clearly in the recent debates between

¹ See, e.g., Waxman 1991, 18, 195, 212 fn. 40; Longuenesse 1998, 204, 271, 395; Matthews 2006, 31; Melnick 2009, 126–130, 2013, *passim*; and Rockmore 2011, Chapter 6.

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Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell.² Both Dreyfus and McDowell treat Kant as an ‘intellectualist’,³ as someone who thinks that our mental, indeed, conceptual capacities thoroughly shape our perceptual experience.⁴ As McDowell describes this position: “our perceptual relation to the world is conceptual all the way out to the world’s impacts on our receptive capacities.”⁵ Meanwhile, both Dreyfus and McDowell regard Merleau-Ponty as a challenger who urges against Kant that our perception involves, as Dreyfus puts it, “nonconceptual embodied coping skills we share with infants and animals.”⁶ We thus appear to be left with a choice: we can either side with Kant and the claim that “mind is pervasive in our perceptual experience”⁷, or with Merleau-Ponty and the claim that, prior to mind, perception depends on “embodied coping going on on the ground floor.”⁸

In this paper, however, I offer reasons why we should be wary of carving up Kant’s and Merleau-Ponty’s theories of perception in such a dichotomous fashion. Indeed, I show that pitting Kant against Merleau-Ponty in this way leads us to overlook the historical and philosophical continuities between their views of perception. In particular, I demonstrate that a cornerstone of Merleau-Ponty’s

2 See Dreyfus 2006, McDowell 2007a, McDowell 2007b.

3 This is a phrase Merleau-Ponty uses repeatedly in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, e.g., PhP 28 f./50 f. (citations to *Phenomenology of Perception* (PhP) will be to the English pagination/original French pagination).

4 In *Having the World in View* (2009), for example, McDowell argues that Kant commits himself to the view that even the most basic, sensible features of perceptual experience, viz., intuitions, are conceptually shaped (see Essay 2). To this end, McDowell 2009, 30 f., draws on Kant’s claim in the Metaphysical Deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that, “The same function that gives unity to different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of the understanding” (A79/B104 f.). (Citations to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the pagination of Kant’s first (“A”) and/or second (“B”) editions. All other passages from Kant’s work are cited by the volume and page number of *Kants gesammelte Schriften*). In this vein, other commentators have urged that this is the position Kant defends in the Transcendental Deduction (see Sedgwick 1997, Abela 2002, Wenzel 2005, Engstrom 2006, Ginsborg 2008, and Griffith 2012). For an alternative ‘non-conceptualist’ reading of Kant, see Rohs 2001; Hanna 2005, 2008, 2011; Allais 2009; Grüne 2009, 2011; Tolley 2013; McLear 2015.

5 McDowell 20015, 338.

6 Dreyfus 2006, 43. It is, in particular, Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on the body and its ‘pre-reflective’ and ‘pre-logical’ relation to the world (e.g., PhP 241/279, 311/351, 349/311, 547 fn. 3/357) that leads commentators to think he endorses the view that we have an unreflective or non-conceptual relation to the world (see Carman 2008, 28, 81, Dreyfus 2006, 47 f., Kelly 2002). For commentators wary of this characterization of Merleau-Ponty, see Berendzen 2009, 2010 and Siewert 2013.

7 McDowell 2007a, 339.

8 Dreyfus 2006, 43.

theory of perception, viz., his analysis of the 'body schema', is, in fact, a development of Kant's analysis of schematism in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. While the standard reading may tempt us to think that Merleau-Ponty would have dismissed Kant's theory of schematism as overly intellectualist, I show that Merleau-Ponty, in fact, regards it as a non-intellectualist strand in Kant's thought. I argue that this was possible because Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Kant's theory of schematism was shaped by one of his philosophical mentors in France at the time, the Neo-Kantian Pierre Lachière-Rey, and one of the hallmark features of Lachière-Rey's interpretation is the claim that, for Kant, schematism, perception, and embodiment are intimately interconnected.⁹ As we shall see, Lachière-Rey's interpretation thus exposed to Merleau-Ponty a pre-conceptual layer of Kant's theory of perception that bears directly on his primary concerns, viz., the role of the body in perceptual experience. This, in turn, put Merleau-Ponty in a position to self-consciously take over Kant's theory of schematism within his own philosophical account of the body schema. In which case, even if Merleau-Ponty rejects certain versions of intellectualism, far from his philosophy of perception being *anti-Kantian*, there is a sense in which it is broadly *Kantian*.

In order to trace both the historical and philosophical development of the theory of schematism from Kant through Lachière-Rey and into Merleau-Ponty, I begin with an overview of Kant's discussion of schematism as presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Section 2). I go on to present Lachière-Rey's interpretation of this Kantian theory (Section 3) and examine Merleau-Ponty's evaluation of this interpretation of Kant in the *Phenomenology* (Section 4). I next analyze the basic features of Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body schema and its role in perceptual experience and emphasize the Kantian concerns and themes that are clearly present in it (Section 5). In the conclusion, I return to a discussion of the dissimilarities between Kant's and Merleau-Ponty's theories of perception and analyze just how far the continuity between their views can extend given their varied approaches to perceptual experience (Section 6).

⁹ Although in this article, I focus on the influence of Lachière-Rey on Merleau-Ponty, in Matherne 2014a I argue that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of Kant's theory of perception was also influenced by the German Neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer, more specifically by Cassirer's analysis of the role the productive imagination plays in both 'pathological' and 'normal' perception.

2 Schematism in the *Critique of Pure Reason*

According to Kant, there are two basic mental capacities involved in perceptual experience, what he calls ‘sensibility’ and ‘understanding’. Sensibility is a passive capacity by means of which we are receptive to the causal influence of the world, e.g. when our senses present us with a champagne flute.¹⁰ When this happens, Kant thinks sensibility produces ‘intuitions’, which he defines as representations of the particular object given to us here and now, e.g. of *this* flute.¹¹ Meanwhile, the understanding is our active, spontaneous capacity for making judgments about the world, e.g. judging *that* this is a champagne flute.¹² It produces ‘concepts’, which Kant defines as representations of the general features or properties of objects, e.g. champagne-fluteness.¹³ Now, given that sensibility is our capacity for being affected by the world, whereas understanding is our capacity for actively thinking about the world, and given that intuitions are singular representations, whereas concepts are general ones, the question arises: how can these seemingly different capacities with their seemingly different representations come together for the sake of perceptual experience?¹⁴

If Kant were a thoroughgoing intellectualist, we might expect him to argue that the understanding is capable of effecting this mediation. However, this is not what Kant does; instead, he turns to a capacity other than our conceptual one, viz., the ‘imagination’: “Both extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of this transcendental function of the imagination.”¹⁵ In the B Deduction, Kant defines the imagination as “a faculty for representing an object even *without its presence* in intuition” and as he teases out this definition, he indicates why he thinks the imagination is capable of mediating between sensibility and understanding.¹⁶ On the one hand, insofar as the imagination is a faculty for forming *intuitive* representations, albeit of objects that are not directly present to us, it is similar to sensibility. On the other hand,

¹⁰ A50/B76 – A51/B75.

¹¹ As Kant says in the *Stufenleiter*, an intuition is a representation that “is immediately related to the object and is singular” (A320/B377).

¹² A68/B93.

¹³ Again in the *Stufenleiter*, Kant says a concept is a representation whose relation to an object “is mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things” (A320/B377).

¹⁴ For the purposes of this discussion, I will understand experience, for Kant, to involve the type of cognition he describes at A50/B74 – A52/B76, i.e. as involving the ‘unification’ of an intuition and a concept.

¹⁵ A124.

¹⁶ B151.

Kant claims that the imagination is like the understanding because it forms its intuitive representations in an *active* way, through an “exercise of spontaneity”.¹⁷ The imagination can thus serve as an intermediary between sensibility and understanding because it shares features of both. Of course, Kant’s analysis of how exactly the imagination plays this mediating role is quite complicated as it involves his analysis of both the ‘reproductive’ activities of the imagination, by means of which it ‘recalls’ past experience and the ‘productive’ activities of the imagination, which, in fact, make experience possible.¹⁸ However, for our purposes, it will be enough to focus on one aspect of his analysis of the ‘productive’ exercise of the imagination, viz., his analysis of schematism.¹⁹

In the Schematism chapter,²⁰ Kant approaches the issue of how the imagination can mediate between sensibility and understanding at a fairly abstract and general level by asking how the imagination enables us to make judgments in which we apply the categories, i.e. the most basic and commonly used concepts we have, like cause or substance, to empirical intuitions. On Kant’s view, in order to apply a category to an object of intuition, there must be something similar, or as he puts it ‘homogeneous’ [*gleichartig*] between the two representations, i.e. something that provides a reason for applying just this category to intuition.²¹ Kant worries that this requirement of homogeneity cannot be met in judgments where we apply the categories to intuitions for the former, qua completely general concepts, seem “entirely unhomogeneous [*ungleichartig*]” with the latter, qua representations of something highly particular.²² As Kant makes this point with respect to the category ‘cause’,

17 B 151.

18 See Kant’s definition of the imagination in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*: “The power of imagination (*facultas imaginandi*), as a faculty of intuition without the presence of the object, is either *productive*, that is, a faculty of the original presentation [*Darstellung*] of the object (*exhibitio originaria*), which thus precedes experience; or *reproductive*, a faculty of the derivative presentation of the object (*exhibitio derivativa*), which brings back to mind an empirical intuition that it had previously” (*Anthro*, 7:167).

19 For a more thorough defense of the following interpretation of the Schematism, see Matherne 2014b.

20 A137/B176 – A147/B187

21 A137/B176. See Allison 2004, 211–213 for a discussion of the role the notions ‘homogeneity’ and ‘subsumption’ play in Kant’s account of schematism.

