A RECONSTRUCTION OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS: MERLEAU-PONTY'S APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis will attempt to reconstruct and reformulate Freudian psychoanalysis from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

The thesis is divided into three parts corresponding to the three most provocative concepts in Freudian psychoanalytic theory: the unconscious, repression, and psychoanalytic insight (psychotherapy). These elements have been reconstructed and reformulated by Merleau-Ponty throughout his works. This thesis will show how Freudian unconscious, repression, and psychoanalytic insight can be reinterpreted and enriched by Merleau-Ponty's concepts of ambiguous perception/originary experience, integration, and eidetic intuition respectively.

The thesis concludes that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology can help toward providing psychoanalysis with a new philosophical foundation by exposing the error of

theoretical constructs borrowed from chemistry, physiology, or other systems of abstract thought and by insisting that the work of psychoanalysis is, like that of philosophy, one of "restoring a power to signify" by returning to originary experience as the basis for theoretical expression.

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THE DISCERNMENT OF PSYCHOTHERAPY: PSYCHOANALYTIC PENETRATION AS EIDETIC INTUITION

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SE	Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols., (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1954-)
BP	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Bulletin de psychologie, Maurice Merleau-Ponty à la Sorbonne, XVIII, (Nov. 1964)
PAP	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis: Preface to Hesnard's L'Oeuvre de Freud," trans. Alden L. Fisher, The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty, ed. Alden L. Fisher, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969, 81-7
PP	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962)
PriP	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, trans. James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964)
S	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Signs, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964)
SB	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Structure of Behavior, trans. Alden L. Fisher (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963)
SNS	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sense and Non-Sense, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964)
TFL	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France 1952-1960, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970)
VI	Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and Invisible, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968)

INTRODUCTION

This thesis will attempt to reconstruct and reformulate Freudian psychoanalysis from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

The thesis is divided into three parts corresponding to the three most provocative concepts in Freudian psychoanalytic theory: the unconscious, repression, and psychoanalytic insight (psychotherapy). These elements have been reconstructed and reformulated by Merleau-Ponty throughout his works. This thesis will show how Freudian unconscious, repression, and psychoanalytic insight can be reinterpreted and enriched by Merleau-Ponty's concepts of ambiguous perception/original experience, integration, and eidetic intuition respectively.

It suggests; further, that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological reconstruction of psychoanalysis is an improvement over Freudian constructs to the extent that it replaces arbitrary or inconsistent concepts with ideas that are faithful to experience. Merleau-Ponty finds psychoanalysis to be more fruitfully construed as a theory of meaning and as a development of the phenomenological method (cf. PP, 158) rather than as (for Freud) a natural science. (SNS, 24)

Freudian psychoanalytic theory is not in contradiction to phenomenology, but rather a contribution to it.

When Freud holds that every action has multiple meanings, he is trying to understand the phenomena rather than to assign or ascribe them to mechanical conditions. Merleau-Ponty states that Freud "in his concrete analysis, abandons causal thought, when he demonstrates that symptoms always have several meanings, or, as he puts it, are 'overdetermined'." (PP, 158, n.2)

Merleau-Ponty sees in "the conscious" a key to "the structure of oneiric consciousness" (TFL, 49) and approves of Freud's creative descriptions "in a language made to order." (PAP, 82-83) He finds, however, Freud's causal explanations to be dispensable (SB, 177) and his use of terms from the medicine and the psychology of his time to be misleading. (PAP, 83) Therefore, Freudian psychoanalysis, to be properly appreciated, cannot be interpreted from within the "naturalistic framework." (S, 229) But when interpreted outside of the naturalistic framework psychoanalysis is found to be in accord with phenomenology, and in fact Merleau-Ponty claims that "phenomenology which descends into its own substratum is converging more than ever with Freudian research." (PAP, 85) The program which Merleau-Ponty suggests, therefore, is a reinterpretation and reconstruction of Freudian theory which would at once accomplish a furthering of the work of phenomenological description, a liberation of psychoanalysis from its Cartesian moorings, and the

disclosure of a new philosophical foundation for psychology.

Merleau-Ponty's challenge to the concept of psychoanalysis as a natural science has received support from other philosophical interpreters and even from Freud himself. Both Freud and his critics distinguish several levels of psychoanalytic theory, ranging from a level which, it is claimed, is most closely related to empirical data, to a theoretic framework within which the data of psychology are understood. Freud himself termed this theoretic framework metapsychology, "the study of the assumptions upon which psychoanalytic theory is based." (SE, XII, 222) Yankelovich and Barrett further elucidate this by describing metapsychology as the a priori constructions and philosophical underpinnings which serve to guide future research.[1] And John Wisdom recognizes in psychoanalysis an embedded ontology which is not refutable by empirical observation but only by a new theory.[2]

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[1]Yankelovich, D. and Barrett, W., Ego and Instinct (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), pp.174-75.

[2]Wisdom, John, "Freud and Melanie: Psychology, Ontology, and Weltanschauung," Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, ed. Charles Hanly and Morris Lazerowitz, (New York: International Universities Press, 1970), pp.327-30.

In practice Freud's own commitment to scientific induction is not pure, and he is not immune to philosophical theorizing.[3] Nor is philosophical speculation foreign to his working view of science. In one case he admits to pursuing ideas by "combining factual material with what is purely speculative and thus diverging widely from empirical observations." (SE, XVIII, 59) In fact, Freud's justification of the notion of instinct and other "basic concepts" of his science less closely resembles induction than it does Merleau-Ponty's "idealizing fictions": (PriP, 69)

> ...we come to an understanding about their meaning by making repeated references to the material of observation from which they appear to have been derived, but upon which, in fact, they have been imposed ...They are in the nature of conventions--although everything depends on their not being arbitrarily chosen but determined by their having significant relations to the empirical material, relations that we seem to sense before we can clearly recognize and demonstrate them. (SE, XIV, 117)

It is evident that, for both Freud and Merleau-Ponty, the "basic concepts" of psychoanalysis cannot be

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[3]As a matter of biographical interest, Freud enrolled in five of Brentano's philosophy courses from 1874-76, and confesses in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess that, "I secretly nurse the hope of arriving...(through medicine) at my own original objective, philosophy." Cf., Freud, The Origin of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Draft, and Notes: 1877-1902, ed., M. Bonaparte, A. Freud, and E. Kris, trans., Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey, (New York: Basic Books, 1954), Letter 39, January 1, 1896.

passively read from supposedly raw data. Merleau-Ponty's interest is directed toward the theoretical foundations of psychoanalysis and their relations to experience. Accordingly, this study concentrates on some of the most fundamental claims of metapsychology and on the theoretical requirements of psychoanalysis. Merleau-Ponty's remarks on Freud are for the most part suggestive and programmatic. It is therefore necessary, as this thesis attempted, to impose a more rigid organization on his treatment of Freudian theory than is found in his works originally.

A few observations on secondary sources might be appropriate here. There are at present few texts or articles available which deal directly with the specific topic of this thesis. Although a few books and articles which discuss psychoanalysis from the perspective of phenomenology exist, there is no specific commentary on this topic. De Waelhens's Schizophrenia,[4] while a good exposition on phenomenological psychoanalysis, is limited to a consideration of Lacan's structuralist interpretation; thus it has no direct relevance to the relationship between Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Freud's psy-

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[4] Waelhens, Alphonse de, Schizophrenia: A philosophical Reflection on Lacan's Structuralist Interpretation, trans., W. Ver Eecke, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1978).

choanalysis. Ricoeur's Freud and Philosophy[5] is a reliable treatment of Freudian psychology from a phenomenological point of view, but we find only fragmentary exposition on the relation between Merleau-Ponty and Freud. The most relevant article, that of J-B. Pontalis,[6] argues that, in his later lectures at the Collège de France, Merleau-Ponty began to acknowledge that the unconscious is incapable of reduction to phenomenological description based on intentionality or to some form of consciousness. The article is, however, only a brief discussion of Merleau-Ponty's unconscious and does not refer to related topics as are treated in this thesis. A recent article by Paul Jacobson[7] is helpful, but is restricted to a comparative study of the problem of sexuality between Merleau-Ponty and Freud.

Due to the limitation of secondary sources, I have restricted my research to Merleau-Ponty's texts as

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[5]Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, trans., Denis Savage, (New York: Yale University Press, 1970).

[6]J-B. Pontalis, "Note sur le problème de l'inconscient chez Merleau-Ponty," Les Temps Modernes, (17: 184-185, octobre, 1961), 287-303.

[7]Paul Jacobson, "The Return of Alicbiades: an approach to the meaning of human sexuality through the works of Freud and Merleau-Ponty," Philosophy Today, 22 (Spring, 1978), 89-98.

much as possible. Although on occasion I will refer to some secondary materials, my original sources are Merleau-Ponty's works themselves.

PART ONE

FREUDIAN THEORY OF UNCONSCIOUS

A. The Descriptive Unconscious as Ambiguous Perception

Introductory Remarks

The unconscious is one of the most important elements of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, since it is this which lends support to Freud's claim that mental life is more comprehensive than immediate states of consciousness. For Freud, "what is conscious is conscious only for a moment," (SE, XXIII, 159) and conscious acts, taken together, "remain disconnected and unintelligible." (SE, XIV, 167) To fill in the gaps of momentary perceptual consciousness, Freud postulates the existence of latent, unconscious ideas. The mental is thereby made continuous and intelligible, yet always partially hidden. But Freudian theory, with its sharp separation of external and internal, has no place for unconscious ideas which neither impinge on a passive consciousness as stimuli from the external world, nor exist as internal objects created by consciousness. There are, however, other ways of conceiving of the conscious when/which overcome this problem; Merleau-Ponty's first step in recasting Freudian theory is to insist on a phenomenological method.

Merleau-Ponty's most fundamental methodological commitment is to the principle that perceptual experience is the final court of appeal for all our knowledge. (PP, 23) By means of this it is possible to disclose progressively a relationship of consciousness to its object that will overcome the subject-object dichotomy which undermines Freud's treatment of latent ideas.

To begin with, experience reveals that perceptual consciousness is not momentary at all; the idea of atomistic impressions which must be "filled in" is an unfounded theoretic construction. Freud claims that "a gain in meaning" justifies going beyond an otherwise unintelligible consciousness to the assumption of the existence of latent states. (SE, XIV, 167) Merleau-Ponty finds in experience "not sensations with gaps between them" but rather "a basic layer of experience, a whole already pregnant with an irreducible meaning." (PP, 21-2) To Freud's claim that a separate realm of unconscious ideas is necessary to account for mental life as intelligible and continuous, Merleau-Ponty responds that we only know mental life to be meaningful because we experience it that way, and that we must look within experience rather than beyond it in order to reveals its actual structure.

Merleau-Ponty thus does not reject Freud's un-

conscious, but rather considers it a suggestive idea needing reformulation: "We still have to find the right formulation for what he intended by this provisional designation." (S, 229) The structure of perception provides a possible direction: "In an approximate language, Freud is on the point of discovering what other thinkers have more appropriately named ambiguous perception." (Ibid.)

1. The Phenomenal Field

Merleau-Ponty holds that, though experience reveals objects as present to consciousness with an originary meaning, that meaning is never fully explicit and possessed by consciousness but always invites further exploration. We can never exhaust all possible figures to arrive at a fully determinate thing; further perception can always contain surprises which disconfirm what we presumed to be a stable order. The perceptual figures which we have not yet apprehended are not unconscious in the sense of something separate from consciousness, but are part of the indeterminate, ambiguous character of experienced phenomena. Merleau-Ponty insists that at any moment we experience neither an unintelligible sensation nor a ready-made thought, but one aspect of a phenomenal field with an ambiguous meaning which invites clarification.

The notion of a phenomenal field dispels the Freudian problem of locating latent thoughts within the

dichotomy of subject and object, internal and external. The problem of locating objects inside or outside consciousness arises only if we try to go beyond perceptual experience and examine consciousness as one among several objects. In a phenomenal field, we do not experience a landscape and other human beings as totally external stimuli affecting us. Totally external stimuli would be unintelligible and require some subsequent endowment of meaning; according to Merleau-Ponty, we experience no such separation of external qualities and meanings. Merleau-Ponty finds, in original perception, wholes rather than elements, with no division between the sensory "given" and supposedly internal emotions. (cf. SB, 166)

Merleau-Ponty's critique and analysis of the phenomenal field plays an important role in his project. For Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenal field is the field of perceptual consciousness. This conception of the phenomenal field creates a new dimension of analysis wherein the difficulties and inconsistencies of the classical psychological approach to consciousness and nature, as understood by both empiricism and intellectualism, can be remedied. By means of phenomenological reduction[1] Merleau-

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[1]It is impoortant to be aware that Merleau-Ponty gives only a qualified acceptance to the Husserlain epoché and reduction, and states that "the most important lesson the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete

Ponty sets aside the "préjugé du monde" in order to explore the phenomenal field and return to the "world as lived." "The reduction of the idea of 'the world' opened up a phenomenal field which now has to be more accurately circumscribed, and suggested the rediscovery of a direct experience which must be, at least provisionally, assigned its place in relation to scientific knowledge, psychological and philosophical reflection." (PP, 54) We do not simply notice, for example, a mountainous landscape and our own desire to explore it as alien data impinging on consciousness, but rather as human phenomena to which we belong. (cf. PP, 24) Perceptual consciousness, intentions, and the world's qualitative presence make up an indivisible whole.

