

**THE STRUCTURE OF LINGUISTIC BEHAVIOUR : USING  
EVIDENCE FROM APHASIOLOGY TO CORROBORATE  
AND DEVELOP MERLEAU-PONTY'S THEORY OF  
LANGUAGE AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY.**

**ELDON CHRISTOPHER WAIT**

Promoter: M.F.N. Shutte

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## PREFACE

The theme of this thesis occurred to me while reading Luria's **Basic Problems of Neurolinguistics**. Many of Luria's patients manifest forms of a disintegration of speech and of the understanding of speech, which resemble the disintegration of movement in space and perception of space of Goldstein's patient, Schneider, the case Merleau-Ponty described in so many of his arguments, particularly those in the chapter of the **Phenomenology of Perception** entitled "The spatiality of one's own Body and Motility". It seemed to me that I could analyse the speech syndromes Luria reveals, and Luria's explanations, in much the same way that Merleau-Ponty analysed Schneider's syndrome and the explanations offered by Goldstein and others. I felt that in this way I would be able to exhibit certain features of the speaking subject and its relations with others, in the same way that Merleau-Ponty revealed the spatiality of the body and its relations with the world.

This seemed to me to be a useful project, firstly because of the central role that the problem of language plays in Merleau-Ponty's later philosophy and because the later reflections on language seem to presuppose such an analysis of pathological forms of speech.

The change from transcendental phenomenology to the phenomenology of the 'incarnate subject' makes language the fundamental problem of philosophy. Once we have accepted the

impossibility of a complete reduction, given up the dream of returning to the pure consciousness as the source of all meaning and being, and accepted that the mind is in a relationship of reciprocal exchange with the instruments it uses, it is clear that language is no longer just a 'regional problem', not just one of the phenomena on which we can reflect. "Philosophy" says Merleau-Ponty, "is language itself". "It is the most valuable witness to Being"<sup>1</sup> (1969:126). "It is by considering language that we would best see how we are to and how we are not to return to the things themselves"<sup>2</sup> (1968:125). Consequently, as Merleau-Ponty refined his position and "fixed the philosophical significance" of his earlier works he concerned himself increasingly with the problem of language. Much of these later writings on language are still set against the background of his theory of speech which emerges in the **Phenomenology of Perception** particularly in the chapter "The body as Expression, and Speech."<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless this chapter is in an important sense only programmatic. Instead of the finely worked out analyses and arguments which we find in **The Structure of Behaviour** and in the chapter "The Spatiality of one's own Body and Motility", of the **Phenomenology of Perception** we are simply given assurances that we can deal with the speaking body in the same way that we have dealt with the moving body.

"What we have said earlier about the representation of movement must be repeated concerning the verbal image. I do not need to visualise external space and my own body in order to move one within the other ... In the

same way I do not need to visualise the word in order to pronounce it ... I reach back for the word as my hand reaches back towards the part of my body which is being pricked." (1962:180)

"Thought and expression, then, are simultaneously constituted, when our cultural store is put at the service of this unknown law, as our body suddenly lends itself to some new gesture in the formation of habit. The spoken word is a genuine gesture, and it contains its meaning in the same way as the gesture contains its." (1962:181)

This way of arguing reappears in all of Merleau-Ponty's later writings.

"Speech is comparable to a gesture because what it is charged with expressing will be in the same relation to it as the goal is to the gesture which intends it ..." (1974:86)

"When I am actually speaking I do not first figure the movements involved. My whole bodily system concentrates on finding and saying the word, in the same way that my hand moves toward what is offered to me." (1973:19)

"Speaking subject: it is the subject of a praxis. It does not hold before itself the words said and understood as objects of thought or ideates. It possesses them only by a Vorhabe which is of the same type as the Vorhabe of place by my body that betakes itself unto that place." (1968:201)

"Start from here in order to understand language as the foundation of the I think: it is to the I think what movement is to perception." (1968:257)

Even in his general theory of intersubjectivity, into which his theory of linguistic behaviour must be integrated, Merleau-Ponty repeatedly recalls the analogy of the binocular perception of objects in space. Two perceiving subjects are said to be able to find themselves in the same world, just as two monocular images merge in binocular perception, into one indivisible object.

"But we have learned in individual perception not to conceive our perspective views as independent of each other; we know that they slip into each other and are brought together finally in the thing. In the same way we must learn to find the communication between one consciousness and another in one and the same world." (1962:353)

"The communication makes us witnesses of one sole world, as the synergy of our eyes suspends then on one unique thing." (1968:11)

Within the context of Merleau-Ponty's approach these analogies can serve only to indicate the direction in which research should proceed. Merleau-Ponty always attempts to demonstrate the inseparability of the essence and the phenomenon through which it is revealed. To put essences back into existence (1962:vii) means that the phenomenologist can never see linguistic behaviour as a possible actualization or as "another manifestation" of the body subject, the essence of which has been revealed in the phenomenon of motility and the perception of space. Just as the musical meaning of a sonata is inseparable from the sounds<sup>4</sup> so the essence of linguistic behaviour is inseparable from the phenomenon of speech. In all our intellectual analyses of language we will be unable to do anything but carry ourselves back to an encounter with the phenomenon of speech itself. The intelligibility of linguistic behaviour and the essence of speech must be revealed embedded in, and ultimately inseparable from the phenomenon, even if our revelations are inspired or guided by those of motility and the perception of space.

Merleau-Ponty's later reflections on language and philosophy

presuppose therefore, that the analogies made with body motility are taken up and demonstrated, so that for example, if it is true that the spoken word contains its meaning in the same way that the gesture contains its, this can be revealed, as the gesture was revealed, in a comparison of normal and aphasic forms of linguistic behaviour.<sup>5</sup>

The project of this thesis also seemed to be useful on the otherhand, because it could bring about a confrontation between existential phenomenology and modern Neurolinguistics. It was clear to me for example, that in his discussion of Schneider, Merleau-Ponty had gone beyond Goldstein's explanation of abstract or categorial attitude. I felt that while Luria had seen the problems in Goldstein's theory, he was himself unable to produce a satisfactory explanation of conduction aphasia.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps an adaptation of Merleau-Ponty's analyses could make a valuable contribution to the current debate in Neurolinguistics. While all the authors in this field seem to be aware of Goldstein's account of conduction aphasia in terms of a loss of categorial attitude, none seem to be aware of Merleau-Ponty's arguments. Furthermore Merleau-Ponty claimed that aphasiologists, whether they were aware of it or not, were trying to formulate "an existential theory of aphasia" (1962:190). Can we show that this is true of Luria? If it is not true, and if Luria can make sense of the distinction between abstract and concrete speech without adopting an existentialist theory, would this not undermine the arguments in favour of Merleau-Ponty's theory of speech and in turn the arguments in

favour of his theory of the body and motility?

Finally, if we are able to link modern Neurolinguistics and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in this way, we will no longer be tied to Merleau-Ponty's actual arguments and descriptions. We will be able to extend his method to reveal other facets of language and intersubjectivity, so that the return to problems in neurolinguistics will enable us not merely to repeat Merleau-Ponty, but to renew his effort by taking up the movement of his thought.<sup>7</sup>

Our first task therefore is to reveal the structure of the relationship between the gesture and its goal. Secondly, we need to 'translate' this relationship into the realm of speech and to deduce the nature of speech and its signification, given that speech is in the same relation to its signification as the gesture is to its goal. We will then try to show how the various reflections on speech that Merleau-Ponty has made throughout his works, can be related and can be seen to manifest this idea of speech and its relationship to its signification, so that it will be clear that the comparison with the grasping gesture is not based on some superficial similarity but points to the very essence of the speech act. Finally we will turn to a description and an analysis of various forms of aphasia as these are presented, and discussed by Luria in '**Traumatic Aphasia**' and '**Basic Problems of Neurolinguistics**'. Through an analysis of these forms of aphasia and Luria's explanations, we will attempt to corroborate our account of the speech act.

The first step in this process however proves to be problematic. We need to understand the relationship between the grasping gesture and its goal in a way that is both profound and sufficiently general to enable us to make the translation into the realm of speech. Certainly there is no question of embracing in thought some positive idea of which the grasping gesture and the speech act are merely actualizations. Nevertheless we must be able to disengage ourselves to some extent from Merleau-Ponty's actual reflections on the grasping gesture if we are to exploit the analogy between grasping and speech. We will demonstrate that such a general concept of the relation of grasping can only be understood in terms of its break with the idealist relation of constitution, the relationship between a constituting consciousness and its object. The notion of the grasping body can only be given philosophical status via the notion of a transcendental constituting consciousness. By and large commentators have attempted to articulate Merleau-Ponty's position through a discussion of his relationship with realism and empiricism. For our purposes this is not sufficient. On various occasions Merleau-Ponty has made it clear that his analyses and criticisms of transcendental idealism are not simply of historical interest, or heuristic devices meant to prepare the reader for his own view. The ultimate meaning of Merleau-Ponty's thesis lies in this break with Husserl's idealism. The idealism is therefore "a route that must be followed."

"What will always make of the philosophy of reflection not only a temptation but a route that must be followed is that it is true in what it denies ..." (1968:32)

"This movement of reflection will always at first sight be convincing: in a sense it is imperative, it is the truth itself, and one does not see how philosophy could dispense with it. The question is whether it has brought philosophy to the harbor, whether the universe of thought to which it leads is really an order that suffices and puts an end to every question." (1968:31)

We will devote a considerable amount of space to the presentation of the transcendental ego, precisely in order to bring it to the fore as convincing, as imperative, as the truth itself, because it is only in the movement of thought in which we go beyond this truth that the relationship between the gesture and its goal and the relationship between the speech act and its signification can emerge. We will see that every aspect of speech which our analyses of aphasia bring to the fore can be located conceptually only by returning to that movement of thought in which Merleau-Ponty breaks with the notion of the transcendental ego.<sup>8</sup>

But giving such an account of transcendental idealism "from within", revealing its truth and its indispensability, has the added advantage of making our entire project accessible to those neurolinguistics, aphasiologists and philosophers who take the 'natural attitude' as the only possible intellectual framework.

The nature of this project also seems to require a particular style of writing. In keeping with his theory of meaning and communication, Merleau-Ponty presents his reflections on space, motility, language, intersubjectivity and transcendental idealism, without emphasizing their relations at each step. His vocabulary and metaphors change as he moves from one topic to

the next, so that it is not always easy to recognize the same theme as it appears in various contexts.

Our project requires us to emphasize at each step of our argument, the relationships between these topics. This means that we will have to adopt a vocabulary and a set of metaphors that we can use throughout our research. Our descriptions and metaphors may at times appear rigid and severe, but this seems to be an inevitable consequence of trying to maintain a certain distance between us and our themes and of trying to bring out the relationships between the various topics we deal with. We will attempt to compensate for this rigidity and severity by introducing at various stages in our argument, quotations, which show how the same point is made by Merleau-Ponty in different contexts and in different works. In this way we hope to retain the coherency of our research and a certain 'altitude', while at the same time retaining the evocative power of Merleau-Ponty's writing, and, as it were, embracing as we proceed, insights, different nuances and different levels of subtilty as these are found in his various publications.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1) "But, because he has experienced within himself the need to speak, the birth of speech as bubbling up at the bottom of his mute experience, the philosopher knows better than anyone that what is lived is lived - spoken, that, born at this depth, language is not a mask over being, but if one knows how to grasp it with all its roots and all its foliation - the most valuable witness to Being." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:126)
  
- 2) Ricoeur expresses the necessity for this change of emphasis as follows.

"If phenomenological reduction is to be something other than the suspension of our links to the world, it must be the 'beginning' of a life of meaning, the simultaneous 'birth of the spoken being of the world and the speaking - being of man". (1967(b):1)

"In linking the question of sign to the level of the pre-reflexive, to the very heart of the 'perceived', phenomenology made the question of language fundamental; it made it a central question because it was universal." (1967(b):10)

- 3) Merleau-Ponty expressed this interdependence of his later and earlier writings in the following way:

"This remark brings us to a series of further studies which I have under undertaken since 1945 and which will definitely fix the philosophical significance of my earlier works while they, in turn, determine the route and method of these later studies." (1964:6)

- 4) "The musical meaning of a sonata is inseparable from the sounds which are its vehicle: before we have heard it no analysis enables us to anticipate it; once the performance is over, we shall, in our intellectual analysis of the music, be unable to do

anything by carry ourselves back to the moment of experiencing it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:182)

It is interesting to see Husserl sounding a similar warning as early as in *Ideas*.

"Those who, not content with what is offered to them as intuitively manifest, demand 'definitions' of the type provided by the 'exact' sciences, or believe that with phenomenological concepts won from the rough analysis of a couple of illustrations and taken as firmly fixed they can think their scientific thought unhampered by intuition, and through such free-lancing further the cause of phenomenology, are still so truly beginners that they have not grasped the essential nature of phenomenology, nor the method of work which it intrinsically demands."(1931:245)

- 5) It is clear that Merleau-Ponty himself recognised this need and intended to clarify the experience of speech by returning to the sciences of linguistic behaviour.

"We shall attempt elsewhere to develop these remarks more fully in a theory of expression and truth. It will be necessary then to clarify or explicate the experience of speech in terms of what we know from the sciences of psychology, behaviour disorders and linguistics." (1973:14)

- 6) "However, this hypothesis [Goldstein's hypothesis that all brain lesions lead to a disturbance of 'abstract set' or 'categorical behaviour'], was not confirmed by clinical observations. Careful clinical analysis showed that patients with conduction aphasia in fact have no disturbance of 'abstract set' and no defects of 'categorical behaviour'. (Luria, 1976:242)
- 7) This is how Ricoeur presents the goal of his investigations of language and his relationship with Merleau-Ponty.

"... I shall try to take up Merleau-Ponty's interrogation from the point at which he left it. Our position with regard to the greatest of French phenomenologists has, perhaps, already become what his was with regard to Husserl. We are not repeating him but taking up the movement of his thought."  
(1967(b):1)

- 8) Our interest in Husserl's transcendental phase is therefore not historical. From a strictly historical point of view it would certainly be misleading to argue, as we do, that Husserl's work can be divided into three distinct phases. Even '**Cartesian Meditations**', often taken as the most fully developed presentation of the transcendental phase, contains elements which predict the break with pure transcendental idealism.

## THE FORMAL AND THE INFORMAL ESSENCE

What characterises phenomenology and distinguishes it from traditional thought, is its pursuit of an intuitive and informal intelligibility of the world. Phenomenologists argue that the authentic meaning of all statements in the sciences and disciplines cannot be inferred from the basic axioms and definitions on which they are held to be based. Our actual understanding of these statements is made possible through an intuitive intelligibility which is completely ignored in the formal presentation of the science and its theoretical foundations. We can define a straight line for example, as "the shortest distance between two fixed points". But a radical philosophy of geometry should never accept such a definition as fundamental because our actual understanding of "distance", and therefore, of "shortest distance", already presupposes some grasp of a straight line. The definition is ultimately only a formula which enables me to make certain predictions. It does not offer me a grasp of the essence of straightness, it merely puts a question or a riddle to me which is only resolved if I am able to return to that perceptual grasp of straightness which I have as I identify an actual line as being straight. Long before discovering the formal definition, all straight lines "looked straight", they shared a certain common style or **physiognomy**.

It is this physiognomy ignored in all theories of the basic axioms of geometry, which enables the individual to understand

what is meant by "the shortest distance between two points", and enables him to make sense of all the geometric constructions and proofs based on the straight line. It is the task of a phenomenology of geometry to explicate this physiognomy, this informal essence which is the sense a straight line has for me prior to any theory, a sense therefore to be discovered in my experience of the straight line itself.

"This cannot be emphasized often enough - phenomenological explication does nothing but explicate the sense this world has for us all, prior to any philosophizing, and obviously gets solely from our experience - a sense which philosophy can uncover but never alter ... " (Husserl, 1969:151)

Contrasting the formal definition and the physiognomy of the cube and the triangle, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates the way in which the physiognomy provides the meaning foundation.

"One can bring together discursively the notion of the number six, the notion of 'side' and that of equality, and link them together in a formula which is the definition of the cube. But this definition rather puts a question to us than offers us something to conceive. One emerges from blind, symbolic thought only by **perceiving** the particular spatial entity which bears these predicates all together. It is a question of **visualizing** that particular form which encloses a fragment of space between six equal faces." (1962:204)<sup>1</sup>

"Let us, at the outset, reject any idea of a formal essence of the triangle. Although attempts at formalization may be conceived, it is in any case quite certain that they lay no claim to provide a logic of invention, and that no logical definition of a triangle could rival, for abundant variety, the **actual sight** of the figure, or enable us to reach, through a series of formal operations, conclusions not already established by the aid of intuition... There would be no experience of truth, and nothing would quench our

'mental volubility' if we thought *vi formae*, and if formal relations were not first presented to us crystallized in some particular thing." (1962:385) (My own emphasis)

The intelligibility which phenomenology takes as fundamental is thus of the experiential order. It is a meaning embedded in and inextricable from the concrete experience. The definitions of the cube, the triangle and straight line do not actually answer the question "What is a cube?" "What is a triangle " and "What is a straight line?" The actual answer and ultimately the actual meaning foundation of solid and Euclidean geometry is found in an experience, in a 'contact' with straight lines, triangles and cubes, a contact which Husserl calls 'evidence'.

Throughout his writings Husserl continuously changed his mind about how this contact is to be understood. In general however we can say that evidence is a contact with the thing itself, not an intuition of images, definitions, or symbols. Ricoeur summarises the notion as follows,

"Evidence, according to Husserl, is the presence of the thing itself in the original (in contrast to the presentation, memory, portrait, image, symbol, sign, concept, word); one would be tempted to say presence in flesh and blood. This is the self-giveness (Selbstgegebenheit) which Husserl calls "originary"." (1967:101)

This is not simply a repeat of Kant's recognition that concepts without intuitions are empty, and that it is only from the united co-operation of thought and intuition that knowledge can

arise. The informal essence transcends Kant's distinction between intuitions and concepts. The Kantian distinction, blinds us to the fact that in the physiognomy it is the sensuous matter of experience itself that manifests its form or essence.

Perhaps the simplest experience in which the phenomenon encountered clearly demands the rejection of a distinction between intuition and thought, and indicates the nature of the informal essence, is the phenomenon of depth. If I stand with one eye closed, approximately 30 cm from a thread suspended from the ceiling to the floor, so that the points of attachment are not in my field of vision, I cannot tell how far the thread is from me. The thread in fact appears to occupy an ambiguous position. As I open both eyes I am immediately able to see the exact distance of the thread from me. This perception of its distance is not based on any calculation because the thread appears to 'jump' to its determinate position. The experience is not equivalent to thinking about its distance from me, for if I close one eye again, the thread once again occupies an ambiguous position. Could we argue that closing one eye makes it impossible to think about or remember the distance? The experience we have of the thread taking up its position in front of us is so vivid that we recognize immediately that any attempt to reduce this distance to an act of judgement based on signs, misconstrues the experience entirely.

One of the more important explanations found in modern

psychological theories of perception, takes as the sign of distance, the difference between the retinal images produced in the left and the right eye. Since the two eyes are about seven centimeters apart they do not produce identical images of the world. The images of those objects which are situated at a great distance will be found in corresponding positions in the two monocular images, while the images of those objects which are closer will be displaced (Vernon, 1962:119/20). The thread for example suspended in front of me, is seen on the right side of the visual field of the left eye, and on the left side in the visual field of the right eye. On the basis of this discrepancy the mind is held to infer which objects are close by, and which are further removed. This principle is held to be exploited in the stereo-scope where an illusion of depth is created by providing the viewer with two photographic images made of the same object from slightly different positions.<sup>2</sup>

But explanations of this kind, which suggest that depth or three dimensionality is only inferred, do not accord with the actual experience we have of the distance or proximity of an object. The explanation suggests that the perception of distance is actually the perception of two dissimilar images plus an estimation of, the objects distance. What characterises genuine perception however, is that the two images, with their differences, have ceased to exist as identifiable entities.

'The single thread 30cm from me', is not for me an idea, not a

way of thinking about the two images, not a notional unity as is Venus, which is a way of thinking about the morning star and the evening star. The two monocular images are not brought together under the concept of 'a single thread 30cm from me'. If this were the case I ought to have the perception of depth as soon as I notice the identity of the two images. But in actual fact I need to "wait much longer" for the single thread to appear (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:231). What we have is a synthesis in which the two images have lost their density and substance and have entered into the thread itself 30cm from me.

"The binocular perception is not made up of two monocular perceptions surmounted; it is of another order. The monocular images are not in the same sense that the thing perceived with both eyes is. They are phantoms and it is the real; they are pre-things and it is the thing: they vanish when we pass into normal vision and re-enter into the thing as into their daylight truth. They are too far from having its density to enter into competition with it ... The monocular images cannot be compared with the synergic perception: one cannot put them side by side; it is necessary to choose between the thing and the floating pre-things." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:7)

"On passing from double to normal vision, I am not simply aware of seeing with my two eyes the same object, I am aware of progressing towards the object itself and finally enjoying its concrete presence." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:233)

It is wrong to represent experience as a synthesis of intuitions through concepts when the most characteristic feature of the experience of the thing is the "re-entering of the images" into the thing, the emergence of the thing itself as the absolute simultaneity of form and content, as a matter which is pregnant

outer intuition, namely, liability to be affected by objects, the representation of space stands for nothing whatsoever." (1964:71)

The depth that we have revealed, is not just an a priori form of intuition. It is a dimension of the world itself and for Husserl the source of our understanding of spatial objects.

We could perform a similar experiment to the one above, this time using a wooden cube. With one eye closed and under appropriate lighting, it is possible to see the cube as a square or as two or three adjoining parallelograms. As I open both eyes, a cube emerges from the flat shapes and, "of its own", takes up its solidity and volume. The experience of this emergence can never be described as an interpretation, or a way of thinking about the parallelograms.

"The whole of the configuration strives towards its equilibrium on its own, by delving in depth, as a stone falls downwards." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:262)

The solid cube is as unmistakably present to me as is the distance of the thread. The parallelograms, are not diamond shaped because they are not signs or images of the cube, but sides. The cube announces itself through its sides - which is why the sides become 'squares-seen-at-an-angle'.

"An image or sign points to something that lies beyond it, which, could it but pass over into another form of presentation, into that of a dator intuition, might "itself" be apprehended. A sign and copy does not

"announce" in itself the self that is signified (or copied)." (Husserl, 1931:160)<sup>4</sup>

The cube "announces" itself through its sides, this means that the entire cube is "present in" any one of its sides. My perceptual field is not for me like a painting or a photograph which can be cut up into smaller pieces. The sides I see cannot be isolated from the entire configuration. They are **squares seen at an angle because they are the sides of a cube**. I could never define **this** cube as a figure bounded by six equal sides because it is only in grasping the cube as a physiognomic whole that I grasp the inevitable presence of its six equal sides. It is the cube itself as a solid entity that I see, and this is why its hidden sides, without ceasing to be hidden are present to me.

If the hidden sides and attributes of the cube were available to me only through an express process of inference from a concept I would always be tempted to remake the inferences or to check the back of the cube to verify their existence, "... and thus resemble the patient mentioned by Scheler who was constantly turning around in order to reassure himself that things were really there ... " (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:418). We are aware of the hidden sides as an "incontestable acquisition".

What we have said about the monocular image in binocular perception and the side of the cube, we can say of every spatial

entity and every sensory quality. My perceptual field is not 'made up' of images or signs, and nor is it 'made up' of colour sense data. What I encounter is 'the-true-colour-of-the-object announcing-itself-through-its-perspectival-variations', variations due for example to different lighting conditions. The colours I encounter in perceptual experience cannot therefore be matched with colours in the black-white range, they are not data.