22 A137/B176.

Now how is the *subsumption* of [empirical intuitions] under [the categories], thus the *application* of the category to appearances possible, since no one would say that the category, e.g., causality, could also be intuited through the senses and is contained in appearance?²³

The solution to what we could call the ‘problem of homogeneity’ takes shape in Kant’s theory of schematism. He argues that in order to apply a category to intuition, there must be some,

third thing [*ein Drittes*], which must stand in homogeneity [*Gleichartigkeit*] with the category on the one hand and the appearance on the other, and makes possible the application of the former to the latter.²⁴

Kant labels this requisite third thing a ‘schema’ and argues that insofar as it is “*intellectual* on the one hand and *sensible* on the other” it is homogeneous with both a category and an intuition, hence, can function as a “mediating representation” between the two.²⁵ Since Kant is chiefly concerned with how this will work at the most general level with the most general concepts, in the Schematism chapter he focuses mainly on the products of the imagination that he thinks would be generic enough to play a role throughout *all* our experiences, rather than in just one instance. Kant calls these special, all-pervasive schemata ‘transcendental schemata’.²⁶ Insofar as they must be completely general, the content that Kant identifies for such schemata is fairly thin: he claims that the imagination need only provide a ‘time-determination’ [*Zeitbestimmung*], i.e. a representation of the category in temporal form.²⁷ For example, the schema for cause is the temporal pattern: if A at time₁, then B at time₂. He characterizes schemata as time-determinations because he thinks these are homogeneous with intuitions and the categories. Time, on his view, is the universal form of all our intuition, in which case time-determinations, in virtue of their *temporality*, will be homogeneous with intuition, and in virtue of their *universality*, i.e., applicability to all intuition, will be homogeneous with the categories:

²³ A137/B176 – A138/B177.

²⁴ A138/B177.

²⁵ A138/B177.

²⁶ A138/B177.

²⁷ A138/B177. Although I describe transcendental schemata here as time-determinations, I shall leave it open as to whether transcendental schemata are exclusively temporal, as Allison 2004, 217 f. suggests, or whether they can involve spatial determinations as well, see Guyer 1987, 174 and 2006, 98 f.

Now a transcendental time-determination is homogeneous with the *category* [...] insofar as it is *universal* and rests on a rule *a priori*. But it is on the other hand homogeneous with *appearances* insofar as *time* is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold.²⁸

In virtue of being homogeneous with both categories and intuitions, transcendental schemata can mediate between the two in judgment and thus serve as the basis for the formulation of general laws about how this application will work for each category. With respect to cause and effect, for example, Kant's law is: "All alterations occur in accordance with the law of the connection of cause and effect."²⁹ In this judgment, we see the category of 'cause' successfully applied to 'all alterations' in our intuitions.

Although Kant devotes the majority of the Schematism chapter to this high-level and admittedly very abstract discussion of transcendental schematism, he also discusses two other increasingly more concrete forms of schematism: the schematism of pure sensible, i.e. mathematical concepts and of ordinary empirical concepts, e.g. the concept of a dog.³⁰ Unlike transcendental schematism, which makes experience *in general* possible, these latter two forms of schematism make *particular* experiences possible, e.g. of the number five or dogs. Kant sees the need to address these two other forms of schematism because he thinks that the problem of homogeneity arises for *every* judgment that involves the subsumption of an intuition under a concept, not just the high-level judgments that express general laws.³¹ For, as we saw above, concepts, on his view, are mediate, universal representations that have their seat in the understanding, whereas intuitions are immediate, singular representations that have their seat in sensibility, in which case all concepts are heterogeneous with all intuitions.³² So, just as in the transcendental case, Kant thinks that in order to explain how judgments are possible in which we apply a mathematical or an empirical concept to a particular intuition, we must take into account how schemata pave the way.

²⁸ A138/B177 – A139/B178.

²⁹ B232.

³⁰ A140/B179 – A141/B180.

³¹ On this point, I disagree with Walsh 1957/8, Chipman 1972 and Pippin 1976, who argue that the problem of homogeneity only arises at the transcendental level. While the categories may be more heterogeneous with intuitions than pure sensible and empirical concepts are, hence Kant's claim that these concepts are "not so different and heterogeneous" from appearances, in virtue of being concepts they will be to some, if lesser degree, heterogeneous with intuitions (A138/B177).

³² See, e.g., A50/B74 – A51/B75 and A320/B376 f.

It is in Kant's analysis of these latter forms of schematism that he turns more directly towards perception.³³ During perceptual experience, Kant maintains that we form a concrete sensible representation of the object we perceive, which he calls an 'image', e.g. when I perceive a dog, I form an image of a dog in my head.³⁴ And in the Schematism chapter, he claims that schemata are what enable us to form images. Though we shall return to this claim shortly, there are two features of images that we should note. First, for Kant, an image represents not only the features of an object that are immediately present to us, but also features that are hidden from our current point of view.³⁵ For example, if I am standing in front of a house, the image I have of it will not only represent the front-side of the house, but its hidden back-side as well. As Kant describes images in his *Metaphysics L₁* lectures:

There are thus many appearances of a matter according to the various sides and points of view. The mind must make a formed image [*Abbildung*] from all these appearances by taking them all together [*zusammen nimmt*].³⁶

Here, we find that images are distinct from intuitions arising from sensibility for the latter only represent what is immediately present to us, e.g. the front-side of the house, whereas the image projects beyond this to other sides and points of view that are not immediately present to us, e.g. to the back-side of the house as well. Second, Kant claims that images are representations that "must [*müssen*] be connected with the concept" and that "they indicate [*bezeichnen*]" concepts.³⁷ Insofar as images are connected with and indicate concepts, I take Kant's view

33 A142/B181.

34 For a more detailed discussion of my interpretation of the role images play in Kant's theory of perception, see Matherne 2015.

35 For a discussion of these issues, see Sellars 1978.

36 *Lectures on Metaphysics* 28:235 f. See Makkreel 1990, 15–19, for a discussion of the imagination in these lectures.

37 A142/B181. Insofar as I take Kant to connect images to concepts, I am in disagreement with both Rohs 2001, who argues that image formation occurs entirely on the basis of pre-conceptual synthesis, and Ginsborg 2008 who argues that image formation occurs not on the basis of concepts, but rather on the basis of a "consciousness of normativity" that stems from the understanding (71). On this issue, I am closer to the view of perceptual images put forth by Strawson 1974 and Sellars 1978; however, my view of images is more similar to Sellars's discussion of "image-models" than to Strawson's discussion of images (25). Whereas I conceive of an image as a representation of the object from our present perspective as well as other perspectives, Strawson treats an image as a representation only of what he calls, 'non-actual perceptions', i.e. 'past and merely possible perceptions' (53).

to be that images are understood, in part, as images *of* concepts, e.g. the image I form of this champagne flute is, in part, a sensible representation of the concept 'champagne flute'.³⁸

Returning to the Schematism, Kant claims that, "the schema [...] [is that] through which and in accordance with which the images first become possible."³⁹ A schema is able to do this, on Kant's view, because it involves a "general procedure" for processing intuition in such a way that it results in the formation of images.⁴⁰ To clarify what this procedure involves, we should recognize, in the first place, that Kant characterizes a schema as a representation of something like a sketch, outline, or, per Kant, a 'monogram'⁴¹, that reflects how a concept manifests in sensible terms.⁴² That is to say, a schema represents how a particular concept with its various properties is supposed to show up as a whole in perception. My schema for the concept 'dog', for example, is something like a sketch of a dog as a three-dimensional, four-legged, furry animal, just as my schema for the concept 'triangle' is something like an outline of an enclosed, three-sided figure. These schematic representations, however, are not to be confused with a sensible intuition of, say, *that* Great Dane or *that* equilateral triangle. Rather, on Kant's view, a schema is at once sensible *and* generic: it is a sensible representation that could apply to *any* intuition that instantiates a particular concept. In which case, my schema for dogs must be generic enough to apply to Great Danes, Golden Retrievers, and Teacup Poodles alike. As Kant makes this point about the

38 While on my interpretation, Kant thinks that the images involved in perception are connected to concepts, I do not think this commits him to 'intellectualism', for, as I argue below, he does not think this process depends on judgment, but rather on the 'know-how' of the imagination involved in schematism.

39 A142/B181.

40 A140/B180.

41 In the Schematism chapter, he describes a schematic representation as a "monogram of pure *a priori* imagination" (A142/B181). And later in the *Critique* he defines a monogram as an "outline" [*Umriß*], "sketch" [*Zeichnung*], or "silhouette" [*Schattenbild*] of an object, akin to what painters have in their heads (A833/B862, A570/B598).

42 On this point, while I am in agreement with Heidegger, who in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* claims that, "The formation of the schema is the making-sensible [*Versinnlichung*] of concepts" (68/97. Citations are to the English translation/German original), I am in disagreement with commentators like Pendlebury 1995: 784, 787 f.; Longuenesse 1998, 115–118; and Allison 2001, 25–28 who argue that schemata must be pre-conceptual because they play a crucial role in the formation of concepts. Here I also disagree with a number of commentators like Bennett 1966, 151, Chipman 1972, 42, and Guyer 2006, 97, who have argued that although Kant distinguishes between schemata and concepts at the transcendental level, at the empirical level he identifies empirical schemata with empirical concepts.

schema of a triangle: it must “attain the generality of the concept, which makes [it] valid for all triangles, right or acute.”⁴³ Indeed, if this were not the case, a schema would not be able to mediate between concepts and intuitions in the requisite way.

