

INSIDE/OUTSIDE: MERLEAU-PONTY/YOGA

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The binary of inside and outside is a consequence of a duality inherent in many philosophical traditions. Any philosophy that critiques and attempts to go beyond this duality of transcendence and immanence has to deal with these notions in a radically different way. It is pertinent to note here that articulating a philosophical concept of a 'side' is itself problematical. What I intend to do here is to reflect on the notion of 'inside' from a phenomenological standpoint. I believe that this is most clearly manifested in the space where yoga and phenomenology meet.

Among the phenomenological traditions in Western philosophy, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's thematization of the body and the world allows for a more complex understanding of inside and outside. But even in his philosophy there is a recurring ambiguity in the use of inside/outside. In the first section of this article, I discuss certain explicit uses of these terms in Merleau-Ponty's writings. While his philosophy apparently forecloses the possibility of understanding the 'in' and 'out' as polar elements, his explicit usage of inside/outside, inner/outer, and other synonymous terms needs to be clarified. Along with this is his repeated reference to dimensionality, thickness, corporeality, and depth—terms that seem to rephrase this in/out dichotomy. It is not clear whether these rephrasings add clarity to the fundamental ambiguity of these terms.

Although such an ambiguity is seemingly always present, I believe that it is possible to continue to use terms like inside and outside even while working from 'within' Merleau-Ponty's philosophy—if a phenomenological reading of yogic practices (essentially *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma*) is allowed into his discourse. I will argue for this position by thematizing the notion of 'inner body' without the necessary consequence of giving in to the transcendent/immanent duality. I will argue that it is the phenomenological experience of dimensionality, a term commonly used by him, that should be identified with the 'inside'. This conclusion is further reinforced through a phenomenological understanding of the practice of yoga. Yoga, particularly Haṭha Yoga, in its emphasis on techniques of body control and breathing, allows for a rich phenomenological interpretation of the *inner* body. The emphasis on the inner body also leads us to consider the categories of eating and breathing along the trajectory of phenomenological experiences. The possibility of 'perceiving' the inner body through these yogic methods suggests an addition to Merleau-Ponty's examples of 'reversibility', namely the reversibility of consuming/consumed.

Inside and Outside in Merleau-Ponty

A close reading of the chapter "The Intertwining—The Chiasm" in his book *The Visible and the Invisible*, and some working notes in the same book, highlights a

fundamental ambiguity in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body.¹ This has to do with the thematization of dimensionality and related notions like corporeality, depth, inside, and outside with respect to the body, the world, and their phenomenological implications.

On the one hand, terms like inner, outer, inside, outside, interiority, and exteriority may seem to negate Merleau-Ponty's philosophy about the unity of the body and the world. Inside and outside, for example, must have a reference point or a boundary through which they get defined as such. The problem with using a term like 'outside' lies in Merleau-Ponty's view that the body is the world and the world the body: "Where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?"² According to this view, it would be incorrect to look at the world as being outside the body. 'Outside' seems to imply a rigid demarcation between the thing and the surrounding world. This is exactly what he is arguing against. Is it therefore possible to talk of an 'inner' body without the implication that the world and the body are separate?

The need to address the issue of the inner body becomes clearer when we consider Merleau-Ponty's shifting reference to the notions of inside/outside, dimensionality, corporeality, thickness, and depth. It does seem that in places he uses these words 'synonymously' with one another. Among these, dimensionality plays an important role. The dimensionality of the body is what makes it visible, as much as it is the dimensionality of things that allows their visibility. But what is this dimensionality?

For Merleau-Ponty it is the phenomenon that is primal; thus, it is not enough to talk of dimensionality as a theoretical or objective term. Following him, we can ask, what is the phenomenon of dimensionality? In trying to explicate this notion of dimensionality, it becomes difficult not to refer to terms like inside/outside. To attempt to understand this tension in using these terms without giving into their dualistic meanings, we can look at certain explicit comments by him on this issue. In the "Intertwining" chapter and in some working notes there are more than a few examples of this.

In this chapter there are many passing but explicit references to ideas of inner and outer, beginning with "a visible . . . is rather a sort of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons."³ There are more remarks about the inside and outside of the body that follow: "This can happen only if my hand, while it is felt from within, is also accessible from without. . . ."⁴ His use of 'mass', traditionally used to associate dimensionality with ideas of substance, matter, and so on also attests to this ambiguity about dimensionality: "Between the massive sentiment I have of the sack in which I am enclosed, and the control from without that my hand exercises over my hand. . . ."⁵ Note here the image of an enclosed body and the sack as the outer sheath of the 'inner body'.

Merleau-Ponty goes on to consider the relationship between the seer and the visible. The very action of perceiving emphasizes the distance between the perceiver and the perceived. "It is that the thickness of flesh between the seer and the thing is constitutive for the thing of its visibility as for the seer of his corporeity. . . . It is for the

same reason that I am at the heart of the visible and that I am far from it: because it has thickness and is thereby naturally destined to be seen by a body."⁶ He uses two 'synonyms' for dimensionality here: thickness and corporeity. He continues, "the thickness of the body, far from rivaling that of the world, is on the contrary the sole means I have to go into the heart of the things, by making myself a world and by making them flesh."⁷

The body allows the 'outside' to be drawn entirely within it and "communicates to the things upon which it closes . . . that divergence between the within and the without that constitutes the natal secret."⁸ This reference to the within and without is further and more explicitly mentioned in the footnote at the end of this line, where he writes, "In any case, once a body-world relationship is recognized, there is a ramification of my body and a ramification of the world and a correspondence between its inside and my outside, between my inside and its outside."⁹ How does one make sense of this repeated reference to inside and outside? I believe that as far as the body is concerned the notion of inside and outside does not repudiate the intertwinement of the body and the world. Thus, although these terms are apparently loaded with the dualism that he would like to reject, he continues to use them but attempts to suggest more complex images of their relationship.