"The same colour appears "in" continuously varying patterns of perspective colour-variations" (Husserl, 1931:131)

Merleau-Ponty provides a vivid description of this irreducible depth of a perceived colour.

"I am sitting in my room, and I look at the sheets of white paper lying about on the table, some in the light shed through the window, others in the shadow. If I do not analyse my perception but content myself with the spectacle as a whole, I shall say that all the sheets of paper look equally white. However some of them are in the shadow of the wall. How is it that they are not less white than the rest? ... I notice that the sheets over which a shadow is thrown were at no time identical with the sheets lying in the light, nor yet were they objectively different from them. The whiteness of the shaded paper does not lend itself to precise classification within the black - white range." (1962:266)

Furthermore, since the thing ultimately announces itself through its colour,

"A colour is never merely a colour, but the colour of a

certain object, and the blue of a carpet would never be the same blue were it not a woolly blue." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:313)

" ... a thing would not have this colour had it not also this shape, these tactile properties, this resonance, this odour." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:319)

"In reality, each colour, in its inmost depths, is nothing but the inner structure of the thing overtly revealed ... One sees the hardness and brittleness of glass, and when with a tinkling sound, it breaks, this sound is conveyed by the visible glass. One sees the springiness of steel, the ductility of red-hot steel, the hardness of a plane blade, the softness of shavings." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:229)<sup>5</sup>

#### LANGUAGE AND THE FORMAL ESSENCE

The definition in science and philosophy claims to answer the question "What is ...?", it claims to express the essence of the thing which would provide the ultimate explanation for the thing's properties. When however we investigate the way in which individuals actually try to understand why a certain thing has certain properties it is not the definition to which they return, but the informal essence. It is the physiognomy of the cube which allows us to see at a glance, that doubling the length of a side would increase the volume eight times.

If on the other hand, a particular individual was unable to 'see', if his visual experience did not already suggest this feature of the cube, he could still resort to a blind faith in the definition of its volume and the mathematical rules for the manipulation of symbols. If volume =  $S^3$  then  $(2 \times S)^3 = 2^3$

$X S^3 = 8 X \text{ volume}$ . In this way he could be said to compensate for his lack of intuitive grasp through a blind attachment to formulae and definitions.

Under certain circumstances we may be obliged to resort to using formulae in this way, particularly when dealing with objects we cannot visualize. With the use of formulae a mathematician may, for example, be able to deal with the 'volume' of a figure bounded by equal 'sides', in a multidimensional space. Here there is no physiognomy, no 'mute' intelligibility to exploit, he can only proceed by sticking blindly to the formulae and the rules for the manipulation of symbols. The formula for the 'volume' of a multidimensional figure is not meaningful to the mathematician because it refers to some object or to an idea. He is unable to imagine any such object and the only way of thinking about the 'volume' is by recalling the formula. Nevertheless the formula is not meaningless. It has a technical meaning, in that it prescribes the exact rules for calculating the 'volume' of any such figure, for calculating the change in 'volume' for any change in the length of its 'sides'. There is however a clear distinction between the 'sense' of volume given in an intuitive grasp of the physiognomy of the cube, and the technical meaning, which is ultimately reducible to a set of rules for the manipulation of symbols.

Husserl argued for the importance of phenomenology, by demonstrating the way in which a technocratic mentality had

begun to replace a genuine understanding of the world, affecting, not the progress and successful application of the sciences, but the meaning of their theories, making it ultimately impossible for European man to achieve any radical reflection on himself. The paradigm case for this mentality Husserl found in modern algebra. In contrast to arithmetic, which still retains some connection to activities of adding and subtracting objects, algebra has become an entirely autonomous discipline. The functions of adding and subtracting for example, have become reduced to syntactical rules for the manipulation of symbols. In becoming autonomous, algebra breaks its ties with acts of adding and subtracting objects, and the mathematician becomes an ingenious technician who calculates simply through a blind adherence to rules.

"One operates with letters and signs for connections and relations (+, X, = etc) according to rules of the game for arranging them together in a way essentially not different, in fact, from a game of cards or chess. Here the original thinking that genuinely gives meaning to this technical process and truth to the correct results ... is excluded." (Husserl, 1970:45)

What was unacceptable about the formal definition, was not that it was inaccurate, or failed to take into account all the features of the original phenomenon. A blind attachment to the correct definitions and rules would enable us to deal with straight lines and cubes, just as a blind attachment to the rules of algebra would enable us to add, multiply etc. What was

unacceptable for Husserl was the fact that the authentic informal essence was being replaced by a technical meaning.

What Merleau-Ponty argues, particularly in **The Visible and the Invisible**, and what I will attempt to demonstrate, is that language in general and traditional philosophical language in particular, functions in a similar way to these systems of symbols. The meaning made possible by these languages, is in a sense, a technical meaning, in that it is ultimately inseparable from the language. Instead of revealing the essences of things, of perception, of thought, of the subject and the object, traditional philosophy replaces the authentic meanings, with a 'linguistic' meaning. The concepts and ideas it analyses are not universal and eternal, but inseparable from a particular language and a particular mode of communication ordered by the language.<sup>6</sup>

"It is possible for me to believe that I am seeing an essence when, in fact, it is not an essence at all but merely a concept rooted in language, a prejudice whose apparent coherence reduces merely to the fact that I here become used to it through habit ... I can never be sure that my vision of an essence is anything more than a prejudice rooted in language ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:259)

"The separated essences are those of language. It is the office of language to cause essences to exist in a state of separation which is in fact merely apparent, since through language they still rest on the ante-predicative life of consciousness." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:xv)

"Thought is no 'internal thing', and does not exist independently of the world and of words. What misleads us in this connection, and causes us to believe in the thought which exists for itself prior to expression,

is thought already constituted and expressed which we can silently recall to ourselves, and through which we acquire the illusion of an inner life." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:183)

If we devote our attention to the perception of speech for example, we will find that here too, the intelligibility is embedded in the physiognomy of the sound patterns.

"Why not admit what Proust knew very well ... that language as well as music can sustain a sense by virtue of its own arrangement, catch a meaning in its own mesh ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:153)

It is because of this intrinsic meaning in language that it can be used to compensate for a visual deficiency. In his analysis of Goldstein's patient, Schneider, Merleau-Ponty illustrates how Schneider compensates for the loss of the formal essence through the substitution of linguistic meaning.

"If a fountain pen is shown to the patient, in such a way that the clip is not seen, the phases of recognition are as follows. 'It is black, blue and shiny,' says the patient. 'There is a white patch on it, and it is rather long; it has the shape of a stick. It may be some sort of instrument. It shines and reflects light. It could also be a coloured glass.' The pen is then brought closer and the clip is turned towards the patient. He goes on: 'It must be a pencil or a fountain pen.' (He touches his breast pocket.) 'It is put there, to make notes with.' It is clear that language intervenes at every stage of recognition by providing possible meanings for what is in fact seen, and that recognition advances *pari passu* with linguistic connections: from 'long' to 'shaped like a stick', from 'stick' to 'instrument', and from there to 'instrument for noting things down', and finally to 'fountain pen'. The sense-data are limited to suggesting these meanings as a fact suggests an hypothesis to the physicist. The patient, like the scientist, verifies mediately and clarifies his hypothesis by cross-checking facts, and makes his way blindly towards the one which co-ordinates them all.

This procedure contrasts with, and by so doing throws into relief, the spontaneous method of normal perception, that kind of living system of meanings which makes the concrete essence of the object immediately recognizable, and allows its 'sensible properties' to appear only through that essence. It is this familiarity and communication with the object which is here interrupted. In the normal subject the object 'speaks' and is significant, the arrangement of colours straight way 'means' something, whereas in the patient the meaning has to be brought in from elsewhere by a veritable act of interpretation. The world in its entirety no longer suggests any meaning to him and conversely the meanings which occur to him are not embodied any longer in the given world. We shall say, in a word, that the world no longer has any physiognomy for him." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:131/2)

If definitions and formulae are intelligible, this is not because they refer to universal and eternal concepts or ideas, but because they rely on a certain intelligibility intrinsic to the technical language as a strictly ordered system of sounds or symbols. The procedures of science and traditional philosophy, at least as these are portrayed in the formal presentation of their axioms and methods, have therefore something in common with Schneider's procedures for identifying objects and making sense of his world.

#### THE TASK OF A RADICAL PHILOSOPHY

Husserl does not suggest that this formalistic and technocratic mentality in science and mathematics is illegitimate, he concedes that it promotes a certain streamlining of concepts, allowing one to operate in the system with a certain clarity and ease, and that it is therefore imperative for the progress of science. But if philosophy is to be radical, if it is to

uncover the actual foundations of the sciences and mathematics, and reveal the true significance of their results, and make possible for man a genuine understanding of himself, it cannot be content with the substitute meanings of formal definitions and language in general.<sup>7</sup>

As Merleau-Ponty puts it,

"... philosophy is not a lexicon, it is not concerned with "word meanings", it does not seek a verbal substitute for the world we see, it does not transform it into something said, it does not install itself in the order of the said or of the written as does the logician in the proposition, the poet in the word, or the musician in music. It is the things themselves, from the depths of their silence, that it wishes to bring to expression." (1968:4)

If philosophy is to illuminate the foundations of the sciences, if it is to make possible a dialogue between various schools of thought, be they different philosophical schools or different approaches in the empirical sciences, it would have to reveal beneath the formal definitions, the informal essences given in a primitive grasp of things, in relation to which the formal definitions will be an abstract and derivative sign language, as is geography, in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is.<sup>8</sup>

#### PHENOMENOLOGY AND KANT

In order to break with linguistic meanings Husserl proposes a

method that would project the investigating philosopher beyond the realm of philosophical discourse, and terminate in an intuitive grasp of things, such as we have seen in the perception of depth and the cube. Phenomenology must put into 'parentheses' our traditional concepts and everything we normally say about things, and return to an as yet mute experience of things, return to an evidence in which we encounter the thing itself, "in the original" in "flesh and blood" in contrast to an intuition of images, symbols, signs or words which only refer to the thing. What is clear at this stage is that this rejection of formal definitions as the foundations of philosophy and science, and the pursuit of an informal essence found in things themselves, is not just a break with tendencies in science, but also a radical break with Kant's epistemology as put forward in the first critique. Husserl's resolve not to accept any judgement that is not derived from experience, means that we can no longer make an absolute distinction between a *priori* and a *posteriori* knowledge since any such distinction would itself have to be based on an experience.<sup>9</sup> Whatever distinctions are to be held in philosophy would have to refer back to a primitive grasp of these distinctions in experience.

Paradoxically, its feature of not being derived from experience would have to be given to me in evidence, i.e. in an experience in which the feature is present to me as it itself. Even the validity of logic, will have to be grounded in an actual

experience of coherency or consistency and necessity. If we are to accept the necessity and universality of a logical implication such as  $P \supset Q$ , we will have to derive the necessity and universality from 'evidence', from an experience in which the necessity and universality is given to us as it itself.<sup>10</sup> Such evidence Husserl would call apodictic. In an experience of apodictic evidence he says, the affair-complex viz. that  $P \supset Q$  universally and necessarily, is given with the absolute unimaginableness (inconceivability) of  $P \not\supset Q$ .

"Any evidence is a grasping of something itself that is, or is thus, a grasping in the mode "it itself", with full certainty of its being, a certainty that accordingly excludes every doubt ... An apodictic evidence, however, is not merely certainty of the affairs or affair-complexes (states-of-affairs) evident in it; rather it discloses itself, to a critical reflection, as having the signal peculiarity of being at the same time the absolute unimaginableness (inconceivability) of their non-being; thus excluding in advance every doubt as "objectless" empty."  
(Husserl, 1969:15/16)

As we have seen above, Kant equates meaningful perception of objects with a process in which a sensuous element acquired through the senses is synthesized in accordance with the act of judging, since in judgements elements are brought under the unity of a concept.

"Now we can reduce all acts of the understanding to judgements, and the understanding may therefore be represented as a faculty of judgement." (1964:106)

He therefore deduces all the fundamental concepts from a list of

the possible logical judgements that can be made about objects.

"The functions of the understanding can therefore, be discovered if we are given an exhaustive statement of the functions of unity in judgements." (1964:106).

Kant has therefore, according to Husserl, equated the intelligibility of things themselves, grasped in experience, with that of the intelligibility of scientific discourse and logical judgements. For Husserl this is the intelligibility of the 'sign language', the objects synthesized in accordance with Kant's categories, were not objects of experience but objects of scientific discourse. The fundamental concepts or categories, rather than being those of the "pure understanding" were actually "rooted in language".

In spite of the many changes in his approach, Husserl remained committed to the ideal of uncovering the informal essences as the genuine roots of all intelligibility, and the true foundations of philosophy and science. Nevertheless his understanding of the nature of the informal essence, and the particular way in which it was fundamental, changed throughout his life. At first, the intuitive grasp of things and the experience of evidence was interpreted as a psychological process. This meant that the physiognomy of the straight line, the experience of depth, the experience of reaching in perception the concrete object itself, the true colour announcing itself through its perspective variations etc., as

well as the experience of necessity and universality would all be private, subjective psychological phenomena. It meant that we discover the informal essence through introspection, by reflecting on these psychological processes. In the '**Philosophy of Arithmetic**' Husserl attempted to find the foundations of arithmetic, the informal essence of adding, of multiplying, of number etc., in certain mental acts performed by the individual calculating. When the weaknesses of psychologism became apparent to him, he moved to a form of transcendental idealism trying to discover the primitive essences of things in the constitutive acts of a transcendental ego. Finally, towards the end of his life, in the period of the *Lebenswelt*, the transcendental approach begins to give way to an existential one. What seems to characterise the two earlier approaches is that certain formal essences were maintained in Husserl's own understanding of his project. As these were recognized as prejudices, and traced back to their roots, the very notions of an 'informal essence', and a 'grounding experience' became more refined. Since it is with Husserl's transcendental idealism, that Merleau-Ponty contrasts his own position, when arguing against the possibility of a complete reduction, we will try to capture the gist of this transcendental idealism, primarily as it is presented in the *Cartesian Meditations*, by showing how it follows immediately from the recognition of formalistic assumptions in his psychologism.

## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EGO

A purely formal approach to arithmetic would define it as a particular instance of algebra, where symbols like  $x$  and  $y$  have been replaced by symbols like 1, 2 and 3 etc. A formal arithmetic would be a purely syntactic system of symbols where the functions of adding and multiplying, were reducible to the manipulation of symbols in accordance with rules and definitions.  $3 + 4 = 7$  would be true by definition, or simply because the rules relating to the manipulation of the symbols 3, 4 = and 7 had been respected, just as in Bridge, in a particular game 9 'no trump tricks' is 'equivalent' to 10 'tricks' in 'spades'. But this is not the way in which arithmetic calculations are actually performed. Children 'discover' that  $3 + 4 = 7$  and few mathematicians know the rules relating to symbols like  $478 + 526$ . In cases like this we need to calculate the answer, which means that two numbers must be brought together and a third number has to be 'produced'. Husserl's argument is that in the formalist interpretation of arithmetic, the real meaning of adding and multiplying has been lost. One can perform any of the algebraic functions simply through a blind manipulation of symbols according to syntactic rules. The operation can be performed without ever thinking about what it means to multiply or add. The genuine sense of adding and multiplying has been replaced by a sense of 'manipulation of symbols in accordance with rules'. The original thinking which gives meaning to the operations has been lost, and a technocratic meaning has been substituted.

Merleau-Ponty shows how patients suffering from "number blindness", patients who are unable to conceive of number, are still able to calculate by relying on this technocratic meaning, relying that is, on a blind attachment to ritual procedures of manipulating symbols.

"It has been possible to demonstrate that the patient, though able to count, add, subtract, multiply or divide in relation to things placed in front of him, cannot conceive number, and that all his results are obtained by ritual procedures, which have no significant bearing on it. He knows by heart the sequence of numbers and recites it mentally, while checking off on his fingers the objects to be counted, added, subtracted, multiplied or divided: 'a number for him merely belongs to a sequence of numbers, and has no meaning as a fixed quantity, as a group or a determinate measure'. Of two numbers the greater for him is the one which comes 'after' in the numerical series." (1962:133/4)

Merleau-Ponty's description of the way in which the patient performs arithmetic calculations brings out by contrast the way in which we normally calculate. The patient appears to have lost the informal essence of number and adding, which Husserl claims is the sense of a plurality. Adding has sense for me not because I know all the rules relating to the symbols  $3 + 4$  ;  $4 + 1$  etc., but because I can actually synthesize two quantities and produce a third. To uncover the informal essence of adding, Husserl suggests that we only have to reflect on the psychological process in which we abstract from the particular nature of the individual objects and intuit them as one plurality.<sup>11</sup> It may well be that after considering the two groups of objects as one plurality, I still have to use a

'ritual procedure' to determine how many objects constitute the plurality. For the patient on the other hand, the ritual procedure of adding has no sense of totalling up quantities by adding units. He could just as easily be reciting the days of the week. To each object then would correspond a certain day, and the final object 'counted' would correspond to Sunday. For the patient seven or seventh is a name like Sunday and there is a sense in which, rather than adding, he has determined the name of the last object counted. What the patient has lost, has not affected his ability to execute any arithmetical function, it simply affects the way in which he executes the functions. His way, by contrast, points to a sense of adding a number which is central to our understanding of what we are doing when we add, but which is ignored in the formal description of arithmetic. This sense of number and adding can only be discovered by reflecting on our activity of intuiting various objects as a plurality.

To uncover the grounding or informal sense of adding, we only have to reflect on our own productive activity, the activity through which two groups of objects become intuited as one plurality. The grounding sense of 'to add' is given in this activity.

"We must rise above the self-obliviousness of the theoretician who while preoccupied with things, theories and methods is quite unaware of the interiority of his productive thought (die Innerlichkeit seines Leistens) and who while living in these things, theories, methods, never focuses his attention on his own productive activity." (Husserl, 1969:14)

Frege's criticisms of Husserl's Philosophy of Arithmetic led Husserl to reject this psychologistic position. He came to recognise that the psychological mechanisms, through which pluralities were intuited, does not tell us anything about the meaning or essence of adding or number. Arithmetical calculations can be carried out by an adding machine, but it is clear that we could not base the fundamental concepts of arithmetic on a description of the functioning of its mechanism. The informal essence discovered in this way is not fundamental. On the contrary the psychological processes, like the mechanical processes of the adding machine, follow the definition of adding. If arithmetical concepts were based on psychology, arithmetic would be a branch of empirical psychology. Arithmetical truths, such as  $3 + 4 = 7$ , would have no universality or necessity because ultimately they would be statements about my psyche or at best they would reflect certain tendencies in the way people actually thought.  $3 + 4 = 7$  would be true if I and others actually arrived at 7 every time we added 3 and 4, and it would be true because 7 was the result of our adding.  $3 + 4$  would be equal to 7 because like the structure of the adding machine, my psyche is of such a nature, that the intuition of 3 entities and 4 entities produces an intuition of 7 entities. The truths of arithmetic would manifest or reflect peculiarities of the human psyche. Similarly if the validity of logic were based on an experience of apodictic certainty then the truths of logic would be determined by what was imaginable and what was not, and logic

too, would be a branch of psychology reflecting the nature of our imagination.

A description of the psychological process in which an intuition of 3 objects and 4 objects produces an intuition of 7 objects, is analogous to a description of the way in which the mechanical operations effected by depressing the keys 3, +, and 4, produce the mechanical operation in which 7 is typed. The relationships between psychological acts, like those between mechanical processes, are purely external and in this case causal. What a philosophy of arithmetic needs to explain are the internal relations between elements. It needs to explain how  $3 + 4 = 7$  would be true, even if there were no minds or adding machines, how the elements are related to each other because of what they mean. It would have to account for relationships which do not become established in time or in the world, or through psychic causality.

If we assume that the informal essences of things can be discovered by reflecting on our psychological processes, phenomenology, as the science of these essences, will be concerned with subjective private impressions. The fact that we may need some informal essence of adding or of straightness before we can add or understand the formal definition, would only be of interest to psychology, to a psychology of understanding geometry. Rather than being fundamental or

making possible the ultimate explanation, the informal essence, as a psychological phenomenon, would itself be something that needs to be explained, and in an explanation of this phenomenon we will need to refer back to the formal essence, i.e. the straight line as the shortest distance between two points, the straight line existing independently of its being perceived. The physiognomy of the straight line, will then be explained as the effect of a straight line on the psyche of the perceiver. It is the formal essence then, which is fundamental and which will explain the phenomenon of the informal essence. Any philosophy which aimed at being radical could never content itself with what would ultimately be psychological phenomena.

Similarly, the experience of apodictic certainty, or the experience of unimaginableness, as psychological phenomena, may well play a role in an account of how we recognise or respond to logical truth, but can never account for the universality and necessity of logical validity. The laws of logic hold independently of there being any experience of apodictic certainty. In fact these experiences of certainty could be explained as the effects of a conditioning process or of an evolutionary process, where through natural selection the human psyche has become structured to conform in its activities to the nature of reality. In either account formal logic, as the law of reality is always presupposed, and any intuition of certainty is a secondary phenomenon.

Finally, if 'meaning' is not to become reducible to subjective private experiences, we will be obliged to define meaning in terms of truth conditions, and since only sentences, propositions or judgements have truth conditions only these can be said to be meaningful or meaningless, and the entire enterprise of finding a meaning in things, will end in subjectivism and psychologism.

## TRANSCENDENTAL EGO

Husserl was faced with a dilemma. On the one hand he wished to penetrate below formal definitions, to reveal those experiences through which the definitions have meaning for us, while on the other hand he wished to avoid the subjectivism and relativism which seemed to follow as soon as these experiences are taken as meaning foundations. He was convinced of something which at first appears to be a paradox. He was convinced that reflection on a primitive experience was not necessarily an exercise in introspective psychology, that 'categorical intuitions' were not private, subjective or psychological phenomena. The paradox disappears when we recognise that those philosophers who assume that the subject of experience is always a psychological ego, and that the informal essence discovered in experience is a psychological entity, have already taken for granted certain formal distinctions made in traditional philosophy, without trying to reveal their meaning foundations. They assume for example, the absolute distinction between a subjective or psychological realm, and the realm of the external world, or the absolute distinction between the processes in time of a psychological ego, and the timelessness of logical relations, or simply, the absolute distinction between thought and reality.

But if for Husserl in his transcendental phase, these distinctions are not simply the products of a certain philosophical language, if they are to have an authentic meaning

for me, I must be able to return to an experience in which I encounter these distinctions. I must for example be able to encounter the external world's lying beyond my experience or lying beyond my subjective realm, that is, I must be able to encounter the transcendence of the world. Long before discovering any formal definition of reality, I must have encountered the real itself, as opposed to signs or images of it. This encounter cannot be taken to be a subjective or private event, numerically distinct from the reality itself, for if it were distinct, it would be no more than a sign or image of that reality. Reflecting on this encounter would not be a form of introspection revealing the nature of my psyche, it would be a reflection on the act through which the world itself came to be, it would reveal the nature of reality. Husserl's commitment to the informal essence leads him to the subject which thinks the being of the world, not the idea or the meaning of being, but being itself.