Turning now to the formation of images, on Kant’s view, the outline or sketch represented by a schema indicates a procedure, something like a pattern or stencil, for us to follow when processing intuition in such a way that results in an image. On the one hand, since a schema represents the various properties or features of a concept, if we are presented with only one feature of an object in intuition, the schema indicates a way to project its hidden features as well. For example, if I immediately perceive only the front-side of this dog or perhaps only two of its legs, my schema for dogs guides me in forming an image in which its hidden backside and other two legs are projected as well. On the other hand, given that a schema is a representation of how a concept will manifest in perception, when we process what we intuit in light of it, we will form a conceptually laden image on the basis of that intuition. When I, for example, organize a manifold of intuition in light of my schema of the concept ‘triangle’, it will result in an image of a triangle, i.e. an image that illustrates the concept ‘triangle’. Ultimately, it is in these ways that schemata play a pivotal role in Kant’s theory of perceptual experience.

At this point, however, we may wonder what makes a schema itself possible in the first place. Since it is meant to make the application of concepts to intuitions in judgment possible, a schema cannot be the result of having made a judgment. But it also cannot simply arise from sensible intuitions themselves, since no intuition, qua a singular representation, would have the requisite generality. We, thus, need to look for a resource other than understanding and sensibility to explain how schemata arise, and, to this end, Kant appeals to our capacity of the ‘productive imagination’ and its “hidden art [*Kunst*] in the depths of the human soul.”⁴⁴

Kant does not go into great detail about what exactly this hidden art of the imagination is; however, the fact that he calls it ‘art’ is instructive. The term ‘art’ is a technical term for Kant. As we see in §43 of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant defines art not as a product, e.g. Botticelli’s *Venus*, but as the *activity* an agent engages in, e.g. the art of painting.⁴⁵ He, however, does not restrict art to the

⁴³ A141/B180.

⁴⁴ A141/B180. For an extended argument that Kant conceives of schematism as ‘art’, see Matherne 2014b.

⁴⁵ *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (KU) 5:303.

realm of aesthetic activity; rather, he identifies art with activities that involve skill or know-how, e.g. the art of French cooking. Kant distinguishes 'art' in this know-how sense from activities that only require theoretical knowledge:

Art as a skill [Geschicklichkeit] of human beings is also distinguished from science [Wissenschaft] (to be able [Können] from to know [Wissen]), as a practical faculty is distinguished from a theoretical one, as technique [Technik] is distinguished from theory.⁴⁶

To use one of Kant's examples, even though Pieter Camper, the author of *Treatise on the Best Form of Shoes*, had extensive theoretical knowledge about shoes and was able to "describe quite precisely how the best shoe must be made," due to his lack of know-how, "he certainly was not able to make one."⁴⁷ Given that in the first *Critique*, Kant is arguing that the theoretical and conceptual activities of the understanding must be supplemented by the imagination, there is reason to think that he labels schematism as an 'art' in order to emphasize the fact that it involves some sort of imaginative know-how. Insofar as a schema reflects how a concept with its various features manifests in sensible terms, presumably this imaginative know-how will involve skills for making certain perceptual discriminations and being sensitive to certain patterns of meaning; *prior to judgment*, we, through our imagination, have know-how that pertains to what a concept *looks like* or how it *shows up sensibly*. In this way, the Schematism challenges the intellectualist interpretation of Kant, suggesting that rather than Kant's theory of perceptual experience bottoming out in our conceptual grasp of the world through the understanding, it bottoms out in the know-how of the imagination.

3 Lachièze-Rey's Interpretation of Schematism

Let's turn now to the historical reception of Kant's theory of schematism in France in the early 20th century. In particular, given its influence on Merleau-Ponty, I want to consider the interpretation it receives by the French Neo-Kantian Pierre Lachièze-Rey. Although Lachièze-Rey's work has not been translated into English and has received little attention in the English-speaking world,⁴⁸ he was one of

⁴⁶ KU 5:303.

⁴⁷ KU 5:304.

⁴⁸ See brief mention in Guyer 1983, 344; Longuenesse 1998, 6, 169 fn. 5; and Allison 2001, 66 fn. 34, 289 fn. 21. For overviews of Lachièze-Rey's work in French, see Maldiney 1958 f., Bourgeois 1992, and "La Philosophie de Pierre Lachièze-Rey" in Lachièze-Rey 2006, 9–20.

the leading Kant interpreters in the 1930s and 40s in France and his major work *L'idéalisme kantien* was one of the most prominent books published on Kant during this time. As the title of this *magnum opus* suggests, Lachièze-Rey was interested in idealist themes in Kant, especially the active role the subject plays in making our experience of objects, space, time, etc., possible. However, much of Lachièze-Rey's understanding of Kant was shaped by his reflections on Kant's last unfinished work, the *Opus Postumum*, a work in which Kant explicitly considers the role the body plays in experience, albeit only in tantalizingly brief and scattered fragments.⁴⁹ As a result, Lachièze-Rey's Kant interpretation focuses, in part, on what can and should be said, from a Kantian point of view, about the relationship between the transcendental activities of the subject and our embodied engagement with the world. Given that this relation is displayed vividly in perceptual experience, Lachièze-Rey was interested in Kant's view of perception and, significantly for our purposes, he read Kant's discussion of schematism as pivotal in this regard. This, indeed, is the guiding topic of his essay "The Possible Use of Kant's Schematism for a Theory of Perception" [*Utilisation possible du schématisme Kantien pour une théorie de la perception*] and an important theme in his essay "Reflections on the Constituting Activity of the Spirit" [*Réflexions sur l'activité spirituelle constituante*] as well.⁵⁰

In what follows, I want to draw our attention to two features of Lachièze-Rey's discussion of Kant's theory of schematism as a theory of perception: first, the implications he takes it to have for how Kant understands the relationship between imagination and judgment in perception, and, second, the role he suggests Kant accords the body within this framework. On Lachièze-Rey's reading, in the Schematism chapter Kant commits himself to the view that in order to have perceptual experience, it is not enough to rely solely on the conceptual capacity of the understanding, i.e. on concepts and judgments; these 'intellectual' ways of being oriented towards the world must be supplemented by a more 'intuitive' way of being oriented towards the world through schemata and imagination. Lachièze-Rey tends to make these points by using language of 'intentions'. In this context, the term 'intention' is not meant to refer solely to something practical, e.g. my intention to drink champagne; instead, Lachièze-Rey is using the term in its broader phenomenological connotation, as referring to any state, practical, theoretical, perceptual, etc., through which we are 'directed towards' or 'aim at' the world. And in the 'Schematism' essay, Lachièze-Rey argues that concepts and schemata, for Kant, represent two types of intentions through which we can be

49 "La Vie de Lachièze-Rey", in Lachièze-Rey 2006, 5f.

50 Translations are my own.

directed towards the world: concepts involve what he calls 'intellectual intentions', whereas schemata involve 'intuitive intentions'.⁵¹

On this view, in perception, our concepts involve intellectual intentions that direct us towards objects in the world in light of common properties those objects share with others.⁵² For example, my concept 'dog' directs me towards judging certain objects I perceive to be dogs, i.e. as having the properties common to dogs, e.g. furriness, four-leggedness, in general. However, Lachièze-Rey urges that merely having intellectual intentions does not yet guarantee that we will actually perceive objects as instantiating those properties. For wanting to apply a concept and knowing how to do so are two different things. Consider, for example, the difference between wanting to apply the concept 'dog' and knowing what furriness and four-leggedness *look like*. On the Kantian view, for this latter to take place we need to have schemata that provide us with a grasp of what the sensible conditions are under which that concept can apply.⁵³ As Lachièze-Rey glosses this point, what we need are further intuitive intentions that direct us towards these sensible conditions.⁵⁴ In which case, he takes schemata to involve intuitive intentions that orient towards the ways concepts manifest concretely. For example, my schema of 'dog' directs me towards what is distinctive in the perceptual appearances of objects of this kind, i.e. which are furry, four-legged, etc.

According to Lachièze-Rey, if we understand concepts and schemata in this intentional light, then we shall find that, in Kant's theory of perception, concepts *depend on* schemata in the following sense. Lachièze-Rey claims that the *raison d'être* of an intellectual intention is to be realized in the world; however, this is not possible unless the intuitive conditions under which those intentions can be realized are specified.⁵⁵ In which case, Lachièze-Rey maintains that intellectual intentions need intuitive intentions to specify those conditions, hence need the latter in order to be fulfilled.⁵⁶ Or, as he puts it, the *raison d'être* of an intellectual

51 Schematism, 174. The intuitive intentions Lachièze-Rey is interested in are not the ones involved in intuitions that arise passively through sensibility. Rather, he is interested in the 'dynamic' intuitive intentions that have their seat in the imagination.

52 As Lachièze-Rey puts it in the 'Reflections' essay, these intentions direct us toward the 'ideal object', i.e. the concept or common property instantiated in something we perceive (127).

53 See A136/B175 for Kant's description of schemata as the "sensible conditions" "under which objects in harmony with [...] concepts can be given".

54 Schematism, 174. In the 'Reflections' essay, he suggests that these intentions direct us towards the 'incarnations' of 'ideal objects', i.e. the sensible appearances of a concept (127).

55 Schematism, 175.

56 Schematism, 175: "*ce dynamisme intuitif ne saurait jamais être absent, car c'est lui qui assure entre l'initiative spirituelle et son effet la continuité grace à laquelle seule peut être opérée la con-*

intention would be ‘lost’ [*perdraient*] were it not connected to an intuitive intention.⁵⁷ This means, from Lachièze-Rey’s perspective, that, for Kant, perception is not a purely intellectual matter; but rather that our conceptual understanding of the world must be grounded in an intuitive grasp of the world through the imagination and schemata.