Soon after, Merleau-Ponty refers to things as "not flat beings but beings in depth."¹⁰ A few lines later: "What we call a visible is . . . the surface of a depth, a cross section upon a massive being. . . ."¹¹ The use of 'depth' and 'massive' again points to their connection with dimensionality, but their use does little to dispel the miasma surrounding these terms. C. Vasseleu points out that since the massive is used as a "pre-subjective, elemental corporeality," it should not be seen as "matter, or mind, or substance of any kind."¹²

The notion of the visible, of the seer and the seen, gets implicated in a reversibility. This idea of reversibility plays a central role in Merleau-Ponty's idea of the flesh. He gives the examples of touching/touched as also that of hearing myself/others and in this latter example once again explicitly mentions the outside and inside. "Likewise, I do not hear myself as I hear the others. . . . I have rather an echo of its articulated existence, it vibrates through my head rather than outside."¹³ But this failure of complete reversibility is not a fault; it only attests to a bodily synthesis. This synthesis occurs "because I hear myself both from within and without."¹⁴

In his working notes there are more allusions to inside/outside. In reemphasizing the noncoincidence of the seer and the visible—there is always a chiasm between them—he notes: "The things touch me as I touch them and touch myself: flesh of the world—distinct from my flesh: the double inscription outside and inside. The inside receives without flesh: not a 'psychic state' but intra-corporeal, reverse of the outside that my body shows to the things."¹⁵ Thus, he points to the dialectic of separation and union.

There is thus in Merleau-Ponty's usage of inside/outside an ambiguity in their meanings. When he mentions the dream as 'inside' he qualifies it this way: "the internal double of the external double is *inside*."¹⁶ His ideas on the invisible also carry with it these notions, thus implying the inside as non-corporeal. For example: "the

invisible is what, relative to the visible, could nevertheless not be seen as a thing (the existentials of the visible, its dimensions, its non-figurative inner framework).¹⁷ This ambiguity persists in a later note on the chiasm: “chiasm my body—the things, realized by the doubling up of my body into inside and outside—and the doubling up of the things (their inside and their outside).”¹⁸ The association of inside and outside with respect to things betrays the ideas of corporeality/dimensionality inherent in his usage of inside and outside. If the inside world, or “mind as the *other side* of the body”¹⁹ only refers to some non-corporeality, then they should be absent in things. By referring to the things and their inside and outside, Merleau-Ponty makes this ambiguity more explicit. But at the same time, in the same note, he says, “there is inside and outside turning about one another.”

His comments on the interiority of the body as “the conformity of the internal leaf with the external leaf, their folding back on one another,” having “never been apart,”²⁰ seems to place this interiority as a non-corporeal interiority. Here it seems to be synonymous with invisibility, and the folding back equivalent to the reversibility of the visible and the invisible. But this notion of interiority or internal is different from the explicit use of the inside of the body in its corporeality.

There is yet another interpretation of the ‘inner’, one dominantly related to ideas of inner life. Many writers continue to view Merleau-Ponty as a philosopher of the ‘inside’. In an edited book dealing with this aspect of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, D. Olkowski notes that there is a sustained engagement in Merleau-Ponty’s oeuvre with the relationship of continuity between “the ‘interior’ aspects of the subject and the ‘exteriority’ of the world.”²¹ But the notion of ‘inside’ here is circumscribed by the phenomena of inner life. The association of the inner with the inner (psychic) life also leads Galen Johnson explicitly to caution against the use of any images of spatialization in understanding the idea of inner.²² But nowhere in these discussions do we find any detailed attempt to explicate the idea of the ‘inner’ body. The lack of such a discussion suggests that these writers view the body as a homogeneous entity, because of which there is little possibility of articulating a phenomenology of the inner body.

I believe that the most important reason for this continued ambiguity regarding the notion of inner with respect to the body is to be found in the absence of a tradition of lived experience of the inner body in the West, one that could have been used by Merleau-Ponty in a manner similar to the case histories of Schneider.²³ In contrast, the phenomenological experiences of yoga strongly suggest the possibility of a lived experience of the inner body. The next section will discuss the different ways in which we can understand this notion of the inner body.

The Inner Body

I begin with the claim that it is possible to have phenomenological experiences of the inner body. To explicate this claim, we need to explore the idea of dimensionality, a term commonly used by Merleau-Ponty. We also need to incorporate two common categories associated with bodily experience, namely eating and breathing.

Surprisingly, he does not discuss these two categories in detail, but it is clear that they are of fundamental importance in any philosophy of the body. (I associate excreting with eating and breathing here.) What distinguishes these two ‘activities’ is their defining presence in any thematization of the body while at the same time they provide us with what I believe are the most compelling reasons for believing in a transcendent world. These categories point to the necessity of enlarging Merleau-Ponty’s vocabulary and expanding the meaning of interiority of the body.

Before proceeding further, we have to ask whether the use of inside/outside by Merleau-Ponty, as described in the previous section, violates his explicit attempts at breaking the transcendence/immanence duality. Although at first reading it may seem so, I do not believe this to be the case.

Merely ‘voicing’ the inside/outside does not *necessarily imply* this duality. One can hold on to the formulation of the flesh as the element of being—of body and the world intertwined as flesh—and also the notion of inside/outside. This usage leads to the dichotomy only if there is a corresponding ontology of a transcendental world, removed and disjointed from the body. In this context the use of inside and outside is a way to designate the boundary between the object and the world. The use of these terms by Merleau-Ponty does not necessarily imply an ontological division of the object and the world. In fact, as he mentions in his notes, the inside and outside are two leaves “folding back on one another” and “which have never been apart,”²⁴ thus offering one suggestion on how to imagine inside/outside without the corresponding dualistic ontology.

From Merleau-Ponty’s standpoint, the idea of inner body makes little sense. There is just the body: no inner and outer bodies. Being a body also implies being in dimensionality. The idea of inner body has gained currency only within the dualist tradition, notably the scientific one. Inner body is understood as the collection of organs, blood vessels, and so on that constitute and make possible the body. It is an X-rayed body. Following Merleau-Ponty, there is no philosophical merit in isolating this X-rayed body as a separate entity or using it to argue for a ‘category’ called inner body. I would suppose that for him the heart is an organ like the hand except that there are different modes of presentation of these organs. But using the word ‘organs’ is itself to give in to a biological model. So the apt explanation would be that the hand and the heart (and the whole body) are one and should not be seen as a set of separate organs. *It seems to me that for Merleau-Ponty the relationship of ‘inner organs’ to the body is similar to that of the body and the world: where are we to put the limit between either of them?*

Thus, if I want to discuss the idea of inner body while trying to stay within his philosophy, I cannot begin with the biological body, because it is not the ‘inner’ body. But there is something else I can do: reflect on the notion of dimensionality that Merleau-Ponty refers to so frequently. The primordially of dimensionality hides within it this notion of inner body.