Traditional thought which begins with the absolute distinction between thought and reality, always introduces, surreptitiously, another subject, which sees these thinking and perceiving psyches as objects in the world, who is able to establish a numerical distinction between their experience and the object, between their thoughts of the world and the world itself. Yet it does not establish such a numerical distinction between its own experiences and the actual situation it observes. It could do so only by seeing itself as one of the objects in the world, but

this it could only do by mentally adopting the position of yet another observing consciousness. If it is to encounter the distinction between thought and reality, if it is to encounter the transcendence of the world, then it cannot begin by assuming a numerical distinction between its own thoughts and the world. It would have to take itself to be the last subject, the subject which is not seen by other subjects, the subject for whom there is no distinction between its thoughts of the world and the world itself. It would have to take itself to be the transcendental ego. We cannot therefore relegate all experiences and intuitions to the realm of the psychological and the relative. I cannot consider all my truths as only truths for me for it is I who makes sense of the distinction between a truth in itself and a truth for me.

"Intellectualism certainly represents a step forward in coming to self-consciousness: that place outside the world at which the empiricist philosopher hints, and in which he tacitly takes up his position in order to describe the event of perception, now receives a name, and appears in the description. It is the transcendental ego. Through it every empiricist thesis is reversed: the state of Consciousness becomes the Consciousness of a state, passivity the positing of passivity, the world becomes the correlative of thought about the world and henceforth exists only for a constituting agent."(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:208)

"I am not a 'living creature' nor even a 'man', nor again even 'a consciousness' endowed with all the characteristics which zoology, social anatomy or inductive psychology recognise in these various products of the natural or historical process - I am the absolute source, my existence does not stem from my antecedents, from my physical and social environment: instead it moves out towards them and sustains them, for I alone bring into being for myself (and therefore into being in the only sense that the word can have for me) the traditions that I elect to

carry on, or the horizon whose distance from me would be abolished - since that distance is not one of its properties - if I were not there to scan it with my gaze. Scientific points of view, according to which my existence is a moment of the world's, are always both naive and at the same time dishonest, because they take for granted, without explicitly mentioning it, the other point of view, namely that of consciousness, through which from the outset a world forms itself around me and begins to exist for me." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:vii-ix)<sup>12</sup>

"... what we are finally as naturata we first are actively as naturans, that the world is our birthplace only because first we as minds are the cradle of the world." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:33)

Similarly, the critics of the informal essence, take for granted the traditional distinction between the present moment in time, and timelessness or eternity. What characterises the truths of logic and arithmetic, as opposed to the truth of any observation statement in empirical psychology, is that the former are eternal, they were for example true before I recognised them to be true. What characterises the existence of the world, is that it exists throughout time, it is not constantly annihilated and recreated, it survives throughout my experiences and thoughts of it (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:272). Whenever I encounter the world I am aware that the world precedes and outlasts my encounter. But if this distinction between the present moment and eternity, has any authentic meaning for me, if it is not simply based on some formal definition of eternity, then I must in some way encounter eternity itself, or the world's existing in the past itself. My experience of the necessary truth of  $3 + 4 = 7$  is an experience of  $3 + 4 = 7$  being true before I recognized it as being true. It is not as if at T2 in the present, it becomes true that it was

true at T1 in the past. Its being true at T1 is independent of the truth of any thought or image at T2. This means that if I experience the necessity of the truth of  $3 + 4 = 7$ , I cannot be confined to acts in the present, I must be able to encounter T1 itself, not a memory or an image of T1 at T2. This means that there can be no numerical distinction between my thought of T1 and T1 itself, which means I cannot be in time, I must be the constituter of T1, and in general I must constitute time itself (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:413/4).

Perhaps the most useful way of thinking about this transcendental ego, which constitutes the world and time, is in terms of it being the last or ultimate subject, the subject which does not exist for another subject but the subject for whom everything exists.<sup>13</sup> This notion is brought out clearly where Merleau-Ponty, quoting Husserl, demonstrates the timelessness of the transcendental ego

"Ultimate subjectivity is not temporal in the empirical sense of the term: if consciousness of time were made up of successive states of consciousness, there would be needed a new consciousness to be conscious of that succession and so on to infinity. We are forced to recognize the existence of 'a consciousness having behind it no consciousness to be conscious of it' which consequently, is not arrayed out in time, and in which its 'being coincides with its being for itself'."  
(1962:422)

Similarly, the transcendental ego is the principle of all recognition and is not there to be recognized.

"Thus, whenever he thinks, the subject makes himself his point of support, and takes his place, beyond and behind his various representations, in that unity which, being the principle of all recognition, is not there to be recognized, and he becomes once more the absolute because that is what he eternally is." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:373)

This means that the transcendental ego has no outside; we can think it only by coinciding with it, only by taking up our position from within it. If ever there could be such a view of it from the outside, it would cease to be the last subject and there would be a numerical distinction between its thoughts and the world and it would be confined to its own private realm of experiences and thoughts.

"The affirmation of an alien consciousness standing over against mine would immediately make my experience into a private spectacle, since it would no longer be co-extensive with being." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:353)

After all, when critics like Frege recognise that an arithmetic based on psychology could have no claim to universal and necessary truth (from now on referred to as  $PQ$ , where  $P$  = all statements in arithmetics based on psychology and  $Q$  = all statements that are not necessarily and universally true) they cannot regard this act of recognition as itself an event which simply manifests some aspect of their psyche, for this would imply that their criticism of Husserl's 'Philosophy of Arithmetic' must itself be rejected since the criticism would be no more than a manifestation of a psychological disposition, it would imply that the inference  $P.Q$ , could only represent a

certain tendency in most psyches, for the idea of Q to be associated with the idea of P, so that whenever P is thought the idea of Q follows. The critic would not, therefore, in his claim that P $\supset$ Q, be making any statement about such an arithmetic, he would simply be describing some interesting peculiarity of his associations. Such a position would put the critic in a vicious circle, where the reason for rejecting the insight is founded on the very insight to be rejected.

"If, indeed, the guiding thoughts and principles of the mind at each moment are only the result of external causes which act upon it, then the reasons for my affirmation are not the true reasons for this affirmation. They are not so much reasons as causes working from the outside. Hence the postulates of the psychologist, the sociologist, and the historian are stricken with doubt by the results of their researches." (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:44)

Husserl's argument would be that in order to avoid this circularity, the critic would have to acknowledge that the act through which it becomes true for him that P $\supset$ Q, cannot be an act in his psyche, an act which ultimately manifests the nature of his psyche. It would have to be an act which is synonymous or 'co-extensive' with the state of affairs in the world, viz. that P $\supset$ Q, so that there can be no numerical distinction between "I think P $\supset$ Q" and "P $\supset$ Q".

The most popular alternative to this argument presupposes the adoption of formal definitions. It is argued for example, that truth and certainty have nothing to do with intuitions or

thoughts, that truth and certainty are defined in terms of verifiability. On a close scrutiny however, these formal solutions turn out to be as naive and dishonest as the "scientific points of view", for in their own way, they also take for granted, without explicitly mentioning it, a transcendental ego.

For example, the critic may reply by pointing out that although I may have an intuition of the truth of  $P \supset Q$ , this intuition is nothing but a psychological phenomenon.  $P \supset Q$  is true not because it is seen to be true in an intuition, but because it can be proved to be true. My thoughts do not open onto reality itself or onto eternity. This impression of not being confined to my own thoughts and having access to a state of affairs in the world, in the past and the future, is a psychological phenomenon, perhaps produced by an unconscious recognition of the fact that  $P \supset Q$  can be verified. The necessary and timeless truth of  $P \supset Q$  is not based on an intuition but is based on the fact that it can be verified simply by applying the laws of logical deduction. If  $P$  = all statements found in arithmetics based on psychology  $R$  = all observation statements, and  $Q$  = all statements that are not universally and necessarily true. Then since  $P \supset R$ , and  $R \supset Q$  it follows that  $P \supset Q$ . The difficulty with this position is that it assumes that the laws of formal logic are applicable to the real world. Unless we are indubitably sure that our logic is also the logic of the world, the conclusion,  $P \supset Q$  does not allow us to predicate anything about the nature of

an actual arithmetic based on psychology. Perhaps it will be replied, that even though we can never be indubitably sure that our logic is the logic of the world, even though our axioms are only based on conventions, we can infer with confidence that an arithmetic based on psychology could have no claim to universal and necessary truths, because our logic has been shown to be reliable or fruitful in our interaction with the world. But if we take such a conventionalist or pragmatic approach to logic we still presuppose an absolute indubitable knowledge of these successes in our interactions with the world.

I must simply assume that these successes are exactly what I think they are, for it will not be possible to verify my knowledge of them or verify my belief that they are effects of my interaction with the world, rather than due to chance factors, because any act of verification presupposes a logic which is the logic of the world. In general, it is not possible to test one's logic or one's rationality. If the test is to prove anything at all, it must be rational, and the interpretation of its results must be carried out rationally, and this rationality, which cannot be tested, will have to be assumed to be absolute.

The critic may reply to all these arguments by saying that in any act of knowledge certain things have to be assumed. I have to assume that, for example, my logic is also the logic of the world. But, he may add that we are justified in making this

assumption. Although my ideas and conclusions as a psychological ego are produced by causal processes and associations, although my rationality manifests the peculiarities of my psyche, I can assume that the normal tendencies of my thinking will conform to the rationality of the world, because from a Darwinian point of view such a conformity would have been required for the survival of my species. But can I really make this assumption on the basis of the Darwinian account of the survival of the fittest? I can only make this assumption if I am sure that Darwin's explanation is a reasonable or a possible account of history. But how can I judge whether the theory is reasonable or not? Even if I do judge the theory to be reasonable, how do I know that the theory is reasonable in itself and not simply in conformity with my perhaps completely misguided idea of rationality? I can trust my judgement of the theory only if I already know that I am rational, or at least that my judgement is rational. The Darwinian argument cannot, therefore, provide me with any reason to assume that my brain has so evolved, that my thinking conforms to the rationality of the world, for I have to know that I am rational before I can accept the Darwinian argument.

Finally, the critic could claim that the axioms of his logic need no verification. 'p⊃r and r⊃q then p⊃q' is valid by definition of logical validity. Logical validity is independent of the existence and nature of the world. In order to draw the conclusion (which is valid by definition) that P⊃Q we only have

to make a series of substitutions. Since  $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{D}R$ , we can substitute  $P$  for  $p$  and  $R$  for  $r$ , and since  $\mathcal{R}\mathcal{D}Q$  we can substitute  $Q$  for  $q$ . Since the syllogism ' $p\mathcal{D}r, r\mathcal{D}q$  therefore  $p\mathcal{D}q$ ' is valid by definition, it follows that the syllogism ' $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{D}R, \mathcal{R}\mathcal{D}Q$  therefore  $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{D}Q$ ' is also valid by definition.

Such a position would also be unacceptable. In the first place, a position like this would not seem to capture the spirit of Frege's criticism. Frege's argument with reference to the adding machine, seems to suggest that for him  $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{D}Q$  because of what such an arithmetic would actually be like, rather than it simply being true by definition, a definition which Husserl's 'Philosophy of Arithmetic' could be challenging. But resorting to  $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{D}Q$ 's being true by definition, has more serious weaknesses. In adopting this position the critic assumes an absolute, non temporal access to the world of propositions and symbols.

For example, the initial substitution  $p = P$ , takes place before we draw our conclusion  $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{D}Q$ . I can draw the conclusion that  $\mathcal{P}\mathcal{D}Q$  only if I am sure that  $P$  has been substituted for  $p$ . If I take myself to be a psychological ego confined to the present moment, I will have to rely on my memory of the act in which I substituted for  $p$ . Gurwitsch (1951:398/404) points out that what is always presupposed in any formal logical argument is the 'ideal identity' of the presuppositions and acts that I perform.<sup>14</sup> If the conclusion of the argument is to be valid I must for example be able to return to the act in which I

substituted for  $p$ , as many times as I wish, I must be able to return to the act itself not to a memory or a recording of it, otherwise the truths of formal logic will depend on the accuracy of my memory or of my recording. There can be no ideal identity for a psychological ego, confined to the present moment, I must be a transcendental ego, one who has an absolute indubitable access to the past moment, one for whom the past moment is exactly what he thinks it is.

The validity of a logical conclusion, then presupposes an absolute indubitable access to the world of propositions and symbols. Clearly this access does not function as a presupposition in the technical sense, the indubitable access is the condition for the possibility of logic. It plays a role at every step of the argument, which is probably why it passes unnoticed or why, as Merleau-Ponty would put it, it could be introduced surreptitiously.

Whether we adopt a correspondence or a coherence theory of truth, we always presuppose an indubitable access to the world of propositions and operations, i.e. to the ideal world. The objectivity or truth of this access can never be proved or disproved since it is assumed in any process of verification or any logical inference. If ever we claim to know anything whatsoever, and even the assertion that we know nothing can be shown to be such a claim, we have to accept that we have an access which is indubitable and unquestionable. But how can we

conceive of an act of knowing whose truth need not and cannot be questioned? Clearly such an act could not simply mirror an object in the world or in the past, for any such mirrored image could always be questioned or tested by comparing it with its object. The act of knowing, if it is to be indubitable would have to grasp the object itself or the past itself, so that there can be no numerical distinction between the act of knowing and the object in itself. The object cannot be beyond or outside the act in which I am conscious of it. In Husserl's language I must constitute it, i.e. constitute not only its sense but also its being. I must conceive of myself as the 'last subject'.

"The attempt to conceive the universe of true being as something lying outside the universe of possible consciousness, possible knowledge, possible evidence, the two being related to one another merely externally by a rigid law, is nonsensical. They belong together essentially; and, as belonging together essentially, they are also concretely one, one in the only absolute concretion: transcendental subjectivity. If transcendental subjectivity is the universe of possible sense, then an outside is precisely nonsense."  
(Husserl, 1969:84)

The world is what I think it is and I have an absolute indubitable access to the world because I have a absolute indubitable access to my own thought. Only in the relationship of thought to its object is it impossible to conceive of any numerical distinction between the act and its object.

"... a consistent reflection dissipates every question concerning the relationship between them [the

mind and the world]. Henceforth their relationship will be one of pure correlation: the mind is what thinks, the world is what is thought ... (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:46)

Consciousness considered in its "purity", must be reckoned as a self-contained system of Being, as a system of Absolute Being, into which nothing can penetrate, and from which nothing can escape: which has no spatio-temporal exterior, and can be inside no spatio-temporal system, which cannot experience causality from anything nor exert causality upon anything." (Husserl, 1939:153)

At the root of all our knowledge we find a being which is not confined to any spatio-temporal position, but who constitutes the sense and being of space and time and of being in space and time, a being which regards everything that exists as existing through itself, that posits itself purely as the acceptance basis of all objective acceptances and bases. To perform the reduction, to put the real world and the ideal world into parentheses is not to consider our experience of them as a dream or an illusion, but to expose the surreptitiously introduced subject through which there is a real world and an ideal world.

"The transcendental ego emerged by virtue of my 'parenthesizing' of the entire Objective world and all others (including all ideal) objectivities." (Husserl, 1969:99)

$P \supset Q$  must be true, we have argued because I, as this constituting subject, think  $P \supset Q$ , but as we have seen what characterises the experience of truths like  $P \supset Q$  is that we recognize that this relationship holds even if there were no-one to think it or recognize it. This means that my own thinking that  $P \supset Q$  cannot

be for me the thinking of a person in the world. My own thinking cannot be an object for me. I cannot consider myself a natural man among men, nor can I think of myself as a psyche. I must take myself to be the last subject, only then will 'I think that P $\supset$ Q' be synonymous with 'P $\supset$ Q', only then will it be impossible to establish a numerical distinction between my thinking and this state of affairs in the world. What compromised Husserl's account of the informal essence in the **Philosophy of Arithmetic** was that the events reflected on were events in the individual philosopher's psyche and it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that Husserl had simply given a description of some peculiarity of his own associations. If my thoughts cannot be objects for me, then as this fundamental thinker the only way of knowing myself is by co-inciding with myself. The only way of thinking about me would be to become me. Because of the central role that will be played by this notion of a transcendental ego in my account of Merleau-Ponty's theory of motility and linguistic behaviour, it seems appropriate to make this notion more concrete by examining its relation to some aspects of the 'Ego' in the theories of Descartes and Kant and its relation to the traditional arguments in favour of solipsism and the argument from illusion.

#### KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL EGO

Kant also makes this distinction between transcendental consciousness and a psychological ego. If Kant's epistemology

succeeds in overcoming scepticism and relativism, as he claims it does, then this transcendental consciousness cannot be objectified, cannot have a spatio-temporal exterior, and the possibility of knowledge must be indistinguishable from the possibility of a world. Kant's transcendental subject must be taken as a last subject.<sup>15</sup>

Kant argues that scientific knowledge is possible because the world I experience is regular and law-like. It is regular and law-like because the experienced world is synthesized in accordance with the a priori categories of the understanding. Unless it was synthesized in this fashion, it could not enter as an object of my consciousness. It makes sense to me, that the cup broke because it fell to the floor. The event is intelligible because it is synthesized in accordance with the category of cause and effect. What Kant tries to demonstrate however, is that these categories and this consciousness are not arbitrary, that they are not simply relative to 'human' knowledge as opposed to the knowledge some extra terrestrial being or some machine might have of the world, they are objective in the only sense that the word objective can have for us. It is not possible to consider the thesis that they are relative to a human knowledge of things, without in that very act of considering, asserting or presupposing their universality necessity and objectivity. They are a priori categories of the last subject, the subject which thinks and considers - not he who is thought about or considered. I cannot

imagine that I have been programmed through evolution, for this would mean that my rationality was contingent on survival in this world. This would mean that even the explanation in terms of survival of the fittest may not actually make any sense, that it simply conforms to my subjective and contingent criteria.

Kant asks whether the a priori categories could have been implanted in us by our Creator. He considers the possibility that they are "so ordered by our Creator that their employment is in complete harmony with the laws of nature ..." (1964:174). But he immediately points out that if this were the case, the categories would be no more than "subjective dispositions of thought" and their necessity would have been sacrificed.

"The concept of cause, for instance, which expresses the necessity of an event under a presupposed condition, would be false if it rested only on an arbitrary subjective necessity, implanted in us, of connecting certain empirical representations according to the rule of causal relation. I would not then be able to say that the effect is connected with the cause in the object, that is to say necessarily, but only that I am so constituted that I cannot think this representation otherwise than as thus connected."  
(1964:175)

And it seems clear that Kant would reject any computer model of the mind where God is replaced by he who constructs or programs the computer. If the categories are not subjective dispositions of thought, even dispositions which are in complete harmony with the laws of nature, they can only be the a priori forms of

## DESCARTES AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL EGO

Husserl credits Descartes with being the first philosopher to have seen the transcendental ego, to have recognized that the guarantee of certainty lies in an experience, an experience of the absolute access of thought to its object, an experience which is the access itself (1969:24).

When Descartes concludes that "I think therefore I am" is an indubitable truth, he is not revealing some interesting feature of his psychological make up. He is not saying that his psyche is so constituted that whenever he thinks about the fact that he thinks, the thought that he exists is inevitably associated. He is not pointing to an external relation between the idea of 'cogito' and the idea of 'sum', a relation explicable in terms of conditioning processes or neurological connections. Descartes never argues for example that the cogito ergo sum is true because his associations are reliable, or because his subjective dispositions of thought are in harmony with the laws of reality. He never argues that since the thought that I exist inevitably follows the thought that I think, we can assume with confidence that my actual thinking implies my actual existence. If this were Descartes' argument, the cogito ergo sum would not be a first truth, it would depend on the harmony of the subjective dispositions with the nature of reality. Any appeal to a Darwinian explanation would render the cogito relative.

The cogito ergo sum is based not only on the indubitability of the thought, "I think that I think" but on its being indubitable for he who meditates. Could this thought have been produced in me by other thoughts or physical causes? If this were the case then I would have to verify its truth and for as long as each verification is itself caused each will presuppose another, and so on ad infinitum. Could the idea of 'indubitability' be produced in me through some causal process? Are we then programmed into thinking that the thought, "I think that I think", is indubitable? But this would undermine its necessary truth. In the same way that Kant could never accept that the categories are subjective dispositions, Descartes could never accept that the idea of indubitability is produced in him in some or other fashion.

Nor could Descartes accept that 'indubitability' was a concept which I applied to certain of my thoughts if they fulfilled certain requirements. Certainly "I think that I think" is true because the mere fact of the existence of the thought is a sufficient condition for its truth. This however does not yet mean that it is indubitably true for me. The process in which I recognize that the mere existence of the thought makes the thought true, presupposes an ability to classify this thought as a thought. But how do I know that the concept of thought I am using is the correct concept? This would also make the cogito a dependent truth, dependent on our having made the correct classification of thought as a thought.<sup>16</sup> If the cogito is

indubitable, it must be because there is no gulf between the thought thinking or judging and the thought thought about. The two thoughts must collapse into each other, so that there is no numerical distinction between them, so that my thought is whatever I think it is. Our idea of thought does not precede our ability to recognize thought as thought. Descartes in fact says that the only way in which we can ever learn what it is to think is by thinking. I must then enjoy an immediate access to my own thinking.

Similarly, *cogito ergo sum* is not the conclusion of a syllogism of which the major premise is, "everything that thinks exists". This would make the *cogito* dependent on some abstract a priori relation between the concept of thought and the concept of existence. Descartes is not relying on the formal definitions of the terms. It is not as if through a blind attachment to the philosophic and technical definitions of thought that we can infer that every thinker exists.<sup>17</sup> Surely the entire philosophic tradition with all its definitions has been suspended in the methodic doubt. What is presupposed in Descartes is the collapse of the distinction between epistemology and ontology. There can be for Descartes no distinction between the existence of my thought, or its taking place, and my consciousness and knowledge of it. If I conceive of myself as thought, there can be no distinction between my being and my consciousness of my being. As Lachièze-Rey points out, it is for Descartes precisely because we grasp our actual existence in our actual

thought that we are able to relate the idea of thought and the idea of existence. We know what it is to think, to doubt and exist as thinkers, because we actually think, doubt and exist.<sup>18</sup> We need then, a direct contact of thought with itself, and therefore a direct contact with our existence as thought.

"... the philosophy of reflection identifies my being with what I think of it". (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:48)

Cogito ergo sum, is not the conclusion of a judgement; it expresses the direct contact of the self with the self, which is what Husserl calls evidence, the grasping of the self, by the self. The indubitability is found in this experience of apodictic certainty that thought has in its contact with itself. It does not and cannot presuppose any process of verification, or truth by definition. The thoughts of this thinking subject cannot be construed as events in a psychological ego. The inconceivability of my not existing does not reflect a limitation of my psychological ego, nor is it a sign to be interpreted, it is indistinguishable from the actual impossibility of my non-existence.

"For an absolute self-evidence, free from any presupposition, to be possible, and for my thought to be able to pierce through to itself, catch itself in action, and arrive at a pure 'assent of the self to the self', it would, to speak the language of the Kantians, have to cease to be an event and become an act through and through..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:395)

In the rationality with which I draw the conclusion ... "I exist", Descartes has revealed a rational act whose rationality cannot be tested, the validity of the conclusion is grounded in the experience of certainty. My intuition that I must exist does not "represent" a factual or logical necessity it is **the constitution of that necessity**, it is the rationality of the last subject, a rationality from within.

Any theory which purports to establish objective criteria for rational action always surreptitiously presupposes a subject whose actions cannot be tested with these criteria, whose rationality must be synonymous with his acts, whose rationality is based on the absolute contact that thought has with itself.