Though the phenomenal world appears as structured and responsive to human needs, it is no more subjective than it is objective. Were it so, all meaning would be transparent and all significance would be immanent to consciousness, arrayed before its all-penetrating gaze. But the very horizon which reveals meaning also conveys the world's contingency and renders a total, infallible determination of meaning impossible. The facial gesture perceived within a horizon of anger may subsequently appear

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reduction." (PP, xiv) The reduction is necessarily incompletable for Merleau-Ponty because it is in principle restricted by the ontological condition of être-au-monde.

as hurt feelings; and one may find, through further exploration, that the "other side" of one's own presumably pure generosity is resentment. In this way, all objects of experience necessarily remain partially hidden and transcendent to immediate consciousness. This is not the hiddenness of an unconscious separate from consciousness, however, but (the hiddenness) of a horizon which makes continuous experience possible but never fully embraceable. (cf. SB, 220-22; PP, 69-70)

Merleau-Ponty's conception of the phenomenal field not only avoids the dichotomy of natural and external, but suggests a new way of conceiving the relationship of consciousness to its objects. The structure of ambiguous perception reveals a way of understanding, not only the data of consciousness, but consciousness itself. Though consciousness can never be experienced as an object in the phenomenal field, any object that presents itself always conceals others; one must "lose in background what one gains in focal figure...objects form a system in which one cannot show itself without concealing others." (PP, 67-8) In other words, while perceptual consciousness can be seen as motivated by the subject--depending, as it does, on our body's placement, on our present interests and concerns, and our ability to focus and hold parts of the visual field under scrutiny--it is also motivated by the percep-

tual objects, as Gestalt psychology has demonstrated. For instance, it requires considerable effort on my part to take spaces between trees on an avenue as figures and the trees as the background, since we naturally and spontaneously see the trees emerging from an indistinct and empty ground. We see our visual world in terms of meaningful figure-ground structure which we are generally not at liberty to disrupt. This experienced object-horizon structure reveals the relationship of consciousness to phenomenal field as one of perspectivity. (cf. PP, 68) The two phenomena are corrective: objects display (and hide) themselves one aspect at a time, and consciousness is situated and takes up a point of view on object. (cf. SB, 212-13)

2. The Perspectival Character of Consciousness

The perspectival character of consciousness overcomes what Merleau-Ponty terms the "well-known contradiction" of immanence and transcendence. (cf. SB, 215) (In fact, according to Merleau-Ponty, perceptual consciousness itself is a paradox of immanence and transcendence which cannot be resolved by logical thought, but must simply be accepted. A perceived thing is immanent in the sense that it is always present to the person who perceives it, transcendent in the sense that it is never totally given to the person perceiving it).

The contradiction is real only for abstract thought which begins by conceiving determinate things with stable boundaries.

Consciousness, however, is not a thing, and is neither merely an active part of the world nor creatively co-extensive with it. It is not in the world in a totally passive way, "beset by causal relations...(with) things to see and nobody who sees," (PP, 237) because in addition to what is momentarily present, consciousness is directed toward a horizon of meaning and engaged in a continual synthesis of its present perspective with past and future perspectives. Consciousness is not affected by a series of present objects in the way that a thing is affected by stimuli; what distinguishes it as consciousness is its distance, its awareness of this actual object as among other possibilities and its organization of time instead of submission to it. (cf. PP, 87, 239-40) Thus, consciousness never conceives determinate things with constant and stable boundaries.

The notion of horizontal perspective also indicates that consciousness is not co-extensive with the world as its atemporal creator. It must experience the world from some particular temporal and spatial standpoint rather than all at once. Consciousness can never in principle complete a synthesis of its view of even a

single object since further perspectives are always available. It cannot experience order and meaning except as the world contingently discloses them.

Merleau-Ponty's perspectival consciousness overcomes the epistemological difficulties of the psychoanalytic framework and is able to account for both true and false perceptions of the unconscious. But Freud's claim is not that latent ideas merely add meaning to conscious ones. His claim is, rather, that consciousness is in fact only the incomplete, broken perception of independently existing mental processes: "Mental processes are in themselves unconscious" and must be perceived as objects of consciousness. However, having an object of consciousness does not, for Freud, imply having a clear and transparent apprehension of the object. Just as Kant demonstrated that the noumenal world or thing-in-itself remains unknown to us because our perception of it is "subjectively conditioned," so Freud explicitly claims to extend Kant by showing that the psychical world is "not necessarily in reality what it appears to us to be." (SE, XIV, 171) There is thus a sense in which our psychical life is external to and hidden from us in exactly the same manner as any object in the physical world. (cf. SE, V, 613) Therefore, some special kind of "correction" is necessary to infer "reality" from its momentary representatives in conscious-

ness. For Freud, the sharp separation of appearance and reality accounts for the hiddenness of the unconscious, but not for the possibility of true perception.

In fact, Freud's definition of the mental is that which is ideational, purposive, and intentional. (cf. SE, XV, 61) He insists that unconscious ideas can be considered as fully mental processes and rejects the view that they are physical, the study of which could be relegated to physiology:

> As far as their physical characteristics are concerned, they are totally inaccessible to us: no physiological concept or chemical process can give us any notion of their nature. On the other hand, we know for certain that they have abundant points of contact with conscious mental processes...and all the categories which we employ to describe conscious mental acts, such as ideas, purposes, resolutions, and so on, can be applied to them. (SE, XIV, 168)

Since no appeal to physiology can promote an understanding of conscious mental activity, Freud must look to the data of consciousness: "How are we to arrive at a knowledge of the unconscious ? It is of course only as something conscious that we know it." (SE, XIV, 166) Thus, having overthrown consciousness in favor of the unconscious as the true psychical reality, Freud nevertheless must now appeal to consciousness to form "the point of departure for all our investigations." (SE, XIV, 172) It bears pointing out that Freud's only epistemological alternative would be to identify consciousness

with mental states, but this move would make all internal perceptions immediate and veridical, thereby negating their latent quality.

Merleau-Ponty's reconstruction provides the middle ground between inference and identification which is lacking in psychoanalytic theory. He does not separate internal and external perception: at each moment perspectival consciousness experiences, not a representation, but one view of the object itself, presented within a meaningful horizon. Truth is possible through a synthesis of temporal perspective, but since all syntheses are presumptive, truth is always provisional and may be found, through further experience, to be error. (cf. PP, 380) Mental life always remains partly "unconscious" or hidden because of the impossibility of a total perspective. Merleau-Ponty thus accounts for both the accessibility and the inexhaustibility of latent mental states through the concept of a meaningful horizon. By finding the source of "true" and "false" perception in the structure of experience, Merleau-Ponty resolves Freud's own seeming paradox of a mental life that is unconscious yet known only as something conscious.

3. Embodied Consciousness

Merleau-Ponty completes the reconstruction of Freud's latent unconscious with a notion already implicit

in the perspectival character of perception. But a further problem remains. Freud's difficulty in providing a philosophical framework for the unconscious rests in formulating its relation, not only to a conscious subject, but to the external world as well. Since Freud conceives of consciousness as the momentary perception of formless contents, his failure to distinguish the "place" of psychical and wordly objects leaves consciousness no closer to the psychical parts of its world than to any other, and gives consciousness no means by which to account for the unity of a self or to claim feelings and desires as "mine" except in the trivial sense in which every perceived object is mine. Either consciousness is one link in the natural world's causal chain, no different from the effect of physical and (epiphenomenally) mental stimuli; or consciousness is a non-personal creative source, embracing all elements in the world equally. Either formulation is inadequate to disclose a psychical unconscious which affects consciousness, remains partially hidden from it, and is nonetheless knowable by consciousness as more than an external object--as, indeed, the "preliminaries of thought." And yet this is clearly Freud's intention--to provide some special status for the psyche as distinct from the external world. Though the psyche is an object for consciousness, it is a subject

with respect to the external world. (cf. SE, V, 615-16) For Freud, neither pure subject nor object has an intrinsic order; the source of a unified self and of all meanings and intentions exists in a middle region between subject and object, unspecifiable so long as that dichotomy is adhered to.

Merleau-Ponty, however, is able to complete a reconstruction of Freud's latent unconscious with the notion that consciousness is always embodied. The exploration of a meaningful horizon through different points of view is accomplished by a consciousness which is inseparable from the network of sensory organs, emotions, and motor functions which are receptive to the world's objects. There is not, as for Freud, a separate consciousness to perceive the consequences of a "psychical apparatus... turned towards the external world;" (Ibid.) consciousness is that "apparatus" which, in intimate contact with the world, reveals whatever order and meaning is accessible to a human subject.[2] Instead of consciousness, psy-

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[2]It is interesting to note that though Merleau-Ponty does not deny consciousness to subjectivity, he considers consciousness is no longer the central characteristic of subjectivity. On the contrary, it becomes more or less marginal to subjectivity. In fact, he even considers subjectivity as preconscious, the "anonymous existence," the impersonal "one" ["on"] in order to give a place for "I-body" or "body-subject." (cf. PP, 240, 242, 404)

che, and world, Merleau-Ponty finds in experience only one primary relation, "being-in-the-world," of which embodied consciousness and world are inseparable aspects. There is no longer a question of separating psychical states from those of the external world. Since, for Freud, the psyche is an object for consciousness, but is also a subject with respect to the external world, his theory requires a mental life separate from the external world to make consciousness personal. If consciousness were just the perception of psychical states, it would need to have some means to identify mental states and to unify them as belonging to one person. But phenomenologically we have access to an organized self only insofar as the separate parts of our experience of the world hold together, and we never experience either the complete unity or complete disintegration of the world.

Merleau-Ponty's repeated rejection of the Cartesian dichotomy between the thinking mind and the mechanical body has led him to a philosophical position which proclaims the singular reality of bodily being and subjective reality. In other words, Merleau-Ponty rejects the concept of a pure consciousness and turns instead to the evidence of experience, which reveals consciousness as embodied in a situation.

Merleau-Ponty does not consider the human body as a physical object in the world. If we look at our

lived experience of the body we realize that it is not like other objects in the world. We move external objects by means of our body, which can shift them from one place to another, but we do not move our body in this way. Instead we move our body directly since it is always with us. I do not find my body at one point in space and transfer it to another, since I have no need to look for it. (cf. PP, 94) It is by means of my body that I can observe objects and situate myself in relation to them. But I cannot observe my body in the same way; there is no perspective I can gain on the whole of my body, since it is my body which enables me to have a perspective, just as it is my body that enables me to move. On this fundamental level the human body is not the same as other objects which come before the inquisitive eye of the scientist. My body is

> ...not at the extremity of some indefinite exploration; it defies exploration and is always presented to me from the same angle. Its permanence is not a permanence in the world, but a permanence from my point of view. To say that it is always near me, always there for me, is to say that it is never really in front of me, that I cannot array it before my eyes, that it remains marginal to all my perceptions, that it is with me. (PP, 106)

My body is not "in front of" me; I am in it. More precisely, <u>I am it</u>. I do not merely behold my body objectively, as a spectator observing the relation between

the parts of my body. I am myself the unifier of my arms and legs, the person who both sees and touches them. (cf. PP, 175) Insofar as I have human hands, feet, a body, and a world, I find myself directed towards a world through an intentionality which does not depend on my personal freedom, and which my surroundings have provided with characteristics not chosen by me. In other words, the bodily existence which pervades me, though independently of me, is only the barest raw material of a genuine presence in the world. Still, it provides at least the possibility of such a presence, and establishes my first consonance with the world.

Merleau-Ponty overcomes the opposition between mind and body by grounding them both in the more primitive level of being-in-the-world, of which the lived body is the intentional expression. There is a kind of latent knowledge (in the sense of knowing how, e.g., to ride a bicycle) manifested by the body, an awareness of itself which is not explicable as the work of a non-corporeal mind somehow operating on the body. In describing the body as it appears to our lived experience, we are brought to acknowledge the existence of a body image which functions below the level of our conscious reflection:

> If my arm is resting on the table I should never think of saying that it is beside the ash-tray in the way in which the ash-tray is beside the telephone. The outline of my body is a frontier which

> ordinary spatial relations do not cross. This is because its parts are interrelated in a peculiar way: they are not spread out side by side, but enveloped in each other...my whole body for me is not an assemblage of organs juxtaposed in space. I am in undivided possession of it and I know where each of my limbs is through a body image in which all are included. (PP, 98)

The body image reveals a phenomenal body, which enables us to know, for example, where we have been stung by a mosquito without having to search the spot in objective space. When we reach for an object, we look at the object, not at our hand, since the co-ordination of our body is not something we have to consciously attend to, but is pre-reflectively apprehended in terms of the functional values of its various parts. The phenomenal body is to be understood as an "expressive unity," a "synergic system," comparable to work of art. It is the seat of intentionality, so that in projecting itself onto the world, it makes the world the arena for my intentions. My body is also able to extend its hold on the world through the use of instruments or tools. A blind man's stick, for example, is no longer an external object for him, but an extension of his own phenomenal body through which he is able to feel the pavement.

Merleau-Ponty also asserts that there are realities such as seeing and speaking which place us in contact with original corporeal experience where there is no distinction between subject and object. These

realities reminds us of the mystery of Being in which we find and make our life. This pre-conscious awareness of the world in which the body-subject is situated is one which cannot be expressed in words; as soon as we touch it with our words, it ceases to be what it is. Merleau-Ponty is primarily interested in the pre-reflective level where man is not yet fully consciousness and not yet confronted with self-created meanings. Ultimately, then, we can say that this level of primordial awareness exists, but we cannot completely describe it in words.

It is my body which gives significance to my speech. (cf. PP, 272) Our corporeal being is itself communication. It is this original communication which precedes every explication and every organization which belongs to the very essence of speaking. Speaking is the actualization of the latent intentionality of silent behavior. (cf. VI, 230) By speaking man makes himself a constituting consciousness which is confronted with meanings. If consciousness should be totally loosened from the body, it would have no means of expression, of actualizing itself, and so would literally cease to be. Similarly, the body, if it is no longer "animated" and ceases to be the expression of the intenionality of consciousness, would no longer be a living body, but would fall back into the state of a physical-chemical mass. When there is integration between consciousness and body,

we are truly "at home" in our bodies, and experience our body, not as a screen between us and the world, but as our opening onto the world, since consciousness and body are already grounded on a level of being-in-the-world.