One may respond here by saying that I am investing too much in the notion of ‘inner’. It may be argued that there is really very little at stake in this usage of inner and outer once we see the body as ‘unified’. My response would be to say that

merely calling the body a unified or dimensional being only postpones the inevitable question of the bodily experience of the 'inner'. The idea of inner that I am suggesting here is one that is based on *the phenomenological experience of dimensionality* itself. And since this experience arises from the body and is constructed in it, we cannot escape the reference to our own experience of 'inner' body.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the perception of the world is dependent on and shaped by the way we perceive and use our body. We understand the world as we understand the body. This view when extended to the ideas of dimensionality would imply that our 'perception' of the dimensionality of things and the world is itself because of our perception of our own dimensionality. But how do we experience this 'phenomenon' of dimensionality?

If our perception of the world is the consequence of the body and its motility, then we understand the dimensionality of the world by first experiencing and understanding the dimensionality of the body. Merleau-Ponty's example of the perception of a house is useful here. Every act of perception, spatial and temporal, continues to contribute to our perception of a house. Thus, we 'know' the back of a house or of a cube because of our perception from different perspectives. But this is not enough. I believe that before we 'know' the back of the cube, we 'know' of its 'inside'; we are aware of the dimensionality 'separating' the front and the back. 'Inside' stands for this 'distance'. Inside is not a 'side'. It merely captures a quality of 'sides'. It captures the boundedness of sides and the invisibility of perspective itself.

So, before we are aware of the back of the object, we are already aware of the dimensionality of the object that creates the idea of 'back.' Given a line, we do not presume a backside. There is no backside to a line because we recognize the lack of dimensionality in it.

And how is it that we recognize this 'dimensionality' of objects so readily? Can it be because we first recognize the dimensionality of our body and, more importantly, *experience this dimensionality*? I know I have a back not only because I see others like me having a back but also because I experience the back through the sensations it generates. By this experience of the back I also experience 'dimensionality'.

Thus the basic point to which we are attracted is that 'dimensionality' is phenomenologically accessible. The idea of dimensionality first arises through a 'perception' of the inner body that allows us to grasp the notion of dimensionality itself. One of the ways to understand this is to view the inner body as being in a reversible relation of touching/touched with the 'outer' of the body. Dimensionality is implicated in the 'non-coincidence' of the front and back only because it can also be perceived as the experience of the inside. Now we are in a position to state this: *inside is the phenomenological experience of dimensionality*. This idea of inside has no allegiance to the notion of side and thus is not indebted to ideas of boundary and separation. If one can talk of the inside without the idea of boundary and ontological separation then there is no contradiction generated in the use of inside even while subscribing to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body.

It is through this phenomenological experience of dimensionality that we find a way to talk about inside without a necessary implication of an inside/outside duality

and without being circumscribed by constraining notions of sides. In understanding inside as a phenomenological moment, not only is the idea of dimensionality clarified but also the idea of inside. It is possible to talk of such a moment only because the body has already experienced dimensionality in its everyday 'perception' of its inner body and the 'space' that goes to constitute this inner body. This is what I mean when I claim that 'inside' is nothing more than the phenomenological experience of dimensionality. And the practice of yoga allows us to get a hold on this experience in a conscious manner.

This view is also the reason why the objectified 'external' space, the space around us, is seen as 'outside' rather than inside. External space has no phenomenological consequence when it is seen as a mathematical three-dimensional space. The phenomenological experience of space arises outside this particular construction of mathematical space. In a manner similar to the association of inside and dimensionality, there is an association of the outside and depth. It is well known that for Merleau-Ponty depth is the 'first dimension' and not the 'third' dimension after length and breadth. The primordially of depth manifests itself in some kind of perception and experience. Edward Casey, in discussing depth and voluminousness in the context of Merleau-Ponty, argues that William James and James Gibson were among those who emphasized this primordial nature of depth.²⁵ James, for example, considered depth as "felt volume."²⁶ The shift toward these experiences of depth constitutes its phenomenological moment.

I would like to borrow this notion of depth to complete my construction of inside and outside as phenomenological experiences. Outside, in this rewriting, is the phenomenological experience of 'depth'. It is being 'outside' that generates the notion of depth, the sense of distance and space itself. Depth is not bounded within the inside. It does not arise in a bounded domain. Depth is space, external space, different from internal space, not through some ontological division but essentially through a particular experience of the body. The body experiences inside and outside in qualitatively different ways. Thus my conclusion: *what dimensionality is to inside, depth is to outside*. I must add here that this is not the idea of depth that is present in Merleau-Ponty or, for that matter, in Casey. There is no separation of the 'inside' and 'outside' with their special connections to dimensionality and depth, respectively. But I would argue that the idea of depth and related phenomenological experiences of it (including the depth cues and so on) is essentially linked to the idea of externality. The experience of dimensionality is captured not only in the practice of yoga but also in the most basic human activity of eating itself. There is an undeniable intertwining between eating and the inside and, correspondingly, with excretion and the outside. Eating is the first and final proof of transcendence. Merleau-Ponty's example of the infant and its relationship with its mother seems to be granting this point. As M. C. Dillon notes: the infant's "mouth recognizes the transcendence of Mother right from the start."²⁷ So, to understand the entanglement of eating and inside is not to reduce it only to its literal meaning. Rather, eating opens up this silent dimensionality, fills it with the fullness of transcendence. *We eat the world and the world eats us*.

The body experience of eating is equivalent to the phenomenological experience of dimensionality and thus is intertwined with the notion of 'inside'. The process of eating is never visible to us. Further actions related to eating, such as mashing the food, swallowing, and so on, are all events in the 'dark side' of the body. We can never 'see' ourselves eating, but we experience it all the time. We experience swallowing the food; we experience its passage through the food pipe into the region of the stomach. These experiences all constitute an experience of dimensionality, an expression of the 'inside' of the body. We are usually unaware of these processes except in times of pain and distress of the inner body. But practices like yoga allow us a continuous, conscious grasp of the inner body.

As with eating, so also with breathing. The transcendence associated with breathing is not so clearly manifested as in the case of eating. But breathing is literally the same as eating when seen on the order of consumption. Before I enter into the discussion on consumption, I wish to explore here the link between breathing and the inside of the body, namely the experience of dimensionality. The phenomenological experience of breathing is most powerfully captured by the yogic practice of *prāṇāyāma*. This experience is akin to a mode of *perception of the inner body itself*.