However, Lachièze-Rey goes on to suggest that from a Kantian perspective, having concepts and schemata are not enough for us to have perceptual experience. In order for this to take place, there must be a way for the intuitive intentions involved in our schemata to be realized in the world, and this, he urges, occurs through the activity of our *body*. As Lachièze-Rey makes this point, intuitive intentions must be realized through the ‘intermediary of the motricity [*motricité*] of the body,’ which serves as the intention’s ‘instrument’.⁵⁸ On his view, although a schema may direct us towards the conditions under which a certain concept applies, unless those intentions are realized through certain bodily movements, we will never actually have perceptual experience. For example, in order to actually perceive that furry animal as a dog, my intellectual and intuitive intentions must be realized through certain acts of my body, e.g. I must move my eyes or perhaps pet it with my hands.⁵⁹ This bodily movement, Lachièze-Rey claims, is the ‘real, concrete, material’ ‘operation’ required for our intuitive intentions, and thereby our intellectual intentions, to be fulfilled.⁶⁰ To be sure, he does not treat these bodily movements as transcendental conditions of experience; however, he suggests that they are empirical conditions that must be fulfilled in order for experience to take place. On his interpretation, then, Kant’s theory of schematism at least implicitly points towards the pivotal role our body plays in perceptual experience.

In the end, although we might have expected a Neo-Kantian like Lachièze-Rey to interpret Kant’s theory of perceptual experience in solely intellectualist terms, we, to the contrary, find him arguing that Kant’s theory of schematism reveals the limits of the intellectual in perceptual experience. Indeed, we find him urging that, for Kant, in order for perceptual experience to take place, our orientation towards the world through our conceptual capacities must be supple-

stitution de cet effet.” Lachièze-Rey does not think this dependency goes both ways, for he argues that it is possible for us to have intuitive intentions that do not depend on intellectual ones, e.g. in the case of mathematical construction (Schematism, 175).

⁵⁷ Schematism, 175.

⁵⁸ Schematism, 180. See also Reflections, 133.

⁵⁹ Reflections, 134.

⁶⁰ Reflections, 140.

mented by our imaginative grasp of the world through schemata, as well as the movements of our bodies.

4 Merleau-Ponty's Evaluation of Kant's Schematism

As the repeated references throughout the *Phenomenology* indicate, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of Kant was heavily influenced by Lachièze-Rey's work.⁶¹ Although Merleau-Ponty was reticent about the idealist commitments Lachièze-Rey attributes to Kant,⁶² he was intrigued by Lachièze-Rey's interpretation of schematism for it revealed to him a more sympathetic side of Kant. Indeed, it suggested to him that far from Kant being a thoroughgoing intellectualist who ignores the role of the body in perception, Kant's theory of schematism points towards the fact that perception can take place only if there is imaginative and bodily activity occurring prior to judgment. In this way, Lachièze-Rey's interpretation of Kant bridges the gap for Merleau-Ponty between his views and Kant's, a gap the going interpretations of their theories might have made us think was insuperable.

Merleau-Ponty most directly addresses Kant's theory and Lachièze-Rey's interpretation of schematism in his discussion of geometry in the chapter of the *Phenomenology* entitled 'The Cogito'.⁶³ In this section, Merleau-Ponty offers his analysis of how we acquire geometrical knowledge and selects as his example how we know that triangles "always will have a sum of angles equal to two right angles."⁶⁴ According to Merleau-Ponty, a geometrical figure is not, first and foremost, an object of 'pure thought', i.e. an idea, but rather an object of intuition, i.e. a spatial figure, a '*Gestalt*'.⁶⁵ For this reason, he argues in a Kantian vein⁶⁶ that the knowledge of a triangle cannot arise through 'pure thought', i.e. through our conceptual capacities:⁶⁷

⁶¹ Although he is not cited as frequently in the *Phenomenology*, the French Neo-Kantian Léon Brunschvicg also shaped Merleau-Ponty's understanding of Kant.

⁶² See, e.g., PhP, 387–392/427–432.

⁶³ PhP, 403–8/443–8.

⁶⁴ PhP, 407/448.

⁶⁵ PhP, 404/444.

⁶⁶ For Kant's view of mathematical construction, see A717/B745 and A734/B760. For an overview of secondary literature on his view, as well as her own interpretation of it, see Shabel 1998.

⁶⁷ PhP, 403/443.

one cannot construct a logical definition of the triangle that equals the fecundity of vision of the shape and that allows us, through a sequence of formal operations, to reach the conclusions that had not first been established with the help of intuition.⁶⁸

For both Kant and Merleau-Ponty, it is, in particular, intuitive acts of construction that first provide us with knowledge about geometry. To use one of Merleau-Ponty's examples, in order to discover that the interior angles of a triangle equal 180 degrees, we must, whether "on the paper, on the blackboard, or in the imagination," draw a triangle, "extend a side, [and] draw a line through the vertex that is parallel with the opposite side."⁶⁹ This constructed figure, in turn, demonstrates to us the truth about the interior angles of triangles.

At the same time, Merleau-Ponty argues that not just any intuitive act will provide us with this knowledge. If we randomly draw lines on a page, "no demonstration would result from the construction."⁷⁰ Instead, our act of construction must be underwritten by a particular 'intention', viz., to construct a figure that reflects properties shared by all triangles.⁷¹ In order to characterize the sort of constructive act he has in mind, Merleau-Ponty appeals to Kant and claims it must be an "act of productive imagination."⁷² I believe he alludes to Kant's theory of schematism here because, as we saw above, Kant claims that when the imagination produces a schema, it produces something that is at once sensible and general. So Merleau-Ponty also thinks that in mathematical construction we must engage in an act through which we produce a figure that is both sensible, i.e. spatial, and general, i.e. disclosive of common properties of triangles. Or, as Merleau-Ponty makes this latter point, the figure we construct must be "bursting with indefinite possibilities of which the construction actually drawn is merely one particular case."⁷³ And it is only through a special intuitive act, an 'act of the productive imagination', that we are able to construct such complex figures.

Yet the parallels Merleau-Ponty draws between his view and Kant's do not stop here. Betraying the influence of Lachièze-Rey, Merleau-Ponty argues furthermore that both he and Kant conceive of the acts involved in mathematical construction as essentially related to our embodiment. In a rather striking passage, Merleau-Ponty suggests,

⁶⁸ PhP, 404 f./445.

⁶⁹ PhP, 403/444.

⁷⁰ PhP, 406/446.

⁷¹ PhP, 406/446.

⁷² PhP, 406/446.

⁷³ PhP, 406/446.

according to Kant himself, [the construction of a triangle] is not a purely spiritual operation and makes use of the motricity of the body [...] the geometer [...] only knows the relations that he is interested in by tracing them out – at least virtually – with his body. The subject of geometry is a motor subject.⁷⁴

So when Merleau-Ponty, defending his own view, claims that “my construction is [not] subtended by a concept of the triangle [...]. Rather [...] [I construct] by means of the body,” he, in fact, takes himself to be making a *Kantian* claim.⁷⁵ In this vein, Merleau-Ponty appears to regard Kant, in the Schematism at least, as an ally.

Having said this, Merleau-Ponty nevertheless chastises Kant for not going far enough. By reading Kant through the lens of Lachièze-Rey, Merleau-Ponty was led to believe that, for Kant, the bodily acts through which we construct a geometrical figure are “merely an ‘instrument’ of constituting consciousness,” i.e. of some mental intentions.⁷⁶ The body itself lacks its own intentionality here; it is “simply one object among objects,” which the mind uses as a means to its own ends.⁷⁷ This, however, is precisely the sort of view of embodiment that Merleau-Ponty endeavors to reject in the *Phenomenology*.

One of Merleau-Ponty's central theses is that the body and its movements *in themselves* already involve a form of ‘original intentionality’ or way of being directed towards the world: “Bodily movement can play a role in the perception of the world if it is itself an original intentionality, a way of being related to the world that is distinct from knowledge [*connaissance*].”⁷⁸ Although he does not think this is *always* the case, Merleau-Ponty thinks our perceptual experience *often* involves being directed towards the world solely through our bodily movements, without being guided by a mental representation or intention.⁷⁹ In his words:

[T]o move one's body is to aim at the things through it, or to allow one's body to respond to their solicitation, which is exerted upon the body without any representation. Motricity is thus not, as it were, a servant of consciousness.⁸⁰

74 PhP, 406/446.

75 PhP, 407/447 f.

76 PhP, 407/447.

77 PhP, 407/447.

78 PhP, 407/447. This is a topic he also addresses in the chapter titled “The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motricity”, see, e.g., PhP, 113/140 f. and 139 f./171 f.

79 For a discussion of bodily behavior that is guided by mental representations, see Romd-enh-Romluc 2007 and 2011, 93–102.

80 PhP, 140/173.

Suppose, for example, I unthinkingly reach for a champagne flute. On Merleau-Ponty's analysis, though I am certainly directed towards the flute through the movement of my arm, this movement need not be the 'instrument' of a mental intention; rather, the movement itself can involve an original intending of the flute. As Merleau-Ponty describes such a case:

The gesture of reaching one's hand out towards an object contains a reference [*reference*] to the object, not as a representation, but as this highly determinate thing toward which we are thrown, next to which we are through anticipation, and which we haunt.⁸¹

Or to take another one of Merleau-Ponty's examples, suppose you see a friend across the quad and gesture for him to come over, he declines, so you gesture more adamantly. Merleau-Ponty suggests that in such a case our gestures need not be the outward expression of a mental intention, but rather the gestures themselves intend or aim at the friend:

When I motion to my friend to approach, my intention is not a thought that I could have produced within myself in advance [...]. The distance that separates us and his consent or refusal are *immediately* read in my gesture [...]. If, for example, I realize that my friend does not want to obey, and if I thereby modify my gesture, we do not have two distinct conscious acts. Rather, I see my partner's resistance, and my impatient gesture emerges from this situation, *without any interposed thought*.⁸²

These two examples are meant to illustrate the possibility that in some cases our motor intentions can act autonomously, without depending on some further mental intention.