Embodied consciousness is the middle ground between the pure, unified self-conscious subject and bare external object that Freud sought in his conception of a psychical unconscious. For Merleau-Ponty there can be no pure subject or object, only the body as "subject-object." (PAP, 84) Embodied experiences cannot attain the state of a pure self-conscious subject because its unity is only implicit and always contains a hidden, passive, "unconscious" dimension. But neither can experience ever divest itself of all "psychical," active, unifying elements to confront a purely external object: "I never become quite a thing in the world; the density of experience always evades me." (PP, 165) Experience always includes a personal dimension: "...although I am outrun on all sides by my own acts, and submerged in generality, the fact remains that I am the one by whom they are experienced." (PP, 358) Since even passive elements of experience include some sense of organization, embodied experience can account for Freud's unconscious as "preliminaries of thought." Whatever is hidden in our experience of the world is not simply absent and external,

but rather somewhere on the horizon of consciousness, and we can never bring to explicit presence that which we are not already familiar with in some preliminary way.

> ...I am not myself a succession of psychic acts, nor for that matter a nuclear I who bring them together into a synthetic unity, but one single temporality which is engaged, from birth, in making itself progressively explicit. (PP, 407)

Just as, for Freud, there are different kinds of unconscious states, some more organized and accessible than others, so for Merleau-Ponty there are different kinds of horizons, and the progressive explicitation of self and world which is the life of consciousness cannot be viewed as a unilinear process.

B. The Topographical Unconscious as Originary Experience

Introductory Remarks

Freud distinguishes two kinds of ideas according to their degree of accessibility to consciousness. (cf. **SE**, XIV, 172-3; SE, XIV, 192) Latent ideas capable of becoming conscious are considered to be "preconscious;" the term "unconscious" is now reserved for ideas which are inaccessible to consciousness. Though preconscious and unconscious ideas share the descriptive characteristic of not being conscious at a particular moment, the more important distinction is a topographical one in which inaccessible ideas alone are designated as unconscious and all ideas capable of becoming conscious are placed in a region or system called "conscious" or "preconscious." (cf. SE, XIV, 232) The hiddenness of a large portion of mental life to consciousness is due, therefore, not only to the fact consciousness is momentary but, more importantly, to the existence of an unconscious system (Ucs.) which is inaccessible and which obeys fundamentally different laws from those of the conscious system (Cs.). Freud's conception of the systematic unconscious represents the greatest challenge to reflective philosophy, a challenge which Freud explicitly issues. (cf. SE, V, 614) The Ucs. for Freud is an

"archaic world of vast emotions and imperfect thoughts" to be sharply distinguished from fully developed cognition. (cf. SE, IV, 60) In exploring the characteristics of the unconscious system as a psychical region, Freud opposes what he considers the prevailing philosophic view of mental life as essentially rational and abstract.

Merleau-Ponty's treatment of ambiguous perception in terms of the relationship of figure and ground accounts for an implicit dimension of experience without distinguishing among degrees of indeterminacy. In this respect it parallels Freud's descriptive unconscious which embraces all that is not explicitly conscious with no notice that some parts of unconscious mental life are closer to consciousness than others. Though scientific investigation, listening to music, and dreamimg all include something ambiguous or unconscious, Merleau-Ponty wishes (as does Freud) to distinguish the levels of meaning operating in these activities. But Freud's topographical division of latent states into separate systems of consciousness (Cs.) and unconsciousness (Ucs.) reduces mental life to a collection of formless contents out of which no kind of meaningful activity could emerge. It is Merleau-Ponty's intention to provide an implicit reformulation of the psychoanalytic framework which accounts for layers of experience phenomenologically.

1. Form and Ordered Experience as Primary Phenomenon

Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of the relationship of consciousness to world recasts Freud's problem of accounting for meaningful experience. Whereas Freud constructs a picture of mental life out of the self-enclosed regions or substances which he presumes exist in both mental and physical nature, Merleau-Ponty substitutes a philosophy of form "liberated from the realistic postulates which are those of every psychology." (SB, 132) As conveyed through our immediate apprehension of a landscape as dreary or the color red as aggressive, we experience not bare contents but meaningful forms within a horizon of concordant possible experiences. Meaningful experience is a starting point and need be a problem only if we attempt to account for it by beginning with theoretic constructs. For Merleau-Ponty the ordered, related experience which provides human access to the world and to reason are primary phenomena which do not admit of explanation:

> The world and reason are not problematic. We may say, if we wish, that they are mysterious, but their mystery defines them: there can be no question of dispelling it by some "solution," it is on the hither side of all solutions. (PP, xx)

Merleau-Ponty does not offer an integrated account of Freud's systematic unconscious, but repeatedly evinces interest in the concept and suggested a number of re-

interpretations of it. He is concerned with it as a pre-objective realm of meaning, "an archaic consciousness," (PAP, 81) "a symbolism which is primordial, originary." (TFL, 49) In Structure of Behavior, he regards the unconscious as "the return to a more primitive manner of organizing conduct." (SB, 178-9) In "Man and Adversity" (1951), Freud's great discovery of the unconsious is "something between the organism and our selves considered as a sequence of deliberate acts and express understandings." (S, 229) In later working notes (1959), the repressed unconscious is said to be known "not as a figure on a ground, but as ground." (VI, 190) By integrating these explicit descriptions of the Freudian unconscious within the general framework of Merleau-Ponty's thought, it is possible to suggest a foundation on which a phenomenological reformulation might build.

Merleau-Ponty's treatment of the systematic unconscious represents an extension of his account of the larger area of latent unconscious states. Ambiguous perception reveals an implicit horizon of meaning which is both partly organized and partly submitted to by an embodied consciousness, and these same fundamental structures of experience reveal orders of meaning as well. Different orders of experience and meaning reveal themselves through different kinds of figure-ground relations which correspond to different temporal syntheses of em-

bodied consciousness.

The figure-ground model of ordinary perception, in which a horizon "guarantees the identity of the object throughout exploration," (PP, 68) is only one way that an implicit ground functions. Perceptual consciousness is the foundation for such "higher" activities as geometry, in which recognizing the essence of an object is a matter of presuming a complete synthesis of perspectives. (PP, 388) But there are instances where horizons are even less determinate than in ordinary perception and where "lived experience appears clothed with a signification which breaks apart" and "is not verified by concordant syntheses." (SB, 220) This suggests that some experiences may be more ambiguous than others and that a realm of experience exists which is even more primitive or primary than ordinary perception.[3] Implicit in Merleau-Ponty's account is a double sense in which experience might be considered ambiguous. Not only is experience "horizontally" ambiguous, owing to the inexhaustibility of any horizon; it is "vertically" ambiguous as well, because in foundational activities horizons are less determinate and even less easily reveal a presumptive synthesis. Thus "consciousness is divided into different types of acts of conscious-

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[3] Cf., H. L. Dreyfus and S. J. Todes, "The Three Worlds of Merleau-Ponty," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 22 (June 1962), 559-65.

ness" (SB, 172) constitutive of different levels of meaning. To understand this, we must investigate the basis for the emergence of different kinds of horizons.

2. Kinds of Horizon

An indefinite world horizon surrounds all particular horizons and expresses the implicit unity which is the ultimate background for all conscious acts. (cf. PP, 398) If considered by itself, (and this Merleau-Ponty does not do), such a horizon would be a limit concept of a world which exists prior to the emergence of experience. In figure-ground terms, it would be a pure ground with a multitude of possible figures but with none that is yet actualized. With respect to embodied consciousness, it would be a completely anonymous body which would not be conscious at all. In temporal terms, it would be an implicit hold on "eternity," to the extent that the term can have meaning prior to the emergence of time. But for an actual consciousness to exist, some particular part of this implicit unity must manifest itself through definite figures, employing some bodily functions more prominently than others during a finite period of time. Though consciousness is "one living cohesion, one single temporality," (PP, 407) in primordial contact with the world, "in order to become explicitly what it is implicitly...(it) needs to unfold itself into multiplicity." (PP, 424)

At the other extreme from that of a pure ground of a world horizon is the attempt to reach a completely explicit, unambiguous intuition of meaning. The more determinate meanings that characterize cognitive activity are achievable only when consciousness actively synthesizes a necessarily limited part of its possible experience and presumes completely to exhaust the perspectives on an object, leaving no background at all. What it in fact reveals is a horizon which is itself only one possible orientation to a more ambiguous realm of experience. The price of more sharply organized experience is a limitation of its range, for any horizon short of the world as a whole is itself a kind of perspective or figure in relation to a more comprehensive, less determinate region of meaning. Nor is it possible to intuit the ultimate world horizon as an explicit figure, for this ultimate goal of consciousness requires an overcoming of time. Temporal consciousness can thematize the world's unity only by successively bringing out different parts of it, but each part is built upon a larger, more foundational realm of possible experience, and the world's contingency always threatens the stability of any particular horizon. (cf. PP, 394)

To be meaningful, experience must exist between the pure figure of a completed synthesis and the pure

ground of a world horizon, but it is possible to understand different levels of meaning in relation to these absolute limits. Moreover, these extremes correspond to other dichotomies which Merleau-Ponty employs to account for orders of meaning: active-passive, consciousness-body, personal-impersonal. In every case the extremes themselves represent flawed theories which ignore the world's ambiguities, but within ambiguous experience itself these limit concepts reappear as end-points of a vertical grid within which different levels of meaning can be situated.

The actual structure of ambiguous experience always reveals both a controlling, or active, and a submissive, or passive, element. Though consciousness and body make up one unified subject, Merleau-Ponty distinguishes their respective active and passive dimensions. Insofar as consciousness gives phenomena a meaningful form, accessible to reflection and knowledge, the subject is active and experience contains what Merleau-Ponty calls a personal dimension; but insofar as phenomena are presented through bodily syntheses, the results of which are not conceptually graspable, experience is passive and impersonal. (cf. PP, 238ff.) Objective thought, of which rationalism and naturalism are species, explains experience as either wholly personal, "a sequence of deliberate acts and express understandings," (S, 229) or totally im-

personal, thrown back indefinitely from one bodily stage to another where " 'the sense' and 'the body' are material instruments which have no knowledge of anything." (PP, 237) But since consciousness and a living human body never exist separately, neither extreme is possible. We can, however, differentiate experience according to the degree to which active, organizing functions of personal life are evident:

> Man taken as a concrete being is not a psyche joined to an organism, but the movement to and fro of existence which at one time allows itself to take corporeal form and at others moves toward personal acts. (PP, 88)

Personal life, the constitution of relatively determinate meanings, rests upon a more ambiguous, larger fund of possible experiences, a more primitive level of meaning which Merleau-Ponty says "takes corporeal form." It is corporeal rather than personal in the sense that the body in its contact with the world reveals structures which are presented to a particular person without that person's having any experience of bringing them into existence. A human face can appear benign before any judgment is made because the body's union with the world presents this meaningful whole, just as it more generally determines what kinds of meanings can exist, and what will be the ground of things that can later be open for reflection. (cf. PP, 213-7)

3. The Tripartite: Thetic Intentionality, Operative Intentionality, and Body-Subject

In order to express the way in which reflective personal existence is based upon the body's intimate contact with the world, Merleau-Ponty adopts the Husserlian distinction between explicit thetic intentionality, which posits determinate structures, and operative or founding intentionality, which precedes it and makes it possible.[4] (PP, 429) Neither is identifiable with the limit concepts of the purely personal or purely impersonal, but each moves toward one end of the vertical continuum. Thus, thetic intentionality, while not capable of intuiting an essence from which all ambiguity is removed, is the source of whatever "higher" conceptual activity is possible for finite beings. And operative intentionality, while not

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[4] In fact, Husserl distinguishes two kinds of intentionality, namely, intentionality of acts and operative intentionality. (Cf. E. Fink, "Das Problem der Phenomenologie Edmund Husserl," Revue Internationale de Philosophie, I (2, 1939), 265-70.) For Husserl, prior to the intentionality of acts, that is the explicit intentional positing of meaningful objects, one has to reckon with a first level of intentionality constituting the "pre-thematic" ground for any single standing experience, its pre-given temporal/spatial "world" as its most comprehensive "horizon". So what was originally seen as a prominent characteristic of intentionality, its being an "activity" of consciousness, only holds good for the intentionality of acts, while the operative intentionality must be seen as an anonymously passive synthesis, a passive constitution.

an absolute unity of anonymous body and world in a realm before time and meaning. is the first relationship of a living body to a world, revealing the most primordial structures of both. It

> ...produces the natural and ante-predicative unity of the world and our life, being apparent in our desires, our evaluation and in the landscape we see, more clearly than in objective knowledge, and furnishing the text which our knowledge tries to translate into precise language. (PP, xviii)

The priority of operative intentionality over thetic intentionality expresses the relationship of originary to derived (higher) levels of meaning which Merleau-Ponty also characterizes as the priority of bodily syntheses over intellectual syntheses, the lived over the known, and the unreflected over the reflected.