The Idea of the Inner (Body) in Yoga

First of all, it must be mentioned that there are different meanings associated with yoga as well as different kinds of yoga such as Raja yoga, Haṭha yoga, and so on. Although this word is derived from the Sanskrit *yuj*, meaning union, it is not always circumscribed by it. As S. C. Banerji points out, different texts convey different meanings of yoga.²⁸ For example, the *Bhagavadgītā* suggests yoga as a means of attaining union with God.²⁹ Banerji lists some of these different meanings of yoga: skill in work, desireless action, acquisition of true knowledge, indifference to pleasure and pain, addition (in arithmetic), and conjunction (in astronomy).³⁰ It is important to note here that in the primary and most important manuscript of yoga, namely Patañjali's *Yogasūtras* (hereafter *YS*), yoga "does not mean union, but only effort."³¹ The effort is that which is described clearly in the second sūtra of the *YS*: "yoga is the restriction of the fluctuations of mind-stuff."³²

In the following discussion on yoga, I will be concerned only with the texts of Patañjali's *YS* and Svātmārāma's *Haṭhayoga-Pradīpikā* (hereafter *HYP*) and some relevant commentaries on them. I will also restrict myself to an elaboration of the ideas of inner/internal/inside in these texts, after which I will undertake a phenomenological interpretation of the yogic postures.

The notion of the internal occurs explicitly in both the *YS* and the *HYP*. The first and most important reference to this is in the understanding of the mind as an 'internal organ' of the body. Bhojarāja's commentary on the *YS* refers to the mind as the internal organ that is always open to fluctuations.³³ Vācaspati also makes a reference to the effect that the mind-stuff is used "as a partial expression for the inner organs (*antaḥkaraṇa*)."³⁴ It must be mentioned here that, strictly speaking, *karaṇa* in

antahkaraṇa is means/instrument rather than a physical organ. But the use of the word ‘organ’ derives its force from the classification of the mind as an internal organ that is similar to the organs of sense and action, an association that repeatedly occurs in Sāṃkhya texts. It is also pertinent to remember here that these texts usually refer to eleven organs: five of the senses, five of action, and mind.³⁵ The mind is open to fluctuations, and YS I.6 lists five kinds of these: evidence, misconception, fancy, sleep, and memory.³⁶ The ‘effort’ of yoga is to hinder these modifications and to leave the internal organ free from such changes. Patañjali says that exercise and dispassion (I.12) hinder these changes. Thus, concentration (as the effort, as yoga) is the path to still the ever-distracted mind.

Since the mind is an internal organ and yoga an effort to restrict the fluctuations of the mind, we must expect yoga to be able to suggest how one can control (a) an organ and (b) that which is internal. This implies that right in the very definition of yoga there is already an involvement in the idea of inner (body).

But at this point it is still not clear as to the meaning of ‘internal’ used in the context of the mind. Is the internal in opposition to external organs? Is the mind internal because it is not ‘seen’? Further on, in sūtras II.17 and II.18, there is a definite clue that can answer this query. In these sūtras, it is mentioned that one of the ‘afflictions’ that hinder concentration has to do with the ‘visual’. The suspicion of the ‘visual’ arises because of the possible contamination and distraction of the mind by the objects-of-sight.

Before I discuss further the implications of these observations, the explicit use of internal in the context of *prāṇāyāma* must be noted. In Book II, sūtra 29, Patañjali gives the eight aids for yoga. Out of these, I will be concerned only with the third and fourth ones, namely *āsanas* (postures) and *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath). Sūtra II.46 introduces the *āsanas* by emphasizing the stable and pleasant nature of postures.³⁷ The posture should be comfortable, it must have “no cause of pain,” and, when this is accomplished, the “obstacles to meditation no longer prevail.”³⁸ It is worthwhile noticing the importance of postures in the yogic project of ultimately stilling the fluctuations of the mind. Although the relation of internal organs to the various *āsanas* is not detailed in the YS, the real import of it is clearly explained in the various commentaries on the YS and HYP. I believe that we can mount a strong argument to the effect that the control of the physical, internal organs of the body is a model for the ultimate control of the mind (as an internal organ). This is explained by the importance given to *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma* in the practice of yoga. It is not an accident that the postures have to be ‘steady’ in the same way that the mind has to be steady. I will argue in the next section that the *āsanas* allow for a phenomenological experience (and control) of the inner body. As a natural corollary, then, the practice of yoga allows for the phenomenological experience (and control) of the ‘inner’ mind.

Following the sūtras on postures in Book II are sūtras 50 and 51 on the regulation of breath, *prāṇāyāma*. These sūtras use the ideas of internal and external explicitly. In sūtra 50, the restraint of the breath is classified as external, internal, and steady/suspension. The idea of external and internal is with respect to the body, as is

made clear in Vācaspati's commentary when he states that externality is inferred by the causing of the "motion in a blade of grass or a piece of cotton in a windless spot," and internality inferred by an "internal touch" that begins "at the sole of the feet and extends to the head."³⁹ The external refers to the process of taking in the air from outside; the internal corresponds to expelling the internal air to the outside.⁴⁰ This makes explicit the point that the internal and external are to be understood with respect to the physical body. There is a subtle distinction made in the next sūtra, sūtra 51, where a fourth *prāṇāyāma* is introduced. The first three *prāṇāyāmas* have to do with restraining breath after inspiration and expiration, and suppression of breath "by a single effort." The fourth *prāṇāyāma* is also suppression of breath that occurs in awareness of both the internal and external spheres/fields/objects.

Let me briefly summarize the notion of the internal in the YS. The mind/mind-stuff is the internal organ—of what? Although not made explicit, it is clear that the internal is with reference to the body. This can be adduced from the use of internal and external in *prāṇāyāma*, the classification of organs (of the body), the power of objects-of-sight to create fluctuations in the mind, the focus on both external and internal objects that is clearly with reference to the body, and also, finally, in the suggestion that mind can be freed from the body and roam 'outside' it after reaching the appropriate yogic state (III.38). This explicit physiology of the inner is also inherent in sūtra III.29, which offers a "plan of the body" to the yogi. Vyāsa's commentary on this sūtra adds that the yogi can apprehend the structure of the body after *saṃyama* on the navel.⁴¹ He further describes the general physiology of the body, namely that the corporeal elements are seven: skin, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow, and semen. What is important to note here is that each one of these is seen as being interior to the other. Śaṅkara's subcommentary also makes this clear: "The order of the list is, that each is exterior to the one which it precedes"⁴²—skin is the outermost, then blood, and so on. The idea of internal is also predicated on the priority to vision and sight. The language of perception is itself dominantly visual although references to sound occur intermittently. This priority accorded to vision is something that the YS shares with Western philosophy in general, where metaphors of vision have shaped the course of its many discourses.⁴³ The internal and the inner are thus in the dark, and the mind, being 'internal', is also placed within the tensions of the visible and the invisible. Since my concern here is with the inner body, I merely wish to point out that yoga, as a practice, is most importantly a method to grasp the invisible internal, because of which the grasping of the inner body, or the 'organs' of the inner body, is a natural consequence of its discourse.