Davidson for example offers us objective criteria in terms of which we can test whether an action is rational or irrational. He argues that rational action is action that is related in a certain way to the beliefs and desires of the agent. Amongst other things he mentions that the beliefs and desires of the agent **must cause** the action (1980:3/19). But Davidson ignores the subject which has to use his criteria. Unless this subject is rational his testing procedures will not reveal anything about the action tested. In fact, unless the subject knows that his testing procedure has been rational he cannot claim to have established the rationality or irrationality of the agent's action. How can he test his own testing procedures? By using Davidson's criteria once again? But here too, unless this

testing of the test is rational, and unless he knows that it is rational, he cannot claim to have established the rationality of the testing procedure and hence the rationality of the agents action. Clearly this process can be carried on ad infinitum and nothing will ever be established, unless we can accept that a certain act can be rational and aware of its rationality, indivisibly, so that it will not require any verifying tests. As with the rationality of Descartes' conclusion ... "I exist", I know that I am rational and I know that my rationality is that of the world without having to verify or make any judgement.

#### DESCARTES'S SOLIPSIST ARGUMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION OF BEING

Finally we need to consider the distinction between the truth for the reflecting subject and the truth in itself. It may be argued that Husserl's reduction has lead him into a solipsist position. Everything we have pointed out thus far about the transcendental ego, could simply refer to the way in which he who claims to know, must think of himself. Unless he takes himself to be transparent, to be the constituter of the world and of time, he will undermine his own claim to truth. But we have not yet demonstrated that the subject actually is what he needs to take himself to be. All that Husserl has shown thus far is that we can only have a sense of certainty if we can take ourselves to have an absolute opening onto the world, if we can accept that the world is what we think it is. Does this mean that in the end Husserl's transcendental ego is no different

from that of Kant, and that we would have to accept the existence of a thing in itself lying beyond our knowledge and experience?<sup>19</sup>

But this is to misunderstand the way in which Husserl takes the thought of the transcendental ego to be founding, it is to accept, uncritically a certain formal distinction between truth 'for me' and truth 'in itself'. It is in the solipsism of Descartes that the nature of these assumptions can be seen most clearly. Descartes presupposes, for those who meditate with him and understand his arguments, a certain grasp of the informal distinction between the dreamt and the real, which implies an immediate experience of transcendence itself, while his solipsist thesis assumes that this is impossible. Both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty argue that if we are genuinely incapable of distinguishing between the real and the dream, as is assumed in Descartes' argument, then notions like solipsism and 'a world lying beyond my thoughts and experience' could have no meaning.<sup>20</sup>

Descartes begins his **Meditations** with the problem of distinguishing between the dream and reality.

"I can see so clearly that there are no conclusive signs by which to distinguish between our waking and our sleeping moments, that I am dumbfounded, and my confusion is such that I can almost believe myself asleep at this moment." (1966:103)

But if there are no signs what can the difference be for me

between dreaming and being awake? It is clear that Descartes begins with the distinction between my experience of the world and the world itself. The ultimate court of appeal for this distinction is not within the realm of experience. Within experience, I would at best only have signs. The distinction is made from without. This is brought out vividly when he says,

"How often has it happened to me to dream at night that I was here, in this place, dressed and seated by the fire, when all the time I was lying naked in my bed." (1966:102)

There is then for Descartes a clear distinction between what I think I am and what I am in fact. But what meaning could this distinction have for me? Having resolved not to accept any idea which was not clear and distinct, this distinction would have to be grasped by me. Perhaps Descartes' reply would be that the distinction makes sense to me because I can imagine what some observer, who was not himself asleep would see. But this would only postpone the problem for I will have to imagine a real observer who really perceives me which means I already need to know the difference between real and dreamt. In Descartes' argument we can see that he always takes himself to be a natural man in the real world, one which can dream he is sitting in front of a fire while he is actually asleep in bed, a man that is, with an outside which is accessible to others.

"When I apperceive myself as a natural man, I have already apperceived the spatial world and construed myself as in space, where I already have an Outside Me. Therefore the validity of world-apperception has

already been presupposed, has already entered into the sense assumed in asking the question - whereas the answer alone ought to show the rightness of accepting anything as Objectively valid." (Husserl, 1969:83)

Husserl argues (1969:82/3) that Descartes's fundamental question, viz., how the certainties and compelling evidences I attain in my own domain of consciousness can transcend the immanency of conscious life and acquire objective significance, or how evidence (*clara et distincta perceptio*) can claim to be more than a characteristic of consciousness within me, makes no sense. It is a meaningless question because it fails to recognize that it is through consciousness that there is a distinction between the immanency of conscious life, and "more than a characteristic of consciousness within me", and through consciousness that there is a distinction between a truth for me and a truth in itself. Descartes has, in Husserl's language, missed the transcendental ego, the last subject, because in assuming that I have an outside, that there is a world beyond consciousness, he failed to reveal the consciousness through which there is this outside or this 'beyond me'.

The distinction between the real and the dreamt cannot be captured in a formal definition. As we have seen the formal definition of a transcendent object reduces the object to the abstract law governing its appearances or its properties, but as Descartes himself emphasizes, the dreamt object cannot be distinguished from the real either in terms of its appearances or in terms of the law governing the appearances. If such a distinction could be made, I would be able to distinguish

between my perceptions and my dreams which is what Descartes denies.

Descartes presupposes that his audience has an intuitive grasp of the distinction between a real and a dreamt world, an intuitive grasp which presupposes that we have had an experience of the distinction itself. If we understand Descartes's argument, if it makes sense to us to suppose that there is no real world lying beyond our experiences, then we must have some grasp of the meaning of 'lying beyond my experience', i.e. we must have some grasp of the meaning of transcendence. This meaning of transcendence could never be given to us as an a priori concept, for there would be no way of telling when it should be applied and no way of checking when its application was appropriate. Not only are there no signs enabling us to distinguish between our dreams and our experiences of the world, but as an a priori concept it would be impossible to imagine what experience could ever induce me to apply the concept, and it would be, as Kant put it, empty, and could never be a source of knowledge. In some way actual transcendence must be present in my experiences, not simply signs of transcendence. I must therefore have transcended my "island of consciousness" and encountered the world itself. Since it cannot imply the interpretation of signs, this contact must be indubitable which means there can be no numerical distinction between my thought of transcendence and transcendence itself.

"When Descartes tells us that the existence of visible things is doubtful, but that our vision, when considered as a mere thought of seeing is not in doubt, he takes up an untenable position ... the 'thought of seeing' implies that we have had in certain cases, the experience of genuine or actual vision to which the idea of seeing bears a resemblance and in which the certainty of the thing was, on those occasions, involved." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:375)

But could we not imagine that this distinction between the real and the dreamt could be made entirely within the immanence of consciousness? Couldn't we argue for instance that I've only been dreaming that I dream and dreaming that I am awake? Perhaps the distinction between dreaming, and being awake and of having a direct access to the transcendent world, has been given to me in a dream? Surely not. Could we as Descartes's audience accept this argument without casting doubts on our ability to understand the argument itself? If I accept the possibility that my understanding of the difference between dreams and reality has been given to me in a dream, what faith could I have in my understanding? How could I be sure I have understood what Descartes means when he suggests that my understanding has been given to me in a dream? If I have only had dreams of dreams and dreams of being awake, I may not have grasped the essential difference between genuinely dreaming and genuinely being awake. To accept the possibility that all my experiences may be dreams is to accept that I might not know the difference between actual dreaming and actually being awake and therefore that I might not know what Descartes means when he suggests that all my experiences may be dreams. To accept the

argument is to accept that one might not have understood it. If we understand Descartes's argument, if we grasp the meaning of 'lying beyond my experiences', then we must have had at some stage an immediate and indubitable access to the transcendent world.

"It is thus a fundamental error to suppose that perception ... fails to come into contact with the thing itself... The thought that the transcendence of the thing is that of an image or sign has proved misleading here ... The spatial thing which we see is, despite all its transcendence, perceived. We are not given an image or a sign in its place." (Husserl, 1931:135/6)

"My perception does not bear upon a content of consciousness: it bears upon the ashtray itself." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:260)

"The consciousness I have of seeing or feeling is no passive noting of some psychic event hermitically sealed upon itself, an event leaving me in doubt about the reality of the thing seen or felt ... Sight is achieved and fulfils itself in the thing seen." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:376/7)

"Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there can be no question of setting the act itself apart from the end to which it is directed. Perception and the percept necessarily have the same existential modality, since perception is inseparable from the consciousness which it has, or rather is, of reaching the thing itself. Any contention that the perception is indubitable, whereas the thing perceived is not, must be ruled out. If I see an ash-tray, in the full sense of the word see, there must be an ashtray there, and I cannot forego this assertion. To see is to see something." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:374)

If this access to a transcendent world is absolute and immediate, if experience opens up to the transcendent world, itself then the experience could not simply be a psychological event 'indicating in me' the distinction between immanence and

transcendence. It could not simply be an event which allows me to recognize a distinction which otherwise exists in itself. For once again, this would reduce the experience to a 'sign'. If there must be an ashtray there, if sight is achieved and fulfils itself in the thing seen, if the existence of the thing is as certain as the experience of perception, then my experience cannot simply mirror this transcendence and there can be no distinction between my thought or experience of transcendence and transcendence itself. My experience must be co-extensive with it, or in Husserl's terms I must constitute it.

"That the being of the world "transcends" consciousness in this fashion ... in no wise alters the fact that it is in conscious life alone, wherein everything transcendent becomes constituted, as something inseparable from consciousness, and which specifically, as world-consciousness bears within itself inseparably the sense: world - and indeed: "this actually existing" world.

Only an uncovering of the horizon of experience ultimately clarifies the "actuality" and the "transcendancy" of the world, at the same time showing the world to be inseparable from transcendental subjectivity, which constitutes actuality of being and sense." (Husserl, 1969:62)

Lauer spells this out clearly.

"Husserl was, of course, not the first philosopher to identify being and intelligibility. Nor was he the first to seek in subjectivity an explanation of intelligibility. It is difficult, however, to find a philosopher who identifies being and intelligibility as deliberately as does Husserl in making both depend on constitutive intentionality. According to this theory not only is knowledge constituted in consciousness,

but the very being of that which is known is so constituted; only absolute being is in the full sense, and only being in consciousness (Bewusst-Sein) is absolute being. Now, since being is in consciousness only as constituted, being is absolute only as constituted. Thus, intentional constitution has become a universal explanation or "clarification" of being. "Nothing is, except by a proper operation of consciousness, whether actual or potential" [Formale und transzendente Logik p.207] If, then, the task of philosophy is to understand being, its method must be to penetrate the subjectivity wherein being has its source. It is for this reason that only a phenomenology of being can be a science of being; the gap between being and consciousness highlighted by Descartes can be bridged only if consciousness is constitutive of being." (Lauer, 1958:79)

This is confirmed by the way in which 'reality' is experienced. The existence of the world is not an hypothesis that I make on the basis of some or other evidence. If this were the case I would constantly be tempted to check whether I was awake or dreaming.

"If the reality of my perceptions were based solely on the intrinsic coherence of 'representations', it ought to be for ever hesitant and, being wrapped up in my conjectures on probabilities, I ought to be ceaselessly taking apart misleading syntheses, and reinstating in reality stray phenomena which I had excluded in the first place. But this does not happen. The real is a closely knit fabric." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:x)

He who distinguishes between the real world and his dreams does not classify his experiences under some concept of real and dreamt in accordance with some or other criterion. It is not as if those experiences of mine which are coherent and probable are classified as veridical experiences, or experiences of the world, while those which are incoherent and improbable are

classified as products of my imagination. On the contrary my experience of reality is immediate, and it is therefore easier for me to tell whether it is real or imaginary than to tell whether my experiences are coherent and probable or incoherent and improbable.

"The fact that sometimes the controls become necessary and result in judgements of reality which rectify the naive experience does not prove that judgements of this sort are at the origin of the distinction, or constitute it, and therefore does not dispense us from understanding it for itself. If we do so, we then will have to not define the real by its coherence and the imaginary by its incoherence or its lacunae: the real is coherent and probable because it is real, and not real because it is coherent; the imaginary is incoherent or improbable because it is imaginary, and not imaginary because it is incoherent."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968:40)

As Merleau-Ponty points out, even the most likely or reasonable dreams are immediately recognized by us as dreams when we awake and the most unlikely events in our lives are immediately and unmistakably recognized as real.

"It [the real] does not await our judgement before incorporating the most surprising phenomena, or before rejecting the most plausible figments of our imagination" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:x)

"It has often been pointed out that even the most credible imagination, the most conformable to the context of experience, does not bring us one step closer to "reality" and is immediately ascribed by us to the imaginary - and that conversely an even absolutely unexpected and unforeseeable noise is from the first perceived as real, however weak be its links with the context." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:39)

"... the most credible phantasm glances off at the surface of the world: it is this presence of the whole world in one reflection, its irremediable absence in

the richest and most systematic deliriums, that we have to understand, and this difference is not a difference of the more or the less." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:40)

Even if we take as a criterion for reality, accessibility to others, it would be misleading to argue that we classify our experiences as illusory, whenever we discover that others do not share them. The occasion could just as easily lead us to question the perceptual sensitivity of others.

"'Can't you hear my voices?' a patient asks the doctor; and she comes resignedly to the conclusion : 'I am the only one who hears them then'." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:291)

Merleau-Ponty points out that modern psychology has gone beyond explaining delusions and hallucinations in terms of a loss of the concepts of real and illusory, or the loss of an intellectual power to classify experiences as veridical or illusory.

"A hallucination is not a judgement or a rash belief, for the same reasons which prevent it from being a sensory content: the judgement or the belief could consist only in positing the hallucination as true; and this is precisely what the patient's do not do. At the level of judgement they distinguish hallucination from perception... " (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:335)

A schizophrenic patient, examined by Binswanger, never fails to identify the real world, as the real world which is why it is not possible to dispel his illusions by bringing the real world to his attention. Strictly speaking, the patient's powers of

judgement and his concepts of real and illusory are perfectly intact. He has no quarrel with the real world, he simply says that "it proves nothing against what he experiences" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:291). What is disturbed in the patient are not abstract concepts, but that primitive grasp of reality, the informal essence of transcendence, that immediate access to the world itself. What characterises the schizophrenic, is that the distinction for him, between reality and illusion, rests on an act of **judgement** in which some experiences are **judged** to be illusory and others, veridical. No matter how rational or impartial he may be in this classification, he never enjoys the certitude of being in contact with the world itself.

"My awareness of constructing an objective truth would never provide me with anything more than an objective truth for me and my greatest attempt at impartiality would never enable me to prevail over my subjectivity (as Descartes so well expresses it by the hypothesis of the malignant demon), if I had not, underlying my judgements, the primordial certainty of being in contact with being itself ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:355)

But why should we concern ourselves with the question of how Descartes's audience come to understand the meanings of the terms he uses? In trying to understand how Descartes's audience could distinguish between a transcendent or real world and an immanent or subjective world are we not concerning ourselves with psychological questions? Could we not argue that I may in fact be confined to my own immanent world, even though I might not be able to understand what this

means? Could we not argue for example that the problem of how transcendence is conceived is a psychological problem, and that 'true being' is defined as that which lies beyond my thoughts. According to the definitions of terms, all I could constitute would be the idea or meaning of true being, but never true being itself. Being itself is by definition not a cogitatum. But this would be contrary to the whole spirit of Descartes's break with Medieval thought. The methodic doubt rules out of court all distinctions, definitions and arguments which are not reducible to clear and distinct ideas. If the solipsist position is a legitimate stage in Descartes's argument then it must be, for me, reducible to clear and distinct ideas. Husserl would reply that the ultimate essences in philosophy cannot rest on formal definitions, which would be little more than technical formulae or rules for sportive arguments in philosophical contests (1969:86). If we are to emerge from "blind symbolic thought" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:204) we would have to return to an informal encounter with being itself, as opposed to an intuition of images and ideas or the adoption of definitions.

The project of grounding the meaning of transcendence in a formal definition is dishonest in its own way. As a technical formula or a set of rules for philosophical discourse, the notion of a definition already presupposes a realm which is distinct from the psychological, and which lies beyond whatever I as a psychological ego think of it. The definition and the various stages in the argument in which it is applied must be

for me "abiding possessions". I must be able to return to them, rather than to images, memories or thoughts of them. They must therefore be conceived as lying beyond my psyche. The meaning of transcendence or "true being" cannot be restricted to technical formulae for arguments, since this meaning is always presupposed in the notion of a formula or an argument.

How did Descartes come to make the assumption that he is confined to his own private realm of thoughts and perceptions which may or may not mirror the real world and why was it never suspended in the methodic doubt? Ricoeur argues that Descartes's philosophy is based on two sources, the cogito and God.<sup>21</sup> God's knowledge of me and of the world and my knowledge of God are never subjected to methodic doubt yet they play a decisive role in Descartes's solipsist argument. In order to cast doubt on his perception of the world Descartes points out that he can have no certainty that he is actually dressed and seated in front of his fire, because, in the past he has dreamt that he was dressed and seated in front of the fire, when all the time, he was asleep in bed. But what is the sense of this "all the time"? Presumably this is what someone else would have seen if he were observing Descartes while he was having this dream. Clearly Descartes assumes that it is always possible for him to be seen from the outside.<sup>22</sup> He assumes that he is not the last subject. This assumption is never questioned, Descartes never considers the possibility that the malignant demon is the author of the belief that I am not the

last subject. In fact the very notion of a malignant demon as a subject conscious of me, allows Descartes to make the assumption that I am not the last subject, that my thoughts are "mental events" taking place in the world.

If it is indubitable that I can be seen from the outside, then I must have some special, indubitable access to this state of affairs lying beyond my thoughts and experiences. But it is the possibility of any such access that the solipsist needs to deny. According to Ricoeur, for Descartes, the indubitability of the fact that I can be seen from the outside does not rest on an indubitable access to this state of affairs, but on the indubitability of the presence of God. Because of this surreptitious introduction of God as the genuine last subject, I become a **substantia cogitans**, metaphysically distinct from the world. There is no necessity to 'ground' this idea of myself because there is no necessity to ground the idea of God. It is because Descartes has two starting points, the cogito and God, that he fails to grasp the idea of the transcendental ego.

"By rights the cogito is the transcendental subject. But Descartes betrayed his own radicalism, for the doubt should have put an end to all objective externality and should have disengaged a subjectivity without an absolute external world." (Ricoeur, 1967:83)

Once thought is taken as an activity of such a **substantia cogitans**, as an internal and private event, the question of whether or not there is a world corresponding to this thought is

automatically raised. In Husserl's notion of 'thought' however, there can be no answer to this question since it is through thought that there is a within and a beyond. Because Husserl rejects Descartes's dual starting point, viz. consciousness and God, his notion of the subject is not that of a *substantia cogitans*, it has no outside, no sense is bestowed on it from another source, such as would be the case if God were the last subject.

"Unities of meaning presuppose a sense-giving consciousness which, on its side, is absolute and not dependent in its turn on sense bestowed on it from another source." (Husserl, 1931:168)

It is unfortunate that Husserl adopts Descartes's term 'cogito', when in fact he rejects any notion of a *substantia cogitans*. Similarly it is unfortunate that he compares his reduction with Descartes's methodic doubt, for in Husserl there is no question of doubting the existence of the world in the sense of imagining that beyond my thoughts there is nothing. In the preface to the English edition of *Ideas*, published in 1931, Husserl says quite clearly

"Our phenomenological idealism does not deny the positive existence of the real (*realen*) world and of Nature - in the first place as though it held it to be an illusion." (Husserl, 1931:21)

Merleau-Ponty expresses the same idea,

"Reduction ... Wrongly presented - in particular in the

C.M. [Cartesian Meditations] - as a suspending of the existence of the world - If that is what it is, it lapses into the Cartesian defect of being an hypothesis of the Nichtigkeit of the world, which immediately has as its consequence the maintenance of the mens sive anima (a fragment of the world) as indubitable - - Every negation of the world, but also every neutrality with regard to the existence of the world, has as its immediate consequence that one misses the transcendental." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:171)

There is no question of putting the existence of the world in parentheses in order to focus our attention on the act of thought in which we recognize the existence of the world, for this would imply that the distinction between an existence in itself and an existence for me is taken for granted and that phenomenology is only concerned with the latter, since it is only the latter that is accessible to us as a phenomenon. What we suspend in the reduction is an absurd sense of the existence of the world, an existence that by definition we could never know.

"We subtract just as little from the plenitude of the world's Being, from the totality of all realities, as we do from the plenary geometric Being of a square when we deny (what in this case indeed can plainly be taken for granted) that it is round. It is not that the real sensory world is "recast" or denied, but that an absurd interpretation of the same, which indeed contradicts its own mentally clarified meaning, is set aside. It springs from making the world absolute in a philosophical sense, which is wholly foreign to the way in which we naturally look out upon the world." (Husserl, 1931:169)

This absolute existence in a philosophical sense is what we can describe as the formal essence of the existence of the world.

It is 'absurd' or naive because it feeds off the intuitive or informal essence which it when relegates to the realm of the psychological. As we have seen in Ricoeur's account of Descartes, the notion of an absolute existence is introduced as that which is seen by God, as opposed to that which is experienced by me, but such an account is always dishonest because it refuses to consider the act through which the absolute existence of God is present to me. Phenomenology does not confine itself to a description of the experience of things leaving aside the metaphysical and the ultimate questions of philosophy, it only rejects a "naive" metaphysics.<sup>23</sup>

"Finally, lest any misunderstanding arise, I would point out that, as already stated, phenomenology indeed excludes every naive metaphysics that operates with absurd things in themselves, but does not exclude metaphysics as such. It does no violence to the problem- motives that inwardly drive the old tradition into the wrong line of enquiry and the wrong method: and it by no means professes to stop short of the "supreme and ultimate" questions."<sup>23</sup> (Husserl, 1969:156)

Because Husserl refuses to start with the irreducible distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, because he rejects Descartes's dual starting point, the distinction between epistemology and ontology disappears.

"Whereas Descartes would limit the being of the world in two ways (by the *cogito* which supports the thinkable and by God who supports the created) Husserl decides that there is but one possible system of limitations and that the ontological question is the epistemological question." (Ricoeur, 1967:89)

## THE ARGUMENT FROM ILLUSION AND THE CONSTITUTION OF TIME

Finally we need to consider the argument from illusion. The argument from illusion is probably the most commonly used argument to support the thesis that the subject is a psychological entity, confined to the present moment, and to his private experiences and judgements about an actual but transcendent world and an actually transcendent past and future.

We have seen in our discussion of the perception of depth how the stereo-scope can provide an illusion of depth. If we can perceive depth when in fact there is none, this perception of depth could not have been an access to depth itself. Husserl has argued that we should not assume that "perception does not come into contact with the thing itself". He has argued that "the spatial thing which we see is, despite all its transcendence, perceived"... that, "we are not given an image or a sign in its place" and that "we must not substitute the consciousness of a sign or an image for a perception" (1931:136). Merleau-Ponty has argued that "if I see an ashtray, in the full sense of the word see, there must be an ashtray there" (1962:374). Nevertheless I know that it is always possible that I may, a moment later, on closer inspection, find that it is not an ashtray at all, but something else, like a folded serviette. Since I could not have seen an ashtray at T1, because there was no ashtray, my perception at T1 must have been a judgement based on certain signs, a judgement that at T2 I recognize as being

false. Even though the experience of the ashtray could not be described as an experience of signs and an experience of making a judgement, even though the ashtray gives itself as incontestably present, the perception of the serviette at T2 proves that my perception at T1, did not come into contact with the object itself. Since it is always possible for my perception of the serviette, in its turn to be exposed as an illusion, we must conclude that perception only mirrors the world and never makes contact with it, and that sometimes this mirroring is inaccurate. Being situated in the world I am badly placed for distinguishing between my images and the object itself. I can only infer from the fact that I sometimes see things that don't exist, that I perceive only images and not the world, and that there is no reason to suppose that I ever do perceive the world itself. Since at T1 a cup presented itself to me as real and not as merely probable, since the presence of the cup was at T1 'incontestable', and since at T2 we discover that there was no cup, we must conclude that the incontestability of the presence, its being experienced as real and not merely as probable, must be a psychological or subjective phenomenon. If we are unaware of making judgements, the processes must have been carried out unconsciously, and my actual experience of seeing the cup itself can be nothing other than a subjective decor which hides the actual process I carry out.