Indeed, Merleau-Ponty is influenced by Husserl's theory of operative intentionality, intentionality which is operating <u>through</u> consciousness rather than by virtue of consciousness. He even employs his theory of "body-subject" in order to answer the critical question of how an intention could be effective without being actively intended by consciousness. Thus, it is in the motility of the body, the dialectical encounter between consciousness and the world, that Merleau-Ponty discovers the "original intentionality". "Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'." (PP, 137) With the theory of "body-subject" as the in-

tentional subject, Merleau-Ponty finds that sexuality plays an important role in human existence:

> We discover both that sexual life is one more form of original intentionality, and also bring to view the vital origins of perception, motility and representation by basing all these "process" on an "intentional arc"....Thus sexuality is not an autonomous cycle. It has internal links with the whole active and cognitive being....Here we concur with the most lasting discoveries of psychoanalysis. Whatever the theoretical declarations of Freud may have been, psychoanalytical research is in fact led to an explanation of man, not in terms of his sexual substructure, but to a discovery in sexuality of relations and attitudes which had previously been held to reside in consciousness. Thus the significance of psychoanalysis is less to make psychology biological than to discover a dialectical process in functions thought of as "purely bodily," and to reintegrate sexuality into the human being. (PP, 157-8)

Merleau-Ponty takes this idea further asserting that the unconscious is not found on the level of conscious, but on the level of the body. It is the body that makes possible the existence of the unconscious. The bodily intention lies beyond both conscious volition and mechanical determination. Merleau-Ponty cites an example from Binswanger of a young girl, who reacted with a hysterical aphonia at the loss, the result of her mother's resistence to the match, of her beloved. (cf. PP, 160-1) According to Merleau-Ponty, the aphonia is not to be considered a sexual fixation at an oral point of development, even though we find oral troubles in the patient's childhood, but rather as a way of reacting to

the present situation. Of all the functions of the body, speech is the one most closely connected to being with others. By her loss of speech the patient is breaking with her circle of acquaintances. The aphonia is produced by the operative intentionality of the body-subject, passively passing behind the free intentions of the patient and yet in some way purposively related to her situation. The patient cannot regain her ability to speak by a simple act of volition. For Merleau-Ponty, aphonia is not a causal paralysis, as evidenced by the girl's recovery following psychological treatment and her reunion with the man she loved. Thus the relationship between consciousness and the anonymous intentions of the body is neither expressed by an identity, nor by a dichotomy, but rather by an original dialectic, which is prior to any explicit choice connecting the subject with his world.

Again, sensory experience illustrates the relationship of higher to more foundational levels of meaning. If one wishes a scientific explanation for the appearance of the ocean, for example, one makes use of sensory experience in a specialized way, considering the visual qualities of light and color as well as the retinal structures and atmospheric properties that are thought to pertain to the scene. Not every visual datum will be deemed relevant, and the scientist actively organ-

izes the phenomena he experiences in order to select those relevant to an "explanation". But this motivated structuring of sensory experience by higher categorical thinking necessarily depends upon a larger realm of perceptual experiences from which a limited number of sensory qualities is selected. If we were to give ourselves up to what originally appears to us without having any directed purpose in mind, we would find, not separate visual, auditory, and tactile qualities, but senses that communicate with each other so that, for example, the ocean's glistening color might sound musical. According to Merleau-Ponty "synaesthetic experience is the rule," and one experiences separate senses only when one ceases to live perceptual experience and begins to inquire about it. (cf. PP, 225-7) Not only is original experience intersensorial, but it also displays an affective, motor, and vital dimension. Just as a color such as red can originally present a feeling tone such as anger, so we can imagine that original perception of the ocean is filled with a profound emotional significance. The ocean may present itself for view, not only as a scientific object, but as an indicator to pre-conceptual structures, of which it serves as a symbol.

For Merleau-Ponty, the source of originary symbolism is to be found in the most immediate contact of

body and world, thus he holds that in our original contact with the world whatever appears as "sensible" points to a pre-cognitive constellation of meanings.

The distinction made between originary and derived level of meaning is understandable through the structures of being in the world: the point-horizon relation, the body, and temporality. The foundational layer of meaning is the first step above the ultimate ground of world horizon and completely anonymous body, which Merleau-Ponty calls "a margin of almost impersonal existence." (PP, 84) With respect to the relation of figure and ground, horizons are broadly encompassing but remain relatively indeterminate. The original experience of the ocean presents a meaningful horizon which includes intersensorial and emotional perspectives that cannot be easily organized into even a presumptive synthesis. To the extent that this fund of unreflective, lived experience can be thematized, a personal, thinking subject constitutes more determinate horizons which can lead to a conceptual understanding of the ocean within a limited context, for instance as a visual phenomenon or as an influence on climate. But each of these understandings rests upon the larger horizon of the ocean as originally experienced.

The fluidity of the horizon in original experi-

ence corresponds to less focused activity by the body. Original experience relies on the general rhythms of biological existence that make the body an organism in the natural world. When one gives himself up to phenomena, they present an appearance based on "the pre-logical unity of the body image," not on the unity effected by an epistemological subject." (PP, 232-3) If, "under mescalin, the sound of a flute gives a bluish-green color," if red is aggressive rather than serene, and if the ocean can symbolize dread but not rigidity, this original symbolism is due to a unified, interconnected network of bodily functions which are not chosen by the subject. (cf. PP, 227-8) They are "the stable organs and pre-established circuits" which provide one with a customary body, a general function which remains constant throughout changes created by personal choice. (cf. PP, PP, 82-9) In higher-level activity, by contrast, specialized bodily functions are brought to bear on a more limited horizon of meaning; e.g., sight synthesizes visual qualities and hearing, auditory qualities.

Correlatively, originary experience displays a less concentrated temporal synthesis than does reflective activity. Of course "every present grasps, by stages... the totality of possible time," (PP, 84) so the difference is one of degree, but originary experience includes

within its comprehensive horizon emotional and biological dimensions that cognitive activity tries to exclude. These will include earlier personal experiences which still exist on the horizon of the present, as well as the "stereotyped patterns of our organic behavior" which form the customary body. Merleau-Ponty considers the exclusions of both of these to be forms of repression, and both comprising a past that is ground rather than figure and yet remains a formative part of present life. (cf. PP, 82-5) Whereas the oceanographer aims to synthesize the phenomena presented during the time of his precisely constructed experiment and to exclude such marginal phenomena as his childhood experiences and the phylogenetic heritage of homo sapiens, primordial experience of the ocean includes even "that past of all pasts...at the origin of our volitional being." (PP, 85) This is particularly evident in dreams and in some fantasies, as well as in certain drug experiences. Unlike cognitive and even much perceptual activity, which exhibit a relatively stable horizon or "thematic field" and which disengage a particular "relevant" context from the whole of possible time, originary experiences do not so sharply separate the immediate past and future from more distant time.

4. Original level of meaning Corresponds to the Conception of an Unconscious System

Merleau-Ponty's account of an original or foundational level of meaning corresponds to Freud's conception of an unconscious system. Both refer to a less active, less personal, less fully organized realm of meaning which is an expression of bodily existence and upon which all mental life is formed. But whereas Freudian theory makes uncritical use of constructs such as psychical regions, instinctual representatives, and "reality," Merleau-Ponty attempts to relate his descriptions to forms of experience.

Merleau-Ponty's originary level of meaning appears as the ground of all conscious life by virtue of the fact that every determinate meaning is experienced as outrun by the course of lived experience. Starting from a given horizon or context, one can decide to take up a less controlling attitude and thereby experience, for example, intersensory and emotional dimensions of music which were not present when one was actively organizing it. By submitting oneself to lived phenomena in this manner, it is possible to experience the way in which more coherent structures are built upon less determinate ones (cf. PP, 227) and to conceive of a limit of purely passive phenomena containing only the irreducible core of structures which the body's contact with the world presents.

Freud also makes the claim that the unconscious system is a passive realm which precedes conscious life and active organization, and that it is never possible to experience anything even approximating the Ucs. The Ucs., for Freud, consists of formless contents which represent bodily instincts and have no relation to external reality, even though our experience always exhibits some structure and some relation to a world. Freud posits a radical break between never-experienced contents of the id and the experience of synthesized phenomena in the ego without explaining how form can originate in an ego which is itself part of the id.

Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, begins with meaningful experience and discovers that it exhibits different kinds of form. For Merleau-Ponty, the "unconscious" is not the total lack of organization but "the return to a more primitive way of organizing conduct." (PP, 22) To be primitive is to rest upon the organic structures of the body rather than upon personal decisions; but even this pre-personal body is, for Merleau-Ponty, a kind of intentionality rather than biological organism described by physiology. Every function of the body has a meaning, even so-called reflexes, (cf. PP, 79) so the claim that meaningful experience is based on the body no longer requires crossing a metaphysical bridge between two substances one mental, one material. Unlike Freud's un-

conscious ideas, which inexplicably represent bodily instinctual forces, Merleau-Ponty's unconscious can justifiably be something between the organism and our (personal) selves because experience itself reveals a continuum from a passive, impersonal realm which is not yet that of an inert organism, to a more active, personal dimension which is still embodied.

Freud's insights into the unconscious system are understandable within an experiential framework and do not reguire the further hypothesis of a psychical apparatus with topographical subdivisions. The claim that time does not alter unconscious contents is unverifiable in the Freudian framework since anything unconscious is buried in an inaccessible region. But in Merleau-Ponty's originary level of meaning we experience a comprehensive horizon which remains relatively stable through time. What makes Beethoven's Sixth Symphony lyrical, a rat frightening, the night-time sky awesome or a person with a particular appearance erotically inviting is neither conscious choice nor an inaccessible idea representing a bit of instinctual matter, but rather a formative background of early personal experiences and of bodily intentions shared with others. These pre-personal structures form a relatively constant horizon within which consciousness successively creates more determinate meanings and

personal choices on a "conscious" level. (cf. PP, 82-3)

That the law of non-contradiction does not operate in Freud's unconscious system (cf. SE, XIV, 186; SE, XXII, 73) is experientially verifiable at a foundational level of meaning. There, according to Merleau-Ponty, contradiction is unavoidable and is the source for the insurmountable "antinomies" in the conceptual world. (cf. PriP, 18-9) Thus it is possible for a person to appear as both desirable and repulsive or for a human gesture to suggest both religious and sexual meanings beyond one's conceptual ability to reconcile them. According to Merleau-Ponty, "the accusation of contradiction is not decisive, if the acknowledged contradiction appears as the very condition of consciousness." (PriP, 19)

Both Merleau-Ponty and Freud agree that the originary or unconscious level of meaning expresses the very conditions for the possibility of consciousness. The processes which operate on this level are not random; even if objects experienced at this level often present meanings that are incompatible by the laws of conceptual thought, they do not present arbitrary or unlimited meanings. The psychoanalytic interpretation of dreams, of certain symptoms and behaviors, and of other symbolic expressions rests upon the conviction that the unconscious system operate according to different laws but is not altogether

lawless. For Merleau-Ponty, too, there is hidden logic of lived experience, "a Logos of the aesthetic world," (PP, 429) which appears as the foundation upon which every conscious act rests and as the implicit unity of which every meaning is a partial expression. It is in this sense that Merleau-Ponty accepts the Freudian unconscious as "an archaic consciousness," and a "primordial, originary symbolism," (S, 229) and indeed "the source of dreams and more generally of the elaboration of our life." (TFL, 49)

In both dreams and wakefulness are symphonies, oceans, landscapes, and animals experienced expressive symbols. Both psychoanalysis and phenomenology share in the archaeological project of discovering their deepest meaning. Our claim is that, Freud's idea of an unconscious system is more fruitfully understood within Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

PART TWO

THE PHENOMENON OF REPRESSION

Introductory Remarks

Merleau-Ponty's conception of originary experience provides a reformulation of Freud's unconscious as a system of meaning but not as a region inadmissible to consciousness. Freud explains the inadmissibility of ideas to consciousness through the theory of repression, "the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests." (SE, XIV, 16) Repression requires further consideration, and Merleau-Ponty shares Freud's view that it points to the role of the body in mental life. According to Freud, the body's instinctual demand for pleasure determines what meanings can be admitted to consciousness, and he expresses this relationship between somatic and mental phenomena in the economic (or energetic) level of metapsychology that is concerned with the circulation and distribution of quantities of energy. The separation of two systems of meaning is based, therefore, on the requirements of bodily existence, a claim that appears to challenge the traditional view that mind and body are independent substances.

For Freud the blind energy of desire is the motive force of psychical life; and the energetic approach is

concerned with the vicissitudes of these excitations. Accordingly, the economic discussion of repression involves two basic themes: the demand for pleasure and the role of instinct. Each requires investigation of both "mental" ideas and meanings and somatically based forces and energies.

The overriding principle of mental life is the demand for pleasure which operates in the primary process. The satisfaction of primitive impulses is always pleasurable, but the reason each impulse cannot be allowed full expression is, in Freud's words, that it

> would be irreconcilable with other claims and intentions. It would, therefore, cause pleasure in one place and unpleasure in another. It has consequently become a condition for repression that the motive force of unpleasure shall have acquired more strength than the pleasure obtained from satisfaction. (SE, XIV, 147)

Thus repression, too, serves the function of maintaining the state of highest possible pleasure: not the demand for pleasure considered atomistically as imposed by each particular impulse, but pleasure considered globally when the demands of all impulses and the requirements of the external world are taken into account.

What kinds of things are repressed? Freud answers that it is the "incompatible." (cf. SE, III, 51) The "incompatible" refers to a relationship which a given idea has to other ideas. Since the unconscious system consists

of mental contents with no relationship to each other, all connections among ideas must be established at a higher order of mental functioning. And since repression of "the incompatible" presupposes relationships among ideas, it must itself be the work of higher mental activity. Indeed Freud recognizes that the force of resistance which institutes repression emanates from the ego in its attempt to reconcile the demands of instinct, external world, and conscience. (cf. SE, XIX, 14) Repression is not, however, a conscious act; part of the ego is unconscious. What must be repressed are ideas that are incompatible, those that cannot be synthesized by the ego. (cf. SE, XXII, 76, n.3) Pleasure, conceived globally, is still the purpose underlying synthesis and rejection, but pleasure is defined by the compatibility of claims and intentions rather than by reference to the pleasure or displeasure produced by a single idea.