We should remember here that the philosophical ideas of the body in yoga are taken over from the Sāṃkhya philosophical system. In particular, the distinction between the gross and subtle body is one that is first detailed in the Sāṃkhya texts. As Sinha notes, yoga "is the practice of the Sāṃkhya, which is the theory."⁴⁴ The ideas of gross and subtle body can be found in the *Sāṃkhya-Pravachana-Sūtram* (SPS) of Kapila. (It is also interesting to note that sūtra III.34 in the SPS, which refers to *āsanas*, is exactly the same as the sūtra (II.46) in YS in which *āsanas* are introduced.) Book III of the SPS deals in detail with the more general nature of the body. Sūtra III.7 states

that the gross body is one “produced from the father and mother,” while the subtle body is not so since it is “produced at the beginning of creation.”⁴⁵ The subtle body, referred to as the *Liṅga-Śarīra*, is made of seventeen elements (III.9) and the gross body of five elements (III.17). The principle definition of the body, whether subtle or gross, is “that it is the House of Experience.”⁴⁶ The gross body serves as the vehicle for the subtle body. It is in this sense that the “Gross is also treated as a Body.”⁴⁷ The subtle body is not to be confused with the Self (III.13), is of atomic size (III.14), and so on. What should be noted in the context of the discussion here is that the notion of internal body is not that of the subtle body. In fact, it may be argued that the importance given to the subtle body in Sāṃkhya and yoga negates a serious consideration of the notion of the inner as in the dimensionality of the body. It is the emphasis on *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma*, primarily in the *HYP*, that makes a phenomenology of the inner body (in terms of dimensionality) possible.

The *YS* does not describe the *āsanas*, the various body postures that are now commonly seen as a part of yoga. The predominant text that does this is the *HYP*, where the sūtras detail the various postures. In this text, it is clearly stated that “the interior is to be seen,” and such a seeing is described as a consequence of *śāmbhavī mūdrā*.⁴⁸ To see the inner is also to close out the outer, to subjugate all the senses by concentration. Once the external senses are subdued, then the voices of the *internal* body can be heard. In the right postures and with the abolition of the external senses (senses that are open to the external), the *HYP* says the Nāda can be heard (IV:68): “jingling sound[s] (like that of ornaments) . . . are heard in the (middle of) the body” (IV:70); “the sound of [the] kettle drum” . . . (IV:73); the “sound of drum is heard in . . . the space between eyebrows” (IV:74); “at the end, the sounds of small bells, flute, lute, and bees” (IV:85, 86). All of these form a discourse of the internal, of the inner body. Along with this, we should understand *āsanas* as attempts to make ‘visible’ the inner body. This making visible through hearing, grasping, touching, and controlling the inner organs is the phenomenological experience of the inner body.

Yoga and the Phenomenological Experience of Dimensionality

I use yoga here as Merleau-Ponty uses Schneider’s case studies. He reinterprets Schneider’s experiences through new philosophical categories. He does not use either the dominant mechanistic or psychologistic explanations but argues for a position ‘between’ them. My use of yoga to exemplify the notion of ‘inner’ works on similar lines. I do not analyze the discourse of yoga; I do not believe that this discourse pays sufficient heed to the phenomenological import of its own practices. Nor do I want to subscribe to a mere biological view of yoga as exercises of the physical body. My interpretation of the yogic practices is an intermediate position between these two extremes. What is of interest to me, and of relevance here, is a phenomenological understanding of yogic practices with respect to the body and the possible insights they give about the nature of the inner body.

How can inner organs be grasped and controlled? As mentioned earlier, the *YS* mentions *āsanas* as one of the aids of yoga but does not list out the various postures

that are now commonly associated with the practice of yoga. Vyāsa's commentary on sūtra II.46 lists a few *āsanas*, but it is the *HYP* that discusses the *āsanas* in more detail. The *HYP* (I.33) mentions that "eighty-four *āsanas* have been studied by Śiva."⁴⁹ The more complex postures corresponding to the *mūdras* and *bandhas* are also mentioned in various sūtras of the *HYP*. Following the description of some of the *āsanas*, Book II of the *HYP* deals mostly with *prāṇāyāma*. *Prāṇāyāma* is not independent of *āsanas*, and different practices of breathing use different *āsanas*. And for most of these *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma*, the beneficial aspect on the inner body is explained. For example, II.16 says that "all diseases are destroyed by proper *prāṇāyāma*"; the *Mayūrāsana* cures diseases like *gulma* (chronic enlargement of the spleen) (I.31); *Śavāsana* removes fatigue (I.32); and so on. Performing these *āsanas* is to be involved in an engagement with the inner body that is similar to grasping and controlling them as we do with objects outside the body. In this context, it is useful to note that the *HYP* also mentions six acts for purifying the (inner) body (II.21, 22, 23). *Dhauti* involves swallowing a piece of wet cloth and then withdrawing it (II.24). In II.25 it is mentioned that this process of cleaning cures bronchial disorders and leprosy, among other things. A method of washing that involves taking in water through the anus is called *vasti* (II.26). *Neti* involves inserting thread through the nasal passage (II.29), and it is remarked that this "destroys the multitude of diseases (occurring) above the shoulders" (II.30).

More complex *mūdras* and *bandhas* are also integral to Haṭhayoga. Ten *mūdras* are listed in III.7 "which destroy senility and death."⁵⁰ These *mūdras* and *bandhas* are quite complex to perform, and for each of them the corresponding effects on the body are mentioned. For example, III.55 mentions *Uddīyānabandha*, which is effected by the "drawing back of [the] abdomen above and below [the] navel."⁵¹ It is important to note that most of these *āsanas* are still practiced by many practitioners of yoga today. This continuity allows us to view these texts as forming a part of a lived tradition of yoga. In fact, there are many new *āsanas*, not listed in the *HYP*, that have been introduced into the larger literature of yoga.