Returning to the analysis of geometry, Merleau-Ponty agrees with the Kantian claim that the acts of the productive imagination through which we construct geometrical figures are, indeed, acts of a motor subject. However, Merleau-Ponty takes himself to part ways with Kant insofar as he denies that these acts necessarily express a mental intention. Instead, he claims that our bodily gestures themselves can involve the intention requisite for geometrical construction. Merleau-Ponty suggests that rather than regarding a triangle as an object for me to contemplate, I can regard a triangle as "pole towards which my movements are directed."⁸³ That is to say, I can grasp a triangle as something that indicates a certain way I can move, e.g., how I move my hands or eyes when tracing things

⁸¹ PhP, 140/172.

⁸² PhP, 113/141 (my emphasis).

⁸³ PhP, 405/445.

in a triangular fashion.⁸⁴ Merleau-Ponty describes this as the 'motor formula' of a triangle and argues that it is possible for us to engage in constructive acts that elucidate this motor formula without recourse to mental intentions.⁸⁵ In such cases, he claims, our movements themselves involve the intentions required for construction. For example, Merleau-Ponty thinks I, through the act of drawing, can be intentionally directed towards the constructed triangle as evincing more generic properties of triangles: I aim at the triangle drawn as indicative of the 'pole of movement' associated with *any* triangle. Yet, on his view, it is my movements and their motor intentions that orient me towards the triangle in this way, not my mental intentions. And he objects that this is a possibility Kant's view could not account for.

In the end, we find that Merleau-Ponty's chief criticism of Kant's theory of schematism is not that he neglected the body altogether, but rather that Kant has not yet correctly characterized the role the body plays in it. This is significant because it means Merleau-Ponty was not inclined to dismiss Kant's theory of schematism as too intellectualist to have any bearing on his own account of embodied perception. To the contrary, Merleau-Ponty, thanks to Lachièze-Rey's interpretation, saw Kant's discussion of schematism as a resource for him to develop within his own phenomenological framework. The result of which was nothing other than his theory of the body schema.

5 Merleau-Ponty and the Schematism of the Body

In the early 20th century, the term 'body schema' was popularized by psychologists, like Henry Head and Paul Schilder, and used to explain the proprioceptive awareness each of us has of our own bodies.⁸⁶ Though Merleau-Ponty thinks the body schema gives us proprioceptive awareness of our selves,⁸⁷ he also thinks the

⁸⁴ Merleau-Ponty describes these patterns of movement as a particular "modality of my hold on the world" (PhP, 405/445).

⁸⁵ PhP, 406/446.

⁸⁶ Scott 1956, 145, suggests that Head derived this notion from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In addition to Scott, see Gallagher 1986 for a discussion of the historical use of the term body schema and also for an analysis of the distinction between the body schema and body image.

⁸⁷ We see this clearly in Merleau-Ponty's classic example of the body schema: "If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both hands, only my hands are accentuated and my whole body trails behind them like a comet's tail. I am not unaware of the location of my shoulders or my waist; rather, this awareness is enveloped in my awareness of my hands and my entire stance is read, so to speak, in how my hands lean upon the desk" (PhP, 102/129). For a discussion of what

body schema grounds our perception of the world around us.⁸⁸ As Merleau-Ponty makes this point, “The theory of the body schema is implicitly a theory of perception.”⁸⁹ It is in this vein that Merleau-Ponty’s theory of the body schema is most indebted to Kant and, in what follows, I highlight four often overlooked Kantian themes in his account of the body schema.⁹⁰

5.1 A Kantian Problem

I want to begin by considering the basic problem in perception Merleau-Ponty thinks his theory of the body schema solves. That this problem bears any resemblance to Kant’s problem of homogeneity may initially seem implausible. After all, it seems Kant is concerned with what makes it possible for intuitions to be subsumed under concepts in acts of judgment, given that these two representations are heterogeneous with one another. Meanwhile, throughout the *Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty takes aim at ‘intellectualists’ who think perception requires representations and judgment and defends, to the contrary, a perceptual theory oriented around the *direct* perceptual relation we have to the world through our bodies.⁹¹ And it is in this context that he introduces his theory of the body schema. However, a closer look reveals that despite these dissimilarities on the surface, Merleau-Ponty’s schematism is, indeed, motivated by something like Kant’s problem of homogeneity.

To see this, we need to recognize that although Merleau-Ponty does not speak of intuitions and concepts, there is an analogue in his view. As I mentioned above, Kant defines an intuition as a singular representation, i.e. of whatever particular object is presently impinging upon you.⁹² Meanwhile, a concept is a general representation, i.e. of some property or featured shared by multiple objects.⁹³ In

role the body schema plays in this example, see Smith 2007, 12, 16, Carman 1999, 221, and 2008, 107.

88 For a discussion of how the body schema makes external perception possible, see Gallagher 1986, Carman 1999, 218–223, and 2008, 102–111.

89 PhP, 213/249.

90 Carman 1999, 218 f., and 2008, 105 f., is an exception insofar as he acknowledges that the notion of art/know-how from Kant’s theory of schematism is implicit in Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of the body schema. This shall be the topic of section 5.4 below; however, in sections 5.1–3, I shall touch on themes Carman does not address.

91 See, for example, the chapter titled “‘Attention’ and ‘Judgment’” (PhP, 28–51/50–77).

92 See A320/B377.

93 See A320/B377 and A68/B93.

which case, one way we could characterize the difference between intuitions and concepts is by emphasizing their heterogeneity: whereas the former are *highly particular*, the latter involve a more *general form of meaning*. If we now turn to Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception, we find that even if he does not employ talk of representation, he nevertheless thinks perceptual experience involves the convergence of something highly particular with something general, hence the problem of homogeneity arises in his theory as well.

For Merleau-Ponty, what is particular in perception is what is immediately present to us, i.e. the "perspectival appearances" or what Husserl calls 'adumbrations' of the object we grasp from our present embodied point of view.⁹⁴ Consider, for example, the various appearances or adumbrations we might perceive of a house: "I see the neighboring house from a particular angle. It would be seen differently from the right bank of the Seine, from the inside of the house, and differently still from an airplane."⁹⁵ Or consider looking at a partially shaded white wall: the adumbrations involved in this experience will be a wall with patches of white and gray. For Merleau-Ponty, these sort of perspectival appearances or adumbrations count as the particular of perceptual experience.

As for the general, Merleau-Ponty rejects the idea that a concept, which he defines as a mental representation under which we subsume intuitions (sense data), is the most basic form of generality at work in perception.⁹⁶ Instead, he argues that there is a more basic form of generality, of meaning [*sens*] and signification [*signification*], which we are familiar with through our bodies. He cashes out these meanings in terms of structures that are accessible to our bodies: the meaning of a thing "is not at first a signification for the understanding, but rather a structure available for inspection by the body."⁹⁷ Now, these, what I shall call 'structural meanings' are general in the sense that multiple objects can share the same structure. Let's consider the structural meaning associated with the color blue. According to Merleau-Ponty, "Blue is what solicits a certain way of looking from me, it is what allows itself to be palpitated by a specific movement of the gaze."⁹⁸ More specifically, he suggests that blue is something 'adductive', that we find attractive and inviting; it is something that seems to 'yield to our gaze'.⁹⁹ This blue-structure is something repeatable, something that, say, a blue carpet, blue

⁹⁴ PhP, 211/247.

⁹⁵ PhP, 69/95.

⁹⁶ For Merleau-Ponty's definition of concepts, see PhP, 123/152, 129/160, and 183/257.

⁹⁷ PhP, 334/376.

⁹⁸ PhP, 218/255.

⁹⁹ PhP, 217/254, and 218/255 (Merleau-Ponty notes that the latter quote is from Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, but cited by Goldstein and Rosenthal).

ribbon, and blue swatch of paint could share in common and, on Merleau-Ponty's account, this would mean that they all share the meaning 'blue'.¹⁰⁰

Now, like Kant before him, Merleau-Ponty thinks there is a question of how our perceptual experience could bridge the gap between what is highly particular and general: given that adumbrations are given perspectivally and are situation-dependent, whereas structural meanings transcend any one particular perspective or situation, how could the former bear on the latter?¹⁰¹ Merleau-Ponty offers a nice recapitulation of his version of this problem in a text called the 'Primacy of Perception', a brief summary he gave of the *Phenomenology* shortly after its publication. He asks, in a Husserlian vein, "If we consider an object which we perceive but one of whose sides we do not see [...] how should we describe the existence of these [...] nonvisible parts of present objects?"¹⁰² If I am looking at a lamp whose backside is hidden from my view, how is it, nevertheless, possible for me to "grasp the unseen side as present," i.e. to perceive the lamp *as* having a backside?¹⁰³ Indeed, it seems that in order to grasp this lamp *as* a lamp at all, as opposed to, say, a cardboard cut-out, this projection of its backside is pivotal.¹⁰⁴ Or, to vary the problem, suppose you are looking at the partially shaded white wall.¹⁰⁵ How is it possible, in spite of appearing white and gray at parts, for you to perceive this wall *as* the same white through and through? In these cases, what is at issue is how it is possible for us to grasp something presented perspectivally and in a particular situation to have meaning over and beyond those limits. In other (Kantian) words, how is it possible for a structural meaning, which seems

100 Though I cannot pursue Merleau-Ponty's theory of color further here, it should be noted that this analysis of structural meanings does not exhaust this theory. Although he thinks it is possible for different objects to have the same structural meaning associated with a color, the color of each object is not *exactly* the same: "A color is never simply a color, but rather the color of a certain object, and the blue of a rug would not be the same blue if it were not a wooly blue" (PhP, 326/368, my emphasis). As we see here, Merleau-Ponty thinks the color an object has will be determined, in part, by that object: "it is impossible to describe fully the color of a carpet without saying that it is a carpet, or a woolen carpet, and without implying in this color a certain tactile value, a certain weight, and a certain resistance to sound" (PhP, 337/379). So although multiple different objects can share the same color-structure, the way that structure is filled out in each object will be different.