Freud explains the demand for pleasure not only in terms of the compatibility of meanings but in energetic language as well. Parallel to the experience of maximizing pleasure is, for Freud, a tendency of the "mental apparatus" to attain as close to a homeostatic state as possible, and this is an expression of "the principle of constancy."

> The facts which have caused us to believe in the dominance of the pleasure principle in mental life

> also find expression in the hypothesis that the mental apparatus endeavors to keep the quantity of excitation present in it as low as possible, or at least to keep it constant. (SE, XVIII, 9)

Through this hypothesis Freud endeavors to establish that the human tendency to pursue what is pleasurable is associated with dynamics of energy.

Freud's theory of instinct expresses the same close connection between mental and physical phenomena. Instinct is one of the "basic concepts" Freud refers to as being necessary in the establishment of a new science;[1] it is an attempt to indicate that mental activity is a form of bodily expression. Freud considers instinct neither purely mental nor purely physical: "an 'instinct' appears to us as a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic;...a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body." (SE, XIV, 121-2) Freud considers two separate manifestations of instinct, the idea which represents the instinct (its "ideational representative") and the quantitative energy attached to it ("libido," "charge of effect," "cathexis"). The degree to which an idea is active, whether in the conscious or unconscious, depends on how much instinctual en-

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[1] Cf., J. Laplanche and J-B Pontalis, The Language of Psychoanalysis, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 214-6.

ergy is attached to it, to what degree it is "cathected." To understand repression requires an account of both the ideational and the energetic component of instinct. (cf. SE, XIV, 111-6)

Merleau-Ponty's theory of form may supplement Freud's account for the inaccessibility of primitive level of meaning to consciousness, since Freud holds that an "instinct" appears to us as a concept on the frontier between the mental and somatic and to understand repression requires an account of both the ideational and the energetic component of instinct. This may correspond to Merleau-Ponty's theory of form as a possible way out of the empirical/idealist dichotomy in respect to the relationship between consciousness and nature which will be examined in this chapter.

Merleau-Ponty's theory of form may serve as a more promising model to explain why a primitive level of meaning is inaccessible to consciousness in the way that it replaces Freud's energetic approach with a phenomenological orientation that reveals the body and the relationship between form and body as the necessary conditions for the constitution and the repression of meaning.

A starting point is Merleau-Ponty's explicit statement that the repressed is known as a ground rather than a figure on a ground. (cf. VI, 190) Left at that, the repressed would be part of experience which one neither ex-

plicitly recognizes nor ignores, the surplus of the lived over the known. (cf. PP, 296) This characterization is correct but incomplete, insofar as it implies that a conscious subject freely chooses what part of the world to hide from itself. "If the subject has created the obstacles itself, then they are not obstacles," (TFL, 46) so Merleau-Ponty rejects this interpretation:

> The unconscious is reduced to what we decide not to assume, and, since this decision presupposes that we are in contact with the repressed, the unconscious proves to be nothing more than a particular instance of bad faith, a hesitation of imaginative freedom. Such a view loses sight of what was Freud's most interesting insight...the idea of a symbolism which is primordial, originary...(TFL, 49)

To understand how repression hides originary symbolism from consciousness, we must supplement the idea of the repressed as a ground with other explicit characterizations.

In his preface to Hesnard's book on Freud, Merleau-Ponty considers "the repressed as a zone of experience we have not integrated." (PAP, 81) And in Phenomenology of Perception he relates repression to what we have seen to be a basic structure of human existence: "...as an advent of the impersonal, repression is an universal phenomenon, revealing our condition as incarnate beings by relating it to the temporal structure of being in the world." (PP, 83) Hence Merleau-Ponty's theory of form may help us to elucidate each of his characterizations of repression.

1. Notion of From

In The Structure of Behaviour Merleau-Ponty introduces the notion of Gestalt (synonymous with form and structure) which goes beyond the analyses offered by either empiricism or rationalism, and in particular transcends the dichotomy of consciousness and nature which each presupposes. The notion of Gestalt refers to the ability of an organism to function in a global, structured way, exhibiting a general co-ordination of its parts oriented towards the achievement of certain goals or intentions. As such Gestalten are neither empirical things (being relations between parts) nor pure consciousness (since they are not the product of thought, and exist in organisms which do not display self-consciousness).

In fact, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy develops between two alternatives he rejects. He rejects any philosophy that juxtaposes externally associated terms (the physicalist, reductive sort of explanation which reduces the living process to arrangements of dead pieces); he rejects equally a philosophy that discovers (in phenomena) relations which are intrinsic to thought (the sort of explanation which reads cognitive patterns into concrete life and then explains everything in terms of these patterns). Life is reducible neither to arrangements of things nor to patterns of thought. This is true generally

of biological life and more true of human life. He aims to show "the essential features of the phenomenon, the paradox which is constitutive of it: behavior is not a thing, but neither is it an idea. (SB, 127) Researchers would destroy the meaning of their discoveries as soon as they attempt to give them a foundation in either of these notions. The Structure of Behavior begins this reduction with a study of the nervous system. All the concepts of which psychology makes use (e.g., stimulus, synapse, inhibition, reflex, localization, etc.) become self-contradictory, and lose all usefulness in interpreting and systematizing facts if these concepts are used in a context which incorporates the nervous system into a kind of classical mechanism. This critique, carried on in the light of Goldstein's work, terminates in making the Gestalt or form the interpretative and fundamental idea vis-à-vis the nervous system.

Merleau-Ponty begins with the lower orders of biology and physics, and views them as already organized, already having a surpassing activity. The facts presented by the form theory become more intelligible and useful if it focuses on the primacy of meaning. But the meaning itself is not univocal; it reveals a status of increasing complexity. It is this that Merleau-Ponty elucidates while pointing out the various levels which are found in behavior. All activity of a living thing takes place with-

in the form of a situation and is understood only if one interprets it as the elaboration of the meaning of this situation. At the lower level (that of the "syncretic form") behavior is enclosed within the bounds of its natural conditions and deals with novel situations only insofar as they are related to biological situations which are imposed upon the agent. (cf. SB, 104) Once behavior goes on to "variable forms," it employs "signals" that are no longer determined by the instinctive constitution of the species. (cf. SB, 105) Meaning tends then to free itself from the material things in which it has its basis. Finally behavior will be symbolic if the relation of the sign to the signified ceases to be founded on a real likeness or is no longer restricted to the instance in which it has some practical effect.

This distinction of levels, which has its origin in the form understood as meaning, provides the focal point of The Structure of Behavior. For one thing, it restores a precise and delimited meaning to a notion whose role was formerly of considerable importance: that of cerebral localization. Or again, it clarifies the picture of what is missing in certain kinds of pathological behavior. These latter are not comprehensible if one limits oneself to drawing up a list of the activities that are acceptable or unacceptable in a given subject. The results of such listings are contradictory more often than

not, for the subject is sometimes capable and sometimes incapable of a given act. But this confusion is dissipated and the trouble understood as soon as pathological behavior is seen in relation to a definite level determined by one of the kinds of meaning.

But this is not all. The notion of form is further expanded by Merleau-Ponty to express an overall interpretation of the orders of reality: the physical order, the biological order, the human order.

Form, in fact, has application even in the order of physical nature. The laws of our universe, which imply a matter composed of undifferentiated particles (of one or of several kinds) moved according to the principles of mechanics, are themselves true only within a certain structure--supposedly stable--of the universe. For example, the law of falling bodies is true and remains true only if the velocity of the earth's rotation is not accelerated; if it were accelerated, centrifugal force would be capable of neutralizing, and then outweighing, the force of gravity. The law of falling bodies, therefore, is a statement about the constitution, in the earth's vicinity, of a relatively stable field of forces, and the law is valid only for the duration of the world structure on which it is based. (cf. SB, 138) Physical laws, therefore, only have meaning in in relation to certain global structures. A physical

form must be defined as an equilibrium obtained with respect to certain given external conditions. Or again:

> The notion of form which was imposed upon us by the facts was defined like that of a physical system, that is, as an ensemble of forces in a state of equilibrium or of constant change such that no law is formulable for each part taken separately and such that each rector is determined in size and direction by all the others. (SB, 137)

Thus what is essential to an understanding of a physical activity or essence is its form, the dialectic of laws in a given system, its structure.[2]

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[2]To be sure, all of this had already been said by the Gestaltists, but Merleau-Ponty argues that even though Gestalt psychology, in discovering the notion of Form, freed itself from the atomistic explanations of traditional physics and the views of a naive materialism, it nonetheless remained bound up with the implicit ontology of this science, one which is that of a naive realism. In fact, the Gestaltists did no more than substitute, in the place of a complex of independent, externally related causes and actions, the notion of an integrated whole wherein "causes" are now interdependent but where the motive force is nonetheless causality. In other words, they only touched up the notion of cause, and, for them, the form remains a real thing which acts by means of physical causality. Gestalt psychology remains a prisoner of an objectivistic and causal philosophy in that it holds that forms can be discovered in nature, taken by itself.

For Merleau-Ponty, however, this idea is no more acceptable than of a causal positivism. He emphasizes that structure and laws are two dialectical moments and not two powers of being. The physical form is therefore not a fact of nature taken in itself but only insofar as it is discovered through consciousness. The form is thus not a physical reality but an object of consciousness. (cf. SB, 145)

But in what respects is the physical form like and unlike the forms which characterize the biological or human orders? The notion of equilibrium supplies the criterion by which one judge. This equilibrium is defined in the physical order as a movement toward rest, or the re-establishment of a state of rest. The equilibrium of a biological form, on the other hand, implies the establishing of its own conditions of existence. It is a question, therefore, of a form which shapes for itself its own environment, a form which, far from being limited to conserving itself, is anterior and transcends itself; and such a form attains its equilibrium only in this transcendence. In the case of the physical form, the dialectical relation between the physical law and the cosmological structure remains interior to the system. With the biological form, however, the dialectical relation exists between the form itself and what is outside the form that which constitutes the environment.

But it is in reflection to the human order that the notion of form attains its richest significance. To know that consciousness characterizes the human form is not to be possessed of any great insight if consciousness is understood as an irreducible ultimate, or if one is limited to describing it as the interiorization of exteriority. What is new in this cycle of behavior changes the biological environment into a world of perception and

work; it causes us to progress, beyond the food that is ingested and the prey that is pursued, to the tool or the useful object that is made and utilized. What is involved here is an orientation--through assimilation of the object and is going out toward the object--toward knowledge and control of a reality. Conceived in this way, conscious behavior reiterates the transcendence already discovered in the biological order, but does so to elevate this transcendence to the level of a relation between an existent in conflict with a world of things which also exist.

Human behavior is the concrete creation of new structures and the "capacity of going beyond the created structures in order to create others." (SB, 175) "Human activity creates use-objects and thereby also has as its meaning to reject and surpass (given) use-objects." (SB, 176) Freud's psychological determinism and Marx's historical determinism cite only given complexes and given circumstances concerning means. These have deterministic force only to the extent that the human individual does not succeed in reforming the given, reorganizing it, endowing it with "a new significance." (SB, 179) They explain man only to the extent he often fails at being properly human.

In denying that given psychological or historical patterns have (the properly human) causal force, Merleau-

Ponty differs from Sartre's acceptance of historical determinism. Sartre accepts as given the currently posed historical factors which Marx outlined. For Merleau-Ponty such factors are posed by and for our creative surpassing, and this means that properly human living would reject and reorganize this seeming historical determinacy. It may determine us when we fail to be properly human. The properly human, on the other hand, will be to reorganize the "concrete" even though it is historically given. What was said of biological or physical laws is as true of psychological and historical laws. For Merleau-Ponty, they are disembodied afterthoughts, the temporary products of human living, not its explanatory causes.

Merleau-Ponty holds that the lived exceeds the "representative consciousness;" that is to say, there is a process of thought and activity. This activity is prior to and wider than thought; it is "this sensible mass in which I live." (SB, 211)

This process occurs in animals as well as humans, and it is observable externally. "Spinoza would not have spent so much time considering a drowning fly if this behavior had not offered to the eye something other than a fragment of extension...The structure of behavior as it presents itself to perceptual experience is neither thing nor consciousness." (SB, 127) Thus the problem of subjectivity, solipism, and other minds comes from the split be-

tween concreteness and consciousness. Once we split them, we seem not to observe consciousness in animals and in other humans. No such problem occurs when consciousness is viewed as embedded form, the form of concrete activity.

Form applies to physical things, living organisms, and human activity, but not to all three alike because each presents a different degree of integration. A higher order (e.g., human order) achieves its greater integration by taking up and transforming the "material" of a lower order. Human projects retain their integrity to the degree that they do transform natural bodily powers, but the appropriation of organic functions is never guaranteed. Physical, vital, and human forms are only "partial totalities" and can be destroyed or reduced to a lower level by the "outside" forces it had attempted to integrate, as is evident when plant life is overcome by polluted air or a dancer is disabled by bodily injury.

Human surpassing does not always and necessarily happen. We may be determined by the Freudian complexes and their force of "monotonous need and instinct." Hence Merleau-Ponty assigns these complexes a considerable role, the role of which is then further organized. He considers repression to be the failure of human forms fully to appropriate the biological forms within it; or, in other words, the inability of consciousness to integrate all its lived

experienced into reflective knowledge. These two formulations are parallel because consciousness is, like physical and vital forms, a way of organizing nature. In the case of consciousness, we find the transformation of physical and living nature into such human acts as speech, work, and love. (cf. SB, 162-3)

2. Form and Consciousness

Merleau-Ponty's treatment of forms accords with his phenomenological treatment of consciousness. From one standpoint, the whole notion of form is derived from the apprehension of unities in perception, (cf. SB, 142-5) so that in a sense "what we call nature is already consciousness of nature, what we call life is already consciousness of life, and what we call mental is still an object vis-à-vis consciousness." (SB, 184) From the standpoint of absolute consciousness there can be no problem of relating body to mind. The body as a material would be only an idea, an object for consciousness, and there would be no question of connecting consciousness to physical or organic "condition." (cf. SB, 204ff.) But this view is of a consciousness unaware of its genesis.

