

GEORGE J. MARSHALL

A GUIDE TO MERLEAU-PONTY'S
Phenomenology of Perception

**Phenomenology
of Perception**

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EDITOR: TED HONDERICH

M. MERLEAU-PONTY

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GEORGE J. MARSHALL

A GUIDE

TO

MERLEAU-PONTY'S

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PREFACE

After looking at the rather long bibliography at the end of this work, one may wonder why another book on Merleau-Ponty's the *Phenomenology of Perception*? And given the general strangeness of this work, one might even ask the more interesting question, why this particular kind of book? The answers to these questions are rather straightforward: the *Phenomenology of Perception* is an important work that deserves such attention; and, further, it also needs such attention. The *Phenomenology of Perception* is written in such a way as to make the first time reader cry out for help. This guide has the rather odd look that it does because it attempts to meet this need in a practical and concrete way.

The *Phenomenology of Perception* is an important book that deserves this attention because it is one of those books that can transform our way of looking at reality, the self, consciousness, truth, time, and freedom. It is the kind of book that makes us see things differently, and it has had this effect on a number of significant philosophers who followed him. Further, the *Phenomenology of Perception* is an excellent example of a philosophy putting into practice a new and dynamic conception of what it means to do philosophy. This method is the product of Phenomenology, Existentialism, and Hegelianism. But one needs to be careful here when talking about influences. Merleau-Ponty was not only influenced by each of these trends, but he critiqued and transformed each into his own particular brand of Existential Phenomenology. What is important here is that this method of Existential Phenomenology not only transforms the notion of what traditional philosophy is; but it served as a kind of impetus to a new way of doing philosophy.

The *Phenomenology of Perception* is clearly one of the best examples of Existential Phenomenology for one wishing to discover what this movement is all about. While there was a time that Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* held this title, clearly the *Phenomenology of Perception* is now recognized as the more important and significant work. One might object and ask how could one make this claim given the fact that Heidegger's *Being and Time* has been hailed as the greatest work

in Existential Phenomenology? While it must be admitted that Heidegger's work is clearly a much more important philosophical work than Merleau-Ponty's, it does seem that the *Phenomenology of Perception* is truly phenomenological in a way that *Being and Time* is not. In Merleau-Ponty's work, we see the phenomenological method much more clearly presented with arguments based upon and developed through descriptions as one might expect in such a work. In addition, given the fundamental level of the investigation of Being that takes place in *Being and Time*, it is a much more difficult work and thus not a good example of Existential Phenomenology for the beginner. At the same time, it should be noted that there is a clear relationship between the work of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger. Merleau-Ponty read Heidegger and took him very seriously. In fact, one could say that the *Phenomenology of Perception* begins by studying obvious elements of perception and ends in talking about "Being," very much in the sense that *Being and Time* begins its investigation of "Being." In short, one might claim that Merleau-Ponty's work provides an ideal access to Heidegger's work.

But despite the *Phenomenology of Perception* advantages over *Being and Time*, it is still a difficult book for the first time English speaking reader. It is a difficult work in part because of its revolutionary character. While the goal of the book is to get the reader to look at things in a different sort of way, the reader often does not expect a written work to do this. The reader is often more concerned with what the book says than what it shows. And the first time reader of a work, that is more concerned about showing than saying, often needs a guide.

It is a difficult book because it puts into practice a very dynamic conception of dialectical method. Merleau-Ponty often and regularly presents opposing philosophical positions; but he does so in a way that can be very confusing. Since his critique of the positions of others aims at developing the truth-value contained within each position, there is a kind of positive contribution made by each position. In fact, Merleau-Ponty moves from negative critique to positive transformation of position so quickly that sometimes it is difficult to tell whether the position being presented is being affirmed by Merleau-Ponty as true or is being attacked. The first time reader needs a guide that would enable him to untangle the complexities of the dialectical argument.

It is a difficult book not only because of the complexity of the things that Merleau-Ponty is trying to do, but also because the book is not

very well written. Like many contemporary continental philosophers, Merleau-Ponty is more preoccupied with what he is trying to understand than with his audience. His paragraphs are sometimes too long, as are his sentences, for the North American reader. One almost has the experience that much of the book were written as three or four rather long essays and that the present chapter divisions was an afterthought that were not given enough thought. While this is a significant and important philosophical work, one would have liked to see it go through a few more revisions before it was published. But it did not and as a result the book is much more difficult than it had to be, and the first time reader needs more help than one might expect.

The present **Guide to Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*** attempts to fill these needs in a concrete and practical way. Our goal is **not** to produce another commentary that attempts to say what Merleau-Ponty is saying in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. This Guide is based upon the belief that the best source for discovering what Merleau-Ponty has to say is what he, himself, says. However, the first time reader needs help in understanding what he is saying. In order to provide this help, this Guide tries to provide the necessary background, explanations of how the chapters of the book fit together, maps of the structure of the arguments of each chapter, a glossary of technical philosophical and psychological terms, and an extensive bibliography. **These things do not replace nor are they an alternative to reading of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. What they do is help the first time reader in undertaking such a reading.**

The first section of this Guide, the Introduction, provides the necessary background for a first time reading the *Phenomenology of Perception*. It is important to have some idea of who Merleau-Ponty is, especially in terms of his academic career. What were the influences on him? What were the problems he addressed? How did his intellectual life develop and what was the place of the *Phenomenology of Perception* within this development? This introduction attempts to answer each of these questions. But still more is needed. The dialectical argument of the *Phenomenology of Perception* moves through the history of philosophy presenting and using all sorts of philosophical positions. It is important to realize that the *Phenomenology of Perception* is not a history of philosophy and that it is not concerned with saying specific things about other philosophers. It is, rather, out to make its own points, and it uses the history of philosophy to do so. For the first time

reader, all of this is very perplexing because Merleau-Ponty never really explains how he conceives of the history of philosophy nor how it is part of how he does philosophy. He is too busy using the history of philosophy to make his own points. Thus this introduction offers a very brief overview of how Merleau-Ponty understands the history of philosophy. And finally, there are significant problems grasping his major point because he also seems to go from one theme to another and not explaining how they fit together. In order to address this problem, the introduction presents some of the major themes that are developed throughout the book: being, human reality, truth, time, freedom, and philosophy. These are not themes that are developed in one part of the book but ongoing themes that Merleau-Ponty comes back to again and again. The concern here is to make the reader sensitive to these claims so that he becomes aware of them as they occur in the text. Further, the introduction shows how these themes are connected and interrelated and that each theme is the means by which Merleau-Ponty presents the major theme of the whole book.

The **second section** and the most important part of the Guide is a detailed overview of the dialectical argument of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. Dialectical arguments present major problems for someone not used to them. The first time readers' needs are particularly great here. They are essentially twofold. First, there is a need to see how all the parts fit together, **an overall view**. The *Phenomenology of Perception* has an introduction and then is divided into three parts. Further, all of these, introduction and parts, are made up of chapters. The reader needs to have some idea of how all these parts fit together and how they are related. Secondly, there is a need to be aware of all the dialectical positions that Merleau-Ponty is using in the text, **a view of the details**. While some positions are clearly presented, others are just hinted at rather than being developed. Sometimes it is hard to see where one position begins and another ends. But even more perplexing is the pattern of the dialectical argument: a position is presented always in response to another; it is developed as overcoming the weakness of the other position; then this position is, in turn, critiqued giving rise to yet another position. Given all the steps in the dialectical argument, it is vital to be clear just where each step begins and ends. To satisfy this need, this overview is very detailed and marks out each step by characterizing each and giving a reference to not only the page; but also the line of the text that marks each transition.

The **third section** of this Guide provides a glossary of philosophical and psychological technical terms. Phenomenology, especially as inspired by Husserl, has its own unique vocabulary that poses special problems for the first time reader. In addition, Merleau-Ponty makes use of a great deal of the developments in the early part of the century in continental psychology, especially Gestalt psychology. Again here a special vocabulary was developed that is very different from the one used in contemporary Anglo-American psychology. The use of both of these specialized vocabularies forces the first time reader to be constantly going to dictionaries only to find that the general run of dictionaries is not particularly helpful. Your average dictionary just does not deal with these kinds of technical vocabulary. Thus the first time reader has a need for a glossary to make sense out of the terms that he does not know.

The **fourth section** provides a bibliography. While the most important source of understanding the *Phenomenology of Perception* is what Merleau-Ponty actually says in the book, often the reader will discover that more is needed. With all the help that this Guide provides, one will still discover that more help is still needed. The bibliography provides a listing of books and articles, which can provide such help. I have attempted not just to give you a list of books and articles. Such long lists themselves sometimes become obstacles to finding help. Too long a bibliography can be very intimidating. In order to overcome such problems, I have divided the books into a series of categories to give the reader suggestions about the kind of help that he can expect to find in each work. Further, I have provided an index to periodical articles according to key concepts dealt with in each. While this index clearly has certain limitations, it does enable someone who has a specific problem about a concept in the text to deal with a relatively short list of possible works that might help.

The ultimate goal of this Guide is to provide concrete and practical tools that will help the first time reader understand the *Phenomenology of Perception*. My own attempts to meet the needs of students have developed into this Guide. I must thank my former students for their patience and suggestions, which aided greatly in the development of this text. In addition, I would like to in particular thank Delia Koster, Dr. Maricarmen Jenkins, Dr. Nicole Jeffery, George and John Marshall for all the time they gave listening to my ideas and for all their advice. In particular, I would also like to thank Maricarmen and Nicole for

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Campion College

SECTION I—INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this "Introduction" is to provide the needed background to enable one to read the *Phenomenology of Perception* for the first time. As with any book, there are certain things that authors would never think of stating because they are so obvious to them and yet the new reader needs to know them in order to understand the work. For example, an author rarely, if ever, says who he is or even what is fundamentally behind his desire to write a particular book. It is true that authors are very concerned about the specific problems that their books deal and they will certainly tell you a lot about them, but fundamental problems that motivate a whole career have a tendency to stay in the background and just be assumed. Further, philosophical authors usually assume that we understand the history of philosophy, and thus they use it rather freely in formulating many of their arguments. The problem is that there are many different "understandings" of the history of philosophy, and to understand a particular book you need to understand how that particular author approaches the history of philosophy. But the fact is that most authors are so preoccupied with the specific problems of their book that they never try to explain their views on the history of philosophy or, for that matter, on many other topics.

But the problems of reading and understanding a book are not limited to just getting this background. There are also all the problems of the "Hermeneutic Circle." As you begin reading any book, you discover that you can only understand the individual sentences if and to the extent that you grasp the overall concern of the book. But, of course, one cannot grasp the overall concern of the book until you understand all the particular sentences in light of the overall concern. To really understand a book requires many readings. There are no short cuts here. Clearly, one needs to read it many times allowing the individual sentences to give you what the author is trying to do, while at the same time, this overall concern of the book will enable you to understand the particular sentences. There has to be a dialectical interplay between the overall theme and the individual sentences. In this "Introduction" we attempt to aid this process by developing certain

themes that arise early in the book and keep reappearing throughout it. It is in being sensitive to these themes that the particular sentences are going to start fitting together, and we may begin to start overcoming some of the problems of the "Hermeneutic Circle." But still it must be stressed that such an attempt does not free one from the necessity of reading the book many times. It is only in seeing the parts as part of a unity that an understanding can be developed.

This brings us to the last task of the introduction. Attempting to understand the *Phenomenology of Perception* requires a great deal of work. As was stated above, there are no short cuts. This introduction attempts to present the book in a way that convinces you that the book is worth such an effort. Over the years of struggling with this work, I have discovered that it is an exciting book that offers some rather profound insight into a wide range of topics. This introduction will try to excite you about the book and attempt to get you to take the initial steps to share in these insights. But the introduction does not give you these insights. Only reading this book well can do that. The introduction is going to try to convince you that you should attempt such a reading.

Thus the introduction is divided into three parts. **First**, it places the *Phenomenology of Perception* in the contexts of the academic career and life of Merleau-Ponty. **Second**, it shows how Merleau-Ponty's concerns, which arise out of his life, take form and are articulated through his understanding of the development of Modern Philosophy. **Third**, it articulates the basic ways in which this concern manifests itself in the *Phenomenology of Perception* by developing some of the ongoing themes of that work: the nature of Being, Human reality, Truth, Time, Freedom and Philosophy.

I LIFE AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a certain indecisiveness among scholars on whether one ought to talk about a philosopher's life in developing his philosophy. Some authors begin their work on a philosopher with a short summary of his life. Others prefer to go directly to his thought. While commentators are rather evenly split over which to do, we are faced with the fact that there are good reasons for either approach. Some have argued that the real business of philosophy is with a philosopher's thought, not what he did or whom he married. Such personal data just simply

gets in the way of understanding the “thought.” It distracts us from our real concern of discovering what he said really means. And clearly there is much truth in these claims. But others have argued that to look at a philosophy book as containing only “thought” is to be operating under the assumption that the writer of the book is only a “thinker” and no more. And it seems if there is any assumption that runs counter to Merleau-Ponty’s thought, it is this later assumption. Merleau-Ponty’s writings are a testament to the idea that consciousness is always incarnate and that our ideas are always incarnate. One can only separate the thought of our incarnate ideas from their bodies at the cost of distorting them. My primary concern will be to understand what Merleau-Ponty has to say in the work while recognizing that this is a concrete human being. Thus in this very brief look at the life and education of Merleau-Ponty, we shall attempt to make you aware of the kind of context in which the work arose while not turning this context into the subject matter of our study.

But to provide the lived context of Merleau-Ponty’s works is no easy task. He certainly was a very private person, and there has been no biography as yet published. To simplify things, I have divided his personal and academic life into five parts. The **first** consists in his early life and education (1908-1934). The **second** is a very academic and reflective period during which the *Phenomenology of Perception* was produced. Clearly this is a period in which he primarily acts as a philosopher (1935-1945). The **third** period begins with the Occupation and continues until about 1950. There is a general movement away from academic philosophy and pre-occupation with interrogating the history and the politics of his time. In some respect, there was also a movement from a brief involvement in the intellectual resistance to the beginnings of his career as a social critic (1946-1952). The **fourth** period is a kind of return to academic philosophy and renewed inquiry in which the results of his earlier efforts are reflected upon and often both transformed and carried further. While Merleau-Ponty’s reflection on history continued, he also worked on the traditional academic tasks of an older philosopher: he explained what he had already done, testing out his perspective in new areas, and generally projecting his earlier works forward (1952-1961). The **fifth** period of his academic life paradoxically follows his death and consists of a series of publications of works that he had not finished but was in the process of completing. (1961- Present). In addition to the periods of his academic

life, I will present a few suggestions about which of his other works would help the reader to understand the *Phenomenology of Perception* and I will end with an equally short comment on what the man was personally like.

1. HIS EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION (1908-1934)

Merleau-Ponty was born March 14, 1908 at Rocheford-sur-Mer (Charente Maritime), France. His father died in World War I like the fathers of so many of his contemporaries and thus his mother raised him with a brother and sister in Paris. From all accounts, despite the fact that his father died when he was so young, he remembered his youth as being a very good time. He had the privilege of a first class education at two Paris lycées: Lycées Janson de sailly and Louis-le-Grande. He did his secondary education at Lucé Louis le Grand, and in 1930, he successfully completed his studies in philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure (rue d'Ulm). It was here that he first made the acquaintance of Jean-Paul Sartre. He was also associated for a short time with the Catholic journal, *Esprit*.

He was drawn to the works of Husserl and Heidegger. While Husserl was in Paris, Merleau-Ponty had the opportunity to attend his 1929 lectures which were printed under the title *Cartesian Meditations* and, coupled with his study of Heidegger's writings; these lectures profoundly influenced his conception of philosophy. At about the same time, he also attended Pariser Vortrager and the Alexandre Kojève's series "La Philosophie Religieuse de Hegel" which ran from January 1933 to May 1939 at the École Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Despite the title, Kojève's lectures were really a humanist commentary on Hegel's *Phenomenologies des Giest* but had a major effect upon Merleau-Ponty. He also developed the first stages of a friendship with a fellow student, Jean-Paul Sartre, who in turn was to shape and form Merleau-Ponty's political and social thought not only because of their agreements; but more often than not by their sharp differences. For five years, he taught philosophy at the Lycée at Beauvais where he received a year research grant from Caisse de la Recherche Scientifique.

2. AS A PHENOMENOLOGIST (1935-1945)

In 1935, he returned to L'École Normal in Paris to pursue graduate research as Agrégé Répétiteur de Philosophie, while at the same time

he also taught at Lycée Chartes. His first academic publication was "Christianity and Ressentiment," *La Vie Intellectuelle*, 7, 1935, pp. 278-306. While teaching and working on his first major academic work, *The Structure of Behavior*, he also published three additional academic articles. In 1938 he finished *The Structure of Behavior* [Translated by Alden L. Fischer. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963 (*La Structure du comportement*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1943)]. This work was actually his "these complémentaire" for his teaching license.

In 1939, he entered the army as a lieutenant in the infantry. He served in the infantry during the Second World War rather briefly, little over a year, largely because the war in France was rather short. During this period he was captured and tortured by the Germans. During the occupation, Merleau-Ponty was involved in an intellectual resistance group called "Socialism and Liberty." There he re-met Sartre, and they discovered that they shared a common interest in Husserl, Heidegger, and a range of political and social concerns. This relationship would grow and significantly affect both philosophers.

With the end of the Occupation, he taught as professor of philosophy at the L'Université of Lyons. At the same time that he was finishing his first major academic book, he began working on the *Phenomenology of Perception* [Translated by Colin Smith. New York: Humanities Press, 1962 (*Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Gallimard, 1945)]. In many respects his first two works are closely connected. As he states in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, "We have pointed out elsewhere that consciousness seen from the outside cannot be a pure for itself (*La Structure du Comportement*, pp. 168 and ff.). We are beginning to see that the same applies to consciousness seen from the inside." (p. 215/250 footnote). This attitude of studying the same "reality" first from the outside, behavior, and then from the inside, perception, dominates both books and also explains the use of frequent quotations from *The Structure of Behavior* in the second work. Clearly Merleau-Ponty thought that both works studied the same "reality" but from different points of view. Yet, it should be noted that there is a real difference between these works. While they both look at the same "reality," the *Phenomenology of Perception* goes beyond anything even imagined in the earlier work. In 1945, he finished and published his second and most important philosophical work. When one realizes that these seven years included military service, teaching, the German

occupation, and his involvement in the Resistance, it was an amazing achievement.

On the basis of two books and a number of articles, he was made Docteur es Lettres in July 1945. After this he took a number of teaching posts: "Matière de Conférences" and then "Professeur sans chaire" at the Faculté de Lettres de Paris (1946-1951) "Charge de Conférences" at the École Normal (1946-1949). It is during this time that he took the opportunity to visit the University of Mexico and briefly taught there. From 1947-1950 he was a member of the Jury du Concours d'Entres at the École Normale. He taught a series of courses on the philosophy of language, psychoanalysis, Gestalt psychology, the social theory of Durkheim, Mill, and Weber.

3. AS A SOCIAL CRITIC (1946-1952)

In the third period, from 1945 to 1952, Merleau-Ponty was a close friend and collaborator of Jean-Paul Sartre. As a form of social and political activism, they founded and co-edited *Les temps modernes*, a philosophical and political journal. In addition to Sartre, Jeanson, Aron, and Simone de Beauvoir were also very much involved in the adventure. At first, Merleau-Ponty was overshadowed in the eyes of many by Sartre and was considered just one of Sartre's followers even though, as Sartre admits, Merleau-Ponty was the primary editor much of the time. It was not until later that it was realized that Merleau-Ponty made very significant contributions to the success of the journal. In fact, many of his articles that appeared in the journal were later published in book form. The anthologies of articles from this period are: *Sense and Non-Sense* [Translated by Herbert L Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964 (*Sens et non-sens*, Paris, Nagel, 1948)] which contains seven articles; four in *Signs* (*Signes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1960); and seven in *Parcours* (1935-1951, Edition Verdier, 1997).

Also during this time he wrote: *Humanism and terror: an essay on the Communist Problem* (Translated and with notes by John O'Neill. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980, c1969). It was one of those works done not so much in philosophy but as a practical political assessment of the times. It is interesting to note that this work created a scandal of sorts not only among his opponents on the Right but even among the Communists.

4. AS AN ACADEMIC (1952-1961)

The last period of his life is a return to academic philosophy and renewed inquiry into the results of his earlier efforts. What we find here is Merleau-Ponty reflecting on his earlier works and trying to transform and develop them. While Merleau-Ponty's reflection on history and politics continued, he also worked more single-mindedly on the more theoretical concerns for which he had become well known. He explained what he had already done, testing out his perspective in new areas, and generally projected his earlier works forward. While there are clearly some exciting things developed during this period, there is also a kind of incompleteness. All the major new directions were never finished. One has a sense that this was not because he did not have time to finish them, but rather that these new directions never crystallized in his mind. Most of Merleau-Ponty's ideas at the time were published in articles, which were then published in collections of his works. During this time most of the material for *Consciousness and the Acquisition of Language* (translated by Hugh J. Silverman, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973) was presented as part of his class lectures.

After a brilliant and precocious academic career, he was named, at age 43 to the Sorbonne as Professor of Psychology and Pedagogy, a position that he remained in for a little more than two years and one which he was not very well suited. There he taught a sequence of courses on the linguistic and cognitive development of the child, the relations of the child with adults, and the complexity of the relationships between Phenomenology and the social sciences.

The break-up with Sartre occurs during this period resulting in Merleau-Ponty leaving *Les temps modernes*. While there was a specific concrete conflict that leads to his resignation, the ultimate cause was an accumulation of disagreements over the Soviet Union, the Korean War, and many other issues. With so much standing between them, it is now clear that this break was rather long in coming. It should be noted that it had a major effect on the lives of both philosophers. While Merleau-Ponty's social commentary did not immediately stop (he was still publishing social and political articles in *L'Express*), there clearly was a moving away from these concerns. Later in 1952, Merleau-Ponty's mother died. As Sartre says "He was devoted to her as to his own life. More exactly, she was his life." (*Situations*, p. 301)

At the age of 44 (1952), Merleau-Ponty assumed the Chair of Philosophy at College de France, a unique honor recognizing him as the most outstanding French philosopher of his time (he was the youngest philosopher to ever achieve this honor). The chair had been left vacant by the death of Louis Lavel and had previously been occupied by Henri Bergson and Edouard LeRoy. While the holders of this chair were usually thought to be more or less conservative, Merleau-Ponty had the reputation of being an existential risqué in the extreme. The fact of the matter, however, is that he was the most academic of all the existentialist and his term was very successful. His inaugural lecture, *In Praise of Philosophy* (Translated by John Wild and James M Edie). Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963 (*Eloge de la philosophie*, Paris, Gallimard, 1953), was dedicated to the memory of his mother. He retained this position, actively lecturing until even the day of his death.

Adventures of the Dialectic [Translated by Joseph Bien. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973 (*L'aventure de la dialectique*, Paris, Gallimard, 1955)] was a manifestation of his growing disaffection for the French Communist Party and his intellectual break with Jean-Paul Sartre. From about 1955 until his death, Merleau-Ponty lectured on Hegel. Largely because he had devoted sustained and systematic analysis to Hegel in a way that his contemporaries had not done, Hegel had become a more important part of his thought. And putting the Hegelian interest in the history of philosophy into practice, Merleau-Ponty edited *Les Philosophes célèbres* (Paris: Maxenod, 1956). Most of the material that Merleau-Ponty wrote in the collection has been reprinted in *Signs* [Translated by Richard C McCleary. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964. (*Signes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1960)]. During this time, he was still politically active: he condemned publicly the Algerian war and participated in protest by attending marches. He even went so far as to return his red ribbon of *Legion d'Honneur*.

He died on May 3, 1961. It is claimed that he collapsed while preparing for a class that he was to deliver the next day. He left a wife, who was a physician and psychologist, and a daughter. It is interesting to note that both the *New York Times* and the *London Times* do not mention them in their obituaries of Merleau-Ponty. In fact, these obituaries describe how Merleau-Ponty participated in the creation of the "New Left" in France and how his philosophical works transformed

both Phenomenology and Existentialism. In reading these obituaries, one almost gets the sense that the authors thought of Merleau-Ponty's political and academic works as the family he left behind. Such comments on his life bring to the fore just how private a person he was. In many ways the man that we see when we look back at the life of Merleau-Ponty is Merleau-Ponty, the philosopher. His career began in the wake of Sartre's existentialism and ended on the eve of the counter-offensive of Levi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind*, a book dedicated to Merleau-Ponty.

5. IN DEATH (1961 TO THE PRESENT)

After Merleau-Ponty died, his academic life took off. Works in progress, collections of essays, and class notes were then published in book form. It seems that Merleau-Ponty was working on more than one major philosophical work during the last years of his life. One had the provisional title of *Vérité ET Existence* and the other *La Prose du mode*. The former may have been part of the work that later was published with the title, *The visible and the invisible* [translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968 (*Le visible et l'invisible, suivi de notes de travail*. Paris, Gallimard, 1964)] and was only partially complete. *La Prose du mode* had only an unfinished introductory section. *The Prose of the World* [Translated by John O'Neill. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973 (*La Prose du Monde*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969)], while an interesting work, there is good reason to believe that Merleau-Ponty actually gave up on this work and decided not to finish it.

There were four important collections produced: *The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty* (Edited by Alden L. Fisher. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969). *Existence et dialectique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971). *The Primary of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics* [Edited by James M Edie. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964 (*Le primat de la perception et ses conséquences philosophiques; précède de Projet de travail sur la nature de la perception*, 1933)]. Of the works of this period, the last is the most significant attempt to bring together the major articles of Merleau-Ponty that have not appeared in any of the other collections in either French or English. While there are some minor works that have been omitted, it does a rather good

job and clearly the principal writings are very accessible to the student and scholar.

In addition, there are *Texts and dialogues* (Edited and with an introduction by Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry, Jr. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992); *La nature: notes, cours du College de France établi et annoté par Dominique Seglard; suivi des résumés de cours correspondants de Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, c1995); *Notes des cours au College de France: 1958-1959 et 1960-196* (Préface de Claude Lefort; texte établi par Stephanie Menase. Paris, Gallimard, c1996); and *Parcours, 1935-195* (Editions Verdier, 1997).

6. A WORD ON READING SOME OF MERLEAU-PONTY'S OTHER WORKS

While to scholars everything that Merleau-Ponty wrote is important, to the new reader of the *Phenomenology of Perception* one needs to be a little more discerning about what one reads and does not read. One could easily divide the works of Merleau-Ponty into five categories and such a division can be used as a guide to the new reader of Merleau-Ponty.

1. Merleau-Ponty, himself, has written on the *Phenomenology of Perception*. He wrote two proposals (1933) for a work that clearly turned out to be the *Phenomenology of Perception*. In addition, he made a presentation to the College de France after the publication of the work titled the "Primacy of Perception" that attempts to pull together the themes of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. These works give major insight into what Merleau-Ponty thought was important in this book.

2. The most important work written by Merleau-Ponty that helps in understanding the *Phenomenology of Perception* is the *Structure of Behavior*. As he points out in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, in the *Structure of Behavior* he was concerned with looking at human consciousness from the outside: behavior. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, he turns to looking at human consciousness, but now looks from the inside: within perception. When one sees this connection between these works, one realizes that the themes while different in their point of views are in fact a view of the same reality.

3. There are a large number of essays written before, during and after the writing of the *Phenomenology of Perception* that focus on particular

themes found in the *Phenomenology*. These texts often unpack and explain points that are not clearly presented in the *Phenomenology*. Thus these collections of essays can really be invaluable in understanding a particular section of the work.

4. As noted above, there is a large body of political and social writings that make up the corpus of Merleau-Ponty's works. It is this author's view that understanding Merleau-Ponty's philosophical views clearly helps in understanding his political and social views, but that the reverse is not really the case. Unless the beginner has a major interest in political and social thought, he will probably not find these writings helpful in understanding the *Phenomenology of Perception*.

5. Since his death, there has been a general movement to publish everything that he has written. As a result, notes for possible future publications, class lecture notes, outlines, letters, written chapters of books, and partial chapters have been published. Many of these publications have produced great excitement among commentators and even produced the theory that there is a fundamental break in his thought from the early works of the *Structure of Behavior* and the *Phenomenology of Perception* and the later works as characterized by these unpublished texts. While there are very interesting things to be found in these unpublished texts, the theory of the Earlier and Later Philosophies of Merleau-Ponty suggests that one would find little help in the later works to understand the earlier ones. In fact, these later works often have an unfinished character about them that leaves a certain ambiguity about just what they are claiming. This author has always felt that it is far better to interpret these later works in terms of the earlier works rather than the other way around and thus would not recommend these to the new reader of the *Phenomenology of Perception*.

In light of these considerations, I would recommend the following six works that directly aid in understanding the *Phenomenology of Perception*. The first two are drafts Merleau-Ponty made as research proposals for the not yet written *Phenomenology of Perception*. While it is clear that his thought has not yet crystallized, one gets a sense of what he is trying to do with certain themes.

"Nature of Perception: Two Proposals (1933)," pp. 74-84 (Edited by Hugh J. Silverman and James Barry) from *Texts and Dialogues: On Philosophy, Politics, and Culture*. Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 1992 (B2430 M3763 T49 1991).

The third work, the *Structure of Behavior*, was written prior to the *Phenomenology of Perception* but the *Phenomenology* that was beginning to crystallize. In fact, as we have noted above, Merleau-Ponty conceived of this work as studying the same phenomenon but from the outside. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, we will look at consciousness from the inside.

Structure of Behavior (Translated by Alden L. Fisher). Boston: Beacon Press, 1963 (BF199 M413).

Fourth, about three years after the publication of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty gave a series of seven lectures on the radio. The first of these lectures gives a general overview of what he was attempting to do in the *Phenomenology*. The next four lectures bring up and develop themes found in Chapters II, III, and IV of the Second Part of the *Phenomenology*. The last two lectures develop how one would proceed from the conclusions of the *Phenomenology* to a social and political philosophy. All of this is very interesting because it is done for a general radio audience. While it does not go into issues deeply, this work is a very clear exposition.

The World of Perception (Translated by Oliver Davis). New York: Routledge, 2004 (B828.45 M47).

The fifth work was also written after the publication of the *Phenomenology of Perception* and represents Merleau-Ponty reflecting back over what he has done and attempting to explain what he thought were the full range of its implications. While the shortness of this work limits what Merleau-Ponty can do, the discussion that follows opens some interesting possibilities.

"Primacy of Perception (1943)," pp. 12-42 (Edited by James M. Edie) in *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964 (B2430 M38 P7).

The final work that I would like to propose for your consideration is the following posthumously published text. Here Merleau-Ponty is being considered for the position at Collège de France and attempts to look back over the *Phenomenology of Perception* and its implications; but now in terms of all his works and how they fit together.

"A Prospectus of His Work (Unpublished, written about 1952)," pp. 3-11 (Edited by James M. Edie) in *The Primacy of Perception*

and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964 (B2430 M38 P7).

7. WHAT WAS THE MAN PERSONALLY LIKE?

From the above outline of his life, one does not get much of an idea of what Merleau-Ponty was like. Clearly what we have said above is nothing more than the product of collecting facts about the man that have been strung together historically. These results leave out the concrete existing man with his troubles and victories, and all those things that make up concrete existence. The problem is that, unlike Sartre, Merleau-Ponty was a very private person who kept his personal life very much in the background. Further, there have been, up to this point, no biographies written on his life. On top of all that, I personally did not know nor even meet Merleau-Ponty. At best, I understand him very much on the basis of what he wrote. But there are those who did know him personally and have shared what they thought was important about the man. A good source would be found in **Jean-Paul Sartre's** "Merleau-Ponty" which appears in *Situations* (translated by Benita Eisler, New York: George Braziller, 1965, pp. 227-326). While Sartre seems more concerned with justifying his relationship with Merleau-Ponty, this brief section does offer a kind of personal insight into the personality of the man with all its ups and downs.

Another interesting short source is Alden L. Fisher's "Introduction" to *The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty* (pp 4-5). There he writes:

Merleau-Ponty was reared as a Catholic; his mother was a devout woman, and one has the impression that Merleau-Ponty was equally so in his youth and early adult years. Sometime during the 1930's Merleau-Ponty became disaffected with the established Church and ceased to practice his faith. On one occasion—at the *Rencontres internationales* in Geneva, September 1951—he even admitted that the label 'atheist' could be applied to him. One had the impression, however, that he did so with reluctance and under considerable pressure of the moment. During his last years he refused to accept the designation and seemed rather an open and 'waiting' agnostic. His final position with regard to religion is not known; what is clear is that some degree of reconciliation with the Church of his early years must have been realized prior to his sudden death from a coronary thrombosis in May of 1961, for a Catholic Mass was said

at his funeral. Considering the attitude of the French hierarchy in matters of this kind, there can be little room for doubt.

According to the testimony of his own writings, Merleau-Ponty's childhood was happy, so happy that his adult years never quite provided a sense of rich fulfillment. The death of his father while he was still very young must have affected him greatly, however, for he became extremely close to his mother and remained completely devoted to her until her death only a few years prior to his own. He was happily married to a physician and psychiatrist, a woman of considerable prominence in her own right; they had one child, a daughter.

Merleau-Ponty was a man of medium stature with a striking Gallic face filled with character. A well and neatly groomed man, he had neither the flamboyant nor the disheveled appearance affected by so many European intellectuals. Indeed, he had the external appearance of a successful French business executive, however quickly his eyes and speech dissipated such an impression. He was essentially timid and seemed happiest to live quietly with a few intimate friends rather than in the larger circle of eminence would easily have made possible. Nevertheless, he was a most impressive lecturer and a very effective teacher with an obvious interest in his students and in younger people generally. Extremely gentle and polite, he took the time and effort to put people at their ease; a good listener, he left the impression of being genuinely interested in his interlocutor.

II. MERLEAU-PONTY AND THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

It is probably not too much of an exaggeration to call Merleau-Ponty a "Crisis Philosopher." After all, he was a man who has lived through the German occupation of France and was very much aware of the horrors of the Second World War. Clearly the world that he saw was a world in a state of crisis with fundamental things wrong with the way we treat our fellow man. For him there is something wrong with the very social, economic, and political relationships between human beings and what is needed is a fundamental transformation of these relationships. But what he finds here is a crisis that affects not only our dealings with men in society but also our sciences of man and philosophy itself. The source of this crisis is to be found in our understanding of man. Because of a series of historical and philosophical incidents, the way in which contemporary man understands man has been dis-

torted. Today we tend to think of man mostly as a **thing to be used** and yet at other times as a **disembodied spirit**. These understandings result from the traditional conceptions of body or soul. The result is that when this view rises to the level of science, especially the social sciences, it finds that it has no choice but to choose between the body and the soul. Thus, human nature tends to be conceived in psychology either from a materialistic or intellectualistic perspective. Similarly, philosophy tends to find itself trapped in all sorts of paradoxes that lead one to even question the role of philosophy. Intellectualism and Empiricism are trapped, like the social sciences, in views that distort not only the reality of the human being but reality itself. We find here, in the intellectual realm, the same dichotomy that exists in our social and practical realms. The result is to produce grave consequences for the future of mankind.

We should be clear at this point. The problem for Merleau-Ponty is not with human reality, but with our views of it. We have assumed a certain kind of perspective today that distorts, in a fundamental and radical way, what we see when we look at human reality. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's goal is to change our perspective so that we can both know "man" in the sciences and deal with him in the social and political sphere in a less distorted way. Since the problem is not with human reality but with our understanding of it, Merleau-Ponty attacks that understanding. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty attempts to show that contemporary psychology and philosophy are forced into understanding human behavior either in materialistic or intellectualistic ways when lived experience reveals that it is neither yet somehow both. It is perception, seen as this unique unity that makes us aware of the distortions behind the materialistic and intellectualistic perspectives. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's goal is to overcome the limitations of these perspectives and in doing so achieve an understanding of perception, human reality, truth, time, freedom and philosophy.

Merleau-Ponty is assuming that certain ideas have become part of the Western way of looking at things and as a result they have distorted not only our everyday, scientific, and philosophical understandings of what it means to be human, but our practical dealings with others. These distortive ideas have become part of what it means to be a Westerner, and we are totally unaware of them because they are the very means by which we have an intelligible world. They exist for us much in the way that one's eyeglasses exist. We use our eyeglasses to

see the world, and to the very extent that they work, they are not seen because they are the means by which we see the world. In much the same way, the Western perspective contains certain ideas that enable us to understand the world, and to this extent, they are not seen. Thus the task of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is a re-awakening of these ideas through an analysis of the distortions and oddities these ideas present in everyday life, science, social sciences, and philosophy. One might even describe what is going on here as a kind of "De-Construction" of the Western Perspective. It is interesting to note that while Merleau-Ponty never uses this term, many of those who were influenced by him have, and while this idea does not have the extreme character found in those he influenced, there is a kind of commonality.

But it is important to realize that these limitations of our perspectives are themselves the products of human history with all of its contingencies and necessities. In what follows, we shall attempt to present the history of Modern Philosophy much as Merleau-Ponty understands it. It is this understanding that provides a background for much of his arguments. It is only in so far as we see these arguments in the context of his understanding of the history of Modern Philosophy that we can grasp the implications of many of the points that he is making. In what follows, we shall provide a kind of outline sketch in narrative form of the History of Modern Philosophy. We shall focus on certain figures and use them to represent long historical movements of rather diverse philosophers. The purpose of such a short cut is to enable us to see the pattern of the development that shapes the Western Perspective. Thus we shall look at (1) how **René Descartes** in his quest for truth develops a new way of looking at things. My presentation of Descartes' argument from the *Meditation on First Philosophy* will be more detailed than the other sections not only because of the role that Descartes plays as an opponent of Merleau-Ponty, but also because the first chapter in the last part of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, "The Cogito," is explicitly set up as a parallel counter-example to what Descartes does in the *Meditations*. (2) **Empiricism**, in attempting to overcome the apparent problems in Descartes, launches a movement back to things. (3) **Rationalism**, in responding the same apparent problems, stresses the active role of the subject. (4) **Immanuel Kant** realizes that the apparent problems cannot be overcome unless we transform our way of looking at reality. (5) **G. W. F. Hegel**, in his quest for truth develops a new way of understanding the problem and

thus transforms again our way of seeing reality. (6) **Edmund Husserl**, after reflecting on the problems posed by Kant and Hegel, thinks that philosophy needs to move us back to things as they are. (7) **Martin Heidegger** reflects on these same problems and tries to restore our understanding of the role of the subject. In (8) **Conclusion**, this section with a brief reflection on how Merleau-Ponty tries to transform our way of looking at reality by developing a new understanding of the quest for truth.

It might be best to understand what follows as a **narrative** that tells the story, as Merleau-Ponty conceives of it, of the development of the Western Mind rather than as a scholarly commentary. It is intended to **only serve the purpose** of preparing the reader to understand the *Phenomenology of Perception*. In making such a claim, there is a misunderstanding that sometimes arises. It is thought that to claim that your interpretation of the history of philosophy as just a narrative is to claim that it is not really true. Clearly, this is not the case. The narrative that I present offers an interpretation of Modern Philosophy that I think is right. It differs from a scholarly presentation in two respects: first, I do not attempt to argue for my interpretation or offer texts to support it; and second, I do not try to explain how complex a phenomenon Modern Philosophy is nor do I try to show how I am just focusing on one theme that runs through it. I do not do these things here because they are not needed and would only distract the reader. At the same time, it is important to realize that there are other interpretations and they have validity in so far as they point out many other themes that actually run through the history of Modern Philosophy. Thus, one could say that while my narrative is not supported by argument and only brings out an aspect of a very complex reality, it is a claim about what actually happened and is presented as true. Further it is a claim that one needs to appreciate in order to make sense of that the *Phenomenology of Perception*.

1. RENÉ DESCARTES & A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS

For Merleau-Ponty, the major figure in Modern Philosophy, and his major opponent in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, is René Descartes. Descartes existed at an interesting time in the history of Europe. He lived through the great awakening and birth of modern science. During his life Galileo, Gianbattista, Kepler, Tycho Brahe, Gilbert, Fer-

mat, Torricelli, Harvey, Bacon, and Newton lived. Their discoveries produced a sense of optimism about the power of human reason that perhaps has never been rivaled. At the same time, it was a period of decline for philosophy. Descartes' own experience in university was of a dying Scholasticism that had little attraction for him. Philosophy had become so inbred that it looked as if all that philosophers did was comment on the commentaries of other philosopher's commentaries on still other commentaries. It had become so hard to see that philosophy had anything to do with reality. When confronted with a problem, the philosophers of Descartes' day tended to run to the libraries and try to look up the answer. Further, under the attacks of skeptics like Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, philosophy found itself unable to put up any kind of effective defense. The result of this internal decay and external attack was that philosophy no longer had any credibility in Descartes' eyes or for many of his contemporaries.

But all of this created a problem for Descartes: How can we have real science and no real philosophy? Today, it is difficult to appreciate how this is even a problem. We look at our world today and see science doing all sorts of wondrous things, and there is an optimism and expectation that given enough time and money science will achieve truth. At the same time, philosophy is not doing well. Positivism, Analysis, De-Constructionism, and Post-Modernism have led to attacks on the very possibility of philosophy achieving truth. In fact, one could say that relativism and skepticism dominate contemporary philosophy. While we are aware that this may not be the best state of philosophy, we also feel that it doesn't have anything to do with science. In short, there is a kind of pessimism about philosophy and optimism about science not unlike how it was during Descartes' time, and we tend not to have a problem with it. But for Descartes there was a real problem.

Descartes and his contemporaries were sure of one thing: science was **real knowledge**. They also had a clear idea of what constituted real knowledge. After all they were inheritors of a tradition that stretched all the way back to Aristotle. In Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, we discover that Aristotle defines real knowledge as that, which is true, can be explained, and can be proven. If one were to claim that one has real knowledge about something and what one knows is not true, we could clearly deny that the person really knows. If one were to claim that one has real knowledge about something and it in fact was true, but they do not know why it is true, we could clearly deny that the person really

knows. If we were to claim that one has real knowledge about something and knows that it is true and can explain it, but cannot prove it, we could clearly deny that the person really knows. It is worth noting that all three of the characteristics flow from simply understanding what we mean when we say that someone really knows.

For Descartes, all of this seems rather obvious. But the source of the problem he finds comes from the fact that real knowledge must be demonstrable or provable. Again, Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* is the basis for Descartes' understanding of demonstration. If we might oversimplify things a bit, we could say that for Aristotle proof in science is like a simple categorical argument with its Major Premise, Minor Premise and Conclusion. To prove a conclusion, one must do two things: reason correctly and establish the truth of the premises. The first of these was for Aristotle a rather simple thing. The second was more difficult. In science, one determines the truth of the Minor Premise by means of experience. One looks at how things are and on the basis of this experience one determines the truth of that premise. But the Major Premise poses some special problems. For Aristotle, the truth of the Major Premise cannot be determined simply by experience. It must itself be the conclusion of some other demonstration. It must itself be proven true. Thus, a scientific proof always begins from somewhere. One must start from what has been proven elsewhere in a science or what has been proven in a higher science. Aristotle thought that psychology takes things proven elsewhere in psychology and sometimes it takes things proven in the higher science—Biology. Biology may take things proven elsewhere in Biology or things proven in a higher science such as Physics. In other words, Aristotle conceives of the demonstrations of science ultimately dependent upon a chain of demonstrations going up through the hierarchy of sciences. But, of course, this chain cannot extend without end. If it had no end, then there would be no first premises and ultimately nothing would have been proven. Aristotle reasons that if there is demonstrative knowledge, then there must be some kind of non-demonstrative knowledge that can serve as the starting point for science. Without such a non-demonstrative knowledge there could be no demonstrative knowledge. Such starting points had to be intuitive in the sense that the very act of knowing them would enable one to know that they were true. In Geometry we have a rather clear example of demonstrative knowledge that is based upon an axiom or knowledge that is non-demonstrative.

Such axioms as "The shortest distance between two points is a straight line" are something that if you really understand them, then you know that they are true. For Aristotle, metaphysics deals in a similar way with the ultimate starting points of all demonstrative knowledge. Thus metaphysics is not a demonstrative science but rather an intuitive form of knowledge. But if this is the case, philosophy and, especially metaphysics, is the foundation for the sciences. One cannot have real scientific knowledge unless there is real philosophical knowledge. The job of philosophy is to provide, among other things, a foundation for the sciences; in short, its job is to provide starting points that make science into real knowledge.

Thus, Descartes' problem is that there is no real philosophy in his day and thus there is no foundation to build science upon. The only recourse left open to him is to develop a new philosophy that can provide a foundation for the sciences. And given the problem of philosophy in his day, he knows he has to develop a new kind of philosophy that looks at things in a very different way. In order to do this, Descartes is sure of one thing. The answer is not in libraries or in what others have said. What is necessary is a radically new approach to philosophy. Rather than going to a library, Descartes goes to the Black Forest where he can be alone to think this out. What he needed was a first principle such that the very act of knowing it tells you that it is true; a first principle that at the same time can serve as the foundation for the sciences.

But there really is a sense in which despite his efforts he is not going alone. Clearly, as we have seen, Aristotle is there but also the shadow of Montaigne. Descartes sees the skepticism of Montaigne as undermining the very possibility of philosophy and thus the possibility of science as real knowledge. In what has to be one of the major insights of Modern Philosophy, Descartes comes up with the idea of using Montaigne's skepticism to try and find a truth that can be the starting point of the chain of demonstration that makes science into real knowledge. One needs to keep in mind what Descartes is looking for: a principle such that when one understands it, one knows that it must be true. In using skepticism as a method, Descartes turns to all the ideas that he has in his head and tries to find if they could be doubted. If he finds that they can be doubted, then he plans on discarding them, at least temporarily. If he can find an idea that cannot in any way be doubted, then he has the first principle that he needs.

At this point, he is confronted by another problem. He has at least 20 some years of ideas in his mind. It certainly seems that testing each individual idea would take much too long to serve his purposes. Thus, Descartes proposes to look at the **kinds of ideas** he has in his mind. If it were possible to doubt that a certain kind of idea can yield truth, he would throw out all ideas of that kind. With this criterion in hand, Descartes looks into his own mind and discovers that many ideas were obtained **second hand**: what was told him or he read in books. He then proceeds to ask if this is a kind of knowledge that in no way can be doubted. His answer is, of course, no. All of us have had the experience of someone telling us something and claiming that it is true and later we found out that it was not true. Descartes, therefore, reasons that if we could be deceived sometimes with this kind of knowledge, then this kind of knowledge will not give us what we are looking for; so let us discard all the hearsay forms of knowledge.

Descartes again turns to the ideas that he finds in his mind. There are all sorts of knowledge he has that was acquired by **first hand experience**. There is a saying that claims, "Seeing is believing." Certainly, we cannot be deceived about our own experiences? But if we think about it for a moment, we realize that we are often deceived by our experiences. We think we have seen a man behind the tree and it turns out to be just a shadow. If we can be deceived in cases like this, then we could be deceived at other times and not know it. Clearly this kind of knowledge cannot be the source of indubitable knowledge. Thus we must discard all the knowledge we have acquired by first hand experience.

What do we have left? For Descartes we have **knowledge of our own body**. This is my hand and I feel pain in it. Aren't these things presented to me so immediately that there is no way that I could possibly doubt them? "This is my hand!" How could I possibly doubt the truth of that claim? And then, Descartes begins to think about this and remembers a veteran from the war that had the terrible problem: His big toe on his right foot hurt so badly that it almost drove him crazy. The problem was that nothing could be done for the big toe because it did not exist. The man had lost his whole right leg during the war and thus there was no right toe to hurt him (such experiences have come to be called "Phantom Limbs"). Descartes reasons that if this man could be deceived about his toe, he could be deceived about

his hand, and for that matter his whole body. Thus, Descartes proposes to take all the knowledge about his own body and discard it.

Descartes turns to what is obviously the case, he knows who he is, and he has knowledge about **his personal identity**. "It is I, René Descartes, who is sitting before this fire and thinking about all this." Certainly it seems that I cannot doubt who I am. Isn't this a necessary truth? After a little thought, Descartes decides no. He remembers a man back in Paris who wandered the street claiming that he was Julius Caesar. The man was, of course, crazy, but the fact of the matter is that he really thought that he was Julius Caesar. And thus Descartes concludes, if this man could be deceived about who he is, so could I. If this is the case, then we must discard all the knowledge that I have accumulated about my own personal identity.

Now one may wonder what Descartes has left. It may seem that he has discarded all knowledge. But Descartes thinks that he has not discarded everything. One needs to remember that Descartes was a very significant mathematician and discovered Analytic Geometry. Thus in his head, and maybe in ours too, there are a whole series of **clear and distinct ideas** such as mathematical truths, like "The shortest distance between two points is a straight line" or " $3+4=7$." Descartes thinks that when he understands these ideas, he knows that they must be true because their clarity and distinctness make it so. And then Descartes applies his methodic doubt and asks whether it could be the case that when I know something with such clarity and distinctness, and thus think that it must be true, that God could have made me in such a way that I am wrong? But before seriously considering this proposal, Descartes rules it out. For him, if God is anything He is good and cannot be a deceiver. But then he reformulates the objection and asks if it could be the case that there is an evil spirit, almost as powerful as God, who could make me understand things clearly and distinctly when they are not true. It is interesting what Descartes does at this point. He does not carry his argument to its logical conclusion and discard clear and distinct ideas. Rather, he begins to play with this idea of an evil spirit who is a deceiver and asks: could this evil spirit, almost as strong as God, deceive me about my own existence? Could he make me think that I exist, even if I do not? Then Descartes begins to realize if I do not exist, how can I be deceived? If I am deceived doesn't that mean that I must be? If I doubt, I must be! If I think, I must be! *Cogito ergo sum!* I think therefore I am! Here is something—one's own

existence—the very act of doubting it affirms it. Here is a truth that in no way can be doubted. Descartes has found his first principle.

It should be remembered what Descartes is attempting to do. He wants to create a new philosophy that will provide an indubitable foundation for the sciences. What he has achieved thus far is just a first principle. What he needs to do now is develop an entire philosophy out of the first principle: “I think therefore I am.” Descartes does this by doing a kind of analysis of the first principle itself. He begins by asking who is the “I” that thinks? One needs to remember that we have discarded all knowledge of our personal existence and knowledge of our body. What has been proved is not my, yours, nor even René Descartes’ existence. What we have here is a bare “I”, something that thinks, something that is aware, or something that is conscious. In short, there is a thinking being, or an awareness, or a consciousness, and it must necessarily exist when it is thinking, or aware, or conscious of something. Descartes then turns to this something: the object of thinking, awareness, or consciousness. If I have an experience of a man standing behind the tree, even if there is no man there, it must necessarily be true when I am having that experience, that the man is present in my experience. If the man were not present in my experience, then I would not have an experience of him, and then I would not be certain of my own existence. The object as object of experience must exist when I experience it. Now this does not mean as an object in the world it must exist. At this point, we are still in the mind. The object of experience exists only subjectively, as an object of experience. It is almost as if Descartes has the idea that consciousness is intentional, and thus the object of the cogito shares in the necessity of the cogito.

Descartes now has a situation in which consciousness must necessarily exist as long as it is conscious, and what it is conscious of must necessarily exist as something in the mind. Descartes has a mind and its contents. But to provide a foundation for the natural sciences, clearly we must get beyond the mind and start talking about the world “out there.” Thus Descartes needs to get from inside the mind to the outside world. Descartes proposes that we start examining our ideas (because we don’t have anything else) and try to find an idea that tells us that it is more than an idea and that it must exist in the outside world, in short, an idea of a necessary being. Of course, the idea that he finds is the idea of God. While the three or four arguments for the existence of God that Descartes develops in the *Mediations* are very

interesting and worth philosophical examination, they are not relevant for our purposes. Descartes thinks that he has proven the existence of God, and as we have already seen, if God is anything, He is a good guy and He certainly would never let us be deceived about things that we grasp clearly and distinctly. And, of course, all those things that we grasp with clarity and distinctness are the mathematical aspects of the world. These are the very things that are central to the natural sciences. In doing what he has done, Descartes thinks that the objective attitude that seeks clarity and distinctness has been justified. In doing so, he thinks that he has justified the basic assumptions of science and, thus shown that science is real knowledge.

2. EMPIRICISM AND BACK TO EXPERIENCE

It is important to realize that very few philosophers accepted Descartes' arguments for the existence of God, at least in so far as these arguments could justify the criterion of "clarity and distinctness" and thus founding of the sciences. As a result, his solution to the problem he proposed had little effect on other philosophers. What did have a profound effect, and what dominated much of Modern Philosophy, was **the problem** as he formulated. Descartes' starting point was in the mind. And thus the problem was: how do we get from the mind to the outside world? In fact, the way Descartes developed this problem is insightful. What is out there in the world that can be objectively known turns out to be what can be grasped with clarity and distinctness: the mathematical, measurable, quantitative, material, determinate, matter, physical, and bodily. What is inside the mind (the subjective) is all those things that we cannot have with clarity and distinctness: the non-mathematical, non-measurable, qualitative, immaterial, indeterminate, spiritual, and, most importantly, the soul. The problem as Descartes formulated it is how we establish a connection between the two realms when they seem to be defined as the negation of one another. For those who followed Descartes and for most of Modern Philosophy, this problem had to be resolved. If philosophy is going to do anything, it has to be able to explain how the "objective" can effect the "subjective," because otherwise philosophy will never be able to explain **human knowledge**. If human knowledge is anything, then it is the result of the world affecting consciousness. In addition, philosophy has to be able to explain how the "subjective" can effect the "objective,"

otherwise how will it ever be able to explain **human action**? If human action is anything, then it is the result of consciousness affecting the bodily. Modern Philosophy very quickly realized that as long as one has two mutually exclusive substances, one will never be able to explain human knowledge or action. Right from the beginning, the answer seemed to be found in discovering which of the two substances, distinguished by Descartes, is real and which is an illusion.

It is in this context that Empiricism comes on the scene. Philosophers, such as David Hume, argued that the problem of how to “connect” the spiritual and the physical was impossible to solve. Dualism makes no sense. And further, Descartes’ formulation of the problem itself hides a fundamental confusion. Behind Descartes’ problem is confusion about the nature of our ideas. It is this confusion that leads Descartes to conclude that there are two kinds of mutually exclusive substances. What confuses Descartes is the fact that he has a whole bunch of ideas within his mind such as soul, spirit, body, matter, thought, etc. and he concludes that they all must be the same type of things. Ideas seem to be the type of things that refer to things beyond them. Thus, he finds himself forced into concluding that some of these ideas refer to material things while others must refer to spiritual things. Descartes’ problem is that he does not recognize how complex our ideas really are and that many of our ideas do not simply refer to things. Because of this confusion about the nature of our ideas, Descartes and his followers find themselves trapped in paradoxes and dualism.

What Empiricism begins to realize is that we must understand the real nature of our ideas and we can do this only by looking at their source. Descartes simply assumes that our ideas are just there or that they are in some way innate. But Locke, so that say, proves that there are no such things as innate ideas. Thus we are forced to conclude that all of our ideas come from sense experience. If we look more carefully at our ideas, we discover that every idea is composed of subjective and objective elements. They are composed of the data supplied by sense experience (the objective element), and we organize this data by means of memory, association, and other acts (the subjective element). For example, we have the idea of “white” and if we trace this idea back to the experiences from which it arose, we discover that those experiences reveal a range from dark to light sense data. (All one has to do is look at any white wall and then become aware of the shadows and

the texture of the surface to become aware of what is given in experience.) In fact, there is so great a range of sense data that is given in any one experience that if we were required to describe each individual piece of data in order to answer the question what color is it, it would take us forever. "White" is actually a kind of shortcut. It is an idea that we let stand for a whole range of colors and thus make possible discourse about experiences that have similar ranges of darkness to light sense data. If we assume that just because we use one word to describe the color of objects found in experience there is, in fact, one color out there, then we are making a mistake. We are ignoring the differences between the subjective and objective elements of our ideas and the roles that our ideas play.

Further, sometimes we take ideas and combine them to form new ideas. For example, the unicorn is little more than our idea of a horse combined with the idea of a one-horned animal. If one concludes that because we have an idea of unicorn that there must be something in the world to which it refers, we are committing an error very much like Descartes did. Descartes found all sorts of ideas in his mind: soul/body, immaterial/material, spirit/physical/, qualities/quantities, etc., and thus he comes up with the idea that there are two fundamentally different kinds of substances. If one wants to understand the idea of soul, we need to get back to the experience that gave rise to it, and we need to discover the sense data that were received and how we organized them. The closer we get to sense data, the more we overcome the effects of how we organize this data and the less likely we will be confused about our ideas. The closer we will be to the "truth." When we do this we discover that, as Empiricism argues, to understand any of the so-called subjective ideas, we must realize that they do not refer to spiritual things. In fact, experience only gives us sense data, and thus we must ultimately understand all our ideas in terms of objective ideas. We can overcome Descartes' problem by understanding the complexity of our ideas only through reducing the "subjective" ideas to concrete "objective" sense data.

It is important to realize that such a position has implications. If sense data is the closest we can get to how things really are in the world, and sense data are not things in the world but the effect of those things on us, then we cannot actually know things in the world. It may be that the effects of the things in the world on us (sense data) are fundamentally different from the way that things are in the world. If this

is the case, and Empiricism does claim that it is, then "real knowledge" is not possible, certainly not in the sense that Descartes was trying to establish. In fact, some of the great Empiricists, such as David Hume, think that the only logical position for the truly enlightened philosopher is skepticism.

3. RATIONALISM AND DON'T FORGET THE SUBJECT

Like Empiricism, Rationalism attempted to respond to Descartes' problem. Rationalism argued that Descartes' problem was not a real problem. Like Empiricism, Rationalism held that the source of the quandary was Descartes' formulated the problem. The problem is nothing other than the result of confusions about the nature of our ideas. It is this confusion that leads Descartes to conclude that there are two kinds of mutually exclusive substances. What confuses Descartes is the fact that he has a whole bunch of ideas within his mind such as soul, spirit, body, matter, thought, etc. and he concludes that they all must be the same type of things. Thus, he finds himself forced into concluding that some of these ideas refer to material things while others refer to spiritual things. Descartes' problem is that he does not recognize how complex our ideas really are and that many of our ideas do not simply refer to things. Because of this confusion about the nature of our ideas, Descartes and his followers find themselves trapped in paradoxes and dualism.

But here the similarity of Rationalism and Empiricism ends. For Rationalism, the passively received data is not the home of truth as Empiricism might claim but rather the beginning of knowing. The active elements (what we do to the data) are what are important. Like the dog or the ameba, man's contact with the world begins with sensation, but this is the stuff that man uses to develop knowledge. Knowledge is the product of what we do to sense experience. The way that the Empiricist tends to talk is as if what we do to sensation distorts our knowledge when in fact it is what we do to sensation that enables us to transcend sense data and get at the real world. If what Empiricism claims were true, the dog or the ameba would be closer to reality than man because they do fewer things to their sense data. Clearly this view is false. Human knowledge transcends that of the dog or the ameba because man understands his sense data. Reason grasps the intelligible elements of our experience and thus transcends experi-

ences. Reality is ultimately rational and this is grasped not by sensing it but rather by means of reason. Thus for the Rationalists, it is reason that unlocks the truth because the truth is ultimately rational. For the Rationalists, it is reason and the grasping of the rational, intelligible, immaterial, spiritual and the ideal that gives us reality. It is the domain of consciousness qua reason that gives us access to reality.

But what about the claim of Empiricism that what is really real is the objective: mathematical, measurable, matter, and the bodily? Rationalism responds that these are not even given aspects of what is out there in reality. All of these are rational concepts. What more abstract ideas could we have than the mathematical or, for that matter, "matter?" Empiricism's mistake is to assume that it has gotten aspects or effects of what is 'out there,' when as Rationalism points out what it really has gotten are rational concepts that enable us to transcend sense data and grasp the world as it really is—rationally. Now while Rationalism comes heavily armed in its battle with Empiricism, it also comes on the scene with a kind of optimism about the possibilities of human knowledge. At times certain Rationalists seem to act as if they have almost divine powers. Rationalism's emphasis on reason has led to great systems of philosophy. As time progressed, there was a need to somehow bring into control the flights of the Rationalists and their attempts to capture all of reality. Such flights of reason seem to indicate that Rationalists were just playing with ideas and not grasping reality.

4. KANT AND TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE LOOK AT THINGS

It is in this context that the criticisms of Empiricism seem to have force. In fact, what follows is a war between Empiricists and Rationalists about the nature of reality. It is a war that is waged for almost two hundred years by the time we come to Immanuel Kant and no one seems to prevail. Kant, himself a Rationalist, is awakened from "his dogmatic slumbers" by reading David Hume. Kant, who at one time or another taught calculus and physics as well as philosophy, had been a committed Rationalist who thought that real knowledge was possible not only in mathematics and the sciences but also in metaphysics. The fact is that Hume served much the same role for Kant as Montaigne did for Descartes. Hume claims that all our knowledge comes from sense experience. The claim that real knowledge had to be

based on sense experience struck Kant as being true. The problem was that if Hume was right, then it seemed to follow that real knowledge in mathematics, sciences, and metaphysics was not even possible. As Kant understood Hume, Hume was not just attacking this or that piece of real knowledge, but the very possibility of real knowledge.

Thus, confronted with Humean skepticism and knowing that there was real knowledge in mathematics, science, and metaphysics, Kant had a problem to solve. **How is real knowledge possible?** It is important to note that Kant is not concerned with giving us examples of real knowledge or with explaining how it occurs but rather with the fundamental problem of showing how such knowledge could be possible. Hume does not deny that certain kinds of knowledge look like real knowledge but for him this is just an appearance. Hume argues that it is impossible for them to be as they appear. Thus Kant starts here. Mathematics, science, and metaphysics appear to be real knowledge. Kant is going to argue that it is possibly for them to be as they appear. Kant begins his quest by reflecting back on the controversy between Rationalism and Empiricism. What he finds is a controversy that seems to be going nowhere. What this suggests to him is that there is a fundamental problem behind the controversy and the positions of Rationalism and Empiricism. He begins to think that maybe the source of the controversy is something that both positions share. In looking at both Rationalism and Empiricism, and then the rest of the history of philosophy, Kant sees that they all share something in common: the same conception of truth.

In the past, truth has been defined as the “conformity of the mind to reality.” It is as if the human mind was conceived like a bucket that is empty and when things are in the bucket or mind in the same way that they are in the world, one has truth. Rationalism argues that it is reason that transforms our experiences and creates things in the mind in the same way that they are in the world. Thus, for Rationalism, there is truth. Empiricism argues that our experiences are the effects of things in the outside world and thus there is no way to know if things in mind are the same as things in the world. Thus, for Empiricism, there is no truth. What Kant begins to think is that maybe truth isn’t the “conformity of the mind to reality” but rather the “conformity of reality to the mind.” Thus, for Kant, the mind is not like an empty bucket. It has its own nature and to be in the mind requires being there according to the nature of the mind. As Medieval philosophy

claimed: "What is known has to be known according to the mode of the knower." For Kant this hypothesis implies not only a new way of looking at truth but also at human knowledge and reality. In writing the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant is not only going to prove that mathematics, science, and metaphysics as real knowledge are possible, but he is also and maybe more fundamentally, attempting to transform our way of looking at reality. Large parts of the *Critique* make sense only when they are seen as devices Kant uses to bring back this transcendental transformation of our perspective.

While this is not the place for a detailed treatment of Kant's argument in the *Critique*, some aspects of it are important for our purposes. Kant's basic argument is that we ought to look at human knowledge in a new way. If the human mind has a definite nature, this means that knowing is a process by which what is outside the mind ends up in the mind. But this means that what is in the mind will always be different from what is outside the mind. Kant characterizes this by saying that how things appear will be different from how they are in themselves. He uses the two Greek works: phenomenon and noumenon to stand for appearances and things-in-themselves. The basic assumption behind this distinction is that what is in the mind is always a product.

For example, **experiences** are a product, much as Hume claimed, of sense data and subjective organizations. We walk into a room and see a desk. In having such an experience, clearly certain sense data are necessary and, in addition, this sense data is organized by memory and association in such a way that we have the experience of the desk. It does not take much to realize that this organizing is subjective and arbitrary. It is subjective because it ultimately depends upon my past experiences and it is arbitrary because there is no necessity in my past experience. This could be easily seen by imagining someone who had never seen a desk. Clearly, this person would not see a desk as a desk upon entering the room. At this level, Kant agrees with Hume. There is nothing here to give rise to real knowledge. But Kant does not stop here. While it may be true that in order to experience this or that object, for example, a desk, certain contingent past experiences must have occurred. Kant asks, are there certain conditions that make possible the experience of any object whatsoever? While Kant offers a series of arguments to support his claim, we shall jump to his conclusion. Kant argues that without spatial and temporal organizations there can be no experience of an object and without an experience of an object,

there can be no experience. Thus Kant argues that space and time are the *subjective necessary* conditions of there being experiences at all. He calls them “a priori conditions” and “forms of sensibility.” In short, he is claiming that while spatial and temporal structures are subjective, they are also necessary structures because without them there would be no experiences at all. While certain contingent subjective structures are the conditions for seeing this or that object, for example the desk, space and time are the necessary subjective conditions for there being any experience whatsoever. With these a priori conditions in hand, Kant turns and asks how mathematics is possible as real knowledge? His answer is that it is based upon an insight into the a priori conditions for any possible experience. And thus mathematics will be true of any possible experience whatsoever. In providing the necessary conditions that makes mathematics as real knowledge possible, Kant claims to have answered Hume’s objection. In so doing, he tries to get us to see a totally new conception of reality—made up of necessary subjective conditions. Because the traditional way of looking at reality precluded these conditions, the problems of Empiricism and Rationalism arose. At the same time, Kant is quick to add that while mathematics is necessarily true of all phenomena, it is not true of noumena. How things are in themselves does not fall with the province of science, not even mathematics.

Next, Kant turns to our **understanding**. For him, understanding is also a product, but here it is a product of certain structures which organize our experiences. And following the pattern above, Kant argues that there are not only subjective conditional structures that enter into our understanding of this or that object; but there are also certain *subjective necessary* conditions for there being an understanding at all. After a great deal of argument and analysis, Kant comes up with the following: unity, plurality, totality, reality, negation, limitation, substance/accident, cause/effect, community, possibility/impossibility, existence/non-existence, and necessity/contingency. Without these structures no possible understanding could exist. Like space and time, these twelve a priori conditions make real knowledge possible. But unlike space and time they are the necessary conditions for having an understanding rather than having an experience. Then Kant turns to the question of what makes science real knowledge. His answer is that not all of science is real knowledge, only its fundamental principles. What makes the fundamental principles of science real knowledge is

an insight into the a priori conditions of any understanding whatsoever. Thus the fundamental principles will be necessarily true of any experience that is understood because of the very nature of the understanding. At the same time, Kant points out that while the principles of science are necessarily true of all phenomena, they are not true of noumena. How things are in themselves does not fall within the province of sciences.

Often ignored in works on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant next turns to **reflection**. And again, following the same pattern, he argues that our reflections are a product of subjective organizations of our understandings. Reflection takes what we understand and organizes it still further. And while there are subjective contingent structures that are required to organize this or that understanding, there are also *subjective necessary* structures that make any reflection whatsoever possible. Kant develops eight such structures: identity/difference, agreement/opposition, inner/outer, and matter/form.

And, finally, Kant turns to **reason** itself. Reason is the ultimate organizing human power that takes the products of our reflections and attempts to achieve a unity. What reason produces is, thus, a product of certain structures and a given, in this case our reflections. Again, there are subjective contingent structures, but Kant argues that there are also certain *subjective necessary* structures that are required for reason to do its thing. Kant claims that there are three basic structures that ultimately unify all our knowledge: the Self, the World, and God. These are necessary a priori conditions or ideals as Kant calls them.

Now Kant turns to his last question about what makes metaphysics as real knowledge possible. Traditionally, it was thought that metaphysics dealt with things-in-themselves, the noumenon. But such a conception of metaphysics is doomed to the attacks of Hume. There is no way to save it. It is only by transforming our way of looking at human knowledge and reality that metaphysics can be saved. If one looks at all the a priori conditions: the Forms of Sensibility, the Categories of the Understanding, the Amphibolies of Reflection, and the Ideals of Reason—then one discovers that we have all the major concepts of traditional metaphysics (It is interesting to look at the topic covered in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and see how Kant includes almost all of them.). All one has to do is change the way that one looks at knowledge and reality and the result is that traditional metaphysics can be saved. All one needs to do is realize that instead of talking about noumenon, the

metaphysician is actually talking about the a priori conditions of phenomena—just a small change and we can save everything; otherwise for Kant, metaphysics is lost.