101 This, of course, is not to say that structural meanings transcend our bodily perspective altogether, just that they transcend any *one* perspective we might take on an object.

102 PrP, 14. Citations to *Primacy of Perception* (PrP) are to the English translation.

103 PrP, 14. See also PhP, 69–74, 95–100 and 331–339/373–382, for a discussion of object constancy.

104 For a discussion of these issues in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, see Kelly 2005.

105 See PhP, 318–327/358–368, for a more extended discussion of color constancy.

heterogeneous with an adumbration, to come to bear on it in perceptual experience? This, I take it, is Merleau-Ponty's version of Kant's problem of homogeneity.

5.2 A Kantian Solution

Not only does Merleau-Ponty pose this problem in a Kantian vein, but he also solves it in one by resorting to a theory of schematism. For Merleau-Ponty, like Kant before him, in order for what is highly particular and general to converge in perceptual experience, there must be a schema that paves a way. To be sure, Merleau-Ponty chooses to frame schemata in an explicitly bodily fashion; however, his general Kantian orientation is betrayed by the fact that he thinks it is the patterns or procedures involved in a schema that enable us to perceive something highly particular as having a more general meaning.

Let's begin by considering the patterns of bodily movement that Merleau-Ponty suggests underwrite the body schema. According to Merleau-Ponty, our bodies have various patterns of movement, which he labels 'arrangements' [*montages*] or 'typics' [*typiques*], which track or are 'synchronized' with structural meanings present to us in perception.¹⁰⁶ For example, just as there is a certain inviting structure associated with the color blue, Merleau-Ponty thinks there is a typical "motor reaction provoked by blue," something we could call "blue behavior."¹⁰⁷ Likewise, Merleau-Ponty suggests there is a typical pattern of eye-movement that tracks the movement of objects in our visual field; this 'natural arrangement [*montage*]' of our gaze, he argues, is the 'natural translation' of the movement of perceived objects.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, he claims that this arrangement can be so ingrained that if we, say, think we are moving our gaze but our eyes are, in fact, paralyzed, we will nevertheless perceive objects to be moving.¹⁰⁹ Or to use an example from another sense modality, Merleau-Ponty claims that we have

106 PhP 330/372. Although Landes translates 'typique' as schema, I shall only translate 'schéma' as schema and shall translate 'typique' as typic. This has the advantage of preserving the allusion to Husserl's discussion of the notion of a 'typic' [*Typik*] in the *Crisis* and *Experience and Judgment*. It is worth noting that Kant also uses the notion of a 'typic' in the *Critique of Practical Reason* in a chapter titled 'Of the Typic [*Typik*] of Pure Practical Judgment', which is the practical analogue of the Schematism chapter in the first *Critique* (5:67–70). However, to my knowledge Merleau-Ponty does not ever discuss Kant's typic in his published writings or lectures. For a discussion of the relationship between Husserl's theory of types and Kant's theory of schemata, see Lohmar 2003.

107 PhP, 217/254.

108 PhP, 49/74.

109 PhP, 48–9/74.

certain patterns of movement that are a “typic [*typique*] of the tactile ‘world,’” i.e. that allow us to track tactile meanings, e.g. smoothness or roughness, in what we perceive.¹¹⁰

Now, on Merleau-Ponty’s view, these arrangements or typics of bodily movement make up or are the ‘annexes’ of the body schema.¹¹¹ In which case, the body schema as a whole, through these various patterns of movement, has the function of attuning us to the various structural meanings in what we perceive. This, in turn, is why Merleau-Ponty thinks the body schema can solve the problem of homogeneity: when something highly particular solicits one of these patterns of movement, we will perceive that adumbration as having the structural meaning that *any* object that solicits that movement would have. If, for example, the patch of carpet present from my current point of view engages the ‘blue behavior’ that is part of my body schema, then I will perceive it *as* blue, i.e. as blue beyond what is given to me here and now. So too when I perceive only the front-side of a lamp, if that perspectively given adumbration engages the patterns of behavior typically associated with lamps, which, in part, involves anticipating that they have back-sides, then I, in virtue of my body schema, am able to perceive it as a three-dimensional lamp. For Merleau-Ponty, then, like Kant, it is the patterns or procedures involved in our body schema that mediate between what is particular and general in perceptual experience.

5.3 A Transcendental Body Schema?

Though there may be reasons to think Merleau-Ponty sets up his theory of the body schema in broadly Kantian terms, it may seem as if there is one important place they will part ways, viz., with respect to Kant’s claims about *transcendental* schematism. After all, at various points in the *Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty is highly critical of Kant’s transcendental idealism and his account of the a priori, and one would therefore certainly expect Merleau-Ponty to reject the transcendental claims so central to Kant’s theory of schematism.¹¹² To be sure, Merleau-Ponty criticizes Kant for claiming that, “we will understand by *a priori* cognitions [...] those that occur *absolutely* independently of all experience.”¹¹³ By Merleau-Ponty’s lights, this amounts to conceiving of a priori/transcendental conditions

110 PhP, 331/373.

111 PhP, 49/74.

112 See, e.g., PhP lxxiii/10, lxxv/12, lxxix/16, 60f./87f., 229/266.

113 B3.

as “condition[s] of possibility that are *distinct from* our experience.”¹¹⁴ At the same time, however, Merleau-Ponty claims that on this point Kant is not entirely consistent. Insofar as a few paragraphs earlier in the first *Critique*, Kant asserts that, “There is no doubt whatever that all our cognition begins with experience,” Merleau-Ponty thinks Kant recognizes that “the *a priori* is not knowable prior to experience, that is, outside of our horizon of facticity.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, Merleau-Ponty concludes that when Kant indicates that the *a priori* is independent from experience, Kant “has not followed his own program to its logical conclusion, for he set out to define our powers of knowledge through our factual condition.”¹¹⁶ According to Merleau-Ponty, if we take the latter Kantian idea as our starting point, then we find that there can be a “new definition of the *a priori*,” i.e. one that defines the *a priori* as the “formal expression of a fundamental contingency: the fact that we are in the world.”¹¹⁷ On this view, an *a priori*/transcendental condition makes experience possible not because it is ‘prior to’ experience, but rather because it expresses something about the formal features of our facticity, without which there would be no experience.¹¹⁸ This, in turn, means that what is a posteriori/empirical does not have to be conceived of as distinct from what is a priori/transcendental; the empirical is, instead, to be understood in terms of the *particular* ways in which the transcendental manifests in the course of experience, i.e. in terms of “the concrete form that [our facticity] takes in the human subject.”¹¹⁹ Insofar as Merleau-Ponty takes this conception of the relationship between the transcendental and empirical to be broadly Kantian, it is what I want to draw on in this section as I argue that in Merleau-Ponty’s account of the body schema we see an analogue of Kant’s account of transcendental schemata and empirical schemata. Indeed, in a vein similar to Kant’s account of how transcendental schemata make experience in general possible, Merleau-Ponty suggests that there are (what we could call ‘transcendental’) features of our body schema, which function as formal conditions of the possibility of experience *as such*. Then in a manner that echoes Kant’s analysis of more ‘sensible’ schemata, Merleau-Ponty indicates that there are (what we could call ‘empirical’) features of the body schema that reflect how those transcendental features develop in experience, making *particular* kinds of perceptual experiences possible.

114 PhP lxxiii/10, my emphasis.

115 B1, PhP, 229/266.

116 PhP, 229/266.

117 PhP, 229/266.

118 For a discussion of other ‘transcendental’ themes in Merleau-Ponty’s theory of perception, see Gardner 2015.

119 PhP, 229/266.

The ‘transcendental’ features of Merleau-Ponty’s body schema are the features that make it possible for us to find meaning in perception at all. As he makes this point, our body schema involves a “*universal arrangement [montage], a typic [typique] of all perceptual developments and of all inter-sensory correspondences beyond the segment of the world we are actually perceiving,*”¹²⁰ and “*a typic [typique] of every possible being, or a universal arrangement [montage] with regard to the world.*”¹²¹ These universal arrangements and typics orient us towards meaning in the world as such, i.e., enable us to experience the world as a meaningful place. Moreover, he thinks there is something we would call ‘transcendental’ about the annexes of the body schema, i.e. our senses:

To have senses such as vision is to possess this general arrangement [*montage*], this typic [*typique*] of possible visual relations with the help of which we are capable of taking up every given visual constellation.¹²²

In virtue of having each sense, then, we are able to track meanings in what we perceive that are relative to that sense, e.g. my sense of touch enables me to perceive the world in tactile terms, whereas my sense of smell enables me to perceive it in aromatic terms.

However, like Kant before him, Merleau-Ponty does not take this account of the transcendental features of schematism to be exhaustive; rather Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of *habit* and *habit-acquisition* points toward an empirical dimension of the body schema.¹²³ On his view, in the course of experience, the body schema is determined and developed in different ways, the result of which is an ever-evolving empirical body schema, which makes *particular* perceptual experiences possible, e.g. of dogs, of red, etc. He claims that this determination and development occurs primarily through the acquisition of habit, insofar as it involves the “reworking and renewal of the body schema.”¹²⁴ When we acquire a habit, we acquire what he describes as “the power of responding with a certain type of solution to a certain form of situation” and in this way habits make new kinds of experiences possible.¹²⁵ To use one of his examples, once I have learned

120 PhP, 341/383, translation modified, my emphasis.

121 PhP, 453/492, translation modified, my emphasis.

122 PhP, 341/383, translation modified, my emphasis.

123 See Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of ‘motor habits’ at the end of the chapter titled ‘The Spatiality of One’s Own Body and Motricity’ (PhP, 143–148/177–183) and of ‘perceptual habits’ at the end of the chapter titled ‘The Synthesis of One’s Own Body’ (PhP, 153–5/188–190).