The unfolding of physical, vital, and human forms is also the history of consciousness itself. That nature and life "participate in form" means that they participate in consciousness. (cf. SB, 133) Consciousness is not a

separate "spiritual" order which encloses the world as its object but a structure which retains and relies on physical and organic forms even as it transform them into human projects. Since consciousness never escapes embodiment, it cannot in principle rise above its natural origins to see them as external objects: "higher behavior retains the subordinated dialectics in the present depth of its existence." (SB, 207) Consciousness never attains the perfect integration which would allow it fully to control the corporeal forms it depends on: sleepiness interferes with the writer's concentration, fatigue thwarts the pursuit of a passion. (cf. SB, 210) But this is not just a deficiency. Any existing human activity, to be more than a pure idea, must be executed through particular objects and through an incarnate consciousness, which will be more or less alert or drowsy, more or less in control of its habitual behavior. Here the corporeal is not a substance separate from the mental but the means by which consciousness actualizes itself, not all at once through an eternal intuition of self and world but part by part, in time, through successive perspectives:

> The problem of relations of the soul and body is thus transformed instead of disappearing: now it will be the problem of the relations of consciousness as a flux of individual events, of concrete and resistant structures, and that of consciousness as tissue of ideal significations. (SB, 215)

These descriptions imply a dialectical relation-

ship of consciousness and its foundations. It is usual to say that the corporeal realm precedes and sets limits for any possible consciousness. From this standpoint organic forms or structures are already constituted and presented to consciousness as its past, a foundation on which to build. But from another perspectives, that of intentional consciousness at each moment, the corporeal realm is the future, that which does not exist in activity until consciousness constitutes it. Consciousness recognizes the corporeal as its fields of "future possibilities," and it is consciousness which further limits the corporeal by actualizing only part of it. From either viewpoint it is correct to say that consciousness exists through the medium of the body which it never fully integrates. The body is either the "already constituted" which consciousness can know progressively through archaeological investigation or the "yet to be constituted" toward which consciousness is teleologically directed. Thus the background or horizon of every conscious act is both its past and its future, both a prior condition of consciousness and a realm of "pre-being" which is brought into existence for the first time when consciousness defines it.

Merleau-Ponty usually refers to the repressed unconscious as a past which is no longer accessible, but he also indicated the sense in which it is a future:

> this unconscious is to be sought not at the bottom of ourselves, behind the back of our "consciousness," but in front of us, as articulations of our field...it is the constellation wherein our future is read. (VI, 80)

It is thus possible to consider "originary" experience as in the future as well as in the past, as a telos as well as a genesis.

Merleau-Ponty often relies on a series of descriptions which alternate between these two viewpoints, sometimes adopting one to the exclusion of the other. But he also explicitly recognizes the correctness of both standpoints on the organic, pre-reflective level of experience.

> We may with equal truth say of these pre-givens (as Husserl says of the body) either that they are always "already constituted" for us or that they are "never completely constituted"--in short, that consciousness is always behind or ahead of them, never contemporaneous. (S, 165)

To explicate Merleau-Ponty's conception of repression requires following his procedure of assuming only one standpoint at a time (usually the repressed as past), but we must add the implicit understanding--even when he does not--that the other perspective is possible. Merleau-Ponty suggests that this particular ambiguity is unavoidable when one engages in phenomenological description with the resources of a dialectical language. (cf. TFL, 52)

The repressed unconscious is the realm of "concrete and resistant structures" that are the foundation for all meaning yet inaccessible to knowledge and reflec-

tion. It is not an object but that through which objects are possible, a characterization Merleau-Ponty applies to both the body (cf. SB, 215) and the unconscious. (cf. VI, 180) Repression is a universal phenomenon since consciousness always uses bodily structures in its perception of the world and can never make those structures into determinate objects of knowledge. They are not a background that could subsequently be made a figure. The repressed structures are always background because consciousness requires them in its constitution of a world. Consciousness is not a pure transparency which could intuit anything it chooses; it must rely on physical and organic forms which define the limits of possible experience.

> To the extent that I have "sense organs," a "body," and "psychic functions" comparable with other men's, each of the moments of my experience ceases to be an integrated and strictly unique totality, in which details exist only in virtue of the whole; I become the meeting point of a host of "causalities." (PP, 83)

Though it is consciousness which originally transforms sense organs and psychic functions from the variable form (vital level) to the symbolic form (human level), consciousness itself remains a "partial totality" which always falls short of completely integrating vital functions into self-enclosed meanings. In the choice to enter a loving relation, for example, consciousness takes up the body's desiring powers but never has them totally at its demand,

never fully comprehends them. It is not purely a matter of choice whether and whom to desire. It is possible to experience one's own desire or lack of it as an alien influence, disturbing what one would choose, because consciousness does not constitute desire itself. Desire is among the categories of pre-personal existence, making up a horizon which consciousness does not create but can only live within.

> In so far as I inhabit a "physical world," in which consistent "stimuli" and typical situations recur... my life is made up of rhythms which have not their reason in what I have chosen to be...Thus there appears round our personal existence a margin of almost impersonal existence...round the human world which each of us has made for himself is a world in general terms to which one must first of all belong in order to enclose oneself in the particular context of a love or an ambition. (PP, 83-4)

3. The Function and Character of Repression

Repression restricts consciousness but is also a necessary condition for its existence. Consciousness must rely on "concrete and resistant structures" which are given to it, which it "uses as springboards from which to leap toward other spontaneous acts." (PP, 136) Were it purely spontaneous, constituting a perfectly enclosed meaning at each moment, it would have no relation to a past and no sense of continuity over time. On the other hand, a biological past makes possible the sense of unity which allows consciousness to exist. (cf. PP, 137) That momentary con-

sciousness acts with the weight of a given history allows it.

> to overcome the dispersal of instants...reintegrating into personal existence even that past of all pasts which the stereotyped patterns of our organic behavior seem to suggest as being at the origin of our volitional being. (PP, 85)

But having a pre-personal horizon of "stereotyped patterns" also precludes consciousness from having the comprehension of its origins that would allow it to transcend them: "What enables us to centre our existence is also what prevents us from **centering it completely, and the anonymity** of our body is inseparably both freedom and servitude." (PP, 85)

Repression as an universal phenomenon helps to explain what is more familiar to psychoanalysis, the repression of particular meanings in the life of an individual. Consciousness exists by projecting itself into a physical world and a body, and it not only takes up these structures in its constitution of a world but also adds its own personal meanings to them. Overlaying the original capacity for desire, for instance, are the particular habits developed in the course of a personal life. The horizon which surrounds personal acts would seem to consist of at least two layers; first the inherited organic structures from the distant past, and then habits and dispositions acquired in the more recent past of personal and cultural life. Merleau-Ponty refers to the

acquired world of past experience as a "sediment" which becomes added to the original "anonymous" forms of nature and body, and they together form a background for conscious activity. (cf. PP, 130) Sedimentation is a necessary condition of experience:

> Consciousness projects itself into a physical world and has a body as it projects itself into a cultural world and has its habits: because it cannot be consciousness without playing upon significances given either in the absolute past of nature or in its own personal past, and because any form of lived experience tends toward a certain generality whether that of our habits or that of our bodily functions. (PP, 137)

Not all of one's personal past recedes into the generality of the repressed, of course. A large part of our dispositions, commitments, or specific past actions are available to us as memories; they are backgrounds which can become figures when we choose to re-think a commitment or recall a former event in our lives. The repressed past which has not been integrated with the present, by contrast, is inaccessible to memory and has become, like bodily forms, necessarily lived rather than known, a condition of all possible experience.

The structures of originary experience will clarify this notion of repression as "a zone we have not integrated." The background of present consciousness is fragmented into different kinds of possible horizons, some revealing a presumptive synthesis more readily than others. Derived meanings are relatively more determinate wholes,

more open to reflection and memory, because they are understood as fitting within a larger horizon of meaning. Categorical thinking in general is possible through a hierarchy of meanings, where the horizon of a more particular meaning such as "right angle" is understood within the wider but still quite determinate horizon of "Euclidean space." Similarly, one may recall a series of professional activities, each one having a quite determinate meaning within personal life.

Important human projects are generally lived unknown, more or less. But any activity not literally definitive of one's conscious life can be identified; one's most fundamental commitments will not, however, be known within any larger isolable project. Truly originary experience presents structures which are not fully identifiable. They cannot be synthesized because they are so general that they enclose all other horizons. They are not meanings we are presently constituting but structures presented to us as the background of all experience. This description applies not only to originary bodily forms but also to those formative personal experiences which tend toward the same "generality." An episode of an individual's life may assume a meaning that is incompatible with one's apprehension of "my past": it can neither be situated within the framework of past events nor become a recognizable framework for all others. Instead it may take on a

pre-eminent significance that surrounds all one's life and become, like more remote organic structures, part of the foundational level of meaning that is inaccessible to explicit awareness.

In temporal terms, consciousness centers experience in the present, but the past and future do not form a continuous, uniformly accessible background. Some parts of time can become split off from others and join biological forms as an impersonal horizon, a general medium through which to have a world.

> ...repression, to which psychoanalysis refers, consists in the subject's entering upon a certain course of action--a love affair, a career, a piece of work--in his encountering some barrier, and, since he has the strength neither to surmount the obstacle nor to abandon the enterprise, he remains imprisoned in the attempt and uses up his strength indefinitely renewing it in spirit....One present among all presents thus acquires an exceptional value....We continue to be the person who once entered on this adolescent affair or the one who lived in this parental universe. (PP, 83)

Personal and cultural life is an extension of the biological structures which serve both to implant and to restrict consciousness. To choose a particular kind of cultural patterns or human relationships as one's own is to create one form of living out of the totality of possible forms which are at the limit of consciousness. An acquired form of behavior is not only a real human commitment, but also a pattern of behavior that one can identify and represent to oneself as within the larger layer horizon of

life's possibilities. A repressed experience can be seen as one that is being lived as an anonymous background of all conscious life; in other words, it is both the precondition and hidden goal of conscious life; thus we cannot conceptually grasp it. For Merleau-Ponty,

> Consciousness can live in existing things without reflection, can abandon itself to their concrete structure, which has not yet been converted into expressible signification; certain episodes of its life, before having been reduced to the condition of available memories and in offensive objects, can imprison its liberty by their proper inertia, shrink its perception of the world, and impose stereotypes on behavior. (SB, 222)

To avoid individual repression, conscious life would have to a "progressive structuration" in which each moment of one's personal past would take its place within a more comprehensive present consciousness. (cf. SB, 177) Each choice would actualize a human possibility without fore-closing any other for the future. It would always be possible to detach oneself from any commitment and to reexamine it. Indeed, if an embodied consciousness can live a life of "pure authenticity," its only limits would be those established by the "stereotyped organic patterns at the origin of volition." (cf. PP, 85)

For Merleau-Ponty, however, the biological and the human are not strictly separable. There are not set instincts plus a separate system of consciousness, but bodily forms that absorb personal acts into stable dispositional tendencies. (cf. PP, 146) "For man, to live is...

to continue a vortex of experience which was set up at our birth....," (TFL, 47) and we can expect certain experiences, especially those early in life, will constitute an unbroken elaboration upon organic structures.

It is impossible to distinguish phenomenologically between an organically based condition of consciousness, and a former personal choice which has come to enclose all experiences. It is only when one assumes a sharp, objective demarcation between a world of instinct and a world of culture and choice that one can debate how to classify desire or incest toboo. For Merleau-Ponty, there are no such separate layers:

> Everything is both manufactured and natural in man, as it were, in the sense that there is not a word, not a form of behavior which does not owe something to purely biological being and which at the same time does not elude the simplicity of animal life. (PP, 189)

For each individual the dichotomy between the acquired and the natural becomes translated into the oscillation of personal and impersonal dimensions of existence. (cf. PP, 88) The horizon surrounding consciousness does consists of two layers, personal meanings open to possible reflections and impersonal structures enclosing all experience. The former appear as "acquired," habits or commitments still open to choice, while the latter are experienced as "natural," necessary and inextricable parts of consciousness. This is the phenomenological distinc-

tion between the spiritual and the organic, but it does not admit of a precise fixing of boundaries. In one's sexual desire for a particular person, for example, we would ordinarily assume that some personal decision is made, that the specific desire is not the person's only manner of having a world. But we may also assume there to exist something like an erotic core which is organic and "repressed" in the sense that it is not itself open to possible reflection and choice. It will be merely bodily not when it can be traced to physiological processes, but when it is experienced as the result of something outside one's control. What at one time is an object of choice may become impersonal and repressed at another, as when habit becomes "force of habit." Merleau-Ponty includes both inherited organic structures and more recently "acquired" forms of behavior as possible structures of the repressed because both express the "advent of the impersonal" when they are lived though not integrated, when they are enacted though deprived of human significance.

Since individual repression is an elaboration on the anonymous forms which all persons share, we can expect some similarity in the kinds of things that are likely to assume the importance of enclosing all other aspects of life. The variety of personal lives and cultural environments will result in differences of things repressed, but the elements of lived experience which are not integratable

will be bound up with the foundational structures of experience.