5. HEGEL AND THE NEW WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Kant proposes that we look at our relationship to the world in a new way and all the traditional problems of Rationalism and Empiricism will disappear. All we have to do is pay one small price: we must realize that our knowledge is perspectival and thus all we ever know is appearances and we never know things as they are in-themselves. For Hegel, this was far too great a price to pay. If philosophy and science are to be understood as real knowledge, then they must be attempts at discovering the truth—the way things really are. To accept only appearances or phenomena is, in effect, to renounce the pursuit of truth for Hegel. But one needs to be careful here. Hegel is not simply a critic of Kant. Hegel, early in his career, referred to himself as a follower of Kant as did all the German Idealists. And with them, he felt that the problem was that Kant did not go far enough in transforming our perspective; as a result Kant did not really understand what the problem was that was facing philosophy. For Hegel, Kant like no other philosopher grasps that human knowledge is perspectival. This entailed a radical transformation of the way in which we look at things. Hegel held that this created a new conception of philosophy and made Kant one of the truly great philosophers. But his transformation did not go far enough. For Hegel, even given this transformation, the problem of truth still existed. How does one find the truth, when it appears that we are trapped in our perspective? In short how does one transcend one's perspective, for after all that is what achieving truth requires? How does one go beyond appearances to discover how things really are? How does one transcend phenomena and achieve the noumenon?

Perhaps, it would not be inappropriate here to use a poem to illustrate the problem as Hegel sees it and which also suggest the direction that his answer took. Once again, one must remember that our concern is to understand Merleau-Ponty and his *Phenomenology of Perception*. And this concern places certain limits on what is to follow.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk
Cried, "Ho! what have we here,
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up he spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope.
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant

Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

(John Godfrey Saxe
American Poet 1816-1887)

This poem, in an interesting way, presents the way in which Hegel looks at the history of philosophy. Of course, this poem is a criticism by Saxe, a criticism of the blindness of theologians and philosophers. Hegel thinks it is a valid criticism. Kant has shown that our knowledge is perspectival and this is what Rationalism and Empiricism did not see. Their own unawareness of the limitations of their perspective is in fact the source of their problems just as it is with the blind men and the elephant.

If we look at the poem a little more carefully, we can see how it parallels Hegel's views of the history of philosophy. For Hegel, all philosophers have a finite perspective on reality just like the blind men. Further, just like the blind men, philosophers have a tendency to absolutize their claims. They tend to think that reality is as it falls in their perspectives and is no more than that. Both philosophers and the blind men absolutize their claims for basically the same reason. The blind men know that they are right because they actually touch the elephant. It is this experience that drives them to assert that they really know. In the same way, philosophers think that they know what reality is because they have come into contact with it. It is reality itself that causes them to think that they know.

This later point is very important for understanding Hegel's response. The history of philosophy is not the history of errors. It is a history of finite contacts with reality. Just as the blind men touch the elephant here, then there, and over in that part, philosophers have come into contact with reality from a range of different perspectives. They have falsified their claims by holding that reality is this part and no more. But the fact is they are right when they claim that reality is this part and wrong in claiming that it is no more. If we look at the Blind Men and the Elephant again, we can see that the elephant is like a spear, a rope, a wall, a tree trunk, etc. What is wrong here is

to claim that the elephant is only like any one of these. If we could become aware of just what a philosopher experiences when he experiences reality, avoid absolutizing that claim, and then somehow figure out how to put all the claims together, we would have reality as it is or Absolute Truth. Now, of course, this cannot be solved by assuming that all the claims of philosophers are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and that achieving the truth is just putting the pieces together. For the fact of the matter, we have our own perspective and cannot forget it. We cannot put the claims of the blind men together as if we knew in advanced what the elephant looks like. This would be just operating within our own perspective and begging the whole question. What we need to do, and this is what Hegel proposes to do in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, is to operate within each perspective and discover just how it is limited. If we can discover how a perspective is limited, we have discovered how it is related to other perspectives, because what limits one perspective is another perspective.

In order to make this a shorter story, Hegel thinks that not only can philosophy put together all the finite perspectives and achieve the truth, but also that he has done it. While this is a claim that can be easily parodied and is often parodied, Hegel is very careful about the way that he develops his position, and it is certainly much more complex than our characterization suggests. What is interesting to note is that Hegel created a revolution in philosophy. The role of philosophy was transformed and more importantly philosophy's perspective on knowledge and reality was also transformed. But the fact is that Hegel's solution to what he took to be the central problem of philosophy was not accepted, just like Descartes' solution to his problem was not accepted. What was accepted, as with Descartes, was Hegel's formulation of the central problem. In many respects it is the problem of human finitude and the possibility of knowledge and truth, which have dominated modern philosophy after Hegel.

6. HUSSERL AND BACK TO EXPERIENCE

Modern philosophy, after Hegel, struggles with the problem that Hegel presented and, on the whole, there is a kind of commonality in responses despite the incredible diversity of approaches. Philosophy became pre-occupied with the problem of just how we know anything about reality. In fact, philosophy becomes dominated by epistemologi-

cal concerns. At the same time, the idea grows that there is something wrong with this epistemological problem itself and that it is a kind of pseudo problem. Philosophers begin to see what is happening in philosophy is a confusion about just what philosophy itself is and what it does. Thus the philosophy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in addition to its preoccupation with epistemology, is characterized by a reflection upon what it really means to do philosophy. Philosophy becomes dominated by methodology. All of the movements of this period are concerned, in a sense, with either solving the problem posed by Hegel or by by-passing it through clarifying what it really means to do philosophy. It is into this situation that Edmond Husserl finds himself with a specific problem arising in the foundation of mathematics. Husserl has the idea that he could just come to philosophy for an answer and his problem would be solved. Instead, he finds that philosophy seems to be preoccupied with the problems of how we really know reality and about the nature of philosophy. In fact, philosophers seem so preoccupied with these concerns that they no longer seem to be philosophizing about reality. The more Husserl looks at philosophy, the more he finds that it looks very much like the situation of the blind men and the elephant. Husserl concludes that there is something wrong with this whole situation. Probably because it is so much in the air at the time, he concludes that the source of the problem is our understanding of philosophy. As a result, Husserl becomes so pre-occupied with the proper method of doing philosophy that it dominates his writing for the rest of his career. For him, philosophy done rightly is called Phenomenology.

Since much of the philosophy of his time was concerned with the epistemological problem of how we know what exists, and this concern led to philosophers not philosophizing about reality itself, Husserl sought a way of overcoming the epistemological problem. His solution was a remarkably simple and straightforward one: ignore the problem. In fact, he argued that the job of philosophy was not even to talk about what exists. "What exists" is the domain of the sciences. It is their job to discover what exists. Because the success of the sciences has dazed philosophy, philosophy has tried to mark out a part of what exists and then conceives of itself as finding out about this area in some kind of quasi-scientific sort of way. But such attempts have failed and are wrong-headed. Philosophy is not concerned with knowing some

special kind of beings, but rather it is a kind of understanding that grasps the meaning of what we know.

Instead, Husserl argues that while philosophy is not concerned about the existence of things, it is concerned with the understanding of meanings. "Meanings" are not things that exist out there, as sometimes Plato is interpreted as claiming. Meaning is a product of the interrelation between consciousness and the world; and it exists within consciousness. Thus philosophy does not have an epistemology problem. Its object is given in experience. The problem that Husserl finds is that we are naturally so taken up with the things of the world that we never look at our relation to things, our experience. To do philosophy, we need to break with our everyday concerns so that we can become aware of our own acts of experiencing and the "meanings" given in them—our finite perspectives. We need to rediscover our own subjective states. Husserl speaks of this reflective act as an "epoché" or "bracketing of existence." In fact, he spends a great deal of time developing the complexities of this move because it is the central act of assuming the philosophical attitude. It is a kind of reflecting back upon our experience, a making us aware of our own perspectives with all their assumptions. One could say that this act is an act by which we become aware of our own finitude and how it affects the content of our experience.

The situation of the blind men and the elephant is useful here. Just as the blind men have an experience of the elephant that is finite, particular, or perspectival, so everyone's experience has these same characteristics. And just as the blind men fall into error by ignoring the limitation of their perspective, we all suffer this same fate. The job of philosophy is to overcome this fate by making us aware of ourselves. Philosophy is a kind of self-knowledge, but not simply for its own sake but as a means to understand what is given in experience. What the "epoché" does is makes us aware of our experiences or phenomena so that we might study them. Thus Husserl called this kind of philosophy, Phenomenology. But once we become aware of the meanings given in our experiences, we must take into consideration how our finite perspectives formed by all the assumptions we carry with us distort what is given in experience. Husserl calls this act a "reduction" and during his career you find him spelling out how the "reduction" is to be done. Eventually he clarifies many different kinds of reductions. The aim of this whole process was to come to a complete understanding

of the meanings given in experience. At times, Husserl talks as if this is a finite process and that if we had enough phenomenologists, they could eventually do a complete clarification of all meanings. At other times, Husserl seems a little unclear whether a final reduction is ever possible.

7. HEIDEGGER AND DON'T FORGET THE SUBJECT

The problem with Husserl's writings, especially in his *Ideas*, is that they make the whole process of transcending one's perspective and achieving truth too simple an exercise. There are times in which Husserl describes philosophy as if it is the same as Idealism, especially when he talks about the "final reduction" and "essences." While Heidegger's relationship to Husserl is as complex as any teacher/student relationship, he clearly distinguishes himself by exploring the fundamental nature of the human perspective and finds it to be, not simply something we are burdened with, but rather something central to what it means to be human. For Heidegger, human reality is openness onto being. Finitude is not something that one can overcome; it is rather the very essence of what it means to be human. But to grasp human reality in this way requires a fundamental transformation of our perspectives. One must overcome the prejudices of past philosophies and approach human reality anew. What Merleau-Ponty finds in Heidegger is a true kind of Existentialism with its movement back to concrete existing human reality. What he also finds is an attempt to break with traditional philosophy, especially with its epistemological concerns, and to develop a totally new conception of metaphysics to replace the old one. In doing so, epistemology is laid aside because now human reality is viewed, not as something opposed to being, but rather as the very means by which being is manifested.

While a philosopher as complex and as deep as Heidegger clearly cannot be captured in a few sentences, what is important to realize is that he represents, in Merleau-Ponty's view, a continuation of a pattern that we have seen in Modern Philosophy. There is a gradual development of an awareness of human perspectivalness moving gradually from being viewed first as a problem that has to be overcome, then as something which may be of value in one way or another, and then as the key to its own transcending, and now as essential to what it means to be human. But all this requires and implies a transformation of the

way in which philosophy is conceived. What we will see is Merleau-Ponty beginning with these realizations. Much of the *Phenomenology of Perception* will be an exploration of their implications.

8. CONCLUSION: A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS AND A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

As one reads Merleau-Ponty, it is easy to develop a bit of uneasiness about how he uses the history of philosophy. In the "Preface" of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, we will see Merleau-Ponty interpreting Husserl and Heidegger as if there is no real difference between them, when the very themes that he presents are the ones that most commentators would use to distinguish their positions. Often one finds serious criticism of Husserl put into Husserl's own mouth. At other times, it clearly looks as if Merleau-Ponty is projecting his own views onto the positions of philosophers of the past. And on top of all that, there is his very perplexing relationship to Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre's name only occurs a few times in this work, and it is always presented positively with Merleau-Ponty acknowledging his contributions. But there is a clear sense in which the *Phenomenology of Perception* is a major attack against Sartre's position. The positions Merleau-Ponty attributes to Descartes often look much more like Sartre's than Descartes', and these are always attacked. The entire chapter on freedom is clearly an attack on one of the basic concepts of *Being and Nothingness*; yet Sartre is never named. To the first time reader of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, all of this can be very perplexing indeed.

Merleau-Ponty's approach to other philosophers has certain characteristics about it that re-echo the poem, "The Blind Men and the Elephant." While the poem has a sarcastic edge to its criticism, Merleau-Ponty is much more open to other philosophers. He assumes, as does the poem, that every real philosopher had contact with reality, and thus has a truth to offer us. The problem is that philosophers have a tendency to absolutize the truth content of their contact and thus distort it. What is needed is an attitude that does not absolutize and yet still seeks the truth within every position. But the only way not to absolutize is to be aware of the limitation of each perspective. Further, it is only by grasping the truth within the context of each perspective that one's quest for truth can begin. But for Merleau-Ponty this does not mean that we are trapped in these perspectives and possess only

relative truths. Our perspectives are not barriers to discovering how reality is but they are the necessary conditions for that discovery. Our perspectives open out upon a world. They are the very conditions of our transcending ourselves and grasping reality.

With this view in mind, we find that Merleau-Ponty approaches the works of other philosophers and the history of philosophy by treating them as a source of insights into how reality ultimately is. He reads other philosophers to find the truth contained within their works. And when he finds such truth, it should not be surprising that he concludes that it is true. While error is sometimes important in understanding the limitations of a particular philosopher's perspective, for Merleau-Ponty, it is important only in so far as it is a tool to discover what is true in that perspective. For Merleau-Ponty, there is a sense in which a philosopher's own claims are not the best authority for what he has discovered. Merleau-Ponty's attitude is dominated by the quest for truth and that other philosophers and the history of philosophy turn out to be sources of that truth not unlike what we saw with Hegel.

When Merleau-Ponty first read Husserl, it transformed the way in which he viewed philosophy. It made him rethink his whole role as a philosopher. While Husserl said and maintained all sorts of other things with which Merleau-Ponty may not agree, Husserl's conception of philosophy had a profound influence upon him and it becomes in Merleau-Ponty's mind the significant part of Husserl's philosophy. It is this part that he is presenting and characterizing as Husserl's philosophy. In fact, the other philosophers that we have seen are also taken in this way. For example, the Kantian conception of the "a priori" dominates the *Phenomenology of Perception*. It is no longer restricted in the rather narrow logical sense of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but still one could describe the *Phenomenology* as attempting to find the a priori structures of perception much more like Heidegger does in *Being and Time*. For Merleau-Ponty all philosophers are talking about the same "world" and while they may have different perspectives on it, all these perspectives must fit together. What is true in one philosopher must be compatible with what is true in another. And thus, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, not unlike Hegel's, is not separated from the views of others but rather arises out of them.

The problem of Merleau-Ponty's relationship with Sartre is very complex and has been the subject of several books (see bibliography).

They were close friends who much admired each other. They were co-editors of *Les temps modernes* and thus they even worked together rather effectively. It seems for political reasons their friendship came to an end, but it also seems that their respect for each other did not. Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* were both written about the same time, and it is hard not to imagine that they did not use each other as sounding boards for their respective thought. In fact, it is hard not to see that each shared in the formation of the other's perspective. In this context, we can see that clearly the *Phenomenology of Perception*, at least in part, is formed by a reaction to Sartre and thus is very critical of Sartre. The goal is not to destroy Sartre's work, but rather to "convert" Sartre himself. The goal is to get Sartre to assume a new perspective on reality, what it means to be human, truth, temporality, and freedom. Just as Merleau-Ponty is primarily concerned with transforming his reader's perspective, so he attempts to do the same thing with Sartre. One does not directly attack and confront someone who you wish to convert.

III. WHAT IS THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION ACTUALLY ABOUT?

There are clearly some problems in trying to state what the *Phenomenology of Perception* is about. One might think that this should be a simple task; after all, isn't this a phenomenological study of perception? Isn't it about perception? Well, yes and no. There is a clear sense in which the *Phenomenology of Perception* locates itself **within** perception, and it is true that not to recognize this can lead to all sorts of problems. But at the same time, this is not a traditional epistemological study of perception as would be found in North American Philosophy. In fact, to attempt to put it into the traditional epistemological category would be to change it into a very paradoxical work. While the *Phenomenology of Perception* locates itself **within** perception, its concerns are really metaphysical: What is the nature of "reality" or "being" as found in perception? What is the fundamental nature of human reality that enables perception to occur? What is Truth? What is Time? What is Freedom? And what is it that we are doing when we ask such questions and attempt to answer them—what is Philosophy?

At the same time, one ought not to minimize the importance of perception for Merleau-Ponty. Much of the *Phenomenology of Perception*

is an attempt at arguing for the “primacy of perception” over reflective and analytic thought.

By these words, the “primacy of perception,” we mean that the experience of perception is our presence at the moment when things, truths, values are constituted for us; that perception is a nascent *logos*; that it teaches us, outside all dogmatism, the true conditions of objectivity itself; that it summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action. It is not a question of reducing human knowledge to sensation, but of assisting at the birth of this knowledge, to make it as sensible as the sensible, to recover the consciousness of rationality. This experience of rationality is lost when we take it for granted as self-evident, but is, on the contrary, rediscovered when it is made to appear against the background of non-human nature. (*The Primacy of Perception*, p.25)

Thus central to the *Phenomenology of Perception* is this rediscovery of “lived perception.” It is from “lived perception” that we have access to reality, and indeed, to ourselves. It is on the basis of this “lived perception” that we abstract, conceptualize, theorize, and develop our sciences and philosophies. Our abstractions, conceptualizations, theories, sciences and philosophies are the particular ways in which we take hold of the reality as given to us in “lived perception.” While they give us reality as it is, they give it to us in limited ways. But because they give us reality, we tend to be so overwhelmed with what is given that we overlook the limitations of each of these ways of grasping the reality (the blind men and the elephant phenomenon). It is as if the more reality is manifested by our abstractions, conceptualizations, theories, sciences, and philosophies, the less likely we will be aware of their limitations. It is as if reality seduces us into accepting what is given as the whole of reality. For Merleau-Ponty, to be so seduced by reality is to fall into a fundamental but natural error. As a result of this error, there is a tendency to assume that reality is nothing but what given through our conception of it—in our theories, sciences, and philosophies. And further, there is a tendency to think that “lived perception” is the same as “conceived perception.” Thus for Merleau-Ponty, we must become aware that “conceived perception” is not “lived perception” by getting back to the actual experience of “lived perception.” In fact, the basic concern of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is to take our conception of being, human reality, truth, time, and freedom back to the “lived perceptions” from which they arose to make us aware of the limita-

tion of these conceptions and thus grasp the real truth value of these concepts.

Merleau-Ponty sees much of contemporary philosophy trapped between Empiricism and Intellectualism's conceptions of reality. The first reduces reality to the material or physical and the other raises reality to the status of an idea or to pure rationality. It is essential in understanding Merleau-Ponty's claims to realize that he does not think that Empiricism and Intellectualism are vacuous positions. Both positions arise from "lived perception" and both grasp reality through that experience. The problem is that each grasps reality in a certain limited way. Both views, in turn, absolutize their experiences by claiming that reality is only as it appears within their perspective, and thus each "forgets" lived perception. What we have here is two radically different perspectives or paradigms concerning reality that turn out to be mutually exclusive. Merleau-Ponty's goal is not to refute them and thus abandon these positions. Rather his goal is to awaken within each perspective an awareness of the limitations of each. He does this by showing that each view has trouble accounting for certain aspects of "lived perception" and as a result both positions end up with rather paradoxical problems with their claims.

Merleau-Ponty's goal in all this is to **make us, his readers, aware of our** assumptions that produce such problems. Ultimately, the goal is to become aware that **our** perspective is limited, and that while we experience reality in "lived perception," it is only in this limited way. In dealing with Empiricism and Intellectualism, Merleau-Ponty is out to show that whatever reality is, it can give rise to both Empiricism's and Intellectualism's claims. Their thought distorts reality in so far as they are restricted within the context of their individual perspectives and claims. The goal of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is to try and discover Reality in so far as it can give rise to materialistic and intellectualistic interpretations. Perhaps, if we take a few examples of the way that Merleau-Ponty attempts to do this, it might become a little clearer. In what follows, we will develop six such themes: being, human reality, truth, time, freedom, and philosophy. It is important to realize that these are not themes that are treated just in one part of the *Phenomenology of Perception* but rather are dealt with over and over again. Each time they are presented, Merleau-Ponty adds a nuance to their meaning. Clearly one could look at the entire book as a gradual development of these six themes. At the same time, it is also important

to realize that they are not separate themes but intimately connected. Not only does the development of one theme have implications for the others, but they are also developed along the same lines and manifest the same structure. In a real sense, talking about one is talking about all of them.

I. BEING

Merleau-Ponty finds that there is a problem with “being” today. The modern way of looking at being seems to conceive of it as an all or nothing sort of thing. Clearly Sartre dividing all reality into “Being” and “Nothingness” is a significant and obvious example of this attitude. It does not take much to be reminded of the words of Parmenides and to realize that they are very much alive today:

Come now, I will tell you—and do you listen to my saying and carry it away—the only two ways of search that can be thought of. The first, namely, that *it is*, and that it is impossible for it not to be, is the way of belief, for truth is its companion. The other, namely, that *it is not*, and that it must needs not be.... (Fragment 4)

For materialism today, the only thing that can be real is the material, and further material things either are or they are not. For intellectualism, a thing is either known or it is not known, and the real is what is known. What neither position can even imagine is an order of being somehow in between these two categories. Through his appeals to “lived experience” and “lived perception,” Merleau-Ponty claims that we discover something that does not fit in the nice categories of analytic reflection: “ambiguity.” If we turn to lived experience we discover that “ambiguity” is always given and present. In short, “ambiguity” is real, and it is a kind of being in between actuality and nothingness. Alphonse de Waelhens has found this concept so central that he has called Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy the “Philosophy of Ambiguity.”

Empiricism claims that what is real is either there or not there, no in between. Intellectualism allows for only one conception of meaning—intellectual determinate meaning. As we read the *Phenomenology of Perception*, we discover that Merleau-Ponty points out that there is an indeterminate being (ambiguity): the being of the background, **which is there in its absence**. Further, this indeterminate being is not just there but plays a central role in enabling the object to be present in perception. Further, Merleau-Ponty argues that there are levels of

meaning and even indeterminate meaning (ambiguity) given in perception that are actually present and yet are not at all like the determinate meaning of reflective thought. And not only are these meanings present in perception, they are the conditions of there being determinate meanings. Whether we are talking about ambiguity, indeterminate being, or indeterminate meanings, Merleau-Ponty is out to show that being is a lot more complex than traditional philosophy has conceived it.

What we find here is metaphysics. Reality is much broader than just determinate being and nothingness. There is a depth to reality that has been over-looked in favor of the determinate objects of science and objective thought. One could easily write a book on this metaphysics such as M. C. Dillon has done with his *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*. One discovers in Dillon's work all the elements of metaphysics, in fact, impressively so. Yet one needs to be careful. *Phenomenology of Perception* is not traditional metaphysics nor is it developed in the ways that a traditional metaphysician would have done so. Merleau-Ponty's concern is not to abstract out the basic structure of reality as Dillon's work might suggest, but rather to see these structures in reality: to reawaken our awareness of reality in its complexity and depth. This can only be done by making us aware of the limitations of our modern way of looking at things, so that we might "transcend" these limitations. At the same time he wants to warn us that in transcending these limitations, we are not transforming our self into some kind of non-perspectival transcendent being. One transcends a perspective only by assuming another. The metaphysics that Merleau-Ponty offers is not a determined system of some sort or other. It is the result of a process of discovery that must remain open leaving more to do. For Merleau-Ponty, metaphysics is a process of discovery that while never finishing, it sees things more clearly in their complexity and depth.

2. HUMAN REALITY

In much the same manner, Merleau-Ponty turns his attention to human reality. He does this in the context of assorted philosophical positions such as Empiricism and Intellectualism, and the developments in the human sciences. In particular, he is concerned with the developments in anatomy, physiology, psychology, and psychoanalysis that have occurred in his day. What he sees in all this is a series of

claims about human reality. But more importantly, these are claims that conflict in fundamental ways. What Merleau-Ponty sees is chaos flowing from the different perspectives or paradigms that dominate contemporary thought. Again, at the heart of this chaos is the fact that these claims arise out of our “lived perception” of human reality. These positions are not vacuous but have made real discoveries. Science and philosophy today have attempted to understand human reality by going to experience. And they have succeeded. In fact what they have experienced is so real that it seduces them, and us, into thinking that we now know all there is to know about human reality. But instead, we find the same kind of dichotomies found in the understanding of human reality as we found with being. Contemporary thought finds, in good Cartesian fashion, either body or consciousness. Everyone is aware today that dualism is wrong and as a result there can not be two distinct substances that make up human reality. What dominates our approach to understanding human reality today is either the reduction of all human reality to physical parts and pieces as if the human being were nothing other than a complex machine like a computer, or the fundamental reaction to this reductionism that in turn claims that we should exclude any scientific approach to human reality and instead turn inwardly to human subjectivity and conscious/unconscious reality. What we find today is an all out battle between these two fundamentally different ways of looking at human reality. Merleau-Ponty’s reaction is that these battles are going nowhere and are just echoes of the past battles between Empiricism and Intellectualism. And as with Kant, Merleau-Ponty finds that these never-ending controversies suggest that there is something fundamentally wrong. For Merleau-Ponty, it is something with our way of looking at human reality.

Merleau-Ponty argues that what is hovering behind “our way of looking at human reality” is René Descartes and his body/soul distinction. Contemporary approaches to human reality, since they have already been attuned by Descartes, find more evidence of the bodily or the spirituality of human reality. Contemporary thought has moved far beyond anything that Descartes could have even imagined, and what has moved it, is its own experiences and what it has truly discovered. For Merleau-Ponty, these are not positions that should be dismissed and discarded as if they are worthless. What one needs to do is make them, and us, aware of how limited these perspectives are, but even more importantly, how human reality is such that it can give rise to

such different claims. To do so, we need to take these claims back to the experiences that gave rise to them. For Merleau-Ponty human reality is not "body" or "soul" but rather that which can give rise to either of these concepts: "incarnate consciousness." "Incarnate consciousness" is intended to be a radical new category of being much like "ambiguity." The way that Merleau-Ponty develops these concepts has certain strange effects on the reader. In the first part of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty attempts to present the **consciousness** as something that is bodily. At times this clashes with our understanding of what consciousness is such that it makes it appear that Merleau-Ponty must be some kind of materialist denying the existence of soul. Then about half way through the book, he begins to develop the **body** as something that is conscious and thinks. This equally clashes with our preconceptions so much so that now we begin to wonder if Merleau-Ponty is a subjective idealist. What is important here is that these "clashes" occur for us. The purpose of all these "clashes" is to take us aback and make us begin the process of reflecting on our own way of looking at things.

It is only by transforming our way of looking at human reality that some of the problems and paradoxes that Merleau-Ponty presents can be understood. It is only by transforming our way of looking that we can overcome the narrowness of Empiricism and Intellectualism. But even more importantly, it is only by transforming our way of looking that we can be open to the complexity and depth of human reality. It is only through this complexity and depth that the Human Sciences can develop and achieve success. And it is only in light of the complexity and depth that we can face the practical and concrete problems of living together.

3. TRUTH

As we have already seen, the approaches of Rationalism and Empiricism are perplexingly alike, and yet radically different. As Kant pointed out, both Rationalism and Empiricism conceive of truth as the conformity of the mind to the world. If things are in the mind as they are in the world, then we have truth. If they are not the same, then we have falsehood. Rationalism argues that reason is the key to getting truth and that truth can be achieved. Empiricism argues that things can never be in the mind as they are in the world, or if they are, we can

never know it. It would not be such a bad thing if these views were only held by a couple of philosophical schools but the fact is that they have become part of the contemporary way of looking at things. We find that not only philosophy, but also the sciences and the everyday way of looking at things have been formed by this way of looking at truth. For Merleau-Ponty, this presents a very serious problem.

Merleau-Ponty's response follows the same pattern that we have seen. The conception of truth that has become part of our contemporary way of looking at things is not a fiction but rather arises from our experience. The reason that Intellectualists and Empiricists are committed to their views on truth is that they find support for it in their experience. Experience teaches that this is what truth is and that it is both possible and not possible. How could this be? The answer is because their perspectives grasp only part of the reality of truth. In so far as it really grasps part of truth, they tend to absolutize what they find and end up with contradictory claims. What is needed is that we get back to experience and become aware of the limitations of our perspective. How do we become aware of our limitations? Merleau-Ponty claims that our experiences always present more than just what is absolutized. Absolutizing is a kind of abstracting that is the result of focusing in on certain parts of the experience. In absolutizing, one is claiming that this is all that there is. In going back to lived experience with such claims in hand, one discovers that there are contradictions. Merleau-Ponty attempts to use these contradictions to force us to transform our narrow perspectives and thus see truth in its complexities and depth.

As a result of this process, Merleau-Ponty argues that a new conception of truth reveals itself. While the mind of God may possess all reality as it is and thus have Absolute Truth, the human reality is something fundamentally different. **Human truth** is always in a context and essentially limited and perspectival. It is claims such as these that have led some to argue that Merleau-Ponty is a relativist, and since relativism is wrong and self-contradictory, that Merleau-Ponty's theory of truth is wrong. While the present author reserves his judgment on this issue, it is clearly not the case that Merleau-Ponty is a naïve relativist if he is one at all. In formulating his position, he is profoundly aware of the problems of relativism and he seeks to overcome them. Human truth appears only within a perspective. In this he does agree with relativism. But for Merleau-Ponty the way in which relativ-

ism conceives of truth is as if it were the "product" or the "effect" of the perspective. The result is that a truth in one perspective has just as much value as one in another perspective even if they are contradictory. While truth is always in a perspective, for Merleau-Ponty it is not the "product" or "effect" of the perspective. The perspective is the condition that is necessary in order to have truth appear. Human reality, as Heidegger maintains, is the condition for the appearance of being. For being to appear within human reality is to have truth. Thus for Merleau-Ponty, we may have two perspectives in which there appear to be contradictory truths; but this contradiction must be resolvable once one takes into consideration the differences of the perspective. At the heart of Merleau-Ponty's conception of truth is the idea of the self-transcendence of human reality and its contact with a reality that transcends it. It must be remembered that for what appears to appear as real, it must appear as transcending consciousness. To appear as transcending consciousness is to appear as being more than what appears. It is in this rather paradoxical claim about the nature of human transcendence that Merleau-Ponty locates truth.

4. TIME

In focusing on human transcendence, Merleau-Ponty draws special attention to time. As with all the other themes we are looking at, contemporary thought has all sorts of problems with time. The tendency is either to reduce it to some kind of objective stuff or claim that it has only a subjective reality. And, of course, Merleau-Ponty sees the workings of the Cartesian distinction influencing the way that we see time. His concern is to get back to experience of the reality of time, which is the basis for these diverse conceptions of time. He starts by showing how from any one of these perspectives, time is revealed as being more than what is claimed. Again, the move is to get us, his readers, to become aware of the limitations of our own perspective and thus lead us to transform our perspective in order to grasp more of the reality of time.

Starting from lived perceptual experience, Merleau-Ponty tries to show that temporal meanings are already given prior to an interpretative activity. He does not deny that we can interpret and give temporal meanings to our experience, but these are possible only because temporal meanings are already given. At the same time, he argues that

temporality cannot be some *thing* that is just given in experience. His conclusion is that time, like truth, is something that only exists within a human perspective. Again, like truth, it cannot be just the effect of the perspective as is the case when one's sexual perspective gives sexual meanings to what is seen. For Merleau-Ponty temporality is much more fundamental than this. In fact he concludes that time is human reality.

At first sight, such a claim seems rather wrong-headed. Certainly it does not seem true to say that "I am time" in any meaningful way. But what we discover is that Merleau-Ponty is attempting, once again, to bring out the idea that human reality is a self-transcendence. Human reality in its very essence is a going beyond itself to what it is not. It is this because human reality is the movement beyond itself that being and objects appear. To understand human reality in terms of transcendence or a perspectival opening-onto-being is already to have time. Human reality is a movement from what it is and has been (a past) to a reality that transcends it (future), and as a result things are present to consciousness (present). And just as traditional philosophy and the analytic attitude dichotomize the unity of the self and the world making knowledge impossible, so the analytic attitude transforms time into three distinct moments: past, present, and future that all have the same kind of being. Given this way of conceiving time, there is no way to account for our experience of the movement of time. At other times, when this attitude focuses in on the movement then there is no way to account for the real difference in temporal moments that we experience. It is only in so far that we look at human reality in a radically new way that we will be able to make sense out of knowledge, but also time. It is because human reality is incarnate that its movement into being is always from some place, from what this particular human being has become. It is because human reality is a going beyond itself to what it is not that everything we experience is marked by this transcendence and thus has temporal meanings.

5. FREEDOM

Again, it should not be surprising to discover that Merleau-Ponty's treatment of freedom follows a similar pattern. The contemporary perspective seems to demand that one is either free or not. It is almost as if there is a natural logic that forces us to radicalize our con-

ceptions. And yet everyday experience reveals that we feel the burden and responsibility for what we have done while at other times we feel like a leaf being pushed this way and that by circumstances totally beyond our control. What philosophy and the social sciences have done is radicalize such experiences. For example, Sartre has done a masterful job of showing how, because of bad faith, we make ourselves think that things are beyond our control when deep down we are free, maybe better, we are freedom, absolute freedom. At the same time, the human sciences attempt to explain human reality in terms of nature or nurture or some strange combination of both never leaving any room at all for human freedom. Many human scientists would even be shocked if someone asked them about freedom. For these social scientists freedom is not one of those things that even enter into their study of human reality.

Merleau-Ponty proceeds by going back to lived perception. In addressing the human sciences, he tries to make us aware of our experience of freedom and responsibility for what we have done. Even very young children seem to have this experience at least to the extent that they can answer a question as "Did he deliberately hit you?" Sometimes their reluctant yes answer is a testament to the force of this experience. Of course, determinists can argue that it may appear like this, but it is only an appearance since you are really not free. No matter what data you present to such determinists, they can always assert that this is mere appearance. For someone who is not open to experience, there is little that one can do. One could try and show how the scientific perspective with its emphasis on objectivity goes all the way back to Descartes and is only a perspective, a dated one at that. One could, as Merleau-Ponty does, show how this perspective creates certain odd phenomena; but if this does not make his opponent more aware of the limits of his perspective, there is nothing one can do. What we see here is an example that is just as true of Rationalism and Empiricism. Merleau-Ponty insists that there are no crucial experiments that can show that they are wrong and no ultimate argument that will work if they are not willing to question their assumptions. Sometimes a philosopher needs to know that what he has said is all that can be said and that there is nothing else that can be done.

Merleau-Ponty's reaction to claims like Sartre's is much more temperate. Sartre claims that there is human freedom and that it is absolute. Probably nowhere in the history of philosophy has there been

such a radical claim about the nature of freedom. While Merleau-Ponty attacks the “radicalness” of this claim, his major concern is with the conception of freedom itself. For Sartre, freedom is independence and freedom from restraint. You are free only to the extent that there are not forces making you do this or that. This is the kind of independence that teenagers seek and think will fulfill their lives only to find out as they mature that it is an illusion. But it is this conception of freedom that is not only behind Sartre’s absolute freedom but also determinism. Merleau-Ponty argues that they both have a piece of what is given in experience. When we go to our lived experience, one always find conditions that somehow restrict freedom and yet such experiences reveals freedom at the heart of what it means to be human. But when these elements of lived experience are radicalized, one ends up in determinism or absolute freedom. There is a sense in which freedom is fundamental to human reality but not in the way that Sartre describes it. There is also a sense that experience always shows us factors limiting our freedom. In order to make sense out of our experience we need to question our perspectives and transform our way of looking at them.

The source of the problem is conceiving freedom as “freedom from” this or that obstacle. As long as this is how freedom is conceived we are left with either absolute freedom or determinism. Merleau-Ponty proposes that we conceive of freedom as “freedom to” do this or that. To be able to drive down the street of a large city requires that we follow the rules of the road. If we had to fear that the driver coming towards us would cut into our lane, or that people would not obey stoplights, it would become impossible to drive down a street. The restrictions, the rules of the road in this case, do not eliminate our freedom to drive but in fact make it possible. Merleau-Ponty is not claiming that all obstacles make action possible, since there are clearly cases in which we are not free. Sartre’s analysis, however, does not even allow for this possibility. What Sartre is claiming in developing this idea of freedom is not even a possibility because obstacles are always the ground of our freedom.

But we have been dealing with this issue in a rather superficial way. Remember that Merleau-Ponty agreed with Sartre that there was something fundamental about freedom. Freedom exists because human reality is a self-transcendence. In fact, Merleau-Ponty will argue that freedom in its most fundamental sense is nothing other than hu-

man reality in its self-transcendence. This is not the absolute freedom of Sartre because human reality is very different for Merleau-Ponty. Human reality goes beyond what it has become and moves to what it is not. This movement is always situated because human reality is always situated and yet it is always going beyond. It is in this dynamic character of human reality that we find truth and time. It is also the domain of freedom.

6. PHILOSOPHY

As one reads the *Phenomenology of Perception*, one becomes aware that there is a preoccupation with methodology: with what the natural and the social sciences ought to be doing, but more importantly there is a preoccupation with the methodology of philosophy. From the "Preface" on, Merleau-Ponty is concerned that the reader comes to an understanding of how philosophy ought to be done and with what he is doing as an example of it. As mentioned above, for him, as well as for Husserl, *Phenomenology* is philosophy done rightly. The result is that the nature of philosophy is a central theme of the work. The problem is that while this concern is almost everywhere in the book, there are few explicit efforts to unpack how he conceives of philosophy. In what follows, I shall attempt to bring together and formulate Merleau-Ponty's conception of philosophy. In order to do so, **first**, I explain how philosophy is different from the sciences. **Secondly**, I show that there is a paradox at the heart of philosophy. **Thirdly**, I describe the sense in which philosophy is viewed as a creative activity. And, **finally**, I consider how philosophy is related to the history of philosophy.

First, following Husserl, Merleau-Ponty sees much of contemporary philosophy having problems because it does not understand what philosophy is. And even worse, he thinks that because of the great success of the natural sciences there has been a tendency to try to remake philosophy in the image of the sciences. But, the fact is that philosophy is very different from the sciences. The sciences are primarily concerned with developing knowledge about objects in the world: discovering if they exist, finding connections between, and explaining them. In a real sense, philosophy is not interested in objects in the world, and thus it is not concerned with developing objective knowledge. Science is a domain full of theories about this or that, and justifying these theories is one of its essential acts. But for Merleau-Ponty, philosophy ought

not to be in the business of creating theories. For him the term “philosophical theory” is a contradiction in terms and thus there can be no legitimate philosophical theories. But if science is concerned with developing objective knowledge and theories, what is the goal of philosophy? Merleau-Ponty claims that philosophy is essentially a kind of questioning, a questioning that aims not so much at getting answers like science does, but rather a questioning whose goal is to unsettle us and shake our certainties. The goal here is not answers but rather the transforming of our perspectives. Now clearly this is not a radically new conception of philosophy. If one looks at the Socrates of the Platonic Dialogues, it is easy to see an example of this conception of philosophy. Socrates is clearly asking questions not to discover some factual information, but to raise his listeners above their naïve certainties.

One might make this same point in another way. Using the figure/background pattern, we could say that philosophy is not concerned with the figure or object, but rather it is concerned with the background as background. Following Gestalt psychology, Merleau-Ponty argues that the figure/background relation is not only the most primitive element that we find in all perceptual experiences, but that it leaves its mark on all our abstractions, conceptualizations, theories, sciences, and all forms of knowledge. Further, what is known has its real significance only when seen in terms of its context. The error that we make in the everyday world, in the natural and human sciences, and in philosophy is to abstract out the figure or object and claim that this object is all that actually exists. In short, we have the error of the blind men dealing with the elephant again. The job of the questioning of philosophy is to get us to realize that there is something more than just the figure. Philosophy’s aim is to awaken our awareness of the background and overcome the “absolutizing error” and thus grasp the real value of what we have experienced. But there is a fundamental problem here. There is a tendency to think that all we have to do is focus our attention on the background, and thus we would become aware of it. But to transfer one’s attention from the figure to its background is just to make the background into another figure with its own background. A background transformed into a figure is opened to all the problems of the first level experience. This background-become-object becomes something that can be absolutized itself. The real job of philosophy is to become aware of the background of our ideas, concepts, sciences

and knowledge without transforming it into an object. It is to grasp the background as background.

Second, there is a temptation to think that Merleau-Ponty in making this claim is trying to transform philosophy into some kind of intuitional activity. It seems that he has excluded philosophy from the domain of knowledge of objects and excludes it even from transforming what is not an object, the background, into an object so that it can be a part of our knowledge. It certainly looks like grasping the background as background is some sort of intuitive act. But this is an objection that Merleau-Ponty takes very seriously especially given the popularity of Bergsonian Intuitionism in his day. Merleau-Ponty fears that Bergson's conception of philosophy leads us to conceiving philosophy as a personal act that occurs within us and locks out such acts from the view of others. If the fundamental act of philosophy is intuition, doesn't this somehow trap philosophy in subjectivism? For Merleau-Ponty, the philosopher's questioning is both a social and cultural act. And as with any form of questioning, it must be open to the view of others or else the questioning just does not make any sense at all. Further, the questioning activity itself does not make sense unless it can be guided by the transformation of the others' perspective. Merleau-Ponty argues that philosophy is not intuitive because it is social and depends in an essential way on the mediation of language. Another problem with characterizing philosophy as some kind of intuition is that it seems to imply that philosophy has a unique kind of knowing and thus consists of a unique body of knowledge. For Merleau-Ponty, there are all sorts of dangers with this characterization, and he tries to avoid talking this way at all. For him, philosophy is not like science. It is not a body of knowledge, even in some unique sense of body of knowledge. It is an activity that through language transforms our perspectives.

Thirdly, by claiming that philosophy is not a body of knowledge but rather an activity, especially a creative activity of transforming our perspectives, it seems that Merleau-Ponty is turning philosophy into poetry. It is interesting to note that he denies that there is any radical distinction between philosophy and not only poetry but also art in general. The goal of art is to transform our perspective so that we see that we see more, and that we see differently. It does this through physical and cultural things. Poetry uses language to transform our perspective much as philosophy does. It usually uses a different kind

of language from philosophy. The philosopher uses argument, description, critiques, but then so does poetry at times. In the same way, the poet uses metaphors, similes, and maybe even rhyme to transform us. However, the philosopher could, and occasionally does, use similar devices. He may even use poetry itself to make his point. Merleau-Ponty often talks about the difference between philosophers and poets as if it were the case that philosophers in using arguments to transform our perspective are aware of what they are doing and that poets transform us unaware of what they are doing. But while he talks this way sometimes, clearly this is not his position. There is no reason why a poet cannot be self-aware and, clearly, no reason that a philosopher could not be unaware of what he is doing. It is more the case that self-awareness defines the philosophical nature of the activity such that he would say that some poets are truly philosophers and some philosophers are no more than just poets. To say the least, Merleau-Ponty has a rather ambiguous relationship between philosophy and poetry.

But this characterization of philosophy itself has interesting implications for the nature of philosophy. There is a kind of double movement in the philosophical act. In so far as philosophy is creative, it moves away from its goal of transforming our perspective. What it uses to transform our perspective is something other than the transformation. At the same time, insofar as it is an expression that is aware of itself, it returns to this activity. There is a real danger that the dual movement becomes separated. For example, we will see Merleau-Ponty uses dialectical arguments as a tool to transform our way of looking at things. Some of these arguments are rather fascinating and tend to draw our attention. The danger is that we may end up thinking that these arguments are philosophy and lose sight of the way that Merleau-Ponty is using them. In short, we may lose the self-awareness of what is happening. Clearly philosophy uses language, but if one thinks that philosophy consists in only what is said and ignores what is shown, one has lost philosophy.

Finally, as we have already seen, the history of philosophy plays an important role in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. But in addition, it also plays an important role in his conception of philosophy. Merleau-Ponty sees a major problem with using the history of philosophy. If we make a distinction between the questions posed by a specific philosophy in the past and the question we pose now, it certainly could be asked: Do we have the right to ask a philosopher of the past our con-

temporary questions, which Merleau-Ponty clearly does? If we recognize the unique character of each philosophy, we ought to say no. But to do so would be to reduce different philosophies to isolated cultural objects. If we tend to deny the unique character of each philosophy, we ought to say yes. But, then, are we reducing the history of philosophy to philosophy? In the first case, there is a history of philosophy, but no philosophy. In the second, there is philosophy, but no real history of philosophy. Merleau-Ponty's answer to this dilemma is found in the way that he conceives of philosophy. Philosophy, like an artistic product, can provoke more than what is explicitly contained in it. Each philosopher is guided by a vision, which is not the explicit theme of his exposition. In each work, we find explicit prose developing a specific theme, and at the same time we find a key which transforming our perspective into the vision of the author. But this vision is not some subjective possession of the author. If it were this, then there would be no way to access it. It is a vision of a "world" and a "reality" that is the same "world" and "reality" we have before us. This is not a world and reality that is cut off by the philosopher's perspective but rather the "world" and "reality" that transcends his perspective and provides the background of what he explicitly sees. Merleau-Ponty talks as if there is a "primordial faith" that links us to other philosophers. But his point is much stronger than that. What we see is given to us as real. To experience something as real is to experience it as transcending our perspective. This awareness of "something more" or this background is what unites us to others. For Merleau-Ponty there are certain extremes through which we must chart our course if we are going to do philosophy rightly. There is the danger of egoism in transforming the past and the other into our own philosophy. And there is the idolatry of absolutizing the past as somehow having done it all. We need to look at the past, and other philosophers for that matter, as containing possibilities of transforming our perspectives. No philosophy belongs entirely to the past nor do we belong entirely to the present. No philosophy has been completely surpassed, but neither is there any philosophy whose works can simply be repeated.

SECTION II—GUIDE TO THE ARGUMENT: OF THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION

When I first taught Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, I discovered that the major difficulty that stood in the way of understanding this book for the first time reader was the problem of following its argument. Merleau-Ponty's style of dialectical argumentation proves to be a major obstacle for the average English-speaking reader. There is a tendency to have one's attention captured by the play of various claims without realizing that this dance of positions is intended itself to show something. In addition, Merleau-Ponty has the bad habit of developing at length the position of his opponents without telling the reader what he is doing. Then, much too often, he concludes with so brief a criticism that it can easily be missed with the result that the reader may mistaken the presentation as a presentation of Merleau-Ponty's own position. But even more importantly for those not familiar with dialectical argumentation, his argument appears to wander from one point to another with rather odd jumps that can take one's breath away but also leave one without any sense of where the argument is going. In order to overcome these problems, I present a detailed overview of the argument of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. I do this in two ways: first, for each section of the book, I give a brief general introduction that focuses on the goal of each section and shows how each part fits into the overall aims of the book taken as a whole. Secondly, I present a rather detailed organized presentation of the argument and clearly label each position considered while guiding the reader along the path of the argument.

This section in no way is intended to replace the reading of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. Perhaps it is important to realize that this overview is not the same thing as a commentary. The job of a commentary is to tell the reader what the book is about. If it does this, it is a good commentary. If it does not do this, it is not good. But the goal of this overview is very different. It aims at providing a map that guides the reader through the maze of arguments and, hopefully, to achieve an understanding of what is happening in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. It is important to remember that no one would ever

think that they "know Paris" if they only read a map of Paris. This work has the same limitations. Reading what follows will not enable you to "know" what Merleau-Ponty has to say in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. Only reading the *Phenomenology of Perception* will do that. But it is worthwhile to remember that having a map of Paris on your visit can really be a help and lead to your knowing Paris. This overview is offered as something that can help you to understand this book. But it is important to realize what it is and to use it in the right way.

In order to keep the reader in touch with the text, I have given references to each element of the argument. Originally, I had planned on having page and line number references to each item. In 2002, Routledge produced the "Routledge Classic Version" of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. While I realize that the old plates of the *Phenomenology* were in very bad shape and needed resetting (for example, whole words along the inside of some pages were lost.), this reprinting certainly created problems. In producing this new printing, the *Phenomenology of Perception* was "computerized" and thus it became easy to change the font and the line spacing to make it much more readable. But the result of these changes is that the book went from 466 pages to 544 pages. This clearly means that references to the old text no longer match the new text. Given that there are over 40 years of scholarly works that have references to the English translation; one may wonder how Routledge could have created such a problem.

However, since there are major reasons for giving the reader a sense of where on a page an argument begins, I felt it was necessary to still have references to page and line. It was tempting to make all my references to the French edition of the text. This is a common practice. But this solution seems inadequate. Most first time readers of the *Phenomenology of Perception* are dealing with either the old or new English editions and not using the French nor do they have access to the French edition. While scholars who work on Merleau-Ponty must deal with the French version, the first time reader almost never does. Thus in order to meet what I took to be a need, I have given references to both English printings. Such references look like the following: (108:28/124:24). The first two numbers separated by a colon are the page and the line number in the English translation of the work printed in 1962. The two numbers after the slash separated by a colon are the page and line number in the English translation of the work printed in 2002. Where there are references simply to a page, I have

followed the same pattern: (108/124). The first number is the page number of the 1962 printing and the second number following the slash is the 2002 printing.

PREFACE

The fact that the "Preface" begins by asking the question "What is Phenomenology?" has led many to conclude that this preface is some kind of general introduction to the Phenomenology Movement. Even its general structure, as Merleau-Ponty develops it, has encouraged this view. It is divided into three parts. The first maintains that an ambiguity surrounds the whole question of the nature of phenomenology and this ambiguity can be seen in the paradoxical claims that have been made. The second tries to clarify this ambiguity by presenting four basic themes of phenomenology in response to these paradoxical claims. And the third presents the implications that these results have for phenomenology; but, more importantly, they announce a new conception of philosophy that the rest of the book will explain and attempt to 'justify.'

But if one looks more carefully, one discovers that the "Preface" is not a simple introduction that explains Phenomenology for those who do not know. In fact, it clearly presupposes that you do know what Phenomenology is. In this preface, Merleau-Ponty is primarily concerned with explaining where he and this work stand in relation to the whole Phenomenological Movement. In doing so, he also goes on to defend his type of 'existential phenomenology' by establishing its links with Husserl.

But the Preface is clearly more than just this. It also serves the role of a brief introduction to the major issues and problems that we will discover in this book. In discussing description, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with raising the issue of the status of scientific and philosophical explanation. Which is primary: the explanations of perception or perception itself? The phenomenological reduction raises the issue of the nature of the self. Is consciousness ultimately the 'transcendental ego' as is assumed in science and much of philosophy or is it something else? The eidetic reduction raises the problem of the nature of truth. Is truth the apodictic certainty that much of modern thought is seeking and which many others have despaired of finding? The description of intentionality claims that underlying 'intentionality of act' is a more

basic 'operative intentionality' that reveals the intimate union of subject and object. How are we to conceive of this 'being-in-the-world'?

I. WHAT IS PHENOMENOLOGY? (vii:1/vii:1)

- A. No single answer has been given to this question because of the paradoxical claims that have been made about phenomenology.
 - 1. It studies essences by abstracting from existence, yet it also claims that it puts essences back into existence so that they can really be understood.
 - 2. It transcends the naiveté of the natural attitude, yet it is supposed to remain ultimately naive.
 - 3. It is called a rigorous science, yet it deals with such non-scientific ambiguities such as the world, time, and space as they are lived while preserving their essential ambiguity.
 - 4. It is referred to as being constitutive of its subject matter, yet it is opened to the very intelligibility that the world offers.
- B. The paradoxical character is due to more than just the differences between Husserl and Heidegger. (viii:3/viii:14)
 - 1. Phenomenology is immature in that it is more of a style of thinking than a philosophical method.
 - 2. The study of phenomenology poses special problems and causes its own sorts of confusions because it is accessible only through the phenomenological method itself.

II. WHAT ARE THE BASIC THEMES OF PHENOMENOLOGY? In what follows, Merleau-Ponty gives a very Heideggerian interpretation of Husserl. Merleau-Ponty is much more concerned with presenting the truth he finds in Husserl rather than what Husserl may have actually held. We will see many examples of this kind of interpretation of philosophers by Merleau-Ponty as we proceed through the book. (viii:19/viii:32)

- A. **Description** is a procedure by which Husserl attempted to overcome the reconstitution of the world by the objectifying of scientific explanation and by the subjectifying of analytical reductions of idealism, and thus grasp the world of things in themselves. (viii:24/ix:3)
 - 1. Phenomenology is an attempt to go beyond the hypothetical and, sometimes, unreflective attitude of science to an awareness of our involvement in the world that gives rise to knowledge. (viii:27/ix:6)
 - 2. Phenomenology, in the discovery of the subject as a condition of the world, also attempts to avoid idealism. Rather than making assumptions about the independence of the subject like Descartes or Kant, it finds man in the world and in a world that is always already there and not a mere product of consciousness. (ix:22/x:6)

3. Both scientific explanation and the analytic reflection of the philosophers offer accounts or reconstructions of the world. The goal of Phenomenology is to transcend these accounts and achieve the real. (x:24/xi:17)
- B. **Phenomenological Reduction** is the particular attitude the phenomenologist takes toward the world. It is a wonder that results from a disengagement from the certainties of common sense and the natural attitude towards things. (xi:11/xii:8)
 1. Even Husserl can be interpreted as taking the Phenomenological Reduction in an idealistic sense. For such an idealism, philosophy offers a systematic and coherent view of the world observed by a transcendent ego. From such a perspective the world is conceived as the product of our “meaning giving” and consciousness as nothing but the ultimate source of that meaning. For such a perspective there, of course, can be no problem with consciousness or with the consciousness of others. (xi:15/xii:12)
 2. But a more careful examination of Husserl’s texts reveals that the true phenomenological reduction reveals a fundamental problem with consciousness and the world. It finds consciousness essentially involved in a world. It reveals a subject in a world that is essentially ambiguous and never susceptible to a complete systemization. (xii:15/xiii:19)
 3. As a result, the whole project of the phenomenological reduction is transformed and phenomenology has become a perpetual beginning that takes nothing for granted. (xiii:22/xiv:31)
- C. **Eidetic Reduction** is an attempt to bring the world to light prior to the reflective acts that constitute sensation or thought. It is an attempt at reflecting without objectifying. (xiv:31/xvi:9)
 1. Often the eidetic reduction has been interpreted as if Husserl were concerned only with “meaning” in the same way that the Vienna Circle held. The eidetic reduction has even been interpreted as being concerned with separating essences from existence in some kind of idealistic fashion. (xiv:31/xvi:9)
 2. But a closer examination of Husserl’s writings discovers that he goes beyond Logical Positivism by means of the eidetic reduction. Essences rather than being the object of our study are nothing but means by which we transcend to the real. (xv:10/ xvi:32)
 3. Thus the task of the eidetic reduction is to overcome the objectifications of the natural world and restore our experience of the lived world as a basis of truth. (xv:37/xvii:11)
- D. **Intentionality** refers to the dual fact that consciousness is opened toward a world that it neither embraces nor possesses but toward which it is perpetually directed and that the world is the pre-objective individual whose unity decrees what knowledge shall take as its goal. (xvii:11/ xix:9)
 1. Usually intentionality has been interpreted, following Kant, to mean, “All consciousness is consciousness of something.” Yet this is very mis-

leading for it says nothing new or uniquely phenomenological. What phenomenology is concerned with is something much more fundamental—something which is the very condition for the Kantian intentionality. (xvii:14/xix:12)

2. To grasp the significant sense of intentionality, one must distinguish between 'intentionality of act' such as is present in judgments and will acts; and 'operative intentionality' which is the basis of the above and identical with consciousness as a lived projection into a ready-made or already-there world. (xvii:35/xix:34)
3. It is with this fundamental sense of intentionality that phenomenology becomes concerned with origins. This sense of intentional is identical with the existential situation which serves as a context from which all explicit meanings are born and can be understood. (xviii:9/xxi:14)

III. WHAT RESULTS DOES ALL THIS HAVE FOR PHENOMENOLOGY? (xix:35/xxii:11)

- A. Phenomenology/Philosophy must be based on a notion of rationality, which can unite the extremes of subjectivism and objectivism. (xix:35/xxii:11)
- B. It must be capable of a form of radical reflection that overcomes the problems of objectification and, like art, bring truth into being. (xx:19/xxii:32)
- C. Phenomenology, as a disclosure of the world, rests on itself, or rather provides its own foundations. (xx:42/xxiii:23)

INTRODUCTION: TRADITIONAL PREJUDICES & THE RETURN TO PHENOMENA

The *Phenomenology of Perception* makes a rather radical claim: the primacy of perception. By the primacy of perception, Merleau-Ponty means that the experience of lived perception is our presence at the moment when things, truths, values come to exist for us. And as such, lived perception teaches us, outside of all dogmatism, the true conditions of objectivity itself and thus has a status higher than all the products of reflective thought. If we are to understand perception, it is to lived perception we must go and not to our "understandings" of perception. The first Chapter of the Introduction begins this whole process.

In looking over the first chapter, it appears as if there is something wrong with it because it is so incomplete. It looks like a part of a chapter rather than a whole chapter. I think that this is what we have here. I have had the "impression" that Merleau-Ponty submitted a rather dif-

ferent looking book than the one we have before us. While I have no evidence to support this claim, I think he submitted a book with an introduction followed by only three chapters. I have thought that, in reaction to the objections of possibly an editor, Merleau-Ponty divided these larger sections into the smaller chapters and that he sometimes did this rather arbitrarily. The "Introduction" is a good example of this. Clearly each of the four chapters cannot stand on their own. It is only when they are brought together that they begin to make sense.

If we take a birds-eye view of the four chapters of the "Introduction" we can see how they fit together. There is a gradual development through the dialectical presentation of a series of theories. **Chapter I** deals with the theories of "simple impressions" and "sense qualities" that are usually held to be a kind of "common sense" understandings of perception that are offered by psychology or at least popularized psychology. In addition, Chapter I turns its attention to the theory of "physical stimuli" as usually posited by the science of physiology. All of these accounts of perception have various difficulties.

In **Chapter II**, Merleau-Ponty moves to the theories of sensation now modified and enhanced by association and memory. Here we are moving into the area of Philosophy, now as characterized by Empiricism and especially, David Hume. In **Chapter III**, we transcend the accounts of Empiricism and look at the attempts to explain perception by the addition of Attention and Judgment. Of course, these are the theories of Intellectualism or Rationalism.

All the claims we find in the first three chapters are found wanting. When we turn to **Chapter IV**, it is as if we have turned to the conclusion of what we have seen in the first three chapters. What we saw in the first three chapters were a series of theories that seem to distort perception rather than make sense out of it. Now in Chapter IV we turn our attention to the attitude from which these theories arise. Or maybe a better way of putting it: we are now going to consider the perspective that gives rise to these theories in science, psychology, and philosophy. And it is from the understanding of the limitations of this perspective that Merleau-Ponty hopes to give us the direction on how we ought to proceed in this book.

At the same time, the "Introduction" plays a role within the context of a phenomenological study. The first step in a phenomenological study is the putting in abeyance the Natural Attitude. Husserl calls for a "bracketing" and a setting aside the whole question of existence,

the epoché. As we have seen in the Preface, Merleau-Ponty has a very unique interpretation of the whole process. For him, we have certain biases, and we tend to be unaware of them. This is precisely the concern of the "Introduction." The "Introduction" performs the function of an epoché; that is, it attempts to attack our prejudices not by proving that they are false; but rather by raising doubts about them. If the doubts can be raised, then, at least we become aware that we do have assumptions, and not certainties. Merleau-Ponty hopes to raise sufficient doubts to convince us that we should suspend our assumptions—not necessarily deny them. It is to make us aware that maybe we have assumptions that are distortive of what we are going to study—clearly this is the first step in a philosophical understanding of anything.

One additional point needs to be stressed not only about the "Introduction" but also about the argument of the whole book. Merleau-Ponty argues dialectically. Much like Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he begins with what he takes to be the most obvious and most common sense position—that which explains perception in terms of sensations. This is the position that he thinks we are most comfortable. He handles this position in much the same way that he handles all the positions presented throughout the *Phenomenology of Perception*. He begins by offering a rather positive presentation of the position. Then he develops a critique by attempting to show that this position cannot account for some aspect of lived experience. He concludes this dialectical treatment of these theories by offering an account of why they are distortive of reality. For him such theories confuse the object of perception with the object in the world, or they commit the Experience Error, or they assume the Objective attitude, or some other formulation of the same error.

What is interesting is that Merleau-Ponty attempts to link each position with the position that follows it. The second position is considered because it claims to overcome the weakness of the first, just as the third position overcomes the weakness of the first two. The result is that there is a kind of unity between all the positions that Merleau-Ponty presents and there is a movement from the naïve to the much more complex and realistic positions.

But, of course, it should be emphasized that this is all an introduction. Sometimes authors find the "Introduction" lacking because Merleau-Ponty does not go far enough. He doesn't ultimately refute his

opponents nor does he offer his own position. But it seems that we must be aware that this is just an introduction that is setting the tasks that are to be done in the rest of the book.

CHAPTER I • 'SENSATION' AS A UNIT OF EXPERIENCE

Sensation is the most obvious starting place for an investigation of perception. Common sense seems to suggest that perception is reducible to the 'elements' that make it up. Merleau-Ponty argues, first, that 'sensation' in the theories considered are not descriptive of experience. Secondly, he argues that any justification for using 'sensation' to explain perception is questionable. And finally, he tries to account for the 'obviousness' of this approach and thus attempts to put into doubt the assumptions involved in such an obvious approach to perception.

I. TWO COMMON-SENSE THEORIES OF SENSATION that have been adopted by psychologists claim that sensations are units of experience. (3:1/3:1)

A. Pure Sensation - The Impression. (3:7/3:6)

1. **The Position:** That which ultimately can be said to be perception is sensation—those elements by which I am affected. These sensations are purely given, undifferentiated in their 'impact', instantaneous, and an atom of experience. They possess no meaning in themselves. (3:7/3:6)

2. **Critique of the Position:**

a) Against the claim that the single impression is descriptive of experience, it is pointed out that nothing in our experience corresponds to it. (3:21/3:29)

b) Against any justification for the use of 'simple impression' in a theoretical explanation: (3:25/4:3)

(1) While it is possible in theory to look at even the data that Gestalt theory presents as not primary and analyze it further into simples, does such an analysis of ours get any closer to reality just because we have analyzed or broken the data down? (4:8/4:14)

(2) The reason for this desire to analyze is that instead of attending to the experience of perception we overlook it in favor of the object perceived. (4:23/4:30)

B. Sense-data: Qualities with meaning. (4:30/5:1)

1. **The Position:** Perception ultimately consists in certain perceived qualities that have clear and definite relationships to one another. These relations allow us to read off sufficient information to interpret what these qualities are. If qualities did not have a determinate meaning, we would be back to the problems of the simple impression. The essential point

that is being made is that while they are 'meaningful' in some sense, they are just pure qualities that are passively received. (4:30/5:1)

2. **Critique of the Position:** (4:35/5:7)

a) Against the claim that 'sense quality' is a concept that is descriptive of experience, it is pointed out that qualities are not elements of consciousness but properties of objects and as such are never given purely as qualities in experience. (4:35/5:7)

b) Against the claim that sense qualities may be useful in explaining perception even though they are not experienced: (5:3/5:17)

(1) As with the concept of simple impression, the concept of sense qualities rests upon a confusion of our experience for what is experienced. "The experience error" consists in believing that what we know to be in things as they are in-themselves are actually in our experience of them. This tends to produce two mistakes about perception. (5:8/5:22)

(a) One is to make qualities into an element of consciousness, when in fact it is an object for consciousness. (5:24/6:2)

(b) The other is to think that the meanings that the qualities possess are fully determinate and developed. (5:27/6:6)

(2) An analysis of the concept 'field of vision' and the Müller-Lyer's optical illusion are presented to reveal lived experience. In lived experience, perception presents us with an indeterminacy and an equivocal meaning, which no mere lack of attention can account. Auxiliary hypotheses, which attempt to account for this indeterminacy, merely reveal our prejudice in favor of the objective world and, further, they blind us to lived experience. (5:30/6:8)

- C. In the footnote (#1/#4) Merleau-Ponty sets forth an important problem involved in the kind of approach that he is taking. We are dealing with the realm of accounts of perception and the realm of what is actually experienced. In the conflict between the two realms there can be no ultimate refutations. It is important that we do not expect too much from our efforts in critiquing these positions. (7:2/7:29)

II. **THE STATUS OF THE EXPLANATORY CONCEPT OF SENSATION IN PHYSIOLOGY.** (7:4/8:2)

- A. **The Position:** The 'scientific' or physiological position identifies the ultimate datum of perception with those physical stimuli by which we sense. Basically it conceives of perception as anatomical paths, which lead from a receiver through a definite transmitter to a recording station. Hence there is a correspondence and constant connection between the stimulus and the elementary perception—the constancy hypothesis. (7:4/8:2)

B. **Critique of the Position:** (7:21/8:18)

1. The constancy hypothesis conflicts with the data of consciousness presented by the very psychologists who accept and recognize it as a theory.

Neither sense data nor sensory apparatus seem to work the way the theory suggests. (7:21/8:18)

2. Merleau-Ponty develops a series of examples that support his position. (7:23/8:20)
- C. Merleau-Ponty develops his own description and account of such experiences that give such problems to this position. (8:28/9:23)
 1. We receive yet another warning about how far criticism of this position can be taken. While a position such as the "constancy hypothesis" cannot prevail against the testimony of experience, there is no "crucial experiment" that is going to decide the issue once and for all. (Note footnote #5/#13, where Merleau-Ponty adds a bit to this point.) (8:28/9:23)
 2. At rudimentary stages of sensibility, there is a working together on the part of partial stimuli and a collaboration of the sensory with the motor system that rules out any definition of the nervous process as the simple transmission of a given message. (9:9/10:12)
 3. Psychology and physiology can no longer be seen as two parallel sciences, but two accounts of behavior, the first concrete, and the second abstract. This requires a transformation of attitude in both psychologists and physiologists. (10:6/11:11)
 4. Physiology, being a science, is dominated by an objectivistic attitude toward perception and is a second order reflection. As a result it tries to explain perception in terms of **things** where experience reveals meaningful patterns. It attempts to build up all knowledge out of describable elements thus both transforming and distorting it. To adequately understand perception we must overcome the objectivistic attitude and turn to a pre-objective realm of experience such as is exemplified in 'primitive thought'. (10:26/12:4)

CHAPTER 2 • 'ASSOCIATION' AND THE 'PROJECTION OF MEMORIES'

While the last chapter began with the everyday attitude toward perception and proceeded to the attitude of science as contained in psychology and physiology, the next two chapters are concerned with the traditional attitudes of philosophy: Empiricism (Chapter II) and Intellectualism (Chapter III). The present chapter is best seen as a continuation of the dialectical argument of the last. It is concerned with the theory of sensation but now as modified by association and then by memory. These modifications attempt to account for the meaning that is found within lived experience. Merleau-Ponty argues that association and memory rather than accounting for 'meaning' actually presuppose it. Once again, Merleau-Ponty maintains that these positions,

as with those of the previous chapter, cannot ultimately be refuted. Here, as in the last chapter, Merleau-Ponty tries to uncover the basic assumptions behind these positions.