But arguments like this assume what they intend to demonstrate.

The argument assumes that my perceptual experience can be divided into a perception at T1 and a perception at T2. But to assume that this is possible is to assume that we do not have an access to the world itself, or to any particular thing in the world. A real object is one thing identical with itself throughout the lapse of time. If perception comes into contact with the thing itself, perception cannot be divisible into a series of acts in time, for such a series can only give me a series of temporal perspectives on the object, which would then have to be subsumed under the concept of 'an identical object existing through time'. We have argued above that my perception of depth and of the three dimensional object, cannot be understood as a synthesis of the two monocular images under the concept of 'an object 10cm from me'. Perception, we argued, opens up to the three dimensional object in the world, itself. To assume that my perception can be reduced to two images subsumed under a concept, is to assume that I do not perceive the object itself. Similarly, to assume that my experience of an object can be fractured into isolated moments in time, is already to have assumed that I am confined to images. Since the object is transhistorical, only a perceptual act which was not divisible in this way, which was contemporaneous with it, could reach the object itself.

"We can no more construct perception of the thing and of the world from discrete aspects, than we can make up the binocular vision of an object from two monocular images. My experiences of the world are integrated into one single world as the double image merges into the

one thing, when my finger stops pressing upon my eyeball. I do not have one perspective, then another, and between them a link brought about by the understanding, but each perspective merges into the other, ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:329)

"We exclude the term perception to the whole extent that it already implies a cutting up of what is lived into discontinuous acts..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:158)

Speaking about the various perceptual acts involved in the perception of one identical die Husserl notes that

"Their unity is a unity of synthesis: not merely a continuous connectedness of cogitations (as it were, a being stuck to one another externally) but a connectedness that makes the unity of one consciousness, in which the unity of an intentional objectivity, as 'the same' objectivity belonging to multiple modes of appearance, becomes constituted." (1969:41/2)

But is the experience of having had an illusion, the experience of a dis-illusion not itself the experience of a disruption or a fracturing of my perception? Since I see a serviette now where previously I saw an ashtray does this not imply that my experience must be divisible into at least two distinct and successive acts? On the contrary, an unbiased description of the experience of a dis-illusion reveals, that it is only a subject whose experience of the world is not divisible into an experience at T1 and an experience at T2, which could have the experience of a dis-illusion. Let us begin with a description of what our experience of dis-illusion would be like if our perception of the world was made up of a succession of

discontinuous acts. At T2 I would have an image and I would make the judgement that I have in front of me a serviette. I would also have the 'faded' image of a cup and the memory of the judgement I made that I have a cup in front of me. How do I decide that my present judgement, that it is a serviette, is superior, or more reliable than the judgement I made in the past? Could it be more reliable because I am now better situated than I was at T1, or because I have looked more carefully, or more closely? But, if we do not yet know whether the object is a cup or a serviette, how can we tell which position is better, which way of looking is 'more careful'? The mere fact that at T2 I may be spatially closer is not a sufficient warrant for deciding in favour of a serviette, because there are circumstances where the object can only be seen to be what it is at a certain optimal distance. It is not as if my present hypothesis is more reliable or probable than my past hypotheses because I now occupy a "better" point of view, "have gotten a little closer" to the object or looked at it more closely. On the contrary it is because the serviette has taken over the ontological function that the position from which I see a serviette has the sense of a "better point of view", or that my new exploration can have the sense of "a closer look" at the object.

The truth of my present perception and the reality of the serviette as opposed to the illusory quality of the cup, is not based on any judgement. Just as in binocular perception we found

that the thread 'of its own' takes up its position in front of me, and just as the cube, as I open both eyes, emerges from the flat shapes and 'strives towards its equilibrium by delving into depth, as a stone falls downwards', so here my experience of the 'reality' of the serviette is not reducible to a change from one hypothesis to another. The serviette, 'of its own' takes up the ontological function, gives itself as real, as the cup loses its substance and enters into the serviette as 'into its day-light truth'. Our analysis of Descartes's argument has shown that our ability to distinguish between the real and the dreamt is not based on an act of judgement in which we apply the concepts of reality and of the dreamt. As Descartes has pointed out, there are no undeniable signs. Consequently if ever we know what reality is, it must be because at some stage we have had access to the real itself and that our certainty was at that moment unquestionable, and did not therefore involve judgements or the interpretation of signs.

The process in which the serviette comes to replace the ashtray can only be described as a metamorphosis. The image of the ashtray cannot be compared with the perception of the serviette, one cannot put them side by side. The serviette is infinitely more concrete. It is not like seeing two paintings of the same object one after the other and having to decide which is the more accurate or reliable representation. Just as the change from seeing the two faces to seeing the vase in the ambiguous

figure, is not simply a change in my belief about what is represented, but is a total re-organization of the picture, a re-organization which appears to take place on its own, so the metamorphosis in which the serviette takes over the ontological function from the ashtray, is not a change of an hypothesis. It is the serviette itself that has supplanted the ashtray. It is the ashtray that has disappeared into the serviette as into its daylight truth, so that the experience can never be described as an experience of contesting images.

"When faced with a perceptual appearance we not only know that it can subsequently "break up", we also know that it will do so only for having been so well replaced by another that there remains no trace of it, and that we seek in vain in this chalky rock what a moment ago was a piece of wood polished by the sea...."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968:41)

If the serviette takes over the ontological function then it did not emerge into existence only at the present moment. Experienced as the real object means that the serviette is experienced as that which **was** on the table even when I saw an ashtray and will be on the table in the future. Unlike the image it is a transhistorical object. But to say that its being the real object for me is not based on a judgement and that it has of its own taken over the ontological function is to say that the metamorphosis is a change of the past and the future itself. Speaking about the monocular images and the way in which they disappear into the object in binocular perception

Merleau-Ponty says

"They are the phantoms and it [the thing] is the real; they are pre-things and it is the thing: they vanish when we pass to normal vision and re-enter into the thing as into their daylight truth. They are too far from having its density to enter into competition with it." (1968:7)

But, since real things are not constantly annihilated and recreated (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:272) then this re-entering of the image into the thing, this loss of density, cannot be an event confined to the present moment, leaving perfectly intact the images in the past. The dissipation of an illusion and the taking over of the ontological function by the serviette, the emerging of the serviette as the concrete real object while the cup loses its substance and re-enters the serviette as into its daylight truth, is a process which effects the cup, there where it is in the past. I cannot hold in front of me the memory of a cup giving itself to me as incontestable, as being the true object, the emergence of the serviette, drains the cup perceived at T1 of its substance. It is not the present memory of perceiving a cup that is now interpreted as the memory of an illusion. If the reality of the serviette and the illusory nature of the ashtray were based on a judgement, all my memories and expectations tied to the perception of the ashtray would have to be re-interpreted one by one. Each would have to be changed in accordance with a rule. For it to be true for me now that a serviette and not an ashtray lay on the table when I

entered the room, I would have to reconstruct the event, form a mental picture of the whole process and identify this image of a serviette in the past, with the serviette I see at the moment. But what sense could all this re-interpretation and re-construction have for me? If the reality of the serviette depended on a judgement and if I am confined to the present moment what possible sense could reality and a transhistorical object have for me? If my only access to the past were based on images and judgements what meaning could "the serviette at T1 " have for me? Memories of the past, whether these are seen as faded images, psychic traces left by the past event, or physiological traces such as established nerve connections would always have to be in the present, if they are to be for me. They could not therefore of their own refer to the past. As with the perception of depth, unless I have a direct access to the past I will be unable to interpret all the alleged signs which are held to indicate or refer to the past.

"If I find in them signs of some 'previous' event, it is because I derive my sense of the past from elsewhere ... A preserved fragment of the lived-through past can be at the most no more than an occasion for thinking of the past, but it is not the past which is compelling recognition: ... The past and the future cannot be mere concepts abstracted by us from our perceptions and recollections, mere denominations for the actual series of 'psychic facts'. Time is thought of by us before its parts, and temporal relations make possible the events in time. Correspondingly it is necessary for the subject not to be himself situated in it, in order to be able to be present in intention to the past and the future. Let us no longer say that time is a 'datum of consciousness'; let us be more precise and say that consciousness unfolds or constitutes time. Through the ideal nature of time it ceases to be imprisoned in

the present." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:413/4)

If the experience of dis-illusion is an experience of the serviette taking over the ontological function, then it must be a metamorphosis which at one stroke changes the past and the future itself, so that it is never possible to fragment this experience and to isolate a T1 in the past as some event complete in itself and unchangeable. For it to be true for me now that the serviette was on the table when I entered the room, even when I saw an ashtray, I do not need to form a mental picture of the event, the new situation weighs upon me with all its weight, it is there for me in the past even though I may not recall any detail of it.<sup>24</sup> A new future opens up with new possibilities even though I may not expressly think about the future in relation to the fact that there is a serviette and not an ashtray on the table. The new situation is on the periphery of all my experience, it is the new background against which I think, perceive and have expectations. Our description of the dis-illusion shows not only that it is not an experience of the fracturing of perception into discrete perceptual acts, but, that it is an experience of the simultaneous access to the past and the future.

But could we not argue that all we have revealed in this description are the psychological conditions for the experience of a dis-illusion? Perhaps I am so constituted that it is

impossible for me to recognize the ashtray as an illusion unless I take the serviette as the real, and at that particular moment I may well be unable to imagine that the serviette too is an illusion. But even if at this moment the serviette gives itself to me as incontestably present so that I am unable to forego the assertion that there is a serviette there, this may simply reflect a certain restriction on my powers of imagination and may tell us nothing about the actual presence of the serviette.

Perhaps my experience of the world is actually fractured into discrete 'now' moments, but the only way in which I can take the serviette to be real is to be so sure that it existed in the past and that it will exist in the future that I take myself to be aware of it in the past and the future. Perhaps there is no necessity to change each memory and each anticipation one by one because all this is done automatically. Perhaps, as with Gestalt psychology, we have only revealed the psychological laws of the organization of perceptions, memories and anticipations. The truth is after all that, no matter how convincing my experience of having access to the serviette at T1 may be, this experience was only made possible by the metamorphosis. Since this metamorphosis must itself take place in time, surely it is still possible to speak of a T1 which occurred before the metamorphosis, a T1 therefore which is itself unaffected by the experience of the dis-illusion, and which is therefore isolated from T2. Even if I am now incapable of representing to myself

the original incontestability of the presence of the cup, the fact remains that from an objective point of view, the cup was at T1 taken to be the real object.

But on what basis must we relegate in this way our description of the dis-illusion to the realm of the psychological? As we have seen it is not on the testimony of the experience of the dis-illusion, for the experience is never an experience of the fracturing of perception into distinct acts at T1 and T2. To assume that this account of the dis-illusion only reveals certain psychological aspects of the experience and tells us nothing about our actual contact with the world is to assume that the perceiver is always confined to his own private sphere of images and judgements, which is what the phenomenon of illusion was meant to demonstrate.

The theorist who wishes to argue that actual experience is a subjective screen hiding a multitude of unconscious processes, an actual world and an actual past, has begun with a metaphysical distinction and is guilty of the same dishonesty we found in Descartes. If I am always confined to my present subjective acts, what meaning could I possibly attach to a real world, and a real T1, in the past, owing nothing to my experience of them?<sup>25</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

- 1) The same point can be made with the circle.

"... what constitutes the difference between the Gestalt of the circle and the significance 'circle', is that the latter is recognized by an understanding which engenders it as the abode of points equidistant from a centre, the former by a subject familiar with his world and able to seize it as a modulation of that world, as a circular physiognomy." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:429)

As is clear from the above quote the notions of physiognomy and Gestalt are used interchangeably by Merleau-Ponty. I have chosen not to introduce the notion of the Gestalt at this stage because of its psychologistic associations (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:207).

- 2) Given that an illusion of depth can be produced with the stereo-scope, it may seem at this stage that, since it is possible to perceive depth when in fact there is none, it is not depth itself that we perceive. But as we will see below, such arguments are based on formalistic concepts of illusion and truth.
- 3) Pierre Lachièze-Rey, regards this as one of the central weaknesses of the Kantian system.

"Cette lacune des grandes oeuvres kantienne nous intéresse particulièrement ici dans l'examen du mode de genèse des représentations de l'espace et du

temps. L'auteur de la Critique nous dit que la sensibilité et l'entendement sont les deux conditions nécessaires de la connaissance; par la première, les objets nous sont **donnés**, tandis que par le second ils sont **pensés** (1); mais la sensibilité à son tour comprend une matière et une forme; et cette forme, qui ne peut plus être évidemment donnée à la façon de la matière, comment donc est-elle présent à l'esprit, comment se traduit-elle dans la matière qu'elle organise ou qu'elle s'incorpore? Voilà' une question sur laquelle la Critique ne fournit aucun renseignement." (1959:324)

4) "The sides of the cube are not projections of it, but precisely sides. When I perceive them successively, with the appearance they present in different perspectives, I do not construct the idea of the flat projection which accounts for these perspectives; the cube is already there in front of me and reveals itself through them." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:204)

5) Sartre's description here is particularly vivid.

"But the yellow of the lemon is not a subjective mode of apprehending the lemon: it is the lemon. And it is not true either that the object X appears as the empty form which holds together disparate qualities. In fact the lemon is extended throughout its qualities, and each of its qualities is extended throughout each of the others. It is the sourness of the lemon which is yellow, it is the yellow of the lemon which is sour." (1969:186)

6) "Let us only say that the pure ideality is itself not without flesh nor freed from horizon structures." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:153)

7) "Since his early article on "Die Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft", he maintained that there was nothing in common between intuition, as he understood it, and a scholastic process which "pretends to draw a real knowledge of things from

the analytic judgement that one can make on the meanings of words." Husserl was, therefore, well aware of the danger of self-deception in proceeding by "eidetic intuition". (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:259)

- 8) "To return to the things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the country-side in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:ix)
- 9) This means that in relation to Kant Husserl could be taken to have extended the notion of intuition, as Taminiaux argues, or to have extended the realm of a priori knowledge, as Lauer argues.

"For Kant, intuition is strictly bound to sensibility and a categorial intuition would be absolutely impossible. A category, in Kant's vocabulary, deduced from the table of judgements inherited from traditional logic, is in no way given to an intuition. The phrase "categorial intuition" on the other hand refers obviously to the intuitive givenness of a category. In spite of the Kantian style of the general setting of the sixth Investigation, the notion of "categorial intuition" denotes thus a certain passing - beyond Kant's setting, a passing-beyond which supposes a broadening of Kant's notion of givenness." (Sallis, 1978:68)

"Kant has specified the ideal order as belonging exclusively to subjectivity and its necessity as attaching solely to the formalizing function of reason. Husserl sought to extend necessity from form to content, thus apriorizing the whole of knowledge - content as well as form." (Lauer, 1958:79)

- 10) "With Husserl ... it is logic itself which becomes phenomenological. That is, he will not wish to give any other foundation to the affirmations of logic

than our actual experience of truth."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1964:52)

"We will not admit a preconstituted world, a logic, except for having seen them arise from our experience of brute being, which is as it were the umbilical cord or our knowledge and the source of meaning for us." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:157)

- 11) "... an aggregate arises in so far as a unitary interest and in and with it a unitary observation makes different contents stand out and embraces them. The collective connection can therefore only be apprehended through reflection on the mental act, through which the aggregate comes into being."  
(Husserl, 1970:79)
  
- 12) It is curious that Merleau-Ponty should make such a statement without qualification. If it is consciousness which is this other point of view, then he would appear to be defending the basis of Husserl's Idealism. As we will see later however, the 'scan of my gaze', is not consciousness.
  
- 13) According to both Ricoeur and Merleau-Ponty, Husserl himself uses the expressions, "ultimate subject". (letzte subjekt) (Ricoeur, 1967:69) and "last, radical subjectivity", (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:235) for the transcendental ego.
  
- 14) "In an article, "Presuppositions Philosophiques de la logique" Aron Gurwitsch expresses a similar idea. His concern is with the "ideal identity of propositions", which he argues is a philosophical presupposition of logic.

"Partout il s'agit de l'identité idéale de propositions, c'est-à-dire de la possibilité de les reprendre, aussi souvent qu'on le veut en tant qu'identiquement les mêmes et aussi de la possibilité idéale de réitérer les opérations logiques ...

L'identité idéale des propositions n'est mentionnée nulle part parmi les axiomes ou parmi les prémisses qui figurent de façon explicite dans la construction de la logique. Cependant on en fait constamment usage, et l'on peut nullement s'abstenir d'en faire usage." (1951:404)

"A tous les niveaux de la logique - "grammaire purement logique", logique de la pure conséquence, logique de la vérité - il y a renvoi à l'expérience perceptive d'un monde cohérent qui, done, figure à titre de présupposition à chacun de ces niveaux." (1951:402)

"Le monde perceptif tel qu'il apparaît dans l'expérience pré-prédicative s'est révélé dans nos analyses comme une des présuppositions fondamentales de la logique." (1951:398/9)

- 15) This is the conclusion Lachièze-Rey comes to in distinguishing between the transcendental and the psychological ego in terms of the distinction between la conscience déterminante and le moi empirique.

"Cette solidarité [du moi et des phénomènes du sens externe] -... fait du moi empirique un objet au milieu des autres dans l'ensemble des phénomènes d'Univers tandis que cet ensemble est sous-tendu par l'unité de la conscience déterminante; les conséquences de cette critique paraissent donc pouvoir être résumées d'une manière très précise au point de vue de la situation des objets du sens externe; ces objets sont hors de moi en tant que moi empirique, ils sont au contraire en moi, ainsi que l'espace qui en est la forme et le permanent qui en est l'ossature générale, si, par ce moi, on entend celui de l'aperception." (1950:207)

"Ce qui doit être, au contraire, considéré comme entièrement à rejeter, sinon par un appel précis au

détail de tous les textes particuliers, ... c'est l'admission, du côté du sens externe ou du sens interne, d'objets correspondant à nos représentations, objets auxquels celles-ci devraient se conformer pour être vraies et qui en seraient radicalement distincts ..." (1950:368)

- 16) "Une interprétation du cogito dans le sens d'un jugement de subsumption y introduirait d'ailleurs nécessairement une possibilité' d'erreur par suite de l'admission d'un dualisme entre les termes comparés bien plus, le rejet d'une telle interprétation dépasse de beaucoup la question même du cogito et s'impose si l'on ne veut pas rendre, d'une manière générale, toute reconnaissance et tout jugement impossibles, car, s'il me fallait, pour reconnaître que je pense, confronter mon acte à la notion de pensée, je devrais encore reconnaître que cette notion de pensée à laquelle je compare mon acte est bien conforme à la notion de pensée et ainsi de suite à l'infini..." (1950:8)
- 17) Merleau-Ponty expressed the same idea when he points out that for Descartes irrestably self-evident truths are still de facto truths and never valid de jure.

"Which is why Descartes maintained, it is true both that certain ideas are presented to me as irresistibly self-evident de facto, and that this fact is never valid de jure, and that it never does away with the possibility of doubt arising as soon as we are no longer in the presence of the idea." (1962:396)

- 18) "... la liaison de la pensée et de l'existence n'est nullement une liaison nécessaire de possibles qui précéderait la liaison effective des réalités correspondantes; mais ces possibles eux-mêmes ne peuvent au contraire être précisément traités comme possibles que parce qu'ils ont d'abord été appréhendés comme réels. L'idée ne précède pas le contact direct avec l'être, mais elle est saisie dans ce contact même parce qu'elle est immanente à l'être; telle est la signification qu'il faut donner

aux nombreux textes où Descartes affirme que le cogito n'est pas la conclusion d'un syllogisme dont la majeure serait: tout ce qui pense est, - que "le propre de notre esprit" est "de former les propositions générales de la connaissance des particulières" - que la liaison de la pensée et de l'existence est aperçue par une "simple inspection de l'esprit" et nous est enseignée d'après ce que nous sentons en nous mêmes - que, pour apprendre ce que c'est que le doute et ce que c'est que la pensée, il ne faut que douter et penser soi-même, - et qu'il en est ainsi également de l'existence." (Lachieze-Rey, 1950:7/8)

- 19) Pivcevic argues that this is the position Husserl is unable to avoid.

"But if this is so [i.e. if "the whole spatio-temporal world in which man and the human Ego view themselves as subordinate realities is such that it has merely intentional existence: in other words, it exists in a secondary, relative sense of the word, i.e. for a consciousness ... it is such that consciousness posits its existence in experience and is, in principle, intuitable and determinable only as the identical reference point of the harmoniously motivated experiential manifolds, but beyond this is nothing at all, more accurately, it would be an absurdity to suppose that it could be anything else beyond this" Ideen I p 117], can we be sure that there is an 'external' spatio-temporal world at all?" (1970:77/8)

- 20) "Therein lies the great problem, according to the traditional view. That I attain certainties, even compelling evidences, in my own domain of consciousness, in the nexus of motivation determining me, is understandable. But how can this business, going on wholly within the immanency of conscious life, acquire objective significance? How can evidence (*clara et distincta perceptio*) claim to be more than a characteristic of consciousness within me? ... What does phenomenology's transcendental self-investigation have to say about this? Nothing less than that the whole problem is inconsistent." (Husserl, 1969:82/3)

"If I said, as do the sensationalists, that we have here only 'states of consciousness', and if I tried to distinguish my perceptions from my dreams with the aid of 'criteria', I should overlook the phenomenon of the world. For if I am able to talk about 'dreams' and 'reality', to bother my head about the distinction between imaginary and real, and cast doubt upon the 'real', it is because the distinction is already made by me before any analysis: it is because I have an experience of the real as of the imaginary, and the problem then becomes one not of asking how critical thought can provide for itself secondary equivalents of this distinction, but of making explicit our primordial knowledge of the 'real', of describing our perception of the world as that upon which our idea of truth is for ever based. We must not therefore wonder whether we really perceive a world, we must instead say: the world is what we perceive." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:xvi)

- 21) "Before taking another step, we must stop to consider this interpretation of Descartes, for it completely fails to recognize the polarity which supports the whole Cartesian philosophy. This is the polarity between the cogito which in itself absorbs all objectivity as its sense (the "ideas" of physics and mathematics are the sense of the cogito) and, on the other hand, the existence of God from which every being as created depends. These two requirements intersect again in the idea of infinity, an idea which belongs at once to the cycle of the cogito, insofar as it is an idea like others, and to the cycle of being, in the respect in which it is the mark of the infinite being in my thought.

One can certainly contest the possibility of a philosophy with two sources - the cogito and God. That is to say, one can deny the possibility of holding at one and the same time a philosophy where subjectivity is the reference pole of all that can be thought and a philosophy where being is the reference pole of all that exists. However, to fail to recognize this structure of Cartesianism is to produce a philosophy other than Descartes's and not to radicalize Cartesianism." (Ricoeur, 1967:83/4)

- 22) Merleau-Ponty points out that the solipsist's argument is unable to cast doubt on the existence of the world without surreptitiously assuming its existence.