124 PhP, 143/177. See Carman 1999, 219 f., and 2008, 106 f., for a discussion of habit.

125 PhP, 143/177.

to waltz, my body schema has been stretched in a new way and I have gained the ability to move in a waltz-like fashion in the circumstances that call for it, e.g. in a ballroom, practicing at home, etc.¹²⁶

In addition to acquiring 'motor habits', Merleau-Ponty thinks our body schema is developed through the acquisition of 'perceptual habits'.¹²⁷ When a child, for example, learns to see colors, Merleau-Ponty suggests she acquires a 'perceptual habit'.¹²⁸ He describes this habit as a new 'style' of seeing and as an 'enriching' or 'reorganizing' of her body schema, which enables the child to see different things in different circumstances in the same way, e.g. as red.¹²⁹ In this way, our perceptual habits refine the 'universal' features of our body schema: it is not just that the body schema attunes us to tactile or aromatic meanings in general, it gears us into particular tactile meanings, say, the feel of velvet and particular aromatic meanings, say, the smell of espresso. In the end, for Merleau-Ponty, as was true of Kant, we can only understand how the body schema makes experience possible if we take into account both its transcendental and empirical features.¹³⁰

5.4 The Art of the Body Schema

The preceding discussion of habit brings us to the fourth important Kantian theme in Merleau-Ponty's account: the reliance of the body schema on art or know-how.¹³¹ As we saw earlier, on Kant's account, the production of a schema does not depend on the conceptual capacity of the understanding, but rather on the art of the imagination, i.e., the know-how the imagination has with how concepts manifest themselves sensibly. In a similar vein, Merleau-Ponty argues that our acquisition of habits, hence the empirical determination of our body schema,

126 PhP, 143/178.

127 PhP, 153–5/188–190.

128 PhP, 154/189.

129 PhP, 155/190.

130 This discussion seems to echo Kant's claims in Section IV of the Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* that the categories alone are not sufficient for experience, but rather they must be empirically determined in order for us to experience the world in conceptually laden terms (5:179 f.). See Allison 2001, 32.

131 This is the Kantian feature of Merleau-Ponty's account that Carman 1999/2008 most emphasizes: "What is essential to the concept of the body schema, and what it shares with its Kantian predecessor [...] is the notion of an integrated set of skills poised and ready to anticipate and incorporate a world prior to the application of concepts and the formation of thoughts and judgments" (2008, 219).

is something that depends not on our conceptual capacities, but on the acquisition of know-how and skills.¹³² As Merleau-Ponty succinctly puts this point, “in the acquisition of habit it is the body that “understands” [*comprend*].”¹³³ When I, for example, learn to waltz, it is not enough for me to have memorized a formula for where my arms go, where my feet go, what count to come in on, etc. What I need is for my body to ‘catch (*kapiert*)’ and ‘understand’ [*comprend*] the movement; I need to develop a waltzing *skill*.¹³⁴

Though this is nicely illustrated in the case of motor habits, on Merleau-Ponty’s view, our perceptual habits rely just as much on the body’s know-how and skills. Consider, for example, our ability to see colors as constant in spite of varied lighting, e.g. when I see the wall as the same color white throughout, even though it is partially shaded. Merleau-Ponty suggests that, in these experiences, it is our gaze that ““knows” [*sait*] what such a patch of light signifies in such a context, and it understands [*comprend*] the logic of illumination.”¹³⁵ This ‘knowledge’ is not theoretical, but rather reflective of our know-how with the logic of color and lighting. Indeed, the independence of these bodily skills from judgment comes out especially strikingly in cases of perceptual illusions, like the Müller-Lyer illusion.¹³⁶ In cases such as this, we conceptually know and judge that a certain relation between objects in the perceived world obtains, e.g. we judge that the lines are the same length, nevertheless we cannot help but *see* them as being of different lengths. This is because our perceptual skills are underwritten by bodily know-how, not intellectual knowledge.

Although it is in his discussion of habits that Merleau-Ponty most emphasizes that the body schema involves know-how and skills, there is something like a transcendental analogue. According to Merleau-Ponty, there is what we could call a ‘transcendental logic’ of the world: “a logic of the world that empirical perceptions determine but that they cannot engender.”¹³⁷ This logic is something he thinks we understand through our body schema; the universal features of the body schema enable us to ““understand” [*comprend*] not only some defi-

132 This is what Noë 2004 has more recently coined ‘sensorimotor knowledge’, i.e. the kind of knowledge underwritten by ‘sensorimotor skills’: “to perceive not only depends on, but is constituted by, our possession of this sort of sensorimotor knowledge [...] in effect, perceiving is a kind of skillful bodily activity” (2).

133 PhP, 145/180.

134 PhP, 144/178. This model of ‘understanding’ echoes Heidegger’s analysis of understanding [*Verstehen*] in ¶31 of *Being and Time*.

135 PhP, 341/383.

136 PhP, 6/28.

137 PhP, 427/466.

nite milieu, but rather an infinity of possible milieus,” i.e. the world as such.¹³⁸ For Merleau-Ponty, this comprehension of the world does not occur through thought,¹³⁹ but rather through the “comprehensive hold” our bodies have on it.¹⁴⁰ Our body in general is, as he puts it, a “knowing-body” [*corps-connaissant*], and it gives us an understanding of the world as a meaningful place.¹⁴¹ But, here, the understanding of the world we have through our body schema is not mediated through our conceptual capacities and theoretical knowledge, but, as with Kant before him, Merleau-Ponty thinks there is an art, a know-how that lies at the heart of this schema that makes us familiar with the logic of the world.

6 Conclusion: Was Merleau-Ponty a Kantian?

Throughout this paper, I have emphasized the historical and philosophical continuity I see between Kant's and Merleau-Ponty's approaches to perceptual experience with respect to the notion of schematism. We found that far from dismissing Kant's theory of perception out of hand as overly intellectualist, thanks to the influence of Lachièze-Rey, Merleau-Ponty thought, in the Schematism, Kant veers from the intellectualist course. Indeed, he takes Kant to have recognized that perception does not just depend on our conceptual capacities; rather it must be grounded in the imaginative activities that occur prior to judgment, as well as the motricity of our bodies. However, once we recognized that Merleau-Ponty was favorably disposed towards these pre-conceptual aspects of Kant's theory of schematism, we were able to also appreciate the Kantian themes present in his own analysis of the body schema. We saw that Merleau-Ponty was not only motivated by something like the problem of homogeneity, but also follows Kant in offering schematism as a solution to it. Moreover, we found Merleau-Ponty emphasizes, as Kant did, the transcendental and empirical dimensions of the body schema, as well as its reliance on art and know-how. However, in addition to clarifying Merleau-Ponty's view of the body schema, this interpretation puts pressure on the predominant view of Kant and Merleau-Ponty as offering us alternative characterizations of perceptual experience. Instead, we find that there is common ground between their views as they use their respective theories of schematism to explore certain pre-conceptual features of perceptual experience. This,

138 PhP, 341/383.

139 PhP, 430/469 f.

140 PhP, 431/470.

141 PhP, 431/470.

indeed, is a common ground that Merleau-Ponty recognizes and why instead of completely repudiating Kant, he acknowledges the ways his theory of perception is indebted to Kant's. By way of conclusion, I want to consider just how far this Kantianism goes.

There is at least one point where I think Kant and Merleau-Ponty will part ways and this is with respect to the role of representation in Kant's account of perception. As we saw above, Kant's theory of perception involves an analysis of how a schema can mediate between two representations, viz., intuitions and concepts. However, we also saw Merleau-Ponty reject the idea that perception needs to be mediated by representations at all.¹⁴² To the contrary, he argues that we can perceive and be sensitive to the meaning presented to us solely in virtue of moving our bodies in a certain way.¹⁴³

However, if we turn our attention away from Kant's talk of representations and consider the role the imagination plays in his theory, I think we shall find something sufficiently proto-phenomenological for Merleau-Ponty to appropriate. As we discussed, Kant's theory of schematism points toward the fact that perceptual experience is not simply a matter of judgment; rather, in order for us to be able to make judgments, we must rely, in the first place, on the art, the know-how of the productive imagination. Our imagination, then, must have skills for making perceptual discriminations or being sensitive to patterns of meaning, which are not dependent upon judgment. In this way, Kant's position suggests that perceptual experience rests fundamentally on an imaginative familiarity with the world, a skillful competence with perceptual meaning, which does not reduce to judgment. This is precisely the sort of know-how with the world Merleau-Ponty thinks we have through the body schema and, for this reason, he sees Kant's suggestions about the productive imagination as philosophically promising.