I. INTRODUCTION: (13:1/15:1). If anything is evident from the discussion of the last chapter it is that perception from its first moment contains meaning. Yet with the introduction of sensation, we have no real way of accounting for it. Even for those who hold to a sensation theory, there still appears something within perception, which exercises a cognitive function. If we admit sensation in the classical sense, we still have the task of accounting for this element, at least in its most simplified form. For example, experience shows that we not only distinguish but experience shape. What is the status of this particular cognitive element within the Empiricist's position? It seems that classical Empiricism has two main directions it could take: (13:1/15:1)

A. Shape is nothing but the sum total of the positions that make it up. There is no sensation that corresponds to shape but only to the particular positions: (14:5/16:11)

1. This seems to deny the reality of shape. (14:5/16:11)

2. It seems difficult to see how we can ever have experience of shape if this is the case. (14:7/16:13)

B. Empiricism, at times, seems to argue as if in addition to the individual positions that correspond to sensations there is also given the 'relation' between these positions. If this is the case, then Empiricism once again has two alternatives: (14:15/16:19)

1. This 'relation' is itself nothing but something that exists along with the positions—that is; it is nothing but a sensation. Thus it is difficult to see how this position differs in any significant way from the first alternative and certainly it has all the same difficulties. (14:19/16:24)

2. The 'relation' is not simply reducible to sensation but actually relates sensations. In this case, Empiricism would be admitting more to experience than sensation and would thus be abandoning Empiricism. (14:24/16:29)

II. THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATION IN PERCEPTION (14:34/17:6)

A. **Position: (14:34/17:6).** In order to maintain still that sensation is the basis of perception; one must also take into consideration the process of association. Although sensations themselves are not intelligible or meaningful, through association we make them so and are able to experience the world as we do. Yet Merleau-Ponty stresses that this is still Empiricism with its emphasis on the 'this-ness' of the senses. Sensation is the real. Thus Empiricism's major problem is to show how everyday experience is possible. (14:34/17:6)

B. Critique of the Position: (15:29/18:6)

1. The empiricistic account ignores the fact that association **presupposes** the very intelligibility of the object for which association is supposed to be the account. (15:29/18:6)
2. Even some Gestalt psychologists have fallen into the trap of explaining the "gestalt" in terms of sensations and things like Wertheimer's laws of proximity, resemblance, and "good form." But such attempts are open to the same kind of criticism as Empiricism. (16:32/19:15)
3. By describing and analyzing an experience of perceptual recognition, Merleau-Ponty tries to show that an impression can never, by itself, be associated with another impression. The whole situation is much more complex than Empiricism would have us believe. Merleau-Ponty develops a series of descriptions to support and unpack this point. (17:12/20:3)
 - a) He describes the experience of seeing trees with a certain "oddness" about them and how this experience is transformed into seeing a ship with its masts hidden in the trees. Merleau-Ponty is concerned here with showing how this experience comes about. (17:12/20:3)
 - b) He contrasts and compares experiments in which one is asked to find the "softened rhyme" and then asked to change the vowel in syllables given. What he tries to show is that there is a difference when for Empiricism there really should not be. Association is not some kind of autonomous force, but rather studies have shown that association occurs only within a context and is dependent upon the context in ways that are not compatible with Empiricism. (17:38/20:29)
 - c) Making use of Gottschardt's experiments, Merleau-Ponty presents two figures (fig. 1 and 2 on page 19/22) in an attempt to show that resemblance by itself is not enough to account for certain experiences. (18:25/21:22)

III. THE ROLE OF MEMORY IN PERCEPTION (19:6/22:11)

- A. **Position:** (19:8/22:14) Perception is ultimately a kind of remembering. Certain stimuli are received that awaken memory and these memories are the cause of the intelligibility of perception. (19:8/22:14)
- B. **Critique of the Position:** (19:20/22:23)
 1. Memory **presupposes** the very intelligibility in perception for which it was supposed to be an account. (19:20/22:23)
 2. While an analysis of illusion clearly shows why memory has been used to account for the intelligibility of perception, further analysis reveals that perception is much more dynamic than this position suggests. (20:13/23:20)
 - a) The implications of the illusion of the proofreader are developed. (20:13/23:20)

b) In much the same way, he develops the sense in which "picture puzzles" are solved (find the cat in the picture of a tree). The point here is to show how memory presupposes rather than explains such a phenomenon. (20:25/23:31)

c) For Merleau-Ponty, the "projection of memories" just cannot account for what happens in these examples. Memory itself presupposes and requires an original text in order to do its job and the "original text" is perception itself. (21:5/24:16)

3. After briefly characterizing the Empiricist's postulated way of explaining experience, Merleau-Ponty goes on to argue that Empiricism's particular emphasis on memory is a result of attempting to deduce the given from what happens in experience. Perceptions are built up (transformed into a process) for Empiricism rather than being experienced. (21:26/25:4)
4. As a result, Empiricism has missed the full impact of the function of consciousness in perception. The real problem is much deeper and requires us to understand how it is that consciousness can have a field open to it that it can modify and also reopen: in short, how perception allows for the possibility of remembering. (22:5/25:27)

IV. CONCLUSION: (22:28/26:13)

- A. Merleau-Ponty's arguments have taken this form: Empiricism has been too simplified, mechanical, and analytical in its approach to perception. Rather than presenting perception as it is, Empiricism has analyzed and broken down experience and thus distorted it as seen in such examples as their use of association and memory. One can see that this is the case by looking at the richness of lived experience. (22:28/26:13)
- B. The problem arises because the empiricist agrees with Merleau-Ponty's description of the lived world but he then goes on to argue that these descriptions are not of what is ultimately real about perception—they are, in fact, derivative. While lived experience may have its charm, it is essentially ambiguous, confused, and most of all, naive. Yes, Empiricism analyzes and deduces, but only in order to overcome the confusions of lived experience and to get to the reality of perception. (22:36/26:17)
- C. At this level, Merleau-Ponty maintains that Empiricism cannot be refuted. There is no crucial experiment that will solve the problem. No matter what description is offered, the empiricist can always claim that he does not understand and that there is a need for further analysis. (23:1/26:29)
- D. Yet it must be pointed out that the Empiricist is dealing with the same world that Merleau-Ponty is. While his perspective on that world is radically different, the world still provides a ground upon which a new perspective can be developed. What is needed is to show the empiricist that there is more to the world than his perspective allows. (23:26/27:15)

1. Empiricism is lacking in that it really has no room for the cultural world, a cultural world in which the empiricist as a man must live. It is in making the empiricist aware of himself as a subject (the theme of the first part of the book) that we may possibly enlarge his perspective. (23:32/27:22)
2. Empiricism is lacking in that it has an inadequate comprehension of the natural world. The second major part of this book will develop these aspects of the natural world that Empiricism lacks. (24:27/28:20)
3. But once again, Merleau-Ponty reminds us that Empiricism can always build up out of psychic atoms accounts of this phenomenon. It is not enough to show that their present accounts cannot handle these, but rather to make us aware that there seems to be something wrong with the whole approach. (25:15/29:17)

CHAPTER 3 • 'ATTENTION' AND 'JUDGMENT'

This chapter continues the pattern of the last. As we saw in the last chapter, we started with the realization that one could not save the account of lived perception with just simple impressions or even with just sensible qualities. Thus we saw attempts to improve the account by means of association and memory. In this chapter, we begin with the realization that these will not work by themselves. In order to save the account of lived perception; we are now going to look at positions that introduce attention and judgment.

The major concern of this chapter is intellectualistic theories of perception. While arguing that Intellectualism is on fundamentally the same level as Empiricism, Merleau-Ponty maintains that it does make some advancement over Empiricism. Its weakness, as with Empiricism, lies in the reflective and objectifying attitude with which it approaches the problem of perception.

As we proceed through this book, we will discover that Merleau-Ponty keeps coming back to this theme over and over again. The problem of the objectifying attitude takes on a central importance but it is often given different labels: Natural Attitude, Third Person Perspective, Objective Attitude, Reifying Perspective, Scientific Reflective Attitude, Cartesian Perspective, etc.

I. PERCEPTION AS MODIFIED BY ATTENTION: This section is actually a transition from the discussion of Empiricism to that of Intellectualism. (26:1/30:1)

- A. While antithetical, the positions of Empiricism and Intellectualism can be seen through their analysis of 'attention' to be on the same level. (26:3/30:1)

1. **Empiricism:** (26:11/30:10)

a) **Position:** Attention is like a searchlight that shows pre-existing objects as if they were in darkness. Attention is taken by Empiricism to be a general and unconditioned power that can be applied indifferently to any content of consciousness. (26:11/30:10)

b) **Critique of the Position:** With the total freedom attention possesses, why does it work now rather than at some other time? How come some perceptions are meaningful and others are not? (26:28/31:7)

2. **Intellectualism:** (27:6/31:13)

a) **Position:** Attention brings forth clarity when it operates because, unlike Empiricism, the process is not haphazard. The world is essentially intelligible. Consciousness employs its act of attention only when this is not apparent at first glance. (27:8/31:15)

b) **Critique of the Position:** With such an account of perception we find that attention becomes increasingly abstract and turns into an ineffective power because it really has no work to perform. (27:41/32:15)

3. **Conclusion:** Empiricism cannot see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not be looking for it; and Intellectualism fails to see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for or, equally, we should not be searching. What Merleau-Ponty is presenting, in a very interesting fashion, is a problem which Plato develops in the *Meno*:

Meno: But how will you look for something when you don't in the least know what it is? How on earth are you going to set up something you don't know as the object of your search? To put it another way, even if you come right up against it, how will you know that what you have found is the thing you didn't know?

Socrates: I know what you mean. Do you realize that what you are bringing up is the trick argument that a man cannot try to discover either what he knows or what he does not know? He would not seek what he knows, for since he knows it there is not need of the inquiry, or what he does not know, for in that case he does not even know what he is to look for.

Meno: Well, do you think it is a good argument?

Socrates: No.

(*Meno*, 80d3-e5)

What Plato and Merleau-Ponty are trying to show is that there is something wrong with the problem itself and the way of looking at knowledge that arises from it. For Merleau-Ponty, the very existence of the problem in the perspectives of Empiricism and Intellectualism is a sign that there is a flaw in their common assumptions. What is central to each position is the assumption that the subject is inactive in relation to an objectified world. Perceptual consciousness is assumed to be a form of scientific

consciousness that leaves no room for the indeterminate. (It may be interesting to note that M. C. Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, makes the problem presented by Plato in the *Meno* as one that is key for understanding the entire *Phenomenology of Perception*. See the introduction of Dillon's work.) (28:17/32:31)

- B. The results of Empiricism and Intellectualism are contrasted with those of Gestalt Psychology. (28:42/33:22). The purposes of introducing data from Gestalt psychology are, first, to continue the critique of both Empiricism and Intellectualism and, second, to attempt to make Gestalt psychologists, themselves, aware of what is implied in their own data. Thus he points out that attention creates a field. To pay attention is to bring a new articulation of some data by taking them within a new context. And thus attention is a kind of movement of consciousness from the indeterminate to the determinate through the creation of a new context that in turn transforms what is perceived. The essential point Merleau-Ponty is making is that a full understanding of attention, in light of the data, presupposes a new conception of consciousness. (28:42/33:22)
 1. A full understanding of attention presupposes a new conception of consciousness. Merleau-Ponty develops this point through an analysis of Head's presentation of certain disorders resulting in problems of locating part of one's own body. (28:42/33:22)
 2. Through an analysis of a child's first coming to the awareness of color, we see the role of attention as creative of fields. (29:23/34:13)
 3. To pay attention is to bring about a new articulation of data by taking them within a field or context. (30:20/35:11)
 4. Synthesis of Transition: Attention is the movement of perception from indeterminate to the determinate by the creation of contexts that transform what is perceived. This passage from indeterminate to determinate is thought itself. (It is worth noting that the phase "synthesis of transition" is introduced here, and it is an important concept which will be developed as the book proceeds.) (30:31/35:22)

II. PERCEPTION AS MODIFIED BY LOGICAL JUDGMENT: (32:1/37:4)

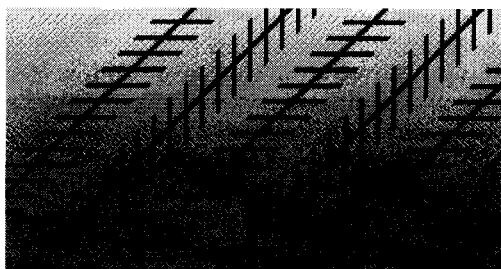
- A. **Position:** Judgment is what sensation lacks to make perception possible. It offsets the dispersal of sensation and reduces perception to the logical activity of drawing a conclusion based on certain sensible data. Perception is then an "interpretation" of the signs of our senses. (32:1/37:4)
- B. **Critique of the Position:** (33:15/39:9)
 1. This position constructs perception instead of revealing it. (34:1/39:10)
 2. It makes nonsense out of the ordinary experience of the distinction between experience and judgment. Merleau-Ponty goes on to develop a series of descriptions to support his position. (34:5/39:15)

a) The experience of two cardboard boxes seems to indicate that more than just judgment is involved in deciding that one is heavier than the other. (34:20/39:28)

b) Merleau-Ponty uses an outline drawing of a cube on a piece of paper to show the problems involved in the fact that the cube has different ways of being looked at and these ways are not merely the product of judgment. Again, the point is that judgment is not perception. (34:28/40:4)

c) How will it then be possible to account for hallucinations or the situation in which someone thinks that they see something when we know that they do not see? For the intellectualist this is a major problem that Merleau-Ponty develops at some length. (34:39/40:16)

d) The last description is of Zollner's Optical Illusion and again Mer-



Zollner's Illusion:
The diagonal lines
are parallel but
appear not to be.

leau-Ponty attempts to show that judgment just cannot do the job here that Intellectualism asks of it. (35:1540:32)

3. What intellectualism seems not to realize is that what is given in perception is what makes possible the very task of judgment. Judgment presupposes perception. And what is given is a kind of meaning that makes possible the explicit kinds of meaning with which judgment deals. Perception already contains meaning prior to our judgments and this meaning cannot be accounted for by means of judgments. (36:20.43:11)

III. PERCEPTION AS MODIFIED BY DIALECTICAL JUDGMENT: (36:39/42:28)

- A. **Position:** Sensations are not experienced nor are they even parts of experience. They are the product of reflection and analysis. They are the 'last effect' of knowledge and thus it is an illusion or confusion that causes us to put them at the beginning of knowledge. Perception is not situated in the abstract world of sensation and material things but rather is a power of consciousness that is independent of sensation and material things. And for this way of understanding perception everything that exists is either a thing or consciousness. There is no halfway house or in-between thing and consciousness. (36:42/42:30)
- B. **Critique of the Position:** (38:9/44:9)

1. This position cannot explain its own ignorance or its own limitation in its perception. For Merleau-Ponty this is not only a serious problem with an **account** of perception, but it is an even more serious defect in this whole approach to philosophy. (38:10/44:10)
2. This intellectualistic position develops what makes perception **possible** but yet it never really uncovers the operation that is perception in **reality**. The account of Intellectualism either falls short or overshoots reality. It either says too little or too much. (38:34/45:1)
3. The analysis of this position bears out again the affinity between Intellectualism and Empiricism. (39:17/45:23)
 - a) For both positions, we have the same conception of the world as being composed of things that are composed of parts, which are defined as mutually outside of one another. (39:17/45:23)
 - b) Intellectualism and Empiricism accept basically the same conception of truth. It is just that one thinks that it can achieve truth and the other thinks that truth is impossible. (39:23/46:1)
 - c) Consciousness is presented in both philosophies as being on the same level as the 'objective.' (41:8/47:23)

IV. PERCEPTION AS SEEN THROUGH CARTESIAN EYES - THE CONSTANCY HYPOTHESIS: (41:34/48:14)

A. **Position:** Perception is a judgment that is unaware of the reasons underlying its own formation. Judgment is the constitution of a meaning for the thing perceived which is not prior to the perception itself and which seems to emanate from it. Consciousness does not constitute what is perceived but rather reconstitutes it. This judgment does not lift itself out of any situation, nor does it do away with the fact of perception, but rather bridges the gap between unreflective experience and reflective thought. (41:43/48:21)

B. Critique of the Position: (43:1/49:24)

1. Description of the discovery of meaning is offered as a critique. It does not seem to be the case that perception operates in the way that either the Cartesian or the Kantian accounts suggest. (43:1/49:24)
2. If we turn to our experience of objects around us, we discover that there is certain givenness in our experience that is the basis for our judgments—a certain givenness that transcends the act of judgment and thus the accounts of intellectualism. (43:27/50:19)
3. **Common man's objection** to the psychological explanation: None of the signs, which this position requires, are present in perception. How can we pretend that the perception of distance is a conclusion reached from the apparent size of objects, the crystalline lens, from the varying convergence of the eyes, etc.? (45:4/53:4)
4. **Philosopher's objection** to the philosophical explanation: A study of spatial relations including the paradox of symmetrical objects in percep-

tion forces us to conclude that perception is not an act of understanding in the sense that this position maintains. But even more importantly, the assumption behind this position is that it places perceptual consciousness in the midst of a ready-made world. (46:19/54:11)

V. GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY'S VIEW OF PERCEPTION: (47:15/54:30)

- A. **Position:** Gestalt theory overcomes the problems of intellectualism in regards to apparent size, distance, spatial relations, etc. It goes on to conclude that the elements by which each of the above is perceived are not signs or reasons in our perceptions but rather causes of these perceptions. (47:15/54:30)
- B. **Critique of the Position:** (47:26/55:6)
 1. Gestalt psychology has never broken with naturalism and this betrays its own descriptions. This can be clearly seen in Gestalt psychology's treatment of the illusion that occurs when there is paralysis of the oculo-motor muscles. (47:26/55:6)
 2. Clearly any adequate understanding of these descriptions reveals that the oculo-motor muscles are neither objective causes nor premises or reasons. Merleau-Ponty concludes that the only reasonable interpretation is that they operate in perception like motives. (48:3/55:21)
 3. The basic problem with Gestalt Psychology is that it lacks a set of categories to express perceptual relationships. It needs a radical phenomenological reduction of categories used in psychology. (49:7/56:32)
 4. Once again, Merleau-Ponty ends this discussion by warning us about the limitations of what we have done. To a Cartesian, what we have described seems nothing more than an allusion to an unreflective state that has no philosophical value or importance. What we find ourselves up against is a radically different way of looking at things, a way that must be overcome with a new understanding of the Cogito. (50:24/58:16)

CHAPTER 4 • THE PHENOMENAL FIELD

We have just gone through a series of dialectical arguments in the first three chapters of the Introduction in which Merleau-Ponty has attacked Empiricism and Intellectualism. As you read the first three chapters of the Introduction, you should be aware of a certain "iffy" character to the arguments. While these two positions have their problems, in no sense could one say that Merleau-Ponty has refuted them. Not only have they not been refuted here, but also Merleau-Ponty claims that they cannot ultimately be refuted at all. In addition, one needs to remember that we are in the Introduction to this book and Merleau-Ponty has only setup the framework of his attack against these two positions. While he may not "ultimately" refute them, there

is much criticism yet to come. At the same time, one must be aware that these chapters are primarily aimed at you, the reader. What Merleau-Ponty has attempted to do in the previous chapters is a phenomenological reduction or "epoché" of our experience of perception. Through this reduction he hopes to set aside the naive certainty that was manifested at the different levels we have considered and to make perception a problem for us again. By this very same process, he also hopes to specify the object of his study. What follows is the final step in achieving these points within the Introduction. This chapter will attempt to develop the ways in which perception has been understood by developing the relation between the concept of 'phenomenal field' and scientific, psychological, and philosophical reflective attitude. The concern here moves from specific claims or theories about perception to the reflective attitudes that give rise to these claims.

I INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS. (52:1/60:1)

- A. In this introductory summary of the previous chapters, Merleau-Ponty explains that the attitude of all the claims that we have seen has reduced perception to a collection of things where experience shows us that it is composed of "meanings." Our experience reveals a "richness" that this attitude cannot comprehend. (52:1/60:1)
- B. Merleau-Ponty concludes by claiming that his study has gotten to the point where 'sensation' and 'judgment' have lost their apparent clearness. And further, we now are at the point where the idea of the phenomenal field needs to be developed. (53:35/62:10)

II. SCIENTIFIC REFLECTIVE ATTITUDE: (54:7/62:24)

- A. How scientific activity appears within the context of this attitude. (54:11/62:28)
 1. The tacit assumption of science is that at every instant in experience can be coordinated with that of the previous instant. Or another way of putting it, all contradictions can be resolved. (54:11/62:28)
 2. Science is merely the sequel or amplification of the process that constitutes perceived things. (54:18/62:35)
 3. Scientific concepts are the means of fixing and objectifying phenomena. (54:22/63:4)
- B. How the scientific attitude has transformed the world that it studies. (54:34/63:15)
 1. Science operates as if it were not working on the basis of any presuppositions in reducing all things to causal relations. (54:34/63:15)

2. It is essentially a process, which reduces our dealings with the world to a third person attitude. (55:18/64:7)
3. Science also reduces all experience to a single level. Thus the living body becomes an exterior without an interior and consciousness becomes an interior without an exterior. Everything is reduced to either in-itself or for-itself; but both are understood as things all on the same level. (55:35/64:23)
- C. Today the philosophy behind this scientific way of looking at things is collapsing before our eyes. And as a result, the contemporary reaction to science has come up with certain basic understanding of science. (56:23/65:17)
 1. We are just starting to recognize that there are some basic difficulties in regards to the way science understands being, and especially, with the "meaning" it attributes to being. (56:29/65:32)
 2. We are also at a point to gain a fuller understanding of how the social and historical nature of the scientific perspective is formed and what are some of the implications that flow from this realization. (56:36/65:32)
- D. Conclusions that we can draw from the above analysis. (57:5/66:5)
 1. Philosophy must be understood as a return to the world of actual experience that is prior to the conceptualized world. (57:5/66:5)
 2. There is a need to have a new understanding of phenomenon and to abandon the idea of conceiving of it as an 'inner world,' 'states of consciousness,' or 'mental fact.' The "immediate" can no longer be conceived in terms of the impression but rather the meaning, the structure, the spontaneous arrangement of parts. (57:17/66:17)
 3. The Bergsonian idea of immediate experience, which has been presented as a major alternative to the scientific attitude, has to be changed. In trying to overcome the problems inherent in science, Bergson has gone too far. (58:17/67:21)

III. GESTALT PSYCHOLOGICAL REFLECTION: (59:4/68 :15)

- A. Basis of introspective psychology: The belief that consciousness is no more than a sector of being and should be explored as the physicist explores his realm. (59:4/68:15)
- B. The results of this attitude. (59:15/68:25)
 1. Because the psychologist is unaware that his concept of meaningfulness is dominated by 'being,' he thus turns psychology into a study of 'psychic facts.' He presupposes the objective world of science and this assumption operates as a framework that dominates all his thought. (59:15/68:25)
 2. Consciousness as an object of study in this framework presents the peculiarity of not being analyzable. (59:35/69:8)
- C. Conclusion: There must be a new realization of what is meant by "phenomenological field.' It must be seen as something that transcends the

views of transcendental philosophy and even the views of Husserl. (60:20/69:35)

1. We need a new way to understand the relationship between consciousness and the world. (60:20/69:35)
2. We must recognize the primacy of the "gestalt" and not attempt to reduce it. (60:29/70:9)

IV. PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION: (61:10/70:30)

A. What our discussion of Empiricism and Intellectualism clearly shows is that philosophy must approach phenomena in a new way. (61:10/70:30)

1. The very recognition of phenomenon as it has been described is a condemnation of Empiricism. (61:10/70:30)
2. The assumption of a transcendental attitude on the part of Intellectualism clearly closes one off from what has been shown about the nature of phenomena. To assume as Kant does that a philosopher's thinking is not conditioned by any situation is to lose sight of the very condition under which phenomena are possible. What are needed here are new conceptions of "transcendental" and a new understanding of the "transcendental field." (61:21/72:17)

B. Philosophy must be transformed and overcome the kinds of assumptions that have plagued philosophy in the past. (62:15/72:6)

1. Philosophical reflection is limited. It cannot achieve a complete elucidation of its object. (62:15/72:6)
2. The core of philosophy can no longer be considered as autonomous activity but must find itself in the perpetual beginning of reflection. It can no longer rest in a Kantian transcendental view in which everything is laid out before it or a Bergsonian intuition, which coincides with everything. (62:26/72:17)
3. Philosophy must begin and end by taking itself as a problem. (63:13/73:11)

V. CONCLUSION: (63:20/73:17)

A. Merleau-Ponty ends with a summary of what has been done thus far in order to explain why the Introduction followed the path that it did. (63:20/73:17)

B. Philosophy must be radically founded on experience. We must be aware that experience anticipates a philosophy and philosophy is merely an elucidated experience. (63:37/73:34)

C. We must transfer the psychologist's second-order reflection on experience to a phenomenon of the phenomenon. The phenomenal field must be transformed into a transcendental one. Of course, Merleau-Ponty is now referring to the new sense of "transcendental field" which he develops on page 63/73. (63:40/73:36)

PART I—THE BODY: EXPERIENCE AND OBJECTIVE THOUGHT, THE PROBLEM OF THE BODY

This short section (pp. 67-72/77-83) is an introduction to the first major division of the book. The topics for each of the major divisions correspond to Merleau-Ponty's dividing of the perceptual experience into three major elements: the subject who experiences, the object of the experience, and the relationship between the subject and object. As Merleau-Ponty sees it, the subject of perceptual experience is the **body**; the object is the **world**; and the relationship between them is **consciousness**. Of course, the major concern of the book is to develop just what "body," "world," and "consciousness" actually mean.

Merleau-Ponty states that the central problem or, more precisely, the dilemma that lies at the heart of the perceptual experience is that consciousness requires an object in order to be conscious, yet it loses itself in the object. How perception can have such a paradoxical character is explained through an examination of the subject of the perceptual experience. But this explanation of the "subject" actually begins by discussing the nature of "object." This discussion is here because Merleau-Ponty is introducing a basic theme that is central to both Chapter I and II, but he also uses the discussion of "object" as a means to make us more aware of the nature of the "subject."

In perception, objects are given to us possessing the "character" of being real. What does it mean to say that perception presents us with objects as real? It means that objects are presented as transcending our perception of them. To see something as real within perception, it must be presented **within** our perception as **transcending** our perception. This is what is at the heart of the paradoxical character that Merleau-Ponty is developing. How can perception have this paradoxical character? It is possible only if there are many levels or kinds of meaning. This is what Merleau-Ponty thinks that the Gestalt's figure/background relationship ultimately reveals. It is only by conceiving of perception very differently from the tradition that we can even come close to understanding this paradox. We must look at what is given in perception as containing not only determinate meanings but also indeterminate ones.

But all this creates a problem, or maybe what might be called a **natural fallacy**. Perception gives us objects but objects that so take up our attention that we very naturally tend to become unaware of the con-

text in which they are given. Or to put it another way, we are unaware of the figure/background relation in perceptual experience. Now what does all this have to do with the subject of perception? Most of all, what does it have to do with the body?

Merleau-Ponty assumes, and yes even says, that the **object/background** and the **object/perspective** relationships are the same. My perspective (like the background) is what makes possible the appearance of the object. To see an object, I must assume a certain perspective. I must stand where I can see it. While this limits what I can see, this limitation is not something negative. It is not something that we should try to overcome. It is rather the necessary condition of seeing. Further, Merleau-Ponty argues that my perspective is not a projection of the object (like the motion picture projector projects out an image). It is the means where by the object is given to me and given to me as transcending my perspective. Merleau-Ponty further argues that this rather paradoxical character of both being given and transcending (being-for-me and being-in-itself) is the very characteristic, which makes the object "real."

Now what does all this have to do with the body? Merleau-Ponty argues that the body is our perspective or being-in-the-world which is the condition of objects appearing as being real; that is, of objects appearing as transcending my perspective. The central question concerning the body is what is the nature of this opening-out-upon-the-world such that objects can appear as being real?

In the following chapters, Merleau-Ponty will attempt to do this by first studying the body as it is conceived today in both mechanistic physiology and in the claims of classical psychology. This first stage (consisting of chapters I and II) will attempt to show the inadequacies of current views of the body. The remaining chapters (III - VI) will analyze various aspects of bodily being—spatiality, unity, sexuality, and expression—as a means of developing a new and more adequate view of the body.

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** Perception has a paradoxical character in that to perceive is to perceive within a certain perspective and yet to perceive is also to go beyond the perspective to an object. Merleau-Ponty develops this point by contrasting his position with that of Leibniz. Leibniz claims that the "object" is that which is seen from no perspective. (67:1/77:1)

- II. **THE PARADOX IS DEVELOPED** by a descriptive analysis of certain aspects of perceptual experience to show how vision can be brought into being from somewhere without being trapped within its perspective. (67:21/78:4). Merleau-Ponty begins by developing the implications of the spatial perspective by describing the experience of focusing on an object and, thus, not focusing on lots of other things. From this description he explains the classic Gestalt distinction between figure/horizon and goes on to argue that it is the horizon that gives reality to the figure or object. Merleau-Ponty concludes that the object is what is seen from everywhere. (67:21/78:4)
 - A. The horizon is the guarantor of the identity of the object throughout the perceptual exploration. It is the correlative of my perspective and is present in perception as a power that enables us to possess the object. (68:17/78:4)
 - B. Now turning to the temporal aspects of experience, Merleau-Ponty claims that in the experience of the present, an immediate past is given without being posited as an object. The immediate past similarly holds its immediate predecessor present. Past time is wholly collected up and grasped in the present and makes the present a possible object of experience. (69:6/79:27)
- III. **PERCEPTION**, on the basis of the above analysis, seems to be an essentially incomplete and limited act of possessing the object. And yet, the same analysis reveals that perception is a drive toward overcoming this limitation and possessing the object. The reality of perception appears in the tension between these two states. (69:33/80:16)
- IV. **THE OBSESSION WITH THE OBJECT** in the perceptual experience results in a forgetfulness of the limited character of the experience and the content of the experience. (70:35/81:23)
 - A. The object of the experience tends to take on an ideal character that transcends the warrants of the experience. It is this very tendency, which results in the objective attitude that has so dominated Western thinking. Merleau-Ponty is claiming that this attitude arises "naturally" from the very nature of perception. (71:13/82:8)
 - B. This natural trend of perception becomes a barrier to our understanding of the experience. Merleau-Ponty proposes to study the accounts of the body given to us by science and psychology as a means of understanding perception and the paradoxical character that we have discovered. (71:36/82:31)

CHAPTER I • THE BODY AS OBJECT AND MECHANISTIC PHYSIOLOGY

Merleau-Ponty begins his quest for a new conception of the body by reacting to the views of Mechanistic Physiology. For Physiology, the body is nothing but an object. By an object it means something composed of parts with only external and mechanical relationships between them. When such explanations have not worked, the tendency is to move to psychological explanations. Thus the body and its behavior have traditionally been explained in terms of physical and psychic facts. This fundamental Cartesian framework is inadequate to explain such phenomena as Anosognosia and the Phantom Limb. With these and other phenomena Merleau-Ponty argues that a new conception of the body is required that transcends the dualism of mind and body.

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** Can the body be taken simply as an object, a being composed of *parts outside of parts* as is done in Mechanistic Physiology, when it is the means of having objects? (73:1/84:1)
 - A. If the body is just an object, it must work like a very complicated machine. Causal relations must be the key to understanding the body. (73:4/84:5)
 - B. A variety of injuries—lesions in the nervous tissue, non-cortical injuries and even central lesions—do not seem to bear out the causal explanation. In fact these phenomena demand that our conception of the body and its relation to the soul be radically rethought. (73:25/85:3)
 - C. Yet it may be objected that mechanistic explanation with proper modifications can handle and account for these injuries. Let's look closer at some of these phenomena and see if it really can. (75:37/87:21)
- II. **MERLEAU-PONTY OFFERS THE BASIC DESCRIPTION** of the Phantom Limb, Anosognosia, and the insect's reflex as a challenge to Mechanistic Physiology. The point of this challenge is to show that this form of Physiology cannot explain or, at least, must be modified in order to explain these phenomena. These points are made by showing certain oddities that develop in attempts to account for such experiences. (76:14/88:3)
 - A. The **Phantom Limb** experience presents a series of problems that seem to defy a purely mechanical explanation. In fact, it seems to demand a mode of explanation that is psychological in some way. Yet a psychological explanation by itself does not seem to work either. Clearly there is a need for both or rather something in-between them. (76:14/88:3)
 - B. **Anosognosia** offers an interesting contrast with the Phantom Limb. It seems to ignore just what the Phantom Limb seems to create. Again,

both mechanistic and psychological explanations are shown to have problems with accounting for such experiences. (76:32/88:19)

- C. Merleau-Ponty develops the description of **behavior of two insects**: one with a cut off leg and the other with a tied and disabled leg. Clearly these phenomena are not easily accounted for in mechanistic terms and they further suggest that a reflex is never just a blind process. One must rethink the Sartrean/Cartesian distinction between mind and matter. (77:8/89:2)

III. **IT SEEMS THAT THE ABOVE PHENOMENA** can only be understood on the assumption of a behavioral setting or pre-objective view of reality by which the body is related to its world. Or perhaps a better way of putting it, they can only be understood if we conceive of the body in a radically different way. We must understand the body, not as an object, but rather as our **'being-in-the-world'**. (79:15/92:12)

IV. **IF WE ADOPT BEING-IN-THE-WORLD** as the proper understanding of the body, we can now return to the Phantom Limb and Anosognosia and discover how these experiences can now be understood. (80:19/92:30)

- A. What we have seen is that neither experience can be accounted for simply by physiological or psychological explanations. In the first case the phantom limb is the actual presence of a representation, Anosognosia the actual absence of a representation. In the second case the phantom limb is the representation of an actual presence, whereas Anosognosia is the representation of an actual absence. Clearly in both cases we are imprisoned in the categories of the objective world. (80:19/92:30)
- B. But from the perspective of being-in-the-world, one can not only explain such experiences but also overcome the paradoxical characteristics. Such a perspective also enables one to understand the body in a radically new way. (81:34/94:13)
 - 1. The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be involved in a definite environment. And it is in terms of the way the body is involved in this environment that can account for the experiences of the Phantom Limb and Anosognosia. Such an understanding enables Merleau-Ponty to reinterpret repression and use it to clarify the Phantom Limb. (82:1/94:24)
 - 2. Clearly implied in the above analysis is the idea that around our personal existence a margin of almost impersonal existence hovers. It is this marginal existence that is in-between the physical and the psychic that makes the Phantom Limb and Anosognosia intelligible. (84:2/96:34)
 - 3. But it is important to realize that what enables us to center our existence is also what prevents us from centering it completely. (85:24/98:27)
 - 4. Man has not only a setting (Unwelt) but also a world (Welt). (87:2/100:13)

- V. **CONCLUSION:** For man to have a world, he must acquire a distance from the world. It is by giving up part of his spontaneity, by becoming involved in the world through stable organs and pre-existing circuits, that man can acquire the mental and practical space, which will theoretically free him from his environment and allow him to see it. But to be able to understand this, we must come up with a new conception of consciousness and its relation to the world. (87:4/100:17)

CHAPTER 2 • THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BODY & CLASSICAL PSYCHOLOGY

In this chapter, or possibly a better way of putting it, in this chapter fragment, Merleau-Ponty is carrying on the pattern of development that we saw in the last chapter. In order to understand what is happening here, we need to look at how this chapter fits into this pattern of development. In the last chapter, Merleau-Ponty began with the claim that the body is an object in the sense of “parts outside of parts.” Then he turned and did a preliminary critique of this claim almost to the point of dismissing it. After the preliminary critique, Merleau-Ponty re-establishes the position and even explains how it would attack his own position. What the remainder of the chapter does is develop dialectically a critique of Mechanistic Physiology. The end of the chapter says that what we must now do is turn to Classical Psychology. What Classical Psychology holds, according to Merleau-Ponty, is that the body is an object, “parts outside of parts.” What we have here is the same basic position that we saw in the first chapter. The next step, if we follow the pattern of the last chapter, is a preliminary critique of Classical Psychology’s position on the body. This is exactly what Chapter II is. It is a preliminary critique of Classical Psychology’s position on the body. What we should expect is that Merleau-Ponty would re-establish or save the position and this “saving” would be followed by a long series of dialectical arguments showing that problems still remain. And this is just what we get in the rest of Part I of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. In short, the argument against Classical Psychology has its preliminary move in Chapter II and then continues throughout the rest of this part of the book.

Now we turn and look at the preliminary critique of Classical Psychology, and we discover that Merleau-Ponty is trying to show that while it does claim that the body is simply an object, many of its descriptions of the experience of the body are not compatible with such a

view. Merleau-Ponty reflects on some of these descriptions and tries to show how they might lead one to a new conception of the body. He is also concerned with giving an account of the "objective attitude" that is so prevalent in today's psychology and that prevents psychology from appreciating the senses in which the body is more than an object.

- I. **THE CHARACTERISTICS CLASSICAL PSYCHOLOGY ATTRIBUTES TO THE BODY**, which are incompatible with its status as an object. (90:1/103:1)
 - A. **Permanence:** (90:3/103:1)
 1. The body has a permanence that is different from objects in our experience. The permanence of the body is not permanence in the world, but permanence from my point of view. (90:21/103:18)
 2. The body is present as a kind of environment through which we experience things in a fundamentally different sense than; for example, a window conditions what we see out it. Not only is the perspective of my body not a particular case of that of objects, but also furthermore the presentation of objects in perspective cannot be understood except through the resistance of my body to all variations of perspective. (91:7/104:15)
 3. When I visually experience my body through a mirror, it is as if the body in the mirror takes on a separate reality. It is not the body that is doing the seeing but rather merely the body seen that appears in the mirror. (91:29/104:37)
 4. Even for the tactile body, we discover this same separation and "being other." The hand touched is different from the hand doing the touching. Clearly objects do not manifest this dual character. (92:5/105:20)
 5. The permanency of the body is not a particular example of the permanency of things, but rather it is the necessary condition for external permanence. Thus the body's permanence is what distinguishes it from objects. If only Classical Psychology had understood, this description might have led it to the view of the body no longer conceived as an object of the world, but as our means of communication with the world and to the world no longer conceived as a collection of determinate objects, but as the horizon latent in all our experience and itself ever present and anterior to every determining thought. (92:20/106:3)
 - B. **Double Sensation**—When I take hold of my one hand by the other, there is an ambiguous relation established. The hand held immediately becomes aware of the hand holding. This is a good example of the body trying to catch itself from the outside through what looks like a sort of cognitive process. It tries to catch itself while being touched, and initiates 'a kind of reflection' which is sufficient to distinguish it from objects. (93:1/106:23)

- C. **The Body as Affective Object**—While I might feel pain through an object, the body is never experienced in this way. Rather than the body being a means of feeling pain, it is where the pain occurs. “My foot hurts” means not “I think that my foot is the cause of this pain” but rather “The pain comes from my foot” or again “my foot has pain.” (93:23/107:8)
 - D. **Kinesthetic Sensation**—This badly expressed concept of Classical Psychology attempts to characterize the originality of the movements of my body. My body itself is directly moved. I do not find it at one point of objective space and transfer it to another. I have no need to look for it—it is already with me. (93:42/107:26)
- II. **WHY HAS NOT CLASSICAL PSYCHOLOGY**, in light of the above characteristics, not altered its view concerning the body? Psychology took the natural step of following the natural sciences in assuming the objective attitude toward its subject matter. When experience reveals the body as a “subject/object” or as capable of “seeing” and “suffering,” these oddities were treated as just examples of the lack of clarity of experience and had to be overcome in order to enter the domain of science. (94:22/108:12)
- III. **YET THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES** in the objects of psychology and the natural sciences could not let the actual phenomenon be hidden for long—after all the psychologist does have himself as an object of study. Let us then return to the description of one’s own body and resume the study of it where we left off. By doing so we shall trace the progress of modern psychology and thereby contrive along with it the return to experience. (95:38/109:34)

CHAPTER 3 • THE SPATIALITY OF ONE’S OWN BODY AND MOTILITY

In this rather long chapter, Merleau-Ponty develops a sense in which the body is not merely an object in the world. The chapter begins by developing the obvious objection. One might still argue that the body, even after all that we have seen, is still ultimately an object for doesn’t it fall into objective space? Doesn’t it “really” have parts separated in space: the hand is here and the elbow is there? Isn’t the body really an extended object: parts outside of parts? Of course, the whole point of all this is to make us aware that Empiricism and Intellectualism are very much with us, for the fact of the matter is that we find such an objection still very reasonable. To respond to this objection, Merleau-Ponty must now turn his attention to spatiality. Is space what these objectors think that it is? Is space just what geometry says that it is? Is

it something that turns the body into an object like other objects? Or is it something more? Merleau-Ponty proposes that we turn to space as it is given in experience to answer these questions. He also proposes that in understanding the spatiality of lived experience, we will see that the body is clearly not an object like other objects for we will find that the body is the condition, in the Kantian sense, of there being lived spatial meanings.

Through the body's spatiality and motility, the body is a condition and "mediator" of the very "objective" character of objects. Using an account of psychic blindness, in this instance the case of Schneider, Merleau-Ponty maintains that Empiricism and Intellectualism cannot account for some of the problems Schneider. In addition he develops a criticism by showing that empiricistic and intellectualistic accounts of the normal subject's perception and behavior have a striking resemblance to Schneider's abnormal activities. The argument of this chapter is a good example of the phenomenological method with its intertwining of descriptions aimed at developing an understanding of the role of the body.

It might be worthwhile to pause and look at Merleau-Ponty's style of dialectical argumentation. What we have seen and will see is a series of objections or criticisms of Merleau-Ponty's position which themselves are philosophical positions. These positions are arranged in an order. Later positions are more complex than the earlier ones because they are specifically designed to overcome the problems inherent in the earlier positions. The movement is from complex to more complex positions with the formulation of Merleau-Ponty's position becoming in turn itself more complex as it response to the criticisms. But it is important to ask what drives the whole process? As we saw at the end of the Introduction and again at the end of the Second Chapter, it is internal criticism. There is a movement back to experience but it is the experience of the position under criticism. It attempts to show that the account of experience given within a particular perspective is not compatible with what is actually experience within that particular perspective. It is these attempts at internal criticism, which drive the dialectical argument.

But Merleau-Ponty is in fact doing more than just this. In addition to arguing that each of the particular views distort reality and distort the very experience that they were suppose to account, Merleau-Ponty argues and attempts to show that his own view cannot only account

for these very experiences that seem to defy explanation for Objective Thought but his view can also explain the limitation of each of these views. In other words, he thinks he can lead us to an understanding of why the opposing views themselves came about.

However, it is important to realize that dialectics is not simply a way of attacking one's opponents. It is also a way of communicating. When we talk about dialectics, we are talking about a tool that Merleau-Ponty is using not only to attack but ultimately to communicate and convince us about the truth of his position. One should never forget that the reader is the one being addressed and not his opponents.

I. INTRODUCTION: (98:1/112:1)

- A. If we go to even the simplest descriptions of our experience of the spatiality of the body, the body does not seem to be just another object among objects in the world. (98:1/112:1)
- B. In attempting to account for such experience, but also the Phantom Limb and the other examples that we saw in the first chapter, psychology has developed explanations using the concept "body image." While this concept was supposed to overcome the ambiguities of experience, this concept has been evolving and seems to indicate that the body is a unique kind of being with all the ambiguity still very much intact. (98:17/113:2)
- C. Merleau-Ponty reconsiders the claim that the body is really nothing but an object. (101:15/116:3)
 1. One could, however, still argue that this conception of the body itself presupposes objective space and thus the body is laid out in space with the hand here and the head up there and the foot down there. Clearly if this is so, the body is really an object just like any other object. (101:15/116:3)
 2. Merleau-Ponty attempts to maintain that this view does not get to the heart of the matter. My body's space is much more than this, and rather than space enabling my body to be understood, it is my body that brings about space. It is the body that is the condition for there being space. Merleau-Ponty maintains further that there is a real difference between "bodily space" and "objective space" the key question to be answered is which is primary and foundational. (101:21/116:9)
 3. He suggests that we can clarify this by looking at an example of morbid motility that shows a little more clearly the relation between space and the body. After this example has been considered, he hopes to show that we will be in a better position to make a judgment on the nature of the body. (102:34/117:26)

II. THE SCHNEIDER CASE: (103:3/118:1)

- A. Through a general description of psychic blindness (see overview of the Schneider Case in the Glossary of this work), Merleau-Ponty tries to show that there is a fundamental difference in Schneider between abstract movements (pretending to do something, describing, identifying, distinguishing, and recognizing) and concrete acts (getting something from his pocket, blowing his nose, lighting a lamp, and making wallets), especially those that have been reinforced by habits. What are of special interest are the problems that arise because of the difference between the act of pointing and the act of grasping. Clearly the point is to stress the privileged status of concrete acts. (103:3/118:1)
 1. What do the peculiarities of the way Schneider acts tell us? (103:36/118:29)
 - a) Knowledge of where something is can be understood in a number of ways. Bodily space may be given to me so that I can take hold of something without knowing the space through which I take hold of it. (104:8/119:11)
 - b) There is a kind of knowledge of space, which is reducible to a sort of coexistence with that place. Through the phenomenal body (lived body), I become one with the phenomenal space without ever entering the objective realm. (105:32/121:8)
 2. What do Schneider's failures tell us? (107:1/122:20)
 - a) A warning is offered against making the transition from the pathological to the normal. (107:28/123:18)
 - b) The normal person enjoys his body not as an object but as a concrete setting or situation in which he is related to a task imposed by a particular job. There is certain immediacy here. (108:28/124:24)
 - c) The normal person's activities always arise out of the numerous possibilities that exist within any given situation. From these possibilities flows his freedom, while Schneider's imprisonment in the actual is the basis of his failures. (104:40/125:4)
 3. What is wrong with the patient?—What Schneider lacks is neither motility nor thought but rather something in between these. Merleau-Ponty suggests that the normal person has movement and a background of possibilities that form a unique totality. For the patient the world exists only as one already made or congealed, whereas for the normal person, his projects polarize the world and organize it for him. (109:34/125:37)
 4. Even in other patients with Psychic Blindness who are not as serious as Schneider, we discover the same fundamental differences between them and the normal person. (111:38/128:19)
- B. Merleau-Ponty presents a series of alternative ways of analyzing the data and describes how each would proceed, and then he offers a series of criticisms of these positions. (112:37/129:23)
 1. Scientific or Inductive Analysis (Empiricism): (112:37/129:23)

a) **Position:** It offers an explanation of Schneider's difficulties by looking beneath phenomena for the circumstances upon which they depend in accordance with the tried method of induction. The obvious source of the problem is Schneider's injury to his vision and the way to understand the difference between grasping and pointing can be achieved by means of the distinction between touching and seeing. (113:2/129:27)

b) **General objection** to this procedure: Inductive analysis is fruitless in that the discreteness of the data that is required for the analysis is lacking. It can succeed only to the extent that this type of analysis stops being purely inductive and attempts to choose between descriptions of the disorder that support it rather than attempting to understand these descriptions. (114:1/131:11)

c) **Specific objections:** (115:19/132:24)

(1) Observations can never reveal one psychic fact as the cause of another because they are not simply laid out to be looked at by inductive reason. Causal relationships are not "seen" but rather they are the product of interpretation. (115:21/132:26)

(2) The subject matter of psychology can never be really expressed in terms of cause and effect or the relation of function to variable. (115:42/133:11)

(a) Facts of psychology are sufficiently ambiguous as not to allow a rigorously exclusive interpretation as in physics. (116:5/133:16)

(i) Developing the position of Geib and Goldstein, Merleau-Ponty argues that maybe the facts of psychic blindness could be accounted for by the weakness of touch in establishing a background for movement. (116:5/133:16)

(ii) In criticizing this view, Merleau-Ponty develops a very interesting dialectical argument attacking it and the different ways in which it could be modified using examples of the experience of the normal person, someone blind, and even Schneider, to show that there are problems with any such attempts. (116:27/134:3)

(iii) This criticism ends with the continuation of the explanation of why induction and causal thinking just cannot work in psychology. (118:1/135:26)

(b) Again starting with Goldstein, Merleau-Ponty argues that there is, in reaction to what was just seen, a tendency to blur the distinction between seeing and touching in the normal person. While there is a unity, Merleau-Ponty maintains that there is still a real difference. The problem here is that the data that psychology deals with are not sufficiently distinct for them to be interpreted in a causal manner. (118:33/136:22)

2. **Intellectualistic Analysis:** (120:29/138:29)

a) **Position:** It offers an explanation of Schneider's difficulties not in terms of causes but rather in terms of reasons or intelligible conditions

for the difficulties. In intellectualistic analysis the problem lies in Schneider's ability to conceptualize the task. In much of this section, Merleau-Ponty is attempting to transform our way of looking at Schneider into an intellectualistic one. It is only in so far as we are within this perspective that the following critique will make sense. (120:29/138:29)

b) **Critique of the Position:** This section attempts to show how the intellectualistic perspective tends to dichotomize concrete and abstract acts and thus ultimately makes the difference in Schneider between pointing and grasping unintelligible. This tendency manifests itself in the movement toward either physiological explanations or explanations purely in terms of consciousness. The basic point is that Intellectualism has not realized that there must be several ways for consciousness to be consciousness and that the problem with Schneider is clearly more than a conceptual one. (122:17/141:1)

c) The reason for the intellectualistic point of view: (124:26/143:15)

(1) It took consciousness out of the context in which it was alive and vital and thus distorted it. In so doing, it reduced all illness to distortions in the symbolic function of consciousness. (124:26/143:15)

(2) While overcoming the weaknesses of Empiricism in recognizing the need for a unity of consciousness, it turns this unity into a unity of thought. Its generalizations tend to have little value for practicing psychologists and this in turn gave an impetus to the empiricist's approach. (125:3/143:33)

d) In light of what we have seen, Merleau-Ponty calls for a 'genetic phenomenology.' The task of such a phenomenology, in light of the difficulties of Intellectualism, will be to conceive between the linguistic, perceptual, and motor contents and their form a relationship that shall be neither the reduction of form to content nor the subsuming of content under an autonomous form. (126:16/145:16)

(1) Through a phenomenological analysis of Schneider's problems, we can see that there is a need for new categories, or a new sense of form and content. Such a new conception of form and content while introducing a radical contingency, which is foreign to Intellectualism, can make sense out of the problems we have seen. (126:30/146:1)

(2) Again, using a phenomenological analysis of Schneider, Merleau-Ponty shows that for the normal person it is easier to understand an analogy than it is to analyze it, but for Schneider, he can only understand the analogy if he analyzes it. Clearly what is needed is a new category of meaning—a new way for meanings to be—that can account for both the normal and the patient's reactions. (128:1/147:5)

3. A Modification of Intellectualism—Critical Analysis (Kantianism): (129:5/148:24)

a) **Position:** An adequate understanding must be more radical and go back to the origin of meaning and find behind our judgments a categori-

cal act that bestows such meaning. Clearly what Merleau-Ponty has in mind here is a position along the lines of the transcendental analysis of Kant. (129:5/148:25)

b) **Critique of the Position:** It duplicates the empirical operations of thought with a transcendental activity, which has the task of being about all those syntheses for which empirical thought provides the elements. By means of a rather long description of his “flat”, Merleau-Ponty attempts to show that a non-temporal synthesis as suggested by critical analysis is not what is found. There is already a meaning before the normal person performs a reflective act unlike Schneider who must reflect in order to produce meaning. (129:14/148:33)

- C. Merleau-Ponty offers an example of what an Existential Analysis of Schneider’s Case might look like. One might also call this an example of how a Phenomenological Psychology (as opposed to a Phenomenological Philosophy) might proceed. This analysis turns its attention to the perception of significance and number. In each of these topics, Existential Analysis is developed by contrasting the normal person’s experience with that of Schneider. The goal of this is to make us more aware of what the normal experience really looks like. For Merleau-Ponty, it is not the abnormal experience that tells us something about normal perception, but rather the abnormal sensitizes us to what is present in the normal. (131:24/151:23)

1. **Significance:** Existential Analysis reveals that in the normal subject the object speaks and is significant while at the same time the subject’s intentions are immediately reflected in the perceptual field. It is the dual objective-subjective tendency that the above forms of analysis cannot cope with. Each finds it necessary to choose one tendency over the other and thus falsifies the phenomenon through its incompleteness. (131:24/151:23)

2. **Number:** It also discovers beneath both intelligence and perception a fundamental function—an ‘intentional arc’—which projects round about us, our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather that which results in our being situated in all these respects. Ultimately, this analysis shows that all Schneider’s problems are reducible to a unity, but not the abstract unity of thought. He is tied to actuality and lacks the liberty or the general power of putting himself into a situation. (133: 25/154:5)

3. **Conclusion:** Merleau-Ponty proceeds to summarize how Existential Analysis goes beyond the traditional alternative of Empiricism and Intellectualism to a new understanding of explanation and introspection. While Empiricism reduces consciousness to a collection of “mental facts” and Intellectualism reduces it to “representative function”, Existential Analysis discovers that consciousness is a projective activity, it is intentionality, and it is Being-in-the-world. (136:14/157:14)

- III. **WHILE THIS SECTION APPEARS** to be a new small chapter containing a discussion of a new topic: motility as intentionality, the fact is that it must be understood a continuing the discussion of spatiality and Schneider. Its aim is to explore the implication of motility as already found in the previous sections and show the implications for our understanding of the body. (137:31/158:36)
- A. Again starting from the Schneider case, Merleau-Ponty is reacting to Intellectualistic accounts and tries to show that movement seems to presuppose a kind of 'knowing of the body' that is not reducible to any kind of conscious knowing as assumed by Intellectualism (note the rather long footnote on pp. 138/159 where this point is developed in some detail). (137:31/158:36)
 - B. We must avoid saying in an intellectualistic sense that the body is in space or in time. The body inhabits space and time. (139:20/161:17)
 - 1) My body provides a kind of space in which every act can operate. This 'meaning' is always already there. (139:20/161:17)
 - 2) In much the same way, it provides a temporality that is present and carries a past and future with it. (140:15/162:1)
 - 3) Neither mechanistic nor intellectualistic theories can account for the normal person's movement in relation to space and time. These can only be accounted for by a conception of the body that allows for the body itself to understand its world. Schneider's problems consist in not having access to this bodily understanding and having to substitute conscious intellectual acts. (140:28/162:15)
 - C. In order to make sense out of this 'bodily knowing'; Merleau-Ponty turns his attention to habits which he claims neither mechanistic nor intellectualistic accounts can explain. The section proceeds by way of the description of a series of experiences. These descriptions attempt to make clear lived experience, which pose problems for both mechanistic and intellectualistic explanations. (142:20/164:22)
 - 1. Dancing: The learning of a new dance is the grasping of a 'motor significance'. (142:35/165:5)
 - 2. Feather in the hat: The woman seems to move with a feather in her hat as if the feather is part of her body. (143:5/165:15)
 - 3. Driving a car: Again, as with the above two examples, developing such a habit consists in not having to consciously reflect on certain activities. (143:7/165:17)
 - 4. Blind man's stick: When the blind man develops the habit of using a stick, this habit expresses our power of dilating our Being-in-the-world, of including things within our body such that we extend our body beyond our skin. (143:18/165:27)
 - 5. Typist: Through a rather detailed description of the experience of one who had developed the habit of typing, Merleau-Ponty argues that the

- typist has incorporated the keyboard space into his own bodily space. (144:1/166:15)
6. Organist: Again showing that mechanistic and intellectualistic theories cannot account for how an experienced organist can learn to play a new organ, Merleau-Ponty argues that these accounts lack something. (145:7/167:33)
 7. Conclusion: What is revealed in this rather long series of descriptions is the experience of our own bodies as a means by which we have a world, and not only a biological world, but also the world of art and culture. (146:4/168:32)
- D. Conclusion: The study of motility has revealed a new sense of 'meaning' that neither mechanistic nor intellectualistic theories can account for. The experience of the body in movement forces us to acknowledge an imposition of meaning which is not the work of a universal constituting consciousness but rather something prior to such acts. (146:41/170:1)

CHAPTER 4 • THE SYNTHESIS OF ONE'S OWN BODY

This chapter is very odd looking with its three paragraphs and its being only six/seven pages in length: pp. 148-153/170-171. It seems that the best explanation of it is that it is only a part of a chapter—the conclusion of the last chapter and a bit of updating of the argument. It starts by summarizing the results of the last chapter and then develops and generalizes these results in terms of the unity of the body. The problem is that while adding a few things, the discussion does little more than present the implications of the last chapter. The primary concern of this chapter, as with the last, is to show a sense in which the body is a condition for there being objects and, in particular, the condition for there being spatiality and spatial 'meanings'.

Merleau-Ponty argues that the body is not an "object," *parts outside of parts*, like other objects as was suggested in the last chapter. There it was claimed by his opponents that the body is in space and thus its parts are in space making it an object like any other object. As a result, the last chapter turned its attention to spatiality in order to discover just what it is. We saw that rather than space conditioning the body, the lived body is the very condition for spatiality. Now Merleau-Ponty concludes that space does not 'pre-exist' the body but rather space is the result of the body. The unity that the body possesses is 'prior' to space and spatial relationships. It is this pre-spatial unity or synthesis of the body that is the very condition of spatiality and that makes the body not simply an object like other objects.

- I. **AGAIN, MERLEAU-PONTY STARTS** by contrasting lived experience with the account of Intellectualism. He claims that in experience we discover that it is not space that determines the essence of objects, but rather our body and its deployment, which is the very condition for spatiality. (148:1/170:1)
 - A. The analysis of space in the preceding chapter has shown that being in space plays an important role in what constitutes a thing. The body differs from things insofar as it is not so much in space as of space. (148:1/170:1)
 - B. The priority of 'lived space' over 'objective space' is again illustrated by going back to experience and especially the Anosognosic's experience. There it can be seen that the spatiality of one's body consists in the very deployment of bodily being and is indistinguishable from it. (148:13/171:12)
- II. **IF WE TURN TO THE UNITY OR SYNTHESIS** of the body, we discover the same implicatory structures we saw in the last chapter with our analysis of space. (149:7/172:14)
 - A. In many respects the unity or synthesis of the body is revealed and reveals the spatiality of the body. The parts of the body are not simply coordinated but exist together in a kind of "common meaning". Merleau-Ponty illustrates this by showing how the young child's first attempts at grasping are achieved not by the child looking at his hand, but rather at the object. The child already has the hand as the means of grasping. (149:7/172:14)
 - B. This implicatory structure is developed through a consideration of some of the ways in which we visualize our own body. The major point of these examples is to stress the fact that the unity of the body is always presupposed. Even abnormal experiences and the heautoscope seem to suggest this. (149:22/172:30)
 - C. Yet this unity is not a conceptual or intellectual unity, as Intellectualism would suggest. My body never is given simply as an object such that I correlate its parts. Its parts are always given as integrated prior to any attempt at understanding them. (150:5/173:17)
 - D. In responding to the claims of Intellectualism, Merleau-Ponty goes back to the experience of our body and attempts to show how it possesses a kind of practical unity. He develops this appeal to experience by comparing the body with a work of art. (150:33/174:11)
 1. Painting: The only way to actually have a painting is by seeing it. Descriptions or accounts just don't work. (150:35/174:13)
 2. Poem: The meaning and effect of a poem cannot simply be translated into prose. The poem exists in the very words that make it up, yet it is more than just those words. (150:40/174:18)
 3. Novel: While the plot of a novel can be summarized, it has a reality that cannot. (151:20/175:5)

4. Works of art are things in which the expression is indistinguishable from the thing expressed; yet the work transcends its own expression. Like the work of art, the body is a focal point of living meaning, which both is and transcends its parts. Its unity is more than its parts. (151:29/175:13)

III. CONCLUSION: Merleau-Ponty extends his discussion of motor habits of the last chapter and attempts to show how they add a dynamic aspect to the “synthesis” of one’s body. The body is an instrument for the appropriation of instruments, and the body has a unity just in so far as it is opened to situations in the very act of acquiring them. (151:44/176:27)

CHAPTER 5 • THE BODY IN ITS SEXUAL BEING

In general, this chapter is a continuation of the attempt to discover the senses in which the body is more than just an object, parts outside of parts. We have seen in the last chapter that the body projects itself into a world, it incorporates things within itself through its motility, it becomes a kind of background which enables things to stand out as objects, and it also endows things with ‘meaning’. We have seen how the body does all this with regards to spatial meanings, and now we are going to do this all over again with sexuality.

The chapter begins with Merleau-Ponty dialectically situating his position by means of the positions of Intellectualism and Empiricism. He shows that neither can account for the sexual abnormalities of Schneider or even normal lived experiences. As we have seen, there are two fundamentally different ways of approaching experience. One could, as does Empiricism and Intellectualism, assume a *Third Person Perspective* in which case sexual meanings are the result of association, memory, or the product of a constituting consciousness. But for both positions, there is no meaning actually given in perception.

From the *First Person Perspective*, Merleau-Ponty claims that experience shows us an underlying sense of sexuality which is an ultimate given. It is this underlying sense of sexuality that is the basis for the association, memory, and acts of a constituting consciousness. The *First Person Perspective* grasps that there are many senses of meaning, many levels of meaning. As Merleau-Ponty formulates his position, clearly one tends to think that he is formulating a position similar to Freud’s and Psychoanalysis’. And clearly this is his intention. It is as if he is formulating an objection that his position is nothing other than a rehashing of Freud’s. The remainder of the chapter is a critique of

Psychoanalysis with the aim of clarifying Merleau-Ponty's own position and developing the senses in which the body is not an object.

The problem with Psychoanalysis is that it conceives of sexual meaning as if it were the same thing as conscious meaning. What we see here again is the *Third Person Perspective* that levels out all of reality and meaning onto one level. Using interesting descriptions of some of the classic cases of Psychoanalysis, Merleau-Ponty tries to show how the "unconsciousness" is nothing more than a hypothesis that is required because of the way that 'meaning' is understood. Further, Merleau-Ponty tries to show that Psychoanalysis is trapped in the same all or nothing dichotomy as one finds with Intellectualism and Empiricism. Is sexuality, for Freud, identified with human existence or is it just a part of human existence? No matter which way one turns, it seems that both options leave one open to attack.

The major concern of this chapter is to show that there must be more than one kind of meaning. There must be fundamentally different levels of meaning, because there are fundamentally different levels of being. To distinguish consciousness from the unconsciousness does not go far enough because what Freud finds in the unconscious is that same kind of meanings we find in the conscious sphere. Merleau-Ponty's own position is that there are different levels of meaning and that the figure/background is the model for understanding the difference. Much of the remainder of the chapter is a series of examples of how the figure/background relation helps us to understand the classic case studies of Psychoanalysis.

I. INTRODUCTION: (154:1/178:1)

- A. We have been attempting to elucidate the process by which we have objects and to describe the body as the place in which this occurs. But this process of its nature is one, which hides itself. Insofar as there is a process that presents objects as objects, what is necessarily not presented is the process itself. Merleau-Ponty proposes that we attempt to see how things begin to be for us as objects of love and desire. Possibly here we might get a better idea of the process by which there are objects at all. (154.1/178:1)
- B. Merleau-Ponty begins by looking at the attempts at accounting for the experience of sexuality by Intellectualism and Empiricism. (154:18/178:18)
 1. **Intellectualism** offers an account that interprets sexuality in terms of thought and representations: acts of consciousness. (154:18/178:18)

- a) **Position:** Sexuality is usually conceived as a kind of "representation" or "Idea" which is attached to matters which otherwise would be indifferent. (154:18/178:18)
- b) **Critique:** But Schneider's sexual incapacities and sexual inertia would not really make much sense if this were the case. For example, the infrequency of nocturnal emissions cannot be explained in terms of weakness of representations, but indicates a physical factor. (155:5/179:14)
- 2. **Empiricism** offers an account of sexuality in terms of the parts of the body. (155:33/180:8)
 - a) **Position:** Sexuality is an autonomous reflex. When Schneider received the injury to his head the result was that his reflexes were restricted or limited. (155:33/180:8)
 - b) **Critique:** But if sexuality is an autonomous reflex, the injury should have removed the inhibitions and, in effect, freed the reflex rather than stopping it. The fact that his sexual actions are inhibited indicates an "intellectual" or "psychological" factor. (155:38/180:12)
- C. **Problem:** It seems that neither a purely mental nor a physical concept can be used to explain sexuality. What is needed is a new conceptual framework that can fill all the requirements of the described situation. (156:1/180:16)
 - 1. There must be some kind of force, which brings life into the original world, that is, something that gives it a sexual significance or value. (156.7/180:20)
 - 2. Sexuality needs to be understood as being ultimately a power of a subject to project a certain context. But then it must be realized that this subject cannot be simply an intellectual being. (156.12/180:27)
 - 3. We must be able to conceive of sexuality as an original form of intentionality of the body. Traditional Intellectualism and Empiricism cannot possibly achieve such a conception. (157:37/181:16)
- II. **CLEARLY ONE APPROACH TO SEXUALITY**, however, does make such claims and does explicitly attempt to resolve the above problem: **Freudian Psychoanalysis**. (157:42/182:23)
 - A. **Position:** The Freudian account of Sexuality: (158:1/182:27)
 - 1. The major trend of Freudian Psychoanalysis has moved toward a discovery of sexuality in relations and attitudes, which goes beyond the merely conscious states and attempts to reintegrate sexuality into the whole human being. In doing so, it goes beyond Intellectualism and Empiricism and **suggests** a conceptual framework that might be satisfactory. (158:1/182:27)
 - 2. For Freud, sexuality is not genital but rather a general power by which the subject gives structures to his actions. Sexuality is a manner of being toward a world that is at the root of all neuroses and, in fact, at the heart of all human life. (158:19/183:12)

- B. Critique:** Problems of the Freudian conception. (158:36/183:29)
1. Psychoanalysis is essentially ambiguous because it places emphasis on the subconscious, which it treats as some kind of factual discovery. The "subconscious" is an explanatory concept or hypothesis that attempts to make sense out of experience. Because Psychoanalysis cannot keep the status of this concept clear, there is an ambiguous cloud that covers its attempts at understanding experience. (158:36/183:29)
 2. The major problem of Psychoanalysis is to decide on whether existence has a sexual significance or whether sexuality is simply a manifestation of existence. (159:5/184:4)
 - a) The first would reduce existence to an abstraction, another name for the sexual life—a tautology. (159:5)
 - b) The second cannot be the case because sexuality is not a mere reflection of existence, for excessive or impaired sexuality alters and changes one's whole life and a mere reflection could not do that. (159:10/184:15)
 3. If words are to have any meaning, the sexual life is a sector of our life bearing a special relation to the existence of sex. To live is to exist in this or that world. To take up a particular relation to reality is the heart of sexuality. The problem with psychoanalysis is that it can not take this step in its understanding because it has never really overcome traditional concepts that plague both Intellectualism and Empiricism. (159:24/184:23)
- C.** In attempting to clarify, develop, and expand this criticism, Merleau-Ponty turns to a concrete example of Freudian analysis. A young girl has lost her ability to speak and to eat because she has been forbidden to see a young man with whom she is in love. (160:24/185:31)
1. **Position:** A Freudian interpretation points out the particular sensitivity in the girl of the throat and mouth; and by means of the history of her libido and the oral phase of her sexuality in order to explain her inability to speak. (160:24/185:31)
 2. **Critique:** (161:13/186:28)
 - a) Sexuality does not express its modes of existence like house-numbers simply to be read off, as the above interpretation seems to suggest. (161:13/186:28)
 - b) The girl's problems can only be understood if sexual signs are not simply the means of conveying significance, rather they are themselves filled with significance. Freudian analysis does not conceive of significance in this way. (161:24/187:5)
 3. Merleau-Ponty's analysis. (161:28/187:9)
 - a) The girl has, it should be remembered, the power to speak. Her silence is neither a deliberate nor voluntary act on her part nor is it simply a rejection of her memory. (161:28/187:9)
 - b) What seems to be going on is that the subject has placed herself in a definite situation, which has its own boundaries. These boundaries are

such that speech is no longer a possibility for her. Merleau-Ponty then proceeds to use a series of classic Freudian examples of forgetfulness and repression to expand his point. What has collapsed in these cases is the whole field of former possibilities in the creation of a new situation. What is suggested here is a form of hypocrisy but not simply a psychological hypocrisy. (162:7/187:27)

(1) Psychological hypocrisy—you deceive others although you yourself know the truth. (162:40/188:11)

(2) Metaphysical hypocrisy - self-deceiving through the medium of generality. It is not something that is inevitable nor is it voluntary. (163:1/188:29)

III. **MERLEAU-PONTY SEES TWO FUNDAMENTAL RESULTS** flowing from the above confrontation with Freudian Analysis. (163:31/189:23)

A. New conception of the **Body** found in our analysis of sexuality is developed. (163:31/189:23)

1. Merleau-Ponty develops a very interesting description of how we fall asleep in order to show that the body serves a basic role in connecting the sleeper to the awoken state. By a kind of analogy, he extends this point to claim that the body, in a similar way, also connects the patient with the real world. (163:31/189:23)
2. The body has imitative powers of creating a new situation. We are involved in a situation to the extent that the body has the power not only to create it but also to withdraw us from it. But precisely because my body can shut itself off from the world, this power can now be understood as the very thing that opens me out upon the world and places me in a new situation. (164:24/190:23)
3. Bodily existence runs through me, yet does so independently of me. It is only the barest raw material of a genuine presence in the world. The body expresses existence at every moment; this is in the very same sense in which a word expresses a thought. (165:38/192:7)

B. New conception of Existence, which has arisen out of our analysis of sexuality, is explained. (166:19/192:32)

1. Existence is not a set of facts but rather the ambiguous setting of the inter-communication between facts - the point where their boundaries run into each other. Thus sexuality cannot be just a manifestation or just a symptom of existence. (166:19/192:32)
2. Sexuality and existence, if they are to be understood, must be grasped as being in a figure/background relationship to one another. Sexual meaning stands out from the ambiguous setting which is our existence. There is no attempt to reduce this relationship to something mechanical. For Merleau-Ponty the figure/background relationship is fundamentally dialectical. (166:38/193:16)

- a) The Hegelian Master-Slave relation is used to illustrate what Merleau-Ponty means by dialectics. Further, he offers an interesting analysis of the dialectic of being seen by the other and both possessing the other and being possessed by him. He also shows the same dialectic in the sexual domain to illustrate his point. (167:3/193:21)
- b) Sexuality is dialectical in the sense that it is a movement towards another existence that denies it and yet without which it is not sustained. Of course it should be remembered that dialectical is here being used to clarify the figure/background relationship. (167:36/194:20)
- 3. Mistakes to be avoided. (168:14/195:3)
 - a) Attempting to grasp sexuality or existence in the form of distinct representations, as do Intellectualism and Empiricism. (168:14/195:3)
 - b) To duplicate the obvious content of experience with some kind of latent content as is done in Psychoanalysis. (168:17/195:6)

IV. CONCLUSION: (168:19/195:8)

- A. Sexuality is neither transcended in human life nor shown at its center by unconscious representations. It is at all times present there like an atmosphere. Sexuality is co-extensive with life but only in the essential ambiguity of human existence where everything we live or think has always several meanings. There is a sense then in which there is always a fusion between sexuality and existence. (168:19/195:8)
- B. Existence is indeterminate in itself by reason of its fundamental structure and insofar as it is the very process whereby the hitherto meaningless takes on meaning. It is the act of taking up a *de facto* situation. In this sense it is transcendent since it is the ultimate background of our life. (169:29/196:24)
- C. The concept of existence as developed shares in a radical contingency while at the same time having a radical necessity. For Merleau-Ponty man is an historical idea and not a natural species, or to put it another way, in man there is no unconditioned possession and yet no fortuitous attribute. This is really the first time that Merleau-Ponty presents his idea of a necessary contingency. As we proceed through the book, we will see him developing this idea in much more detail. (170:22/197:23)

Merleau-Ponty offers a criticism of Historical Materialism along the lines he developed with Psychoanalysis in a footnote at the bottom of page 171/198. Of course, this criticism also suggests an explanation of the historical on the same pattern as he has offered of sexuality. The footnote is important not only because it restates the central ideas developed in this chapter in another context (possibly making them clearer), but also because it is a brief statement of Merleau-Ponty's conception of Historical Materialism. While recognized as being an "Existential Marxist", Merleau-Ponty's views on Marxism are considered important in many circles.