My contention is that these postures (and in particular the more complex *bandhas*) function as if they 'make visible' the 'internal organs'. The influential book on yoga postures by B.K.S. Iyengar that details many *āsanas* has this to say about *bandhas*: "*Bandha* means bondage, joining together, fettering or catching hold of. It is also a posture in which certain organs or parts of the body are contracted and controlled."⁵² Not only do they make visible in the context of pointing but the various postures also allow one to 'grasp' these organs. These postures help to 'contract and control' certain organs or parts of the inner body. Through these postures one can literally grasp and manipulate a stomach, for example, as we can manipulate the hand. The *āsanas* are specific in their actions and are generally correlated with specific organs. Thus, there are postures that allow manipulations of the abdomen, kidneys, and various other organs. There are postures that increase digestive powers, postures through which the liver and spleen are activated, and postures for regulating the thyroid gland, and so on. For example, the pose resembling a locust resting

on the ground helps those with a slipped disc. It also keeps the bladder and the prostate gland healthy.⁵³

There is an emphasis on the notion of inner body in many of these postures. The particular form of the posture seems to have been designed in order to be effective on specific organs. So, just as doing exercises for the arms builds the muscles on them, the *āsanas* negotiate with the inner organs in similar ways. This leads to quite complex forms of these postures. For example, Iyengar writes that the posture of a boat with oars is effective on intestines, whereas the posture of the boat alone acts on the liver, gallbladder, and spleen.⁵⁴ Even in the rules for doing the exercises there is a clear articulation of grasping and manipulating the inner body. Here is one direction for one of the postures: “Inhale completely. Tighten the entire abdomen from the anus to the diaphragm. Pull the abdomen back towards the spine and also up towards the diaphragm.”⁵⁵

Thus, through performing the *āsanas* we are able to access phenomenological experiences corresponding to the inner body. As any practitioner of yoga knows, even at the basic level the practice of these postures draws one’s consciousness ‘inward’. In the case of more complex *bandhas* this is made even more explicit.

We should note an important point here. Iyengar’s identification of inner organs, in the language of modern biology, does not constitute the complete phenomenological experience of yoga. These postures were elaborated upon thousands of years ago when presumably the inner organs had not been mapped and taken into the orbit of the biological body. The only feasible explanation about the effect of these postures on the respective parts of the inner body is that there is an already available phenomenological experience of these inner organs that is opened up by the yogic practice. The phenomenological consequence of these postures lies in their ability to allow us a grasp on the internal ‘structure’ of the body and place it in the ‘same level of visibility’ as the external hand.

In the eight steps of yoga, *prāṇāyāma* follows *āsanas*. *Prāṇāyāma* is concerned with inhalation, exhalation, retention, and control of breath. Powerful yogic powers are ascribed to the practice of *prāṇāyāma*, and it is supposed to be dangerous if not learned under proper guidance. The practice of *prāṇāyāma* is also essentially *inward* like most of the *āsanas*. While doing *prāṇāyāma* the eyes are kept closed so that the outer world will not intrude on the senses and violate this inward experience. Iyengar states this explicitly: “In the practice of *prāṇāyāma* the senses are drawn inwards.”⁵⁶ Like the *āsanas*, the practice of *prāṇāyāma* is also one that has an essential engagement with the inner body, both in the phenomenological aspect of this practice and in the beneficial effects on specific organs like the liver, spleen, pancreas, and the abdominal muscles.⁵⁷ For example, in the *Bhastrikā* (HYP II.63), the breath should be “felt to resound in heart, throat and up to skull.”⁵⁸ In the *Sūryabhedna* (HYP II.50), the breath is felt from the “hair on the head to the nail-tips of toes,”⁵⁹ that is, all over the inner body. Once again, we note that the phenomenological experience of *prāṇāyāma* allows a ‘perception’ of the inner body. It also makes possible our experience of the dimensionality that ‘fills’ our body. A sketchy

account like the one above may seem like a simplification of the complex discursive structure of yoga. However, my interest is not to initiate a critical discussion of this discourse, but rather to state my belief that *prāṇāyāma* and the more complex *āsanas* should be seen as avenues that make possible a 'perception', in particular the touching of the inner body. Such an idea must inform Merleau-Ponty's philosophy especially since his central idea of reversibility is intrinsically linked with perception. Thus, I would reinterpret the yogic bodily practices not in terms of its own discourse but in terms of perception and the phenomenological experience of the 'inside'.

I believe that the idea of perception of the inner body complements Merleau-Ponty's project regarding body and the world. *The relationship of the inner body to the outer is the relationship of the body to the world.* 'Before' the intertwinement of the body and the world as flesh, there is 'already' an intertwinement of the inner and outer as body and flesh. The intertwining of the inner and outer body is made possible because the inner body can be perceived and touched in the acts of eating, excreting, breathing, and so on.

As mentioned before, I suspect that there is comparatively little importance given to this idea in Merleau-Ponty primarily because of the absence of a lived yogic discourse in the West. It is surprising that such insightful work on the philosophy of the body neglects a deeper reading of eating, breathing, and excreting. The neglect of breathing can perhaps be understood because in the Western tradition breathing has become an objectified act, a biological rhythm.⁶⁰ In the Indian yogic tradition, by contrast, the phenomenological understanding of breathing is refined to a high degree. This phenomenological approach to controlled breathing further illustrates a way, an opening into the discourse of interiority of the body even while we remain within Merleau-Ponty's project. And we remain within his project for the simple reason that his philosophy, among the Western philosophers, comes closest to understanding the phenomenological import of yogic practices.

The Reversibility of Consuming and Consumed

Perception, for Merleau-Ponty, is intrinsically related to the notion of reversibility. The importance of this idea to him is best captured by his comment that reversibility is the "ultimate truth."⁶¹ The idea of reversibility in Merleau-Ponty's work owes its genesis to the phenomenological understanding of touching and touched, a simultaneous experience that occurs when one hand touches another. This, extended to the domain of vision, suggests the reversibility of the seer and seen. Lawrence Hass notes that "Merleau-Ponty's reversibility thesis expresses reality as a reciprocal envelopment between seer and seen, touching and being touched, which defies analysis through disjunctive categories, and yet provides the very ground for them."⁶²

I argued earlier that yogic practices, both in body postures and breathing, make possible a conscious attempt to 'touch', 'grasp', and 'manipulate' the 'inner' body. Thus, there is a phenomenological similarity between the touching/touched of the left and right hand and the touching/touched of the inner and 'outer' body. Because

there is reversibility that essentially characterizes this relation of touching/touched, there is no disjunction between the ideas of inner and outer body. Thus, the possibility of perception of the inner body necessitates the taking over of it into the folds of reversibility.