"We are not so much thinking here of the age-old argument from dreams, delirium, or illusions, inviting us to consider whether what we see is not "false". For to do so the argument makes use of that faith in the world it seems to be unsettling ... The argument therefore postulates the world in general, the true in itself: this is secretly invoked in order to disqualify our perceptions and cast them pell-mell back into our "interior life" along with our dreams, in spite of all observable differences, for the sole reason that our dreams were, at the time as convincing as they - forgetting that the "falsity" of dreams cannot be extended to perceptions since it appears only relative to perceptions and that if we are able to speak of falsity, we do have to have experiences of truth."  
(1968:5)

- 23) Peter Hutchenson (1980:144/162; 1981:165/178) fails to recognize the true meaning of the reduction and consequently of Husserl's transcendental ego. Hutchenson argues against Sartre and Schutz's interpretations of the fifth Meditation. These authors argue that Husserl failed to prove the existence of other minds. Hutchenson claims that Husserl makes no attempt to establish the existence of other minds because it is impossible to do so from the phenomenological standpoint.

"The reason why Husserl cannot assert the existence (or the non-existence) of other subjects, transcendental or otherwise, is that phenomenological reduction - the methodological device with which Husserl begins philosophical analysis - requires (in part) neutrality on

existential questions. A minor consequence of this point is that Husserl must remain neutral with regard to the existence of other subjects." (1981:167)

"For the "problem of other minds", as it is called is a problem that Husserl cannot answer from the phenomenological standpoint ... performing the phenomenological reduction amounts to abstention from ontological commitment. Post-epoche, one refuses to assert (or deny) straight-forwardly that anything (with the exception of one's own consciousness exists ... Since existential commitments are ruled out of court by phenomenological reduction, problems which require such commitment in order to answer them are impermissible, too." (1980:145/6)

"With regard to other subjects, Husserl wants to clarify what we take to be sufficient reason for believing that there are other subjects. That is why Husserl can speak of the sense "truly existing others", but not truly existing others. Indeed, if "conceptual analysis" is construed sufficiently broadly, then Husserl's phenomenology is a kind of conceptual analysis ... It is a kind of conceptual analysis, since Husserl tries to clarify the way we conceive the world and things in it. In this respect, Husserl's philosophy bears some resemblance to some forms of recent Anglo-American philosophy." (1981:168)

Recently Husserl has attracted the attention of a whole new generation of analytic philosophers. Dreyfus claims that he is beginning to emerge as the "father of current research, in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence" (Dreyfus,1982:2) By and large however, these new approaches (following Follesdal) share Hutchenson's weaknesses. Harrison Hall for example claims that:

"Philosophy is at pains to understand what it **means** for something to count in our experience as

an actually existing reality, what meaning components make it possible for our experience to have as part of its meaning a successful reference to the real world. This reference is part of the **sense** of natural experience which according to Husserl, philosophy can only explicate or uncover. The question that cannot be raised philosophically is a question of fact - namely, is that reference which is built into the meaning of our experience **in fact** successful?" (1982:184/5)

This seems to me to misunderstand Husserl entirely and to ignore so much of what Husserl says in **Ideas and Cartesian Meditations**. The reduction is only the rejection or suspension of an absurd sense of being, of a naive metaphysics but it does not exclude metaphysics as such (1969:56). The reduction, is more a rejection of the radical, dogmatic and unfounded distinction between questions of meaning or sense and questions of being or fact. The reduction leads us to the transcendental consciousness, which is the source of both being and sense.

"Every imaginable sense, every imaginable being, whether the latter is called immanent or transcendent, falls within the domain of transcendental subjectivity, as the subjectivity which constitutes sense and being." (1969:84)

"Nothing is, except by a proper operation of consciousness, whether actual or potential." (Lauer, 1958:79)

"Natural being is a realm whose existential status [Seinsgeltung] is secondary; it continually presupposes the realm of transcendental being." (1969:21)

Sallis points out that Husserl had completely endorsed an article by Fink in which the basic question of phenomenology is identified as that of the origin of the world. According to Fink the task of phenomenology

"is to make the world comprehensible in all its real and ideal determinateness in terms of the ultimate ground of its being." (Sallis, 1973:19)

According to the interpretations of Hutchenson and Hall the distinction between questions of meaning and questions of being can be made prior to and independently of the reduction process. If we can say that the reduction leads us to a realm of meaning and excludes the problem of the being of the world we must already have the sense of to exist, whereas Husserl says quite clearly :

"This concept of the transcendental and its correlate the concept of the transcendent, must be derived exclusively from our philosophically meditative situation." (1969:26)

"The Objective world, the world that exists for me, that always has and always will exist for me, the only world that ever can exist for me - this world, with all its Objects, I said, derives its whole sense and it's existential status, which it has for me, from me myself, from me as the transcendental Ego, the Ego that comes to the fore only with the transcendental phenomenological epoche." (1969:26)

If ever we argue that the world has the sense of actually existing and that this still leaves open the question of whether it actually exists or not, we will have two senses

of the word exist. If Husserl says that the **only sense which the being of the world has** is derived from me the transcendental Ego, then there is no way in which we can make the distinctions Hutchenson and Hall wish to make.

"If transcendental subjectivity is the universe of possible sense, then an outside is precisely - nonsense." (Husserl,1969:84)

The problem with these interpretations is that they adopt what we could describe as a "high altitude" style of thinking which is contrary to the project of phenomenological research. Hutchenson claims for example that:

"There are varieties of solipsism, one which expresses a metaphysical thesis; the other is an epistemological one. Metaphysical solipsism is the thesis that only I and my ideas exist. Epistemological solipsism, on the other hand, is the thesis that one cannot know or demonstrate that anyone other than oneself exists." (1980:145)

In this extract we can see that the distinctions between ideas and reality and between thinking and knowing that the world exists are taken as the a priori givens of any and every philosophical enterprise. Husserl wishes to transcend this entire problematic. To follow the reduction is to be lead to see how these problems and these alternatives are built on formal and ultimately 'absurd' concepts of reality, knowing, thinking, etc. Our intention

in the analysis of Descartes's solipsism was to lead to such an intuition of the naivety and dishonesty at the roots of these distinctions.

The reduction is not an abstention from "ontological commitments", provided commitment is not taken as a psychological phenomenon. The reduction is only an abstention from a dogmatic, unfounded belief that the world exists in an absolute sense, as it does in Kant's theory of the thing-in-itself.

"Nor is it [transcendental phenomenology] a Kantian idealism, which believes it can keep open, at least as a limiting concept, the possibility of a world of things in themselves." (Husserl, 1969:86)

To reveal the existence sense of the world is to reveal its mode of existence. To reveal the original experience in which the existence of the world is grasped is to reveal the process in which the world forms itself around me and comes to **exist** for me, prior to any judgement about my reasons for believing that there is a world. What Sartre, and as we will see Merleau-Ponty, find unacceptable in Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity, is not that Husserl failed to prove the existence of other minds, but that for Husserl "my fundamental connection with the Other is realized through **knowledge**" (Sartre. 1969:233). The solipsism Sartre accuses Husserl of is never the ontological or the epistemological solipsism as defined by

Hutchenson. Husserl remains attached to the notion of the transcendental ego as a pure, presuppositionless consciousness, a pure interiority and he is therefore unable to account for being-amongst-others, since this involves being-beyond-oneself, or ex-tase. But if the notion of being-amongst - others is unthinkable in transcendental phenomenology it is equally so if we take the other to exist in an absolute or realist sense as something in-itself lying beyond my consciousness.

- 24) "I do not form a mental picture of my day, it weighs upon me with all its weight, it is still there, and though I may not recall any detail of it, I have the impending power to do so, I still 'have it in hand'. In the same way, I do not think of the evening to come and its consequences, and yet it 'is there', like the back of a house of which I can see only the facade, or like the background beneath a figure." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:416)

The question of whether Husserl's transcendental Idealism can make any sense of the past and hence whether it can make possible an unbiased description of the experience of dis-illusion, we will consider later. All we wish to establish at the moment is the necessity of this movement of reflection, to expose the assumptions of the natural attitude.

- 25) In a recent article, "Must the other be derived from the I? Towards the reformulation of Husserl's 5th Cartesian Meditation" (Husserl Studies 1 79-104 [1984])

Robert Harlan not only accepts the argument from illusion but argues that it can be used to illustrate the fundamental thesis of transcendental phenomenology viz. "That the subjective functioning of mental life is responsible for the various accomplishments that enable objects to be presented to and verified to exist by subjects."

"Upon entering a dark, unfamiliar room I might mistake a shadow in the corner for a table. The error is revealed when the lights are turned on and the "table" disappears, or when I place books upon "it" and they fall to the ground. (Two aspects of mental life are illustrated by this phenomenon. First of all, the "table" qua correlate of my act of perceiving has a certain sense for me (e.g., something upon which I can place books, something which remains the same given changes in lighting, etc.) which both determines my behaviour towards it and delineates what I may expect in the course of my further experience of it. Failure of further experience to conform to these expectations result in my canceling my initial belief that it was a table that I saw in the corner. Secondly, neither the object that I "saw" (i.e., the "table") nor the horizon of expectation pertaining to this object, the horizon in virtue of which my error was subsequently discovered, could be explained wholly in terms of causal relations between what was the physical cause of my perception and my body. "Operations of mind," operations that take place independently of the causal and physiological processes which make perception possible and which are responsible for the significance assigned to the physical stimulus, thus, must be introduced to account for the correlate of my intentional act in this case, the "table.""

It should be clear that the genuine transcendental subject, the last subject, in Harlan's illustration is the philosopher himself and not the individual

entering the unfamiliar room. It is the transcendental subject for whom there is, from the start a distinction between the real shadow and the "internal" subjective table constructed through the operations of the mind. Clearly, in this example, the validity of world apperception has already been presupposed. (Husserl, 1969:83) The subject in the room is a piece of the world, whom we find as a man and who as a *substantia cogitans* constructs a private table ... in purely internal experience. (Husserl, 1969:25) The reduction is not needed as Harlan argues, "to isolate the subjective functioning in virtue of which intentional acts which present objects [such as the table] with specific senses and specific horizons of expectations are formed ..." The reduction is needed "in order to attain that Ego and conscious life by which transcendental questions, as questions about the possibility of transcendental knowledge, can be asked." (Husserl, 1969:83), i.e. to attain that Ego for whom there is from the start, a difference between a real shadow and an "internal table", between the moment before and the moment after the error is revealed, for whom there is error and truth.

"All my distinguishing between genuine and deceptive experience and between being and illusion in experience goes on within the sphere itself of my consciousness.." (Husserl, 1969:82)

Certainly Husserl refers to his phenomenology as transcendental idealism, speaks about the constitution of meaning and sense and often refers to the constitutive processes as subjective. But it is clear from the rest of his thesis and his rejection of psychologism and the possible wrong interpretations of his philosophy (1969:86) that these words cannot be taken in their traditional philosophical sense. Although he says that his phenomenology is eo ipso "transcendental idealism", it is so in a fundamentally and essentially new sense. His idealism is not "a product of sportive argumentations, a prize to be won in the dialectical contest with "realisms"." It is "sense-explication achieved by actual work" (1969:86). Similarly the terms meaning and subjective cannot have their traditional philosophical definitions since the meaning of meaning and of subjective will only be discovered in phenomenological explication.

## THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE WORLD AND THE PRESENCE OF THE OTHERS

In our argument against Descartes' solipsism it became evident that I cannot think of myself as an isolated *res cogitans* confined to its own thoughts about an actually transcendent world. For the same reason I cannot think of my access to this world as an act of perception, for as long as perception is taken to be an actual and contingent process in the world (Husserl, 1969:84).

It is Descartes who *conceives* of the universe of true being, the transcendent world, as something lying outside of the universe of consciousness, to which I do not have direct access, whose existence I only surmise. But as we have seen Descartes's method of *conceiving* is both naive and dishonest. The universe of true being is conceived positively as that which would be seen by another observer, or according to Ricoeur's reading of Descartes, that which would be seen by God. The problem of conceiving true being is simply replaced by the problem of conceiving an actual God or actual others. The problem is not one of entertaining the idea that the world exists. The problem is that there is a difference for me between thinking that the world exists and the actual existence of the world. Descartes can make this distinction only by involving himself in a vicious circle.

Philosophy must account for the fact that I make this dis-

inction and for Husserl this means that I not only think thoughts, but also the being of the world. I must ultimately recognize in myself the subject that thinks the being of the world, the subject for whom the universe of true being and consciousness are one (Husserl,1969:84).

Where Descartes argues that the real world is beyond my thoughts about it, Husserl agrees, only to answer that "its lying beyond my thoughts" must be a cogitatum. If the very transcendence of the world which Descartes recognises in order to doubt it can be shown to be a cogitatum, Husserl will have overcome solipsism simply by showing that nothing genuinely lies beyond transcendental consciousness and that the very transcendence of the world, which the solipsist claims we cannot be sure about, is itself a cogitatum. All that Husserl has to show is how a transcendental consciousness can constitute the "lying beyond consciousness" of the world. This will demonstrate once and for all that in the transcendental reduction nothing has been lost but only an 'absurd' sense of being.

"On the one hand, idealism would be established if, in effect, one could show that the philosophy of "sense" omits no question concerning being, for this being would be a function of sense. The epoche should suspend all questions about the being or non-being of the world; and in fact this distinction is recovered again within consciousness. ... The being of the world, not just its schematic sense, would be "in" consciousness." (Ricoeur, 1967:101)

We have seen that the depth we encounter in binocular perception

is not reducible to an hypothesis or to a thought that the object is 10cm from me. The depth we encounter is not an object of thought, it lies beyond what I may think of it. Similarly we have also seen in our account of the dis-illusion, that the reality of the serviette, its ontological function, was not for me, based on a judgement. The serviette, we said, "of its own" takes over the ontological function. This we described as a metamorphosis in which the past and the future itself is changed, even though I do not expressly think of them, even though they are not objects of thought. It is clear that the world's lying beyond me, is for me. The world's being more than an object of thought is itself a cogitatum.

The task of the 5th Meditation, which is to overcome the challenge of solipsism, is therefore the task of showing how "the lying beyond my thought" of the world, can be the cogitatum of the last subject, and how this independence of the world is constituted i.e. is dependent on me.

What is it that characterises for Husserl the true being of the world? The actual world, as opposed to an object of thought or an image or judgement, is not only "for me" but "there for everyone".

"The existence - sense [Seinsinn] of the world and of nature in particular, as Objective Nature, includes after all ... thereness - for - everyone. This is always co-intended wherever we speak of objective actuality." (1969:92)

World-experience, as constitutive, signifies, not just

my private experience, but community-experience. The world itself, according to its sense, is the one identical world, to which all of us necessarily have experience access, and about which all of us by changing our experiences - that is: by making them common - can reach an understanding ..." (Husserl, 1969(b):236)

"...I experience the world (including others) - and, according to its experiential sense, not as (so to speak) my private synthetic formation but as other than mine alone [mir fremde], as an intersubjective world, actually there for everyone, accessible in respect of its objects to everyone." (1969:91)

Since we will present Merleau-Ponty's theory of language and intersubjectivity as an answer to Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity we must be careful to avoid misinterpreting these passages. Clearly Husserl could not be making any metaphysical claims. He is not saying that because the world is real in some absolute sense it is also accessible to others. Any such claim would mean that its being accessible to others was an actual, and therefore,, contingent state of affairs. Accessibility to others would not be included in the "existence - sense of the world". The "accessibility to others" is not an actual state of affairs for, says Husserl, "it would not be lost, even if a universal plague had left only me" (1969:93). If "accessibility to others" is taken to be an actual state of affairs, it would mean that Husserl has put himself into a vicious circle, for it will be as difficult to explain how we constitute an actual state of affairs as it is to explain the constitution of 'being'.

This is the mistake that Descartes makes. As we have seen

Descartes appears to establish the distinction between his private world of dreams and the real world, through the existence of some external observer such as God. What distinguishes for Descartes the real fireplace from the dreamt fireplace, is that the former is accessible to some external observer. Descartes makes the mistake of interpreting this accessibility of the world to others, in an absolute or metaphysical sense, forgetting that accessibility to others cannot be conceived as real since it is that through which things are real, and that if it is conceived of as real, it becomes inconceivable that I could ever encounter this accessibility itself, and hence encounter being itself.

"As philosophy, realism is an error because it transposes into dogmatic thesis an experience which it deforms or renders impossible by that fact. But it is a motivated error, it rests on an authentic phenomenon which philosophy has the function of making explicit."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1967:216)

To avoid this circularity, to return to the primitive existence - sense of the world, to our most fundamental encounter with being, really existing others and a really existing world must be put into parentheses. The reduction allows me to focus my attention on the particular way in which a world lying beyond my thoughts, comes to exist for me, as being-for-us. Accessibility to others must be a cogitatum of the last subject, which is why Husserl insists that it is discovered "within myself".

"... within myself, within the limits of my transcendently reduced pure conscious life, I

experience the world (including others) - and, according to its experiential sense, not as (so to speak) my private synthetic formation but as other than mine [mir fremde] ... " (1969:91)

Nor is Husserl making any, formal claim about the definition or the 'meaning' of 'true being' in spite of the use of words like "existence - sense", in the quotes given above. It is not as if the notion of accessibility to others is logically implied in the notion of 'true being' or that reality is defined as that which is accessible to others. As we have seen logical, conventional and formal relations are only possible in a realm of symbols or discourse to which I can return as many times as I wish, which like the world, lies beyond me in a certain sense, and also presents itself as 'for us'. Before we can conceive of a logical, conventional or semantic relationship we already need to have grasped the distinction between my private world and the transcendent world, and therefore grasped "accessibility to others".

What Husserl is referring to in these quotations is the informal essence of 'true being', the grasping of being itself by the last subject. The 'real world' is 'experienced' by me as something experienced by us. In my experience of others and the world, I do not experience others as each confined to his own private experiences. If I am standing with Paul and I point to a mountain, I point to the same mountain that Paul perceives. It is not at all as if my pointing hand is duplicated, so that there is, beside my pointing hand for me, also my pointing hand

for Paul, existing in Paul's experienced world and directing his attention to his mountain. I experience the world as being the same world for him and for me.

"Suppose that my friend Paul and I are looking at a landscape. What precisely happens? Must it be said that we have both private sensations, that we know things but cannot communicate them to each other - that, as far as pure lived - through experience goes, we are each incarcerated in our separate perspectives - that the landscape is not numerically the same for both of us and that it is a question only of a specific identity? When I consider my perception itself, before any objectifying reflection, at no moment am I aware of being shut up within my own sensations... My friend Paul and I point out to each other certain details of the landscape; and Paul's finger, which is pointing out the church tower, is not a finger-for-me that I think of as orientated towards a church-tower-for-me, it is Paul's finger which itself shows me the tower that Paul sees, just as, conversely, when I make a movement towards some point in the landscape that I can see, I do not imagine that I am producing in Paul, in virtue of some pre-established harmony, inner visions merely analogous to mine: I believe, on the contrary, that my gestures invade Paul's world and guide his gaze. When I think of Paul, I do not think of a flow of private sensations indirectly related to mine through the medium of interposed signs, but of someone who has a living experience of the same world as mine ..."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:405)

Nor are Husserl and Merleau-Ponty making claims about psychological processes, about relationships of association between ideas and impressions. Could we argue that it is my perception of Paul and his gestures as he looks at the landscape which produces in me, either through association of ideas or impressions or through some cerebral mechanism, the belief that he sees the same landscape I see? If the identity of Paul's world and my world is not a formal identity, not simply a manner

of speaking about our experiences, could we argue that the identity is reducible to a subjective experience of it being the same world? It is inconceivable that I could explain this experience of identity as a psychological phenomenon because, any such explanation would imply that there was no necessary connection between my impression or idea of "the same world for all of us" and the actual identity of the real world for all of us. He, who postulates the existence of these associative or cerebral processes, postulates them as lying beyond his own thoughts about them, he postulates them as objects of psychology or neuro-psychology and as such objects which are held to exist for everyone. He postulates therefore an actual identity of the world while at the same time admitting that there is no way in which he could know what such an actual identity could mean, since the only ideas of identity he is capable of having are produced in him through a contingent process and have therefore, no necessary connection with the actual identity which he postulates. Similarly I cannot postulate the existence of psychological or neurological processes which produce in me the idea of a world lying beyond my thoughts, of a realm of true being, without accepting that I do not know what it is that I have postulated.

Could we not argue that this conviction that the world I perceive is accessible to Paul, is based on a judgement? Could I not take into account Paul's behaviour, his speech and his gestures and come to the conclusion that he sees the same world

I see - and conclude therefore that the world I see lies beyond me? Any such judgement would always presuppose what it was meant to account for. It would presuppose that I was able to distinguish between my thoughts of Paul's behaviour and Paul's behaviour itself, i.e. it would presuppose that I could recognise, prior to any judgement, those aspects of Paul's behaviour which were accessible to others. Furthermore, if my judgements and inferences are not simply manifestations of my psyche, the realm of judgements and inferences must transcend me in a certain sense, and would to that extent, exist 'for us'. My conviction that the world I perceive is accessible to Paul could not be based on a judgement. There can be for me Paul's behaviour itself, and the actual validity of a judgement, only if, I already encounter a world 'for us', a valid argument 'for us'.

"My awareness of constructing an objective truth would never provide me with anything more than an objective truth for me, and my greatest attempt at impartiality would never enable me to prevail over my subjectivity (as Descartes so well expresses it by the hypothesis of the malignant demon), if I had not, underlying my judgements, the primordial certainty of being in contact with being itself, if, before any voluntary adoption of a position I were not already situated in an intersubjective world, and if science too were not upheld by this basic doxa." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:355)

We are left with only one possible interpretation of Husserl's thesis. If I distinguish between the world itself, the universe of true being and the realm of thought about the world, then I, as the last subject, must be able to have an original experience

of being itself, I must constitute a world that lies beyond any act of thought, (which for Husserl means that the world's being more than what it is for me, the world's being accessible to others must be for me). I must be able to experience others not only as psycho-physical objects in the world but also as subjects for the world.

"...I experience them at the same time as subjects for this world, as experiencing it (this same world that I experience) and, in so doing experiencing me too, even as I experience the world and others in it." (Husserl, 1969:91)

If I experience true being itself then I must have a direct experience of other subjects. This means that Husserl departs radically from those theories which attempt to account for our experience of other subjects in terms of an inference based on certain signs in the behaviour of these other subjects. Since I have some familiarity with the gestures I execute or the words I utter when I have certain thoughts or certain perceptions, could I not infer from the behaviour of others, by analogy with my own behaviour, what it is that he thinks or perceives? As we have seen above, these theories presuppose what they are meant to account for viz. a world of behaviour and a validity "for us". It would be circular if I could perceive their external movements as events in the real world prior to perceiving their perception of the world. An unbiased reflection on my experience of others, reveals that I do not experience signs, but others themselves as subjects.

"If we stick to our de facto experience, our experience of someone else as it comes to pass at any time, we find that actually the sensuously seen body is experienced forthwith as the body of someone else and not merely an indication of someone else." (Husserl, 1969:121)

"What I actually see is not a sign and not a mere analogue, a depiction in any natural sense of the word; on the contrary, it is someone else." (Husserl, 1969:124)

"Experience is original consciousness; and in fact we generally say, in the case of experiencing a man: the other is himself there before us "in person"." (Husserl, 1969:108)

The champion of the natural attitude or the dualist would have to argue that these experiences of a direct access to others are illusions. Given the absolute existence of the world each subject will be seen as separate from others, firstly, because the mind is separate from the body, which only manifests through signs the state of the mind, and secondly, because the body of each subject is separate from all other bodies. Within the real world subjects will be separate from each other as pebbles in a box are separate from each other. But such an argument would only succeed in undermining its own foundations. If we deny the immediate presence of others, it will be inconceivable that we could ever encounter or conceive of a world lying beyond our private thoughts, which is the only possible world the dualist could refer to with his notion of an absolutely existing world.