But does Kant, as Merleau-Ponty clearly does, think of this imaginative know-how as essentially *embodied*? By placing schematism in the body, is Merleau-Ponty stepping out of the Kantian system altogether? In the past two decades, an increasing amount of attention has been paid to the role of embodiment in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹⁴⁴ While a number of commentators have emphasized

142 This is a recurring theme throughout the *Phenomenology*, e.g., PhP, xxiv/11 and xxxii/19.

143 For a discussion of Merleau-Ponty's critique of representationalism, see Carman 2008, 15–19 and 32–37.

144 Although I shall restrict my focus to embodiment in the first *Critique*, it should be noted that numerous other commentators focus on the role of embodiment in Kant's theoretical philosophy in his pre-critical writings (see Laywine 1993, Shell 1996, Carpenter 1998), his anthropological writings (see Pitte 1971, Munzel 1999, Brandt 1999, Zammito 2002), and the *Opus Postumum* (see Shell 1996, 298–305, Förster 2000).

the role the body must play in Kant's theory of sensibility,¹⁴⁵ others have emphasized the role it plays in his theory of self-consciousness.¹⁴⁶ Still others have urged that we should understand even Kant's theory of categories in bodily terms.¹⁴⁷ Of course, what interests us is whether the body plays a role in Kant's theory of the productive imagination, particularly in its schematizing activities. Although some commentators suggest that there may be *some* connection between schematism and embodiment,¹⁴⁸ in *Body and Practice in Kant* Helge Svare urges that there is a *necessary* connection between the two.¹⁴⁹ Svare argues that, for Kant, the imagination is not merely a mental capacity, but one that is equally expressed through bodily activity and that, in the Schematism chapter, Kant is interested in this bodily dimension of the imagination.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, on Svare's reading, a schema

145 In *Kant's Intuitionism* 1995, Falkenstein argues "by claiming that space and time are forms of intuition [Kant] takes the responsibility for original space- and time-cognition out of the realm of thought and places it in the body – in effect giving space- and time-cognition an essential physiological basis" (10f., see Chapter 3). Meanwhile, in *Ideal Embodiment* 2008, Nuzzo argues that, "Time and space as a priori forms of sensible intuition indicate, transcendently, the cognitive dimensions of human embodiment" (13, see Chapters 1–3). Similarly Rukgaber argues, "the forms of intuition are the structure of our finite, embodied perspective" (166). See also Kaulbach 1960, Chapter 11, and Svare 2006, Chapter 5.

146 In this vein, commentators consider what role the body plays in the Paralogisms and Refutation of Idealism. Commentators like Strawson 1966, 37, Sellars 1970, 30, and Nuzzo 2008, Chapter 2, argue that Kant's theory of self-consciousness necessarily requires being conscious of ourselves as embodied. Cassam 1993 too explores this possibility, as well as its limits. However, commentators like Aquila 1992, 162–65, Longuenesse 2006, and Melnick 2009, Chapter 11, argue that Kant does not go this far.

147 Kambartel 1976, Saugstad 1992, and Svare 2006, Chapters 8–11.

148 Sellars 1978 argues that we should think of schemata as perspectival recipes for the construction of image-models, i.e. recipes that specify how to produce the image-model of a particular concept in light of the "perceiver's body" (28) and the fact that through it he is "changing his relation to his environment" (31). Though she does not defend this claim at length, Gibbons 1994 claims that schematizing is an "activit[y] of embodied subjects who can recognize regions in space, as well as handedness, by occupying regions of space and having hands [...]. That Kant thought such arguments inappropriate to the first *Critique* is unsurprising [...]. Nonetheless, their relevance to Kant's theory of [...] schematizing is based on the fact that these theories at least implicitly require an appreciation of the subjective conditions of judgment, which can include the embodied character of the cognizing subject and the felt character of her interaction with the world" (71).

149 See Svare 2006, Chapter 6. Svare also indicates his indebtedness to Kaulbach's interpretation of schematism 1960, 1965, and 1968.

150 Svare 2006, 191. More specifically, Svare argues that the imagination is our capacity to form images and that this could occur through mental and bodily activity: "when 'imagination' refers to the mental domain, this is only part of the meaning it has in the Kantian *corpus* at large. In its

just is “an embodied practice” that enables us to form images.¹⁵¹ If Svare is right, then Kant’s account of schematism already accommodates some of Merleau-Ponty’s insights.

On the one hand, I am quite sympathetic to the suggestion that Kant would acknowledge that our schematizing activities are shaped by our embodiment. My schema for a dog, for example, was most likely shaped by me looking at and petting dogs as a child, just as my schema for the number five was shaped by my learning to count the fingers on my hand. On the other hand, I do not think this licenses us to suppose that Kant regarded the schematizing activities of the imagination as bodily activities or that he thought of schemata exclusively as embodied practices. In the first place, Kant defines the productive imagination as a “faculty of the soul”¹⁵² and describes its activities as “functions of the soul”¹⁵³ and “actions of the mind”.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, he defines schemata as “mediating representations” and it is clear that Kant conceives of representations in mental terms, as “modifications of the mind”.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, if we turn our attention to transcendental

broadest sense, it refers to the human capacity for image production in general. This means that the imagination is at play whenever a person uses her body to create images or image-like structures. As for Kant’s theory of schematism, I think ‘imagination’ should be understood here in this extended sense” (191). To bolster his position, Svare, drawing on the Transcendental Doctrine of Method (A713/B741) and the “On a Discovery” essay (7:191), argues that there is an analogy between the imagination’s activity in mathematical construction and in schematism and claims that in both instances the imagination operates both at the a priori level and through embodied practices (Svare 2006, 188–191). It is less clear to me that Kant is identifying construction through the body with construction in the imagination. For I take what is constructed through the body, e.g. the circle in the sand, to be *an image*, which by Kant’s own lights does not have the generality appropriate to a mathematical concept or a schema: “In fact it is not images of objects but schemata that ground our pure sensible concepts. No image of a triangle would ever be adequate to a concept of it. For it would not attain the generality of the concept which makes this valid for all triangles, right or acute, etc., but would always be limited to one part of this sphere” (A140f./B180).

151 See, e.g. the claim in Svare 2006 that “what Kant calls a schema in the schematism chapter is an embodied practice in which the shape of an object is created or re-created by an embodied agent through the movement of its body, or parts of its body” (197).

152 A94.

153 A78/B103, A94, and A124.

154 A102. Indeed, in the B Deduction Kant appears to claim that the productive imagination is nothing but the faculty of the understanding expressed in a certain way B152–4.

155 A98. For Kant representations just are modes of thought in a broad sense, see, e.g. the Dohna-Wundlacken Logic, where he says, “The division of *all thought* – which has various forms that may be exhausted and brought into a system. The general thing that lies at the basis of all cognition is *representation*” (*Lectures on Logic* 24: 701, my emphasis).

schemata, it seems unlikely that Kant would think of these as embodied practices. For Kant emphasizes that transcendental schemata must be, at least in part, 'intellectual' and, to this end, he claims that they are time-determinations, i.e. determinations of "time, as the formal condition of the manifold of inner sense."¹⁵⁶ This is significant because Kant aligns inner sense with the sphere of the mental:

Wherever our representations may arise [...] as modifications of *the mind* they nevertheless belong to inner sense, and as such all of our cognitions are in the end subjected to the formal condition of inner sense, namely, time.¹⁵⁷

In which case, by describing transcendental schemata as determinations of inner sense, Kant conceives of them as belonging to the mind.¹⁵⁸ But it is not just transcendental schemata that appear to be mental; Kant describes the schemata of pure sensible concepts in mental terms: "The schema of the triangle can never exist anywhere *except in thought*."¹⁵⁹ Meanwhile, Kant characterizes a schema of an empirical concept as a "rule for the determination of our intuition in accordance with a certain general concept," i.e. as a rule for producing an image of that concept. And it is clear from the A Deduction that Kant thinks of the imaginative synthesis through which images are produced in mental terms:

[S]ince every appearance contains a manifold, thus different perceptions by themselves are encountered dispersed and separate *in the mind*, a combination of them [...] is therefore necessary. There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us, which we call imagination [...]. [T]he imagination is to bring the manifold of intuition into an *image*, it must therefore antecedently take up the impressions into its activity.¹⁶⁰

156 A138/B177. As he makes this point a few pages later, "the schematism of the understanding through the transcendental synthesis of the imagination comes down to nothing other than the unity of all the manifold of intuition *in inner sense*" (A145/B185, my emphasis).

157 A98 f.

158 Transcendental schemata, I believe, also pose a challenge to Svare's reading. Kant claims that, "The schema of a pure concept of the understanding can never be brought to an image at all, but is rather only the pure synthesis [...] which concerns the determination of inner sense in general" (A142/B181). And given that that bodily movements are ones that we can form an image of, it is not clear how these movements could count as transcendental schemata.

159 A141/B180, my emphasis. See also Kant's description of the schema for number in general along the following lines "if I *only think*, a number in general, which could be five or a hundred, *this thinking* is more the representation of a method for representing a multitude (e.g., a thousand) in accordance with a certain concept" (A140/B179, my emphasis).

160 A120.

In order to produce an image, on Kant's view, the imagination must take up representations existing in the mind. And insofar as a schema is a rule that guides the determination of these representations, it would seem Kant is conceiving of it, once again, in mental terms.

In the end, then, whether Kant thought schemata were somehow connected to our embodiment, he did not, as Merleau-Ponty did explicitly, argue that schemata *are* embodied. This, I think, betrays a fundamental philosophical difference between Kant's and Merleau-Ponty's approach to schematism and vicariously to perception. For Merleau-Ponty, failing to explicitly address the bodily basis of schematism is an error; whereas if Kant had a qualm about this, surely he would have made the bodily nature of schematism explicit. In which case, it seems to me that Merleau-Ponty does, indeed, advance a theory of schematism beyond Kant's own. However, I do not think this means Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body schema, therefore, ceases to be Kantian. Rather I take Merleau-Ponty to have been inspired by Kant's suggestion that perception depends on our imaginative know-how, which is prior to judgment and to have thought Kant was correct to see this as bearing some connection to our embodiment. And insofar as Merleau-Ponty accords schematism a central place in his theory of perception, his view is, to this extent, Kantian. Nevertheless, framing the imaginative know-how in bodily terms is an imperative for Merleau-Ponty, one the Kant did not appear bound by and it is here that Merleau-Ponty seems to exceed the limits of the first *Critique*. Yet instead of reading this move as a radical subversion of Kant's theory of perception, I hope to have shown we have reason to regard it rather as a creative synthesis.¹⁶¹

PhP *Phénoménologie de la perception/Phenomenology of Perception*

PrP *Le primat de la perception et ses conséquences philosophiques/The Primacy of Perception*

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