CHAPTER 6 • THE BODY AS EXPRESSION AND SPEECH

What we have seen thus far is the body presented as a source of intentionality and 'sense-giving'. For Merleau-Ponty this can be understood only insofar as our notion of the body transcends the dichotomy between subject and object, and thus the body must be understood as more than simply an object, parts outside of parts. Through his analysis of speech and meaning in this chapter, he hopes to show how this dichotomy must be transcended if they are to be understood. It must be noted that Merleau-Ponty is concerned with **speech** and **expression**. The central problem is how the body is capable of speech and expression. As in previous chapters, he will argue that the accounts of Empiricism and Intellectualism are inadequate to solve this problem. They allow for no real possibility of the body expressing or speaking. What is needed is a new conception of the body—Merleau-Ponty's own.

Merleau-Ponty begins this chapter by presenting certain conceptions or **theories of language** which seem to imply a refutation of the conception of meaning he has been developing in the last few chapters. Instead of taking up these theories of language directly, he turns his attention to speech and communication. It should be remembered that this chapter, as with the whole book, deals with perception; and thus he is turning his attention to the **experience of language**—speech and communication. His reason for doing this is to achieve a more basic analysis of the nature of meaning. The current conceptions of language and theories of meaning are ultimately based upon our experience of language. Merleau-Ponty bases his analysis on the fact that we experience speech in two ways: "authentic speech" and "second order speech." He then argues that Empiricism and Intellectualism have taken one of these two types of experiences as primary, "second order speech," and in doing so they have abstracted from the full experience of speech to form their own conceptions of language. Insofar as they have based their analysis on only part of the experience of speech, they both are in error. Speech is actually composed of both parts—authentic speech and second order speech—in a dialectical relation or, one might say, in a figure/background relationship. But more importantly, such an understanding of speech both confirms and is an example of the sense of "meaning" that Merleau-Ponty has been developing.

But before actually looking at this chapter, one must realize that this chapter begins with a definite problem, a problem that arises out of what we have discovered in the last chapters. There we saw that the body is more than an object in the sense that it is the means by which we have objects. It transcends itself and takes a hold onto objects. In taking hold onto objects, the body is the source of meaning. But to appreciate this point, Merleau-Ponty has asked us to understand that there is more than one sense of "meaning". Meaning does not just equal conceptual meaning. He is not denying the existence of conceptual meaning but rather that there is always more than just conceptual meaning.

Merleau-Ponty argues that the way in which we Moderns look at this is in a reflective and abstract way. Reflection separates objects from the background in which they are given. Further, such abstractions yield a distorted view of consciousness, the body, meaning, space, sexuality, the economic, etc. What we see here is a kind of 'natural fallacy' of reason and, for that matter, perception. We tend to see only the object although the context is operative. Because we tend to see only the object, there is a tendency to ignore or even deny the reality of the 'operative context'. What Merleau-Ponty is ultimately concluding is that all meaning is contextual, that is, given in a certain context. As we saw at the end of the last chapter, all necessity is contingent. There really are no absolute meanings.

When we turn to Chapter 6, it is as if Merleau-Ponty is attempting to defend this position against the obvious objection: language seems to present us with meanings and truths that are absolute. For example, "At 12:20, October 22, 1997, there were six people in College, room 409." This seems to have a meaning that transcends any particular situation or for that matter, any human being. It seems to have a meaning and truth the very opposite of what Merleau-Ponty claims. Let's stop and consider this example. It does seem that we could ask a series of questions about the statement. Is it true? It would seem that either it is or it isn't. If we found out it was true, wouldn't it still be true in an hour or two? If I translated it correctly into French, would it still be true? If Queen Elisabeth did not know anything about it, would that make any difference on its truth or falsity? What if every human being was killed, would that change its truth-value? If we reflect on the above sentence, there clearly seems to be a sense in which we have discovered a truth and a meaning that seems independent of these contexts.

While there are limitations on who can understand the proposition (they need to know the language, they need to experience it, and they need all sorts of things to know what it means), it really does not seem that whether someone knows it or not makes any difference concerning its truth and meaning.

At this point one begins to get the idea that Merleau-Ponty is going to attack this whole understanding of language. As one reads the text, one becomes aware that he never directly confronts the criticism. Rather he begins to investigate the nature of meaning in language by turning his attention, and ours, to where language gets its meaning, to the source of meaning in language: expression and speech. While Merleau-Ponty does not deny that there are linguistic meanings, he argues that we ought not to deal with them in isolation but rather we must turn to the place in which we first come into contact with linguistic meanings, in expression. It is in understanding how the body can express itself with meanings that we will ultimately understand the nature of linguistic meanings, and thus Merleau-Ponty can formulate his response to the above objection.

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** Merleau-Ponty formulates the basic problem that this chapter is going to deal with in his quest to discover the sense in which the body is not simply an object. Again we discover that a dialectical reaction to Empiricism and Intellectualism serves as a basis for stating the problem of the chapter. (174:1/202:1)
- A. **Empiricism** offers an interpretation of speech: (174:11/202:11)
 1. **Position:** Empiricism claims that language is nothing but an assemblage of signs while speech is the process by which verbal images or traces are produced in us by these signs. The meaning of words is considered to be given **with** the stimuli or **with** the states of consciousness. (174:11/202:11)
 2. **Critique of the Position:** (174:17/203:6)
 - a) Clearly we are looking at speech from the point of view of the third person and as a result we are attempting to understand speech that is now viewed rather absurdly as not really having a speaker. (174:17/203:6)
 - b) Merleau-Ponty develops a description of aphasia, actually the Schneider case, in which there are some very interesting difficulties with language. Of course the point is that an Empiricistic account just cannot make sense out of the fact that “automatic language” or “concrete language” poses very few problems for Schneider and yet “intentional language” or “authentic denomination” creates an almost impossible situation for him. According to Empiricism there really should be no difference. (175:15/203:23)

B. Intellectualism offers an interpretation of speech: (176:26/205:5)

1. **Position:** Intellectualism is the movement away from Empiricism to an opposite but equally extreme position. Now rather than a mechanical or a mechanistic process accounting for meaning, Intellectualism offers the power of consciousness, which organizes experience in categorical fashion thus constituting meaning. (176:26/205:5)
2. **Critique of the Position:** (176:32/205:20)
 - a) As systematic of the Third Person Perspective, Intellectualism, like Empiricism, characterizes the word in such a way that it does not possess meaning. In short, both miss what is essential to speech. (176:32/205:20)
 - b) In Empiricism, there is clearly no one speaking, but now we find in Intellectualism that there is clearly a subject but it is a thinking subject and not a speaking subject. Again, the accounts of both miss what is essential in speech. (177:7/205:28)
 - c) Merleau-Ponty claims that Intellectualism can be "refuted" by simply pointing out that **Words have meaning**. (177:17/206:3)
3. **Position:** Following in rather dialectical fashion, the objection of Intellectualism is reintroduced: Isn't it really the case that speech presupposes thought? Don't we have to already know what we are going to say before saying it? (177:19/206:5)
4. **Critique of the position:** Merleau-Ponty develops a series of concrete descriptions that seem to fly in the face of such a criticism. Clearly the point of all this is to show that meaning requires expression: thought tends towards expression as towards its completion or natural end. (177:22/206:7)
 - a) It seems that the experience of our thought being completed by the act of expression suggests that the situation is much more complex than Intellectualism assumes. (177:22/206:7)
 - b) The child's coming to understanding of things by learning to use language again suggests things are much more complex. (177:42/206:20)
 - c) The role of words in religion and in superstitions is suggestive of a fundamental dependent relation between meaning and expression. (178:2/206:30)
- C. The conclusion that Merleau-Ponty draws from all this is that the process of communication requires an intimate interaction between word and meaning. The remainder of the chapter defends and argues for this point. In doing so, it brings together many of the points developed in the previous parts of the book. (178:18/207:11)
 1. The speaker does not translate ready-made thoughts but, rather, accomplishes communication. Nor does the listener translate, but rather receives thought from the speaker. (It is important to notice the qualifications that Merleau-Ponty makes in the footnotes at the bottom of pages 178/207 and 179/208. He is not claiming here that this is true of

all language. The example of the philosopher aims at showing this limitation. Rather he is assuming the distinction between “authentic speech” and second order expressions. What he is claiming is only true of “authentic speech.” (One might also look at his brief explanation of this distinction found on page 184/213.) (178:18/208:3)

2. To illustrate this point, he uses philosophy as an example and tries to develop the sense in which a philosopher can create new ideas using old terms. His concern is with showing how a philosopher’s writing can literally create his own audience. Of course the point of all this is to show just how thought and speech are one. (This is a very important example.) (179:4/208:35)

II. HAVING NOW FORMULATED HIS BASIC POSITION that words have a meaning and that there is a concrete unity of meaning and expression; Merleau-Ponty now turns his attention toward defending and explaining this position. In doing so, he will develop one more aspect of the way in which the body is more than just an object. (179:39/209:5)

- A. There are several ways in which the interaction between word and expression can be misunderstood. Thought is not contained in words as a representation nor is it contained as a sign or stimulus, which activates some kind of pre-established nervous network or ‘pure-recollection’. (179:39/209:5)
- B. What follows here is a series of concrete descriptions designed to show the concrete unity of meaning and expression. (180:3/209:8)
 1. The orator does not think before speaking. In a situation where he improvises, his words reveal their meaning even to him. (180:3/209:8)
 2. In response to Bergson’s “pure recollection”, Merleau-Ponty develops the role of memory in terms of some of the concepts presented in the last chapter. His conclusion once again aims at a more fundamental conception of the body, which underlies communication. (180:33/209:35)
 3. In the light of the above considerations, Merleau-Ponty goes on to develop the analogy that thought is to the word as consciousness is to the body. Speech is the presence of thought in the phenomenal world, not as its token but as its body. Thought is no internal thing and does not exist independently of the world and of words. Thought and expression, then, are simultaneously constituted. The details of this analogy are important for Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the relation of consciousness and body. (181:26/211:7)
 4. The spoken word is a gesture. What is communicated in speech is not some kind of representation but rather the speaking subject himself as a certain style of being and given with the ‘world’ at which he directs his aim. Although speech acquires an institutional character, it is through the gestures that the institutional words of a language operate and are alive. (183:29/213:19)

a) Characteristics of physical gestures are developed that tell us something about linguistic communication. (184:22/214:16)

(1) Gestures are not causes or reminders of something else; they are themselves the attitude, e.g., the gesture does not make one think of anger, it is anger itself. (184:31/214:25)

(2) Gestures require at least the capacity to undergo the same experience if they are going to be intelligible, e.g., the sexual scene for a child will be merely an unfamiliar and disturbing spectacle, without meaning, unless he has reached the stage of sexual maturity. (184:39/214:32)

(3) Communication or comprehension of gestures comes about through the reciprocity of my intentions and the gestures of another. It is as if I let the other person's intentions inhabit my body through the gesture. (185:9/215:10)

(4) Just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things', it is through my body that I understand what others say. (186:5/216:12)

b) Characteristics of linguistic gestures are compared with physical gestures in order to clarify the nature of linguistic communication. (186:13/216:20)

(1) Verbal language seems to be quite different from gestures. Gestures seem to show only a certain relationship between man and the world, while verbal language aims at something mental. While there are some real differences between them, many of the differences are only apparent. (186:13/216:20)

(2) Verbal language functions in relation to a cultural context in much the same way that gestures operate in relation to a natural context. (186:25/216:32)

(3) While one is tempted to distinguish verbal language and gestures in terms of the conventional character of verbal language, Merleau-Ponty argues that there is an important sense in which the words of language are not merely conventional. (186:42/217:14)

(4) In addition, there is a sense in which gestures are not merely natural as opposed to conventional. Even some of our most common gestures show great variations from culture to culture. (188:32/219:18)

c) Yet there are fundamental differences between verbal language and gestures. The most important of these is that verbal language becomes a possession in a way that a gesture could never become. The result is that there is a certain privileged position that language has within the domain of reason. (190:1/220:27)

C. To overcome the prejudice of viewing language as a determinate thing, Merleau-Ponty attempts by means of descriptions to recapture the living character of language. In so doing, he tries to show how meaning provides a context in which words exist. (190:29/221:25)

1. Merleau-Ponty offers an existential analysis of Amnesic Aphasia. Again, many of the examples are taken from the Schneider case. While Empiri-

cism and Intellectualism have hang-ups because of the dichotomy between body and soul, an existential theory treats thought and objective language as two manifestations of the same phenomenon. Seen in this light, the root problem of aphasia (in Kantian language) is found not so much in the understanding as with the productive imagination. Thus conceived, thought and language are shown not to be the causes of the other, but coexistent. (190:36/221:32)

2. In many cases, patients for whom words have lost their meaning sometimes retain in the highest degree the ability to associate ideas. This reinforces the distinction between the lived content and the deposited significance of language. The patients seem to have lost the former while the latter enables them to associate. The lived content—the inner life of speech—is the power of relating oneself with the world. This power, Merleau-Ponty calls “transcendence.” (191:2/222:3)
3. Speech must then be conceived as a process of creating specific worlds or contexts. It is neither an operation of intelligence nor a motor phenomenon. It is wholly motility and wholly intelligence. It is only through understanding meaning in this way that one can make sense out of amnesic aphasia and other disorders such as alexia, motor aphasia, and literal paraphasia. (194:28/226:13)

III. CONCLUSIONS TO THIS CHAPTER ARE FORMULATED. Meaning as found in speech cannot be either the operation of intelligence or merely a motor phenomenon. (195:24/227:17)

- A. There must be different layers of significance. And this is just what we have seen through our analysis. There are *lived* and *determined* levels of meaning and these are in a figure-background relation to one another. Again, the Schneider case makes all of this a lot clearer. Schneider's problem is seen as an imprisonment in the actual. This time meaning is, as it were, ossified. In the normal situation, speech resides only in the openness to existence. Speech then is considered as the surplus of our existence over natural being. (195:24/277:17)
- B. These different layers of meaning can only be understood if one transcends the distinction between the physical and the mental. Our analysis of speech reveals this in-between. It must be remembered that speech not only expresses meaning but it also creates a repository and a residue. Again, it is important to keep in mind the distinction between the *speaking word* and a *spoken word*. This should remind us of Merleau-Ponty's distinction between first order speech and second order. (196:31/228:29)
- C. The analysis of speech and expression brings home to us the enigmatic nature of our own body even more effectively than did the study of bodily space and unity. The problem of the world and one's own body

consists in the fact that the world and one's body is **always already there**.
(197:21/229:25)

CONCLUSION TO PART I OF THE BOOK: (198:12/230:21)

This section attempts to bring together what we have done in this part of the book. One could certainly call it a "conclusion to the first part of the book." It begins with Merleau-Ponty declaring that the body is not an object—a claim that takes on a special significance because he puts the whole discussion of the body into a Cartesian context. The Cartesian point of view was one that purified the common sense notions of body and soul through reflection—Analytic Reflection. Merleau-Ponty's own approach has been much more radical. The descriptions of the body have revealed that in one's own experience the body appears in a radically different way than it does from the point of view of reflection. This section concludes with the claim that the distinction between body and soul that Descartes finds distorts what is given us in experience. For Merleau-Ponty experience teaches us that there is a fundamental unity between the body and soul, but a unity that is clouded in ambiguity. In some respects, one could say that Merleau-Ponty's analysis aims at making us more aware of this ambiguity. (198:12/230:21)

**PART II—THE WORLD AS PERCEIVED:
THE THEORY OF THE BODY IS ALREADY A
THEORY OF PERCEPTION**

In the first part of the book, Merleau-Ponty attempted to discover the **subject of perception**. Just who or what is the fundamental perceiver? His answer is the body. Most of the first part of the book was a defense of this claim by trying to show that the most fundamental sense of the body is the body as an incarnate presence (more than just an object, parts outside of parts). This was the first stage in his study of perception. In the second stage, the second part of the book, Merleau-Ponty turns his attention to the **object of perception**—the world. His goal, as in the first part, is to further our understanding of perception. Thus, his concern is not with our conceptions of the world nor theories about the world, but rather to go back prior to our conceptions and theories to the **world as perceived**—the world as it is found in our perceptual experience. It is this world that gives rise to conceptualization and theories, and it is this world upon which these are based. It is also through this world that we can understand the perceptual act.

Further, in the first part of this book, we have attempted to understand the nature of the body and in having done so; Merleau-Ponty is now telling us that we have already seen a certain understanding of the world implied in these efforts. In finding that the body is more than an object, we discovered that the body is a dynamic pole of the perceptual experience and, thus, it is never just an object but always something that goes beyond itself into a world. What we will discover in the second part of the book is that the world is not a thing nor a pile of things, but rather always something that goes beyond itself too. The world is the other dynamic pole of perceptual experience. Perception is a "transcending" through and through in which the body forms a system with the world. But if this is true, doesn't it mean that the body is involved in the objects of experience? And if the body is essentially ambiguous, then does not this mean that the world must share this ambiguity? But if this is the case, then it means that the world will not be the determinate world of the Analytic Attitude. Doesn't this imply that we have separated the perceived world from the "objective" world of things out there? Aren't we lost in subjectivism or relativism?

In placing the body and its ambiguity at the heart of our experience of things, Merleau-Ponty has, indeed, introduced ambiguity into things. And thus, things as they appear are different from things as they are in the "real world". In raising this point, Merleau-Ponty is setting up a dialectical move aimed at getting us to pull back from this assumption so that we might move forward towards really understanding what is given in perception. He argues that the involvement of the body is not a hindrance to getting at objects but rather the necessary condition for there being objects. He offers a series of descriptions to show how an object appears in lived experience. All of these examples are examples of not only how the body is involved in the experience of objects but also how it must necessarily be involved.

The Analytic Attitude, or the prejudice in favor of the objective world, just does not make sense when it is confronted with examples like Aristotle's illusion, Heautoscope, Stratton's experiment, or Diplopia. The goal of the analysis of these examples is to give us the experience, which remakes our contact with the lived body and the lived world. In one sense you could say that the concern now is to show that the world is neither an object nor a pile of objects. The world that we experience is always something more. And saying that it is something more does not destroy objectivity. It gets rid of an illusory "ideal of

objectivity" in order to replace it with a true understanding of objectivity and reality. In some respects, the whole question of objectivity and what it means for an object to be real becomes a central issue in the chapters that make up this part of the book.

In this brief introduction, Merleau-Ponty argues that to understand the body as the subject of perception is to understand the object of perception in a radically new way. In what follows, the implications of our new conception of the world will be worked out. The world will be considered, first in general, as it falls within sense experience (Chapter I); second, as it is spatial (II); third, as it is composed of things (III); and finally, as it is a place inhabited by others (IV).

- I. **POSITION:** Merleau-Ponty begins by stating his own position. My body is more than an object in the sense that it is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and it forms a system with the world. (203:1/235:1)

- II. **OBJECTION:** By considering the world as mediated by the body, the very objectivity, which is an essential constituent of the world, is eliminated. If the body does enter into our experience of the world, it is only by providing certain limited contacts with the world which must be overcome if the world is to be experienced as it is. Again, the example of the "cube" is used and this should remind us of the discussion in the introduction to the first part of the book, because clearly the Analytic Attitude is still very much with us. (203:16/235:15)

- III. **MERLEAU-PONTY'S RESPONSES TO THE ABOVE OBJECTION:** (204:2/236:17)
 - A. Merleau-Ponty argues that while one can conceptualize the world or an object as independent of the body, such conceptualizations are empty unless they are based upon a contact with the world, and this always involves the body. (204:7/236:23)
 1. There is a first order dogmatism that simply assumes that the object exists in-itself without even wondering how this in-itself comes to be for us. Clearly in this objection we have this same attitude manifesting itself again. (204:25/237:4)
 2. The objection comes from a kind of **second order dogmatism** of analytic reflection, which overcomes the naivety of the above, but still in reflection and thought attempts to restore the object in itself. In so doing it distorts not only the object in the world but also our conception of it. (204:28/237:6)

3. The world is not the result of abstractions from experience as it is in the Analytic Attitude of the objector, but rather is found in the lived-through experience of the body. Such abstractions as contained in the objection only make sense, themselves, in terms of a world that is initially experienced. The objections themselves presuppose this experience. (204:39/237:19)

B. Merleau-Ponty develops an analysis of several examples of ways in which external perception seems to be affected by the perception of one's own body in support of his own position. The point, of course, is to drive home the fact that the body plays a role in our experience of the world and that external perception and the perception of one's own body are two facets of one and the same act. (205:9/237:31)

1. **Aristotle's Illusion:** When one touches an object with one's fingers crossed, you tend to experience two objects rather than one. (This is a reference to *Metaphysics* 1011a33 where Aristotle in passing says: "for touch says there are two objects when we cross our fingers, while sight says there is one". It might be worth noting that Aristotle mentions the same illusion in *On Dreams* 460b28-462a7, "Again, when the fingers are crossed, one object seems to be two; but yet we deny that it is two; for sight is more authoritative than touch." He also mentions it three times in *Problems*: Bk. 31 958b16-958b22; Bk. 31 959a20-959a23; and Bk. 31 959a20-959a23. Most notable of these is the last where he says: "Why is it that an object which is held between two crossed fingers appears to be two? Is it because we touch it with two sense organs? For when we hold the hand in its natural position we cannot touch an object with the outer sides of the two fingers.") Clearly Merleau-Ponty is trying to show that this experience is unintelligible unless we realize that our body has an influence on what we experience and, more specifically, that the synthesis of the object is affected by the synthesis of one's own body. (205:11/237:33)

2. **Heautoscopy:** Here we have an example of a disturbance of the body manifested in an experience of seeing one's self as a double, usually in the form of the face and bust which imitates the expression and movements of the original. Again, this shows that the body affects experience but conversely, a certain form of external experience implies and produces a certain consciousness of one's own body. (205:33/238:16)

3. **Stratton's Experiment:** A lens is used to produce an inversion of the visual field on the retina thus objectively altering a subject's vision. What is interesting here is that as the body adapts its actions to this inversion, our experience tends to "right" itself but more importantly there is an immediate equivalence between the orientation of the visual field and the orientation of one's body. (206:10/239:2)

4. **Diplopia:** Merleau-Ponty presents an analysis of a visual disorder in which two images of a single object are seen. It is usually called double

vision. Again, what is important is how this experience illustrates the role of the body in overcoming this disorder. (206:19/239:11)

- IV. **CONCLUSION:** Every external perception is immediately synonymous with a certain perception of the body, just as every perception of the body is made explicit in the language of external perception. The goal of the following chapters is to reawaken the experience of the world as it appears to us insofar as we are in the world through our body, and insofar as we perceive the world with our body. (206:23/239:15)

CHAPTER I • SENSE EXPERIENCE

This chapter is Merleau-Ponty's second look at sensation. In a much more negative way than the Introduction to the book, this chapter covers much the same ground only with much more complex positions and more complex issues. While Empiricism does receive some attention, Merleau-Ponty's major concern here is with Kant and Intellectualism. Yet the chapter begins with the customary dialectical analysis of Empiricism and Intellectualism. The analysis focuses on two problems: Do sense qualities have meaning? And is there a unity between the senses? Empiricism gives a negative answer to both questions and Intellectualism offers an affirmative answer. The pattern of Merleau-Ponty's analysis is very much as we have already seen. Against Empiricism, he argues that sense qualities have a meaning but not, contra Intellectualism, an explicit or determinate meaning. Against Intellectualism, he argues that there really is a difference of content and a real difference between the senses yet not, contra Empiricism, explicit separation. The point of these analyses is that there is a kind of meaning and a kind of unity that is not even conceivable from the analytic attitudes of Empiricism and Intellectualism.

The point of this chapter is to maintain that there is such a kind of meaning and unity. In the following chapters of Part II, we will see specific examples of such meanings and unities. Chapter II is concerned with spatial meanings given in sense experience (horizontal and vertical, depth, movement); Chapter III with the meanings involved in the experience of a thing (size and shape, color, tactile experience); and Chapter IV with the experience of the other (cultural meanings). The pattern of argument in the present chapter is carried on in each of the following chapters. In Chapter II, spatial meanings or unities are argued to exist contra Empiricism but not to be spatial meanings

such as might be found in geometry, as Intellectualism would maintain. In Chapter III, Merleau-Ponty argues that our sense experience of things actually contains size and shape, color, weight. These meanings are given in sense experience but again not in the explicit sense of “meaning” that Intellectualism would attribute. Against Empiricism, finally in Chapter IV, it is argued that the problem of other minds is in fact overcome in experience—we do experience the other directly. Yet the problem is not just a pseudo-problem. Contra Intellectualism, the other is given to us as always transcending our grasp—as really other. In much the same way, these chapters also carry on the dialectical argument over the unity of the senses within the context of Empiricism and Intellectualism.

Clearly the focus of all these arguments in this chapter and the chapters that follow is to make us aware that there is something wrong with the very attitude that is central to both Empiricism and Intellectualism. In adopting a kind of Cartesian point of view, both have turned reality into a product of reflective thought. For both, reality is a matter of in-itself (*en-soi*) or for-itself (*pour-soi*) with nothing in-between these two fundamental categories of Analytic Reflection. As we progress through these chapters, Merleau-Ponty attempts to make us aware that our lived experience attests to the reality of something in-between that does not make any sense from the point of view of the Analytic Attitude. Over and over again, Merleau-Ponty argues that if we accept the Analytic Attitude, all sorts of experiences just don’t make sense and we are lost in all sorts of paradoxes. This in-between reality, as we have already seen, is the very essence of the new conception of the body. Now we will see that it is also at the heart of the lived world.

But obviously more is at stake here. What we shall see is an on going attack against Analytic Reflection by showing how it is distortive of the philosophy and the social sciences. And, of course, behind all these attacks is Merleau-Ponty’s attempt to transform philosophy by instituting Radical Reflection at its core. Nothing less than a complete transformation of philosophy will be required in order to make sense of reality. As we read the following chapters, we should keep this part of Merleau-Ponty’s agenda clearly in mind. The importance of this first chapter is that all of the above arguments are laid out for the first time and this chapter provides a kind of framework in which what is to follow makes sense.

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** Merleau-Ponty continues to argue that objective thought has no real conception of the subject of perception and thus has no real understanding of perception. (207:1/241:1)
 - A. **Empiricism** describes perception as an event in the world consisting of data connected by causal relations. The perceived subject is no more than a place in which the elements of perception occur and are related. It is perception seen from the *outside*. This is radically different from the way in which perception appears from the *inside*. What Empiricism does not seem to realize is that all knowledge takes place in a context that has been opened up by perception as lived through from the *inside*. (207:4/241:4)
 - B. **Intellectualism** goes beyond Empiricism in that it deals with consciousness of certain states. There is a sense in which Intellectualism makes explicit what is central to the approach of Empiricism—the point of view of the transcendental ego. Yet it too has provided itself with a ready-made world, a whole system of experience—world, body, and empirical self—which are subordinate to a universal thinker who sustains the relationships but does not perceive. (207:29/241:7)
 - C. **Conclusion:** Insofar as sensation is taken as a state of consciousness or as a consciousness of a state, there will be no perceiver. The goal of this chapter is to return to sensation in order to discover the living relation that exists between perceiver, his body, and the world. (208:24/241:31)
- II. **MEANING IS FOUND AS ALREADY GIVEN IN SENSATION.** This view is developed in opposition to Empiricism but it also attempts to overcome the distortions of Intellectualism. (208:33/242:14)
- A. In opposition to **Empiricism**, Merleau-Ponty argues that sensations are not discrete unintelligible elements. They have a meaning. Using Goldstein and Rosenthal's observations on color, he tries to show how the perception of color contains a real significance that Empiricism does not recognize nor can it give an adequate account. (209:1/242:18)
 1. In what follows Merleau-Ponty almost lists the results of how different colors affect muscular tonicity, accuracy of movement, and even the degree of abduction and adduction of certain acts. (209:1/242:18)
 2. On the basis of these and other descriptions, Merleau-Ponty draws a series of observations that seem to follow from them. (209:26/243:9)
 - a) These observations show that each color has a sufficient effect so that a definite motor value can be assigned to it. (209:26/243:9)
 - b) Sensations present themselves with a "motor physiognomy" and thus possess a kind of "living" significance. (There is an error in the text in this section that actually makes what Merleau-Ponty is saying here unintelligible. On at least two occasions, the new version of the text replaces "adduction" with "abduction." The text should read: "Generally speaking, red and yellow favour **adduction**, blue and green **abduction**. Now, on

the whole, the significance of **adduction** is that the organism turns towards the stimulus and is attracted by the world—**abduction** that is turns away from the stimulus and withdraws towards its centre.” One should note this error in your copy of the text.) (209:34/243:18)

c) This “living” significance makes sense only if it is not a closed state or an indescribable quality presented to an observing or thinking subject but rather more like a “motor halo” that surrounds sensations. (210:16/244:4)

d) The most basic experience of color is found in certain bodily attitudes, which are indicative of the color. Qualities, such as color, are revealed through types of bodily behavior. (211:2/244:28)

3. **Conclusion: Sensation has a lived meaning which is nothing other than a certain way of being in the world suggested to us from a certain point in space and revealed to our body.** Merleau-Ponty develops this point by offering two interesting comparisons. He compares both falling asleep and sleeping and the presence of God in the sacrament of Holy Eucharist with sensation and its meaning. His point is that sensation and its meaning are related in a form of communion. (211:19/245:15)

B. In opposition to **Intellectualism**, Merleau-Ponty argues that while sensations are meaningful, they are not meaningful in the intellectualistic sense. (212:17/246:20)

1. **Position of Intellectualism:** It claims that sensations have meanings in so far as they have an object or that they refer to something. But sensation can refer to something only in so far as consciousness steps back from sensations and can bring them all together into meaningful wholes. (212:17/246:20)

2. **Criticism of this Position:** In removing consciousness from sensation, Intellectualism in effect makes our sense organs either objects in the world or just instruments. Neither objects nor instruments can make sense out of sensations. The problem is that Intellectualism is trapped in the dichotomy of the in itself and for itself in so far as it attempts to overcome Empiricism without really understanding the fundamental problem of Empiricism. The result is that it is condemned to repeat the same errors. (212:31/247:6)

3. Clearly certain insights can be gathered from the weakness of Intellectualism shown by the description of the lived experience of color. (213:16/247:16)

a) In reaction to Intellectualism, and also to describe his own methodology, Merleau-Ponty claims that if one is to justify one's own reflection, that is to say one's own progress toward truth, one must not merely put one's view of the world in place of another's, but one must show how this particular naïve view of the world is included in and transcended by one's own. (213:16/247:16)

b) The results of our descriptions all point to the fact that sensations are intentional, but clearly in a sense of "intentional" radically different from what is held by Intellectualism. (213:31/248:31)

c) The body and the sensible are not mutually exclusive terms. Rather they are connected in that the sensible is nothing but a vague beckoning to the body that calls it forth. One abandons oneself in the sensible. This is just what is meant by intentionality of the body. (214:7/248:22)

C. **Conclusion:** But it still can be asked, how does the concept of sensation as intentional overcome Intellectualism's problem of the dichotomy between *for itself* and the *in itself*—the problem of the relationship between the intellectual and the physical? Merleau-Ponty has attacked Intellectualism on the grounds that it cannot explain the experience of perception because it is trapped in this distinction. He now turns this same objection upon his own position and in concluding attempts to expand on his position with his answer. (215:16/250:3)

1. Central for understanding how the dichotomy of *for itself* and *in itself* can be understood is the realization that every perception takes place in an atmosphere of generality and is presented to us anonymously. There is always an element of every sensation that transcends our grasp and that gives us something other. (215:20/250:6)

2. Sensation can be anonymous only because it is incomplete. This reveals a depth in experience that can never be exhausted and which always remains marginal. (216:24/251:15)

3. All of this shows us that sensation belongs to a certain field and is pre-personal. Unlike in Intellectualism, what we find here is that vision is a thought subordinated to a certain field, which reveals itself through the body and this is what is called a sense. (216:38/251:29)

III. **THE SENSES HAVE A UNITY** and are interrelated with one another. The concern is to understand this unity in the context of the conceptions of Intellectualism and Empiricism. (217:11/252:8)

A. **Introduction** and development of the problem of the unity of the senses is presented in the context of the controversy between Intellectualism and Empiricism. (217:11/252:8)

1. **Intellectualism** is not really concerned with the senses. For it the senses are nothing but a product of analysis. There really aren't senses outside of abstraction. What are ultimately real are consciousness and its unity. Using Kant's deduction of space as a form of sensibility as a framework, Merleau-Ponty argues that Intellectualism holds that all the senses are spatial and thus in some sense one. (217:11/252:8)

2. **Empiricism** has found that it cannot find *facts* that would refute this conception of the *a priori* and this whole idea of space as an *a priori* of experience. Rather it starts by assuming that the character of space is what distinguishes (and separates) the senses. Ultimately, for Empiri-

cism, space is a special characteristic of vision. Merleau-Ponty argues that as a result, its attempts at overcoming Intellectualism rest upon the presupposition of just what it is trying to claim. (217:34/253:2)

3. **The problem** behind the controversy between Intellectualism and Empiricism is not a factual one or even a matter of the interpretation of facts. This is a problem that arises from the very nature of reflection and its relation to experience. To overcome the problems involved in this controversy, we must be clear about the fact that there are different kinds of reflection, but more importantly we must become aware of the nature of our own investigation. (218:22/253:25)

a) **Intellectualistic Reflection** (also sometimes called Analytic Reflection) is the kind of reflection whereby both the object and consciousness are thematized. The natural result of this kind of reflection is dualism, the very kind of dualism that has plagued both Intellectualism and Empiricism. This is also the kind of reflection, which is at the heart of science. (218:28/253:32)

b) **Radical Reflection** for Merleau-Ponty is a new kind of reflection that overcomes all the paradoxes of Analytic Reflection. It is a non-thematizing reflection by which consciousness becomes aware of itself in operation. Rather than giving us some kind of argument to support the existence of such a reflection, he gives us examples of where we have had such an experience. The purpose of his descriptions is to enable us to rediscover this kind of reflection within ourselves. (219:13/254:21)

- B. **Intellectualism's claim about the unity of the senses:** As an example of what Radical Reflection can do, Merleau-Ponty formulates his own response to Intellectualism's (Kantian) conception of space as a single *a priori* form. At first it seems that he is siding with Empiricism, but we will see that this is not the case. (220:8/255:21)

1. The unity of space and ultimately the Transcendental Deduction of Kant are based on the assumption that experience and consciousness form a complete system of truth and that there is nothing for which a rational and unified account cannot be given. Clearly, space is the form of sensibility because logical necessity of truth and reason require it. If we are to accept or reject this assumption, we must get back to the experience that gave rise to it. (220:19/255:33)

2. Merleau-Ponty argues that Kant was not true to his own principles in forming his conception of space as an *a priori* condition of experience. Phenomenological investigations carry on the original inspiration of Kant and discover a new definition of the *a priori* - a definition that overcomes the problems implied in the form-matter distinction between *a priori* and empirical that gives Intellectualism such difficulties. (220:34/256:11)

a) The unity of the senses is nothing but the formal expression of a fundamental contingency: the fact that we are in the world. (221:7/256:27)

b) No sensation is atomic. All sensory experience presupposes a certain field. An *a priori* truth is nothing more than the grasping of the role these truths play within the context of this field. An *a posteriori* truth is the same fact grasped implicitly and in isolation from the field. The unity of the senses is an *a priori* truth in this sense. (221:20/257:4)

c) Once we distinguish the *a priori* and the empirical, between form and content, we are in a position to understand spaces as concrete moments. But in thus opening ourselves to this conception of space, isn't there a danger that we have now come to understand perception in an Empiricistic sense? Doesn't lived experience attest to the separation of the senses? (222:5257:32)

- C. **Empiricism's claim about the separation of the senses:** To again make us aware of the effects of Analytic Reflection and how Radical Reflection overcomes its inherent problems, Merleau-Ponty turns to the arguments of Empiricism. Merleau-Ponty tries to show that Empiricism does offer some strong points in favor of the fundamental distinction between the senses and yet it does not ultimately defeat the position of Intellectualism. Again, we have one of the examples of the arguments and attacks missing one another. (222:23/257:32)

1. The discussion begins with the famous example used by Empiricism of the experience of **the person blind from birth whose sight has been restored**. In most cases, such persons discover something radically different from what they had by means of the other senses. For Empiricism this was considered "proof" of the separation of the senses. (222:22/258:11)

a) Such "proofs" have never nor can they ever prove that sight is separate from the other senses. Such arguments always presuppose what they are trying to prove. (222:26/258:15)

b) Touch involves a setting at least analogous to that of vision that allows the previous blind person to marvel at the differences that vision offers. (223:12/259:8)

c) True vision proceeds through a series of phases of transition from sight operating like touch to it gradually taking on its own way of possessing a world. In short, what experience shows us is that each sense possesses the object in its own particular way and that there is a kind of spatiality of touch that relates to but is different from the spatiality of vision. (223:22/259:17)

2. On the basis of these descriptions, Merleau-Ponty concludes that Empiricism rather than disproving Intellectualism shows that there is a richness and a complexity to our senses that has not been realized by either Empiricism or Intellectualism alone. (224:14/260:18)

a) The tactile field has never the fullness of the visual. The tactile object is never wholly present in each of its parts as is the case with the visual

object. In short, we can draw the obvious conclusion that touching is not seeing. (224:14/260:18)

b) What the experience of the blind person who now sees tells us is that the senses are distinct from each other and distinct from intellection insofar as each brings with it a new mode of presentation and a new type of synthesis, which can never be exactly transposed. We can recognize this only if we reject Analytic Reflection and rediscover the body as the subject of perception. (224:31/261:2)

- D. Merleau-Ponty now turns his attention to the **fundamental problem** behind the controversy between Empiricism and Intellectualism: Analytic Reflection. In what follows, he turns his attention first to Empiricism and tries to show that because of its reflective attitude it really cannot make sense out of experiences in which the senses can be seen to communicate with one another. After developing a series of criticisms based upon the descriptions of concrete experiences, Merleau-Ponty is quick to point out that we ought not to fall into Intellectualism which has the same problems of making sense out of lived experience. Again, we will see that the cause is Analytic Reflection. (225:20/261:33)

1. **Empiricism's** reflective attitude makes many experiences paradoxical or outright unintelligible. (225:22/262:1)

a) The experience of being in the **concert hall** is developed along with the way in which the sound and the sights are present. Merleau-Ponty concludes that what we have here is two spaces but they are distinguishable only because of the common background in which they exist. It is only in so far as the reflective attitude abstracts from this common background that the senses become distinct and separate. (225:22/262:1)

b) Merleau-Ponty develops a description of his experience of **his room** in which there are pages of white paper on the floor, some in the sun and others in the shadows. He begins by thinking that they are all the same color white, but upon reflection he begins to note the differences. (225:36/262:16)

1) The source of the above difference and the source of the whole idea of sensible *quale* is the reflective attitude that so dominates Empiricism. Much of what follows is a careful analysis of the second order reflective act and how it transforms our lived experience and how it makes us forgetful of the lived experience. (225:36/262:16)

2) In what follows, Merleau-Ponty offers an interesting description of how the objective attitude transforms lived experiences and he tries to give us an example of how Radical Reflection can make not only a home in lived experience but even in the transformations of the Analytic Attitude. (227:2/263:28)

c) Using the examples of **cinematography picture** and stroboscopic movements, Merleau-Ponty tries to show again that the Analytic Attitude even when it uses the "constancy hypothesis" cannot give an ad-

equate account of such lived experiences. Again he attempts to show that even such everyday experiences present major problems for Empiricism in trying to develop an account or an explanation. Once again he claims that the source of these difficulties is the very nature of the reflective attitude. (227:40/264:32)

- d) The last major example that Merleau-Ponty describes is the experiences of someone under the influence of the drug, **mescaline**. (228:14/265:13)

1) If one takes seriously the experience of those under this drug, it clearly seems to be the case that they are claiming that they hear colors and see sounds. It is important to realize that taking these experiences seriously is precisely what the analytic attitude cannot do. (228:14/265:13)

2) Furthermore, such experiences are not limited to those induced by drugs. If we are open to lived experience, we discover concrete examples that cannot be ignored. (229:11/266:14)

- e) **Conclusion:** The senses communicate by opening on to the structure of the thing. The form of objects stands in a certain relation to their specific nature and appears to all our senses. It is only in so far as we can overcome the limitations of the analytic attitude that such experiences can be even opened to us. Merleau-Ponty ends this section with a series of concrete descriptions of experience, which support his claim. (229:17/266:20)

2. But Merleau-Ponty now warns us that we must be careful. If we concluded that the senses communicate by opening on to the structure of the thing, there is a real danger that we might fall back into **Intellectualism**. We must be concerned about how we develop our account of such experiences. (230:18/267:26)

a) Intellectualism is very quick to offer an account of such experiences by uniting them into a single world. While such experiences do have a unity, it is not in the way that science gathers data, but much more in the way binocular vision grasps one sole object. (230:31/268:6)

1) Merleau-Ponty provides a long description of the synthesis of binocular vision followed by an explanation of why the intellectualistic account does not do it justice. Experience shows us that something other than thinking is going on. (230:31/268:6)

2) Nor does attempting to explain it away by means of scientific ideas such as "an innate device" or the functioning of two eyes gets us anywhere toward understanding this kind of experience. (231:6/268:21)

3) Shall we attempt to account for double and normal vision in terms of the divergence and convergence of the eyes? In those who have been operated on for cataracts, it is impossible to say whether their double vision is due to the failure to see because of failure to focus or whether they fail to focus because they cannot see. In this context the data is always ambiguous. (231:17/268:31)

b) The unity of the object that is given us in sensation is intentional but not some kind of "notional intentionality" as Intellectualism would have it. Again using the description of the experience of binocular vision, Merleau-Ponty tries to show that this is not the product of some third person operations. Things are much more complex than just this: it is not the epistemological subject that brings about the unity, but rather our bodies. (232:6/269:18)

c) After developing all these descriptions of synthesis of binocular vision, Merleau-Ponty returns now to the question of the kind of unity that is found between the senses that Intellectualism does not even imagine. What gives our senses a unity is the very nature of the object of perception that is not only given in experience but always transcending the very experience in which it is given. It is this imminence and transcendence, which occurs in lived experiences that is completely lacking in the analytic attitude of Intellectualism. (233:11/271:2)

E. **Conclusion** to this section on the unity of the senses is developed by a continued analysis of binocular vision and two new descriptions: the experience of talking films and an experiment with flashing words. With these three examples, Merleau-Ponty tries to pull together the basic points of this section. (233:41/271:30)

1. The unity of senses cannot be understood in terms of their subsumption under a category by consciousness, but by their never ending integration into one knowing organism. Again, Merleau-Ponty develops his analysis of binocular vision to illustrate the unique nature of the synthesis of the senses by the body that is beyond the understanding of Intellectualism and Empiricism. (233:41/271:30)

2. To reinforce his conclusion, he now turns to an example of a talking film and shows how such an experience is not merely the presence of sound and sight, but rather the talking film transforms both sound and sight. The result is that the sudden absence of one makes this synthesis all the more obvious. In the talking film we have a reality that has an underlying unity. (234:19/272:17)

3. Behind both of the above examples, Merleau-Ponty finds the body to be a ready-made system of equivalents that allows for the transpositions from one sense to another. It is the body that provides the underlying unity that we saw manifested in the above two examples. The body is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is the general instrument of my "comprehension". (235:2/273:5)

4. Merleau-Ponty extends his discussion of 'natural' objects to that of cultural ones by turning his attention to language. This time he is concerned about an experiment in which words are flashed on a screen so fast that one cannot tell what the words are. In this context words such as 'warm', 'hard', 'damp', etc. seem to produce an effect on the body, a kind of pre-figured meaning of the word. Again, we have an example of the body's

providing an underlying unity that makes possible the conceptual meaning, which words can have. (235:20/273:23)

IV. CONCLUSION TO THIS CHAPTER attempts to bring into focus that central problem of this chapter. (237:6/275:21)

A. Objection—All that has been presented up to this point may be an adequate description of how things appear, but it is our job as philosophers to go beyond appearances and conceive of things as they are. Is it the job of the philosopher to go beyond the ambiguity of the above description in order to find the truth? And if this is the job of philosophy, are we not forced into one of two alternatives neither of which is satisfactory? (237:6/275:21)

1. If we do clarify the ambiguity of the above description, don't I then discover that I am an object just like any other thing? But, then, there is no one who perceives—there is a series of pieces that make up a process and no one who actually perceives. (237:13/275:28)

2. If I react to the above approach and claim that I am not an object, but just a consciousness of an object; then I really have the problem of how is it that I come into contact with an object. But, of course, the whole point of these objections is to remind us that Empiricism and Intellectualism are still very much with us even despite the arguments that we have seen. (237:21/276:1)

B. Answer to the objection: In response, Merleau-Ponty becomes almost poetical, and thus very difficult to understand. It is as if he thinks that the ultimate issue here is not one that can be decided by rational arguments but rather by a plea to look at things differently. He starts by returning to experience and tries to describe how the Analytic Attitude develops into both Empiricism and Intellectualism. But in so doing, he argues that it overlooks the very nature of perception, its object, and the real subject of perception. In attempting to describe all three, but most of all the subject of perception, Merleau-Ponty claims that the real subject of perception, the body, is **temporality**. Here we have a very radical claim of how the body is more than just an object, parts outside of parts. The final part of this conclusion returns to the Analytic Attitude, which is closed to the above descriptions. This section ends with a plea to open ourselves to the non-thetic reality that is the ground of perception. (238:1/276:25)

1. Merleau-Ponty begins by giving an account of the way of looking at perception such that the positions of Empiricism and Intellectualism arise. In returning to the experience of perception, he then tries to claim that this attitude misses and distorts essential aspects of perception. (238:1/276:25)

a) In perception we do not think the object—we experience it. The object is always already given as being present in perception but always as

transcending perception. For both Empiricism and Intellectualism this aspect of lived perception always remains a paradox. (238:38/277:24)

b) But most important for Merleau-Ponty is his claim that the perceptual synthesis is a temporal synthesis; and subjectivity, at the level of perception, is nothing but **temporality**. Much of this section attempts to describe time and the body trying to bring together many of the themes of this chapter. Again, this is an aspect of lived perception that is completely closed to the Analytic Attitude. (239:20/278:13)

2. Merleau-Ponty argues that the above descriptions reveal and depend upon a new type of reflection—radical reflection. Once again he contrasts radical reflection and intellectualistic reflection and argues that only through the former a true understanding of perception will be achieved. The section ends with an almost poetic plea for understanding. (241:8/280:13)

CHAPTER 2 • SPACE

As we have pointed out previously, this chapter and the two following carry on the argument developed in the First Part of the book. While Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological analysis in the Second Part has turned its attention to the object of perception, he has already in the First Part subjectivized the object and thus opened himself to the charge of relativism. His response is that he has not destroyed objectivity but rather destroyed a false conception of objectivity. What he is attempting to do now is make us aware of what "real" objectivity consists. In the last chapter, objectivity was tied to the "givenness" of perception. We saw that sensations had both a meaning and a unity, which constitute their objectivity. But this meaning and unity is not as the Analytic Attitude might imagine it to be. Objectivity or givenness has a very unique character for Merleau-Ponty.

In the present chapter, we are going to try and understand this new conception of "objectivity" or "givenness". But now we are going to do so by turning our attention to certain aspects of spatial givenness. Perceptual experience comes already possessing certain basic kinds of meanings: horizontal and vertical, depth, movement, and certain unusual experiences such as occur in myths, dreams, and insanity. The problem is that from the Analytic Attitude such "meanings" are not given in perception but are rather "products" in some sense or other. It is important to see what the problem is here. The traditional views do not deny that these meanings **appear** to be given in perception. Their position, however, is that this is only an appearance: when one under-

stands perception, one discovers that these meanings cannot be given in perception. So when Merleau-Ponty says "Let us look at experience and find what is actually given there to decide the issue", it clearly does not have any influence on someone who approaches perception from the point of view of the Analytic Attitude. Merleau-Ponty's opponents will respond yes, it looks like this but this is only an appearance. The result is that appeals to experience by themselves are never going to be enough.

Instead of simple appeals to experience, what we find in this chapter are description of experience which challenge both Empiricism and Intellectualism, challenging them to account for such experiences. After offering a rather detailed description of Stratton's experiment with inverted vision and another experiment with titled vision, Merleau-Ponty not only challenges their accounts of such experiences but also asks how either of these phenomena would ever happen if the account of Empiricism and Intellectualism were true. Clearly the claim is not only that these accounts are inadequate to explain such experiences, but these accounts if they are properly understood actually lead to the denial of the very possibility that such experiences could actually exist. Furthermore, he argues that if his approach to perception is on the right track, there really is not a problem giving an account of these experiences. Explicit spatial meanings are a product of the adaptation of the body to its situation by means of "implicit meaning." Once the body does this adaptation and a dialectical relation is established, perception is now given with certain "explicit meanings."

The rest of the chapter follows in much the same pattern. Intellectualism, for example, maintains that depth is not a given but rather a product of an inference. After all how could it be a given if in cases like the "View Master" there is nothing there to be given? Merleau-Ponty's response is twofold. Intellectualism is presupposing what it is trying to prove and thus its explanations just do not work. For Intellectualism, I see a small man and since I know what he is, I infer that he is far away. Merleau-Ponty argues that a necessary condition for seeing a thing is seeing it as having its "actual" size. To see a wee little man would not be to see a real man. From tall buildings, the people below take on an unreal character—they look like ants. From a plane flying high, the cars below look like toys. For Merleau-Ponty depth is a product of our bodies grasping things. The weaker the grasp the further we see the thing from us. In addition, Merleau-Ponty offers a series of de-

scriptions of experience such as micropsy that neither Empiricism nor Intellectualism can provide an adequate account. Further, both tend to deny the very existence of such phenomena.

In turning to our experience of movement, Merleau-Ponty claims that movement is actually given in perception and not something inferred, as the Analytic Attitude would claim. Again Merleau-Ponty uses things like Zeno's Paradox to show how the Analytic Attitude is trapped by its own way of approaching such phenomena. Intellectualism and Empiricism take the view that the real is composed of actual places and thus the paradox is very real for them. Perception of motion can only be real provided that what is given in perception is more than being-in-a-place. Transitions must be given and be real in perception.

The final part of this chapter turns to a series of situations in which the normalcy of perception has broken down. In situations of drug induced experience, schizophrenia, dreams, or even in the context of myths, it seems that unusual kinds of meaning are given in perception. Of course, the Analytic Attitude would say that these experiences can not happen the way that they are described. If perceptions are composed of determinate pieces, these experiences can hardly even be called experiences. But if there are non-thetic or implicit meanings given in perceptions, it is possible to explain how such non-normal experiences are real experiences. Further, to recognize the reality of such experiences is not to relativize experience. Myth, dreams, and even insanity are never totally sealed off from the world but are themselves an opening on to it. The problem with the traditional approaches is that Intellectualism claims that the apparent and real are one and Empiricism claims that the apparent and real are separate. What we must see, according to Merleau-Ponty, is that the apparent opens on to the real and is the real presence of the real, but a real that always transcends the apparent. It is precisely this, which is the ground of objectivity.

In the four parts of this chapter, which are almost like chapters unto themselves, Merleau-Ponty considers the experience of horizontal and vertical, depth, movement, and such experiences as are found in myths, dreams, and insanity. With each, Merleau-Ponty argues that these experiences make no sense if there is an attempt to explain them only in terms of the subjective or objective conceptions of space. Not only do these phenomena resist such explanations but if one examines them with an unbiased eye, they are suggestive of yet another conception of space.

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** Merleau-Ponty begins this chapter by using Kantian terminology to suggest that there are two possible ways of looking at space: Intellectualism and Empiricism. First, space could be conceived (as is done by Empiricism) as the concrete **subjective** relationship that exists within our experience of the connections between things such as being on top or bottom, right or left of something, and near or far. Second, space could also be **objectively** understood (as is done by Intellectualism) as the single indivisible whole in which all things have position and relation to one another independently of our arbitrary relationship to them. This would be the space which geometry develops. After making this distinction, Merleau-Ponty poses two questions: Are we faced with just these two alternative ways of conceiving space? Does not experience provide us with a different way of conceiving space? Merleau-Ponty is going to argue that these are not the only two ways and that experience does provide us not only with another but a more fundamental conception of space—lived space. (243:1/283:1)

- II. **HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL:** Merleau-Ponty proposes that we look at our experience of these spatial relations prior to analytic analysis. The problem is that such experiences tend to be hidden in the “ordinary run of living.” Thus to solve this problem Merleau-Ponty proposes that we examine some exceptional cases in order to make our ordinary experience stand out more clearly. To do so, he turns to a series of experiments done by two psychologists, Stratton and Wertheimer. It is important to keep in mind when looking at this experimental data that the goal is to understand ordinary experience. (244:25/284:33)
 - A. **Stratton's experiments** with vision without retinal inversion are used to provide the basic data for this section. Merleau-Ponty uses two articles published by Stratton as a basis for this discussion: “Some preliminary experiments on vision without inversion of the retinal image” and “Vision without inversion of the retinal image” both published in *Psychological Review* in 1896 and 1897 respectively. (244:25/284:33)
 1. *Description of the experiment:* It has been long known that the retinal image is inverted. Stratton's experiment seeks to explore what would happen if the retinal image were turned right side up. By the use of special glasses the image on the retinal was corrected and the result was that the whole landscape at first appears unreal and upside down. But by the second day, the subject begins to see things the “right way up” but feels that his own body is upside down. A second experiment follows the same pattern but now from the third to the seventh day, the body progressively rights itself and finally seems to occupy a normal position especially when it is active. There is also interesting adaptations of actions with things and also objects with hearing. When the glasses are

eventually removed objects do not invert but there is queerness about them and motor actions are reversed. (244:30/285:1)

2. *Stratton's interpretation of the data:* Since the inverted visual data conflicts at first with the normal tactile experience, the subject must decode or translate the visual data until it becomes habitual. The 'top' of the visual field, where the legs at first appear, have been frequently identified with what is 'down' for touch, soon becomes so identified through habit that the subject can 'see' and 'feel' both in the same place. (245:18/285:29)

3. *Critique of Stratton's interpretation:* This interpretation is unintelligible insofar as it assumes some kind of meaning for 'inverted,' 'the right way up,' etc., when this is the very question at issue—What do these terms mean within the context of the experiment? One cannot simply assume that two points are enough to establish a direction between things. We are not dealing with things here but rather with sensory fields and experience. The tendency here is to assume that the world and orientated space are given along side the content of sensory experience but they are not. All that is given is experience and the question is how experience acquires spatial meanings. (246:23/287:8)

4. *Application of this experiment to the issue at hand:* Merleau-Ponty generalizes the above critique and applies it to both empiricistic and intellectualistic psychologies insofar as they have tried to explain the experiment. Empiricism tends to claim that experience is passive and ultimately receives spatial relations as content from the world. Intellectualism claims that the subject structures the experience and that this "form" that it produces is constitutive of spatial relationships. (247:20/288:10)

a) Empiricism cannot explain how it is ever possible for the image of the world to right itself for me. (247:39/288:26)

b) Intellectualism cannot even concede that the image of the world is ever inverted. (247:41/288:28)

c) What we need is a new conception of spatiality that transcends the options of either content or form. What we need to do is go back to lived experience prior to any distinction between matter and form. Or to put it in other words, we need to find a conception of space that is a kind of absolute within the sphere of the relative. (249:11/288:30)

- B. **Wertheimer's classic experiments** with the tilting of the visual field, which appeared in 1912 in *Experimentelle Studien über das Sehvermögen*, are presented. (248:24/289:20)

1. *Description of the experiments:* In an experiment analogous to Stratton's, a situation is created by means of a mirror in which a subject's visual experience is reflected at an angle of 45 degrees with the result that everything is seen as "slanted." A man walking in this situation tends to lean to one side and sees an object falling as falling at an oblique angle. The general effect is an experience of "queerness." After a few minutes

a sudden change occurs and things become "normal" or vertical again. (248:24/289:20)

2. *Wertheimer's interpretation*: Merleau-Ponty here develops Wertheimer's interpretation and turns it into his own view of space. In doing so, Merleau-Ponty develops some of the implications of this study to use against an approach like Stratton's and to defend his own new conception of space. (248:33/289:29)

a) In Stratton's experiment, we thought that motor exploration was the key to "righting" the visual field, but now we see that this exploration is not even necessary and bearings are taken by a kind of global act on the part of the perceiving subject. Clearly more is involved here than the position of the body. It seems that the visual field can impose a spatial orientation, which is not that of the *physical body*. (By *physical body*, Merleau-Ponty means the mass of tactile, labyrinthine and kinesthetic data that has been called the body by Stratton.) (248:33/289:29)

b) Although the *physical body*, as a mosaic of given sensations, has no specific direction, it does play an essential part in establishing the experience of the "level." One might more correctly say it is the *body as agent* or the *virtual body* that plays an essential part in the establishing of the spatiality of the "level." (249:28/290:32)

c) In this experiment we see how the virtual body ousts the physical body to such an extent that the subject no longer experiences the effects of the mirror but rather experiences a situation in which he is capable of living. The virtual body gears itself to the world by making it a possible habitat. The constitution of a spatial "level" is simply one means by which the virtual body integrates itself in a world. The determinacy of perception in terms of definite spatial relations clearly points to a perceptual ground or general setting in which my body can co-exist with the world. (250:14/291:23)

- C. Merleau-Ponty now **applies the results** of this experiment to the problems we have seen with Stratton's experiment. He tells us that we are now in a position to understand the phenomena described by Stratton but left unexplained in his work. (250:41/292:13)
 1. The 'correction' of the field is not the result of association as an empiricist approach would have it nor is it an establishing of a new co-ordinate system as the intellectualist would claim, but rather it is the result of my body adapting to the situation. (250:41/292:13)
 2. These studies reveal that there is an organic relation between the body and the world such that spatial meanings are the result of the body gearing the subject to his world. This process is how it comes about that the world appears as *real* for the subject. (251:27/293:13)
- D. This section **concludes** with the question: Why do clear perceptions and assured actions always presuppose spatial relations as already given? (251:30/293:16)

1. Merleau-Ponty answers this question by attacking the assumptions upon which it is based. This question assumes that there is some determinate ground for spatial relations and in so doing assumes that we could have a transcended view of it like that of the *thinking subject*. But the fact is that we are operating within perception and have no such view. Within perception, space is always given as precedes itself and as always already *there*. For the *perceiving subject* space is always given as a condition for perception itself. (252:5/293:24)
 2. To reinforce the distinction between the *thinking subject* and the *perceiving subject*, we turn to a description of a face seen upside down. For the *thinking subject* there really is no difference between a face seen this way or that. But for the *perceiving subject* to see a face is to take a certain hold upon it. It is to be able to follow on its surface a certain perceptual route with its ups and downs. As a result, after a few minutes the face seen upside down has a uniquely unnatural aspect. It even becomes terrifying. The way the face is given in perception again shows how spatial relations are central and presupposed in taking a hold upon an object. (252:21/294:5)
 3. We could not perceive anything unless our gaze took a hold on a world. But it is important to realize that this taking a hold is not done by the thinking subject or even the perceiving subject. Prior to our perception, our lived bodies, as systems of anonymous 'functions', establish a relationship to the world such that things appear as already possessing spatial organization. Thus every perceived world is grasped in terms of direction and we cannot dissociate being from orientated being. It is this primordial activity of the body that is the condition for the possibility of spatial relationships and spatial meanings. (253:19/295:11)
- III. **DEPTH.** Somewhat following the pattern of the last section, Merleau-Ponty turns his attention to another spatial meaning "depth." His problem is that traditional views have denied that such a meaning is actually given in perception. The influence of these views is so great that he thinks that we would normally agree with one or another of them. His goal in this section is to show the distortive assumptions behind these views and to awaken in us an experience of what is actually given in perception. Of course, as with the last section, he also goes on to explain the role of the lived body as the ground of such meanings. (254:36/297:1)
- A. **Introduction** and statement of the problem for this section: (254:36/197:1)
1. Traditional positions are one in denying that depth is visible. (254:36/297:1)
 - a) **Empiricism** (Berkeley) holds that our retinas receive only flat projections of the spectacle and that depth is not spread out before our eyes but given only in a foreshortened form. (254:37/297:2)

- b) **Intellectualism** holds, for theoretical reasons that depth is invisible even though it might appear to be there. Like all other spatial relations, depth is the result of a synthesis and is not seen. (255:6/297:9)
2. Assessment of these positions. (255:11/297:14)
- a) In both positions, depth is equated with breadth seen from the side. (255:11/297:14)
- (1) Berkeley argues that what one calls depth is nothing other than a juxtaposition of points that I am simply in a bad position to see. If I were a spectator looking at what I am looking at from the side, I would see depth. Merleau-Ponty's point is that such a "depth" is nothing other than "breadth" seen from over there. (255:11/297:14)
- (2) Intellectualism arrives at much the same conception. It conceives of depth as a process of synthesis because it too develops its analysis on the basis of a depth already in existence but as presented to a spectator standing at the side. (255:27/297:29)
- b) Although the equation of breadth and depth is common, Merleau-Ponty argues that it is the result of confusion and it rests on a very odd assumption. For them to think that breadth and depth are the same, they must be assuming a sort of ubiquity for human perception. For example in God, who is everywhere, breadth and depth are, of course, equivalent. It is as if in giving an account of human experience, they have mistakenly turned it into divine experience because only in doing so does this account makes any sense. (255:33/297:34)
3. The fact, however, is that we normally accept such speculation about the equation of depth and breadth because of the influence of the intersubjective world—the world is given as being seen by others. To overcome the prejudices of the Analytic Attitude and the influence of the intersubjective world, the goal of this section will be to rediscover the vision of depth so that we might discover the primordial experience from which such spatial meaning springs. In doing so, we will find that depth clearly belongs to the perspective and not to things. In discovering this, we will be in a position to appreciate a new way of conceiving the relationship between subject and object. (256:3/298:11)
- B. Psychology has attempted to give an account of our experience of depth, and for Merleau-Ponty such accounts have failed. (256:29/298:37)
1. **Traditional Psychology** has argued that depth is the result of an inference from the apparent size of the object and the convergence of the eyes. But clearly there is a problem with this explanation. Making an inference from the apparent size presupposes that one already knows what the "real size" of objects are, but how could this be? To make an inference from the convergence of the eyes clearly is assuming that the eyes, the apparent image, and the objective things are all in the same space and all somehow related. How could one make this assumption? (256:37/299:7)

2. **Gestalt Psychology** has clearly shown that depth is not the result of an inference from the apparent size of the object and the convergence of the eyes. These are present but they produce depth not through any kind of inference but rather because they are the **causes** of depth. But such a conclusion can only be reached because Gestalt psychology abandons lived experience and goes back to reflective thought. If one looks at what their descriptions have revealed, one would discover that apparent size of the object and the convergence of the eyes are not presented as causes of depth, but something quite different. If we are to understand perception, we must remain at the level of description in order to see what is actually there. (257:35/300:15)
- C. Merleau-Ponty offers his own analysis of the experience of depth. (258:23/301:8)
 1. It cannot be the case that depth is simply given as a datum in consciousness because that would not solve the problem but just move it to another level. (How does one experience depth if all you have is data that have no depth?) In order to experience depth one needs more than just to receive it passively. One needs to live it. Apparent size and the convergence of the eyes rather than being **reasons** or **causes** of depth are **motives** that draw it forth in our taking hold on things. (258:23/301:8)
 - a) By "motive" Merleau-Ponty means that something has its origin in certain given facts, not in so far as these facts by themselves have the physical power to bring it about, but in that they provide reasons for undertaking it. A motive is an antecedent that acts only through its significance and at the same time it is also part of a reciprocal kind of action. (259:2/301:25)
 - b) An example of "motive" is developed by describing how a death in the family will motivate one's journey home because it is a situation in which one's presence is required. In much the same way the experience of convergence of the eye or of apparent size of an object motivate one's taking up of a certain kind of perspective such that the experience of depth results. (259:10/302:2)
 2. This section ends with a series of descriptions of some of the characteristics of depth found in experience. The point of these descriptions is to further develop our understanding of depth and Merleau-Ponty's own explanation. (259:23/302:14)
 - a) **Notion of apparent size** is developed through the examples of after-images being projected on a screen and the enlarged moon on the horizon. The point here is to show how apparent size is an element of the comprehensive organization of the field and that rather than being a sign or indication of depth is nothing other than a way of expressing our vision of depth. (259:23/302:14)
 - b) **Perspective distortions** are not given in perception otherwise we should not have to learn about perspective. Rather than being given

in lived experience they 'appear' only when we transform such experiences. Merleau-Ponty develops this point by contrasting everyday experience with similar experiences in cinema, photographs and paintings. (260:6/303:4)

c) **Constancy of shape** is often treated as if it were a real constancy and the product of a comparison of physical image with a mental image without ever explaining how such a comparison between so totally different things is ever possible. In lived experience it is not a matter of smaller or larger. Rather it is the same object seen from farther away. (260:17/303:14)