Both Merleau-Ponty and Freud agree that these are rooted in the body, which determines toward what kind of things consciousness can be directed. For Freud the dominant bodily need is pleasure, the "fulfillment" of instinctual forces. Merleau-Ponty suggests what is foundational by using such indeterminate locutions as "prelogical unity of the body image" and "Logos of the aesthetic world." It is indeed the indeterminate character of "pleasure" (or "desire") that provides phenomenological grounds for supposing it to be originary and for inferring that the elements of individual life most likely to be repressed are those closely associated with it.

Pleasure cannot, however, be represented in third-person terms. Freud tries unsuccessfully to explain repression through a system of energies which represent the somatic demand for pleasure. The goal of perfect pleasure first is conceived as complete homeostasis, then as a constant level of energy, but Freud abandons both of these purely quantitative constructions. Beginning with the assumption that the body can be represented only through mechanical functions, Freud is unable to account for its role in the exclusion of "incompatible" meanings from consciousness. Freud acknowledges the need to include some qualitative factor, some reference to temporal rhythms,

which he cannot explicate. "If we were only to say what this qualitative characteristic is, we should be much further advanced in psychology." (SE, XIX, 160)

Merleau-Ponty advances psychoanalytic psychology by providing it with a new foundation that overcomes the split between the corporeal and the mental, the purely quantitative and the qualitative. The body can exclude meanings from consciousness because it is itself the source of meaning. It can seek what is desirable because it is possessed by desire, (cf. SB, 172) which is not a quantifiable force. Freud implicitly recognizes this in his notion of instinct as a "frontier concept between the mental and physical," but his Cartesian framework tracks of bodily energies and mental ideas, and then search for a principle to connect the two. Merleau-Ponty provides that principle in his conception of human reality as a partially integrated form. The physical and the spiritual are not separate substances but two dimensions of existence which can be well or poorly integrated.

PART THREE

THE DISCERNMENT OF PSYCHOTHERAPY: PSYCHOANALYTIC PENETRATION AS EIDETIC INTUITION

Introductory Remarks

Merleau-Ponty's formulation of a realm of meaning not integrated into consciousness offers a phenomenological framework for understanding what Freud calls "the most essential part" of psychoanalysis, the existence of a repressed unconscious. (cf. SE, XIV, 16) Freudian psychotherapy aims to overcome the dissociation between conscious and unconscious system of meaning through a procedure that implicitly suggests a novel conception of freedom because he conceives only the traditional alternatives of pure spontaneity, which he rejects, and absolute determinism, which he embraces. Merleau-Ponty's development of the relationship of consciousness to originary experience will clarify Freud's clinical project and reveal a form of freedom that goes beyond activity and passivity.

The therapeutic goal of psychoanalysis is the comprehension of the id by the ego, and this project confirms Merleau-Ponty's observation that phenomenology and psychoanalysis converge by "aiming toward the same latency." (PAP, 85) The psychotherapeutic effort to overcome repression parallels the phenomenological attempt to uncover

the structures of originary experience. Freud and Merleau-Ponty even use similar images. Psychoanalysis works with "derivatives" of the unconscious, just as Merleau-Ponty considers the more accessible, determinate meanings to be in some way derived from a primary level of meaning. (cf. SE, XIV, 139; PP, 394) The available ideas have a close conceptual relationship with their foundation, and both authors call them "translations" of an original text. (cf. SE, XIV, 166; PP, xviii) Indeed, both Freud and Merleau-Ponty describe the work of exploring that text as an integration, assimilation, or appropriation of it by consciousness. (cf. SE, XXII, 80; SB, 178ff.) Merleau-Ponty insists, however, that Freud's descriptions of analytic therapy cannot be accomodated within his deterministic framework and that they require the formulation of a new relationship, that between originary experience and consciousness.

1. Fundierung Relationship

Originary experience does not cause consciousness but is its foundation. Merleau-Ponty's articulation of the Fundierung relationship expounds the actual connection of Freud's unconscious system to consciousness in a way that the deterministic hypothesis cannot. His concept of Fundierung demonstrates how phenomena are grounded on more primordial phenomena (or motivation) where phenomena are

mutually implicated by being expressions of the same intention or meaning. For instance, in trying to illuminate the dichotomy of defining time as either the product of a constituting consciousness, or as something already constituted and into which consciousness is immersed, Merleau-Ponty employs a conception of "passive synthesis"[1] in order to overcome the opposed relationship between time and consciousness. (PP, 427) Again, in order to overcome the contradictory concepts of freedom and determinism, he defines freedom as "creative repetitions." (SNS, 25) Such paradoxical usages may bring us to question the meaning of the juxtaposed concepts in terms of their suitability for conceptualizing our lived experience of the world.

Indeed, Merleau-Ponty's theory of Fundierung may provide us a way to overcome the discrepancies between instinct and cause. Originary experience, like an instinct, is neither internal nor external to consciousness. Freud locates repressed instincts in a topographical region separate from consciousness, yet recognizes that an

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[1]To be sure, Husserl had already used the concept of "passive genesis" in his Cartesian Meditations to account for phenomena that have been constituted at a prior temporal occasion, phenomena passively given in memory, which provide ready data for any present temporal occasion of constitution, i.e., any new act activity of active genetic constitution. Merleau-Ponty is, in fact, influenced by Husserl's concept of "passive synthesis" when treating the problematic relationship between time and consciousness.

instinct is not external in the same way as a stimulus: "...with an instinct, flight is of no avail, for the ego cannot escape from itself." (SE, XIV, 146) But repression also requires that an instinct be "external enough" to be inaccessible. The figure-ground structure points to a new possibility, that the originator (or instinct) is the ultimate horizon of each conscious meaning, which is, in turn, "presented as a determinate or explicit form of the originator." (PP, 394) The originary or the instinctual can be both inescapable and inadmissible.

Originary experience is also like an instinct and unlike a cause in that it is relatively constant rather than momentary. The same originator manifests itself through different determinate meanings, just as instinct is the foundation for a variety of expressions, condensations, and distortions. These derivatives of instinct are not vicissitudes of physical energies but explications of <u>original forms</u> of embodied consciousness which, though in a way "timeless" themselves, can be unfolded only through a multiplicity of expressions. (cf. PP, 407; PP, 424)

Freud requires instincts to be both causes and intentions, but seen as originary experience, they need not be either. Instincts neither dictate specific meanings nor appear as explicit conscious choices, but rather mark out an area of possibilities within which experience can exist. Operative or founding intentionality conveys this

middle position. As "the text which our knowledge tries to translate into precise language," (PAP, 86) operative intentionality does not determine what particular meanings individuals or cultures will thematize, but all symbolic behavior, including anything worthy of being called knowledge, must be an expression of it. Even a symptom, like all specific intentions, is not just an effect but an expression of a more primitive intentionality, which means that it carries its significance within itself. (cf. PP, 161) It is thus possible to justify a theory of interpretation or a hermeneutics and to make sense of the psychoanalytic study of "condition of representability" and of its claim that one thing can be "fitted" to express another.

Operative intentionality does not determine but overdetermines specific meanings. Though Freud presumes that the same basic instincts are present in everyone, he does not conclude that everyone has the same experience, because instincts are not sufficient condition for particular conscious meanings, as causes would normally be understood to be. Nor could any account of "multiple external forces" explain existence of specific behavior, and Merleau-Ponty interprets Freud as realizing this:

> Freud himself, in his concrete analyses, abandons causal thought, when he demonstrates that symptoms always have several meanings, or, as he puts it, are "overdetermined." For this amounts to admitting that a symptom, at the time of its onset, al-

> ways find raisons d'être in the subject, ao that no event in a life is, strictly speaking, externally determined. (PP, 158, n.2)

Freud's own identification of overdetermination with condensation of meaning strengthens this interpretation and is an implicit recognition that the relationship between unconscious and conscious meaning is one of foundation rather than causation. A conscious expression is not a purely passive effect of the unconscious but a partly creative "condensation" of "external" influences and active intentions in the subject. The two are inseparable since "influences" are immediately organized or "condensed," and the endowment of meaning always depends on given structures or "multiple determinations." Freud's notions of condensation and overdetermination thus concur with Merleau-Ponty's claim that conscious meaning is "presented as a determinate or explicit form" of originary structures.

The Fundierung relationship reveals the inadequacy of psychological theories that embrace either extreme of Cartesianism. The integration of originary experience by consciousness can be neither a purely active spontaneity which abandons originary structures nor a purely passive regression which merges with them. The attempt by consciousness to purify itself of limiting structures and to make them its objects is the effort to attain a transcendental consciousness, but this can only appear as some-

thing "to be achieved, that is, realized in existence," and it is never finally realizable. (cf. SB, 221) So long as consciousness does exist, it is inserted in a world and a body which it can know only as a presumed synthesis of perspectives which are never in fact exhaustible. To ignore this contingency of the world and to postulate that one actively thematizes fully determinate meanings is to cling to an idealrather than a living truth and eventually to recite abstract formulas. (cf. PriP, 20; PriP, 75)

Just as one cannot overcome the division of the lived and the known or of operative and explicit intentionality through the ideal of transparent reflection, so it is impossible to become one with nature and to allow experience to flow through a completely passive (non-) consciousness. "I never become quite a thing in the world; the density of existence as a thing always evades me...." (PP, 165) Each extreme expresses a false view of freedom as an escape from the limitations of existing in particular situations, of having the world reveal a progressive but never fully determine order. Each represents an unrealizable fantasy of withdrawal from ambiguity, by escaping from either the world's contingency or its imperfect significance.

> We would err as much by defining philosophy as the search for the essences as by defining it as the fusion with the things, and the two errors are not so different....Philosophy is flattened to the sole

plane of ideality or to the sole plane of existence. (VI, 127)

2. Misinterpretations of Therapeutic Process

The impossibility of a purely active or purely passive consciousness corresponds to two misinterpretations of the therapeutic process. On the first view, consciousness has an absolute or "radical" freedom ungrounded in any particular structures. Knowledge and action are therefore the result of pure spontaneity. A life has the meaning with which consciousness freely endows it, and an unrestrained will is the solution to any "obstacles" consciousness itself might have created. If this were true, psychoanalytic therapy would be unnecessary. Analytic therapy presumes that it is possible for one, despite one's best efforts, to be deceived about one's own life and to have a restricted range of action as a result. To choose to give one's life a meaning without regard to originary structures is only to continue that deception. It is to conceive a meaning as if it were fully determinate and not to recognize that it is surrounded by larger horizon. If one lives on the memory of a former love, for instance, one cannot escape that condition simply by choosing a new lover. Insofar as one does not realize the foundation of that choice, one will be immersed in a mistaken love, only later to "find be-

neath this supposed love something other than love: the likeness of the "loved" woman to another...and it is just this which will justify me in talking about illusion." (PP, 378)

To overcome illusion requires more than an intellectual apprehension of the truth, as many misguided lovers may later attest. But the error of a purely cognitive psychotherapy is explainable phenomenologically: it takes advantage of the capacity of consciousness to construct meanings and be forgetful of their origins, to attempt an explicit and objective knowledge of oneself, and to ignore the real weight of one's past and the contingency of one's future. The self is then analyzed as a thing:

> The model is provided for us by these things in front of us which at first glance seem entirely determinate: this stone is white, hard and cool, and it seems...that it has no need of time in order to exist....The perception of one single thing lays for ever the foundation of the ideal of objective or explicit knowledge which classical logic develops. (PP, 332)

Cognitive psychotherapies make the mistake of seeing illness as a purely intellectual disturbance, curable through an "objective" knowledge of which science is the model. Merleau-Ponty insists that there can be no freedom from illness "by an intellectual effort or by an abstract decree of will" (PP, 165) that leaves unchanged the organic, pre-personal structures on which both knowledge and will depend:

> psychological medicine does not act on the patient by making him aware of the origin of illness...the coming to awareness would remain purely cognitive ....Neither symptom nor cure is worked out at the level of objective or positing consciousness, but below that level. (PP, 163)

The psychoanalytic notion of insight expresses this need to gain access to the actual structure of one's life, below the level of abstract awareness or arbitrary choice. In Freud's terms, the unconscious is the motive force for all life whether or not it is recognized. Merleau-Ponty concurs and describes, in effect, the difference between a cognitive awareness and a freeing insight:

> even unknown to us, the efficacious law of our life is constituted by its true signification. Everything happens as if this signification directed the flux of mental events. Thus it will be necessary to distinguish in development an ideal liberation, on the one hand, which does not transform us in our being and changes only the consciousness we have of ourselves, and, on the other, a real liberation....We are not reducible to the ideal consciousness we have of ourselves. (SB, 221)

The solution is not to abandon reflection or to try to become reducible to a succession of external events--this is the opposite misinterpretation of psychotherapy. On this view psychoanalysis would be identifiable with either behavioral or physiological forms of therapy. Consciousness could be ignored since it would be a purely passive part of nature, and treatment would consists of a manipulation of conditioned responses or physiological processes. Freud rejects this interpretation both by explicit statement (cf. SE, XXIII, 157; SE, XIV, 174-5) and by his

account of the process of psychoanalytic therapy. And Merleau-Ponty even finds Freud's claim that "every human action 'has a meaning'" to be an unintended development of phenomenological method. (cf. PP, 158)

3. Freedom and Psychotherapy

Merleau-Ponty is able to offer a philosophical foundation for psychoanalytic therapy by interpreting it as a psychology neither dominated by nor dispossessed of consciousness. In spite of its deterministic framework, the concrete methods of Freudian psychotherapy accord with Merleau-Ponty's own understanding that man is not "a psyche joined to an organism." And a phenomenological description of psychoanalytic treatment reveals a post-Cartesian conception of human freedom as the expansion of an incarnate consciousness.