The discussion of yoga and the phenomenology of the inner body also suggest another addition to the examples of reversibility as articulated by Merleau-Ponty. As much as touching is a paradigmatic example of grasping the inner body, there is yet another image of *consumption* as a mode of perception of the inner body. The examples of eating and breathing are exemplars that suggest that there is yet another category of reversibility that our reflections on inner body necessitate. This is the reversibility of consuming/consumed. In the case of vision, Merleau-Ponty says that to see is also to be seen. Although this symmetry is never possible in full, it is this reversibility that is responsible for the intertwining of the body and the world. Since the body is implicated in the flesh of the world, perception itself “is the relation of flesh to itself,”⁶³ thus establishing a position that does not demand the extremes of immanence or transcendence. But already within this view of the body/world there is an underlying notion of ‘consumption’.

Just as there is seer/seen, touching/touched reversibility, eating implies an eating/eaten reversibility. Eating is the first paradigm of the body’s ‘grasping’ of transcendence. At this point it may be useful to reflect back on Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, where he emphasizes the ontological implications of the difference in pointing and grasping.⁶⁴ *In the case of eating, there is not only the concrete grasping of the world but also a process of consuming it and placing it ‘within’ one’s own body.* Neither vision nor touch accomplishes this as well as eating does. The consumption of ‘matter’ is the first conscious act of the child when it suckles milk. Consumption illuminates not just the possibility of a transcendental world but also grounds it in the body concretely.

Since the body and the world are not two objective entities distinct from each other, consumption implies cannibalism: the flesh ‘consumes’ itself. In fact, it is this that inspires the view that perception is inherently cannibalistic in character. Perception is consumption—a self-consumption. This is also a natural extension to Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the body. In the “Intertwining” chapter, he writes: “Thus since the seer is caught up in what he sees, it is still himself he sees: there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision.”⁶⁵ But there is more! Vision is not merely narcissistic but leads into the world of consumption and self-consumption—leads to cannibalism. It is objective thought that makes the mistake of separating the consuming and the consumed because *even as the body consumes the world, the world consumes the body.* The latter is exemplified in the visibility of excretion but also remains more than that. Because the body and the world share the flesh, consumption becomes the dominant marker not only of perception but also of being-in-the-world itself.⁶⁶ Thus, the reversibility of the consuming/consumed should be seen on the order of the other manifestations of reversibility.

What has this got to do with the inside? Understanding eating merely as a biological process ‘inside’ the body is once again to give into dualism. On the other

hand, there are many phenomenological experiences of eating. This includes feelings like hunger, pain, fullness, nausea, and so on. These experiences of eating belong to the phenomenological experiences of dimensionality and are more powerful than seeing or touching. The latter are 'two-dimensional'; they are 'pointers' of dimensionality and do not 'grasp' it as such—once again underlining Merleau-Ponty's distinction between pointing and grasping. One can have an illusion of vision, but how does one have illusions of eating? Consuming the world and experiencing it as part of the inner body would be the phenomenological experience of dimensionality, thickness, and so on.

Thus, it is also within the notion of consumption that the ideas of dimensionality lie. Is it possible for a 'dimensionless' body to 'consume', or, equivalently, is it possible for us to eat a 'dimensionless' thing? Perception is consumption and self-consumption. It is narcissism and cannibalism. The consumption of the world/body also contributes to the 'perception' of dimensionality. Not only are the experiences of eating the phenomenological experiences of the inner body but they stand in defense of Merleau-Ponty's view of the inside and outside.

The phenomenological experience of breathing, of which *prāṇāyāma* is the exemplar, takes this one step further. It illustrates the consuming/consumed reversibility and also focuses on the inside/outside ambiguity present in his works. It is in *prāṇāyāma* that we find the full expression of this reversibility, an understanding of the unity of the senses, and the capacity of 'perceiving' the inner body through breathing techniques. Even before we can reflect on eating we are already drawn into the reversibility of consumption through our acts of breathing. At a fundamental level breathing is consumption—not merely consumption of air as 'matter' but as element in the way Merleau-Ponty understands flesh. Breathing is the first example of the consumption of flesh. The expelled breath from the body is the inhaled breath of the world—*the body breathes the world as the world breathes the body*. They are both implicated in a reversible relation of consumption. This process is not mere 'transference' but belongs to reversibility because of the possibility of the perception of inner body through breathing techniques. And once the inner body is perceived through breathing, then breathing is no longer merely a biological act but belongs properly to the domain of perception.

Breathing and perception are linked in a fundamental way as is easily seen in the modalities in which perception gets modified, as in times of emotional distress when one feels anger, joy, and so on. The perceptual experience in these states is significantly different when compared to 'normal' states. In moments of anger, for example, one's breathing is very different in comparison to the normal state. Breathing and health are also co-constitutive of each other.⁶⁷ The interesting connection between breathing and speech is yet another manifestation of the complex phenomenological consequences of breathing.⁶⁸

The practices of yoga *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāma* have many consequences. They make possible a richer phenomenological description of the effects of breathing, of controlling inhalation, exhalation, and retention of breath, due to which there is heightened sense experience, willful control over inner body capacities, and, in

general, new experiences of the inner body. These cannot be explained by the biological model of body and breathing alone. So also, the yogic discourse in its ideal to transcend the body in order to achieve liberation cannot be of much help in understanding the phenomenological implications of its practices. What is needed, then, is a fresh interpretation of the notion of inside and outside that is modeled on the perception and experience of the inner body. I have suggested earlier that understanding 'inside' as the phenomenological experience of dimensionality is one such model.

I began by showing that Merleau-Ponty uses inside/outside in an ambiguous manner. The absence of the idea of inner body in his philosophy compounds this confusion. Yoga is most definitely a philosophy and practice of the 'inner'. I hope to have shown that the 'inner' phenomenology of yoga and Merleau-Ponty's philosophy complement each other perfectly.

Notes

This work was supported in part by the Homi Bhabha Fellowship. I am grateful to Michael Weinstein for a critical reading of the manuscript and for his comments. Discussions with James Morley in the initial stages of reading Merleau-Ponty were useful, and I thank him for that. Dhanwanti Nayak taught me much about yoga, for which I am indebted. Part of this work was completed while I was a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. The support of that Fellowship is gratefully acknowledged. I also thank G. C. Pande for clarifying some important points on the idea of inner in yoga.