3. **Conclusion:** In perception, apparent size, perspective distortions, and constancy of shape are not determinate givens that need somehow to be synthesized but rather they are not even specifically posited. These characteristics of depth are what distinguish the loose and approximate grip on things from the complete grip of what is nearby. The experience of depth is the result of our body's power of grasping a determinate object and not an inferences from its properties properties. (261:25/304:27)
- D. **An objection to Merleau-Ponty's position:** the problem of illusions. (261:43/305:6)
 1. **Problem:** Doesn't the illusion of depth, for example, seeing depth in a stereoscope or in a drawing done in perspective show that there is a problem here? After all in neither is there *really* depth. Clearly such illusions show that depth is something subjective in either an empiricistic or intellectualistic sense. After all, how could one experience what is not there unless depth is the product of some kind of interpretation? (262:2/305:10)
 2. **Response:** Rather than depth being an interpretation, it is a *response* to a situation. What is seen in the stereoscope and in the drawing is a problem for our sight. They pose a question in which the response is already foreshadowed. In answering the question, our gaze takes hold on the data and, in so doing; it makes sense out of the data. This act of taking hold transforms what is given with the result that things are now given as already being in a world that has depth. (262:15/305:23)
 3. **Descriptive analysis of the experience of depth:** Merleau-Ponty attempts to present lived experience by contrasting it with the experiences found in a series of psychological studies and observations. He presents some elements of Koffka's study of the perception of a cube as developed in "Some problems of space perception" (*Psychologies* of 1930); some observations of patient in Goelb and Goldstein's *Über den Wegfall der Wahrnehmung von Oberflächenfarben* (1915); and relating all this to the experience of spatial relations in Wertheimer's *Experimentelle Studien* (1912). The point of all this analysis is to show that the experience of depth is nothing but the result of the body's movement toward possess-

ing a world in the most perfect possible symmetry—the union of data in one thing. (262:35/306:8)

a) Using the framework of Koffka's observations, Merleau-Ponty claims that this shows that depth is born beneath one's gaze because the latter tries to see something. It is one's gaze and not one's conscious awareness that does this. My conscious awareness always finds meaning already given. The point here is that prior to my conscious awareness my gaze is active and constitutes meaning in the very act of taking hold of a world. (262:35/306:8)

b) But this grasping and this delineation are not arbitrary. My gaze works the way it does because the world possesses specific kinds of problems that direct and motivate my gaze toward this or that solution. (263:13/307:2)

c) It is our gaze which calls forth from things and is thus constitutive of meaning precisely because there is an "implicit" meaning already given. It is the act of our gaze that makes this "implicit" meaning "explicit" and all this underlies the thinking subject such that meaning is always already there for it. (264:6/307:26)

E. The **Conclusion** begins with Koffka's description of the experiences of the cube and the problems that traditional views have in dealing with lived experience. (264:18/308:1)

1. Traditional positions and their assessment: (264:18/308:1)

a) **Empiricism**:—Depth in the cube is the result of associating certain aspects of the present drawing with other experiences. (264:18/308:1)

b) **Intellectualism**:—Depth in the cube is nothing but the complete synthesis of the elements perceived. (264:25/308:8)

c) Both positions presuppose depth in their explanations of it and ultimately turn depth into breadth without ever recognizing the real difference in these dimensions. (264:33/308:17)

2. What we must recognize is that there is a radical difference between breadth and depth, in fact, a difference like that between space and time. Depth is the result of a pre-reflective synthesis but not the kind of synthesis that produces spatial relations of breadth but rather of temporary relations. In comparing the experience of depth with memory experiences, Merleau-Ponty concludes that Husserl is right. Depth is a product of a synthesis of transition, synthesis that is constitutive of temporal meanings. But lest we distinguish space and time too sharply, Merleau-Ponty points out that perception provides one with a 'field of presence' in the broad sense, extending in two dimensions: the here-there dimension and the past-present-future dimension. Both these synthesis have their source in the lived body. (265:3/308:31)

3. When we look at the objectifying conceptions of Empiricism and Intellectualism, we discover that they objectify depth detaching it from experience and transforming it. Merleau-Ponty claims that in so doing they

make unintelligible the very nature of experience that they were supposed to explain. At this point, he goes on to develop a series of examples that seem to defy any attempt at explanation on behalf of Empiricism and Intellectualism. (266:12/310:9)

a) He presents a series of examples both of the normal, but passive, experience and several from patients that would present problems for both positions. (266:17/310:13)

b) He also presents, very briefly, the pathological experiences of micropsy and macropsy that would seem to be impossible experiences for Empiricism and Intellectualism. (267:3/311:6)

4. The experience of depth, the near and the far, as with the vertical and horizontal, are abstract designations for one single form of being in a situation; and they presuppose the same setting—the face to face relation of subject and world. Such meanings exist prior to any conscious activity and they are the result of the body's primordial being-in-the-world. (267:11/311:13)

IV. **THE EXPERIENCE OF MOVEMENT:** seeing things going from a place over there to another place. (267:29/311:30)

A. **Introduction:** As with space, movement can be understood only by rediscovering the pre-objective experience from which objective ideas of movement have been formed. The goal of this section is just this rediscovery. (267:29/311:30)

B. Two objective conceptions of movement that result from the Analytic Attitude are presented. This is an attitude that much too often is willing to reject appearances in order to reach the "truth." (267:40/312:5)

1. **The Logician:** The conception of movement as found in the more logical approach. (267:40/312:5)

a) **Position:** Clearly an object in motion is the same as the object at rest and movement is just something accidental to the object. At the same time, we can speak of movement only so long as it is the same object that persists through the different relationships with its surroundings. Motion is really nothing other than the change in the external spatial relationships between an object and its surroundings. (268:9/312:17)

b) **Criticism:** If the above position is understood, there cannot be any real experience of an object moving. For Merleau-Ponty, this denial of what is given in experience is a major criticism of this position. At the same time, he goes on to point out that this whole attitude is open to Zeno's paradox. Clearly the point that Zeno tries to show is that for this view an object is always at rest and can never move. The fact that this position must take Zeno seriously indicates that there is something fundamentally wrong with the position. (268:26/312:37)

2. **The Psychologist:** The conception of movement as found in contemporary psychologies. (269:11/313:25)

a) **Position:** Merleau-Ponty develops this position by using the descriptions found in Wertheimer's *Experimentelle Studien über das Sehen von Bewegung* (1912). Clearly the point of these experiments is to show that the perception of movement not only does not support but it actually contradicts the above account. In the experience of an object moving, the object is not seen as passing successively through an indefinite series of positions. It is given only as beginning, pursuing, or completing its movements. Thus the experience of movement presents motion not as a system of relations external to the object but rather as something that is essential to the object in motion. (269:11/313:25)

b) **Criticism:** Merleau-Ponty begins a kind of dialogue between the two positions as a means of showing how the Analytic Attitude is behind both and to show how each suffers from the weaknesses of that attitude. (270:26/315:11)

(1) The logical approach would object that psychology's account of experience just doesn't make sense. If movement of an object is going to make any sense at all, there must be some object that underlies the movement and is the same through out. The reliance on unthinking perceptual experience is the cause of the problems behind psychology's approach. Perception of movement can be a valid source of knowledge only if it is apprehended with all its significance. (270:26/315:11)

(2) But the psychologist would reply that to understand movement we must look at what is given to us in experience and not be so quick to require that experience have what our theories require. If we look at experience, we discover that motion is "psychic phenomena" that is given in experience. It is not a static phenomenon, as the logical approach would claim. The fact is that it has a dynamic nature such that the logical approach cannot even imagine its complexity. (271:33/316:26)

(3) While Merleau-Ponty agrees with psychology on the dynamic character of the experience of movement, its response to the logical approach in terms of "psychic phenomena" to assure the unity required for movement is a failure. What is not recognized by either approach is the rule of the subject as a unifying force in the experience of motion. (272:8/317:8)

- C. **Reflection on what we have done thus far:** We cannot simply accept either the Psychologist or the Logician's account as having been established. At the same time, we must not simply dismiss these accounts as false. What we need to do is find the truth that is contained in both accounts despite all their limitations. The Logician is right in his demands for an object to underlie movement but wrong about the kind of object. The Psychologist is right about the experience of movement not showing an on going object, but is wrong in claiming that there is no object. (272:18/317:17)

1. The **Psychologist** is attempting to maintain that perception of movement is not secondary to the perception of the moving object. Rather than denying the existence of an identical object throughout the movement, or rather than denying that there is no subject of movement at all, the psychologist wishes to maintain that in no case is the subject of movement an object. He wishes to point out the reality of the 'mobile entity' as distinct from the static entity with determinate properties. (272:29/317:28)
2. The **Logician** is talking about movement only as an *in-itself* and ignores the actual *experience* of movement. He explains the problem of movement only in terms of a kind of being that ultimately makes the experience of motion impossible. The Logician knows only through Analytic Reflection and thus knows only a "positing consciousness" and a "determinate world" with no room for a real "mobile being". This reflective attitude, in trying to understand motion, creates the paradoxical situation such that if the Logician's conception of motion were true; he would have nothing to experience and thus nothing to conceive. (273:9/312:12)
3. **Merleau-Ponty** gradually moves from his criticism of the Logician's views to developing his own conception of motion. What we have discovered is a sense of "movement" which is not only anterior to the objective world but also the source of all conceptual assertions about movement. This "phenomenal" movement is pre-logical and will always remain so. But this does not mean that it is some kind of irrational thing but rather pre-rational—it is that which can be made rational. What we need to discover for ourselves is that the world is only partly made of actual beings and that there is a whole phenomenal realm, which surrounds the actual on all sides. (274:24/320:1)
 - a) What experience teaches us is that the world is not only made up of things but it also contains transitions and these transitions are not only part of the phenomenal realm but they are also real. (275:10/320:16)
 - b) The non-thematized mobile entity that we have discovered reveals the whole realm of pre-objective being and, along with it, the pre-objective reality of space and time. As we have seen above, the spatial relationships exist because temporal relationships are already there. But this, in turn, reveals a sense of time in which the past and future are held together and yet separated in a lived presence. (Note the footnote on page 276/322 on time. Merleau-Ponty presents Bergson's view of time as emphasizing the unity of time and Kant's as stressing the plurality of moments requiring a synthesis. But both positions go too far in stressing either unity or plurality. What is needed is a synopsis that will enable us to formulate a new conception of time containing a new insight into the relationship between unity and plurality.) (275:23/321:7)
 - c) Motion is not, as the Logician would have it, merely a result of a judgment or of some kind of hypothesis. Experience tells us that it is a

fact—a fact that we actually do experience. Yet we must not fall into the realism of Psychology or Psychologism. While we must realize that the minimum necessary condition for experiencing motion is the presence of an object in a certain field, we must realize that the field is not present like some kind of object but rather truly a **field**. Further, we must realize what the problem is that has led psychology to make its claims. It is not the fact that it has grasped the idea of a field but rather the limited way in which it has understood this idea. It has been aware that here is a field, but in grasping this idea in the limited way that it has, it has lost sight of the importance of the real difference between object and field. The Logician, on the other hand, has seen clearly the importance of an object in a way that the Psychologist has not but it has no awareness of the field. (276:3/322:1)

d) What makes a particular part of the field count as an object in motion is the way in which we establish our relations with the field by the act of looking. Fundamentally, it is our body that provides the ground for the appearance of motion. It does this not in terms of explicit reasons or causes but rather being itself the background for such appearances. Of course, such a body cannot be the body of conceptual thought, but rather the lived body that makes its presence known in perception without ever being an object in that experience. (278:9/324:11)

- D. **Conclusion:** Provided that we start from lived experience, we can allow what psychologists call absolute movement without falling into the difficulties of realism and further we can understand the phenomenon of movement without allowing our logic to destroy it. (280:21/327:2)

- V. **LIVED SPACE IS PRESENTED IN SUCH EXPERIENCES** as those of people under the influence of drugs, night experiences, dreams, schizophrenia, and those of primitive peoples with their myths. The major concern of this section is to contrast such experiences of space with those of the Analytic Attitude and to respond to its claim that the space of geometry is the one and only true space. (280:28/327:8)

- A. **Introduction:** Thus far we have been dealing with only the *perception of space* much as a disinterested investigator might acquire. Yet we have discovered that such a concept of space arises from a fundamental involvement of our bodies with the world. The perception of depth, the vertical, the horizontal, etc., exist within the particular context or situation created by this involvement. The goal of this section is to transcend the second order attitude of Analytic Thought and its understanding of space in order to get back to the natural and lived space so that we can bring to light the reality of our involvement in a lived world. (280:28/327:8)

- B. Merleau-Ponty presents a series of descriptions of spatial experiences in which the normalcy of perception has been broken. In looking at such abnormal experiences, he hopes that such descriptions will make the

complexity of our normal experiences stand out more clearly for us and thus reveal the very foundations of normal perception. Again, it is important to be aware that he is not making inferences from the abnormal to the normal. The purpose of these descriptions is to make us aware of our "normal" experience, which is usually quite invisible in its everydayness, by developing a contrast with abnormal experience. (281:33/328:17)

1. Taking a series of studies and descriptions of spatial experiences of individuals under the influence of mescaline and also the experiences of schizophrenics, Merleau-Ponty attempts to show that such experiences tend not to be disturbances in the information that may be derived from perception. For practical purposes this information seems to be still there. What seems to happen is that the world is atomized or dislocated because both mescaline and schizophrenia seem to affect the body's role in drawing the world together. The perception of spatial unity is not the result of some act of consciousness but, in normal perception, it is given as always already there. In abnormal act, it is broken and no act of consciousness can bring it together. (281:37/328:21)
 2. In turning to night experiences such as seeing in the dark and the experience of dreams, we discover a whole new aspect of spatiality. We discover that certain spatial relations, like up and down, clearly have a respiratory or sexual significance in objective space and this significance can be transformed in dream states into a symbolic significance. Such experiences point to a determining of spatial relation prior to objective perceptions and the world of dreams that unites and connects both. Even the myths of primitive peoples show the same kind of connection. Meaning from one sphere seems to pass over to another. Of course, Merleau-Ponty's claim is that what enable all this to occur are our bodies and the way in which they situate us in the world. And clearly it is our bodies that situate us in the world such that we always take where we are as the center of that world and it is this very activity that certain illnesses attack. (283:18/330:13)
 3. Besides the physical and geometrical distance, which exists between me and other things, a 'lived' distance exists which binds me to things that are linked to each other through this lived distance. It is this "distance" which determines the scope of my life and it is this distance that is transformed and broken by mental illness. It is this 'lived space' that cuts across visible space and is transformed by our body's own way of projecting the world, a world that is always already given with spatial meanings for perceiving consciousness. (It is interesting to note how Merleau-Ponty applies this point to aesthetics. See the footnote 4 on the bottom of page 287/footnote 73 on pages 335.). (286:9/333:22)
- C. After giving the above account of experience, the question now arises as to what we can make of such descriptions. Using a form of dialectical argument between himself and the Analytic Attitude, Merleau-Ponty con-

tinues to develop his conception of lived space by showing the kinds of assumptions that stand in the way of understanding such descriptions. The fundamental problem is that the Analytic Attitude understands the data in a fundamentally different way. What we have here is the confrontation of two radically different ways of looking at experience and space. (287:33/335:18)

1. **Objection:** Do these descriptions of abnormal perceptual experience have any philosophical value? After all, isn't the awareness of a dreamer rather vague just because he is dreaming? And when he awakens, are his descriptions the descriptions of a dreamer or someone who is awake and interpreting what he remembers? Aren't the descriptions of the schizophrenic and the primitive open to the same kind of objections? But even more importantly, isn't it really the case that such experiences, themselves, presuppose objective space as a condition of their objectivity and meaning? Clearly there is no explicit or thematic meaning to be found in such experiences, only a kind of subjective indeterminate mess of meanings. Isn't it really the case that these experiences do not reveal anything concerning the structure of consciousness but rather all they present is merely the contents of human experience in its most subjective form? (287:33/335:18)

2. **Response:** (289:8/337:6)

a) It is true that these experiences have no thematic or explicit meaning like traditional philosophy is so often preoccupied. These experiences do have meaning—a non-thematic or implicit meaning—and this is not a lesser meaning. If one understands the position of Analytic Thought, it clearly claims that it reflects on this data and it is this data that is the very source from which objective thought draws its content and meaning. If Radical Reflection is to do anything, it must be a reflection upon this whole process by which Analytic Reflection develops its conception of space. What we have been attempting to do, by means of Radical Reflection, is understand the non-thematic as non-thematic and in so doing understanding a little better the thematic understanding of space which comes from it. (289:8/337:6)

b) Merleau-Ponty reminds us and the philosophers of the Analytic Attitude that the philosopher cannot doubt in principle the testimony of other people, whether dreamer or schizophrenic, about themselves; for this would amount to declaring that a person is no judge of what he experiences. If one did this, it would clearly put the self-evidency of philosophy itself into doubt. What is needed here is another way of approaching the testimony of others. Genuine reflection has to go beyond the Analytic Attitude and become truly radical. And, of course, this is just what Merleau-Ponty has attempted to do with the above descriptions. (289:27/337:24)

3. **Objection:** If one recognizes each kind of experience, as having its own distinctive value and spatiality, are we not being imprisoned in each kind of experience given its limits? Has not this whole approach of the *Phenomenology of Perception* undermined the Rationalist theory of space by substituting relativism for dogmatism? Hasn't the approach of Radical Reflection simply traps us again within the incommunicable subjective experience? (291:37/340:11)

4. **Response:** (292:14/340:29)

a) The experiences described above are not sealed off from each other not even from objective thought. In fact, each is open to the other in so far as each transcends itself into a lived world. The point is to realize that geometrical or objective space is not some kind of ground of all other experiences of space but merely one experience along many, each connected by the lived world. (292:14/340:29)

(1) **Myths:** The mythical consciousness of primitive man exists in a world of daily activities of life. And while such a consciousness does form a world of its own, it is a world that is a product of giving a unity to all the things and activities of everyday life (lived world). But this means that there is already a certain unity and meaning given primitive man that enables him to create his world. And this "already given unity and meaning" serves as a link between perspectives. And further, while mythical consciousness does not reflect upon its experience, as the objective attitude would do, there is a tendency toward objectification manifested in the way it crystallizes itself in myths. (292:24/341:4)

(2) **Dreams:** In dreams we do not leave the lived world totally behind but rather it becomes the very stuff from which our dreams are made. And thus it is both what separates us from the world of sleep and what anchors us to the awaken state. (293:6/341:30)

(3) **Insanity:** Even in extreme cases of melancholia, the patient still makes use of the structures of being in the world that are indispensable for its own denial of the world. (293:14/341:37)

(4) **Normal experiences:** This same link between subjectivity and objectivity is found in normal experiences. One never wholly lives in human space but always is rooted in a natural and non-human space. One's experiences are not compounded out of the element that the objective attitude finds in experience but it is always capable of dissolving into them. (293:21/342:7)

b) In looking at the experiences of myths, dreams, insanity, and even those of everyday life, we see, in opposition to the Objective Attitude, that not only is space existential but existence is spatial. By its very nature, experience opens us to a reality that transcends our particular perspectives. (293:41/342:27)

c) The novelty of Phenomenology does not lie in denying the unity of experience but in finding a different basis for it than does classical

Intellectualism. It shows us a horizon of possible objectifications that in turn *frees* us from every particular setting only because it *ties* us to the world of nature or the in-itself, which includes all of these settings. (294:4/342:34)

D. **Conclusion:** (294:19/343:14)

1. All the experiences we have seen of myths, dreams, and illusions are possible only if the apparent and the real have an ambiguous status in both the subject **and** in the object. Looking at attempts at denying this ambiguity, we can see this. (294:19/343:14)
 - a) **Intellectualism**, like Descartes, tends to see a unity. But if the apparent and the real are thought to be one, then error becomes impossible. (294:21/343:16)
 - b) **Empiricism** clearly grasps that there is no unity here but then thinks that the only option is separation. But if the apparent and the real are thought to be separate, then truth becomes impossible. (295:7/344:8)
2. Both Intellectualism and Empiricism rest on the mistake of overlooking this ambiguity that is at the heart of the experience of the lived world. It is interesting to note the different ways Merleau-Ponty expresses this opposition between Intellectualism and Empiricism. We have seen the contrast between Rationalism and the Philosophy of the Absurd; the Philosophy of Immanence and the Philosophy of Transcendence; absolute self-evidence and the experience of the absurd; Rationalism and Skepticism; and the unity of appearance and reality and the separation of appearance and reality. Of course, it is important in trying to understand this very interesting section to see that these “positions” are the **Intellectualism** and **Empiricism** we have seen before. (295:16/344:16)
3. The lived world consists of “non-truth” or ambiguity, which provides the possibility for both truth and error. It gives us a background upon which truth is based and which is the source of meaning. (295:27/344:27)

VI. **CONCLUSION:** (296:7/345:13)

- A. From this conception of the lived world comes a new conception of consciousness—a cogito that can be in the world. It is a cogito that is not in total possession of itself nor totally ignorant of itself. It is this ambiguous possession of itself that enables it to have a world. (296:7/345:13)
- B. The world that is given to this new Cogito is a world that is an absolute certain *in general*, but a world in which we cannot be certain of any one thing in particular. (297:31/346:1)
- C. There is a world for me because I am not unaware of myself; and I am not concealed from myself because I have a world. (298:4/347:24)

CHAPTER 3 • THE THING AND THE NATURAL WORLD

This chapter, much more than the last, is not really a single chapter but rather four chapters centered on responding to a single objection. In the **first section**, Merleau-Ponty examines a series of characteristics of objects that have been claimed to be constants: size, shape, color, and tactile experiences. Of course, the very constancy of these characteristics could and has been used to deny the mediating function of the body that Merleau-Ponty has been developing. Thus he argues that the experience of these constants, rather than being the means of determining the reality of the object, is here dependent upon the experience of the object. The experience of size, shape, color, and tactile qualities presupposes the experience of the object. In the **second section**, Merleau-Ponty picks up this sense of object or 'thing' and begins an examination of it as an inter-sensory entity. He argues that the 'thing' is not some independent reality but rather a correlative of our body. But it is a correlative that is given as being independent of me. Experience gives us "things" as existing beyond our experience. This rather paradoxical character is used to illustrate the limited and ambiguous character of our hold on things. In the **third section**, the 'natural world' is presented as the ultimate horizon and a *priori condition* in which things are presented to us. And in the **fourth section**, hallucinations are distinguished from perception and used to highlight the particular relation of ambiguity our body has with the world. In developing his descriptive analysis of hallucinations, Merleau-Ponty tries to show that Empiricism and Intellectualism cannot explain such experiences because they misunderstand both the world and consciousness. The chapter ends with a presentation of a new conception of both.

After this overview of the chapter, one may begin to wonder if there is a common theme that runs through these rather distinct "sections." If we consider just the first part of the book, we see that Merleau-Ponty has attempted to argue that there is clearly a sense in which hallucinatory objects are given in perception. Further he argues that there is a dialectical relation between the body and the world and this dialectical relation constitutes all perceptual meanings (in this case, the hallucination and its object). The section ends by raising the objection: hasn't Merleau-Ponty in fact turned all perceptions into a kind of hallucination? Hasn't he radically subjectivized all perceptual experience and destroyed objectivity? Merleau-Ponty is again raising

the same problem that we have seen in each chapter of Part II of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, and which each chapter has attempted to formulate an answer. This chapter is no different. In fact, the response of this chapter is part of a pattern that has emerged in Part II of the book.

As a response to this objection, Chapter I, on Sensation, attempted to explain the way in which sensations are “objective”. In Chapter II, on space, the same objection was reformulated and was supposed to have been answered by the analysis of that chapter. But now here we have the same objection arising again. It is important, however, to notice that there is a movement from chapter to chapter. The objection is becoming more complex and so is Merleau-Ponty’s response to it. Merleau-Ponty is not simply repeating himself. There is a real movement and development from chapter to chapter.

This chapter begins by examining the thing with its determinate properties with the intention of responding to the above objection. The chapter then proceeds to consider how phenomenological analysis presents the thing and then considers the nature of the natural world as the ultimate horizon in which all things are given in perception. It does each of these things, again, as part of a response to the objection. The chapter ends by going back to the problem entailed in Merleau-Ponty’s interpretation of hallucinations and reconsiders the whole problem in the light of what has been discovered there. This reconsidering does two things. First, it provides a piece of the answer to the objection. And lest we get too confident that we have discovered the whole truth, secondly, Merleau-Ponty reintroduces the objection, now more complex and with greater force. Clearly we will have to wait until Chapter IV for a more complete answer to the objection.

FIRST SECTION (299-I/348:I)

In considering the first section in more detail, we see how psychology has discovered that certain properties appear to be constant. The objects in perception seem to possess the same properties: they appear to remain the same size, possess the same shape, and always have the same color. It is because they appear to have these properties that they are real and objective things. Merleau-Ponty will claim that these properties, which are the basis of objectivity, are given in perception. In turning to the interpretations of perceptual constants by Empiricism and Intellectualism, he tries to show that for Empiricism there is

no real true size or shape. It all depends on the perspective. For Intellectualism, the real object is the totality of all its possible perspectives and size and shape, and it is the product of a synthesis. It is usually argued that one does not directly see the object but rather it is inferred from the size, shape, color and other sensible qualities. But if this is the case, Merleau-Ponty is quick to argue: how does one ever make such an inference and how does one ever reach the point that one can be said to see an object. Merleau-Ponty claims that the object is given in perception and, since one sees the object, one sees it as having the same size, shape, color, and the other qualities.

What we see in this section is a series of arguments that aim at first of all showing that Empiricism and Intellectualism, given all their assumptions, are unable to account for experience. In fact, experience becomes unintelligible if not paradoxical from these points of view. Secondly, by means of the dialectical argument, Merleau-Ponty attempts to lead us toward the conclusion that we have to re-think our whole approach to the problem. In many respects, this is the fundamental concern of this chapter and, indeed, the whole book.

This section begins with a simple announcement that we are to "approach the phenomenon of reality by studying perceptual constants." His concern in this section is to discover how things are given to us in perception as "real". Clearly, it seems that we experience real things and that things are given us as having "reality". What does "reality" mean here? Some have claimed that "reality" is not given but rather the result of seeing perceptual constants such as **size and shape, color, and tactile experiences.**

I. PERCEPTUAL CONSTANTS (299:1/348:1)

A. Size and Shape: (299:3/349:3)

1. Empiricistic view of size and shape: (299:3/349:3)

a) **Position:** Starting with a more or less empiricistic view, psychology seems to recognize, as of course does Merleau-Ponty, that the body plays a role and has an effect on the experience of size and shape. But it claims that experience shows us that sizes and shapes vary from one experience to another. And thus psychology concludes that the constancy of size and shape is nothing more than a convention—the result of a choice we make among all the different sizes and shapes given us in experience. (299:9/349:10)

b) **Critique of this interpretation:** (299:24/349:4)

But if all the sizes and shapes given in experience are equally real, doesn't this mean that size and shape have become subjectivized? Empiricism

can only overcome this objection by giving an account of size and shape that presupposes just what it is trying to prove - the objective world with determinate sizes and shapes. (299:24/349:4)

What this view does not really address is how it is possible, given all the apparent sizes and shapes, for one size and shape to crystallize themselves and to appear as objective? This view just does not account for the appearance of objectivity or even its possibility. (300:4/349:13)

2. Intellectualistic view: (300:11/349:20)

a) **Position:** As a possible way of avoiding these problems, Merleau-Ponty develops a kind of Kantian Intellectualistic view. One might maintain that size and shape are never perceived as attributes of a single object. The constancy of size and shape through various perspectives is merely the constancy in the relations between phenomena where these relationships are the necessary conditions for the very presentation of these phenomena. In short, the constancy is a product of the *a priori* structures of experience and thus reality is not something given in experience but rather the very framework of these *a priori* structures. (300:11/349:20)

1) Merleau-Ponty then develops this interpretation with descriptions of an experience of a pen, a square and a cube in which each object is shown to be given with an orientation that maintains its size and shape - a kind of *a priori*. (300:18/349:27)

2) What each of the above descriptions affirms is the role of the subject in determining a system of relationships in which objects of perception fit and thus have constancy of shape and size. A distortive experience of shape and size is understood when the perspective distortion is no longer being passively endured but rather finds its place in the system of our experience. (301:2/350:17)

3) In all experience, the object remains unchanging and all changes are the product of our relationship to the object. Our relationship is not arbitrary but rather has a logical structure that allows objects to appear within our experience. This structure is the necessary condition for the appearance of objects. (301:16/350:30)

b) Critique of the Intellectualistic interpretation. (301:28/351:5)

1) While Kant is right in saying that perception is polarized towards the object, he does not go far enough in his account of appearances. It is not because of a phenomenal structure that we know the determinate size and shape of objects. Further, perception is not some kind of act by which the subject thinks or figures them out. What is ignored is how they are given in perception. In fact, without assuming a pre-scientific conception of experience, Kant's account would make no sense. Rather than explaining how the experience of determinate size and shape come about, he is assuming it. (301:28/351:5)

(a) When we turn to experience (here Merleau-Ponty describes the experience of his room), we do not find, as Intellectualism suggests,

a law or rule governing the parade of phenomena. Rather we find that it is the self-evidence of the thing that enables us to grasp the determinate size and shape. (302:2/351:23)

(b) Further, we discover that our bodies establish a relationship to the object such that the object is given most fully (for example, experiencing a painting at an art gallery). For us, there is such a thing as being too close or too far from the object. Merleau-Ponty presents several descriptions of our experience of the human body to illustrate this point. It is this privileged perception or, better, this **privileged hold** on the object that becomes the basis for the constancy of size and shape. (302:13/351:34)

(c) Experience also clearly shows that the distance from me to the object is not a size that increases or decreases, but a tension that fluctuates round a norm governed by my act of taking hold of the object. (302:35/353:4)

2) Merleau-Ponty attempts to show in contrast to Intellectualism and Kant that correlative perspectives are not posited before me successively, but present themselves only as so many steps toward the thing itself **with** its size and shape. While things are given to consciousness as always already having a determinate size and shape, they have a determinate size and shape because of the way they are possessed through the body. It is my *bodily-being* that is the basis of this and not, as Kant and Intellectualism would have it, my *conscious being*. (303:13/353:4)

3. **Conclusion:** Size and shape are ways in which our experience breaks forth into things and transcends itself by taking hold of them. This always occurs within a certain framework or setting. But the setting is not some kind of intellectualistic setting but rather the setting of my **lived body**. As Merleau-Ponty points out in the footnote (p.303/353), the constancy of size and shape is not an intellectual function, but an existential one, which means that it has to be related to the pre-logical act by which the body takes its place in the world. (303:26/353:16)

B. **Color:** Perceptual qualities such as color teach us more about the perception of an object than does its geometric properties. To see this, we need to ask what is the 'real' color of an object and how do we experience it? (304:20/354:20)

1. Using a dialectical analysis of the traditional answers to this question and his criticism of these answers; Merleau-Ponty prepares the way for his own answer. (304:20/354:20)

a) **Empiricism view** of color: (304:24/354:24)

1) **Position:** Empiricism holds that the color of an object is the color I most often see, the one that it assumes in daylight, a short distance away, and under 'normal' conditions. What we need to recognize is the role of memory and our expectations as the source of our experience of the constancy of color. (304:24/354:24)

2) **Critique:** But if we turn to experience (and, in particular, the observations of Gelb); there really is no room for such artificial reconstructions of phenomenon. The experience of the constancy of color is not simply the product of a determinate datum given either by experience or memory. Even in rather normal contexts, there is an already indeterminate givenness in our perception of color that is prior to any such acts and which clearly seems to be presupposed by them. (304:32/354:32)

b) **Intellectualism:** (305:10/355:11)

1) **Position:** Intellectualism holds that the color of an object is the result of a judgment as to what is the object's most constant color. (305:10/355:11)

2) **Critique:** The weakness of Intellectualism, as well as that of Empiricism, lies in its refusing to recognize any color other than those fixed or determinate qualities which make their appearance in a Reflective Attitude; whereas color in lived perception is a *way* into the thing. Merleau-Ponty attempts to show that "real color" is not a determinate given but rather something that is given as part of the indeterminacy of the background. Rather than seeing color and inferring a thing, lived experience shows that perception goes directly to the thing and secondarily to the color. (305:16/355:17)

c) **Scientific View (Psychology and Physics):** (305:39/356:7)

1) **Position:** The trend in Psychology and Physics is to rather arbitrarily define color by focusing in on one aspect of the experience of color to the exclusion of others. As a result, they tend to define color as a certain quality that is invariant, which is, of course, the very assumption that is also behind the answers of Empiricism and Intellectualism. (305:39/356:7)

2) **Critique:** Essentially, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with making us aware of the very aspects of experience that the above analysis has ignored. To show this, he analyzes the relationship between lighting and the object's own color. This relationship cannot be explained simply in terms of determinate data or even in terms of a functional relationship between the data. Thus, neither intellectual analysis nor association can work by themselves. What such phenomenon reveals is a certain kind of organization that these approaches cannot even imagine. (306:8/356:15)

(a) Merleau-Ponty begins by arguing that even the works of psychologists despite their assumptions reveal that our experience of color is more than their theories allow. By briefly describing Achermann's results that yield the distinction between "colored areas" and "surface colors", and other observations about transparent objects, gloss, glow, brightness, and the color of lighting, Merleau-Ponty tries to give us some idea of what this more is like. (306:8/356:15)

(b) To support the above point, Merleau-Ponty turns to a more in depth description of our experience of the constancy of a thing's own color. In gaslight, a blue paper looks blue even though the eye receives the same rays of light as it does from a brown paper in daylight. This can be seen by the use of a screen or, as a painter tends to do, by half-closing ones eyes. But what is important here is the transformation of lived experience and what it shows us about lived experience. The perception of a colored object or objects is dependent upon the organization of the perceptual field. There is a factual relation between the phenomenon of constancy and the articulation of the field, and the phenomenon of lighting, which has been overlooked by the scientific view of perception. (307:3/357:14)

2. The above attempts have tried to account for the phenomenon of constancy in terms of a "functional" relationship between what is sensed (the object), the organization of the experience (the field), and the lighting. Such attempts have failed. What we need to do is go back to our own experience of the **object**, the **field**, and the **lighting** in order to formulate a response that is adequate to the real complexity that is found in experience. (309:1/359:28)

a) **Lighting** (and reflections): Merleau-Ponty claims that lighting and reflections only play their part if they remain in the background as discrete intermediaries, and ultimately they **lead** our gaze to the object rather than being its objects. (309:15/360:11)

1) Based upon a range of studies in psychology, we discover that we perceive in conformity with the light, as we think in conformity with other people in verbal communication. Lighting and reflection are not given in experience as determinate objects but rather the very conditions for there being determinate objects. (310:3/361:4)

2) Lighting and the constancy of the thing illuminated, which is its correlative, are directly dependent on bodily situation. But in this dependency, they cannot be objects given. In lived experience, lighting is not an object. It is what we assume in order to have objects. (310:34/362:4)

3) After describing how pictures in an art gallery must be perceived, Merleau-Ponty goes on to claim that the fundamental relations that exist in our experience of color and lighting are made possible by our taking up of an abode in a certain colored setting in the world and that our bodies are exactly that which makes this "taking up of an abode" possible. All the attempts at characterizing this relationship as "functional" are in fact trying to get at this reality. (311:33/363:7)

b) **Organization of the Field**: Through several short descriptions, Merleau-Ponty attempts to show that the "field" or context in which the phenomenon of constancy is presented is essentially connected with both the color and the object because the field can transform the color seen and the object seen. Using an example of a beam of light shining on a

white circular surface, he tries to show how the field ties into the other two in a much more fundamental way than has been thought. It is this same unity that a painter must be aware of in order to achieve certain effects of color in a painting. (312:3/363:17)

c) **Object:** Continuing with the example from the Fine Arts, Merleau-Ponty tries to show that even a painting in an art gallery must be seen from a certain distance or one loses what is given in the painting. One needs to be not too close or too far in order for the lighting and the field to present the object in the painting. (312:37/364:15)

3. In **conclusion**, Merleau-Ponty urges us to go deeper. The constancy as we have seen with color is also true of geometrical forms, sense data and the significance of objects. All go together and form a system. The constancy of color is only an abstract component of the constancy of things that, in turn, is grounded in the primordial constancy of the world as the horizon of all our experiences. (313:17/365:5)

C. **Tactile experiences:** (313:32/365:20)

1. **Weight:** (313:36/365:24)

a) **Description of the experience:** The perception of weight of an object tends to remain the same whatever the muscles used and wherever the initial position of the body. (313:36/366:1)

b) A **Dialectical Analysis** of the **Traditional Psychological Accounts** is developed: (314:5/366:1)

1) **Position:** The tendency is to try to account for such phenomenon as the result of some kind of inductive interpretation in light of parts and pieces of the body. (314:5/366:1)

2) **Critique:** But it seems impossible to suppose that the interpretation rests on any explicit induction. It does not take much to realize that there is clearly nothing "explicit" in any such experiences that can correspond to such an inference. (314:10/366:5)

3) **Position:** But even if one grants that there is no explicit inference, clearly it could be the case that the body, by means of habits, has worked out a scale of weight-equivalences that makes possible such experiences. (314:17/366:12)

4) **Critique:** But even such accounts seem to presuppose much more. In fact, such an account seems to assume a framework of global knowledge that connects all the parts of the body. Such a move has implicitly given up on the inductive account of the constancy of weight in terms of the parts and pieces of the body and if developed properly, may be promising. (314:19/366:14)

5) **Position:** Well, there has to be something, an "impression of weight," that is there and the same and that is the basis of the experience of the constancy of weight. Common sense seems to require this. (314:24/366:19)

6) **Critique:** But experience tells us that the constancy of weight is not a "real constancy" in the sense that there is a permanent and unchanging "impression of weight" that is contained in all experiences. There is just nothing given in experience that corresponds to this "real constancy." (314:25/366:20)

7) **Position:** But if nothing is given in experience as a "real constancy," then clearly it must be the case that our experience of the constancy of weight must be the product of our judgment. Isn't it the only thing we have left if we are going to account for the experience of constancy of weight? (314:27/366:22)

8) **Critique:** The above account still presupposes that there are determinate elements for our judgment to organize. But experience again teaches us that we do not know our body and the power, weight, and scope of our organs as an engineer knows the machine composed of parts outside of parts. (314:33/366:28)

b) **Merleau-Ponty's Conclusion:** While the above accounts touch on the surface of phenomenon, they do not get at the depth. There is a fundamental unity of the "I can" or action or *movement* of one's body that not only brings the body together but also provides the context in which there can be constancy of weight and constancy in perception at all. The above descriptions and critiques gradually make us aware of this depth. Merleau-Ponty's conclusion is clearly more "pointed to" rather than explicitly stated. (314:36/366:31)

2. **Touch:** In this discussion of touch, Merleau-Ponty is continuing the discussion of constancy while providing a kind of **conclusion** to the section. In comparing and contrasting touch with vision, his goal is to present the sense in which touch reveals a kind of "constancy-for-my-body." (315:3/367:4)

a) Touch and vision are analogous. It is important to note that for Merleau-Ponty, the movement of one's own body is to touch what lighting is to vision. All this is true despite the fact that tactile perception always includes a connection to bodily component while vision is usually characterized as just giving us the object where it is. But just as there is a passive and active vision, so there is a passive and active touch. Like the exploratory gaze of true active vision, the *knowing touch* projects us outside our body through movement. As with vision, we find in tactile perception the presence of a background connecting and unifying perceptions. (315:3/367:4)

b) While touch and vision are analogous, there are significant differences. Touch unlike vision is not really dissectible and thus not easily falls into the theoretical. Touch does not give us the illusion of being immediately present everywhere and being nowhere as does vision. Touch adheres to the surface of our body and we cannot unfold it before us and thus it never quite becomes an object. (316:13/368:23)

c) The unity and identity of the tactile phenomena do not come about through any synthesis of recognition in the concept. They are founded upon the unity and identity of the body as a synergetic totality. Each contact of an object with part of our objective body is, therefore, in reality a contact with the whole of the phenomenal body and reveals the constancy-for-my-body. Of course, the point of all this is that what is discovered and seen clearly with tactile perception is true of all perceptions. (316:40/369:17)

SECOND SECTION (317:19/370:5)

This section analyzes the 'thing' as an inter-sensory entity, which stays the same through a series of experiences. The thing as presented to the senses and in perception is not some kind of objective property or a quale or a notion just given to consciousness. What we have discovered is the fact that our gaze or our movement is a response to a question posed by the world to which our bodies must provide a fully appropriate reply. The thing is the result of this reply. Thus Merleau-Ponty argues that the thing is a unique 'accent' that is to be found in each experience. It is a unique 'accent' that is also clearly a correlative of our bodies.

The goal of this section is to characterize or define what the thing is as it is found in perception. The **first** part of this section attempts to develop this characterization by describing and analyzing how the "thing" is a correlative of our body. In the **second** part, he develops this characterization by describing the senses in which the thing is more than just a correlative of the body. After considering major objections to this rather odd definition in the **third** part of this section, Merleau-Ponty concludes in the **final** part with a response to both Empiricism and Intellectualism as a means of further specifying his conception of the thing.

II. "THING" AS AN INTER-SENSORY ENTITY. (317:19/370:5)

- A. The **thing is the correlative** of our body and our life. In what follows, Merleau-Ponty develops a running analysis of several descriptions of perceptual experience based on both psychological studies and reflections on art in order to support this claim. (317:19/370:5)
 1. The thing as it appears in perception arouses a certain motor intention within our body that is directed out at the thing and that creates a field in which the thing is given. (317:26/370:12)
 2. One perceives a thing because one has a field of existence that draws towards that field the whole of one's body as a system of perceptual pow-

ers. Thus there is no question of how the senses are connected. They are connected in the object through the field. (318:9/370:35)

3. One has a visual object, for example, because one has a visual field in which richness and clarity are in inverse proportion to each other. If we dealt with either separately, the process could go on into infinity. But in dealing with both, we need to produce a certain optimum balance between these two that in turn results in the thing as real. (318:18/371:8)
4. The unity of the thing is not to be found merely in fixed properties or some vacant substratum underlying these properties. Rather the unity is a kind of unique accent that is to be found in each property, that unique manner of existing of which properties are second order expressions. Much of the descriptions that follow are concerned with giving us a sense of what is intended by "unique accent." (319:6/372:3)
5. Experience seems to show that our senses question things and that things reply to them. Yet this dialogue is not an intellectual operations but the very activity of the body taking hold on to a world. The thing possesses a significance that calls for a response from the body. The result of this response is our having determinate things with determinate significance. (Clearly a distinction has to be made about the kind of "significance" that determinate objects have as a result of the body providing a field and the "significance" that produces this very field.) (319:22/372:16)
6. The relations between things or aspects of things have our body as their vehicle. The thing is inseparable from a person perceiving it and can never be actually 'in-itself' because every perception is a communication or a communion with an extraneous intention. The fact that this has not been realized earlier is explained by the fact that any coming to awareness of the perceptual world has been hampered by the prejudices arising from objective thinking. (320:14/373:17)
 - a) In developing his opposition to "objective thinking," Merleau-Ponty develops a series of examples to support his point. In reality all things exist in a setting and any explicit perception of a thing survives in virtue of a previous communication with a certain atmosphere. Perceptions transform sensible data in much the same way as letters and words are transformed in to literature. (320:34/373:34)
 - b) He also develops several examples of when objects are removed from a situation and how this absence transforms the experience. (321:11)
 - c) In a rather interesting example from a novel by Honore de Balzac, *Le Lys Dans la Vallée*, Merleau-Ponty offers an analysis of the scene in which Felix de Vandenesse prepares flowers for Madame de Mortsau. These flowers speak of love but do so only within a particular perspective and only to certain people. (321:23/374:32)

Below is the specific text to which Merleau-Ponty is referring.

The next day I went early. There were no flowers in the vases of her gray salon. I rushed into the fields and vineyards to make her two bouquets; but as I gathered the flowers, one by one, cutting their long stalks and admiring their beauty, the thought occurred to me that the colors and foliage had a poetry, a harmony, which meant something to the understanding while they charmed the eye; just as musical melodies awaken memories in hearts that are loving and beloved. If color is light organized, must it not have a meaning of its own, as the combinations of the air have theirs? I called in the assistance of Jacques and Madeleine, and all three of us conspired to surprise our dear one. I arranged, on the lower steps of the portico, where we established our floral headquarters, two bouquets by which I tried to convey a sentiment. Picture to yourself a fountain of flowers gushing from the vases and falling back in curving waves; my message springing from its bosom in white roses and lilies with their silver cups. All the blue flowers, harebells, forget-me-nots, and ox-tongues, whose tines, caught from the skies, blended so well with the whiteness of the lilies, sparkled on this dewy texture; were they not the type of two purities, the one that knows nothing, the other that knows all; an image of the child, an image of the martyr? Love has its blazon, and the countess discerned it inwardly. She gave me a poignant glance which was like the cry of a soldier when his wound is touched; she was humbled but enraptured too. My reward was in that glance; to refresh her heart, to have given her comfort, what encouragement for me! (*The Lily of the Valley* by Balaz, tr. Katharine Prescott Wormeley)

7. **Conclusion:** Perception is not a science. It does not posit things, but lives with them. It is this living with them that allows them to have meaning and thus to become objects of science. (321:38/375:14)
- B. Yet the **thing is more than just the correlative** of our body. After all, we grasp the unity of our body only in that of the thing. And even more importantly the thing is presented in *perception* as *in-itself*; that is, as having an independence of its own beyond our experience of it. (322:3/375:20)
 1. For Merleau-Ponty the body is essentially an intentional object, which means that we only have our body insofar as it is related to things. Just as there is no object without a subject, so there is no subject without an object. (322:3/375:20)
 2. Further, if we attend to perceptual experience we discover that the thing holds itself aloof from us and remains self-sufficient. It poses a non-human element, which lies hidden in our experience. (322:16/375:33)
 3. A thing is a thing because, whatever it imparts to us, it is imparted through the very organization of its sensible aspects. A thing has a sig-

nificance that is indistinguishable from the total appearance but transcendent to any one of them. (323:2/376:23)

4. In a rather interesting contrast between art and perception, Merleau-Ponty argues that we feel that the work of art is put together by design, that in it significance precedes existence. The miracle of the real world is that in it significance and existence are one. (323:31/377:16)
 5. We do not begin by knowing the aspects of a thing. We go straight to it, and it is only in a secondary way that we become aware of the limits of our knowledge. (324:16/378:10)
- C. Clearly there are certain ways that we can look at our experience of objects that seem totally contrary to what we have seen. One might claim that each of these perspectives or reductions could be conceived as **objections** to Merleau-Ponty's descriptions and analysis. If one were operating on the level of any one of these reductions, clearly Merleau-Ponty's analysis would make no sense. (324:30/378:23)
1. **First Reduction:** To notice that the object is for me and thus it ceases to be in-itself in order to become the pole of a personal history. (324:31/378:24)
 2. **Second Reduction:** To notice that the object is given to me through a sense and thus I have a certain aspect of the object—the outer surface of the object. (324:34/378:27)
 3. **Third Reduction:** To notice that the object has undergone certain distortions in being given to me, we pass from the visual thing to the perspective aspect. (325:6/379:5)
 4. **Fourth Reduction:** To notice that the object I perceive is a sensation or a certain modification of my body. (325:9/379:8)
- D. How are we to understand that the thing is the correlative of my knowing body and that it rejects that body in such a way to overcome the objections implicit in each of these four ways of viewing the object of perception? (325:20/379:19)
1. The perception of a real object gives us something as transcendent yet standing in the wake of one's subjectivity. To perceive a thing is not to coincide with it nor is it to fully embrace it in thought. (325:22/379:22)
 - a) **Realism** wants to claim that the object is totally independent of the subject and thus it has trouble explaining how the object is ever really part of perception. (325:25/379:25)
 - b) **Idealism** wants to claim that the object is a product of the synthesis of the subject and thus it has trouble explaining how the object has any transcendence or opacity. (325:29/379:31)
 2. To perceive is to maintain a place and point of view but to also go out beyond these to a thing, which is other. (325:40/380:4)
 3. To perceive is to have a certain setting in which the thing will appear. A thing is not actually given in perception; it is internally taken up by us,

reconstituted and experienced by us insofar as it is bound up with this setting. (326:24/380:30)

4. Human life 'understands' not only a certain definite environment, but also an infinite number of possible environments, and it understands itself because it is **thrown** into a natural world. To have a body is to possess a universal setting, a **schema** of all types of perceptual unfolding that lie beyond the world as we actually perceive it. (326:36/381:4)

THIRD SECTION (327:14/381:26)

This section begins with Merleau-Ponty explicitly connecting his position with that of Kant's while devoting a great deal of time to distinguishing the two positions. There is a tendency, in reading this section, to focus on the distinctions while ignoring the similarities. It should be pointed out that what is really important here are the similarities. Merleau-Ponty is claiming that the natural world is an *a priori* condition for perceptual experience. The natural world is the counterpart of the pre-personal existence of my body and it is the horizon of all horizons, which guarantees for experience a given unity and, even more so, which guarantees the very possibility of the perceptual experience itself.

This section begins, **first**, with Merleau-Ponty's own position developed and supported by descriptions. **Secondly**, he presents an objection to his position that attacks it as a kind of relativism that in turn makes knowledge and truth impossible. **Thirdly**, he gives a kind of response to this objection. At this point, he conceives of the objection as rather superficial and thus his response is rather limited. We will see that in the Third Part of the book, he will formulate a series of much more complex objections and a much more in depth response. And, finally, in the **fourth** part of this chapter, he attempts to pull all the themes together in the form of a conclusion.

III. THE NATURAL WORLD. (327:14/381:26)

- A. **Position:** The natural world is the schema of inter-sensory relations. (327:15/381:27)

1. This section begins with Merleau-Ponty distinguishing his position from that of Kant. While the choice of the word "schema" is intended to bring to mind Kant's use of the word in the context of the "schema of the imagination," which in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, connects the sensible data of experience with the Categories of the Understanding, Merleau-Ponty does not want us to conceive of this relationship as some kind of transparent determinate system of invariable relations. The natural

world, while it is a unity, is not the unity of an intellectual synthesis, but rather it is a unity in the sense that a 'style' is a unity. (327:16/381:28)

a) To recognize a style is to experience a certain manner of dealing with situations in which, for example, I recognize an individual by taking on the style of the other through a kind of imitation yet I do this in such a way that I may not be able to intellectually define the style. (327:28/382:5)

b) While we experience such styles or unities, they are not fixed and unchanging structures. Experience teaches us that they are not constant nor do they dissolve into disconnected elements. Rather experience shows us that the natural world is a developing permanent being that unifies the real diversity of things. (327:34/382:11)

c) The world provides the background that enables one to overcome errors and illusions; and thus supports all the actions that strive towards truth. It is important to note that all these points are developed through an analysis of descriptions of perceptual experience. (324:41/382:18)

2. The natural world is a field or setting not for the experience of this or that object nor this or that type of experience, but rather the very condition for there being perceptual objects and experiences at all. It is the foundation of the very possibility of perception. (328:21/383:2)

a) Any understanding of the natural world presupposes having this natural background that unites all our experiences of the world. Every definition of the natural world is nothing more than just a summary and schematic outline of this world. (328:29/383:10)

b) The world itself is not a certain significance common to all our experiences but rather something that breathes life into our knowledge. Further the world does not hold for us a set of outlines which consciousness binds together into a unity. (328:37/383:19)

- c) And yet, there is a sense in which the natural world could be characterized as a kind of outline or even a schema. (329:1/383:25)

(1) Merleau-Ponty descriptively develops the sense in which the natural world could be said to present itself in terms of spatial outlines. (329:2/383:26)

(2) In much the same way, he describes how the natural world presents itself in terms of temporal outlines. (329:6/383:30)

(3) But these outlines do not follow each other or stand side by side in front of me. The perceiving body does not successively occupy different points of view as if beneath the gaze of some unlocated consciousness that thinks about these points of view. The perceiving body lives these different perspectives and goes beyond itself to a world. (329:11/383:34)

3. My point of view is not a limitation of experience, but rather it is the way my body infiltrates itself into the world. My experiences of the world result from the integration of perspectives in the very same way that

one single object emerges from the merging of double images in vision. What makes this integration possible is the natural world—in the sense that it is the horizon of all horizons, the style of all possible styles, the unity underlying all the disruptions of my personal and historical life. (329:33/384:21)

- B. **Objection:** In a clear sense, Merleau-Ponty is raising an objection against his own position here. The objection is that doesn't this position lead to **relativism** and undermine the very possibility of truth? How can anything ever really and truly present itself to us, if I always have the world through my perspective? Doesn't this position imply that the synthesis by which I have the world is never a complete process and, thus, I can always expect to see it break down and fall into the status of a mere illusion? After all, isn't it just my perspective? No matter how one attempts to answer these questions, it seems that Merleau-Ponty's position is confronted with a contradiction: a belief that the thing and the world, as is given in perception, must entail the presumption of a completed synthesis—and yet this completion is made impossible by the very nature of the perspectives which have to be inter-related, since each one of them has an indefinite character about it. (330:17/385:12)
- C. **Response:** There is, indeed, a contradiction but it only exists if one insists on maintaining the objective attitude toward the world. If one overcomes this attitude and actually looks at perception, one discovers that there is a synthesis of horizons because one's perspective is essentially a temporal and intentional process. The contradiction exists only because real perception is overlooked by the objective attitude. (330:36/385:31)
1. Through a description of ordinary perception, Merleau-Ponty attempts to show how time runs through individual perceptions holding them together while keeping them apart: a synthesis of horizons. (330:41/385:36)
 2. At the same time while one does experience the world, he does have it as a result of synthesis, which entails a certain kind of indeterminacy. But this indeterminacy has the character of a style and one possesses it as such. (331:6/386:7)
 3. At this stage, one discovers that the problem and the contradiction are solved by properly understanding the nature of perceptual consciousness. Consciousness is not an omnipresent and transcendent pure mind but an awareness that is essentially involved in a world. This involvement in the world is not something accidental to consciousness that at times we can ignore but part of its very essence. (331:25/386:25)
- D. **Conclusion:** (332:17/387:21)
1. There is an ambiguity given in perception that is not an imperfection of consciousness but part of the very definition of consciousness. In so far as consciousness is temporal, we can see that we have a world to the extent that it transcends our grasp into a past and future. It is only in so

far as we occupy a situation in the world with a past and future, that the world can appear as real. Thus what the objective attitude points to as undermining the reality of perception is, in fact, the necessary condition for reality. (332:17/387:21)

2. The reality of being has its roots in the ambiguities of time and depends on this ambiguity for its determinacy. Such an observation is supported by experience. (332:28/387:33)

a) But we must be careful when we turn to experience. There is a tendency to take the naïve experience of a single object as a paradigm. If one does this in too naïve a way, we end up with a view of the world as a sum total of perceptions and things that have no real relationship to one another. (332:28/387:33)

b) If we open ourselves to experience, we discover the roots of objective being. Each thing can offer itself only in so far as other things recede into the vagueness of the remote distance. Things and instants can link up and form a world only through the medium of the ambiguous being known as subjectivity. (332:43/388:11)

3. It is of the essence of the thing and the world to present themselves as 'open', to send us beyond their determinate manifestations, to promise us always 'something else to see'. There are two aspects of each perception: the objective aspects and the subjective setting in which the objective is given. The problem with Objective Thought is that it sees only the objective determinate aspects and just misses the subjective setting. While it is true that the thing and the world are given to us in perceptions, they are also given as transcending that perception. It is the experience of this "mystery" of how an object is both given and yet given as transcend that is the basic goal of this section. (333:19/388:31)

FOURTH SECTION (334:2/389:20)

In the last section, we considered an objection to Merleau-Ponty's position that claims that he has locked us up in our own perspectives and thus yielded a kind of relativism. Further it points out that if we were locked in our perspectives then there would be no difference between a real perception and an illusion. In this fourth section the attention is turned to what actually is the difference between hallucinations and real perceptions. If Merleau-Ponty's account of perception cannot explain the difference between these two, then there really is something wrong with his position. Thus in order to respond to this implicit objection, Merleau-Ponty develops several descriptions of hallucinations in order to reveal the real differences between them and real perceptions. Further, he argues that such an objection both arises out of objective thought and actually proves to be a major obstacle for all forms

of objective thought itself. But if we get back to lived experience and set aside the products of analysis, we can see that the problem can be overcome and, once again, our perspectives rather than trapping us in relativism become the way in which we achieve truth.

This section begins, **first**, with descriptive analysis of hallucinatory experiences that he intends to use in his argument against Empiricism and Intellectualism. In the **second** part he develops his on going criticism of both positions in light of this analysis and extends it to Objective Thought in general. In the **third** part of this section, he reflects on what is wrong with Objective Thought and develops certain methodological principles that he in turn uses in his analysis of the natural world. In part **four**, he turns to the experience of hallucinations, which some may think (Empiricists and Intellectualists) is a counter example to Merleau-Ponty's position. He argues that Objective Thought has all sorts of problems with such experiences and that his understanding of both the world and cogito are the keys to understanding hallucinations.

IV. HALLUCINATIONS. (334:2/389:20)

- A. In reaction to both **Empiricism** and **Intellectualism**, Merleau-Ponty maintains that patients, at least most of the time, discriminate between their hallucinations and their perceptions. Thus the morbid world has an artificial character and lacks something needed to become 'reality'. To substantiate this position, he offers a series of descriptions that support this point. (334:2/389:20)
 1. A descriptive analysis of a series of case studies that have been reported of hallucinations is offered and developed. (334:6/389:25)
 - a) A schizophrenic who experiences "picking" or shocks distinguishes these experiences from ones that the doctor creates. (334:6/389:25)
 - b) Another schizophrenic who claims to see a man standing outside his window has no problem distinguishing a real man standing there who meets all the characteristics of the first. (334:10/389:29)
 - c) A patient who hears voices distinguishes these voices from other voices in a rather interesting way. (334:17/389:36)
 - d) A patient afflicted with senile dementia who has been complaining about finding powder in her bed, is startled to find real powder there. (334:23/390:6)
 - e) A subject who had delirium tremens immediately takes his doctor's hand as he becomes aware that the guinea pig placed in the other hand is a real guinea pig. (334:26/390:9)
 2. What each of these examples clearly shows are that hallucinations are not simply the result of sensory content, as **Empiricism** would claim.

But one cannot reduce them to some kind of judgment or belief either as **Intellectualism** would claim. Clearly hallucinations are much more complex a phenomenon than they appear in the concepts of either position. (334:36/390:19)

- B. What is wrong with the approach of **Empiricism** and **Intellectualism** such that they give such poor accounts of the experience of hallucinations? But more importantly how can one deal with such experiences in order to actually understand them? What is the proper method for dealing with such phenomena? (335:18/391:7)
1. What is wrong with Empiricism and Intellectualism? (333:27/391:15)
 - a) **Empiricism** tries to explain hallucinations through the effect of certain physiological causes. (335:32/391:21)
 - b) **Intellectualism** tries to explain hallucinations through certain ideas of consciousness. (335:34/391:21)
 - c) The two doctrines presuppose the priority of objective thought and have at their disposal only one mode of being. Both positions attempt to explain the phenomenon of hallucination in terms of determinate being. All the difficulties arise from the fact that objective thought leaves no room for the equivocal adherence of the subject to pre-objective phenomena. (335:37/391:25)
 - d) For both, the "cogito" of Objective Thought teaches that the existence of consciousness is indistinguishable from the consciousness of existing and that therefore there can be nothing in consciousness that it is unaware and conversely, everything that it knows with certainty it finds in itself. Clearly such claims fly in the face of lived experience. (336:22/392:15)
 2. Merleau-Ponty now turns his attention to what the problems of Objective Thought teach us about how hallucinations should be studied. What he attempts to do is develop a key insight that any successful method should be based upon: namely, that one must give priority to lived experience over conceptualized experiences. (336:33/392:26)
 - a) We must stop constructing hallucinations according to some conception of how we think these phenomena ought to be. And we must also stop trying to assume a totally disengaged attitude where we simply accept the accounts of those having hallucinations as defining such phenomena. Neither approach is appropriate. (336:35/392:28)
 - b) What one needs to do is realize that real knowledge is never a becoming totally one with what is known and the knower. Knowledge is always mediated, if for no other reason than that it is rooted in language. One must realize that consciousness of others, the past, or illness, can never reduce their existence to what I know of them. But neither can my own consciousness be reduced to simply what I know of it. (337:7/393:7)
 - c) There is not privileged self-knowledge, and other people are no more closed systems than I am myself. (337:26/393:25)

(1) **Problem:** If a philosopher produces hallucinations in himself by means of drugs, either he yields to the hallucination and thus cannot be objective, or he retains something of his reflective power and thus he cannot be said to really have the experience. It looks as if the philosopher is trapped within his perspective either way and truth becomes impossible. (337:26/393:25)

(2) **Solution:** We must recognize that our perspectives are not in opposition to the perspectives of others but are *with* them in so far as we and the other open out on to a world. We must put ourselves back in the lived situation if we are to understand it. In understanding the other, it is not a question of either taking his word for it, or of reducing his experience to mine, or coinciding with him, or sticking to my own point of view, but of making explicit my experience and his experience by understanding the phenomenon in terms of the relationship between our perspectives. (337:32/393:31)

C. Given these methodological insights, Merleau-Ponty now does a more complete descriptive analysis in which he compares and contrasts perception and hallucinations. To appreciate the philosophical value of this section, one needs to focus on what Merleau-Ponty is trying to show us about the subject of perception, the world, and their relationship. (338:16/394:22)

1. The fact that I classify the hallucinations of others as hallucinations means that I find nothing similar to them not only in my experience but any possible experience. I am therefore aware of apprehending through experience a system of phenomena that make up not only my private experience, but the only one possible for me and for others: the real world. Clearly the point of this is that the perceived world is not only my world, but also the one in which I see and encounter others. (338:18/394:24)
2. While it is true that my perception is perspectival, that is, I perceive only from a certain angle, such perceptions exist with a certain horizon that contain all the possibility for other perspectives. The presence of these other perspectives is actually given within any one perspective because this presence is the necessary condition for an object to appear as real. So, one could say that my perspective opens me out to the whole world. (338:25/394:34)
3. The victim of hallucinations enjoys no such world. His hallucinations are not given as things that others cannot see but rather they are given as open only to him. In short, the hallucinations have lost their connection to the natural world. (Here and in some of the following points, Merleau-Ponty runs through a series of descriptions to support this position.) (339:1/395:13)
4. The hallucinatory thing is not, like the real thing, a form of being with depth or temporal endurance. It is not in the world as a perception is, but 'before' it. And, of course, this makes the hallucinatory thing un-

like anything that Empiricism and Intellectualism can conceive. (339:19/395:25)

a) **In response to Empiricism:** There are hallucinations because of the phenomenal body. The victim of a hallucination does not see and hear in the normal sense, but makes use of his sensory fields and his natural insertion into a world in order to build up an artificial world answering to the total intention of his being. But hallucinatory beings lack something when compared with the things of perception. (Here again, Merleau-Ponty presents a rather long series of examples to support this point.) (340:10/396:27)

b) **In response to Intellectualism:** Hallucinations are not a sensory process, as we have seen above, but still less are they a product of judgment. While hallucination is not a perception, it does have a certain value of "reality" since it alone counts for the victim. But even more importantly, there is a hallucinatory deception that Merleau-Ponty develops by means of descriptions and this will never make sense as long as we are trying to interpret hallucinations as an intellectual operation. (341:27/398:16)

5. One can only understand hallucinations provided that hallucinations and perceptions can be seen as modulations of one single primordial function. And this can be so only because in the normal subject, reality itself suffers through an analogous process. To hallucinate, and more generally to imagine, is to exploit the tolerance on the part of the *ante predicative* world and our bewildering proximity to the world of being in syncretic experience. After giving so many examples from abnormal cases, it is interesting to note that Merleau-Ponty turns his attention here to normal experience. He does **not** make inferences from what is true in the abnormal situation and then predicate these characteristics of the normal situation. Rather he uses the abnormal to highlight how the normal is **different** with the goal of trying to get us to understand the normal more clearly. (342:19/399:13)
- D. **Conclusion:** One can account for hallucinatory deception only by removing apodictic certainty from perception and full self-possession from perceptual consciousness. (343:37/400:33)
1. **Natural World:** What is given in perception is never necessary since perception is a process of making explicit something that can be pursued to infinity. But this does not reduce perception to merely the possible or probable. Perception gives us the real. This "openness" in the percept is the very ground of its reality. And while each thing has a certain appearance of uncertainty about it, what is at least certain for us is that there are things, that is to say, a world. (344:12/401:16)
 - a) To ask whether the world is real is to fail to understand what one is asking. The world is not the sum of things but the inexhaustible source from which things are drawn. It is the necessary condition for the perception of things. (344:13/401:26)

b) In the experience of the world, there could not possibly be error because there is not yet truth there; for all that is given is reality. Nor could there be necessity, for there is only facticity. (344:20/401:26)

2. **Consciousness:** The results of our analysis show that we cannot attribute to perceptual consciousness the character of being in full possession of itself. What we need is a new conception of the cogito that is radically different from the conceptions of Objective thought. (344:22/401:28)

a) If hallucinations are to be possible, it is necessary that consciousness should, at some moment, cease to know what it is doing; otherwise, it would be conscious of constituting an illusion and thus not be deceived. (344:24/401:31)

b) Clearly what is needed is a conception of the cogito in which it never completely coincides with itself, but rather there is a mere intentional and presumptive coincidence. (344:35/402:4)

CHAPTER 4 • OTHER PEOPLE AND THE HUMAN WORLD

This chapter follows the pattern of the previous three chapters. It starts with what Merleau-Ponty thinks is a fact: meanings are given in perceptual experience. But now our attention turns to cultural and social meanings. Again while Merleau-Ponty admits that Empiricism and Intellectualism agree that cultural and social meanings appear to be given in perception, close analysis reveals for them that they are not. From the objective attitude such meanings are always understood on the basis of some kind of inference. In response, Merleau-Ponty is going to argue that on the level of lived perception cultural and social meanings are given, they are *always already there*.

While Merleau-Ponty initially formulates the problem in terms of cultural and social meanings, there is a movement to the most fundamental cultural and social meaning—the experience of the other. The major part of this chapter formulates the problem of “Other Minds”—first to almost dismiss it and then to reformulate it into a real concern that leads to solipicism. After getting our bearing in relation to solipicism, the chapter moves back to the discussion of cultural and social meaning and attempts to explain them in terms of what we have discovered.