By freedom Merleau-Ponty does not mean the capability of man to do anything, act without constraint. His conception of freedom is just the opposite of Sartre. Sartrean freedom is never accepted by Merleau-Ponty since Sartre holds that "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself,"[2] that "existence comes before essence"[3] and that

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[2] J-P Sartre, "Existence is an Humanism," Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, ed. W. Kaufmann, (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1956), 291.

[3] Ibid., 189.

there is no determinism--man is free, man is freedom.[4]

It is sure that man's life is not the product of of physical or social determinism; rather it is a dialectic enacted between man and his surrounding. Sartre advocates an absolute freedom where consciousness is defined as "nothingness" where man is free to create himself and where any attempt to objectify or identify oneself as a something is condemned to failure as a manifestation of mauvaise foi. For Merleau-Ponty, however, Sartrean absolute freedom makes action impossible because absolute freedom and consciousness as "nothingness" cannot find "position" in the world, but soars above it, therefore man is condemned to never being anything and never doing anything. (cf. PP, 434-7) Man is indeed "condemned to be free" only in the sense that one is never identical with a single moment of existence, cannot merge with nature, and always maintains a faculty of withdrawal from any actual situation. (cf. PP, 360) Thus there is no question of freedom versus determinism. There are, however, degrees of freedom, the very thing which the Cartesian framework can give no account of.

Freedom is never absolute but incarnated. There is freedom only in a situation in a social environment not of our own making or choosing, where there exists obstacles

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[4] Ibid., 295.

or opacity which prevents us from achieving our goals, desires, and acts. Absolute freedom exists only in our imagination or fantasies where there is nothing to prevent us from doing what we want.

Greater freedom is attainable by progressively integrating impersonal, given meaning into personal consciousness, by transforming formerly hidden psychological or cultural conditions of life into objects available for choice. (cf. PP, 441) A purely active endowment of meaning onto one's life cannot accomplish this transformation. One does not overcome guilt by resolving not to be guilty or to get rid of an inferiority complex by confirming oneself of being "worth while." Psychoanalysis recognizes that it is necessary to understand the meaning of these debilitating complexes in order to free of them.

4. Psychotherapy and Eidetic Intuition

Merleau-Ponty's conception of eidetic intuition expresses in part the kind of "meaning comprehension" that Freudian therapy seeks. Eidetic intuition aims for something "between" an ideal signification and a meaningless series of events. A patient cannot understand the source of his problem either by giving it a name or by simply living it; he must, in Freud's words, "put it in a coherent context." Insight is not attainable either by actively inventing a theoretic framework divorced from

concrete data or by becoming immersed in the data of illness and noting its succession of symptoms. The insight which eidetic intuition points to is, rather, "a spontaneous organization beyond the distinction of activity and passivity, of which the visible patterns of experience are the symbols." (PriP, 77) Freudian psychotherapy seeks eidetic intuition by using a verbal method. The patient attempts to learn his own hidden intentions by speaking about them. However, the "resistance" of the patient, which is his enclosure within the intentions he seeks to make determinate, can prevent him from engaging in creative speech or from recognizing the significance that his speech conveys. Psychoanalytic therapy overcomes these barriers through the techniques of free association and therapeutic interpretation, in which patient and therapist together seek an eidetic intuition of the patient's foundational experience.[5]

Merleau-Ponty suggests we trace the movement of

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[5]We may have two versions which are concerned with the patient's foundational experience. The patient's foundational experience can be interpreted either as the formerly hidden originary structures as psychogenesis or as the formerly hidden originary structures as non-actualized possibilities [essential eidetic structures]. Here I refer this foundational experience only to the latter. For Merleau-Ponty, it is not from out of the past that the experiences of an unhappy childhood deform behavior; there are no persistent forces, rather a lack of current structuration: the person has not succeeded in giving a meaning to these experiences and in integrating them so defined into his personal existence as an adult. (cf. BP, 315)

the birth of speech so as to study what he terms "authentic speech" (PP, 178, n.1) or "originating speech" which formulates meanings for the first time in contrast to "a secondary speech which renders a thought already acquired." (PP, 389) Rather than rely on the more accessible and determinate language of much everyday conversation, the patient is encouraged to gain access to unconscious meanings through an "authentic speech" which "brings to the surface all the deep-rooted relations of the lived experience wherein it takes form." (VI, 126) Authentic speech is indeed the originating first-hand speech, like a child uttering its first word, a lover revealing his feelings, or a writer who attempts to fashion a language adequate for expressing his primordial experience. It is a highly creative speech, but it is different from ordinary speech since ordinary speech, though artful and skilful, is not creative in this sense.

As a matter of fact, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with the "authentic communication" in human beings, where two or more persons seek to open themselves to each other to learn and exchange something about themselves and the world. In other words, it is a "mutual confirmation" and genuine reciprocity. It is such experiences that allow man to feel at home in speech, where his intentions are embodied and realized, and he is thrown out into the world

and into relationships with others. "There is said to be a wall between us and others, but it is a wall we build together, each putting his stone in the niche left by the other." (S, 18) Thus Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of speech can be considered as an appeal to rediscover our origin or root in our speech, a genetic investigation of its ground in our pre-reflective life, its capacity for creativity, its potential for genuine communication.

The notion of authentic speech and its method is similar to phenomenology's "imaginative free variation". The patient begins with an available meaning and then submits himself to whatever "associations" occur, making no attempt to organize them. Since these spoken associations are <u>expressions</u> of originary experience, they will convey its meaning. Whereas phenomenological free variation is voluntarily controlled by a person attempting to gain access to the essence of an experience, psychoanalytic free association is involuntarily controlled by the meaning of his unconscious complex. The patient himself may be unable to recognize that meaning, however, since he begins by having no larger context within which to situate it. The therapist, having undergone a training analysis, is presumably not immersed in the patient's repressed intention and is able to identify it and, through interpretation, to help the patient do the same. The therapist

cannot simply tell the patient in conventional language what is being repressed; the patient's speech must be directed so that he is able to intuit the core of his hidden signification through the Abschattungen of his own free association, or at least to recreate that intuition following the analyst's interpretations.

It is now possible to reinterpret Freud's suggestion that an unconscious idea become conscious when it is linked to "the word belonging to it." It is difficult to understand how significance emerges for a patient if he starts by possessing an unconscious "thing" and a word, each already having a ready-made meaning, but located in a separate psychic region. Either the subject already knows the connection of word and thing but chooses to ignore it or the separate is truly repression, in which case it is unexplainable how each content would ever recognize the other as "belonging to it." Phenomenologically, unconscious contents cannot have determinate meanings at all until they are made conscious, and no word can be presumed in advance to belong to a repressed structure. Freud is right that a word separate from the hidden structure fails to overcome repression, but this is not because the word as a complete signification needs to become connected to an unconscious content, but because such a "word" is not yet concrete, has not yet been created as a vehicle of meaning. (cf. PP, 176) Merleau-Ponty warns against con-

ceiving eidetic intuition as merely the framing of an experience with an abstract concept: "It is possible for me to believe that I am seeing an essence when, in fact, it is not an essence but merely a concept rooted in language ...." (PriP, 75) The difference between the abstract concepts of second-order expression and the creation of meaningful words is, clinically, the difference between a therapist's or patient's theoretic explanation "divorced from the facts" and the eidetic insight that is produced through free association.

In sum, psychoanalysis increases a patient's understanding and freedom in its initial phases by gaining access to formerly hidden originary structures. Its method is neither the abandonment of reflection nor the construction of ideas, but a process of free association and interpretation that is beyond the distinction of passivity and activity. The patient submits to his associations without structuring them, yet the therapist perceives not a series of unrelated aural events but unwitting creation of meaning. Psychoanalytic insight is neither an inductive inference from facts (PriP, 70) nor the imposition of fixed concepts; either would make a patient's co-operation superfluous. Rather, eidetic intuition in psychotherapy relies on the imaginary variations of a patient and the empathetic sensibilities of

a therapist who creatively discovers both a structure and the words "belonging to it."

By making hidden intentions objects for possible reflection, psychotherapy transforms not only "the ideal consciousness we have of ourselves" but the actual structure of our existence. The clinical project of psychoanalysis aims not only to understand the distorted expressions of the unconscious but to change them. If the therapeutic strengthening of the ego, as Freud claims, produces an increase in mastery and control over instinctual forces, then the deterministic framework becomes increasingly deficient as the therapeutic process succeeds. Only in the extreme limit of sickness, if anywhere, can an unconscious instinct operate as an external cause of consciousness; "psychoanalytic treatment is based upon an influencing of the Ucs. from the direction of the Cs." (SE, XIV, 194) This progressive strengthening of the ego, its increasing appropriation and assimilation of the id, involves a dynamic relationship between unconscious and conscious parts of the psyche that is not expressible in terms of the fixed relationship of cause to effect. Though, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, causal explanations may be applicable in certain cases of illness, they are transcended by persons who have achieved a degree of integration, which is the goal of psychotherapy.

> ...there are other men, capable of integrating into their existence, by unifying it, what in [cases of sickness] was only ideological pretext, and these would be truly men. With respect to them, the causal explanations of Freud would always be anecdotal; they would account only for the most external aspects of a true love just as, according to Freud himself, physiological explanations do not exhaust the content of a dream. Mental acts would have their own proper meaning and their own internal laws. (SB, 180)

Freud's accomplishment was to penetrate that unique realm of meaning and to discover some of its laws, partly for the therapeutic purpose of freeing patients from the weight of their past. The philosophical challenge is to develop a new explanatory framework commensurate with this achievement and thereby to free it from the encumbrance of causal determinism.

Freedom is never perfect so long as consciousness lives in originary structures which it cannot completely integrate, but psychoanalytic therapy does achieve a progressive expansion of consciousness and a strengthening of freedom, as structures once definitive of a life become possible choices within it.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, Freud provides us with important suggestions and guidelines for both the method and significance for further psychoanalytic research. As a theory of meaning, psychoanalysis expresses the primacy of the irrational and the concrete in mental life and indicates that the more rational, abstract thought of scientific discourse is built upon a foundation of meaning which always remains partly hidden. What remains unconscious, however, can never be an object for reflection, and unless all cognitive activity is to be renounced, neither Freud nor any other thinker can say anything without being subject to that criticism that his ideas are not complete, that they point to concealed meanings. If our judgment that psychoanalytic concepts are deficient is not to be a condemnation of all intellectual effort, it must be able to distinguish between theory that is well and poorly founded. Freudian metapsychology may then assessed with respect to whether its concepts are appropriate expressions of the experience it represents.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological reconstruction of psychoanalysis is an improvement over Freudian constructions to the extent that it replaces arbitrary or inconsistent concepts with ideas that are faithful to experience. When, for example, Freud describes how manifest

dream images point to hidden meanings and then explains this as the displacement of energy from one idea onto another, it is evident that he is employing two universes of discourse and that the second is imposed on experience only because either natural sciences have led us to expect that energy underlines all wordly processes. Merleau-Ponty does not claim that his reconstructions provide a complete insight into the discoveries of psychoanalysis. For Merleau-Ponty, as for Freud, all ideal truths are founded on a more original form of experience, and a consequence of this is that no categories are final. This does not mean that intellectual progress is impossible; skepticism is inevitable only if our original expectation is to reach absolute knowledge. (PriP, 21) Merleau-Ponty's formulations differ from Freud's in recognizing this contingent element in all expression.

Freud himself becomes increasingly aware of the provisional nature of psychological theory. In one of his later works, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, he remarks that the obscurity of his explanations is "due to our being obliged to operate with the scientific terms, that is to say with the figurative language, peculiar to psychology...." Though he still holds the hope that the "deficiences in our description would probably vanish if we were already in a position to replace the psychological terms by physiological or chemical ones," he recognizes

that "they too are only part of a figurative language" and concedes that its advantage is only that "it is one with which we have long been familiar and which is perhaps a simpler one as well." (SE, XVIII, 60)

Merleau-Ponty attempts to demonstrate that this familiarity and simplicity is deceptive, that it promises a determinacy that is illusory and in principle unachievable in treatments of mental life. Freud's explanation of repression through the vicissitudes of instinctual energy supposes that it is possible to attain a complete understanding of the inadmissibility of certain ideas as a third-person process in a "mental apparatus." In contrast, Merleau-Ponty's treatment of inaccessible originary meaning as a horizon enclosing all others is admittedly programmatic: it does not promise an explanation of which meanings are originary or what images or forms of behavior serve as symbols for the repressed. This is the work of phenomenological description, which is an endless project. But it is no different from the actual practice of psychoanalysis, which explores unconscious symbolism through the free associations of patients in psychotherapy. Phenomenology and psychoanalysis aim, as Merleau-Ponty says, toward the same latency in that both endeavor to elucidate a foundational layer of meaning. One advantage of phenomenological concepts such as hierarchies of meaningful

horizons, progressive integration, and eidetic intuition is that they underline the ambiguity of experience and the consequent tentativeness of all theoretical formulations. Freudian theory is both misleading and inconsistent with its own clinical practice insofar as it purports to offer an account of psychic life as an object that can be exhaustively explored.

Freud expresses dissatisfaction with the imprecision of his own "figurative language" and Merleau-Ponty faults Freud's "energic metaphors" for being neither satisfying nor philosophically comprehensible. But the solution is not, as Freud implies, to seek concepts purged of ambiguity but rather to look for a means of expression that will create new meanings, just as the patient in psychotherapy aims to use words that will reveal his unconscious thoughts for the first time. Merleau-Ponty can help toward providing psychoanalysis with a new philosophical foundation by exposing the error of theoretical constructs borrowed from chemistry, physiology, or other systems of abstract thought and by insisting that the work of psychoanalysis is, like that of philosophy, one of "restoring a power to signify" (VI, 155) by returning to original experience as the basis for theoretical expression.

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