- 1 – M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).
- 2 – *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- 3 – *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- 4 – *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- 5 – *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- 6 – *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- 7 – *Ibid.*
- 8 – *Ibid.*, p. 135–136.
- 9 – *Ibid.*, p. 136 n.
- 10 – *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- 11 – *Ibid.*
- 12 – C. Vasseleu, *Textures of Light* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 60.
- 13 – Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 148.

- 14 – Ibid.
- 15 – Ibid., p. 261.
- 16 – Ibid., p. 262.
- 17 – Ibid., p. 257.
- 18 – Ibid., p. 264.
- 19 – Ibid., p. 259.
- 20 – Ibid., p. 265.
- 21 – D. Olkowski, “The Continuum of Interiority and Exteriority in the Thought of Merleau-Ponty,” in D. Olkowski and J. Morley, eds., *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 1.
- 22 – Galen Johnson, “Inside and Outside,” in Olkowski and Morley, *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority*, p. 29. For a treatment of the idea of inner (as thought, psyche, rather than ‘body’) building in Wittgenstein, see Paul Johnston, *Wittgenstein: Rethinking the Inner* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).
- 23 – Schneider, who suffered a head injury due to a splinter from a shell, suffered from many mental disorders. Merleau-Ponty used these disorders as case studies to argue that these disorders could not be described completely by either the empiricist or intellectualist views, and he developed a philosophy that is in between these positions.
- 24 – Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 265.
- 25 – Edward Casey, “The Element of Voluminousness: Depth and Place Re-examined,” in *Merleau-Ponty Vivant*, ed. M. C. Dillon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).
- 26 – Ibid., p. 10.
- 27 – M. C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 167.
- 28 – S. C. Banerji, *Studies in Origin and Development of Yoga* (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1995).
- 29 – Ibid., p. 44.
- 30 – Ibid., p. 1.
- 31 – Ibid.
- 32 – J. H. Woods, *The Yoga-System of Patañjali* (1914; Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 1983). The second sūtra of Book I in the *Yogasūtra* says yoga is *cittavṛttinirodha*.
- 33 – J. R. Ballantyne and G. S. Shastri, *Yogasūtras of Patañjali* (Delhi: Akay Book Corporation, 1980), p. 10.

- 34 – Woods, *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*, p. 6.
- 35 – To list them: the organs of sense are the eye, ear, skin, nose, and tongue; the organs of action are the organ of speech, the hand, foot, anus, and genitals. This is the listing of the eleven *Indriyas*, the eleventh being mind, as listed in sūtra II.19 of *Sāṃkhya-Pravachana-Sūtram*. But further on, mind as the internal organ is itself subdivided into three divisions. Thus sūtra II.38 says that there are thirteen instruments (*karaṇa*) of which ten ‘external’ are the organs of sense and action and three ‘internal’ are associated with the mental (*buddhi*, *ahaṃkara*, and *manas*). See the *Sāṃkhya Philosophy*, trans. N. Sinha (1915; Delhi: Oriental Books, 1979), pp. 252, 270.
- 36 – Ballantyne and Shastri, *Yogasūtras of Patañjali*, p. 11.
- 37 – Woods, *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*, p. 191; Ballantyne and Shastri, *Yogasūtras of Patañjali*, p. 64.
- 38 – Ballantyne and Shastri, *Yogasutras of Patañjali*, p. 64.
- 39 – Woods, *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*, p. 194.
- 40 – See also T. Leggett, *The Complete Commentary by Śaṅkara on the Yoga Sūtras* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 1990), p. 276.
- 41 – *Samyama* is a technical name for the triad of concentration, meditation, and *samādhi* (the last three aids of yoga) and is described in YS III.4. See Leggett, *The Complete Commentary by Śaṅkara*, p. 284.
- 42 – *Ibid.*, p. 335.
- 43 – For example, see D. M. Levin, ed., *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For a discussion of Merleau-Ponty’s engagement with metaphors of vision see M. Jay’s piece in Levin’s book.
- 44 – N. Sinha, *The Sāṃkhya Philosophy*, p. xi.
- 45 – *Ibid.*, p. 283. See also the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* of Isvarakrisna for similar discussions on the subtle and gross body.
- 46 – *Ibid.*, p. 285.
- 47 – *Ibid.*, p. 288; sūtra III.11.
- 48 – Banerji, *Studies in Origin and Development of Yoga*, p. 275.
- 49 – *Ibid.*, p. 229.
- 50 – *Ibid.*, p. 249.
- 51 – *Ibid.*, p. 351.
- 52 – B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on Yoga* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 242.

- 53 – Ibid., pp. 80–81.
- 54 – Ibid., p. 88.
- 55 – Ibid., p. 106.
- 56 – Ibid., p. 241.
- 57 – Ibid., p. 253. Mircea Eliade discusses breath control and other respiratory practices associated with Taoism. In the case of “embryonic respiration,” the Taoists believe that the ‘place’ of each breath is the “internal organ that corresponds to each breath.” See Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), p. 60.
- 58 – Banerji, *Studies in Origin and Development of Yoga*, p. 357.
- 59 – Ibid., p. 243; *Haṭhayoga-Pradīpikā* II.49.
- 60 – Eliade does point out certain similarities between *prāṇāyāma* and the respiratory practices of Hesychastic monks. See Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, p. 63. I am sure there are other monastic communities in the West that may have had or continue to have such practices. But it can be argued that modernism in the West shifted the body discourse into dominantly that of the scientific one, a move that inevitably distanced the body from its phenomenological descriptions.
- 61 – Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 155.
- 62 – Lawrence Hass, “Sense and Alterity,” in Olkowski and Morley, *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority*, p. 91.
- 63 – Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology*, p. 170.
- 64 – See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962). See also Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty’s Ontology*.
- 65 – Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, p. 139.
- 66 – This is not to mistake the flesh as corporeal. Even as an element of being, consumption becomes the underlying norm.
- 67 – There is also this interesting belief within the yogic, particularly the tantric, tradition that the health of a person can be gauged by the amount of time one breathes through the left or right nostril. An imbalance in this is related to the level of illness of the person. See, for example, Swami Śivapriyananda, *Secret Power of Tantrik Breathing* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1983).
- 68 – There is also a fascinating insight into breathing and its connection with speech, namely, when one is breathing, he/she cannot speak. Thus, there is always a sacrifice of speech while breathing and vice versa. I do not want to speculate on the implications of this here but merely point out that the complexity of breathing manifests itself phenomenologically in diverse ways!