I. INTRODUCTION: (346:1/403:1)

A. This chapter begins by summarizing in a rather poetical fashion the implications that flow from the previous chapters. The nature of subjectivity is always self-transcending. I am never quite one with myself. I have been born into personal existence in a time, which I am not responsible

like anything that Empiricism and Intellectualism can conceive. (339:19/395:25)

a) **In response to Empiricism:** There are hallucinations because of the phenomenal body. The victim of a hallucination does not see and hear in the normal sense, but makes use of his sensory fields and his natural insertion into a world in order to build up an artificial world answering to the total intention of his being. But hallucinatory beings lack something when compared with the things of perception. (Here again, Merleau-Ponty presents a rather long series of examples to support this point.) (340:10/396:27)

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I. INTRODUCTION: (346:1/403:1)

A. This chapter begins by summarizing in a rather poetical fashion the implications that flow from the previous chapters. The nature of subjectivity is always self-transcending. I am never quite one with myself. I have been born into personal existence in a time, which I am not responsible

nor control. All my perceptions rise out of this background that transcends me. This background makes my perception possible and yet, at the same time, hinders it from ever becoming completely mine. I never completely have myself because I am always more than what I can grasp. There is thus at the very heart of subjectivity that which is anterior and remains alien to my personal life. Merleau-Ponty calls this nature or the world. (346:1/403:1)

B. The problem of this chapter. (347:37/405:7)

1. Merleau-Ponty now turns his attention not just to the fact that nature finds its way to the core of my personal life and becomes inextricably linked with it, but to the fact that my behavior patterns and the behavior of others settle into nature and become deposited in the form of a cultural world. I look about me and I find roads, villages, a hat, or even a pipe. Clearly objects are given in perception possessing cultural and social meanings. The concern of this chapter will be to understand how it is possible for a cultural world to be **always already there** for us. (347:37/405:7)

2. **An obvious answer** to this problem is that I interpret the behavior of others, their instruments and their world, by an analogy with my own. It is through my own inner experience that each of these becomes significant to me. The actions of others are always understood through my own, the *one* or the *we* is always understood through the *I*. (348:23/405:36)

3. **Objection to this answer:** But how is this possible? How can the word 'I' be put into the plural? How can what appears to me as being intrinsically bound up with my own individuality be attributed to others whose individuality is presented in a radically different form from mine. For Merleau-Ponty this problem seems to be increased when we turn to the first of all cultural objects -the body of the other. How can we solve the paradox of a consciousness seen from the outside? (348:35/406:11)

C. The approach of this chapter: Although the problem of other consciousnesses is not the same as our problem of culture, the analysis of the perception of others runs up against the same difficulties. Thus Merleau-Ponty proposes to answer the problem of the nature of the human and cultural world by first turning to the problem of the existence of other minds. This chapter will end by returning to the problem of culture. (349:4/406:24)

II. THE PROBLEM OF OTHER MINDS. (349:13/406:33)

A. Today we have a major problem with the existence of other people largely because we have assumed the attitude of Objective Thought. (349:13/403:33)

1. For Objective Thought, the body of another is an object standing before a consciousness that thinks about it. As a result, the body of the other is seen as something empirical, biological and even mechanical, but always

as just a thing, parts outside of parts. In such a context, there is no way of seeing another consciousness in the body. (349:24/407:7)

2. But the problem behind Objective Thought is much deeper. Objective Thought cannot overcome the dichotomy of being-in-itself and being-for-itself that is fundamental to its way of looking at reality. (349:34/407:16)
 3. Thus Objective Thought has no place for other people or a plurality of consciousnesses because of the way that it conceives the relationship between the in-itself and the for-itself, between body and soul. (349:44/407:27)
- B. The results of our study of body and consciousness can now be applied to the problem of other minds. (350:8/407:34)
1. As we have seen Objective Thought is distortive of our understanding of even our own body. Experience tells us that I have the world as an incomplete individual. It is through the agency of my body as the potentiality of this world that I have objects. Or perhaps, it would be better to say that I have my body through objects and not in any kind of logical implication, but through a real lived implication. We have seen that my body is a movement towards the world, and that the world is my body's point of support in this movement. (350:15/408:4)
 - a) In response to Empiricism, Merleau-Ponty claims that we have also come to understand that the physiological event is merely the abstract schema of the perceptual event that reveals this movement of the body into a world. (350:37/408:25)
 - b) In response to Intellectualism, he argues that we cannot conceive the body in perception as does a constituting consciousness as being something separate from the world, but rather the body must be grasped as our inherence in the world. Our "perspective" or our body must be understood as our insertion into the world. (350:41/408:29)
 2. What we have discovered in the previous chapters has transformed our very notions of body and consciousness. And it is only in light of this transformation that the problem of other minds can be solved. If my consciousness has a body in the senses described above, why shouldn't other consciousnesses have a body in the same sense? If that is the case, the problem of other minds has disappeared. (351:11/409:7)
 - a) We must distinguish clearly between the objective body and the phenomenal body. We must realize that the phenomenal body is the body, which we experience in perception; it is the body that is given. (351:14/409:9)
 - b) We must also realize that even our own consciousness as given to us through perception is not a pure being-for-itself but rather a subject as a pattern of behavior and as a being-in-the-world. The phenomenological reflection reveals vision not as 'thinking about seeing' but as a gaze at the world which grips it, and that is why for me there can be another's gaze.

But as I have myself only incompletely, it must be remembered that I have the other in the same way. (351:28/409:23)

c) The claim of Objective Thought that the experience of the other is really nothing but the result of an inference by analogy can now be responded to. Reasoning by analogy presupposes that I recognize the other as other, and this is precisely what it is supposed to explain. There is nothing in the experience of another that even resembles 'reasoning by analogy'. Merleau-Ponty develops an interesting example of a child's biting to illustrate his point. (352:5/410:7)

d) It should also be noted that there is a sense in which there really is no problem of "Other Minds." The standard problem has its source in the dichotomy that is central to Objective Thought: the dichotomy between the for-itself and the in-itself. But we have discovered that the body of the other is not an object for me nor is mine an object for him. Both are manifestations of behavior or, more exactly, each is a certain way of being involved in the world that leaves open a whole range of possibilities. In reality, the other is included in my perspective not because my perspective has no definite limits, but because it slips spontaneously into the other person's perspective and because both are brought together into one single world, which we all participate on a visual, auditory, and tactile level. (352:26/410:27)

3. Merleau-Ponty now draws a series of conclusions about our experience of intersubjective relations as they are given in perception. (353:27/411:34)

a) The living body of the other has the same basic structure as mine. I experience both his and my body as the powers of adapting certain forms of behavior and a certain world of activity in which the natural object takes on the shape of cultural objects. (353:43/412:3)

b) In language, as one of these cultural objects, we have a special example of how our perspective merges with the other. The very nature of language is that it creates a common world of meanings through which we share the thought and discoveries of the other. In language, we create a common world through which we not only relate to the other but we meet them in a kind of co-existence. (354:22/412:34)

c) The tendency of not conceiving the above phenomenon as intersubjective is due to Objective Thought. If we look at a child who has not reached the level of abstract thought, we discover that the world is essentially intersubjective for him. Although the adult has outgrown this, it should be realized that the unsophisticated thinking of our earliest years remains as an indispensable acquisition underlying that of maturity. (354:39/413:17)

- C. **The problem reconsidered:** Merleau-Ponty, however, warns us that we must not think we have simply solved the problem of other minds. The problem, while it has its source in the difficulties of Objective Thought,

has another source and that source is the very nature of subjectivity itself. In raising the following objections, Merleau-Ponty is, of course, raising a problem with his own approach to other minds. The goal of such an exercise is to overcome any naivety about the problem and also lead us to a better understanding of the complexities of his position. But in saying this, one should not think that these are made up objections or just pretend objections. One needs to be aware that there is seriousness in what follows. (355:42/414:25)

1. Objections:

- a) In attempting to make intersubjectivity possible have we not reduced the subjectivity to something quite impersonal and thus eliminated subjectivity? (354:42/214:25)
- b) In saying that we come into contact with the behavior and words of another, have we forgotten that his behavior and words are not the other person? (356:18/415:6)
- c) Although the other's consciousness and mine tend towards producing a common situation, isn't it still the case that each is projecting his 'one and only world' that in fact could never really be the same as others? (356:32/415:19)

2. Responses: (356:36/415:23)

- a) The difficulties involved in the perception of other people should now be realized as not simply the result of Objective Thought. There is a problem here, which cannot be resolved by rediscovering behavior. The conflict between the other and myself does not begin only when we try to think ourselves into the other and thus it does not vanish if we reintegrate thought into non-positing consciousness and unreflective living. (356:36/415:23)
- b) Through a careful analysis of an intersubjective relation, a couple for whom there is more love felt on one side than on the other, Merleau-Ponty concludes that there is a solipsism rooted in the heart of living experience and that it is quite insurmountable. If one claims that the other is given to me simply as a fact, it must always be remembered that this is a fact *for me* and this always implies a difference. (357:7/416:1)
- c) The only recourse to overcoming this solipsism seems to be idealism but Merleau-Ponty finds the price much too high. Idealism overcomes solipsism but only by sacrificing individuality. (358:31/417:29)
- d) At this point Merleau-Ponty considers an interesting possibility: Could I not achieve a union with the other through God? While this does seem an unusual question for him to ask, Merleau-Ponty's answer is no. The very act of reflection and love leading to God will always place God outside the realm of possibility and thus preclude God's role as such a mediator. (358:41/418:1)
- e) In conclusion, Merleau-Ponty seems to suggest that there is a definite attraction towards formulating a solipsistic philosophy but that the

act of conceiving and formulating such a position presupposes others. And, indeed, it does seem that both acts require the existence of others if they are going to make any sense at all. (359:19/418:23)

1) Consciousness presents itself with the absurdity of multiple solipsisms. The only way to make sense of this is to realize that solitude and communication are not two horns of a dilemma, but rather two moments in one phenomenon. (359:26/418:30)

2) But even this only makes sense if we realize that there is a depth to experience and not only I, but also the other, are always given as transcending that experience. (360:5/419:15)

3) The truth of solipsism is that every experience appears to me as a particular instance that does not exhaust the reality of what is given. (360:24/419:33)

4) While the experiences of a stranger's gaze on me and the reflections of a philosophy may appear to be an exception to the above claim, they both can be seen as illustrating this point. The fact is that perception grasps an object, myself or the other, always reveals that which remains transcendent even in the act of possessing. (361:1/420:16)

III. THE PROBLEM OF THE CULTURAL & SOCIAL WORLD. (362:1/421:23)

- A. Building on what we have already seen, Merleau-Ponty urges us to see the social as neither an external object nor as an idea but rather as a permanent field or dimension of existence. Just as nature is the horizon in which things possessing determinate meanings appear, so the social is the horizon in which cultural and social meanings appear. (362:1/421:23)
- B. The social is already there when we come to know or judge social meanings. In order to support this point he develops three situations in which this point can be more clearly seen. (362:19/422:3)
 1. In the Russian revolution the peasants joined the workers not because of some explicit understanding or theory about their situation but rather because of a sense of a shared struggle and a shared fate. At the most basic level, social meanings do not exist as some kind of third person object which is presented to a disengaged intellect. (362:27/422:11)
 2. The historian, such as Fabrice, attempts to understand the Battle of Waterloo by trying in reflection to get a bird's eye view of the battle, but all he achieves is a representation of the battle. The "real battle" is what transcends all representation and yet unites them because it is the ultimate background upon which all reflection works. (362:38/422:22)
 3. In much the same way, the historian or philosopher that attempts an objective definition of 'class' or 'nation' ends up producing a representation of class or nation, which carries with it an essential limitation. The reality of each exists as that toward which all representations aim and yet can never achieve. (363:7/422:34)

- C. The social is an existential modality, which entails all the problems of transcendence. These problems exist as unsolvable only insofar as we attempt to remove them from the fundamental ambiguity of being-in-the-world. At the heart of being-in-the-world is the fact that I am open to phenomena which transcend me and which nevertheless exist only to the extent that I take them up. It is the paradoxical sounding relationship that enables both my birth and death to exist for me, not as facts, but real possibilities. (363:26/423:19)

IV. CONCLUSION: (364:43/425:3)

- A. The social as well as the natural world are forms of transcendence, which have their origin in the ambiguous life that makes knowledge possible. What we have discovered is a new conception of transcendence, and since transcendence is the basis of objectivity, we have discovered a new conception of objectivity. (364:43/425:3)
- B. If we conceive of the social and the natural world in this way, Merleau-Ponty thinks that we are forced to re-evaluate the very nature of reflection itself. If the descriptions have shown us anything it is that there is a meaning of reflection altogether more radical than that of Objective Thought. What we must now do is turn and look at this conception of radical reflection not simply as we have come to understand it but also as we have been using it. Clearly we have reached a point where we must radically reflect back upon what we have been doing and thus undertake a phenomenology of phenomenology. In so doing, perhaps we will come to understand how our thought is grounded in our bodies and the world and that beyond these there is nothing to understand. (365:16/425:19)

PART III—BEING-FOR-ITSELF AND BEING-IN-THE-WORLD: THE LACK OF AN INTRODUCTION FOR THE THIRD PART

Perhaps the best comment that can be made about the “Introduction to the Third part of the Book” is that **there isn’t one**. If we look back over the book, we can see that the previous parts had “Introductions”: Part I, pages 67-72/77-83, and Part II, pages 203-206/235-239. And while one might expect that Merleau-Ponty would have carried on this pattern of writing a separate introduction for each part, he does not do it. If one were to ask why he does not do this, clearly I have to admit that deep down I really don’t know. It may be that he just forgot to write one, although such an answer is never really satisfactory to commentators. Commentators always like to find “significance” in

things. But it could be that Merleau-Ponty was just careless. There are examples of this in other parts of the book. Or it might be that he had some profound reason for not doing so that I cannot comprehend. By the way, this is an answer that commentators almost never want to acknowledge. Or it could be a whole number of reasons that are just too obvious to even consider. While keeping all these possibilities in mind, what follows is my best shot at trying to come up with reasons for this lack of introduction.

In a sense, these comments are also an attempt to “introduce” the third part of Merleau-Ponty’s book and give an overview of how I conceive of this part as fitting in with the rest of the book. At the same time, I will try to explain why Merleau-Ponty did not write an introduction, while assuming that he did not think that there should be such an introduction—an assumption that gives a rather paradoxical ring to the following attempt at offering an introduction to this part. It might be best perhaps to read what follows as a possible example of reflective thought changing, and possibly distorting, the lived experience of reading this book. It needs to be remembered by the reader that what is important here, of course, is the lived experience of reading Merleau-Ponty’s book.

The *Phenomenology of Perception* is organized, as one would expect a phenomenological work to be organized. The “Introduction” serves the role of an epoché, at least in the sense of attempting to raise doubts concerning our everyday experiences, and even primitive philosophical views on perception. Part One turns its attention to the subject of perception—the **body**; and Part Two is concerned with the object of perception—the **world**. Part Three is concerned with the relation between subject and object—**consciousness**. Yet when one actually looks at the final three chapters in the last part of the book, it is as if they are going back over the ground already covered. Chapter one deals with the subject; chapter two with the objects of perception; and chapter three seems to be a very strange and out of place chapter. What is going on here?

To get clear on what is happening in this final part, one must go back and see what has happened up to this point. The entire book has been a dialectical argument against **Analytic Reflection** in so far as it reflectively dichotomizes the subject and its object. Merleau-Ponty has used **Empiricism** and **Intellectualism** as the tools that have made his dialectical arguments work. The basic problems that this dialectic has

considered over and over again have been the problems of truth, being, and action. In short, the book has moved back and forth in considering matters of epistemology, metaphysics, and theory of action.

The recurrent theme of the book is that these three problems seem unanswerable because of the Analytic Attitude that is so characteristic of both Empiricism and Intellectualism. Merleau-Ponty has argued that Empiricism and Intellectualism have given inadequate answers to these problems and that these answers have been the result of their ignorance of their abstractive character of their reflective acts. To reflect, to conceptualize, to formalize, to abstract, etc., is always to transform what is reflected on. Merleau-Ponty's own position has been developed by going back to experience and attempting through radical reflection to make us aware of lived reality of the body, world, thing, other people, etc. And thus to understand this through radical reflection is to understand that beyond these there is nothing to understand. To come to grips with the ambiguity of the lived world which radical reflection gives us does not require that this ambiguity be overcome. In fact, to attempt to overcome this fundamental ambiguity is to return to Analytic Reflection. The key insight thus far in this work is that radical reflection reveals the impossibility of a complete reduction, or to put it in other terms, it reveals the never-ending character of the philosophical endeavor.

But are we, again, at one of those places in the text where Merleau-Ponty is raising the question about his whole approach? Indeed, I think we are. It is as if Merleau-Ponty wants to ask: Isn't it time to ask about the phenomenological approach itself? Thus we have Merleau-Ponty calling for, or at least announcing, **a phenomenology of phenomenology**. In one sense, the final section of the book is an attempt at doing this. The problem is that phenomenology is not a series of doctrines or theories. Phenomenology as the "Preface" says is a certain style or way of doing philosophy. We can now see that this is not just a temporary state of affairs but all that phenomenology can be. But if this is all that it can be, then how does one study it; or more importantly, how does one do a phenomenology of phenomenology? The first step is that one must be doing it. Without the doing, it doesn't exist. Thus the final sections of the book are examples of doing phenomenology whose primary goal is to provide a subject matter for our study of phenomenology. Thus, this section has a certain meta-level character about it. It is a reflection back on what we have seen in order to see it more clearly.

What is to be discovered here cannot simply be said before hand but only shown in the doing and thus an introduction that attempts to say what this section is doing is totally out of place.

While the final sections of the *Phenomenology of Perception* may have this "meta" role, they are still a central part of the first level activities of the book. If the first part of the book deals with the subject of perception and the second deals with the object, why does the first chapter in the third part seem to be dealing with the subject again, and why does the second seem to be dealing with the object yet again? To answer these questions one again has to look at what was discovered in each of the first two sections. The Analytic Attitude has created this radical break between the subject and object of perception. Both Empiricism and Intellectualism have treated the subject of perception as if it were a reality unto itself. Merleau-Ponty has argued that this is nothing but a distortive abstraction. To become aware of the true subject of perception is to become aware of a being intimately involved in a world—a *being-in-the-world*. This involvement is so central to the subject of perception that one could conceive of the subject as relational—*intentional*.

In much the same way, the second major part of the book started with the conceptions of Empiricism and Intellectualism. The world is for both a determinate in-itself and separate from the perceiver with its own determinate nature. Again Merleau-Ponty argues that this is a distortion and a result of the abstractive nature of analytical reflection. If one looks at lived experience one discovers that the world is always a world for us. While the character of otherness is clearly affirmed by Merleau-Ponty, he attempts to show that the world is the correlative of my body. It is itself relational and achieves a kind of unity, in ambiguity, with my body.

Thus we could conclude that the major point Merleau-Ponty is making in the first two parts of the book is exactly the point we were expecting him to develop in the final section of the work. In studying the subject and object, we have been already considering their relationship and, in fact, in their very essence they are relational. Furthermore, if we were to try and characterize this relationship, possibly no better word could be found than "consciousness." If consciousness is that in which the body transcends itself and is involved in a world, and it is also that in which the world is both other and yet for us, it is clearly the kind of topic that we would have expected the book to have ended.

But one must remember Merleau-Ponty's fear of the Analytic Attitude. Descartes has already turned consciousness into a thing that becomes imprisoned within itself. If one is to go beyond the abstractions of Analytic Thought, one must by means of radical reflection transcend to consciousness not as it is conceived through reflection but as the source of all such reflection. To avoid any possibility of reifying consciousness, Merleau-Ponty returns in the first chapter of Part III to the subject of perception. Not the rather abstract perceiver who sees meaningful color patterns nor the one who sees the others, but now it is the philosopher, in particular, the phenomenologist who is perceiver and who is reading the *Cartesian Meditations*.

Thus the final section begins again the investigation of the subject of perception and in a sense begins the book over again. The final section as a whole is a redoing of the whole book again for two reasons: first, the relation between subject and object is not something unto itself. It cannot be described without the subject and object; just as the true subject of perception cannot be described without describing a relation to the world; and just as the true object of perception cannot be described without describing a relation to the body. For Merleau-Ponty it is inconceivable to treat the relation without considering the terms of the relation.

Second, the redoing of the entire book here is not a redoing for its own sake. Merleau-Ponty is concerned with the task of a phenomenology of phenomenology. This redoing is itself to be the subject matter of the section. To make sure that this stands out the first chapter of the third part makes a move to philosophical perception. But we are not to follow Descartes. Descartes' *Meditations* is not our subject matter but rather it is the consciousness that is reflecting on Descartes. This is a consciousness that in many respects is radically different from the one Descartes found. And just as the consciousness of Descartes implied a certain conception of truth, and in fact was the standard for such a truth, so this New Cogito implies a new conception of truth, reality, and action. But if one reflects upon all this, especially Merleau-Ponty's fear of reification, one again begins to have a sense of why talking about the relationship between the subject and the object, the theme of this part of the book, might better not be done. Merleau-Ponty may have thought that doing so would lead people toward a reification of consciousness. And this would be the last thing that he would want to do. Thus, how could he write an introduction?

Throughout the book, Merleau-Ponty has interwoven questions of truth, being, and action. In the final three chapters, these three themes reappear. In the first of these three chapters the concern is with truth, in the second it is with being, and in the final chapter it is with action. In many respects, it is the same kind of dialectical moves being made yet the emphasis has changed. Now Merleau-Ponty is more concerned with re-thinking these concepts—developing a new conception of truth, being, and action. In many respects these are the primary results of our phenomenological analysis and they are being laid out before us so that we can now proceed to a *Phenomenology of Phenomenology*.

There may still be one problem with these chapters. The move is from truth, to being, to action. Why this order and what does this order suggest? Once again we have to see this in relation to Merleau-Ponty's reaction to the Analytic Attitude. For the Analytic Attitude, what is ultimately fundamental is the order of knowledge. Following Descartes, it is man as knower, which sets the standard for our understanding of being and action. Merleau-Ponty's own analysis tries to show that knowledge, and thus truth, is dependent upon question of being and such a question is in turn dependent upon action. In these three chapters the movement reverses the priority of the Analytic Attitude. Rather than truth being primary, we find Merleau-Ponty arguing for the priority of action. Thus the concern of these last three chapters is to once again transform our way of looking at reality by transforming our priorities. But again, this is not the kind of thing that can be announced in an introduction. It is rather something that has to be done to one's readers. It is only in so far as these three chapters do transform one's priorities that such a transformation will make sense.

CHAPTER I • THE COGITO

The last part of the *Phenomenology of Perception* (Part III) is, in many ways, a kind of conclusion to the whole book in that it brings together the basic themes that have already been developed. Yet at the same time, it attempts to develop the implications of these themes in ways that are sometimes surprising. This chapter plays this dual role. Much of what is presented here—outer and inner perceptions, mathematical knowledge, and the role of language—have already been discussed. Thus, at first glance, they seem to be little more than summaries of what has already been developed. And yet, on a closer examination,

they are placed in a new context and are used in new ways to make explicit what was only hinted at earlier.

Merleau-Ponty begins this chapter in a fashion that is intended to remind us of Descartes' *Meditations*. True, Merleau-Ponty is not sitting before a fireplace meditating on what he is experiencing. Rather he is writing this book. There before him is an ashtray and paper. But more importantly, there is before him the "idea" of the Cartesian Cogito. And just like Descartes, he proceeds to describe these experiences. What he finds in these descriptions is "consciousness"—a consciousness that is constantly transcending itself into the book, the ashtray, paper, and, yes, even into the Cartesian Cogito; and yet it somehow possesses each of these as its own. In his analysis, Merleau-Ponty finds a paradoxical relation of transcendence/immanence at the heart of consciousness.

He argues that Descartes' attempt to overcome this paradoxical character by emphasizing the immanent character of the objects of consciousness is achieved only at the price of ignoring the transcendent character. In this transcending of itself, Merleau-Ponty finds a "cogito" radically different from the Cartesian Cogito. It is a cogito that neither fully possesses its objects nor itself. Thus, it is a cogito that lacks the kind of certainty and truth that the Cartesian Cogito seems to achieve.

The basic structure of this chapter follows the pattern of Descartes' Methodic Doubt in the *Meditations* as it considers external perceptions, internal perceptions, mathematical knowing, and, finally, the certainty of abstract ideas. While Methodic Doubt raised doubts about the object of each of these kinds of knowledge, Descartes' subject/object distinction enabled him to establish the necessary truth of the subjective states. It is this "necessary truth" that is at the heart of the radical distinction between the Cartesian Cogito and the cogito that Merleau-Ponty finds in experience. The whole chapter is a critique of this concept of necessary truth. In so doing, Merleau-Ponty attempts to discredit the Cartesian conception of the cogito while defending his own view.

The chapter is divided into four major parts. The first, rather dramatically introduces both the problem of truth and the problem of the nature of consciousness that amounts to an analysis of the relation between appearance and reality. The second part retraces the path set out by Descartes' Methodic Doubt. The third is a reflection on

the nature of truth that has been discovered in the second part. The final section develops the nature of consciousness that has been found in the analysis thus far. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the nature of consciousness that we have discovered is a silent or Tacit Cogito that the Cartesian Cogito attempts to speak and make explicit and does not succeed in doing. Of course, this is precisely the point he was trying to make in the introductory descriptions of his experience of the Cartesian Cogito.

I. **INTRODUCTION.** (369:1/429:1)

- A. Merleau-Ponty begins this chapter by giving a description of his own experience of being in the world. In particular, he develops his experience of reading Descartes' *Meditations* and his experience of the Cogito, which is contained and presented in that work. It seems to him that his whole life is an act of transcending himself toward things and, in this case, the Cartesian Cogito—a movement, one might describe as a quest for truth. (369:1/429:1)
- B. In saying the above, he is not moving toward a naive realism but feels that there is truth in the Cartesian return to things and ideas to the self. But even more, experience teaches us that there is a paradoxical character to experience and it is in this paradox that both Empiricism and Intellectualism have been trapped. Merleau-Ponty does not think that this is some kind of special discovery of his. Plato's *Meno* (80D) develops the same paradox in terms of learning. Perception, like learning, requires that the object cannot be totally transcendent to experience nor can it be totally immanent to experience. In the first case we could not seek it and in the second there would be no need to seek it. This discussion should also remind us of the earlier treatment of the same problem we saw when Merleau-Ponty dealt with attention in the "Introduction" to the *Phenomenology of Perception*. (369:22/430:1)
- C. It is precisely this problem of the paradoxical character of experience that Descartes seeks to resolve and overcome. He realizes that only for thought that runs ahead of itself and launches itself into a world, and is aware of itself as doing so, can there be a *world for thought* and can there be *truth for consciousness*. Descartes introduces self-consciousness as the ultimate solution. In what follows, Merleau-Ponty attempts to bring out the implications of Descartes' quest for absolute truth in the *Meditations*. Central among these is that the Cartesian doctrine of the Cogito leads logically to the assertion of the timelessness of mind, and to the acceptance of a consciousness of the eternal and the absolute within the self. It is this same conception of consciousness that has led in one way or another to the positions of both Empiricism and Intellectualism. It is important to further realize that this position of Descartes' is not just

one that Merleau-Ponty arbitrarily chose but one, which he maintains, is essentially in opposition to his. Here we have the direct confrontation between “objective thought” in the person of Descartes opposing everything Merleau-Ponty has done. (371:21/432:1)

- D. After developing Descartes’ conception of the Cogito, Merleau-Ponty now turns our attention to a few implications that follow from this conception in order to use them as a framework for what is to follow in this chapter. (372:28/433:9)
 1. If consciousness is as Descartes has described it, how can we explain the experience of being affected when for Descartes there is clearly no way that we can have this experience? (372:28/433:9)
 2. How can we ever experience other minds? The plurality of Cartesian consciousnesses is impossible if the Cogito is an absolute consciousness of itself, for the other will always be other and not consciousness. (373:20/434:11)
 3. For Descartes truth ultimately consists in a coinciding of the Cogito with its object. Both Empiricism and Intellectualism accept this same criterion but in radically different ways. The only way out for Merleau-Ponty, the only way to avoid the extremes of both Empiricism and Intellectualism, is to find a middle way, a way in-between reducing experience to a collection of psychological events or maintaining that there is a transcendental subject above time and limitations. What we need to do is rediscover this ‘in-between’ and this can only be done by returning to lived experience and discovering what it reveals. (374:4/435:5)
- II. **A QUEST FOR ABSOLUTE TRUTH.** One could describe this quest as an attempt to find the kind of truth that Descartes sought in the *Meditations*: a truth in which thought can both coincide with its object and completely possess it, in short a truth of self-evidence. All the possible candidates for this kind of truth are chosen from the very same ones proposed by Descartes and all of them are found wanting. The purpose of this quest is to show that there are problems at the heart of the Cartesian conception of truth and to suggest an alternative view of truth. (374:27/435:27)
 - A. **External Perception**—While our experience of things in the external world can always be open to doubt, certainly we cannot doubt that we are having these experiences when we are having them. Is absolute truth to be found in our subjective state of knowing that I am now having this experience whether the object experience exists or not? Can perception be reduced to thought about perception, as Descartes seems to think that it can? (374:27/435:27)
 1. Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there can be no question of setting the act itself apart from the end to which it is directed.

To see is always to see some thing. This is just the nature of perception. (374:32/435:32)

2. The certainty of thought about perception carries with it no more weight than the perception itself. If I am sure of having felt, the certainty of some external thing is involved in the very way in which the sensation is articulated and unfolded before me. There is no 'interpretation' of my sensations and no judgment that does not spring from the very configuration of the phenomenon. My 'interpretation' must necessarily be **motivated**. (375:16/436:23)
 3. **Conclusion:** The above analysis of perception reveals a consciousness that is transcendent through and through - that is an active transcendence. This active transcendence is the simultaneous contact of my own being and the world's being. (376:28/438:9)
- B. **Internal Perception:**—Can our experience of our own acts of willing and feeling be reduced to our thought about them? Isn't what we have discovered above just applicable to external perception? Clearly external perceptions are necessarily incomplete and thus do not present reality completely because this kind of perceptual 'synthesis' must always be incomplete. But this would not be true of other acts of synthesis such as willing and loving. Here we have the thinking self-coinciding with its own conscious states. To will and to know that one wills and to love and to know that one loves are the same act; love is consciousness of loving and willing is consciousness of willing. Thus, we have discovered a unique kind of complete truth just like Descartes wanted to find. (377:21/439:3)
1. We do discriminate between 'true' and 'false' feelings. Everything felt is not ipso facto placed on a single footing of existence. And further, not everything within us is true in the same way and there are degrees of reality within us just as there are in external perceptions. To support these claims, Merleau-Ponty develops three major descriptions. (378:12/439:37)
 - a) **Illusory love:** Merleau-Ponty takes an example of illusory love to show that even at the level of internal perception there are different levels of being because even here there is an ambiguity that provides a ground for this difference. In doing so, he develops the conception of illusory love by distinguishing it from a misinterpretation of love and real love. (378:17/440:5)
 - b) **Hysterical subject:** Going back to Scheler's example of a hysterical subject, Merleau-Ponty attempts to show that the subject's symptoms are not just pretended nor are they the same as real pain, but rather they are different. The subject is not wholly given over to them and thus they have a unique status of their own. Again it is the ambiguity at the heart of the individual that allows for the status of such experiences. This ex-

perience further reveals that we, and the subject, are not perpetually in possession of ourselves. (379:27/441:21)

c) Coming to know that one is in love: This point can be even more clearly made if we see how love and our awareness of it develops. The love that I come to know wasn't simply something there that I was ignoring, but rather something that was working itself out in me. This love was lived, not known, from start to finish and thus another example of the way in which we are not in total possession of ourselves. (380:22/442:23)

d) Merleau-Ponty **concludes** that such experiences reveal that there are so many relatively closed worlds and so many situations in which we constantly live. If we are in a situation, we cannot be transparent to ourselves, so that our contact with ourselves is necessarily achieved only in the sphere of ambiguity. (381:10/443:19)

2. **An obvious response to the above critique:** If illusion is possible in consciousness as indicated above, is it not the case then that all consciousness states could be illusory? Haven't we, in attempting to avoid the Cartesian absolute consciousness, gone too far and ended up in some kind of endless doubt? Are we not trapped somehow between absolute consciousness with absolute truth and a finite consciousness with no truth? (382:1/444:16)

3. **Conclusion:** Merleau-Ponty attempts to offer a position in between these two alternatives. (382:19/444:33)

a) My existence is neither in full possession of itself nor is it entirely estranged from itself (the assumptions behind the above two alternatives) but rather because my existence is action and doing, it transcends both of these. (382:19/444:33)

b) Descartes is right in that to know is to know that one knows but not because this second order of knowing guarantees knowledge itself, but the reverse. Even in such experiences as 'love', it is not my thought about it that makes my love real but rather my loving that makes my thoughts true. (382:26/445:3)

c) It is not the 'I am' which is pre-eminently contained in the 'I think', not my existence which is brought down to consciousness which I have of it, but rather the 'I think', which must be re-integrated into the transcendental process of the 'I am' and consciousness into existence. (383:33/446:16)

C. **Abstract mathematical thought of geometry:** It may seem, as it did for Descartes, that when I understand the characteristics of a triangle there is a unity and a coincidence of consciousness with what is understood. Truth in geometry would seem to be impossible unless one enjoyed an absolute self-possession in the act of thought; for such a self-possession is the necessary condition for transcending the order of phenomenon and appearances and gain access to the "idea" itself. Pure thought, as contained in geometry, seems to be in full possession of both itself and

its object and thus it gives us necessary truth. Furthermore, this clearly seems to be a perfect example of what Descartes was trying to achieve. (383:38/446:22)

1. As part of developing the claim that abstract mathematical thought offers absolute truths, Merleau-Ponty describes a proof in geometry with special emphasis on the role that the construction of the figure plays. In attempting to show that constructions and drawings are usually part of proofs in geometry, Merleau-Ponty is setting the groundwork for his critique of the claim that abstract mathematics offers absolute truths. This initial description attempts to show the role of constructions and how it bares upon this conception of the independence of mathematical thought from the perceived world. (383:43/446:26)
2. Abstract mathematical knowledge rests not only upon the construction of the figure but in fact upon experience. It is only in the context of experience that the concepts of geometry can make sense. Further, if geometry does rest upon experience, it clearly follows that it has all the limitations of knowledge that arises from that source and thus it cannot possess the kind of truth that is trying to achieve. (384:40/447:28)
 - a) One might object that geometry is dependent upon experience only in a psychological sense and this is merely an accidental characteristic. But Merleau-Ponty argues that the very logic of discovery attests to the need for experience. If logic were nothing but formal definition there would be no discoveries in geometry. Since there are discoveries, we must look at the act of construction in a new light. The construction makes explicit the possibilities of the triangle, considered not in the light of its definition, but as a goal of my understanding. And further, it is in this context that we can understand the importance that intuition plays in geometry. (384:40/447:28)
 - b) In order to develop this point, Merleau-Ponty returns to a description of the act of construction in geometry. The drawing is not just lines on a paper but rather must be viewed as a gesture that is an outward expression of an intention. I must place myself somewhere in space and establish a relationship through my body to the world. The construction is the formula of an attitude, a certain modality of my hold on the world. It is the product of the dialectical relationships between my body and the world just like all other kinds of determinate meanings. (386:12/449:11)
 - c) Following Kant, Merleau-Ponty claims that central to this whole process of producing meaning is the body's motility. It is the body through its motion that establishes the relationship to the world that 'creates' space. (386:41/450:1)
 - d) My body's motion can play a role in grounding mathematics only if it is an original manner of relating itself to the world that is productive of space itself. (387:24/450:27)

3. **Conclusion:** The geometer knows the relationships with which he is concerned only by describing them, at least potentially, with his body. The subject of geometry is a motor subject and the body's motion can play a part in the perception of the world only if it is itself an original intentionality, a manner of relating itself to a distinct object of perception. And the essence of the triangle is not some eternal existing idea but rather the presumption of a completed synthesis of our perception of a thing. (388:3/451:32)

- D. **Abstract ideas:** If we grant that our body is the condition of the possibility of geometry and even of all expressive operations, does this mean that there is no possibility of absolute truth as Descartes sought? In dealing with abstract ideas, we must turn our attention to the role of language and expression. Speech is the act through which thought immortalizes itself in both abstract ideas and truths. What Merleau-Ponty has shown above is only that thought has its roots in actions **and not that it cannot be transformed into something quite different by language**. Thus we are faced with a new problem. All that we find in language is what thought has put there - Why? The answer is obvious: so that it can be the absolute truth of thought. (388:21/451:32)
1. In response to this claim, Merleau-Ponty argues that the experience of how language operates refutes the claim that absolute truth is achieved in language. (388:36/452:7)
 - a) Meaning is given to each word by the sentence in which it is found. And further, each word is used in many contexts thus acquiring an accumulated significance such that it is impossible to establish its meaning absolutely. (388:36/452:7)
 - b) As for the speaker, **authentic speech uses constituted language** as the raw material by which it surpasses constituted meanings into new meanings both for ourselves and others. If we look at how meanings develop and transform themselves through use we become aware of the limitations of speech. Clearly, it is not a place in which we can get absolute meanings. (388:43/452:17)
 - c) If we look at constituted language, we discover that it plays the same role in expression as colors, sounds, and materials do in the arts. A painting, for example, always tells us more than just what our senses can give us. With the painter or the speaker, the picture and the utterance do not just contain ready-made thoughts. In the very act of expressing they reveal something new. Once again, Merleau-Ponty develops his distinction between second order speech and originating speech to clarify this point. But it must be remembered that what the lived experience of language shows us is that it is not the kind of thing that could give us absolute meanings. (389:7/452:25)
 2. **Objection:** One might still object that the idea of triangle is very different from the work of art or a physical thing. Both the work of art and the

physical thing can be destroyed, but clearly there is a sense in which the idea of triangle cannot be destroyed. (390:15/454:2)

3. **Response:** Merleau-Ponty points out that there is a real sense in which the above objection rests upon a distinction that is itself not real. Rather than there being two radically different things, triangles and the Ninth Symphony, these are just two things on a continuum with significant similarities and differences. No one mode of expression has a privileged position over the others. And ultimately, if there had been no mankind, there would have been no speech and no ideas such as a triangle and no Ninth Symphony. (390:20/454:7)
4. **Conclusion:** It is ultimately through language and expression that abstract thought appears as if it offers necessary truths. While it appears to do this, this appearance is the result of thought always being more than just abstract thought. And in the same way, thought appears to have the character of absolute truth because truth is always more than absolute truth. Truth is always open-ended. (391:24/455:17)
 - a) The gestalt is used to explain the operation of speech and expression just as it was used in perception. Expression is everywhere creative, and what is expressed is always inseparable from it. There is nothing behind language, no transcendent thought. Rather, language transcends itself in speech and thus makes communication possible. What Merleau-Ponty finds here is the same basic pattern that he found in his analysis of perception. (392:3/456:2)
 - b) **In an interesting prefiguring of the next chapter on temporality,** Merleau-Ponty develops the relationship between thought and time primarily emphasizing the temporality of all thought while at the same time pointing out the sense in which thought can be a-temporal. His basic concern is to show why abstract thought tends to appear as if it consisted of necessary truths. (392:41/457:3)
 - (1) Of some interest is the fact that Merleau-Ponty denies the distinction between **factual truth** and **rational truth**. The fundamental difference between these kinds of truths is presented as being one of degree. Again, there is an interesting explanation and development of this point using the distinction between figure/background. (393:36/458:2)
 - (2) Again, Merleau-Ponty argues that there is an ultimate horizon upon which all truths must be understood. The fundamental fact is that we experience a participation in the world. It must be remembered that our 'being-in-the-world' is indistinguishable from being in the world. (394:21/458:30)

III. **TRUTH AS SELF-EVIDENCE:** In this part of the chapter, Merleau-Ponty turns his attention to the Cartesian conception of truth, which he developed and attacked in the second part. What we saw there was the claim that truth is self-evidency, a coinciding of the subject and the object, and

it is both necessary and absolute with a particular timelessness about it. Now we turn our attention specifically to this claim and Merleau-Ponty will attempt to show us that this conception of truth is an abstraction that conceals and deceives us about the actual lived experience of truth. (395:5/459:22)

- A. If we turn to our experience of truth as it is found in our lived perception and knowledge of the world, we discover that the "self-evidence" of Descartes has no place. (395:12/459:29)
 1. All consciousness is, in some measure, perceptual consciousness. Thus to lay bare all the presuppositions of our thought so that we possess something in an absolute self-evident way is impossible. Yet because consciousness is temporal, our ideas are presented as the ones we possessed in the past and with a degree of self-evidence. (395:12)
 - a) Presuppositionless thought requires that instead of being myself, I should be purely and simply one who knows himself. (395:18/459:35)
 - 1) As Kantians would say, this is to cease to be an event and become an act through and through. (395:22/460:3)
 - 2) As the **Schoolmen** would say, this is to become a pure form and not to be composed of form and matter. (395:24/460:5)
 - 3) As **Malebranche** would say, we would have to cease to perceive, feel and have contact with truth but we must become pure 'idea' and 'vision' of the truth. (395:25/460:6)
 - b) Self-evidence, in fact, denies what experience teaches. I am always given as being in a world, a world that transcends me and thus I am always given as transcending myself and never completely in possession of myself. (395:27/460:8)
 2. But clearly certain implications flow from what we have seen. Things do appear as self-evident. What enables such experiences to occur and thus what makes self-evidence appear is the fact that they occur in a context of what I have accepted or am committed to. It is because I have accepted a certain view of space or the way of life of a particular society that certain things follow with necessity. What we have here is another example of Merleau-Ponty's understanding of **contingent necessity**. (396:7/460:30)
- B. The conceptions of self-evidence as found in Descartes and Spinoza rest upon a misunderstanding that rather than helping us to understand reality becomes a barrier to such an understanding. (397:8/462:3)
 1. **Conception of Spinoza** - Being is defined as that which is necessary and which necessarily exists. To ask the fundamental question of metaphysics: why is there something rather than nothing is impossible since the shape of the world and its very existence for Spinoza is merely the consequences of a necessary being. (397:12/462:7)
 2. **Conception of Descartes** - Being is reduced to appearances since all my truths are after all self evident only to me or for a thought fashioned like

mine. Here the question why there is something rather than nothing seems very relevant but clearly there is no way to answer it, for Descartes has ultimately separated thought from being. (397:19/462:14)

3. **Conclusion:** Both conceptions are not as different as they might appear at first. Again what we have come up with is dogmatism and skepticism. The laws of our thought and our self evident truths are certainly a fact, but they are not detachable from us, while my thought, my self evident truth is not one fact among others, but a value-fact which envelops and conditions every other possible one. (397:30/462:25)
- C. **Conclusion:** We must restore the idea of contingency of the world and the contingency of truth that the Objective Attitude has distorted by its claims of absolute truth. At the same time, we must recognize that neither error nor doubt ever cuts us off from truth because they are given in a world horizon that summons us to resolve them. We must understand that the contingency of the world is not a defect in the world that must be overcome by thought but the very condition that makes possible both human truth and error. Contingency of the world is the very necessary condition by which the world appears as real. And we must realize that the world is that reality in which the necessary and the possible are merely provinces. (398:20/463:19)

IV. IN REACTION TO THE OBJECTIVE ATTITUDE OF DESCARTES and its understanding of the nature of truth, Merleau-Ponty now turns his attention towards developing a **new Cogito** which would be implied in his own understanding of truth. (398:37/464:4)

- A. Descartes has claimed that there is an independence of the Cogito from the world and, in a certain sense, he is right. And yet we have discovered in Merleau-Ponty that there is at the heart of the Cogito a dependence on the world. What we must now do is understand how these both seeming contradictory understandings can be true of the **new Cogito**. (399:3/464:9)
 1. Merleau-Ponty begins by reconsidering the position of Descartes in light of what we have done and he finds in it a paradox: either we must conclude that since what is seen is never certain, the seeing is not certain or that since the seeing is certain, what is seen must be too. But either alternative leads to problems. (399:3/464:9)
 2. One might take our experience of doubt as an example to illustrate this point since Descartes claims that one who doubts cannot, while doubting, doubt that he doubts. But clearly, this is not doubt in Montaigne's sense. Further it is important to realize that Descartes does not actually suspend doubt in the face of the certainty of doubt itself, but rather in the face of thought, the I think therefore I am. (399:18/464:24)
 3. Merleau-Ponty offers us a re-interpretation of the Cartesian Cogito. While thought seems to be independent of the world experienced, it

also reveals to us the fact that it always goes beyond itself into a world. It is as if there is a deeper paradox at the heart of the **new Cogito** that is essential to it. (400:3/465:15)

- B. In turning explicitly to Descartes' *Meditations*, Merleau-Ponty begins a reflection on the role that language plays in the "Second Meditation" where Descartes discovers the Cogito. Merleau-Ponty argues that while this "truth" appears absolute and independent of language, this is merely an illusion produced by language itself. Further, Descartes' speaking or formulating this understanding of the Cogito presupposes an unspoken Cogito, which is the object of this formulation. (400:33/466:12)
 1. The Cogito that Descartes discovers is not Descartes, or you, or me, but an impersonal **one who thinks**. The very nature of the impersonal character of the Cogito attests to the fact that it is an abstraction, an abstraction that we tend to ignore because of the way that language functions. (400:33/466:12)
 2. To illustrate the above point, Merleau-Ponty develops the way in which language takes on meaning for a child when it establishes a situation for him. The power possessed by language brings a thing expressed into existence and it shows how the significance of a word carries the reader beyond language and thought as constituted. (401:16/466:35)
 3. The meaning of a word and the word itself are not constituted by consciousness. They are not objects I recognize through any identificatory synthesis, but rather they are a certain use made of my phonatory equipment, a certain modulation of my body as a being in the world. The meaning of a word is learned as one learns to use a tool, by seeing it used in the context of a certain situation. (402:35/468:22)
 4. Thus language presupposes nothing less than a silent consciousness, a silent consciousness embracing the world of speech in which words first receive a form and meaning. (403:36/469:29)
- C. Merleau-Ponty now turns his attention to explicitly formulating this conception of the **new Cogito**, which is the silent ground of the Cartesian Cogito. He begins by showing that this **new Cogito** seems to imply all sorts of difficulties and these difficulties arise from the Analytic Attitude. But in overcoming the limitations of this attitude, we can begin to understand the **Tacit Cogito**. (404:13/470:13)
 1. **Tacit Cogito** is the ultimate presupposition of language and all experience. Merleau-Ponty calls it 'tacit' to contrast it with what one might describe as the 'spoken' Cogito of Descartes. After setting aside the Analytic Attitude and objective reflection, the **Tacit Cogito** is revealed as the presence of oneself to oneself. (404:13/470:13)
 2. The **Tacit Cogito** is the core of subjectivity - a total project or logic of the world - which empirical perceptions endow with specific form but to which they cannot give rise. This **Tacit Cogito** is the ultimate ground of

all perceptions in which there is still a unity of subject and world or more properly where there is not yet a subject and world. (404:44/471:5)

a) Using the terminology of Phenomenology, there is no pure hyle or pure morphe. There are no sensations that are not in communication with other sensations or the sensations of other people or are there apprehensions or apperceptions that are not in unity with a world. (404:44/471:5)

b) Using the descriptive example of his relationship with Paul, Merleau-Ponty shows how our perceptual worlds are not isolated from one another but rather they communicate. Yet it is precisely because the world makes its impact on me and reaches me in a uniquely individual way that I can have the world for Paul as well as for myself. (405:18/471:23)

c) Since I am not tied to any one perspective but can change my point of view, I am open to a range of possibilities even if I am limited in that I must have a perspective. The ultimate subject is that which can undertake all these perspectives and hold them together. (406:15/472:26)

3. In this **new Cogito** Merleau-Ponty finds one single 'living cohesion', one single temporality from which is engaged, by birth, in making itself progressively explicit, and in confirming that cohesion in each successive present. The primary truth is indeed 'I think' but only provided that we understand thereby 'I belong to myself while I belong to the world.' The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself. (407:22/473:37)

- V. **CONCLUSION:** Insofar as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world. One might ask why I go beyond myself into a world. Classical thought has attempted to explain this in terms of world in itself or in terms of an absolute mind. But clearly the explanation is not in some logical system but rather in the factual nature of my being. (408:22/475:6)

CHAPTER 2 • TEMPORALITY

As some commentators have pointed out, this is one of the most difficult chapters of the book. Whether it is because of the nature of the subject or because Merleau-Ponty's presentation is so obscure, we will leave to another time. But certainly, this chapter possesses some interesting problems for anyone trying to understand it. In his quest to understand the nature of temporality, Merleau-Ponty begins with a series of accounts of time, which ultimately provide a framework

for this chapter. **Common Sense** and science fiction conceive of time as objective and as being essentially a plurality. This account uses the metaphor of a river to illustrate both characteristics. **Empiricism** and some form of psychology agree with the claim that time is essentially plural but argue that it is a subjective reality consisting of memories, traces, projects, engrams, or whatever. In reaction to both of these positions, **Intellectualism** affirms the unity of time but develops this unity in the determinacy of an idea or synthesis. **Bergson**, while agreeing with Intellectualism on the unity of time, reacts to the determinacy and tries to develop an indeterminate conception based upon intuition. While clearly critiquing each of these accounts, Merleau-Ponty does not conclude that they are simply wrong. His concern is to show that each is partial and a limited abstraction from the reality of time. Thus this chapter attempts to show how the reality of time is such that it can be understood as being able to give rise to the claims that it is something objective or subjective, plural or unified, and determinate or indeterminate. It is in this context that he develops the claim that time is subjectivity and subjectivity is time.

In making the claim that time is not for someone, but rather is someone, we need to be clear about what Merleau-Ponty is attempting to do. If we go back to experience, we discover all sorts of temporal meanings given in perception. "The world is *older* than the human race." "Students are so *young* this year." "The church in the plaza is so *old* looking." "My last class went so *slowly*." "The semester is going so *fast*." One could with a little imagination discover all sorts of different senses of temporality that are given in perception. Merleau-Ponty's point is that it makes a lot of difference from which experience one abstracts if one is going to develop an account of time. In fact, he claims that it makes all the difference. If we are going to understand temporality, we must discover what the primary meaning of time is. Now this may seem like an odd task, but I think we can make some sense out of it.

If we may be allowed to use an example: we use the term 'healthy' in all sorts of ways. We say that a certain kind of food is healthy, or that exercise is healthy, or that a certain life style is healthy, or that John is healthy. If we think about what is going on in each of these uses, we discover that the term 'healthy' is being used analogously. Its primary use is in its application to John. Here 'healthy' means that John's body is functioning as it should. The application of the term to the other things, food, exercise, or a certain life style, does not mean

that food, exercise, or a certain life style have all their parts functioning as they should but rather that they promote health in a body (the proper functioning of all the parts of the body). In this case, healthy as applied to John is the primary use of the term and the other senses of healthy are all derivative of that sense and secondary to it. If one did not realize this, he could end up being very confused about what 'healthy' actually means. In much the same way, Merleau-Ponty points out that 'temporality' has all sorts of different meanings. His concern is to discover which is the primary use of this term and which are the secondary uses, and maybe even which are the tertiary uses of the term. If we could discover which is the primary use of the term upon which all the others are based then we are in a position to overcome the confusion that has affected the accounts of time that we have seen. Possibly then we would be in the position to make sense out of all the issues that have been causing us difficulties.

Another way of looking at this chapter that might be helpful in understanding it is to look at the chapter as starting with the following objection: "What about the world which exists prior to the emergence of humans? It seems that Merleau-Ponty is forced into saying that there is no such world. Doesn't this imply some sort of subjectivism? Doesn't it show that there really is no world, no object of perception?" Merleau-Ponty's answer to this objection takes an unusual form. He sees at the heart of this objection the idea that the world existed **before** humans. What 'before' must mean here is before in time. In order to respond to this objection, we must discover just what is meant by 'before' and more importantly, we must discover what is meant by time.

This chapter develops along the lines of so many of the previous chapters. Time is shown not to be in things or in ideas. Since it is not to be found in these objects, we must return to it as a phenomenon and describe it. The fundamental problem found in these descriptions is the tension between the unity and diversity of time. This tension can only be overcome by the recognition of a reality that is "in between," and more fundamental than the for-itself and the in-itself. These descriptions reinforce the primacy of the phenomenal and serve as a basis for Merleau-Ponty's own inferences about time, the Cogito, and most of all, the World.

(This chapter opens with two quotes: one from Claudel's *Art Poétique* and the other from Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. One might trans-

late Claudel's quote as follows: "Time is the sense of life (*sense*: as one might say the *path* of a stream, the *meaning* of a sentence, the *pattern* of a fabric, the *distinctiveness* of an odor)." The Heidegger quotation can be translated: "The sense of Dasein is temporality." Merleau-Ponty comes back to these quotes in the conclusion, page 430/500.)

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** We have seen temporality appear and reappear as we have proceeded through the analysis of perception. This is because temporality, as with spatiality and sexuality, is at the heart of human existence. To speak of any one of these 'attributes of existence' is always to speak of every other one and of existence itself. But this chapter will go on to argue that despite this observation, temporality still has a kind of priority. We have also seen that in understanding the subject we must not conceive of it as a series of psychic events or as something eternal (again later in this chapter the eternality of the subject will become a major issue). In this chapter, Merleau-Ponty will consider time and, through understanding its internal dialectic, come not only to a new conception of the Cogito but also to a **new conception of the World.** (410:1/476:1)
- II. **IN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND TEMPORALITY,** Merleau-Ponty turns and examines **three common theories concerning the nature of time.** After presenting each theory, he tries to show that, while each captures an aspect of time, each account distorts the fundamental nature of time by excluding other aspects. (411:4/477:14)
 - A. **Position:** The metaphorical view of **Common Sense** and science fiction maintains that time is an object out there in the world independent of the subject and, like a river; it is composed of all sorts of parts. It is so much a real object that one could imagine someone making a machine to travel up-stream (past) or down-stream (future). There is a whole class of novels that is based upon this almost common sense view. (411:4/477:14)
 - B. **Criticisms:** (411:11/477:21)
 1. Time is often conceived as being just like a river. Merleau-Ponty argues that this is a confused metaphor. It implies that time is an in-itself—one, indivisible, and a changeless being with no real successiveness whereas experience clearly suggests something very different. (411:11/477:21)
 2. Further, this metaphor also implies the existence of a witness tied to a certain spot in the world which views the different places in which the river flows making possible the illusion of change. (411:14/477:23)
 3. Merleau-Ponty concludes that time is not an objective process and it is not an actual series that one records. Common Sense tries to establish time in the objective world, but the objective world is too much of a

plenum to allow for time. In fact, Common Sense tries to explain time in terms of a whole series of "nows" in a world that has no room for past and future without realizing that without past and future there can be no now. (411:23/477:33)

- C. **Position: Empiricism** and some forms of psychology attempt to overcome the above problems of Common Sense by transferring the whole process into consciousness. They claim that time consists of a plurality of parts but now not in the world but rather within consciousness and out of subjective data. It is now memories that are used to explain the experience of the past and projections explain the experience of the future. But the problem is that both memories and projections are temporally in the present and thus Empiricism repeats the same error as Common Sense. (412:35/479:13)
- D. **Criticisms:** (412:40/479:18)
1. Bergson, operating on the level of causal explanation, undermines physiological theories of memory and clearly discredits the idea of a bodily storage of the past. In its place Bergson offers an explanation in terms of "intentions" as cling to memories. But such an explanation does not go far enough since it is trapped on the same causal level. One needs to be aware of "other viewpoints" that would enable one to recognize something as a memory and thus one needs to transcend the purely causal. (412:40/479:18)
 2. Merleau-Ponty objects that none of these psychological elements can account for the experience of time. All of them are simply **present** characteristics and in no way have a temporal (**past** and **future**) character about them. (413:26/480:12)
 3. Using analogy between the past and present and with the present and future is just not going to be able to account for the experience of past and future. The past and the future cannot be mere concepts abstracted by us from our perceptions—time is experienced by us before its parts and temporal relations can make possible the perception of events in time. (414:11/481:2)
- E. **Position: Intellectualism** is clearly aware of what is wrong with Common Sense and Empiricism. Neither view recognizes the real involvement of consciousness in our experience of time. Time is not something out there in the world nor is it a datum of consciousness. Intellectualism claims that consciousness deploys or constitutes time. And thus consciousness is not trapped in the present but can move freely from future to past since all these moments are a product of consciousness itself. Further they claim this unity is achieved in the act of synthesis by which consciousness achieves a determinate idea. To the question what is time, Intellectualism claims that it is this determinate idea. (414:30/481:20)
- F. **Conclusions:** (414:40/481:24)

1. But if consciousness is thus free to move from future, to present and to the past, does it have a notion or even a basis for developing a notion of the real differences between the moments of time? (414:40/481:24)
2. Time as the imminent object of a consciousness is time brought down to one uniform level; in other words, it is no longer time. There can be time only if it is not completely deployed: only provided that past, present and future do not have the same meaning. (Note the footnote on this page. It contains a defense and a criticism of Bergson. Merleau-Ponty's relationship to Bergson is not a simple one.) (415:3/481:36)
3. While intellectualism is right in saying that time needs a synthesis, it cannot be a synthesis that is done once and for all. Time needs a synthesis that must always be undertaken afresh. Time needs to be understood as that **dimension of our being** by which we can form the conceptions of past, present, and future. (415:20/482:17)

III. **THE PROBLEM FOR MERLEAU-PONTY** is how do you make someone aware of that which is by definition not an object but rather a background or horizon by which one has objects? If time is a fundamental dimension of our being by which our experience has temporal meanings, what is given in these experiences are objects with temporal meanings and what is not given is that by which these objects are given. To reflect upon experience is to have objects. What is clearly needed here is a radical reflection by which we can have the background, or the dimension of our being, as it is without objectifying it. What is more important for Merleau-Ponty here is that we need a process of communicating that gets one's readers to perform this radical reflection. This difficult passage should be looked at in light of this problem. (415:32/482:26)

- A. Merleau-Ponty begins this section by presenting a descriptive analysis of our experience of objects having temporal meanings. The goal of this section is to discover the fundamental sense of time. (415:36/483:3)
 1. It is in our normal activities, for example in working, that I can become aware of the horizon of the day—what has happened and what I am expecting to occur. Our experience of time makes us aware of a field of presence that is primary and in which a fundamental sense of time is given and from which all the dimensions of time make their appearance. All of this is present prior to my reflection and forming of images and concepts. (415:36/483:3)
 2. The three dimensions of time are not given through discreet acts; rather, they are given like figures within a background. The past and the future are given in much the same way that the back of a house is given when I have an experience of the front of a real house. I have certain forms of intentionality, protentions and retentions, which anchor me in an environment thus making the present real. (416:18/483:21)

3. With the arrival of each moment, its predecessor undergoes a change, I still have it in hand and it is still there; but my hold on it becomes less and less secure as it sinks away below the level of the present. (416:37/484:1)
- B. In order to develop this last point, Merleau-Ponty turns his attention to an attempt at explaining such phenomena. Husserl offers a diagrammatical representation of time as a network of intentionalities. Merleau-Ponty tries to show how this diagram captures the point he has been trying to describe. (417:6/484:16)
 1. **Criticism:** Neither the description nor this explanation of Husserl's bring us one step closer to understanding time. Doesn't this view create an ideal unity as the ground of all synthesis of moments? And if there is such an intellectual synthesis, doesn't time disappear as we have noted above? (417:10/484:20)
 2. **Response:** (417:25/485:11)
 - a) Husserl's point in introducing the idea of retention was to convey the idea that I have the past in hand and do not construct it. He clearly distinguishes this way of possessing the past from an identifying synthesis that occurs in voluntary recollections of the past. We do organize our experience of the past in order to discover things about the past. What enables us to do such syntheses is the temporal meanings **always already there** that arise from this more fundamental sense of time. (417:25/485:11)
 - b) Beneath the intentional and conscious acts, the past is an 'operative' intentionality which makes the former possible. This 'operative' intentionality is the very transcending of the subject. My presence outruns itself into a future and past. (418:31/486:9)
 - c) The phenomenon of time that Husserl is trying to explain might best be called a 'passive synthesis.' In saying that it is a passive synthesis, we must remember that this term is not a solution to the problem of time but merely a pointer to the problem. (419:2/486:22)
 3. Merleau-Ponty now turns his attention to the implications of Husserl's diagram for our understanding of his descriptive analysis of our experience of time. In this **first** step, he develops a position that might remind one of Bergson's conception of time in so far as it emphasizes the unity of time. (419:9/486:29)
 - a) It is important to realize that Husserl's diagram represents an instantaneous cross-section of time. There is not a multiplicity of linked phenomena in the experience of time, but one single phenomenon of lapse. Time is the one single movement. (419:9/486:29)
 - b) Time is nothing but a general flight of the self outside of itself. Or as Merleau-Ponty quotes Husserl: "Time is the means offered to all that is destined to be, to come into existence in order that it may no longer be."

This very busting forth into the world is the source of our primordial experience of time. (419:29487:16)

4. This section begins by asking if time is such a unity, how is it that this temporal outpouring does not make the individual moment of time disappear? In this second part of the development of the implications of **Husserl's diagram**, Merleau-Ponty seeks to distinguish his position from that of Bergson by stressing the real differences between the temporal moments. (420:7/487:35)

a) Since in time being and passing are synonymous, when an event becomes past, it does not cease to be. If we look at experience, it teaches us that time maintains what it has caused to be and at the same time expels it from the present making it past. Time both unifies and separates all in the same act. (420:19/488:11)

b) Bergson was **wrong** in explaining the unity of time in terms of its continuity, since this amounts to confusing past, present, and future. (420:31/488:23)

c) But he was **right** to focus in on the continuity of time as its essential phenomenon. (420:35/488:27)

- C. **Conclusion:** There is one single time which is self-confirmatory, which can bring nothing into existence unless it has already laid that thing's foundations as present and eventual past, and which establishes itself at a stroke. (421:2/489:1)

IV. IN THE CONTEXT CREATED BY THE LAST SECTION, Merleau-Ponty now formulates his own conception of time and claims that **time is subjectivity**. In what follows, he presents this claim and then defends against two basic criticisms. (421:10/489:10)

A. Presentation of the position. (421:10/489:10)

1. The past is not past nor the future future without a subject. Time only exists when a subjectivity is there to disrupt the plenitude of being. The dimensions of time exist only when subjectivity adumbrates a perspective and thus introduces non-being into being. Thus, in the most fundamental sense, **time is subjectivity**. (421:10/489:10)
2. The passage of one present to the next is not a thing that I conceive, nor do I see it as an onlooker, I perform it. I am already at a future event just as my gestures are already at their goal. (421:21/489:21)
3. Merleau-Ponty claims that there is a sense in which even Common Sense tends to agree with these descriptions. Everyone talks about time but not as an object, as a proper noun. Sometimes one even sees it personified and treated as if it were someone. Using an example of a fountain, he tries to show that there is truth even in the river metaphor of Common Sense. The metaphor is nothing other than an intuition of time's permanence. The problem with Common Sense is that it thematizes or objectifies its own insights and betrays them. (421:26/489:25)

4. Time is not just *for* someone, but actually time *is* the explosion or thrust into a world that is subjectivity itself. In fact, Merleau-Ponty goes so far as to put the claim in the strongest possible why: "We must understand time as the subject and the subject as time." (422:13/490:19)
5. Ultimately subjectivity is not temporal in the empirical sense. There is a sense in which consciousness is timeless in that it is not intra-temporal. But it is temporal or "temporality" in that it is the ground by which there is temporal meanings at all. (422:26/490:32)
- B. **Criticism:** Does not this position imply that consciousness possesses time as laid out and complete? Are we not going back to a view of time as something eternal as we saw in the Objective Attitude? (422:37/491:9)
- C. **Responses:** (423:1/491:12)
 1. Although time is subjectivity, the moments of time are not given to us all at once (as it would be in eternity) but rather lived one step at a time. (423:1/491:12)
 2. The temporal perspective is not the result of memory or thought and does not express a consciousness of time theoretically all-embracing. It rather expresses an initial ambiguity. Experience teaches that we possess the past event as it is but we have it at a distance. It is both given and not given. (423:7/491:18)
 3. Time exists for me only because I am situated in it; that is, because I become aware of myself as already committed to it. The whole of being is not given to me completely because one sector of being is always so close to me that I take it as the real. Time exists for me because I have a present and a presence. It is because of this characteristic of experience that one tends to have an illusion of eternity and it is the focusing in on this illusion that leads to the above objection. (423:40//492:17)
 4. The ultimate consciousness of time is not an eternal subject perceiving itself in absolute transparency. It is the consciousness of the present with the opaqueness that this brings with it. At the same time it is important to realize that it is by communicating with the world that we are **present** to ourselves because we are a **presence** to the world. (424:20/493:3)
- D. **Criticism:** Given the unity and the particular diversity of temporality, how is it possible to describe the subject in any intelligible sense if it is time? Doesn't equating subject and temporality make it more difficult to understand the subject? (424:35/493:18)
- E. **Response:** (424:37/493:19)
 1. We must avoid conceiving consciousness as either an invisible power or simply a cluster of distinct manifestations. Consciousness is neither. It cannot be conceived in terms of either of these separately—Consciousness is both. We must learn to understand consciousness as something that unfolds itself into multiplicity. This is what is trying to be characterized by the term "passive synthesis." (424:37/493:19)

2. Merleau-Ponty tries to develop this point by analyzing a situation from Proust's novel: *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (Remembrance of Things Past). Merleau-Ponty points out that Swann's love for Odette not only transforms their relation but also his love. But importantly, this transformation could be seen from the very beginning. Swann's life was a living out of these implications. (425:2/493:27)
 3. One could never manage to understand how a **thing** or **constituting subject** (of course, there is no real difference between them) would be able to posit or become aware of itself in time. It is only because we are neither a thing nor a pure thinking subject, but rather a subject that is identifiable with time that we can be aware of ourselves. It is the very essence of time that it has a relationship to itself or an awareness of itself. It is through temporality that there can be, without contradiction, ipseity, significance and reason. (425:30/494:21)
 4. Subjectivity is not motionless; it is of its essence to open itself to another and to go forth from itself, as it is with time. (426:23/495:20)
- F. **Conclusion:** Time is a passive synthesis, which is the nature of subjectivity itself. (426:37/496:3)
1. While there clearly is some truth in the claims of Common Sense, Empiricism, Idealism, and Bergson, the key here is to understand time as a passive synthesis. The term '**passive synthesis**' attempts to bring together the individual insights of each of these claims, but a passive synthesis is a contradiction in terms if 'passive' is taken only in the Empiricist's sense of 'receptive', and 'synthesis' is taken in the Idealistic sense of 'creating'. What is being described by this term is a process by which we have ourselves in transcending ourselves; and we have ourselves as a unity only to the extent that we recognize our fundamental multiplicity. Subjectivity is this radical going beyond one's determined self to a not yet determined self. And it is this aspect of Subjectivity that is the primary ground of temporal meanings. (426:37/496:3)
 2. Passive synthesis is a spontaneity 'acquired' once and for all, and one that perpetuates itself in being by virtue of its being acquired. The best example of this is "being-in-a-situation," or subjectivity, or temporality. (427:25/496:28)
 3. Unlike the way that Heidegger characterizes time, temporal moments don't somehow all exist on the same level. Time and subjectivity are true ek-stases. Thus, we are not in some incomprehensible way an activity joined to a passivity; but wholly active and wholly passive because we are the upsurge of time. (427:27/496:30)
- V. **CONCLUSION:** This section looks much more like the conclusion to the whole book rather than the conclusion of this chapter. One ought to find this rather strange. If it is the conclusion to the book, why is there another chapter? If it is the conclusion, what exactly is the last chapter

doing? Both of these questions are rather interesting and perhaps one ought to explore the implications of any answers that you might come up with. (428:13/497:24)

- A. A restatement of the problem of this book followed by a summary of the answer. (428:13/497:24)
 1. Merleau-Ponty begins this conclusion by formulating a series of questions, which tie together in an explicit way, the goals of the *Phenomenology of Perception* and the *Structure of Behavior*. The aim of these questions is to focus on the problem of the Being-for-itself and Being-in-itself as it has been developed throughout these works. (428:13/497:24)
 - a) What is the relationship between consciousness and nature, that is, between the inner and outer? (428:14/497:25)
 - b) What is the link between the Idealist perspective that nothing exists except as an object for consciousness and the Realist perspective that consciousness is introduced into the stuff of the objective world? (428:15/497:26)
 - c) How is the world and man accessible to two kinds of investigation, the first case explanatory and the second, reflective? (428:20/497:30)
 - d) What can we find either in ourselves or in the world that can account for the relationship between meaning and absence of meaning? (428:25/497:32)
 - e) Is the meaning that is found in the world produced by the assemblage of independent facts or is it merely the expression of an absolute reason? (428:28/487:35)
 2. While dismissing Empiricism and Intellectualism, he points to the fact that **Intellectualism is partly right**. There is a 'meaning giving,' an outward giving of meaning to the world, but not a conscious, or even unconscious, meaning giving, but rather a 'body-meaning given' which differs from what Idealism proposes, not simply in that we are normally unaware of it, but primarily in that it is a completely different "sense" of meaning-giving—one known only in its results. Further, **Realism is also partly right**, there is a meaning always already there, but not the kind of determinate meaning that Realism had claimed. (428:30/498:4)
 3. Referring to the quotes with which he began this chapter, Merleau-Ponty develops different senses of "sens" to illustrate this different kind of meaning-giving. It might be of value to keep in mind the translation offered for this quote from Claudel's *Art Poétique*: "**Time is the sense of life** (**sense**: as one might say the **path** of a stream, the **meaning** of a sentence, the **pattern** of a fabric, the **distinctiveness** of an odor." (It may be of interest to note that at 430:32/500:19, Merleau-Ponty introduces yet another sense of 'sens': "**tenor** of our life.") What Merleau-Ponty is attempting to develop through this consideration of the different senses of 'sens' is the fact that we find in all these real differences of meaning

a sense of being orientated or polarized in the direction of what we are not. (429:17/498:31)

4. The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a projection of the world. The world is the cradle of meaning, but meanings which are already constituted. It is the abode of rationality. It is this 'pre-meaning' which is the result of our fundamental meaning-giving. (430:12/499:30)
- B. The application of our discoveries about the fundamental sense of time to some of the major problems we have considered in this Book. (430:27/500:14)
1. **Meaning:** As we have seen there is meaning only because of our presence to a thing. Now after the analysis of time, we can see that an object has meaning because of what we are—a certain presence which carries with it a certain past while moving forward toward a future. (430:27/500:14)
 2. **For-itself and in-itself:** Throughout the book, we have been attempting to overcome the dichotomy between for itself and in itself by understanding them in a radically new way. Now we can see that the problem is overcome by recognizing that the 'for-itself' is merely the hollow in which time is formed and the 'in-itself' is simply the horizon of my present. (431:2/500:27)
 3. **Body:** Under the gaze of scientific thematization and objective thought, we have seen the body reduced to a sum of its parts. The major part of this book has attempted to get us to transcend such abstractions and become aware of the lived body. Now we can see that there really is no problem of the relation of mind and body when we see them in terms of temporality. (431:14/501:9)
- C. Merleau-Ponty ends this chapter by raising two objections to what he has claimed about time and he develops responses to each, again using the new concept of temporality as equated with subjectivity. (432:7/502:7)
1. **Criticism:** Merleau-Ponty has claimed that there is no world without man. But this is wrong! Clearly it is a fact that the world existed a long time before man ever existed. (432:9/502:9)
 2. **Response:** But this is just another example of the intellectualist abstract reflection misleading us. Merleau-Ponty is not claiming that the world is constituted by consciousness but rather consciousness always finds itself already at work in a world. World is *always already there* for us. (432:13/502:13)
 3. **Criticism:** But one might object, isn't world also the world that will be there for others when I am gone? Doesn't the world have a real independence from me? The above claim seems to deny this. (432:33/502:32)
 4. **Response:** While I may never know the other as I know myself, the self is open to me because each of us arrives at self-knowledge only by projecting himself into the present where we can be joined together. The other rather than fragmenting the world is united by it. (432:34/502:33)

5. **Conclusion:** The solution to all the problems of transcendence is to be found in the pre-objective present in which we find our bodily and social being. It is here in the pre-existence of the world that we have the key to understand all the abstractions that have plagued us: objective meaning, in itself and for itself, and the "parts out side of parts" view of the body. It can also unlock the nature of freedom. (433:15/503:20)

CHAPTER 3 • FREEDOM

This chapter begins where the last chapter ends and it reformulates one of the problems developed there. Merleau-Ponty argued that there are a whole series of different analogous meanings for the word 'temporality' and he attempted to find the primary meaning upon which all the others were based. In doing so, he distinguished two fundamental levels: the meanings of time found in experiences which are the product of consciousness' thrust into the world and the sense in which the very thrust of consciousness itself is time. In making this distinction, he argues that the primary analog of temporality is the very thrust of consciousness which is indistinguishable from consciousness itself. All the other meanings of temporality flow from this one. Once having made this distinction, Merleau-Ponty claims that there is a sense in which consciousness is trans-temporal or eternal. It is eternal in so far as it is prior to any of the determinate meanings that appear in perception since they are the result of the thrust of consciousness into a world. In making the claim about the eternality of consciousness, Merleau-Ponty, maybe rather overly dramatically, is only trying to point out the difference between the different levels of temporal meanings. Consciousness does not fall within the kind of determinate temporal meanings found in perception but rather it is the ground of these meanings. The determinate temporal meanings flow and follow upon consciousness' possessing of the world.