"Quite rightly, therefore, we speak of perceiving someone else and then of perceiving the objective world, perceiving that the other Ego and I are looking at the same world, ... (Husserl, 1969:124)

We must therefore perform the reduction in order to reveal our authentic experience of others. We must put into parentheses this actually existing real world as well as really existing other subjects, we cannot think of this "us", for whom the world exists, as a bundle of parallel consciousnesses or as a collection of individual subjects.

"No more than space is made of simultaneous points in themselves, no more than our duration can serve its adherence to a space of durations, is the communicative world a bundle of parallel consciousness. Our traces mix and intermingle; they make a single wake of "public durations." (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:19)

"Sofern das Dasein Uberhaupt ist, hat es die Seinsart des Miteinanderseins. Dieses kan nicht als summatives Resultat des Vorkommens mehrerer 'Subjekte' begriffen werden." (Heidegger, 1949:125)

It is true, as has been argued in recent research (Hutchenson, 1980:144/62), that Husserl doesn't attempt to offer a proof of the existence of others. Such a proof would demonstrate precisely the sense of existence which Husserl wishes to put into parentheses. But this does not mean that his investigations are only concerned with an explication of the sense or meaning of actually existing others. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is not neutral to ontology, and performing the reduction on the actual existence of others does not amount to an abstention from every ontological commitment. It is only the absurd sense of actually existing others which is put into parentheses. Husserl is simply rejecting the possibility of claiming that others exist in a certain sense, a sense which would imply that we could never know what it was that we were

asserting when we assert that others exist. Husserl is concerned with an explication of the act in which I, as the last subject, constitute, actually existent others, an act which is of such a nature that the question of whether there actually are existing others or not, is not left open.

If I return to an unbiased reflection on my experience of the other, I find that the other is present to me "in person", I am not confined to "signs" of a subject or to making inferences or hypotheses about a possible subject. This means that my thoughts or experiences must be co-extensive with the other himself. It means that there can be no numerical distinction between my act of thinking the other and the other himself, I must constitute the other. This is why Husserl insists that,

"... within myself, within the limits of my transcendently reduced pure conscious life, I experience the world ... as an intersubjective world, actually there for everyone." (1969:91)

"Within and by means of this ownness the transcendental ego constitutes, however, the "Objective" world, as a universe of being that is other than himself - and constitutes, at the first level, the other in the mode: alter ego." (1969:100)

If the other, which is discovered "within myself", is a psychological subject, then he will be confined to his own thoughts and experience, and the world will not be "for us". The other which I constitute must be, like me, a last subject, one which has an immediate access to the world itself. There can be no numerical distinction between the world he grasps in thought and the world itself, his thought must be, like mine

co-extensive with the world. But how is this possible?

"In so far as I constitute the world, I cannot conceive another consciousness, for it too would have to constitute the world and, at least as regards this other view of the world, I should not be the constituting agent. Even if I succeeded in thinking of it as constituting the world, it would be I who would be constituting the consciousness as such, and once more I should be the sole constituting agent."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:350)

Furthermore, since the other is precisely that subject for whom everything, including myself is an object in his world, my experiences and thoughts would have an outside, I would not be the last subject, I would not be co-extensive with reality and would in my experiences and thoughts, simply manifest the nature of my psyche.

"The affirmation of an alien consciousness, standing over against mine would immediately make my experience into a private spectacle, since it would no longer be co-extensive with being. The cogito of another person strips my own cogito of all value, and causes me to lose the assurance which I enjoyed in my solitude of having access to the only being conceivable for me, being, that is, as it is aimed at and constituted by me." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:353)

How is it possible for a last subject to constitute another last subject, which would prevent it from being last, and turn its constitution into a private spectacle, like a dream?

It will not do to suggest that each simply thinks of himself as the last subject turning the other into a psycho-physical entity

with an outside.

"He must and I must have an outer appearance, and there must be, besides the perspective of the For Oneself - my view of myself and the other's view of himself - a perspective of For Others - my view of others and theirs of me. Of course, these two perspectives, in each of us cannot be simply juxtaposed, for in that case it is not I that the other would see, nor he that I would see. I must be the exterior that I present to others, and the body of the other must be the other himself." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:xii)

If these two perspectives are simply juxtaposed, then what I perceive will not be the other as a subject for whom the world exists, I will perceive only his outside, and once again, there will be no world "for us", and consequently there will not even be a realm within which perspectives would be thought to be juxtaposed. If we are to avoid a vicious circle, we cannot begin with multiple perspectives, I must be the exterior I present to others and they must be the exterior they present to me. But how can I be the exterior that I present to others, either I will lose my access to the world and to others, or I will not be this exterior but he who constitutes "having an exterior for others"?

The problem appears to be irresolvable and it seems as if we have simply replaced the impossibility of constituting a world which lies beyond my thoughts, by the impossibility of constituting another constituting consciousness. Husserl's reply to all this is that there can be no doubt that others are present to me "in person", and that if this presence is not non-sense, I must constitute it. The task of phenomenology is

simply to lay hold of this experience of others and to explicate the intentional processes through which it comes into being.

"Imperturbably I must hold fast to the insight that every sense that any existent whatever has or can have for me - in respect of its "what" and "it exists and actually is" - is a sense in and arising from my intentional life -." (Husserl, 1969:91)

The existent to which Husserl turns his attention, is the transcendent world with its essential characteristic of being there for everyone. This means that in my experience of the world I find not only those aspects which are there "for me", but also other aspects which are there "for others" or rather, since my experience is one of our accessibility to the world itself, my experience, involves not only my constitutions but those of others. For example, a certain object which is closer to me than it is to Paul could be experienced by me as both "over here" and "over there", at the same time. The "over here", due to, "my" constituting, is described by Husserl as belonging to my primordial ownness, while the "over there", a sense constituted by Paul, is described as "foreign" to me (*mir fremde*).

If we ignore for the moment his emphasis on the perception of the Other's behaviour, Merleau-Ponty provides us with an exceptionally vivid description of this phenomenon.

"No sooner has my gaze fallen upon a living body in process of acting than the objects surrounding it immediately take on a fresh layer of significance: they

are no longer simply what I myself make of them, they are what this other pattern of behaviour is about to make of them. Round about the perceived body a vortex forms, towards which my world is drawn and so to speak sucked in: to this extent, it is no longer merely mine, and no longer merely present, it is present to x ...." (1962:353)

It should be clear that the phenomenon Husserl and Merleau-Ponty are referring to could not be understood as a mental reconstruction of the objects. It is not here a question of trying to imagine what the other sees, and then thinking of the object as a synthesis of what I see and what I imagine the other sees. As we have seen above, explanations of this sort are not only unfaithful to the phenomenon, but presuppose what they claim to explain. I can execute the reconstruction or judgement only if I have before me the behaviour of the other, only if I am able to distinguish between my own impressions or thoughts about his behaviour, and his behaviour itself. In my reconstructions and judgements I would have to be able to return to the behaviour itself, and not to my private thoughts about it. I need therefore an encounter with the actual behaviour itself, or as Husserl puts it, with "objective subjects, subjects existing in the world", which like any other actually existing reality, is what it is because of the layers of significance contributed by others. Consequently, the others which I discover in my experience of an actual world, and the "living body" on which Merleau-Ponty's gaze falls, cannot be "objective subjects, subjects existing in the world"

"If the transcendental constitution of other subjects

and accordingly the transcendental sense, "other subjects", are in question, and consequently a universal sense - stratum that emanates from others and is indispensable to the possibility of an objective world for me is also in question, then the sense, "other subjects", that is in question here cannot as yet be the sense: "Objective subjects, subjects existing in the world." (Husserl, 1969:92/3)

It is of course equally inconceivable that I could explain this 'impression' of encountering a foreign layer of significance, through some unconscious process of association or some neurological mechanism. Since I must conceive of these processes as 'real', any such explanation would always assume that I already understood what a 'real' process was. For as long as this sense of 'real' is produced in me and bears no necessary relation to actual reality, any such explanation would be tantamount to admitting that I do not necessarily understand what it is that I am asserting.

It is therefore not a reconstruction or a private impression that I experience but the object itself, the object which is more than what it is for me. Its lying beyond what it is for me, the fresh layer of significance is encountered as it itself. This means that I must constitute the object as the synthesis of what is due to 'my' constituting and what is due to the constituting by the other. But how is such a paradoxical state of affairs possible? If it is the fresh layer of significance itself, the 'mir fremde' itself that I encounter then I must encounter the other as a constituting consciousness. But a constituting consciousness can only be encountered from the

inside i.e. by coinciding with it. How could I constitute a foreign constituting without this immediately becoming my constitution? If I genuinely encounter the other as a last subject how can there be any distinction between the other and myself ?

"Experience is original consciousness; and in fact we generally say, in the case of experiencing a man: the other is himself there before us "in person". On the other hand, this being there in person does not keep us from admitting forthwith that, properly speaking, neither the other Ego himself, nor his subjective processes or his appearances themselves, nor anything else belonging to his own essence, becomes given in our experience originally. If it were, if what belongs to the other's own essence were directly accessible, it would be merely a moment of my own essence, and ultimately he himself and I myself would be the same."  
(Husserl, 1969:108/9)

Husserl's answer is that I do not constitute the other as an object for me but as "that which cannot be perceived directly" as "that which can only be experienced by analogy with myself". Thus the analogical perception of the other, which plays such a central role in the fifth meditation, is not a real process in the world. It is constituted. The alter-ego is constituted as that which exists in a certain relation to me, he is constituted as that which is perceived analogically. His being perceived analogically is not a contingent characteristic, it is part of his original essence, of his particular mode of being. Even though Husserl appeals to the verbal sense of alter-ego as an "initial guide", it is clear that he is explicating the originating experience, the constitution of the Other.

"Initial guidance can be furnished by the verbal sense, an Other: an Other Ego. "Alter" signifies alter-ego. And the ego involved here is I myself." (1969:110)

The Alter-ego is never constituted as an independent entity, - but always as alter, as that which exists in a certain relation to me myself.

"The "Other", according to his own constituted sense, points to me myself; the other is a "mirroring" of my own self and yet not a mirroring proper, an analogue of my own self and yet again not an analogue in the usual sense." (1969:94)

But how is this possible? How can anything be conceived as existing in a relation to me since it is I, the last subject, which constitutes both things and relationships. The only relationship I have with the world is the relationship of the constituter to the constituted. Husserl argues that the experience of an alter-ego implies an experience of myself as having an outside, as being part of the world, and being confined to a particular view of the world.

Husserl now attempts to reveal the act in which I constitute myself as a being in the world, as the being in relation to which the other can be alter. In order to do so he needs to carry out another kind of reduction. In this reduction the problem is not to reveal on this side of the constituted world a constituting subject, but to reveal within the realm of the constituted, that which is primary or always presupposed. He

argues that if in our experience of a transcendent object we put into parentheses the contributions of others, if I ignore the added layers of significance, the objects being present to x, we will be left with a sphere which Husserl calls the sphere of primordial ownness

"... we disregard all constitutional effects of intentionality relating immediately or mediately to other subjectivity and delimit first of all the total nexus of that actual and potential intentionality in which the ego constitutes within himself a peculiar ownness" (1969:93)

This is not equivalent to imagining that I am the only subject or alone, in any metaphysical or natural sense, and there is no suggestion in this return to the sphere of personal ownness that Husserl regards solipsism as a phase through which phenomenology needs to pass. Traditional solipsism which doubts the 'real' existence of others, already presupposes the existence sense which Husserl is explicating here and hence presupposes the presence of others which the sphere of primordial ownness excludes. Traditional solipsism is therefore not genuinely radical in its methodic doubt.

"If I "abstract" (in the usual sense) from others, I "alone" remain. But such abstraction is not radical; such aloneness in no respect alters the natural world-sense, "experienceable by everybody", which attaches to the naturally understood Ego and would not be lost, even if a universal plague had left only me." (Husserl, 1969:93)

"I decide to abstract from all that is given to me as alien. This does not mean that I remain alone in the ordinary and non-phenomenological sense, as if the empirical solitude of an isolated or solitary man did

not already assume association with other men. In the transcendental sense this means, rather, that I decide to take into consideration only "what is my own" (das mir Eigene)." (Ricoeur, 1967:118)

Husserl argues that if I reflect on this sphere of ownness, I will find amongst its objects, (which have of course been purified of all sense pertaining to other subjects, and hence of objective reality) one object which is unique, my owned body. Within this pre-objective world of ownness this is the only body which is an animate organism, a psycho-physical unity, the only body to which I ascribe fields of sensations, the only body in which I rule and govern and so operate in the external world, which is affected by the external world, and which is part of the world. The constitution of a world of ownness therefore implies that I constitute myself as mundanized, or "having carried out a mundanizing self-apperception" (Husserl, 1969:99)

"We now can say this: while I, this ego, have constituted and have continued to constitute this world existing for me as a (correlative) phenomenon, I have carried out, by means of corresponding constitutive syntheses, an apperception of myself (as 'me' in the habitual sense of a human personality immersed within the totality of the constituted world) which transforms me into a being of the world (eine Verweltlichende Selbstapperzeption)." (Ricoeur, 1967:123)

The mundanized self has of course a special relation to everything else in the sphere of ownness. If I am to constitute objects 'there' or 'here', 'near' or 'far away', I can only do so because I have constituted myself as occupying a place in the sphere of ownness. I am 'here' by virtue of having a body.

"This body serves as reference pole for all physical bodies (Körper) which, under this second degree reduction, no longer make up an objective world but rather a primordial nature, an owned nature." (Ricoeur, 1967:121)

Now that I have constituted myself as a being with an outside, it is possible to constitute a relationship of analogical perception between the Other and myself. It is possible to constitute the other as that which is perceived by analogy with myself.

"Let us assume that another man enters our perceptual sphere ... Since, in this Nature (the realm of my primordial ownness) and this world my animate organism is the only body that is or can be constituted originally as an animate organism (a functioning organ), the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism, must have derived this sense by an apperceptive transfer from my animate organism, ... It is clear from the very beginning that only a similarity connecting, within my primordial sphere, that body over there with my body can serve as the motivational basis for the "analogizing" apprehension of that body as another animate organism." (Husserl, 1969:110/1)

Later he develops this insight to the perception of contents belonging to the "higher psychic sphere".

"Such contents too are indicated somatically and in the conduct of the organism towards the outside world - for example: as the outward conduct of someone who is angry or cheerful, which I easily understand from my own conduct under similar circumstances." (1969:120)

Needless to say none of this must be taken as a description of an actual process in the world.<sup>1</sup> There is no real act in which

sense is transferred onto the body of the other, no real similarity connecting his body and mine, nor do I actually understand the other by observing certain somatic indications and interpreting them on the basis of a familiarity with my own outward conduct. The actual world and actual processes have been suspended in the reduction. There is the phenomenon of transfer of sense, the phenomenon of perceiving and interpreting the behaviour of the other on the basis of an analogy with myself. It is clear that Husserl is describing and not explaining, and that the phenomenon of analogizing perception for example is what I take it to be; it is an object of thought, constituted by me the last subject. The spatial aspect of my body and the spatial separation of our bodies does not explain why the other can only be perceived by analogy. It is not as if there is a metaphysical gulf between his sphere of interiority and mine, on the contrary, as we have seen, the real world of space, like any other actual object, presupposes my experience of others as co-constituters of the world. It therefore presupposes the distinction between my sphere of ownness and the sphere that is foreign to me. The distinctions are not simply given, they are constituted in the experience of an actually existent world and of others. As Husserl puts it, the distinction between my primordial sphere and the primordial sphere of the other, which is for me an appresented sphere, presupposes that the experience of someone else has "done its work".

"How can I speak at all of the same body, as appearing within my primordial sphere in the mode There and

within his and to him in the mode Here? These two primordial spheres, mine which is for me as ego the original sphere, and his which is for me an appresented sphere - are they not separated by an abyss I cannot actually cross, since crossing it would mean, after all, that I acquire an original (rather than an appresenting) experience of someone else? ... The body belonging to my original sphere and the body constituted, after all quite separately in the other ego become identified and are called the identical body of someone else. How does this identification come about? How can it come about? But the enigma appears only if the two original spheres have already been distinguished - a distinction that already presupposes that experience of someone else has done its work." (1969:121)

If the landscape exists for Paul and myself, if it is "for us" then I must constitute a world which precedes the division, which is the unity of "the landscape for me " and the "landscape for Paul". The distinction between these two spheres is implied in the constitution of this landscape because it is their unity. This is how Husserl attempts to explicate the constitution of the being of the world and the being of other subjects. This is his argument showing that nothing has been lost in the reduction but an absurd sense of being. Husserl claims to have overcome solipsism because he has shown that the sense of true being, which is presupposed in Descartes's argument, is constituted as that which exists 'for us'.

Clearly Husserl's argument fails. It is inconceivable that an alter-ego can draw me out of a solipsist retreat for as long as it is constituted by me, even if it is constituted as lying beyond me, as accessible only indirectly through analogical perception. Since the alter-ego is ultimately still whatever I

think it is, the world existing 'for us' will still be my world even though it may have the nominal sense of being 'for us'. If the otherness of the other, is constituted by me, then I am not the subject in relation to which the other is alter. I am the last subject who constitutes both 'myself' and the alter-ego for whom the alter-ego is one of its own cogitata.<sup>2</sup> Husserl cannot account for the constitution of being because it is inconceivable that a transcendental ego could constitute itself as mundanized or as embodied. I will always be the last subject, the subject which constitutes, not the subject constituted. At best I could delude myself that I am embodied, in the world and in time, but it is difficult to understand how a last subject could delude itself.

"To say that it is still myself who conceive(s) myself as situated in a body and furnished with five senses is clearly a purely verbal solution, since I who reflect cannot recognize myself in this embodied I, since therefore embodiment remains in the nature of the case an illusion, and since the possibility of the illusion remains incomprehensible."

"... how could the working of my own thought be concealed from me, since by definition thought is for itself." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:213)

## FOOTNOTES

1) It is interesting to see how Harlan's faulty conception of Husserl's transcendental ego leads him to misinterpret Husserl's account of intersubjectivity. Not having put the real world into parentheses, Harlan sees the process of analogizing apperception as a real process in the world in an ego which is actually separated from the other.

"Because direct access to mental life is restricted to the subject of mental life, consciousness of the other as another subject must be originally founded upon a connection made by the I between his own mental life and its external manifestation."  
(1984:89)

If direct access to mental life is restricted, this would never be for Husserl a metaphysical truth which would precede and limit phenomenological analysis. As Husserl puts it, the distinction between my primordial sphere and the primordial sphere of the other are not separated by an abyss, the distinction is constituted.

2) "... as universal subject I cease to be a finite self, and become an impartial spectator before whom the other person and myself, each as an empirical being, are on a footing of equality, without my enjoying any particular privilege. Of the consciousness which I discover by reflection and before which everything is an object, it cannot be said that it is myself: my self is arrayed before me like any other thing, and my consciousness constitutes it and is not enclosed within it, so that it can without difficulty constitute other (my)selves. In God I can be conscious of others as of myself, and love others as myself. But the subjectivity that we have run up against does not admit of being called God ... I can never recognize myself as God without necessarily denying what I am in fact trying to assert I might love others as myself in God, but even then my love of God would have to come not from me, and would have to be truly, as Spinoza said, the love which God has for himself through me. So that finally nowhere would there be love of others or indeed others, but one single self-love linked to itself beyond our own

lives, and nowise relevant, indeed inaccessible, to us. The act of reflection and love leading to God places the God sought outside the realm of possibility. We are thus brought back to solipsism ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:358/9)

THE AUTHENTIC SUBJECT DEMANDS IN PRINCIPLE "THE CONTRADICTION  
OF IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE"

For Merleau-Ponty, Husserl was unable to account for the presence of an alter-ego because he had unconsciously adopted what proves to be a formal ideal of truth and certainty, an ideal which he traces back to Descartes, an ideal which identifies truth with presuppositionlessness, and certainty with the transparency of the knowing subject to itself. He was therefore committed to what he took to be a complete reduction, which meant that the reflecting philosopher had to reveal, as the ultimate foundation of all meaning, the acts of a pure constituting consciousness, the acts of a subject which enjoyed an absolute consciousness of itself, which was perfectly self contained, a last subject whose only relation with the world is the relation of cogito to cogitatum, a subject without an 'outside', for whom therefore, there could be no other genuine subject.

"The plurality of consciousness is impossible if I have an absolute consciousness of myself ... If it is perfect, the contact of my thought with itself seals me within myself and prevents me from ever feeling that anything eludes my grasp; there is no opening, no 'aspiration' towards an Other for this self of mine, which constructs the totality of being and its own presence in the world, which is defined in terms of 'self possession', and which never finds anything outside itself but what it has put there."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:373)

Certainly, if phenomenology is to avoid the weakness of

relativism and subjectivism it could not trace the essences of things themselves back to the private, contingent processes of a psychological ego, an ego in space and time, whose processes are numerically distinct from the things themselves,

"the two being related to one another merely externally by a rigid law." (Husserl, 1969:84)

But does this imply that phenomenology must be the elucidation of a transcendental subject which constitutes its world? Must we go from a subject *naturata* to a subject *naturans*?

"And because we assuredly must reject the idea of an exterior relation between the perceiving and the perceived, must we pass to the antithesis of immanence, be it wholly ideal and spiritual, and say that I who perceives am the thought of perceiving and the perceived world a thing thought? Because perception is not centripetal, must it be centrifugal, as is a thought I form or the signification I give by judgement to an indecisive appearance? ... " (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:32)

Merleau-Ponty's argument would be that if I attempt an unbiased reflection on my experience of truth and certainty, whether I take that experience of having immediate access to the thing itself (which we have seen in the disillusion, as the serviette becomes the real object and the vase an illusion), or whether I take that moment at the end of a logical argument, in which I recognise that P.Q or even that moment, following Descartes, in which I come to the conclusion that 'I am', I find that it is never an experience of being absolutely self conscious or

absolutely transparent to myself. My thoughts and experiences take place against a background, or within a situation, which determines their meaning and being but which is not constituted by me, which is always already there. In any act that I perform, even acts of consciousness, reflection and methodic doubt, I am saturated through and through with a meaning and being which does not have its ground in me, which is bestowed on me from another source.<sup>1</sup> Every centrifugal act of constituting meaning and being is inseparably centripetal (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:439), every "inside" is indistinguishable from its "outside". There is for me truth and certainty not in spite of the fact that I am opaque to myself but precisely because this sense bestowed on me and my acts, does not have its source in me, and precisely because the meanings of things and the meaning of being which I encounter is 'out of my hands'. My most original experience of truth and certainty is an experience of being in a situation which is already there, whose foundations cannot be found in me, a situation which I allow myself to "rest in" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:396); a situation which is the background of all my thoughts. Speaking about this new idea of truth and being situated historically and socially, Merleau-Ponty says:

"Since we are all hemmed in by history, it is up to us to understand that whatever truth we may have is to be gotten not in spite of but through our historical inherence. Superficially considered, our inherence destroys all truth; considered radically it finds a new idea of truth ..." (1964:109)

My inherence in the social and historical is the source of all

truth, because authentic truth does not have its source in a constituting consciousness, but in a subject existing as a social and historical being, i.e., a subject with an outside. The last subject, has an outside or a 'body'. This incarnation or mundanization cannot be treated as Husserl believes, as a cogitatum, for it is that through which there are cogitata and through which there is certainty and truth.