In turning to freedom, Merleau-Ponty begins the chapter by reformulating much the same point. Clearly there are determinate meanings given in perception that affect human action. I see this rock as too high to climb or the locked door as an obstacle. But all these meanings flow from the thrust of consciousness into a world. Here again, Merleau-Ponty is going to argue that there are two fundamentally different levels of meanings that apply to human action. Clearly there are determinate meanings given in perception, but also there is the very thrust of consciousness into a world that constitutes these meanings.

If we are going to locate freedom, we will not look in perception and its determinate meanings but rather at the very thrust of consciousness itself. For Merleau-Ponty consciousness is freedom.

Further if all obstacles are a result of the activities of consciousness, does this imply that consciousness itself is prior to all obstacles and thus is absolutely free? Isn't Merleau-Ponty offering us a position that is much like Jean-Paul Sartre's? The remainder of this chapter carries on the pattern of the last chapter and attempts to explain and re-interpret this understanding of human freedom. It has been suggested that the fundamental difference between this chapter and the last is that in the chapter on Temporality, Merleau-Ponty is approaching the relationship between consciousness and the world from a predominately phenomenological point of view. In the chapter on Freedom, the point of view is dominated by Existentialism. But whether this is true or not, clearly Merleau-Ponty is turning his attention toward making as clear as possible the relationship of consciousness and the world, or being-in-the-world, or intentionality. While the entire book has been concerned with developing this point, now freedom and action provide the context for this final exposition. It is important that this is the 'final' exposition not in the sense of the completed exposition but the last attempt in this book.

- I. **INTRODUCTION:** Merleau-Ponty begins this chapter by milling over the results of the last chapter especially the concluding remarks on the nature of the world. Developing these remarks, he shows that there is a way in which his own position could be interpreted in much the same as Sartre's. What follows is a short presentation of the core of Sartrean philosophy with a series of objections to it. To overcome these objections, Merleau-Ponty suggests another way of interpreting Sartre - an interpretation that in fact leads back to Merleau-Ponty's own position. (434:1/504:1)
- A. From consciousness as temporality, we see that consciousness transcends the level of being causally influenced by objects both in the natural and social world. This implies that human consciousness in being temporality is free. From this Merleau-Ponty develops the **central core of Sartrean philosophy** and its doctrine of Absolute Freedom. Insofar as my consciousness transcends the determinate structures of the world, there can be no limitations on my freedom especially since the determinate structures of the world are not something simply found 'out there' but rather, they follow from the subject. Without a subject there

is no world and the world that is, is always the world of some subject. (434:4/504:4)

1. Consciousness can never objectify itself. The closest I can come to just being something is by taking a statistical and objective view of myself. Of course, such a move can never be genuine and really turns out to be a form of bad faith. (434:7/504:7)
 2. Since what we mean by freedom is just another name for consciousness, I am never a thing and my freedom cannot be turned on and off. If I am a subject, I must be free. If I am not free, then all is lost. Clearly, consciousness is free or not free and there is no middle ground between these two. (424:26/505:6)
 3. But even further, freedom does not admit of degrees. One cannot be a bit free for that implies that in some sense one is not free. If there is a sense in which one is not free, either it has enough force to make me act or it does not. In the first case, I am not free and in the second, I am clearly free. Again, there is no middle ground between these. (435:8/505:18)
 4. In addition to rejecting the idea that the laws of causality affect my freedom, clearly motivation, nature, history, my relationships to others and my own temperament do not affect it either. All of these rather than being something that restricts my freedom actually flow from my freedom and its choices. (435:14/505:24)
 5. What misleads us into thinking that motivation, nature, history, my relationship to others, and my temperament restrict my freedom is that we often look for freedom in the voluntary deliberation that examines one motive after another. In reality, the deliberation follows upon the decision and operates at a much deeper level. (435:37/506:11)
 6. Often weakness is given as an example of something that destroys freedom. But this problem comes again from how we look at freedom. We should not be seeing freedom in the act of the will. We have recourse to an act of the will only in order to go against our true decision. Ultimately nothing can set limits to freedom, except those limits that freedom sets for itself. (436:12/506:29)
- B. Objections to the Sartrean position:** (436:42/507:21)
1. Sartrean freedom applies not to a characteristic of our action but rather to the source of all action. Thus we can say that all actions are free, but it seems to follow that for Sartre to say that an action is free is meaningless since it cannot be otherwise. How can we be free, if that is how we are determined? (436:42/507:21)
 2. In equating freedom with subjectivity itself, Sartre seems to suggest that action itself is meaningless. The nature of the self is such that it is the very opposite, or more exactly, the negation of what exists in the world such that nothing can pass from us to the world nor from the world to us. If this is the case, what can action mean? (437:10/507:33)

3. The very idea of choice also seems to vanish. If to choose is to choose something for which freedom has a desire, then the self must not have what it desires and thus is limited. The Sartrean self is absolutely free and is not limited by needs, which fall outside of itself. Why does it choose? (437:22/508:8)
 4. In attempting to maintain absolute freedom, one must maintain we can at any moment radically change our whole life. But what kind of freedom is it in which I am limited to just willing for this moment and in which I am unable to determine any of my successive moments? (437:33/508:18)
 5. If freedom is absolute and thus totally indeterminate, how can we have experience of it? Freedom can only be experienced insofar as it stands out from a background which is not freedom and which freedom is specifically different. Merleau-Ponty also quotes Sartre as saying much the same thing. (438:5/508:33)
- C. **Toward a reconstruction of the Sartrean conception:** If the Sartrean conception of freedom is to make any sense at all, we must realize that freedom develops within a particular field. We must also realize that freedom is not simply a negative aspect of our universal commitment to a world but rather the particular manner of our being in the world. Freedom cannot be looked at as just a centrifugal force giving meaning to all that is around it, but it must include a centripetal element. In short, freedom must find itself in a situation. (438:19/509:11)
- II. **FREEDOM AS CENTRIFUGAL AND CENTRIPETAL**—In the transformation of the Sartrean idea of freedom, Merleau-Ponty has attempted to show that if the concept is to have any meaning there must be a sense in which freedom affects and is affected by the world. In this part of the chapter he proposes that we go back to experience of perception, pain and fatigue, and also history to develop the non-causal sense in which these two 'affect' each other. (By the way, these are the same examples that Sartre uses in *Being and Nothingness*. One might think of this section as a redoing of *Being and Nothingness* just as Chapter I of Part III was a redoing of Descartes' *Meditations*.) (439:21510:20)
- A. **Perception (external perceptions):** (439:29/510:28)
1. There is a sense in which Sartre is right. Freedom does bring things into existence as obstacles for freedom. It does not, however, arrange for **particular obstacles** but rather for there to be **obstacles in general**. It does not draw the particular outline of the world, but merely lays down its general structure. (It is interesting to note that not only is the example of the rock and other examples are taken from Sartre and how very different Merleau-Ponty's analysis of these examples is.) (439:29/510:28)
 2. In order to understand these two senses of obstacles, we need to distinguish between two kinds of intentions. (439:44/511:4)

- a) **Expressed intentions:** Those intentions by which I plan not to make a climb of those mountains. These are the intentions which I make as a thinking subject which have the power to place myself at will anywhere in the universe. (440:1)
- b) **General intentions:** Underlining **myself** as a thinking subject is **myself** as always involved in a situation. From this more basic self, flow intentions that evaluate the potentialities of my environment. Whether I have decided to climb the mountain or not it will appear high because it exceeds the power of my body to take them in stride. These intentions provide the content in which the thinking subject will develop its expressed intentions. General intentions can be taken in two ways. (440:3/511:7)
 - (1) These intentions constitute a system in which all possible objects are simultaneously included. (440:17/511:21)
 - (2) They are not of my own making. Gestalt psychology has shown that certain groupings of objects are given to us with a particular significance - that is, they are given to us to be taken in a certain way. (440:23/511:27)
- 3. Merleau-Ponty **concludes** that perception reveals that there are no obstacles in themselves, but the self, that qualifies them as such, is not some acosmic subject but rather one that runs ahead of itself into a world so that a world with meaning is **always already there**. (441:11/512:22)
- B. **Pain and fatigue** (internal perceptions): (441:18/512:28)
 - 1. Pain and fatigue can never be regarded as causes that 'act' upon my freedom, but rather they express my attitude towards the world. I am free in relation to fatigue and pain to precisely the extent that I am free in relation to my being in the world, free to make my way by transforming it. (441:18/512:28)
 - 2. At the same time we must recognize a sort of sedimentation of our life. Certain ways of acting acquire a favored status for us. Granted that we can change even these but those which have been long established **probably** won't change. (441:38/513:11)
 - a) **Objection:** It might be objected by a Rationalist that this recourse to probability is meaningless since whether we can change or we cannot change is the problem. In fact, he might object that the whole idea of probability is just a fiction and not something found in the real world. (442:4/513:20)
 - b) **Response:** But is our involvement in the world so clear-cut? Hasn't our analysis of perception found this involvement shot through with generality? Haven't all our descriptions revealed freedom to be founded on a generality of probability? (442:19/513:34)
 - 3. **Conclusion:** In response to the Rationalist's dilemma: either the free act is possible or it is not—either the event originates in me or is imposed on me from the outside, Merleau-Ponty argues that our freedom does not destroy our situation, but gears itself to it. As long as we are alive, our

situation is open and that implies both that it calls up specially favored modes of resolution and also that it is powerless to bring one into being by itself. (442:31/514:1)

- C. **History:** This section is not concerned so much with the general run of the mill historical meanings found in perception. Merleau-Ponty clearly puts this discussion in the context of Marxism and is concerned with showing how social, political, and economic meanings actually come into being. But he is even more specific than just this. His real concern is to try and develop an account of the coming into existence of **class-consciousness**. Further, he is trying to deal with this problem in the context of the conflict between the materialism of traditional Marxism and Sartre's more idealistic interpretations, and, of course, the major concern here is transforming Sartre's view into his own. (442:36/514:15)
1. If we stress freedom in history as a response to determinism, the major problem we have is how to avoid falling into the position of Idealism. We cannot conceive of historical movements as the results of some kind of absolute consciousness that thinks these movements. Just as it is wrong for materialistic thought to derive class-consciousness from objective conditions, so it is wrong for Idealism to reduce the conditions to *being aware of them*. Both approaches ignore the phenomenon of history and are trapped with the realms of the *in-itself* and the *for-itself*. (442:36/514:15)
 2. Merleau-Ponty proposes that we adopt a genuinely **existential method** to discover how we are involved in historical movements and then he proceeds to give us an example of what this might look like. (443:22/515:8)
 - a) When we turn to experience we find that we are involved in a class not simply because of an economic system or society considered as systems of impersonal forces but insofar as we carry these institutions within us and experience them. This process in turn is not an intellectual operation devoid of motive, but one's way of concretely being in the world and being part of an institutional framework. Merleau-Ponty develops this point by characterizing three aspects of a style of life that might lead to class-consciousness: being at the mercy of booms and slumps, an awareness of the appointed order of things, and a sense of co-existing in the same situation with others. (443:30/515:15)
 - b) Individuals are involved in the same situation and feel alike not in virtue of some comparison but on the basis of their tasks and gestures—their activities. It is because one perceives in a concrete way and because of what one is doing, that his life is synchronized with others who share a common lot. There is at the heart of this involvement not an appointed order or an absolutely free being, but rather a lived through ambiguity which realizes itself as the work of an artist does. It is the intention that creates its instruments and its means of expression. (444:20/516:11)

- (1) Merleau-Ponty presents a rather detailed description of how an individual might come to class-consciousness. In particular, he has in mind the 1917 revolution in Russia. (444:25/516:17)
- (2) The key point that he is making here is that neither the appointed order nor a free act is presented here but the elements of life and choice lived through in an ambiguity. (445:29/517:26)
- (3) To make this point a little stronger, especially in relationship to Sartre, Merleau-Ponty distinguishes the way the intellectual is moved toward supporting a cause and the revolutionary's possession of the cause. (445:39/517:36)
- c) Historical movement seems to require space in order to generate itself. It requires a horizon not restricted to immediate concerns. The determinist would like us to think that economic or social forces simply cause a movement to begin. What we have here is a disregard of all but intellectual projects. But intellectual projects are not enough. Before a thought is thought, it must be lived through as a possibility. It is I who gives direction, significance and a future to my life, but that does not mean that these are concepts. They spring from my present and past and, in particular, from my mode of present and past co-existence. These kinds of motivations do not do away with freedom but are the only basis on which freedom can manifest itself. (446:12/518:16)
 - (1) It is not usually when things are at their worst that one finds the development of revolutions. In fact, one forgets that at times prosperity frequently brings with it a more radical mood among the masses. (446:12/518:16)
 - (2) Further, there is a tendency to see here only intellectual projects when experience clearly shows that what is really operative here are **existential projects**. (446:22/518:25)
 - (3) Both Idealism and Materialism fail to grasp the individual **coming into being** as part of class-consciousness. Idealism fails because it tries to deduce actual existence from consciousness and Materialism fails because it tries to derive consciousness from stuff of existence. (447:40/520:13)
3. A **conclusion** to the discussion of historical meanings in perception is developed through a dialectical give and take. (448:3/520:18)
 - a) **Objection:** From the idealist perspective, one might make the claim that I am not a particular project but rather a pure consciousness and the above analysis clouds this fact. (448:3/520:18)
 - b) **Response:** This approach tends to reduce everything to two categories *for others* and *for oneself* (*en soi* and *pour soi*, the terms used by Sartre). But if this is all that we have, then how can we ever explain the experience of the other? (448:8/520:23)
 - c) **Objection:** It might possibly be objected that in developing the analysis in the way that we have, we do not take into consideration the

problems of inter-subjectivity. Do we **really** have the other as he is? (448:12/520:27)

d) **Response:** Merleau-Ponty considers the above objection as more misleading than helpful. The phenomenon we are trying to uncover cannot be done by reflective thought. Objective thought only gives us a distorted view of the phenomenon. The *other-person-as-object* is nothing but an insincere modality of others just as *absolute subjectivity* is nothing but an abstract notion of myself. What we must do if we are going to achieve the phenomenon is use a much more **radical reflection** which will reveal to us the halo of generality or a kind of atmosphere of 'sociality' around the individual. It is interesting to note how the figure/background relationship has appeared over and over again with all sorts of twists and adjustments. (448:28/521:5)

e) **Statement of position:** If this is done we can understand that there can be situations for freedom and thus a direction of history and also historical truth. History reveals to us an exchange between **generalized** and **individual** existence, each receiving and giving something that creates the very necessary conditions for both historical direction and truth. (448:43/521:19)

(1) **Direction to history:** If I could completely make myself into a worker or a bourgeois, then there would be nothing for my freedom. I would be all that I am and leave nothing to become. But because I am never just what I am, there is always what I could be. There is an opening. There is direction to experience and a direction to history. (448:43/521:19)

(2) **Historical Truth:** What is known as the significance of events is not an idea that produces them, or the fortuitous results of their occurring together. It is the central project of a future that is elaborated within a social coexistence with the other. Further this is not some kind of intellectual project but rather one that is an average and statistical significance of these projects. (449:24/522:7)

(3) Merleau-Ponty is claiming that historical "meaning-giving" is not merely centrifugal but arises in a context of generality. He is not claiming that history from end to end has only one meaning. But rather he is claiming that what is given in the generality of experience allows us to distinguish between accounts and to make judgments concerning them. (450:5/522:31)

D. In this **conclusion**, Merleau-Ponty attempts at transforming the Sartrean idea of freedom into his own view: freedom is centrifugal and centripetal. Such a conclusion arises out of our becoming aware that around our individual projects is an area of generalized existence that connects us both to a natural and social world. (450:24/523:15)

1. In this section Merleau-Ponty attempts to show that there is an interaction, a give and take, between the subject and its world. He shows the

nature of the world with which we are reacting. He does this by taking world in two senses - that of nature and the cultural world. He concludes by giving us examples of the sense in which he has taken both and how each reveals the same world. (450:24/523:15)

- a) **Perceiving red:** In taking this example of experiencing the color red, Merleau-Ponty explains that this "unique" red of experience stands out only from a background of generality. (451:2/523:37)
 - b) **Understanding the God of Spinoza:** In much the same way, the idea of the God of Spinoza also stands out from a context of generality but a generality that is social. (451:11/524:9)
 - c) The relation between these two spheres of the self and the world, both natural and social, exists only because of our field of presence, a presence that throws us into a natural and cultural world. (451:31/524:28)
2. Merleau-Ponty finds within the dialectical relation of self and world a place for freedom. My actual freedom is not on the hither side of my being, but before me in things since I am not simply an isolated consciousness but a field in a world. (452:15/525:19)

III. CONCLUSION TO THIS CHAPTER, AND POSSIBLY TO THE BOOK: **What is Freedom?** (453:30/527:3)

- A. To be born is both to be born of the world and to be from the world. The world is already constituted but also never completely constituted. In the first case, we are acted upon and, in the second, we are open to an infinite number of possibilities. But this analysis is still abstract for we exist in both ways at once. There is, therefore, never determinism and never absolute choice; I am never a thing and never pure consciousness. (453:39/527:11)
- B. In the simplest terms Merleau-Ponty is telling us that freedom is what human existence is. In this sense, his position is indeed like that of Sartre. But, of course, the whole point of his argument was to show that human existence is fundamentally different from what Sartre thought that it was. We have also seen human existence as limited and yet transcending - as that which overcomes the dichotomy between the in-itself and the for-itself, but here Merleau-Ponty reminds us that this is just what we have found freedom to be. (454:7/527:23)
- C. The questions and activities of philosophy are aimed at revealing man's being in the world, his freedom, and all that follows from it. It does not give us theories but "shows"—shows in the clearest possible way. One might conclude that the central act of philosophy is to enable us to do radical reflection. It is only in the context of radical reflection that we can realize that there are real limitations to what philosophers can do. "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." (455:37/529:16)

SECTION III—GLOSSARY: PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TERMS

The *Phenomenology of Perception* presents some serious problems for a first time reader. Not only is Merleau-Ponty very much part of a *Continental Tradition of Philosophy* that has a vocabulary very different from anything used in North American philosophy, but he also obtains most of the data used in this book from Gestalt Psychology, which itself has developed a rather complex vocabulary. The result is that there is a need for guidance through this maze of technical terms. While this glossary attempts to fill this need, it is important to realize that it is not intended as an alternative to a dictionary. Merleau-Ponty is a very well educated and well-read man who has a vocabulary that often requires one to take refuge in a dictionary. Terms that could be found in the normal dictionary have not been included in this glossary. Nor is it the intention of this glossary to give some kind of general definition that would be useful for understanding how these terms are used in other contexts. Its goal is much more limited. This glossary attempts to give some idea of how Merleau-Ponty uses technical terms from philosophy and psychology in the *Phenomenology of Perception* and thus aid the reader in understanding what Merleau-Ponty is saying.

At the same time, it is important to realize that Merleau-Ponty does not use terms in some iron clad and unchanging sort of way. Often he starts with a term in its "normal usage" and develops and transforms it as he uses it. He also takes philosophically technical terms and subjects them to a kind of critique and then proceeds to transform them in order to save the term. Such re-evaluations of terms usually begin with a use very different from Merleau-Ponty's and ends with a meaning that nicely fits within his thought. There is a sense in which, not only for Merleau-Ponty, but for all philosophers, the meaning of words is dynamic and subject to context in significant sorts of ways. In what follows, I will attempt to capture the meaning in Merleau-Ponty's initial use of these terms with the hope that the reader will be sensitive to what Merleau-Ponty does with these terms. The references in

the brackets refer to the first significant place in the *Phenomenology of Perception* that the term appears.

Abduction: (209:24/243:6) While this term has a long and complex philosophical history having been used by Aristotle and C. S. Pierce, Merleau-Ponty tends to use it in a psychological and technical way. In this sense abduction is usually contrasted with adduction. Abduction refers to a muscular movement of a limb or other parts of the body *outward* from the body. Adduction is the same movement of a limb but *inward*. (See error explained in the "Outline" above on this section. Also see "adduction" below.)

Abschattung: [German] (417:14/485:3) This is a Husserlian term that means "aspect, perspective or adumbration." It is also sometimes translated as a "shade." It refers to the one-sided view that an object presents from any finite perspective. Merleau-Ponty uses it very much in this sense.

Adduction: (209:30/243:12) While this term has a long and complex philosophical history having been used by Aristotle and C. S. Pierce, Merleau-Ponty tends to use it in a psychological and technical way. This term is usually contrasted with abduction. Adduction refers to a muscular movement of a limb or other parts of the body *inward* towards the body. Adduction is the same movement of a limb but *outward*. (As noted above in the "Outline" to this section, there is an error in the last version of the *Phenomenology of Perception*. "Adduction" is replaced by "abduction" making the contrast between "adduction" and "abduction" non-existent in the text.)

Afferent nerves: (86:24/99:30) Among the nerves that connect the limbs to the brain are those called the *sensory nerves* or *centripetal* or *afferent nerves*. They transmit to the nervous centers impressions made upon the peripheral extremities of the nerves, and in this way some claim that we become conscious of external objects. The *centrifugal* or *efferent nerves* transmit impressions from the nervous centers to the parts, these impressions either exciting muscular contraction or influencing the processes of nutrition, growth, and secretion. With the phantom limb phenomenon, the nerves from the affected limb are cut at the base of the neck.

A fortiori: [Latin] (21:11/24:23) Literally, the phrase means "even more certain" or "all the more." Thus one might say: "We are forced to accept a claim *a fortiori* because of our prior acceptance of a weaker application of the same reasoning." Merleau-Ponty uses the phrase much in this ordinary sense. For him, if the weaker form of the argument works, then *a fortiori*, the stronger argument works, that is, it is even more certain.

ἀλετήθεια: [Greek] (398:16/463:16) This is the Greek word for truth and is intended to remind us of the Platonic conception of truth as is achieved by understanding the Ideas in-themselves. Thus this word takes on an absolutistic sense in Merleau-Ponty's writing. At the same time, there is

also a Heideggerian use of the term evident in the texts. For Heidegger, truth is what shows itself in a limited sort of way. Again, this is one of those terms that Merleau-Ponty transforms or adjusts with the result that there is a movement in this book from the Platonic conception of truth to a more or less Heideggerian one. The development of what "truth" actually means is one of the major concerns of this book and a key to understanding it.

Agnosia: (125:25/144:20) It has been defined as a rare disorder characterized by an inability to recognize and identify objects or persons despite having knowledge of the characteristics of the objects or persons. People with agnosia may have difficulty recognizing the geometric features of an object or face or may be able to perceive the geometric features but not know what the object is used for or whether a face is familiar or not. Agnosia can be limited to one sensory modality such as vision or hearing. For example, a person may have difficulty in recognizing an object as a cup or identifying a sound as a cough. Agnosia can result from strokes, dementia, or other neurological disorders. It typically results from damage to specific brain areas in the occipital or parietal lobes of the brain. People with agnosia may retain their cognitive abilities in other areas.

Alexia: (195:4/226:32) Loss of the ability to grasp the meaning of written or printed words and sentences. In some contexts this is just another term for dyslexia although some authors distinguish them. As Merleau-Ponty notes in the footnote on page 195, alexia is a sort of "word blindness" that results from a loss of power to grasp the meaning of the written word.

Allocheiria: (98:8/112:7) This phenomenon is also known as allesthesia, allochiria, alloesthesia, and Bamberger's sign. Imagine being touched on the left arm, but feeling it on the right arm. That is what allocheiria is like. It is a condition in which a sensation in an area of a limb (arm or leg) is perceived on the limb on the opposite side of the body. The key point here is that the sensation is not perceived where the stimulus was originally presented. Allocheiria is a form of a technical sounding general condition called allachesthesia, in which sensations are referred to another part of the body.

Alter ego: [Latin] (xii:17/xiii:20) While *alter ego* has a common meaning of referring to another person who is very much like oneself or who is very much like another person, Merleau-Ponty uses it in a much more general way to simply refer to *another self* or *the other* or *another consciousness*.

Amnesia: (175:37/204:10) Amnesia has the following meanings in the field of medicine: *First*, a disturbance of long-term memory (memories from long ago) as opposed to short-term memory (recent memories). A person with amnesia may have a partial or total inability to recall past experiences. And *second*, a loss of memory caused by brain damage or a very serious emotional trauma. There are many different types of amnesia, such as anterograde amnesia, post-traumatic amnesia, emotional

amnesia, lacunar amnesia, posthypnotic amnesia, and transient global amnesia. Amnesia comes from the Greek word "a" meaning "without," and the Greek word, "mnemonic" meaning "memory." Put the two words together and you have, "without memory."

Analytical reflection: (ix:40/x:24) A way of looking at the world, which is the foundation of scientific explanation, that offers an account or a reconstruction of the world rather than presenting the world as it is given in experience. This is an approach or attitude towards the world that has dominated much of modern philosophy in particular Empiricism and Rationalism and becomes the major target of this book. Merleau-Ponty is not only concerned with overcoming the "Analytic Reflection" but also to making us aware of what it is.

Anarthria: (175:17/203:25) A general term used to indicate the inability to articulate speech sounds due to brain lesion or damage to the nervous system. The word itself comes from the Greek "anarthros" which means "not articulated."

Anorexia: (164:21/190:19) Or *anorexia nervosa* is an eating disorder characterized by inability to maintain a minimum normal weight for age or height combined with the intense fear of gaining weight, denial of the seriousness of current low weight, undue influence of body weight or shape on self-evaluation, and, in females, amenorrhea or failure to menstruate. Weight is typically 15% or more below normal, and it may decrease to life-threatening extremes.

Anosognosia: (76:33/88:20) A general term used to indicate a failure or apparent refusal on a patient's part to recognize the existence of a disease or disability. The word comes from the Greek "gnosis," meaning knowledge and "a-" meaning without. One ought to remember that the word "agnostic" is someone who doesn't know, but since that has become associated mainly with agnosticism about religion, psychology and neurology, it is common to use "agnosic" (no "t") to refer to a patient who does not know or notice or recognize some illness or disability. So patients can be agnosic for colors (color agnosia), agnosic for objects (object agnosia), agnosic for faces ("prosopagnosia"—from Greek "prosopon" and "agnosia"), etc. Often anosognosia is manifested not only in what the agnosic says but also in what he does. He acts as if there is no illness or disability.

Antinomies: (351:34/409:29) This is the plural of "antinomy" and comes from the Greek "anti" ("against") and "nomos" ("law"). In the classical sense the term merely means the opposition or even contradiction between two conclusions. In modern philosophy, especially under the influence of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, it refers to two opposing conclusions, each beginning from plausible premises, and issuing from valid steps of inference. For Kant and Merleau-Ponty such antinomies show the consequences of misapplying principles in the attempt to gain knowledge.

Aphasia: (125:24/144:20) This language impairment affects the production or comprehension of speech and the ability to read or write. Aphasia is always due to injury to the brain—most commonly from a stroke, particularly in older individuals. But brain injuries resulting in aphasia may also arise from head trauma, from brain tumors, or from infections. Aphasia can be so severe as to make communication with the patient almost impossible, or it can be very mild. It may affect mainly a single aspect of language use, such as the ability to retrieve the names of objects, or the ability to put words together into sentences, or the ability to read. More commonly, however, multiple aspects of communication are impaired, while some channels remain accessible for a limited exchange of information.

Aphonia: (161:4/186:18) Or “aphony” (from the Greek meaning speechlessness) refers to the loss of the voice resulting from disease, injury to the vocal cords and to various psychological causes such as hysteria. It is with these latter cases that Merleau-Ponty is primarily concerned. Normally, patients have an absence of voicing or can only talk in a whisper. It can be consistent or episodic. Usually the patient has had several temporary losses of voice before the disorder becomes permanent.

Apraxia: (125:24/144:20) A disorder of voluntary movement, consisting in a more or less complete incapacity to execute purposeful movements, notwithstanding the preservation of muscular power, sensibility, and co-ordination in general. It is also described as a psychomotor defect in which one is unable to apply to its proper use an object which one is nevertheless able to name and the uses of which one can describe.

Aristotle's Celebrated Illusion: (205:11/237:33) Merleau-Ponty is clearly thinking of Aristotle's passing reference to this illusion in the *Metaphysics* (1011a33): “For to those who for the reasons named some time ago say that what appears is true, and therefore that all things are alike false and true, for things do not appear either the same to all men or always the same to the same man, but often have contrary appearances at the same time (for touch says there are two objects when we cross our fingers, while sight says there is one),—to these we say ‘yes, but not to the same sense and in the same part of it and under the same conditions and at the same time,’ so that what appears will be with these qualifications true.”

A priori: [Latin] (22:32/26:16) “A priori” is often used in contrast with “a posteriori.” To refer to something as “a posteriori” indicates that it comes after something else and “a priori” refers to what comes before. However, Merleau-Ponty tends to take “a priori” in a technical sense much as Kant does but with some interesting differences. For Kant certain things could only be known after actually having experienced them. Such knowledge is called *a posteriori knowledge* and it is contingent, that is dependent upon those experiences. At the same time, Kant argues that there were certain

basic structures that we could find in experience that were different. He claims that without these structures there would be no experience at all. All there would be is chaos. Thus, Kant argues that there were certain necessary conditions that had to be there in order for there to be an experience at all. Kant called knowledge of them *a priori* knowledge and it is necessary and does not depend upon any one particular experience. Now while Merleau-Ponty conceived of perception, the subject, and the world to be much more complex than anything that Kant imagined, there is a sense in which he was trying to discover the necessary conditions for both perception and reality. While Kant's *a priori* knowledge had a kind of absolute necessity about it, for Merleau-Ponty, if one properly understands it, such a *a priori* knowledge arises out of contingent situations. And thus for Merleau-Ponty such a *a priori* knowledge turns out to give us a kind of contingent necessity, something very different from the kinds of *a priori's* found in Kant and Intellectualism.

Augen-Blick: [German] (438:1/508:29) Used by Heidegger, this term literally means "blink of the eye." Macquarrie and Robinson, in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, translate it with "moment of vision." It refers to an authentic way of encountering the present. Merleau-Ponty tends to use it in a more general way to refer to a kind of grasping or intuition that pulls things together.

Authentic Reflection: (41:32/48:11) This is another name for *Radical Reflection* (see below); and is usually developed as the contrasting mode to Analytic Reflection. Authentic Reflection clearly represents the proper reflective attitude of Phenomenology and Philosophy for Merleau-Ponty.

Autochthonous significance: (441:14/512:29) This is used to characterize a fundamental sense of "meaning." It indicates that there is an *aboriginal* or *indigenous* meaning. One that arises out of the soil, so to speak, and one that is always just given and serves as a basis of all conscious meaning giving.

Automatisms: (138/160:footnote) A condition whereby an individual is consciously or unconsciously, but involuntarily, compelled to perform certain motor or verbal acts, often purposeless, foolish, or harmful. These acts seem to be strange, repetitious behaviors that often occur during a seizure. Automatisms may include blinks, twitches, mouth movements, or even walking in a circle. William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, discusses them in a way that is less mechanical than is usually done in contemporary psychological literature and is closer to Merleau-Ponty's own view. James treats them as instantaneous conversions that seem due to the possession of an active subconscious self by the subject.

Background: (4:12/4:14) This is one of the key concepts that is developed and transformed as the book proceeds. Essentially, Merleau-Ponty takes the discovery of Gestalt Psychology that the minimum that can be per-

ceptual experience is a figure in a background. As we proceed through out the book the conception of background takes on major significance. It is important to watch the way that Merleau-Ponty develops this concept.

Being-in-the-World: (xiii: 21/xiv:30) This is also a concept that is developed and transformed as the book proceeds. It represents an attempt at characterizing the essential way in which the subject is part of a world and not a separate consciousness in opposition to the world as Descartes or Sartre would have it. It is of the very *essence* of consciousness that it is *of the world*, or that consciousness is a being-in-the-world.

Bodily Schema: (48:14/55:32) There is a long tradition of ambiguous terminological usage and conceptual misuse in the psychological literature with "body image" and "body schema." Sometimes they are used with exactly the same meaning and other times "body schema" is used to refer to a conscious image or representation of the body, while "body image" is a non-conscious possession. In fact, the literature suggests that there is a kind of bouncing back and forth between both meanings and both terms. Of course, this ambiguity, about whether the bodily schema or image is conscious or not, is the concern of Merleau-Ponty. He argues that Psychology is too limited in its understanding of what it means to be conscious and as a result you get this bouncing back and forth between meanings.

Bovary Mentality: (286:4/333:17) This is not some kind of technical term but rather a literary allusion. Merleau-Ponty is referring to the kind of "decenterness" that is so well developed by Gustave Flaubert in his *Madam Bovary*.

Causa sui: [Latin] (372:3/432:26) This Latin phrase means 'cause of itself'. Theologians and philosophers have maintained that God is self-caused. Merleau-Ponty uses this concept here as part of an attack on Descartes' conception of the Cogito. His point is that Descartes has transformed human consciousness (Cogito) into a *causa sui*, and thus he has transformed human consciousness into a God. And, of course, Merleau-Ponty concludes that there is something fundamentally wrong with the Cartesian conception of the Cogito. Clearly it is absurd and wrong headed.

Cenesthesia: (99:32/114:6) Or *coenesthesia* is the aggregate of impressions arising from organic sensations that forms the basis, according to some psychologists, of one's awareness of the body or bodily state as with the common feelings of the bodily organism: the feeling of health, comfort, briskness, fatigue, lethargy, &c. As the separate qualities of the organic sensations have become known, the term has been restricted to such senses as pressure and pain, whose sensations that are 'common' to several sense organs, or to such still unanalyzed sense complexes as 'tickling,' 'pins-and-needles,' 'stuffiness,' &c.

- Cerebral Physiology:** (258:24/301:9) While this is clearly a position that Merleau-Ponty is attacking, it is a position that attempts to explain the experience of spatial relationships completely in terms of brain parts and pieces of experience with some kind of functional relationship between them. While such forms of Physiology do exist, Merleau-Ponty is not particularly concerned with any one form, but rather is concerned with trying to show that this whole approach to the nature of space is misguided.
- Chronaxies:** (74:26/85:34) The singular is 'chronaxie' or 'chronaxy' and it refers to the minimum interval of time necessary to electrically stimulate a muscle or nerve fiber. The aim is to measure the minimum current needed to elicit a threshold response.
- Cogitatio:** [Latin] (xiii:9/xiv:19) Again with Descartes in mind, this term refers to consciousness but now consciousness is considered as the object of thought, as conceived and contained within space and time.
- Cogitationes:** [Latin] (xiii:14/xiv:23) Most often Merleau-Ponty uses this term simply to refer to our thought but always with a connection to the Cartesian view of thoughts.
- Cogito:** [Latin] (ix:35/x:20) This term, taken from Descartes "Cogito ergo sum," represents an understanding of consciousness as pure spirit, pure thought, a pure reality distinct from the body and independent from the body. It ends up being an assumption about consciousness that Merleau-Ponty finds throughout modern philosophy and it becomes a main focus of his criticism. Towards the end of the book, Merleau-Ponty will announce a *New Cogito* that is intended to replace the *Cartesian Cogito*.
- Colored areas (Flächenfarben):** (306:8/356:16) Using the studies done by Ackermann, Merleau-Ponty distinguishes two different ways in which color is experienced. In doing so he makes a clear distinction between *colored areas (Flächenfarben)* and *surface colors (Oberflächenfarbe)*. Of course, the point of this contrasting is that if the Analytic Attitude is right, it should not be possible to contrast them.
- Constancy Hypothesis:** (7:21/8:18) Historically, this position arose during the controversy between Wundt and the Gestaltists. Wundt insists that experiences in the external world are replicated exactly in the mind on a one-to-one ratio. The Gestaltists argue no, there is not just replication, but also processing. Merleau-Ponty clearly rejects the "constancy hypothesis" of Wundt and somewhat agrees with the Gestalts. He describes the Constancy Hypothesis as claiming that "we have in principle a point-by-point correspondence and constant connection between the stimulus and the elementary perception." While the Constancy Hypothesis has a certain historical rootedness, Merleau-Ponty is clearly assuming that a tendency toward such claims is very much part of our modern understanding of perception and thus it is important to rise above such assumptions about experience.

Dasein: [German] (xiv:37/xvi:16) This is a term that Merleau-Ponty takes from Heidegger and uses very much in the way that Heidegger does. For Heidegger, the reality that is called the human being is 'Dasein.' Dasein is the entity whose being consists in manifesting and understanding being. In so far as Dasein's being is a revealing of its own being, it is called 'existence' or 'ek-sistence': self-referential standing-out-onto-itself. Dasein's very being consists in being related to itself. But Dasein is not just related to itself. Existence occurs only as being-in-the-world; that is, the openness of the human being to itself which in turn entails the openness of the world for other entities. One of Heidegger's neologisms for 'openness' is 'the there' (das Da), which he uses in two interrelated senses. First, human being is its own 'there': as a thrown project, existence sustains its own openness to itself. And second, in so doing, human being also makes possible the world's openness as the 'there' for other entities. Human being's self-disclosure makes possible the disclosure of other entities. While Merleau-Ponty significantly follows Heidegger in the use of this term, one should expect that he adds to and transforms this idea as the book proceeds.

De facto: [Latin] (396:17/461:5) This relatively common expression which is literally translated as "from the fact." It differentiates that which exists in fact (de facto) from that which exists legally (de jure). It is often used to segregate custom and practice from what is required by right or law.

De jure: [Latin] (396:17/461:6) This expression is literally translated as "from the law." It is used to differentiate what exists legally (de jure) from what exists in fact (de facto). It is often used to segregate what is required by right or law from custom and practice.

Dehiscence: (419:40/487:26) Merleau-Ponty is not using this word in some technical sort of way, but in the every day sense of it being a kind of "bursting open as when an organ discharges its contents." In this sense, one might say that this term has the same meaning as "an opening by divergence of parts" or "a climax." While this is the normal meaning of the term, Merleau-Ponty does refine it and there is a sense in which it gradually becomes a technical term for him especially in his later works.

Delirium: (341/398:Footnote) A disoriented condition with clouded consciousness, often accompanied by hallucinations, illusions, misinterpretations of events and a generally confused quality with reduced capacity to sustain attention to things in the environment. Delirium is frequently a fairly rapid onset (often after head injury or a seizure) but may also develop slowly over time, particularly if metabolic factors are responsible.

Delirium tremens: (334:27/390:10) An acute form of delirium that has all of its characteristic systems associated with excessive alcohol abuse. It is a delirium that follows a day or two after the cessation of alcohol intake after many years of alcohol abuse.

Diastole: (164:27/190:26) Merleau-Ponty is taking two terms "diastole" and "systole" that are usually used to refer to the expansion (diastole) and contraction (systole) of the heart and he is using these terms in a very general sense of "expanding" and "contracting" in describing our relationships to the world.

Dichromic sight (74:10/85:19) It is a condition in which one's perception is colored but only in two colors, usually with a certain transparent color effect.

Doxa (δόξα): [Greek] (355:36/414:18) A Greek word signifying opinions, beliefs, conjectures, estimates. This is a very important notion in the philosophies of both Plato and Aristotle and they use it in rather technical ways in developing their understanding of the nature of real knowledge. Merleau-Ponty tends to use it in a less technical way to refer to any belief or an assumption.

Eidos: [Greek] (176:10/204:26) This is the Greek term that means "idea." The use of this term is intended to remind one of Plato's Ideas, which are the ultimate intelligibility of a thing. The way in which Merleau-Ponty uses this term is intended to remind us of this use. Husserl tended to use this term much more in this Platonic way as designating universal essences and as the ultimate object of phenomenological study.

Eidetic: (xiv:33/xvi:11) Often this adjective, which means "having to do with the ideal," is used in relation to Husserl's conception of the Eidetic Reduction. The Eidetic Reduction is the philosophical process by which we arrive at the idea or essence, the ultimate intelligibility of a thing or experience. For Husserl, there is almost a Platonic sense of getting at the Idea. But Merleau-Ponty tends to look at the Eidetic Reduction as moving in the opposite direction. Rather than overcoming all of our assumptions and prejudices such that we could have the idea of something as it is and undistorted, he thinks that the Eidetic Reduction is the process by which we become aware of our assumptions and see the idea of a thing in the context of all these assumptions.

Ek-stase: (70:33/81:21) This is a term taken primarily from Heidegger. It is an attempt at characterizing active transcendence of the subject in relation to the world. It is the very nature of consciousness that it goes beyond itself into a world and as a result of this going beyond itself it allows objects to appear. Much of the remainder of this book will be concerned with developing both this notion and its implications.

Empfinder: [German] (73:1084:10) A Husserlian term that means "to sense" but most often is used to refer to a kind of concrete comprehending. Merleau-Ponty alludes here to his use of this term in the *Structure of Behavior* where he uses it with a similar meaning but as a noun.

Empiricism: (14:24/17:1) This is a name for a general grouping of philosophical positions that attempt to account for human knowledge in terms of experience. By experience, they usually have in mind sensations

or simple impressions or some other form of data. Often such positions rely on such subjective processes as association and memory (Hume) to account for the complexity that appears in our knowledge. Usually Empiricism is a philosophical term that is contrasted with Rationalism, or even Intellectualism as Merleau-Ponty tends to do. As one proceeds through the *Phenomenology of Perception*, one will discover that Empiricism is gradually transformed. What Merleau-Ponty means by Empiricism in one part of the book will be different from what he means by it in another part. The book starts with a rather primitive conception of Empiricism and its objections to Merleau-Ponty's analysis. As the book proceeds, the position of Empiricism grows in sophistication as does its objections. What Merleau-Ponty is concerned with doing is not refuting one particular version of Empiricism, but rather to put into question the very point of view from which all the versions of Empiricism arise.

Engrams: (195:21/227:14) A physiological term that refers to traces left by stimuli on protoplasm of an organism. This term is usually used in the context of rather mechanical and physiological explanations of experience.

Epiphenomenon: (159:28/184:27) This word is not used here in any kind of technical sort of way as it often is in philosophical writings but rather it merely refers to something being "an additional appearance" or "a secondary symptom" or "something that is merely secondary."

Erlebnisse: [German] (407:21/473:36) Heidegger tends to use this term to express either "aesthetic" or "living experience." Merleau-Ponty tends to use it to refer to the latter in the sense of the "fundamental lived experience" which is the ground of our experience of things.

Eros: (156:8/180:23) Merleau-Ponty is using this term in a Freudian sense and is clearly referring to his position. Freud maintained that humans have two opposing instinctual drives that interact to control behavior: *eros*, the life instinct, which drives people to self-fulfillment and enjoyment, and *thanatos*, the death instinct, which produces self-destruction. Freud's theory posits a perpetual conflict between these two fundamental human drives. At times he seems to speculate that the destructive aspects of *Thanatos* are likely to prevail in the long run over the positive and creative urges of *Eros*.

Essences: (vii:4/vii:4) Husserl describes philosophy as concerned with essences or meaning of something rather than the factual question of whether it exists or not. The question of the existence of things Husserl often seems to relegate to the sciences and thus he attempts to distinguish philosophy from science in so far as it is concerned with meaning or essences. Thus, one could say that essences, the meaning of things, are the primary objects of philosophy. While Merleau-Ponty transforms this Husserlian idea, it is important to note that he leaves certain parts of it intact.

- Ex hypothesis:** [Latin] (370:8/430:17) One might translate this phrase as "given the current hypothesis." In this case, Merleau-Ponty is saying "given the assumptions of Empiricism, it necessarily follows that"
- Experience Error:** (5:14/5:28) For Merleau-Ponty this is an experiential mistake that plagues much of contemporary thought. It consists in *thinking* that what is given us in immediate experience of things is what we *know* is contained in those things. It is an example of our knowledge distorting our experience.
- Experimur nos aeternos esse:** [Latin] (372:17/433:5) This might be translated as "our experience of our eternal being."
- Exteroceptivity:** (76:4/87:27) This term and "interoceptivity" appear to be terms that Merleau-Ponty coined himself and thus have quotation marks around them. This is the case or he got them from someone else who coined them. These terms are not in common usage anywhere. Essentially, exteroceptivity refers to a hard wired connection to the external world as interoceptivity refers to a hard wired connection to all the elements within the body. The first produces our awareness in the world and the second our awareness of the body. It is important to recognize that these terms are being used in the context of developing a position that is not Merleau-Ponty's and one that he is going to criticize.
- Extra-campine hallucination:** (340:4/396:22) The footnote on this page describes this as follows: "when the patient believes he perceives outside the sensory field presented to him."
- Facies totius universi:** [Latin] (301:21/350:35) This phrase can be translated "that which brings about the whole universe."
- Facticity:** (vii:9/vii:9) Merleau-Ponty follows both Heidegger and Sartre in the use of this term. It refers to the concrete "factness" of human existence, all those contingent conditions of an individual human life. Facticity includes all of the concrete elements of one's reality, and it is in this background of facticity that human freedom is not only exercised but becomes possible.
- Faculty Psychologism:** (x:2x/30) Merleau-Ponty, following Husserl, conceives of this doctrine as holding that, like psychology, philosophy is limited to recording the existence of the necessary conditions or structures of experience and is not concerned with essences or meaning. Husserl and Merleau-Ponty are primarily thinking of Kant here. They see him as just recording the elements of our faculties. For both, philosophy must transcend questions of existence and get at meaning.
- Field:** (4:18/4:24) This is a term used by Gestalt Psychology in its attempts at characterizing the nature of the ground in the figure/ground relationship. Merleau-Ponty takes this concept and develops it in ways that were not even thought of by the Gestaltists.
- Figure/ground:** (4:12/4:17) Gestalt Psychology tries to explain various aspects of psychology in terms of structures (Gestalten), particularly in

relation to the tendency of forms of perception to conform to certain structures. In reaction to earlier sensationalist psychological theories that tended to reduce mental life to atomic sensation and ideas, the Gestaltists stressed "wholes" and "structures," and then claimed that these "wholes" could not be broken down into elements. These "wholes" or "Gestalts" contained a figure/ground structure. The figure-ground refers to the fact that certain aspects of a stimulus configuration appear to stand out and have object quality, while other aspects of the configuration appear to be behind, continuous, and with no definite boundaries. Again, this is a concept that Merleau-Ponty makes rather central to his whole philosophy and which he transforms beyond anything that the Gestaltists ever did. In fact, one might say that this relationship becomes a kind of paradigm that Merleau-Ponty uses to explain all sorts of things much as Aristotle uses form/matter and Kant uses the conception of the *a priori*.

For-itself: (56:4/64:35) This term is part of a pair of terms made famous by Jean-Paul Sartre: *for-itself* (*pour-soi*) and *in-itself* (*en soi*). He, in turn, seems to have gotten these terms from the Hegel scholar Jean Hyppolite whose lectures both he and Merleau-Ponty attended. The distinction being drawn is between two modes of being: *consciousness* (being *for-itself*) and the *objects* of consciousness (being *in-itself*). In Sartre and Descartes, there is a radical distinction between the two. Merleau-Ponty sees this distinction as undermining not only modern psychology but also modern philosophy. For him, the task is to transform our understanding both of the subject and the world in order to overcome this distinction.

Freudian Imago: (180:27/209:32) A term used by Freud to refer to unconscious representations of other persons, typically a parent with whom one identifies closely. Psychoanalytic theory conceptualizes the imago as being formed very early in life and, hence, it is usually an idealized representation and not necessarily reflective of the true person.

Fundierung: [German] (127:14/146:21) A Husserlian and Kantian term, which is used rather commonly in Phenomenology that means "establishing or founding of something." It is the attempt at showing that one level of consciousness is based on a lower founding level. Often the goal is to show that this second level is actually the necessary condition for the first. Merleau-Ponty not only attacks this "necessary" view of *fundierung* but also transforms it and uses the result in a positive way.

Gegenstand: [German] (327:7/381:18) Heidegger uses this term for "object or the being-as-opposed" or even more literally, "standing against." Merleau-Ponty pretty much follows this usage. It might be worth noting that Husserl also uses this term but draws a sharp distinction between *gegenstand* and *object* both of which have the meaning of "object" in ordinary

German, but have different meanings for him. At times, Merleau-Ponty also echoes this distinction.

Genetic Phenomenology: (126:20/145:20) This term is generally used by Merleau-Ponty to refer to what is called by others: "Constitutive Phenomenology." Constitutive or genetic phenomenology emphasizes processes and structures within conscious life as they are intentionally related to objects, but it also reflects on the objects as they intended in such processes. As such it has a clearly idealistic appearance. Genetic phenomenology is specified by its concern with constitution—how do intentional objects come about? Clearly this way of thinking comes from Kantianism, but is not confined to operations of conceptually structuring objects. There is also pre-predicative experience in which objects are constituted as perceived, valued, willed and so on, but not yet formed into states of affairs. This kind of phenomenology makes its first appearance in the first book of Husserl's *Ideen* (1913). As the posthumous works have made it clear, Husserl's transcendental constitutive phenomenology and his idealist period began earlier, 1906, and are broader than the books published in his lifetime seem to show. However, what is especially important to Merleau-Ponty is the fact that even during his lifetime he recognized a kind of 'constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude,' or what he called a 'mundane' or 'worldly' phenomenology, that does not have the idealist tones usually associated with Genetic Phenomenology. Rather, there seem to be some clearly realistic, existential and hermeneutical tendencies that contrast with genetic phenomenology and yet seem to converge with it to make a kind of "mundane constitutive phenomenology." Merleau-Ponty makes much of this ambiguity in Husserl's thought in his "rethinking" of the Husserlian position. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the aim of most genetic phenomenology is transcendental.

Geschichte: [German] (374:32/435:23) Heidegger uses this term for "history," that is, he uses it for the object of study of history or historiography. Also, in his later writings, he begins to use the term *Geshick*, which means exclusively the history or destiny of Being. What one finds in Merleau-Ponty is a much more concrete presentation of much the same idea.

Gestalt Theory: (4:11/4:17) A psychological theory developed early this century in German and Austrian by such figures as Max Wertheimer (1880-1943), Wolfgang Kohler (1897-1967), and Kurt Koffka (1886-1941). This theory tried to explain various aspects of psychology in terms of structures (*Gestalten*), particularly in relation to the tendency of forms of perception to conform to certain patterns. In reaction to earlier sensationalist psychological theories that tended to reduce mental life to atomic sensation and ideas, the Gestaltists emphasized "wholes" and structures claiming that these "wholes" could not be broken down

into elements. These "wholes" or "Gestalts" contained a figure/ground structure.

Gnosia: (125:35/145:1) "*Gnosis*" and "*gnosis*" are forms of the Greek word for knowledge and used widely to denote knowing, cognition, recognition, etc. Here, as the translator indicates, Merleau-Ponty is using this term to refer to "the perceptive faculty, enabling one to recognize the form and nature of persons and things" (see footnote, 125).

Greifen: [German] (113:22/130:18) Term used by Geib and Goldstein for "grasping" when they were explaining the difference in Schneider's situation between "pointing" or "*Zeigen*" and "grasping" or "*Greifen*."

Heautoscopy: (149:33/173:7) The experience of seeing oneself as a double, usually in the form of the face and bust with it imitating the expressions and movements of the original. The copy is usually misty, hazy, and partially transparent.

Horizon: (30:22/35:13) This is a Husserlian term that Merleau-Ponty develops and transforms. When we experience an object, our consciousness is focused on this object, and the rest of the world and its various objects are there but not as objects, rather as something in the background. While they are there, we are not presently paying attention to them. In fact, the same holds for most of the many features of the object itself. All these not specifically noted features of the object, together with the world in which it is set, make up for Husserl the 'horizon' of that experience. The various features of the object, which are co-intended, or also-meant, but not at the focus of our attention, he calls the 'inner horizon,' while the realm of other objects and the world to which they all belong, he calls the 'outer horizon.' What is particularly significant is the hidden or objectively not seen nature of the horizon. The horizon is that which is not attended to. Take as an example our 'expectation' that we will find a floor when we enter a room. Usually, we have not even thought about there being a floor. Typically, we cannot even recall when we first acquired the corresponding 'belief' or 'anticipation.' According to Husserl, there may never have been any occasion when we actually judged there to be a floor in some particular room. Still we have come to 'anticipate' a floor, not in the sense of consciously expecting one, but in the sense that if we entered the room and there were none, we would be astonished. In this example we would easily be able to tell what was missing, in other cases our 'anticipations' are so imperceptible that we just may feel that something has gone awry, but not be able to tell what it is.

hyle: [Greek] (xi:25/xii:21) The word seems to have been originally used to indicate the material from which something is made, for example, wood. Aristotle gives us the analysis of substance in terms of two basic principles: matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*). The matter (*hyle*) is a principle of particularization awaiting determination and is the potentialities of the thing. The form (*morphe*) is the universalizing principle by which a thing

is the kind of thing that it is. What is important to realize is that these are not two parts of things but two necessary conditions for things being what they are. Husserl, in turn, takes up Aristotle's usage in a general sort of way and applies these terms not to things that exist in the world but rather to elements of our analysis of experience. In this context, *hyle* refers to "the stuff" of experience, the sensory immanent material of lived experience and the *morphe* refers to the organization imposed upon the hyletic data. It is essential to the Phenomenological analysis that this distinction be seen and made.

Hyletic layer: (243:10/283:10) The hyle refers to the "stuff" of experience, the sensory immanent material of lived experiences. To talk about a "hyletic layer" is to talk about a layer of sensory materials that are given in experience. (See the above explanation.)

Hysteria: (162:17/188:3) A psychiatric disorder, which has a very long history, characterized by such symptoms as hallucinations, somnambulism, functional anesthesia, functional paralysis and dissociation. It is generally thought today not to be a specific illness but rather a general classification of illnesses.

Idealism: (xi:29/xii:26) Often Merleau-Ponty uses "Intellectualism" as another term for idealism. It represents the particular form of the Analytic Attitude that seeks to achieve truth by disengaging from the world and by assuming that world falls within the grasp of consciousness. It maintains that achieving the truth is not the result of some kind of passive receiving of something given but rather the product of human consciousness.

Illusion of the Proofreader: (20:13/23:20) Or the Proofreader's Illusion is nothing other than the tendency to read what we think something says rather than what it actually does say. Often students experience this phenomenon in proof reading their term papers. They become so focused in on what they are trying to say that they do not notice what they actually have written is different. In short, the Proofreader's Illusion is a kind of projecting of what we think out into the world of experience.

In-itself: (56:3/64:34) This term is part of a pair of terms made famous by Jean-Paul Sartre: for-itself (*pour-soi*) and in-itself (*en soi*). He in turn seems to have gotten these terms from the Hegel scholar Jean Hyppolite whose lectures both he and Merleau-Ponty attended. The distinction being drawn is between two modes of being: *consciousness* (being for-itself) and the *objects* of consciousness (being in-itself). In Sartre and Descartes, there is a radical distinction between the two. Merleau-Ponty sees this distinction as undermining not only the thought of Sartre and Descartes but also modern psychology and philosophy. For him, the task is to transform our understanding both of the subject and the world in order to overcome this distinction.

Inner sense: (410:5/467:5) Kant claims that space and time are the a priori conditions for any possible experience what so ever. He distinguishes them by claiming that space is the a priori condition for anything sensed as being "outside" of us, and thus he calls space the outer sense. Time, however, is the a priori condition for any experience of the senses whether outside or inside. It must be remembered that outside things are experiences, in a sense, inside us (Merleau-Ponty might take exception with this way of talking.) and thus Kant calls time *the inner sense*. What we see in the *Phenomenology of Perception* is a distinction between space and time but drawn somewhat differently than Kant does.

Intentionality: (xvii:11/xix:9) This notion refers to an essential characteristic of consciousness in which consciousness is always consciousness of something. Merleau-Ponty wants to affirm this characteristic but makes it more radical. For him consciousness is, in a rather contradictory way, a project of the world *always already there*. Consciousness is meant for a world, which it neither embraces nor possesses, but toward which it is perpetually directed. Much of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is an investigation into the implications of the fact that consciousness is intentional in this sense.

Intentionality of act: (110:30/127:3) Or as Merleau-Ponty sometimes refers to this "motor intentionality." This form of intentionality attempts to specify a new sense of intentionality. For Merleau-Ponty intentionality is not a mere passive orientation toward a world but rather it is an act, a doing, which establishes our relationship to the world. Again, much of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is attempting to develop just what this means.

Interior horizon: (32:29/37:31) As with the term "horizon," this is a Husserlian term that Merleau-Ponty develops and transforms. When we experience an object, our consciousness is focused on this object, and the rest of the world and its various objects are there but not as objects, rather as something in the background. While they are there, we are not presently paying attention to them. In fact, the same holds for most of the many features of the object itself. All these not specifically noted features of the object, together with the world in which it is set, make up for Husserl, the 'horizon' of that experience. The various features of the object, which are co-intended, or also-meant, but not at the focus of our attention, he calls the 'inner horizon,' or 'interior horizon,' while the realm of other objects and the world to which they all belong, he calls the 'outer horizon' or even 'external horizon.' What is particularly significant is the hidden or "objectively not seen" nature of the horizon. The horizon is that which is not attended to.

Interoceptivity: (76:4/87:27) This term and "exteroceptivity" appear to be terms that Merleau-Ponty coined himself and thus have quotation marks around them. This is the case or he got them from someone else

who coined them. These terms are not in common usage anywhere. Essentially, exteroceptivity refers to a hard wired connection to the external world as interoceptivity refers to a hard wired connection to all the elements within the body. The first produces our awareness in the world and the second our awareness of the body. It is important to recognize that these terms are being used in the context of developing a position that is not Merleau-Ponty's and one that he is going to criticize.

Intuitionism: (62:32/72:24) In general, this is a philosophical position that is often contrasted with Empiricism and Intellectualism which claims that real knowledge is not achieved simply through experience nor through reasoning things out but rather through some kind of intellectual act of intuition. Merleau-Ponty usually has Henri Bergson in mind when he is talking about intuitions. Bergson contrasts very sharply intuition from sense experience and discursive reasoning and insists that intuition is capable of grasping the world in its essential fluidity, while other acts falsify it by stopping its flow and spatializing it.

Ipseity: (233:25/271:16) Literally this term means "personal identity and individuality" or "selfhood." Merleau-Ponty tends to use the term in a much broader sort of way as referring to what a thing or a self ultimately is. It is that which we strive for in trying to know something but yet can never reach. Possibly one could equate this with the Kantian in-itself, but for Merleau-Ponty it is not something that cannot be known but rather something that can be known but never completely. It is as if the *ipseity* of a thing is that which always transcends our grasps even when we grasp something about the very *ipseity* thing itself.

***Ipso facto*:** [Latin] (370:19/430:28) A rather common phrase that has the meaning of "by the very fact" or "absolutely, regardless of all other considerations."

Kinesthetic Sensations: (93:42/107:26) This is an umbrella term to cover the sensations originating in the muscles, tendons, and joints. Of course, Merleau-Ponty is attaching such a narrow conception and hopes to broaden its meaning.

Labyrinthine: (249:25/290:27) While this term does have a psychological and anatomical meaning, Merleau-Ponty does not use it in that way. Rather he is using it in the everyday sense of referring to something very complex and difficult to navigate.

Lateral stimuli: (5:41/6:19) This is not a technical term and refers to some special type of stimuli. "Lateral" means "from the side." Thus Merleau-Ponty is talking about stimuli that comes from the side of our vision.

***Lebenswelt*:** [German] (vii:26/viii:6) It refers, in Husserl, to the lived-world upon which our reflection and understanding work. It is the object of our abstraction and the source of our abstractions: the ultimate environment of our experience. And it is very much the encompassing world of our immediate experience that can be recovered from the world as given

to scientific interpretation by a special kind of reduction. While Merleau-Ponty does not use it in the more restricted sense as Husserl does, we find it having a similar and less rigorous meaning in his thought.

Libido: (156:8/180:23) In Sigmund Freud's terminology, this term is used to refer to our sexual energy or sexual drive. Freud conceived of the mind as having only a fixed amount of psychic energy, or libido. Though the word libido has since acquired overt sexual implications, in Freud's theory it stood for all psychic energy. This energy fueled the thought processes, perception, imagination, memory, and sexual urges. In Freud's theory, the mind, like the universe, could neither create nor destroy energy, but merely transfers it from one form or function to another. Because scope of the mind's capabilities was thus limited by the amount of psychic energy freely available, any process or function of the mind, which consumed excess energy debilitated the ability of the mind to function normally.

Logical Positivism: (xv:4/xvi:32) Another name for the position of the Vienna Circle of philosophers. This was a group of philosophers and others centered at the University of Vienna in the 1920's and 1930's. They attempted to add the technical equipment and logical rigor of modern mathematical logic to the empirical tradition of Hume, Comte, and Mach, with its characteristic respect for empirical science and its hostility to metaphysics and theology. The ultimate goal was to achieve a "scientific philosophy" that could eliminate the pseudo-propositions in human knowledge. With Schlick as its central figure, the Circle included at various times Carnap, Feigl, Godel, Hahn, Neurath, and Waismann. At first an informal club, from 1929 it became more organized, with its own manifesto, journal, and series of publications and congresses. Its considerable influence, especially on English-language philosophy, persisted long after the Circle itself dissolved in the late 1930's.

Logicism: (46:24/54:15) This philosophical position, pioneered by Frege and Russell, maintained that mathematics is part of logic. The aim was to provide a system of primitives and axioms such that all mathematical notions could be defined in terms of the system of logic. Further, there was a tendency to extend this project and to claim that all aspects of reality could be accounted for in terms of logic and logic alone. It is with this latter position that Merleau-Ponty is primarily reacting.

Lumen naturale: [Latin] (432:31/502:31) This could simply be translated as "the natural light." To apply this phrase is to suggest that there is something natural about how something manifests itself.

Macropsy: (267:4/311:6) An abnormal form of experience in which all objects, including one's own body appear larger. Often people who have such experiences can characterize just how much larger everything actually appears. Such a phenomenon clearly creates problems for certain theories of perception as Merleau-Ponty attempts to show.

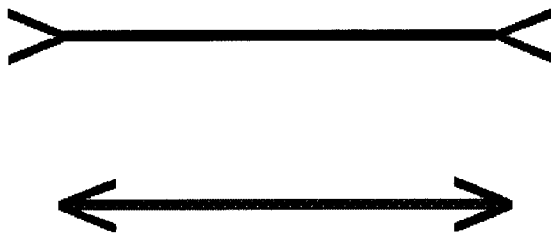
- Melancholia:** (293:17/342:4) A term that has been in use since Ancient Greece to characterize profound sadness and depression. The term actually means "black bile." Today, the term refers to a pronounced depression with feelings of foreboding and a general insensitivity to stimulation. In major depression with melancholia the individual is unable to feel better even momentarily when something good happens, regularly feels worse in the morning and awakens early, and suffers a deepening of other symptoms of depression.
- Mens momentanea:** [Latin] (412:13/478:29) Term used by Leibnitz to indicate the particular "movement of the mind" or even "product of the mind."
- Mescaline** (228:14/265:13) Or as sometimes called "Peyote" is a hallucinatory drug that can produce vivid colorful hallucinations and with which color and space perception are impaired. Its effects are like amphetamines: increases blood pressure, pulse, and respiration with dilated pupils. During the 20's and 30's this drug had a kind of popularity among French intellectuals.
- Micropsy:** (267:3/311:6) An abnormal form of experience in which all objects, including one's own body appear smaller. Often people who have such experiences can characterize just how much smaller everything actually appears, for example, everything appears about three-quarters their normal size. Such a phenomenon clearly creates problems for certain theories of perception as Merleau-Ponty attempts to show.
- Mit-Sein:** [German] (454:12/527:28) Heidegger uses this term for "being-with" and attempts to express a fundamental element of human reality. In its most fundamental sense, human reality is *always already* with others. Merleau-Ponty takes and uses this insight. A significant part of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is an attempt at working out the nature of this "being-with." Here at the end of the book, he is connecting what he has developed about the nature of the other with Heidegger's conception.
- Monad:** (374:3/435:4) Merleau-Ponty is primarily thinking of the term as used in Leibniz's *Monadology*. The term originally comes from the Greek meaning "unit" or "unity" and Leibniz argued that only true unities could be substances. In his words, "What is not truly one being is not truly one being." He proceeds to develop a metaphysics describing the basic properties of these ultimate unities.
- Morphe:** [Greek] (405:15/471:20) This word seems to have been originally used to indicate what the carver did to wood in making a statue or a carving. Aristotle gives us the analysis of substance in terms of two basic principles: matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*). The matter (*hyle*) is a principle of particularization awaiting determination and is the potentialities of the thing. The form (*morphe*) is the universalizing principle by which a thing is the kind of thing that it is. What is important to realize is

that these are not two parts of things but two necessary conditions for things being what they are. Husserl, in turn, takes up Aristotle's usage, in a general sort of way, and applies these terms not to things that exist in the world but rather to elements of our analysis of experience. In this context, *hyle* refers to "the stuff" of experience, the sensory immanent material of lived experience and the *morphe* refers to the organization imposed upon the hyletic data. It is essential to the Phenomenological analysis that this distinction be seen and made.

Motor Project (*Bewegungsentwurf*): (110:29/127:2) Also this is referred to as "Motor Intentionality" or "Intentionality of act." This form of intentionality attempts to specify a new sense of intentionality. For Merleau-Ponty intentionality is not a mere passive orientation toward a world but rather it is an act, a doing, which establishes our relationship to the world. Again, much of the *Phenomenology of Perception* is attempting to develop just what this means.

Motive: (258:39/301:23) Merleau-Ponty means that something has its origin in certain given facts, not in so far as these facts by themselves have the physical power to bring it about, but in that they provide reasons for undertaking it. A motive is an antecedent that acts only through its significance.

Müller-Lyer's Optical Illusion: (6:6/6:27) What is interesting here is that while the center portions of these two lines seem to be of different length, if one measures them, you will discover that they are the same length.



Natürlicher Weltbegriff: [German] (vii:26/viii:6) This refers to the "natural world" in the sense of the world in which we live. Another phrase to indicate much the same idea is "Lebenswelt" which is also taken to be the natural world of everyday life or lived-world.

Natura naturans and natura naturata: [Latin] (45/52 Footnote) Literally translated these mean "nature naturing" and "nature natured". Usually the phrases refer to God as the creative principle of created things (*natura naturans*) and created things (*natura naturata*). Merleau-Ponty may have Spinoza in mind who makes a sharp distinction between the eternal and infinite essence of reality and temporal existing things, or between the eternal principle and what follows from this principle. When all is said and done, however, Merleau-Ponty tends to use these terms to only refer

to *existence for itself* and *existence in itself* as they take on similar meanings to the above in the context of his interpretation of Intellectualism and Empiricism. For Merleau-Ponty, the Intellectualist's conception of consciousness plays a role much like God and the Empiricist's reduces experience to a series of things.

Noematic: (x:4/xi:33) Noema and Noesis are terms in Husserl's conception of the Phenomenology Analysis. They refer to distinct elements of a phenomenon. Noema refers to the object in a particular experience while the Noesis refers to the act that directs us toward an intentional object. Noematic and noetic are the adjectival forms.

Nominalism: (15:26/18:3) A position that claims that all concepts or universals are not real entities either in the world or in the mind but rather names that refer to groups or classes of individual things. It usually holds a metaphysical view that only the unique individual is real: simple impression, sense data, atom, etc.

Non-Positing Consciousness: (49:28/57:15) A consciousness that is not in possession of fully determinate objections. Not the consciousness of the *Cartesian Cogito* that has reality placed before it and in its possession, but rather the *lived consciousness* that is always already involved in a world and in a world that is always transcending its grasp.

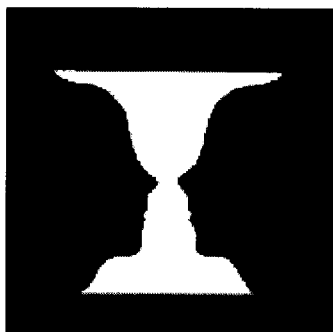
Non-thetic: (242:15/281:26) Merleau-Ponty uses this phrase to indicate a non-positing act of consciousness. For him, consciousness in reflecting stands back from the world, that is, disengages from the world, and thus objectifies the world. In so doing, thetic consciousness distorts the world. A non-thetic consciousness achieves a kind of truth about reality in that it does not distort the world. It does this by not disengaging itself from the world and not objectifying it.

Number Blindness (133:27/154:8) While some times called Dyscalculia, this is an impairment of the ability to recognize or manipulate numbers. It is a general term used to refer to not only physical and mental abilities but also learned responses to numbers.

Objective Spirit: (348:15/405:28) One of the ways that Hegel organizes his philosophy is into three parts that reflect how Spirit becomes aware of itself: Subjective Spirit, Objective Spirit, and Absolute Spirit. *Subjective Spirit* is Spirit becoming aware of itself in the struggle of man to come to the understanding of the truth about itself. *Objective Spirit* is the same coming to awareness of Spirit but now in social movements. Further it is in these movements that man achieves freedom. This reflection appears in the development of human rights, morality, and social ethics. The last division is *Absolute Spirit*. Here Spirit becomes aware of itself in special ways and it presents this awareness in the developments of Art, Religion, and Philosophy. Merleau-Ponty is clearly using *Objective Spirit* in a sense very similar to Hegel's in so far as he is referring to the nature of the Cultural World that ultimately is a manifestation of Objective Spirit.

- Objectivism:** (xix:37/xxii:12) This term is used in contrast to "subjectivism." Both terms refer to certain philosophical positions that attempt to account for human knowledge. Objectivism claims that our knowledge is derived from objects in the world and Subjectivism claims that our knowledge pertains to subjects (people). Objectivism claims that our judgments are true or false independent of whatever people think or feel about the matter. Subjectivism claims that truth and falsity are influenced and transformed and to some extent determined by what we think or feel. Merleau-Ponty presents these two positions in very simplified forms because his goal is to show how Phenomenology transforms and overcomes the weakness of both positions.
- Omnitudo realitatis:** [Latin] (328:34/383:11) Literally, this term could be translated as "the wholeness of reality" or "the completeness of reality." Merleau-Ponty uses this phrase very much in this sense.
- Onomatopoeic:** (187:16/217:31) Merleau-Ponty is not really using this term in a particular technical sense. Rather he is pointing out that some words "sound like what they refer to" and he is somewhat generalizing on this to indicate that there is a kind of natural onomatopoeic activity of words. Of course, the point of all this is to support his claim that what words stand for is not merely a matter of custom.
- Ontic:** (174:10/202:10) For Heidegger this term is contrasted with "Ontological" and is central to the way in which he conceives of philosophy. Heidegger claims that science and scholarly knowledge are concerned with a limited set of objects and things that he calls the "Ontic." He contrasts this to the *proper object* of philosophy that attempts to transcend the Ontic and get at the fundamental structure of Being. Such an attempt is called "Ontological." Heidegger goes so far as to claim that the major problems in the history of philosophy are nothing but confusing the "Ontic" and the "Ontological" with the result that the history of philosophy could be characterized as philosophy being preoccupied with "beings" and having lost sight of "Being." In Merleau-Ponty, we find very much the same distinction and the same idea maybe without the thoroughness and rigidity of Heidegger's presentation.
- Operative Intentionality (funngierende Intentionalität):** (xviii:5/xx:9) Merleau-Ponty distinguishes this kind of intentionality from conscious intentional acts or the intentionality of our judgments. Operative intentionality refers to the natural and ante-predicative unity of the world and our life, which is the ground of all other kinds of intentionality. It is interesting to note that Merleau-Ponty describes this kind of intentionality as the same as Heidegger's conception of "transcendence." (See p. 418.)
- Paradox of Symmetrical Objects:** (46:23/54:14) While Merleau-Ponty's reference here is not as clear as it might be, it seems that he is referring to a type of illusion that is produced with symmetrical objects. An example

of this is "Rubin's Vase." This ambiguous figure demonstrates our ability to shift between figure and ground that provides the basis for the two interpretations of these figures as both a chalice and two faces. For the Analytic Attitude it clearly creates a kind of paradox when it attempts to explain such phenomenon.



- Paraphasia:** (195:18/227:12) A form of psychological jargon for a kind of aphasia in which the patient has lost the power of speaking correctly, though words are heard and comprehended: he substitutes one word for another, and jumbles his words and sentences in such a way as to make his speech unintelligible.
- Paresis:** (278:24/324:26) Generally, this is an incomplete or partial paralysis of the body. Specifically, it is a disorder characterized by progressive mental deterioration and paralysis. It is often the result of central nervous system damage.
- Passive Synthesis:** (419:7/486:26) Again, using a term from Husserl, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with emphasizing the rather paradoxical nature of this phrase. Or as he says, it is "a term which is clearly not a solution, but merely a pointer to a problem."
- Pathology:** (156:1/180:16) An abnormal condition or state in which the proper functioning of the body is prevented. Merleau-Ponty is concerned here with the fact that in the medical area this term connotes an organic dysfunction or disease and not a functional one. But in clinical psychology and psychiatry, the usage has been extended so that disorders for which there are no known biological components are included. Again, this two-fold use of the term suggests to Merleau-Ponty that the phenomena to which it refers are much more complex than medicine, biology, psychology, and psychiatry will admit.
- Penumbra:** (311:13/362:19) While it may appear that Merleau-Ponty is using this word in some kind of technical sense like it is used in psychology, the fact is that he is not. The term has only the rather ordinary dictionary meaning here: the partially shaded region around the shadow of an

opaque body, where only a part of the light from the luminous body is cut off. It is the partial shadow, as distinguished from the total shadow or "umbra."

Phantom Limb: (76:15/88:4) Over the years scientists have noted many complaints of a strange form of pain called *phantom limb pain*. This pain is strange because it is located in an appendage that no longer exists because it has been amputated. Further there have also been reports of the experiences of limbs that have been amputated that do not involve pain. In either case, we have the experience of something that is not there. Many very different philosophical views have trouble with such a phenomenon.

Phenomenal Field: (23:26/27:16) While there is a tendency to think that the Phenomenal Field refers to an "inner world" or a "state of consciousness" or a "mental fact," Merleau-Ponty's concern is to show that the Phenomenal Field or phenomena properly understood is our excess to a reality that transcends us.

Phenomenological Psychology: (59:4/68:15) It is important to recognize that "Phenomenological Psychology" is not "Phenomenology." Merleau-Ponty maintains a very clear distinction between them. As is noted below, Phenomenology is philosophy, whereas Phenomenological Psychology is a social science that has been influenced by Phenomenology/Philosophy in very specific ways. As one reads the *Phenomenology of Perception*, one will discover that on the whole Merleau-Ponty is doing Phenomenology and talking occasionally about Phenomenological Psychology. He is proposing the creation of Phenomenological Psychology as a task for someone else to do. However, there are just a couple of instances, which make understanding what is going on in this book much more difficult, in which he gives some examples of what a Phenomenological Psychology might look like. But despite these examples, Merleau-Ponty's concern is **not** with doing Phenomenological Psychology but with doing Phenomenology. In reading the *Phenomenology of Perception*, one should expect to find a philosophical work and not one in psychology.

Phenomenology: (vii:1/vii:1) Merleau-Ponty begins the "Preface" by trying to explain what he means by this term. He clearly connects his usage with that of Husserl and Heidegger, but clearly he is going beyond their way of conceiving Phenomenology. For Merleau-Ponty Phenomenology is "Philosophy done rightly." Phenomenology is what philosophy really ought to be. And, further, rather than his explanation of this new conception of philosophy ending with the "Preface," it actually just begins there. As we move through the *Phenomenology of Perception* we will discover that the nature of Phenomenology/Philosophy becomes one of the central themes of the book. It also seems to this author that this rather revolutionary conception of philosophy ought to be understood in the context that Merleau-Ponty presents it. So rather than giving some kind

of over simplified definition here, I would suggest that one watches for the way that Merleau-Ponty develops this conception.

Phonatory equipment: (403:11/469:4) This term has two usages: generally, it refers to the equipment that is used in the production of speech sounds, and more specifically, the production of speech sounds by the vibration of the vocal cords.

Phoneme: (403:14/469:8) The minimal unit of speech in a given language that "makes a difference" to the fluent speaker of that language. This "minimal unit" is not really a discrete speech sound, but rather a class of sounds, and is represented in speech through one of its allophones. To use every linguist's favorite example, in English the classes of sound denoted as /r/ and /l/ are distinct phonemes while in Korean they are treated as allophonic variations of a single phone.

Photometer: (307:4/357:14) In the broadest sense, a photometer is any instrument used to measure light intensity. As often used in psychology, "photometer" is the general term covering instruments for detecting scattered light intensity, absorption, and fluorescence.

Physiognomy: (132:15/152:18) This term generally used to refer to the physical appearance of the face; and, more specifically, it has been used to characterize a kind of pseudo-science that uses face and facial expressions to judge mental abilities, character, emotional attitudes, etc.

Pithiatism: (161:30/187:10) This is often used as just another term for hysteria or a class of hysterical symptoms, which can be made to disappear or be reproduced by means of suggestion. It is essentially a psychoneurosis marked by emotional excitability and disturbances of the psychic, sensory, vasomotor, and visceral functions without an organic basis. It is sometimes behavior exhibiting overwhelming or unmanageable fear or emotional excess.

Positing Thought: (397:2/461:32) While this is not a technical term in philosophy or psychology, Merleau-Ponty tends to use it as if it were. For him objective thought stands back from the world and assumes a certain perspective on it. In doing so it **posits objects**. This is not to say that thought, when it does this, is doing something wrong but, in fact, it is doing something that it must necessarily do. Without the positing of object, there could be no science, technology, nor many of the elements of human life. What is wrong with "Positing Thought" is that it is unaware of the kind of effect that it has on objects when it posits them. It is this ignorance that can distort the claims of "Positing Thought."

Praktognosia: (140:41/162:27) This is a term coined by Grünbaum in his *Aphasie und Motorik*. Essentially, it refers to a kind of practical knowing of the body that enables us to act in a world prior to any objective thought.

Praxis: (138/159:footnote and the adjectival form (**Praxic**) that appears on page 125:35/145:1) The Greek word for 'action.' It enters the philosoph-

ical literature as a quasi-technical term with Aristotle referring to "doing something" rather than "making something." It was developed by some of the Left Hegelians, and is now primarily associated with Marx and Marxism. In the 1960's, it became popular among east European Marxists whose central concern was to study the role of free creative activity in changing and shaping ethical, social, political, and economic life along humanistic socialist lines. Merleau-Ponty has all of this in mind but uses the term to describe a kind of grounding activity of the body at the level of perception by which meaning is created prior to our awareness.

Progressive aphasia: (413:3/479:24) This is a form of aphasia that gradually develops. Aphasia is an impairment of language, affecting the production or comprehension of speech and the ability to read or write. Aphasia is always due to injury to the brain—most commonly from a stroke, particularly in older individuals. But brain injuries resulting in aphasia may also arise from head trauma, from brain tumors, or from infections. Aphasia can be so severe as to make communication with the patient almost impossible, or it can be very mild. It may affect mainly a single aspect of language use, such as the ability to retrieve the names of objects, or the ability to put words together into sentences, or the ability to read. More commonly, however, multiple aspects of communication are impaired, while some channels remain accessible for a limited exchange of information.

Protentions: (416:31/483:33) Husserl, as part of his phenomenological analysis, develops this term and "Retentions". He was concerned with explaining how intentionality worked. Clearly, we have objects in our experience, including physical objects, numbers and norms, and it is puzzling how a subject can intend such independent entities. In order to solve this puzzle, Husserl generalized the notion of meaning. Each conscious act involves a meaning that is distinct from the act itself, and it is through this meaning that the act is related to its object. The meaning of an act depends upon its being placed within a temporal 'horizon' of past and possible future apprehensions. My current apprehension has a determinate meaning. This is because the object perceived is perceived in a historical setting. Its meaning is grasped in terms of it being involved in my *retention* of past apprehensions of the object from different angles and the protentions, future involvements with the object. Intentions directed towards different classes of entities are characterized by different structures of relatedness among current apprehensions, past retentions, and future protentions. Merleau-Ponty uses these terms very much in a Husserlian sort of way.

Psychic Blindness: (103:4/118:2) Another term for "agnosia." It has been defined as a rare disorder characterized by an inability to recognize and identify objects or persons despite having knowledge of the characteristics of the objects or persons. People with agnosia may have difficulty

recognizing the geometric features of an object or face or may be able to perceive the geometric features but not know what the object is used for or whether a face is familiar or not. Agnosia can be limited to one sensory modality such as vision or hearing. For example, a person may have difficulty in recognizing an object as a cup or identifying a sound as a cough. Agnosia can result from strokes, dementia, or other neurological disorders. It typically results from damage to specific brain areas in the occipital or parietal lobes. People with agnosia may retain their cognitive abilities in other areas.

Psychologism: (x:2/x:31) A position that accepts some or all of the following: a belief that logical laws are "laws of thought;" a belief that truth can be reduced to the process of verification; a belief that the private data of consciousness provides the correct starting point for epistemology; and belief that the meaning of words are ideas. Merleau-Ponty, following Husserl, conceives of this doctrine as holding that like psychology philosophy is limited to recording the existence of the data of experience and is not concerned with essences or meaning. As such, Psychologism becomes one of the major positions that Husserl attempts to overcome.

Psychosomatic: (236:21/275:2) Generally, pertaining to that which is presumed to have both *psychic* (mental) and *somatic* (bodily) components. The usual implication here is that these two aspects interact, each having impact upon the other. However, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with showing that such phenomena present major problems for the attempts of Empiricism and Intellectualism to account for such interactions given the way that they have dicotomized the mental and bodily.

Quale: (52:18/60:17) From the Latin "qualis" meaning "of what kind." The term "qualis" was created by Cicero. The terms 'quale' and 'qualia' (plural) are most commonly understood to mean the qualitative, phenomenal or 'felt' properties of our mental states, that seem to have a kind of primitive sort of meaning about them. For some philosophers and psychologists quale were the primary data of experience. Merleau-Ponty, with Gestalt psychology, attacks this commonly held view of qualia as being able to make sense out of perception.

Radical Reflection: (xiv:24/xvi:2) Merleau-Ponty claims that the reflective attitude distorts the world and sets as his goal the overcoming of this distortion. But his goal is still a philosophical goal and he expects philosophers to be reflective. Thus he argues that there must be a kind of reflection (Radical Reflection) that enables the philosopher to achieve his goal; that is, a kind of reflection that does not distort the world. Much of the *Phenomenology of Perception* attempts to develop, explain, and defend this concept.

Reductio ad absurdum: (32:14/37:17) This could be simply translated as "reduction to absurdity." It refers to a kind of argument that philosophers often use to disprove a principle or proposition by showing that it leads

to an absurdity when followed to its logical conclusion. If one looks at the literature, you will discover that there are all sorts of complex forms of such arguments. Merleau-Ponty is using the term here in a rather abstract logical way.

Reduction: (xi:12/xii:9) Central to Husserl's idea of Phenomenology is that it must be a presuppositionless science; that is, it must reject all antecedent commitments and assumptions. A major part of his work in developing Phenomenology tended to focus on how to achieve such a state. In his early works he conceived of Phenomenology as a philosophy that could transcend traditional approaches of philosophy and also the limitations of ordinary thinking ("the natural attitude"). This he thought could only be achieved by a kind of *suspension* or *bracketing* (*reduction*) of extraneous commitments. If one achieved this reduction then one could go beyond the usual choices of Idealism and Realism to get back to "the things themselves." In his later works, however, Husserl expanded his phenomenological method to include what he called "the phenomenological reduction." In this reduction, not only extraneous opinions, but also all beliefs about the external existence of the objects of consciousness were bracketed. This suspension of all reference to the reality of the thing experienced left the philosopher with nothing but the experiencing itself, which Husserl divided into the "noesis" (act of consciousness) and the "noema" (object of consciousness). It is important to realize that Husserl used the word "reduction" in different ways, but essentially the goal was the same. Later Phenomenologists, like Merleau-Ponty, came to question even the possibility of such an act, which was so central to Husserl's conception of Phenomenology. Like with so many other concepts, Merleau-Ponty, however, does not just dismiss the idea of the reduction, but rather critiques it and transforms it perhaps into something that Husserl would not recognize.

Reflex Arc Theory: (7:13/8:11) The hypothesized neural unit representing the functioning of a reflex. This abstract arc is schematically represented by a sensory (afferent) neuron stimulated by physical energy and a motor (efferent) neuron to which the impulse is transmitted via an intermediary neuron.

Repression: (83:1/95:28) In Psychoanalytic Theory, the defense mechanism whereby our thoughts are pulled out of our consciousness and into our unconscious. When explaining repression, Freud compared the process to "condemnation" and stated the following: "Let us take as a model an impulse, a mental process seeking to convert itself into action: we know that it can suffer rejection, by virtue of what we call 'repudiation' or 'condemnation'; whereupon the energy at its disposal is withdrawn, it becomes powerless, but it can continue to exist as a memory. The whole process of decision on the point takes place with the full cognizance of the ego. It is very different when we imagine the same impulse subject to

repression: it would then retain its energy and no memory of it would be left behind; the process of repression, too, would be accomplished without the cognizance of the ego." Freud is saying that when we have memories, impulses, desires, and thoughts that are too difficult or unacceptable to deal with, we unconsciously exclude them from our consciousness (some people like to say we "push" them down from our consciousness to our unconsciousness). This is similar to suppression with one key difference - suppression is a conscious exclusion (or "pushing" down) of these painful memories, thoughts, etc., and is more similar to Freud's explanation of condemnation.

Retentions: (416:32/483:34) Husserl as part of his phenomenological analysis develops this term and 'Protentions.' Husserl was concerned with explaining how intentionality worked. Clearly, we have objects in our experience, including physical objects, numbers and norms, and it is puzzling how a subject can intend such independent entities. In order to solve this puzzle, Husserl generalized the notion of meaning. Each conscious act involves a meaning that is distinct from the act itself, and it is through this meaning that the act is related to its object. The meaning of an act depends upon its being placed within a temporal 'horizon' of past and possible future apprehensions. My current apprehension has a determinate meaning. This is because the object perceived is perceived in a historical context. Its meaning is grasped in terms of it being involved in my *retention* of past apprehensions of the object from different angles and the protentions, future involvements with the object. Intentions directed towards different classes of entities are characterized by different structures of relatedness among current apprehensions past retentions and future protentions. Merleau-Ponty uses these terms very much in a Husserlian sort of way.

Schema: (326:36/381:5) (See Merleau-Ponty's characterization and contrast of "schema" in the sense that he is using it with that of Kant on the next page. 327/381) As Merleau-Ponty says, "We do not, following Kant, understand thereby a system of invariable relations to which every existent thing is subject in so far as it can be known. It is not like a crystal cube, all the aspects of which can be conceived in virtue of its geometrical structure, and which even reveals its hidden sides, since it is transparent." One might say that for Kant the rule of schematization is the function of the faculty of imagination, through which concepts and intuitions are combined, or synthesized, according to a rule (called a schema). In the first Critique, this function is presented as one of the steps required in order for the understanding to produce empirical knowledge.

Schizophrenia: (125:26/144:21) The best known and one of the most commonly occurring psychological syndromes, affecting about 1% of the population at some point in their lives. This incidence appears remarkably stable across both time and cultures. Many people suffer from just a

single episode during their lifetimes, but it is more common to experience a series of attacks, which lead to eventual emotional impoverishment. It is a serious mental disorder characterized by thought disturbances, hallucinations, anxiety, emotional withdrawal, and delusions. Most psychiatry textbooks list three types of schizophrenia: hebephrenic, catatonic and paranoid schizophrenia. The specific symptoms to be seen in any given case are highly variable, but a "central core" of characteristic symptoms is identifiable. These include a subjective experience of the loss of free will; the sensation that the sufferer's thoughts are not truly his or her own but are being put into his or her brain by some external agent; vagueness and illogicality of thought, and inability to maintain a single coherent train of thought; loss of drive and emotional engagement with the world, accompanied by withdrawal from social contact; and, not infrequently, auditory or other hallucinations. The sufferer may also experience delusions. They may come to believe that events in the external world are somehow specifically focused on them: this is known as "ideas of reference".

Schneider: (103/118:1) This is a patient that Gelb and Goldstein describe in their classic study: *Über den Einfluss des vollständigen Verlustes des optischen Vorstellungsvermögens auf das taktile Erkennen*. Psychologische Analysen hirnpathologischer Fälle, Chapt. II, pp. 157-250. Goldstein comes back to Schneider in his own work: *Über die Abhängigkeit der Bewegungen von optischen Vorgängen*. Schneider was a veteran of the First World War and was wounded by a piece of scrap metal in the head. The result has been called "psychic blindness." He suffers from a whole variety of disorders including visual, motor and intellectual. His visual data is "unstructured." Rather than meaning being given to him in experience, he must use all sorts of tricks to figure out what things are. While he has a great deal of difficulty doing abstract acts like pointing to his own nose, he seems to have little difficulty scratching it when it bothers him. In addition, he has some rather odd problems when it comes to sexuality.

Senile dementia: (334:24/390:7) A general term for any dementia associated with the aged. Senile dementias are of the primary degenerative type and are associated with a variety of causes including Alzheimer's disease, Pick's disease, and certain vitamin deficiencies, cerebrovascular pathologies, etc.

Sens: [French] (310/361:footnote) (Also see the major application 410/476: sub-title quote.) As Merleau-Ponty notes in the footnote, in French "sens" may be equivalent to either "direction" or "meaning." In fact, the quote that begins the Chapter on Temporality attempts to broaden this ambiguity even further: "Time in the 'sense of life' (sense as one might say the sense or course of a stream, the sense or meaning of a sentence, the sense or pattern of a fabric, the sense or distinctiveness of an order.)"

- Sensationalism:** (xv:38/xvii:23) A very radical philosophical position that reduces all reality to sensations or states of ourselves. Its basic claim is that all that we ever experience is states of ourselves.
- Simulacrum:** (91:41/105:11) While this may appear to be a technical term it is not. Merleau-Ponty is using this term in its everyday dictionary meaning: something having merely the form or appearance of a certain thing, without possessing its substance or proper qualities. In short, it is the mere image or likeness of something.
- Sinngebung:** [German] (xi:28/xii:22) Active meaning giving operation that maybe said to define consciousness. Husserl often uses this expression, for examples in the *Ideas*.
- Solipsism:** (358:11/417:10) This term is derived from the Latin *solus* (alone) and *ipse* (self). It has come to stand for a very extreme philosophical position that maintains that *only* I myself and my own experiences are real, while anything else—a physical world and other people—is nothing more than an object of my consciousness. As a philosophical position, solipsism is usually the unintended consequence of an over-emphasis on the reliability of internal mental states, which provide no evidence for the existence of external referents. As such, it is usually a consequent drawn from a *reducio ad absurdum* argument to suggest that the assumptions upon which it is based are untrue. Merleau-Ponty is attempting to do a little more with this term than is usually done.
- Stroboscopic movement:** (228:4/265:3) This illusion is the product of presenting to vision two separate images along side of one another and then using a strobe light flashing on and off. The result of these conditions is that the image tends to move back and forward between the two separate images clearly giving the impression that there is movement and that at one moment, there is an image where there is no image. Again, the purpose of describing such phenomena is to develop the fact that they cause problems for certain explanations of perceptions.
- Subjectivism:** (xix:37/xxii:12) This term is used in contrast to 'objectivism.' Both terms refer to certain philosophical positions that attempt to account for human knowledge. Objectivism holds that our knowledge arises out of objects while Subjectivism claims that our knowledge pertains to subjects (people). Objectivism claims that our judgments are true or false independent of whatever people think or feel about the matter. Subjectivism claims that truth and falsity are influenced and transformed and to some extent determined by what we think or feel. Merleau-Ponty presents these two positions in very simplified forms because his goal is to show how Phenomenology transforms and overcomes the weakness of both positions.
- Surface color** (*Oberflächenfarrbe*): (306:10/356:18) Using the studies done by Ackermann, Merleau-Ponty distinguishes two different ways in which color is experienced. In doing so he makes a clear distinction between

colored areas (*Flächenfarben*) and *surface colors*. Of course, the point of this contrasting is that if the Analytic Attitude is right, it should not be possible to contrast them.

Symbiosis: (317:34/370:20) From the Greek word meaning "living together." It indicates a relationship between members of different species who live together in a mutually beneficial manner. In the true symbiotic relationship, neither of the two could survive without the other. Merleau-Ponty uses this term more generally and even goes so far as using it to describe the mutual relationship between our world and us.

Synaesthetic experience: (228:16/265:15) Synaesthesia is a condition in which a sensory experience normally associated with one kind of sense experience occurs when another sense is stimulated. To a certain extent such cross-experiences can be perfectly normal: e.g., low-pitched tones give a sensation of softness or fullness while high-pitched tones feel brittle and sharp, the color blue feels cold while red feels warm. However, the term is usually restricted to the unusual cases in which regular and vivid cross-experiences occur when under the influence of drugs or in certain psychic conditions.

Synergic system: (234:5/272:4) Generally the term synergic refers to "working together cooperatively." In physiology, it refers to the characteristic of organs, muscles or the various elements of a large coordinated system all of which function together in combination toward some unified aim. For example, synergic muscles function together to effect a particular movement.

Systole: (164:27/190:26) Merleau-Ponty is taking two terms "diastole" and "systole" that are usually used to refer to the expansion (diastole) and contraction (systole) of the heart and he is using these terms in a very general sense of "expanding" and "contracting."

Tachistoscope: (269:38/314:12) An instrument, which as the name suggests, presents visual materials under conditions of very brief exposures. A sophisticated variety may have up to three or four separate screens (the images from which may be superimposed upon each other in any combination); an extremely precise timing system that can present materials for extremely short durations.

Thematize: (58:34/68:6) While not really a technical term, this word has taken on a technical sense within Phenomenology because of how often it is used and the way in which it has come to be used. It comes from the Greek *thema* (theme). A "thema" in English generally means the theme or subject of a declaration or discourse—a position to be maintained or demonstrated, in short a thesis. To thematize is to produce such a thesis, theme, or demonstration. Thematization is one of the major elements of theoretical knowledge, especially the knowledge of the sciences.

Transcendental: (60:9/69:24) It is one of Kant's four main *perspectives*, aiming to establish a kind of *knowledge* which is both *synthetic* and *a priori*. It

is a special type of philosophical knowledge, concerned with the necessary conditions for the possibility of *experience*. However, Kant believes all knowing *subjects* assume certain transcendental truths, whether or not they are aware of it. Transcendental knowledge defines the boundary between *empirical* knowledge and *speculation* about the *transcendental* realm. 'Every event has a cause' is a typical transcendental statement. While not containing very much of the kind of necessity of Kant, Merleau-Ponty sometimes uses the same term in a new way to indicate the realm that Phenomenology and Radical Reflection open for us.

Transcendental Idealism: (xi:29/xii:26) A philosophical position that has been formulated by Kant to indicate that the proper domain of philosophy is not something out there in the world nor is it simply something subjective. The proper subject matter of philosophy, and thus of metaphysics, is the a priori structure of experience, understanding, reflection, and reason. Thus while there is a sense in which they are subjective, it is not an arbitrary subjectivity but rather something that is necessary. Merleau-Ponty often talks as if this form of idealism reduces the world to what is thought by consciousness and thus reduces the world to a correlative of knowledge. Thus, not only is Merleau-Ponty attempting to find a middle ground between Empiricism and Intellectualism, but a middle ground that overcomes the problems of Kant.

Transition-synthesis (Übergangssynthese): (30:31/35:22) Or, as Merleau-Ponty some time states it, "Synthesis of Transition." Such a synthesis is the movement, often found in perception, from indeterminate "meanings" to determinate ones by the creation of contexts that transform what was initially perceived. What is central here in this kind of synthesis is the transition from "indeterminate" to "determinate."

Umwelt: [German] (87:3/100:16) Very literally, this could be translated as the "surrounding world" and as Macquarrie and Robinson translate it as "environment." It is the setting or context in which an organism operates. This is usually, in Heidegger, contrasted with "Welt" or world that stands for the sum of objects that make up reality. And it is very much in this sense that Merleau-Ponty uses it.

Ursprung: [German] (365:3/425:7) In ordinary German, it is just the word for origin. This is a term that Husserl transforms and makes much more dynamic. For him, it means "that by which something springs forth in experience." Heidegger also does some interesting transformations to this term especially in "The Origin [Ursprung] of the Work of Art." There he connects it with the etymological roots "primordial leap." Merleau-Ponty is operating very much in the context of Husserl and Heidegger and is clearly using this term in a very dynamic sense.

Vi formae: [Latin] (385:36/448:29) This phrase literally means "by way of or through form."

Vienna Circle: (xv:4/xvi:25) A group of logical positivist centered at the University of Vienna in the 1920's and 1930's. They attempted to add the technical equipment and logical rigor of modern mathematical logic to the empirical tradition of Hume, Comte, and Mach, with its characteristic respect for empirical science and its hostility to metaphysics and theology. The ultimate goal was to achieve a "scientific philosophy" that could eliminate the pseudo-propositions in human knowledge. With Schlick as its central figure, the Circle included at various times Carnap, Feigl, Godel, Hahn, Neurath, and Waismann. At first an informal club, from 1929 it became more organized, with its own manifesto, journal, and series of publications and congresses. Its considerable influence, especially on English-language philosophy, persisted long after the Circle itself dissolved in the late 1930's.

Wahr-Nehmung: [German] (297:24/347:1) Husserl uses this term for "perception" without the hyphen. Merleau-Ponty in using the hyphen is trying to emphasize that part of this word; "Wahr" has the meaning of truth. Thus in using this term in this way, Merleau-Ponty is suggesting that perception is a kind of truth giving. It is important to recognize however that this is just a suggestion.

Welt: [German] (87:3/100:16) World or the sum of objects that make up reality is usually contrasted with "Umwelt" or context in which an organism operates. It is the totality of intentional objects facing consciousness within a horizon of other objects. This is a term used both by Husserl and Heidegger. Merleau-Ponty follows this usage.

Wertheimer's Laws: (16:34/19:17) Wertheimer is a Gestalt psychologist who attempts to explain the figure/background relations in terms of sensation and laws of proximity, resemblance and 'good form'. Merleau-Ponty sees such an attempt on the part of Gestaltists as giving into certain scientific and objectivistic prejudices that in turn distort the results of Gestalt psychology.

Wesen: [German] (xiv:38/xvi:16) Heidegger uses this term to refer to "essence" or "what come to presence." It is intended to indicate the "whatness" of things as opposed their "thatness" or existence.

Widerstand: [German] (327:4/381:16) Heidegger does use the term which means "to resist" a few times in *Being and Time*, however, it is not all that clear that this is some kind of technical term for him. Rather this seems to be the ordinary meaning of the term. Merleau-Ponty seems to be following this usage here.

Wortbedeutung: [German] (xv:32/xvii:17) A Husserlian term that refers to the activity or act by which consciousness gives meaning to words. Clearly, Merleau-Ponty is using the term with much the same meaning while transforming the Husserlian idea.

Wurfelhaftigkeit: [German] (324:28/378:21) This is a term taken from Scheler's *Der Formatismus in der Ethik*. While this term has a more or

less technical meaning in Scheler, Merleau-Ponty is here using it to indicate what holds all the appearances together giving us the experience of one object with many sides. One might say this is just another term for *ipseity*.

Zöllner's Optical Illusion: (35:15/40:32) In the illusion below the diagonal lines ought to look as if they are going off in different directions when they are parallel on very close examination.



Zeigen: [German] (113:15/130:12) A term used by Geib and Goldstein for "pointing" when they were explaining the difference in Schneider's activities between "pointing" or "Zeigen" and "grasping" or "Greifen".

SECTION IV—A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS ON MERLEAU-PONTY'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERCEPTION

Clearly in reading a book with the complexity of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, one will discover the need for more specific help than anything that we have done in this work. In response to this need, there has developed a rich body of secondary material available not only on the thought of Merleau-Ponty but also specifically on his *Phenomenology of Perception*. In the period since his death, a large number of books and articles have been published which the reader might find helpful. In order for a bibliography to be useful to the reader, however, it cannot be just a long list of books. Bibliographies are useful only to the extent that they can direct the reader to the material that he needs. A long list of books can never do that and even can be a barrier to finding what one wants. In many ways, a long list of books and articles is actually useless because it gives us too much and there is no real way of separating out what one needs. In the following bibliography, I have divided the rather long list of works into two major parts: books and articles. The books are in turn divided into seven divisions: commen-

taries, overviews of the general themes of Merleau-Ponty's thought, studies of one specific theme, studies on language, comparative studies of Merleau-Ponty and another author, putting Merleau-Ponty into his historical setting and bibliographies. I have also provided a short explanation of each of these divisions. The second major part is in fact a long list of articles that as it stands is not worth very much. But in order to make it usable for the reader, I have constructed an index of topics discussed in these articles. Thus one should look at the long list of articles **through the eyes** of the index in order to discover what you need. One should always go to secondary sources to find something that you need in order to understand and react to the primary sources. The aim of this index is to provide a way to direct your researches and to make them more efficient in finding what you need.

PART I: BOOKS

1. COMMENTARIES

The following three works are rather good examples of commentaries. They take the *Phenomenology of Perception* and explain what Merleau-Ponty is doing section-by-section. The basic concern is to say what he says in a rather clear way. Bannan's and Langer's works are very short and thus they provide a good overview of the work for someone reading it for the first time.

Bannan, John F. *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World; 1967. B2430 M38 B28.

De Waelhens, Alphonse. *Une Philosophie de l'ambiguïté: L'existentialisme de Maurice Merleau-Ponty*. Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain; 1951. B2430 M384 W3.

Langer, Monika M. *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of perception: a guide and commentary*. Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida State University Press, 1989. B2430 M3763 P475 1989.

2. OVERVIEWS OF THE GENERAL THEMES OF MERLEAU-PONTY'S THOUGHT

These works are rather scholarly general introductions to the *Phenomenology of Perception* and/or the thought of Merleau-Ponty. They attempt to do this by developing and explaining what they take to be the central themes of his philosophy. One thus finds these works divided

into five or six parts dealing with separate themes. Often if one is trying to discover something about one of the themes these books deal with, one will discover that they are very useful. Such general works tend to be more critical than commentaries.

- Carmen, Taylor; Hansen, Mark B. N. (eds). *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
B2430 M3764 C36.
- Hadeas, Peter J. *In Place of the Flawed Diamond: An Investigation of Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing; 1986.
B2430 M3764 H33.
- Kwant, Remy C. *From Phenomenology to Metaphysics*. Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press; 1966.
B2430 M38 K89.
- . *The Phenomenological Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press; 1963.
B2430 M38 K9.
- Langan, Thomas. *Merleau-Ponty's Critique of Reason*. New Haven: Yale University Press; 1966.
B2430 M38 L3.
- Madison, Gary Brent. *The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press; 1973. B2430 M3764 M3213.
- Mallin, Samuel B. *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*. New Haven: Yale University Press; 1979.
B2430 M38 M34.
- Matthews, Eric. *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
B2430 M378 M347.
- McCleary, Richard C. *Imagination's body*. Lanham, MD : University Press of America, 1986.
B829.5 .M37 1986 .
- O'Neill, John. *Perception, Expression, and History: The Social Phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press; 1970.
B2430 M3764 M47.
- Robinet, Andre. *Merleau-Ponty: Sa vie, son oeuvre avec un expose de sa philosophie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France; 1963.
B243030 M38 R6.
- Priest, Stephen. *Merleau-Ponty*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
B2430 M3764 P74.
- Primožic, Daniel. *On Merleau-Ponty*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Thomson Learning, 2001.
B2430 M3764 P746.

- Zaner, Richard M. *The Problem of Embodiment: Some Contributions to a Phenomenology of the Body*. The Hague: Nijhoff; 1964.
BF204.5 Z3.

3. STUDIES ON ONE SPECIFIC THEME

Each of the following books is concerned with one specific theme. Often the concern of the author is to explain Merleau-Ponty's thought but the author sees his thought as most clearly seen in the theme that he is developing. Often such works devote a fair amount of time arguing that the theme that they are developing is, in fact, actually key to Merleau-Ponty's thought. While such works may appear to be very limited, often they provide good insight into what is central in Merleau-Ponty's thought.

- Barral, Mary Rose. *The Body in Interpersonal Relations*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America; 1984. B2430 M3764 B37.
- Cataldi, Sue L. *Emotion, Depth, and Flesh: a Study of Sensitive Space, Reflections on Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Embodiment*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, c1993.
B105 E46 C37.
- Dillon, Martin C. *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 1988.
B2430 M3764 D55.
- Gillan, Garth, Editor. *The Horizons of the Flesh: Critical Perspectives on the Thought of Merleau-Ponty*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press; 1973.
B2430 M38 G55.
- Llewelyn, John. *Beyond Metaphysics: The Hermeneutic Circle in Contemporary Continental Philosophy*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press; 1985.
B804 L55.
- Spurling, Laurie. *Phenomenology and the Social World*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1977.
B2430 M38 S68.

4. STUDIES ON LANGUAGE

While there is a real sense that these books ought to be included in the above category since they are studies in one theme, they seem to have achieved a special status of their own. Today, studies in Merleau-Ponty's theory of language have become so important that they really do deserve their own category. Given the rise of Structuralism and the

turn toward the Philosophy of Language in Continental Philosophy, Merleau-Ponty's reflections have taken on great importance. The authors below also attempt to explain his philosophy of language and claim that it gives a privileged access to his thought.

Edie, James M. *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Language: Structuralism and Dialectics*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America; 1987.

B 2430 M3764 E35 1987.

Froman, Wayne Jeffrey. *Merleau-Ponty: Language and the Act of Speech*. East Brunswick: Associated University Press; 1982.

P85 M48 F76.

Hubert, Wallot. *L'accès au monde littéraire : ou, Éléments pour une critique littéraire chez Maurice Merleau-Ponty, précédé de Une philosophie de la perception*. Sherbrooke, Quebec: Editions Naaman, 1977.

B2430 M38 W34 1977.

Lanigan, Richard L. *Phenomenology of Communication: Merleau-Ponty's The-
matics in Communicology and Semiology*. Pittsburg: Duquesne Univer-
sity Press; 1988.

P 91 L34 1988.

———. *Speaking and Semiology: Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenological
Theory of Existential Communication*. The Hague: Mouton; 1972.

B2430 M38 L33.

5. COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF MERLEAU-PONTY AND ANOTHER AUTHOR

Each of the following works attempts to explain both the strengths and weaknesses of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy by contrasting it with the thought of another philosopher. Such authors use the contrast between Merleau-Ponty and another philosopher usually to highlight aspects of Merleau-Ponty's thought that might otherwise go unnoticed. Often such comparisons enable the authors to critically respond not only to the other philosopher but also to Merleau-Ponty.

Crossley, Nick. *The Politics of Subjectivity: between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty*. Brookfield, VT: Avebury, 1994.

B2430 M3764 C76.

Diprose, Rosalyn. *Corporeal Generosity: On Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.

BJ1533 G4 D49.

Dwyer, Philip. *Sense and Subjectivity: A Study of Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990.

B3376 W564 D89 1990.

- Fressin, Augustin. *La Perception chez Bergson et chez Merleau-Ponty*. Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur 1967.
B 2430 B43 F7, Main.
- Kaelin, Eugene F. *An Existentialist Aesthetics: The Theories of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press; 1962.
B2430 S34 K3.
- Low, Douglas Beck. *The Existential Dialectic of Marx and Merleau-Ponty*. New York: Lang; 1987.
B2430 M3763 V5735.
- Reynolds, Jack. *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida: Intertwining Embodiment and Alterity*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004
B2430 M3764 R49.
- Rosenthal, Sandra B.; Bourgeois, Patrick L. *Mead and Merleau-Ponty: Toward a Common Vision*. Albany: State University of New York Press, c1991
B945 M464 R67 1991
- Stewart, Jon. (Ed.) *The Debate between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998.
B2430 S34 D36.
- Whitford, Margaret. *Merleau-Ponty's Critique of Sartre's Philosophy*. Lexington: French Forum Press; 1982. B2430 M376 W46.

6. PUTTING MERLEAU-PONTY INTO HIS HISTORICAL SETTING

The following books attempt to give an insight into what Merleau-Ponty is doing by placing his thought within a historical context. What were the influences on him? How does he differ from those philosophers that had influenced him? What are his relationships to particular philosophical movements? Given the general trend of how that history of philosophy has been developing, how does Merleau-Ponty fit into this trend? What are his contributions? How has he made a difference?

- Gier, Nicolas F. *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology: A Comparative Study of the Later Wittgenstein, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty*. Albany: State University of New York Press; 1981.
B3376 W564 G53.
- Luijpen, William A. L. *Existential Phenomenology*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press; 1963.
B829.5 L813.
- Sallis, John. *Phenomenology and the Return to Beginnings*. New York: Duquesne University Press; 1973.
B829.5 S23.

Schmidt, James. *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism*. New York: St. Martin's Press; 1985.
B2430 M3764 S36.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHIES

While this bibliography may seem rather long, it reflects only those works that throw light on the *Phenomenology of Perception*. The body of works on the thought of Merleau-Ponty is much broader than this. If one is interested in additional works, both books and articles, can be found rather easily in the *Philosopher's Index* that is in both "hard copy" and "on line form" from a library. The *Philosopher's Index* is of particular value because it provides abstracts, often written by the author, of the works it indexes. Further, it is possible to down load both hard copies and computer copies of one's searches. This can be particularly useful in preparing for papers.

It is also worthwhile to look at specific texts listed above. All of them have bibliographies, and while they do not try to be comprehensive, in the particular area that the book is concerned with, one will find a more than adequate bibliography for that topic. Two bibliographies listed below are in book form and are rather comprehensive. In addition, you will discover under bibliographies in the following index to articles, a number of brief but up to date collection of works on Merleau-Ponty.

Lapointe, Francois and Lapointe, Clara. *Maurice Merleau-Ponty and His Critics: An International Bibliography*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press; 1976.
Z8570.45 L37.

Nordquist, Joan: *Merleau-Ponty: a Bibliography*. Santa Cruz, CA : Reference and Research Services, 2000. Social theory, no. 57
Z8570.45 .N67.

PART II: JOURNAL ARTICLES

What follows is an attempt to take a rather long list of references to journal articles and make them accessible to someone wishing to do research. What I have done is created a long list of "keywords" that represent key themes in particular articles. Many of these theme words were chosen by the authors of the articles or by editors. I am responsible, however, for a fair number of them and for attempting to

make the terms relatively consistent in their use. The numbers following each of these keywords are the number of the particular journal articles. Thus if one were interested in finding out what secondary sources have to say about Merleau-Ponty's understanding of God, all one needs to do is turn to the word "God," and one finds 13, 161, 230, 350. If we now turn to journal article #161, we find: Jolivet, Regis, "The Problem of God in the Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty." It is worth noting that searching "God" may not give you all the material about Merleau-Ponty's conception of God and that further searches might be worthwhile. For example, it might be good to also look up the references that correspond to "Absolute" and "religion," for example. Being a little creative with the Index can be rather profitable.

It is also important to realize that this index is not exhaustive. Its goal is not to present every theme discussed in every article but rather to provide a starting point for your research. Again, once you find the above four references, paying attention to footnotes and bibliographies will provide you with further material and sometimes even material that is contained in other parts of this bibliography.

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2. JOURNAL ARTICLES

The following is a rather long list of articles that in one way or another provide assistance in understanding the *Phenomenology of Perception*. Each reference is numbered and it is that number that is used in the Index. In addition to the standard reference to each article, I have provided a list of keywords (the last line of each reference). The purpose of these keywords is to give the reader a bit of an idea of what the article deals with. It should be remembered that trying to sum up a scholarly article in four or five words is an impossible task, but it does give a hint about the particular work. If it turns out to be misleading, reading the article can certainly set that straight.

1. Aanstoos, Christopher M. "A Critique of the Computational Model of Thought: The Contribution of Merleau-Ponty." *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 18, no. 2(1987): 187-200.
Keywords: artificial intelligence/ cognitivism/ computers
2. Adams, Harry. "Merleau-Ponty and the Advent of Meaning: From Consummate Reciprocity to Ambiguous Reversibility." *Continental Philosophical Review* 34, no. 2(June 2001): 203-24.
Keywords: meaning/ Philosophy/ reciprocity/ expression/ history/ emergence of meaning

3. Allen, Jeffner. "Through the Wild Region: An Essay in Phenomenological Feminism." *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* 18, no. 1, 2 & 3(1982): 241-56.
Keywords: feminism/ gender/ sexuality
4. Alvarez-Valdes, Loures Gordillo. "El Momento Existencial Del Cuerpo En Merleau-Ponty." *Daimon, Revista De Filosofia* 20(January 2000-June 2000): 75-88.
Keywords: Being-in-the-World/ body/ intentionality/ metaphysics/ motility/ sexuality/ expression
5. Ashbaugh, Anne Freire. "The Fool in the Farce: Merleau-Ponty's "Philosophy of"." *Philosophy Today* 27, no. Winter (1983): 326-41.
Keywords: methodology/ phenomenology/ philosophy/ metaphysics/ novel
6. _____. "The Philosophy of Flesh and the Flesh of Philosophy." *Research in Phenomenology* 8(1978): 217-23.
Keywords: epistemology/ body/ knowledge/ flesh/ philosophy
7. _____. "The Role of the Body in the Constitutive Phase of Knowledge." *Man and World* 13, no. 2(1980): 233-40.
Keywords: body / meaning/ flesh/ consciousness/ knowledge/ certainty/ Epistemology/ real
8. Baldwin, Thomas. "Phenomenology, Solipsism and Egocentric Thought." *Aristotelian Society Suppl.* 62(1988): 27-43.
Keywords: solipsism/ Husserl/ Putnam/ Burge/ Sartre/ Heidegger
9. Ballard, Edward G. "On Cognition of the Pre-Cognitive." *Philosophical Quarterly* 11, no. July (1961): 238-44.
Keywords: epistemology/ cognition/ pre-reflective/ phenomenology/ reduction/ language/ myth/ description
10. _____. "The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty." *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* 9(1960): 165-87.
Keywords: Twentieth Century Philosophy/ realism/ idealism/ metaphysics/ epistemology/ psychology/ science/ Hegel/ Husserl/ intellectualism/ empiricism/ reflection
11. Bannan, John F. "The Later Thought of Merleau-Ponty." *Dialogue (Canada)* 5, no. 3(1966): 383-403.
Keywords: metaphysics/ phenomenology/ time/ ontology/ sensation
12. _____. "Merleau-Ponty Mismanaged." *Journal of Existentialism* 7, no. Summer (1967): 459-76.
Keywords: metaphysics/ phenomenology/ Schmitt/ empiricism/ intellectualism/ reduction
13. _____. "Merleau-Ponty on God." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 6, no. September (1966): 341-65.

- Keywords:** religion/ subjectivity/ objectivity/ church/ God/ consciousness/ epistemology/ Christianity/ transcendence
14. _____. "Philosophical Reflection and the Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty." *Review of Metaphysics* 8, no. 3 March (1955): 418-42.
Keywords: epistemology/ phenomenology/ consciousness/ time/ reflection
 15. Barbaras, Renaud. "Merleau-Ponty and Nature." *Research in Phenomenology* 31(2001): 22-38.
Keywords: environment/ ethics/ metaphysics/ nature/ ontology/ interrogation/ truth/ expression/ meaning
 16. Barral, Mary Rose. "Merleau-Ponty on the Body." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. Summer (1969): 171-79.
Keywords: metaphysics/ phenomenology/ body/ form/ structure/ soul/ communication/ sexuality
 17. _____. "Self and Other: Communication and Love." *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* 18, no. 1, 2 & 3(1982): 155-80.
Keywords: intersubjectivity/ love/ solipsism/ negativity/ strife/ other/ Lebenswelt/ sexuality/ communication
 18. _____. "Thomas Aquinas and Merleau-Ponty." *Philosophy Today* 26, no. 3 Fall (1982): 204-16.
Keywords: Aquinas/ being/ causality/ truth/ soul/ essences
 19. Barrett, Cyril. "Merleau-Ponty and the Phenomenology of Perception." *Philosophy (Supp.)* 21(1987): 123-39.
Keywords: background/ life-world/ writings/ overview
 20. Barry, J. "The Textual Body: Incorporating Writing and Flesh." *Philosophy Today* 30, no. Spring (1986): 16-31.
Keywords: language/ interpretation/ methodology/ philosophy/ text
 21. Barta-Smith, Nancy A. "When Time Is Not a River: Landscape, Memory, History, and Merleau-Ponty." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 37, no. 4(1997): 423-40.
Keywords: history/ landscape/ memory/ metaphysics/ time/ river/ Marshall, T
 22. Bayer, Raymond. "Merleau-Ponty's Existentialism." *University of Buffalo Studies* 19, no. 3 September (1951): 95-104.
Keywords: Twentieth Century Philosophy/ existentialism/ experience/ reality/ Descartes/ truth/ cogito/ description/ reduction/ essences/ intentionality
 23. Bertoldi, Eugene. "Metaphysics and the 'Eye and the Mind'." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 23, no. Spring (1985): 1-18.
Keywords: metaphysics/ painting/ Cezanne/ "Eye and the Mind"/ art
 24. _____. "Phenomenology of Phenomenology." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. June (1977): 239-53.

- Keywords:** phenomenology of phenomenology/ philosophy/ phenomenology/ methodology/ consciousness/ meta-philosophy
25. _____. "Reply to Joos' 'Remarks on Bertoldi's Time in the Phenomenology of Perception'." *Dialogue (Canada)* 16, no. 3 September (1977): 499-501.
Keywords: epistemology/ dialectics/ time/ Joos/ temporality/ Hegel
26. _____. "Survivor in the VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 25, no. Spring (1987): 13-29.
Keywords: language/ dialectic/ reflection/ cogito/ essences/ time/ ambiguity/ Descartes/ flesh
27. _____. "Time in the 'Phenomenology of Perception'." *Dialogue (Canada)* 13, no. 4 December (1974): 773-85.
Keywords: epistemology/ time/ dialectic/ temporality/ dialectical methodology/ methodology
28. Bertram, Maryanne. "The Different Paradigms of Merleau-Ponty and Whitehead." *Philosophy Today* 24, no. 2 Summer (1980): 121-32.
Keywords: Whitehead/ experience/ pre-reflective/ reflection
29. _____. "A Kuhnian Approach to Merleau-Ponty's Thought." *Philosophy Research Archives* 13(1987): 275-83.
Keywords: Tacit Cogito/ paradigm/ philosophy/ Christianity
30. Bien, Joseph. "Man and the Economic: Merleau-Ponty's Interpretation of Historical Materialism." *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 Spring (1972): 121-27.
Keywords: history/ matter/ meaning/ Marx
31. Blake, Anthony. "A Philosophy of Experience." *Systematics* 1(1963): 337-40.
Keywords: epistemology/ phenomenology/ experience/ body/ consciousness/ dialectical methodology/ review
32. Bourgeois, Patrick L. "The Epistemic Dimensions of Existential Phenomenology." *Philosophy Today* 30, no. Spring (1986): 43-47.
Keywords: phenomenology/ ontology/ epistemology/ primacy of perception
33. _____. "The Integration of Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy." *Southwestern Philosophical Review* 5, no. July (1989): 37-50.
Keywords: intentionality/ transcendence/ Husserl/ idealism
34. _____. "Role Taking, Corporeal Intersubjectivity, and Self: Mead and Merleau-Ponty." *Philosophy Today* (Summer 1990): 117-28.
Keywords: consciousness/ intersubjectivity/ metaphysics/ cogito/ Mead
35. Bourgeois, Patrick L. and Sandra B. Rosenthal. "Phenomenology, Pragmatism and the Backdrop of Naturalism." *Philosophy Today* 23, no. 3 Winter (1979): 329-36.

Keywords: Naturalism/ Pragmatism/ Phenomenology/ man-nature relationship

36. _____. "The Present As the Seat of Temporal Existence: Merleau-Ponty and Mead." *International Studies in Philosophy (Formally Studi Internazionali Di Fiosofia)* 25, no. 3 (1993): 1-15.

Keywords: epistemology/ existence/ phenomenology/ temporality/ Mead

37. Brockelman, P. T. "Sibling Rivalry: The Early Marx and Some Existentialists." *Philosophy Today* 13 (1969): 250-262.

Keywords: Marx/ Sartre/ concrete/ subjectivity/ social world/ idealism/ materialism/ historicity/ alienation/ freedom/ philosophy

38. Busch, Thomas W. "Consciousness and Transcendental Philosophy: A Response to Professor Tibbetts." *Philosophy Today* 14, no. 4 Winter (1970): 299-304.

Keywords: consciousness/ Tibbetts/ response/ Philosophy

39. _____. "Merleau-Ponty and the Problem of Origins." *Philosophy Today* 11, no. 2 Summer (1967): 124-30.

Keywords: metaphysics/ being/ origin of meaning/ subjectivity/ object/ Brute Being/subject-object

40. _____. "Merleau-Ponty's Circulating Being." *Philosophy Today* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 187-92.

Keywords: being/ metaphysics/ circulating being

41. Camele, Anthony M. "Time in Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger." *Philosophy Today* 19, no. 3/4 Fall (1975): 256-68.

Keywords: metaphysics/ temporality/ time/ Heidegger/ "Being and Time"/ ethics

42. Carruba, Gerald J. "The Phenomenological Foundations of Marxism in the Early Works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty." *Dianoia (Mexico)* 10, no. Spring (1974): 37-55.

Keywords: Marx/ background/ Phenomenology/ history/ Early writings of Merleau-Ponty

43. Casalis, Matthieu. "Merleau-Ponty's Philosophical Itinerary: From Phenomenology to Onto-Semiology." *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* 6, no. 1 Winter (1975): 63-69.

Keywords: philosophy/ phenomenology/ "The Visible and the Invisible"/ Husserl/ semiology

44. Casey, Edward S. "Habitual Body and Memory in Merleau-Ponty." *Man and World* 17 (1984): 279-98.

Keywords: memory/ habit/ body/ Bergson/ being-in-the-world/ depth

45. Cataldi, Sue L. "The Conception of Line in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty." *Philosophy Today* 32, no. 4 Winter (1988): 327-37.

- Keywords:** language/ aesthetics/ Heidegger/ line/ art/ thought/ "The Origin of the Work of Art"
46. Cayard, W. Wallace. "Bertrand Russell and Existential Phenomenologists on Foundations of Knowledge." *Journal of the West Virginia Philosophical Society*, no. Fall (1976): 17-22.
Keywords: epistemology/ existentialism/ phenomenology/ knowledge/ sense data/ sensation/ empiricism/ acquaintance/ Russell/ Heidegger
47. Charlesworth, James H. "Reflections on Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenological Description of 'Word.'" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 30, no. June (1970): 609-13.
Keywords: phenomenology/ meaning/ language/ physiognomy
48. Cohen, Richard. "Merleau-Ponty, The Flesh and Foucault." *Philosophy Today* 28, no. 4 Winter (1984): 329-38.
Keywords: Foucault/ flesh/ "The Order of Things"/ post-anthropological
49. Collins, Corbin. "Body-Intentionality." *Inquiry* 31, no. December (1988): 495-518.
Keywords: teleology/ body-intentionality/ pre-objective/ mind-body/ intentionality/ mind
50. Compton, John. "Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Human Freedom." *Journal of Philosophy* 79, no. October (1982): 577-88.
Keywords: Sartre/ freedom/ situation/ motivation/ embodiment/ social world/ history
51. Contini, Marco. "Cezanne e Merleau-Ponty." *La Societa Degli Individui* 11 (2001): 41-54.
Keywords: aesthetics/ art/ body/ freedom/ individual/ soul/ Cezanne
52. Cook, Deborah. "Writing Philosophy and Literature: Apology for Narcissism in Merleau-Ponty." *Eidos* 4, no. June (1985): 1-9.
Keywords: philosophy/ literature/ truth/ self-reflectivity/ subjectivism/ Derrida
53. Coole, Diana. "The Aesthetic Realm and the Lifeworld: Kant and Merleau-Ponty." *History of Political Thought* 5, no. Winter (1984): 503-26.
Keywords: Kant/ aesthetics/ pre-objective/ life-world/ gestalt
54. Cooper, Barry. "Hegelian Elements in Merleau-Ponty's 'La Structure Du Comportement.'" *International Philosophical Quarterly* 15, no. December (1975): 411-23.
Keywords: epistemology/ idealism/ empiricism/ Hegel/ Freud/ Kant/ Kojève
55. Cornell, Kenneth. "LES TEMPS MODERNES: Peep Sights Across the Atlantic." *Yale French Studies* 16 (1965): 24-28.

Keywords: background/ "Les Temps Modernes"/ United States of America

56. Corriveau, Michael. "Phenomenology, Psychology, and Radical Behaviorism." *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 3, no. 1 Fall (1972): 7-34.
Keywords: dualism/ behaviorism/ meta-psychology/ subject-object/ being-in-the-world
57. Coyne, Margaret Urban. "Merleau-Ponty on Language: An Interrupted Journey Toward a Phenomenology of Speaking." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 20, no. September (1980): 307-26.
Keywords: Twentieth Century Philosophy/ language/ speech/ gesture/ speech-event/ language-system
58. Crosson, Frederick J. "Phenomenology and Realism." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 6, no. September (1966): 455-64.
Keywords: idealism/ subjectivism/ relativism/ truth/ transcendental idealism/ metaphysics/ Plato/ The Cave
59. Crowther, Paul. "Merleau-Ponty: Perception into Art." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 22, no. 2 Spring (1982): 138-49.
Keywords: art/ aesthetics/ Gadamer/ Heidegger
60. _____. "Merleau-Ponty: Vision and Painting." *Dialectics and Humanism* 15, no. Winter-Spring (1988): 107-18.
Keywords: aesthetics/ painting/ Cezanne/ vision/ philosophy
61. Culler, Jonathan. "Phenomenology and Structuralism." *Human Context* 5, no. Spring (1973): 35-41.
Keywords: epistemology/ phenomenology/ structuralism
62. Cunningham, Suzanne. "Comments 'Merleau-Ponty and the Myth of Bodily Intentionality.'" *Nous* 22, no. March (1989): 49-50.
Keywords: structure/ form/ Russow/ intentionality/ bodily intentionality/ representational model/ "Structure of Behavior"
63. Daly, James. "Merleau-Ponty: A Bridge Between Phenomenology and Structuralism." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 2, no. 3 October (1971): 53-58.
Keywords: social philosophy/ Phenomenology/ Structuralism/ Levi-Strauss/ methodology
64. _____. "Merleau-Ponty's Concept of Phenomenology." *Philosophical Studies (Ireland)* 16 (1967): 137-64.
Keywords: anthropology/ phenomenology/ experience/ methodology/ science/ objectivity/ description/ clinical cases/ induction/ gestalt/ seeing-seeing-as/ real
65. Daniels, Graham. "Sartre and Merleau-Ponty: An Existentialist Quarrel." *French Studies* 24, no. 4 (1970): 379-92.
Keywords: Sartre/ background/ Sartre and Merleau-Ponty conflict

66. Dauenhauer, Bernard P. "One Central Link Between Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Language and His Political Thought." *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* 29 (1980): 570-80.
Keywords: silence/ cogito/ expression/ action/ discursive expression/ Political Philosophy
67. De Rezende, Antonio Muniz. "Le Point De Depart Dans La Philosophie of Merleau-Ponty." *Revue Philosophie De Louvain* 73, no. August (1975): 451-80.
Keywords: epistemology/ phenomenology/ Structuralism/ science/ knowledge/ psychology
68. De Waelhens, Alphonse. "The Philosophical Position of Merleau-Ponty." *Philosophy Today* 7, no. Summer (1963): 134-49.
Keywords: Twentieth Century Philosophy/ form/ gestalt/ phenomenology/ intentionality/ psychology/ Hegel/ Husserl/ Heidegger/ being-in-the-world/ being/ science/ relativism/ history/ metaphysics/ philosophy
69. Devettere, Raymond J. "The Human Body As Philosophical Paradigm in Whitehead and Merleau-Ponty." *Philosophy Today* 20, no. Winter (1976): 317-26.
Keywords: philosophy/ body/ Process Philosophy/ ontology/ Whitehead/ Heidegger
70. _____. "Merleau-Ponty and the Husserlian Reductions." *Philosophy Today* 17, no. Winter (1973): 297-308.
Keywords: epistemology/ reduction/ phenomenology/ transcendental/ Husserl
71. Dillon, Martin C. "Eye and the Mind: The Intertwining of Vision and Thought." *Man and World* 13, no. 2 (1980): 155-72.
Keywords: ontology/ primacy of perception/ "Eye and the Mind"/ "The Visible and the Invisible"/ metaphysics
72. _____. "Gestalt Theory and Merleau-Ponty's Concept of Intentionality." *Man and World* 4, no. November (1971): 436-59.
Keywords: epistemology/ psychology/ intentionality/ gestalt/ time/ phenomenology/ Husserl/ Gurwitsch
73. _____. "Human Finitude and the Limits of Reason: A Phenomenological Approach to the Question of Irrationality." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 8, no. 2 May (1977): 94-102.
Keywords: finitude/ perspectivism/ reason/ truth/ subjectivism/ relativism
74. _____. "The Implications of Merleau-Ponty's Thought for the Practice of Psychotherapy." *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 14, no. 1 Spring (1983): 21-41.
Keywords: Ricoeur/ Sartre/ freedom/ teleology/ Freud/ Hegel/ freedom/ reason/ psychoanalysis

75. _____. "Merleau-Ponty and the Psychogenesis of the Self." *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 9, no. 1 & 2 Fall (1978): 85-98.
Keywords: body/ body-image/ mirror image/ child/ developmental psychology/ "The Child's Relations with Others"
76. _____. "Merleau-Ponty and the Reversibility Thesis." *Man and World* 16 (1983): 365-88.
Keywords: reversibility/ ontology/ touch/ vision/ synesthesia/ other/ reflection
77. _____. "Merleau-Ponty and the Transcendence of Immanence: Overcoming the Ontology of Consciousness." *Man and World* 19 (1986): 395-412.
Keywords: Twentieth Century Philosophy/ consciousness/ reflection/ cogito/ ontology/ Kant/ meaning/ language
78. _____. "Merleau-Ponty on Existential Sexuality: A Critique." *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 11, no. 1 Spring (1980): 67-81.
Keywords: sexuality/ ambiguity/ ontology/ intentionality/ Fundierung
79. _____. "A Phenomenological Conception of Truth." *Man and World* 10, no. 4 (1977): 382-92.
Keywords: perspectivism/ subjectivism/ relativism/ truth
80. _____. "A-Priority in Kant and Merleau-Ponty." *Kant-Studien* 78 (1987): 403-23.
Keywords: a-priori/ structure/ Kant/ transcendental philosophy
81. _____. "Sartre on the Phenomenal Body and Merleau-Ponty's Critique." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 5, no. May (1974): 144-58.
Keywords: metaphysics/ body/ phenomenology/ immanence/ transcendence/ Sartre
82. Doud, Robert E. "Sensibility in Rahner and Merleau-Ponty." *Thomist* 44, no. July (1980): 372-89.
Keywords: Rahner/ sensibility/ ontology/ action/ embodiment
83. _____. "Wholeness As Phenomenon in Teilhard De Chardin and Merleau-Ponty." *Philosophy Today* 24, no. 2 Summer (1980): 90-103.
Keywords: Teilhard de Chardin/ part-whole/ gestalt/ experience/ mind-body/ Omega Point
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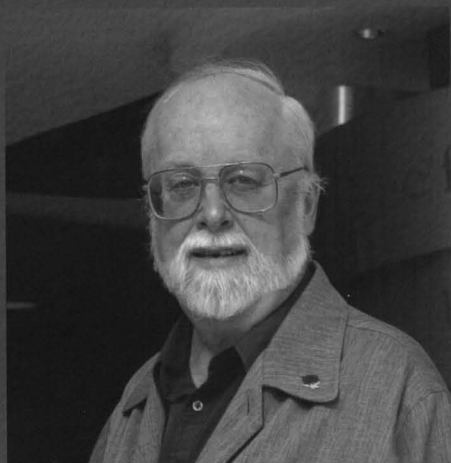
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GEORGE J. MARSHALL

A GUIDE TO MERLEAU-PONTY'S *Phenomenology of Perception*

A Guide to Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception is not a scholarly commentary written for scholars of Merleau-Ponty. Its goal is to provide the first time reader with the basic tools necessary for reading this important work. This Guide is based upon the belief that the best source for discovering what Merleau-Ponty has to say is what he, himself, says. But the European style of writing and the dialectical form of argument present majors obstacles for the first time reader of this book. This Guide attempts to overcome these problems by providing the reader with the necessary background, explanations of how the chapters of the book fit together, maps of the structure of the arguments of each chapter, a glossary of technical philosophical and psychological terms, and a useful bibliography. These things do not replace nor are they an alternative to reading the *Phenomenology of Perception*. What they do is help the first time reader undertake such a reading of this important and influential work.

George J. Marshall received his doctorate from Georgetown University and has taught at Campion College, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, for 40 years. He is now Professor Emeritus but continues to teach full time in Late Modern Philosophy, especially Hegel, and contemporary European Philosophy.



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