"In so far as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:408)

I am not self contained, I am beyond myself an alienated self, a self in ec-stase in being because every act of consciousness throws me beyond myself as the source of meaning and being, because my contact with myself is not the transparency of thought to itself, not the immediate relation of the binding to the bound, but presupposes an openness to the world, an ec-stase in being and time.

Let us begin with that vivid experience of truth which we have in the dis-illusion, the experience in which the serviette takes over the ontological function, to emerge in front of me as the concrete real object. We will return later to the other intellectual truths, and we will attempt to show that all truths are ultimately perceptual, just like all consciousness is

ultimately perceptual consciousness. My most original encounter with being itself, that encounter which is always surreptitiously presupposed in solipsist arguments, is never an encounter with being 'face on'. Because I am not a nothingness, being always emerges in and through a concrete context or against an horizon which I do not constitute but which envelopes me. We have argued above that what characterises the experience of the dis-illusion is that I am not confined to signs indicating the presence of a real object. It is the ontological function, the true being of the serviette itself that is encountered. This means that the serviette itself could not be numerically distinct from my experience of it, it could not genuinely transcend me. Yet, we have also seen that true being could not be constituted by me, that unless it escaped me in some way it would not be real. The being of the object is neither inferred from signs nor is it a cogitatum to which I have an immediate access. As Husserl had already pointed out in *Ideas*, the object 'shows itself' or 'announces itself through its appearances' (1931:160). "We must not substitute the consciousness of a sign or an image for a perception" (1931:136). There is for example no pure datum of whiteness, it is always the whiteness of something in the world such as the whiteness of a starched linen serviette. It is not as if there is one configuration of white which was at first taken to be the white of a vase and now, the white of a serviette. As the serviette emerges and the vase disappears there are no data which have remained unchanged.

The phenomenon teaches us that we can no longer distinguish between form and content and ultimately between the appearance of an object and its presence or being. This means both, that we must reject any notion of a pure appearance, since, all data have a 'depth, in that something announces itself through them, and it means that we must reject any direct encounter with being 'face on', for the real object always announces itself through appearances.

"The 'things' in naive experience are evident as **perspectival beings**: it is essential to them, both to offer themselves without interposed milieu and to reveal themselves only gradually and never completely ... I grasp in a perspectival appearance, which I know is only one of its possible aspects, the thing itself which transcends it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:187)

Neither realism which puts 'true being' absolutely beyond the realm of experience and thought, nor transcendental idealism which attempts to deal with being as a cogitatum can account for our authentic experience of being.

Similarly, we cannot distinguish between the apparent shape and the true shape of the object. The sides of the cube for example, that I see in front of me, do not appear as diamond shaped figures. The cube shows itself through these visible sides making them "squares seen at an angle". I do not have to take into account the angle from which I am perceiving the object, in order to reconstruct in my mind its true shape, because I am not limited to a distorted projection which would need to be

interpreted.

"The sides of the cube are not projections of it, but precisely sides. When I perceive them successively, with the appearance they present in different perspectives, I do not construct the idea of the flat projection which accounts for these perspectives; the cube is already there in front of me and reveals itself through them." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:204)

Every element of the object presents itself in terms of its relationship with the object as a whole. The simplest datum is a figure against a background. Any attempt to isolate an element of the object such as its colour, its side or even its appearance as opposed to the object itself, merely places these elements against a new background and so transforms them. It is possible for me to perceive the sides of the cube as diamond shaped either by closing one eye, or by screening off the rest of the object, but this does not imply that natural perception is built up out of these diamond shaped artificial creations. It is therefore impossible to isolate any part of the perceived object, or the perceived world, in the same way that we can cut a photograph of an object into pieces. The perceived object is a 'Gestalt', a whole that does not reduce itself to the sum of its parts (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:204). The Gestalt is not spread out in space, partes extra partes as are the pieces of a photograph.

Nor for that matter is it spread out in time, seen as an infinite series of now moments. As we have seen the real object lasts through time, and just as the perceived cube cannot be

constructed out of diamond shaped figures, so it cannot be reduced to an infinite series of instantaneous snap shots.

"The Gestalt is not a spatio - temporal individual, it is ready to integrate itself into a constellation that spans space and time - but it is not free in regard to space and time, it is not aspatial, atemporal, it only escapes the time and space conceived as a series of events in themselves ...." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:205)

This wholism or Gestalt of the object is not only incompatible with empiricism and its theory of sense data, but also with transcendental phenomenology. What characterises the experience of the thing itself is the phenomenon of self giving or *selbstgegebenheit*. If the object 'announces itself' or gives itself, then the original or 'last' experience of the world involves an inalienable element of passivity on the part of the perceiving subject. In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl had described the objective of phenomenology as a return to the things themselves, "zu den Sachen selbst". The informal essence was encountered in a *Wesenschau* or categorical intuition, not in the relation of thought to its object. If however we accept, with Husserl of *Cartesian Meditations*, that the being of the world is constituted, then the notion of *Selbstgegebenheit* must be superceded by that of constitution or *Sinngebung*.

"The notion of presence in flesh and blood seems to introduce a disparate factor, self (*selbst*) of the object (be this object a thing, a value, a state of relation), which 'fulfills' a void, keeps a promise. The thing is present itself. Has not the idealistic interpretation of 'sense' destroyed the possibility of there being a 'Selbst' of the thing?" (Ricoeur, 1967:102)

What Merleau-Ponty argues is that this 'Selbstgegebenheit' can never be treated as a 'Sinn' that this announcing of itself through its appearances, which results in the phenomenon being an irreducible 'Gestalt', cannot be the cogitatum of an 'I think'.

" ... the perception of ... the Gestalt cannot be a centrifugal Sinngebung, the imposition of an essence, or vor-stellen ... " (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:181)

We have said that the simplest datum is a figure against a background, but since this background in its turn is what it is for perception because it is against yet another background, there is ultimately no pure datum, no possibility that the subject could contemplate in front of himself a pure phenomenon, since the ultimate background is the world in which he is enveloped, from which he cannot extricate himself.

"The natural world is the horizon of all horizons ... " (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:330)

"We are involved in the world and we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:5)

"To be conscious = to have a figure on a ground - one cannot go back any further." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:191)

The informal essence, or the physiognomy of the thing can only be encountered by a subject which is part of the scene he encounters. My body is a member of every Gestalt. The Gestalt is

not simply a whole which I encounter in front of me but a whole which envelopes me, both in terms of its temporal and spatial span.

"My body is a Gestalt and is co-present in every Gestalt ... it is a component of every Gestalt."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968:205)

If ever an object were absolutely present to me so that I encountered it 'face on', so that I possessed it in its entirety, instead of some of its aspects being only 'meant from afar' (Husserl, 1969:10) or implying an horizon which is not possessed, it would no longer form a Gestalt and there would no longer be a Selbst of the thing.

"Matter is pregnant with its form. Which is to say that in the final analysis every perception takes place within a certain horizon and ultimately in the 'world'." (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:12)

For example, we have seen that the real object, unlike the image or the illusion, exists through time or spans time. If, I encounter the object itself, (in its Selbstgegebenheit), I must encounter its 'being-there-before-I-encountered-it'. Whenever I perceive the object it is always 'already there'.

"What distinguishes intentionality from the Kantian relation to a possible is that the unity of the world, before being posited by knowledge in a specific act of identification is 'lived' as ready-made or already there." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:xvii)

"When I find again the actual world such as it is ... I

find ... a visibility older than my operations or my acts." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:123)

Certainly the past cannot actually precede my present perception, for then I could not encounter its being already there. I would only have signs in the present referring to the past, and the real object would not announce itself to me. If this 'preceding me' is not real, could it be constituted by me? Could I constitute myself as being in the present, and being preceded by a past? No, for then it would not precede me the last, constituting consciousness. I have an immediate relation with the objects of my thought; if the past were constituted by me it would not be 'past'. Unless the past escaped me in some way, unless I could have access to the past only by 'reaching through a layer of time,' it would not be past (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:416/7). Since it is inconceivable that anything could escape a pure *Sinngebung*, the subject that encounters the 'already there' of the object, cannot be the constituter of the past. For the world to be 'already there' I must be in the present and yet capable of reaching out to the past, without possessing it, I must be able to precede myself, or as Merleau-Ponty puts it "steal a march on myself" (1962:360). There could therefore be no *Selbst* of the thing for a pure consciousness. If the Gestalt "spans" time, then every encounter with the Gestalt must be an encounter with myself "in" time.

Similarly, if it is true that the object shows itself through its sides, shows its true shape and size, then I must not only be preceded and outlasted by the object, I must be in the world and surrounded. In some way I must be in space, and yet able to reach the distant object without any distorted projections, such as apparent size and apparent shape.

This is brought out clearly in the perception of depth and the perception of objects placed at an angle to me. We have seen above that the perceptual synthesis of the thread is not reducible to two monocular images plus the hypothesis that the actual thread is 30cm. from me. 'One-single-thread-30cm.-from-me' is an irreducible Gestalt. It has been argued that a man standing four meters from me "appears" smaller than when he stands immediately in front of me. But what is this apparent size? Is it a genuine element in my perceptual experience or is it an artificial creation? If I am asked what size the man at four meters appears to have for me, I can answer only if I am allowed to close one eye, and hold up something, such as my thumb. I am then able to measure this perceived man against the length of my perceived thumb. In so doing, I have not simply cancelled the results of an interpretation process, to reveal the original components of my perceptual field. On the contrary, I have managed to see the man and my thumb as if they were equidistant from me. I have therefore flattened out my perceptual field at a certain distance from me, causing sizes to appear in a single plane where they can be compared. Previously

size had attached itself to the object there where it was in the distance. In genuine binocular perception the man four meters away, is neither smaller nor the same size as when he is directly in front of me.

" ... he is anterior to equality and inequality, he is the same man seen from further away." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:261)

'The same man seen from further away' is an irreducible phenomenon, which means that my perception of the man cannot be distinguished from a complementary perception of myself, as seen from the outside, situated in the world at a certain distance from the man. The presence of the man to me is inseparable from my presence in the world. The more carefully I devote myself exclusively to my experience, the more I discover myself in the world, as seen from the outside.

"As soon as I see, it is necessary that the vision (as is so well indicated by the double meaning of the word) be doubled with a complementary vision or with another vision: myself seen from without, such as another would see me, installed in the midst of the visible, occupied in considering it from a certain spot." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:134)

Similarly in the perception of a circular plate placed at an angle to me, I do not perceive the image of an ellipse and then interpret from this image and from the angle at which I am perceiving, the original circular shape of the plate. I perceive neither an ellipse nor a perfect circle. 'The circular plate

perceived from an angle' is an irreducible phenomenon.

"And finally it is why a disc placed obliquely to our face resists geometrical perspective, as Cezanne and other painters have shown by depicting a soup plate seen from the side with the inside still visible. ... The constancy of the circular shape in a plate is not the resistance of the circle to the flattening of perspective, and this is why the painter who can represent it only by a real outline on a real canvas surprises the viewer, although he is trying to render perspective as experienced." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:260/1)

What the painter tries to represent with a real line and real canvas, is not something that forms an object in front of me, it is the presence of the viewer in the scene which he views.

"Thus the seer is caught up in what he sees, it is still himself he sees: there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision. And thus, for the same reason, the vision he exercises, he also undergoes from the things, such that, as many painters have said, I feel myself looked at by the things, my activity is equally passivity ... so that the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know which sees and which is seen." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:139)

"Inevitably the roles between him (the painter) and the visible are reversed. That is why so many painters have said that things look at them. As Andre Marchand says, after Klee: "In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, ... I think the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it ... I expect to be inwardly submerged, buried. Perhaps I paint to break out." (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:167)

In the experience of "the same man seen at a distance" or "the circular plate seen at an angle" we have the paradoxical

synthesis of a centrifugal and centripetal relation to the world. 'From the inside' and 'from the outside' are inseparable, they turn about each other. A philosophy which would take as its theme "the same man seen at a distance" would have to situate itself within the subject and in the world simultaneously. At the moment when I perceive the true size of the man or the true shape of the plate, meaning and being are imposed on me from another source. Perceiving the world or an object is comparable to perceiving someone looking at me. While his perception of me does not reduce me to an object it does insure that I do not have a sovereign possession of anything I see, that my experience is not reducible to 'contents'.<sup>2</sup>

" ... it is possible to perceive a smile, or even a sentiment in this smile, without the colours or the lines which "compose" the face, as one says, being present to consciousness or given in an unconsciousness. Thus, the frequently noted fact that we can know a physiognomy perfectly without knowing the colour of the eyes or of the hair, the form of the mouth or of the face should be taken quite literally." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:166)

"Just as we do not see the eyes of a familiar face, but simply its look and its expression, so we perceive hardly any object." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:281)

"The truth is that there are no things, only physiognomies - ... 'In nature', says Goya, 'there are as few colours as lines.'" (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:168)

It now appears that the physiognomy and the informal essence which I have presented as the central issue for phenomenology, not only presupposes that we reject notions of perception and

consciousness for as long as these are understood as relationships to contents such as data, or objects of consciousness, but it also presupposes that we overcome the dilemma which compromised Husserl's attempt to account for the presence of other subjects and ultimately his attempt to account for the being of the world. The encounter with a physiognomy, as its name suggests is an encounter with my being encountered. If my body is co-present in every Gestalt then perception is a relationship in the world, rather than an intuition of data or a consciousness of objects.

If we insist on asking how I experience or come to be aware of the world's consciousness of me, we would be unfaithful to our most original experience of truth and certainty.<sup>3</sup> Instead of allowing the experience to teach us the informal but authentic essence of being in truth, we would be suppressing the experience, subjecting it to the formal assumptions of traditional thought. We would be assuming that I am a centre of experiences and thoughts, and that before anything can count for me, it would have to figure in that centre, we would be assuming that the totality of being, and my own presence in the world is constructed by me (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:373). Husserl claims that

"Nothing is, except by a proper operation of consciousness, whether actual or potential." (Lauer, 1958:79)

but if it is true that 'the same man seen at a distance', 'a

circular plate seen at an angle', 'the world being already there', are irreducible phenomena, then having an outside, being in space and time, cannot be grounded in an operation of consciousness. They are phenomena which demand the collapse of the distinction between inside and outside, between what I am for myself and what I am for the world. They are phenomena which demand a subject whose inside is its outside, a subject which is for example, through and through spatial, whose spatiality is not one of its cogitata, not due to a 'proper operation of consciousness', but a spatiality which enters on 'this' side of consciousness, so that it is consciousness itself that is spatial, so that any reflection on my experience of the world leads me back to my being spatially situated in the world. While traditional realism describes the world and the perceiver from the outside, or from an external point of view, idealism takes up its point of view within the perceiving subject. What my experience of being in truth reveals however is that these two points of view cease to be mutually exclusive. It is not a question of absorbing the view from the inside into the view from the outside as is done in empiricism and psychologism which sees the images as a domain within the real world and perceptual processes as events in the psyche, in space and time.<sup>4</sup> Nor is it a question of absorbing my outside, my body into the point of view from the inside as is done by Husserl, in his theory of mundanization.<sup>5</sup>

"Such is the total situation that a philosophy must account for. It will do so only by admitting that as

Hegel said to retire into oneself is also to leave oneself." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:49)

"One of its 'results' [Husserl's inquiry] is the realization that the movement of return to ourselves - of 're-entering ourselves', St. Augustine said - is as if rent by an inverse movement which it elicits. Husserl rediscovers that the identity of 're-entering self' and 'going-outside self' which, for Hegel, defined the absolute." (Merleau-Ponty, 1964(b):161)

"We do not have to choose between a philosophy that installs itself in the world itself or in the other and a philosophy which installs itself 'in us', between a philosophy that takes our experience 'from within' and a philosophy ... that would judge it from without ... " (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:160)

"Inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:407)

"there is inside and outside turning about one another." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:264)

The reduction will not lead us back to pure immanence but to this irreducible inside and outside turning about one another, which we refer to as being-beyond-oneself, or being-in-the-world. If I attempt to reflect on my experience of dis-illusion, of the emergence of the serviette as the true object, I find that this experience is synonymous with a certain "awakening" to the situation or a certain projection of myself into the situation.

" ... to say that I have a view of it [the cube] is to say that, in perceiving it, I go from myself into it, I go out of myself into it. I, my **view**, are caught up in the same carnal world with it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:202)

"We can effect the passage [from monocular to synergic 3D perception ] by looking, by awakening to the world: we cannot witness it as spectators" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:8)

But this awakening or projection is not simply a cogitatum, it is not simply what I think it is. When I awake to find that I am not standing in front of the fireplace but that I am lying in bed, and that "it has all been a dream", it is not at all as if I have simply changed one set of cogitata for another. I wake up to the world which is an act I perform in the world, an act which is more than what I think it is, more than what it is for me, because in that movement I am thrown beyond the private world of 'for me', beyond the immanence of consciousness into the world itself.

"The fact is that if we want to describe it, we must say that my experience breaks forth into things and transcends itself in them." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:303)

"Consciousness defined by its intentionality bursts outwards, moves to where things are." (Ricoeur, 1967:6)

This is why, although we begin our research by reflecting on an experience, such as the experience of depth or of the dis-illusion, we are not necessarily doomed to a subjective or an Idealist account of the world. The resolution to ask of experience itself its secret is not an idealist commitment, because consciousness and experience burst outwards beyond themselves so that an unbiased reflection on experience can lead us to the most concrete grasp of what lies beyond the realm of

experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:159). The phenomenological philosopher,

"abides at the point where the passage from the self into the world and into the other is effected, at the crossing of the avenues." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:160)

I say that I am thrown beyond the immanence of consciousness because at this moment, I am more sure that I am awake and in the world, than I am sure that I think I am awake or think that I am in the world. My certainty that I am awake cannot be traced back to an indubitable thought that I am awake. On the contrary I am sure that I think, rather than hallucinate or dream, because I am sure that I am awake and in the world. My certainty that I am in the world and not in the realm of dreams, is not based on it being the most likely hypothesis, on the contrary, I am confident that I evaluate hypotheses rationally and consistently because I am sure that I am awake and in the world.

" ... it is because first I believe in the world and in the things, that I believe in the order and connection of my thoughts." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:50)

" ... beneath affirmation and negation, beneath judgement, ... it is our experience, prior to every opinion, of inhabiting the world by our body ... " (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:28)

Certainty is thus not originally an attribute of thoughts or thinking, but of modes of being and acting in the world.

"My love, hatred and will are not certain as mere thoughts about loving, hating and willing; on the contrary the whole certainty of these thoughts is owed to that of the acts of love, hatred or will of which I am quite sure because I perform them." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:382)

It is absurd for me to doubt the existence of the world or consider the possibility that I may be dreaming, for the authentic question will always be whether I genuinely doubt or genuinely consider possibilities. We distinguish between dreaming and being awake, not as two sets of cogitations which are respectively false and true, but as two modes of existence. The reality of the world or the true being of the serviette, its ontological function, are not objects of thought, but 'objects' that correspond to a certain mode of being in the world. The reality of the serviette or of the world is neither inferred from signs nor is it constituted, it is 'awakened to'. A reduction carried out on this experience of the reality of the serviette would not reveal an act of consciousness, but this mode of being in the world which is awakening to, or being awake to, the world. This is why "the same man seen at a distance" and "a circular plate seen from an angle" are irreducible phenomena. I am more sure of seeing, when seeing is an act in the world directed towards its object, than I am sure that I think I perceive.

"It is through my relation to 'things' that I know myself; inner perception follows afterwards ... "  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:383)

The reduction will always lead back to this 'relation to things' or to my 'being-in-the-world' and consciousness, rather than being that through which there is anything at all, will be shown to be secondary.

" ... it is not the 'I am' which is pre-eminently contained in the 'I think', not my existence which is brought down to the consciousness which I have of it, but conversely the 'I think', which is re-integrated into the transcending process of the 'I am' and consciousness into existence." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:383)

## FOOTNOTES

- 1) In contrast to Husserl where,

"Unities of meaning presuppose a sense-giving consciousness which, on its side, is absolute and not dependent in its turn on sense bestowed on it from another source." (1931:168)

- 2) The interaction with the world is therefore far more muted than Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* thought possible

"I can not therefore direct my attention on the look without at the same stroke causing my perception to decompose and pass into the background ... This is because to perceive is to look at, and to apprehend a look is not to apprehend a look-as-object in the world (unless the look is not directed upon us) it is to be conscious of being looked at." (Sartre, 1969:258)

- 3) Unfortunately Merleau-Ponty sometimes resorts to some careless expressions,

"The looks with which I scan the world like a blindman tapping objects with his cane, are seized by someone at the other end and sent back to touch me in turn. It is no longer enough for me to feel: I feel that someone feels me." (1973:134)

"And thus, for the same reason the vision he exercises, he also undergoes from the things, such that as many painters have said, I feel myself looked at by things." (1968:139)

which have lead commentators like Sallis to similar misleading expressions,

"In seeing a thing, the thing reflects **back to me** an image of myself seeing it; the thing, in its very way of presenting itself to my seeing, points to that place from which it is seen, points to the seer's position in the midst of the visible, thereby **reflecting back to the seer** an image of himself as so positioned." (Sallis, 1973:91)

"Sent back to touch me", "feel myself looked at" "reflects back to me", are all incompatible with the general thesis of man as ec-stase, and tempt us to think of this phenomenon in terms of a reconstruction or reception of an image of myself seen from the outside within the immanence of consciousness.

Similarly in trying to argue that authentic truth has its ground in the social and historical subject rather than in a pure transparent consciousness, Merleau-Ponty uses the notion of "taking for granted".

" ... a self evident truth is irresistible in fact, yet always questionable, which amounts to two ways of saying the same thing: namely, that it is irresistible because I take for granted a certain acquisition of experience, a certain field of thought ..." (1962:396)

Sallis says much the same thing,

"Indeed, this is not to deny that, in fact, I have experience of truths, that I experience certain truths as self-evident. But such experience always occurs against the background of what I already believe, have already acquired ... Thus there are self-evident truths but only in the sense of truths which are self-evident in so far as I take for granted a certain acquisition, a certain internalized sedimentation: ..." (1973:100/1)

But there can be no suggestion that my being in the world, my being in my society and history, can be understood in terms of **assuming** that certain things are true, either consciously or unconsciously. All my acts, even acts of taking things for granted, assuming or believing that such and such is the case, will only be genuine acts if they take place against a background, if they have an outside. Notions of 'taking for granted', of 'beliefs' whether thematized or unthematized whether conceptual or pre-conceptual, still suggest that being-in-the-world can be traced back to immanence. If we reject the rationalist identification of truth with presuppositionlessness, it does not imply that I am entitled to make assumptions, it implies that truth and certainty refer to modes of being-in-the-world, of awakening to the world, that the subject of truth is an incarnate subject.

- 4) " ... the empiricist philosopher considers a subject x in the act of perceiving and tries to describe what happens: there are sensations which are the subject's states or manners of being and, in virtue of this, genuine mental things." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:207)
  
- 5) "We do not say that ... the subject thinks himself inseparable from the idea of his body and the idea of the world: for if it were a matter of no more than a conceived relationship, it would ipso facto leave the absolute independence of the subject as a thinker intact and the subject would not be in a situation." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:408)

CONSCIOUSNESS IS IN THE FIRST PLACE NOT A MATTER OF 'I THINK  
THAT' BUT OF 'I CAN' (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1962:137)

There is an important sense in which we have thus far, not so much resolved Husserl's problem of accounting for the existence of another transcendental subject, but simply generalized it. The existence of others is no longer a problem because the last subject is always already in the world, is its outside, is in some sense its body in space and in time. But if it is true that the affirmation of an alien consciousness would immediately turn my experience into a private spectacle and cause me to lose the assurance of having access to the world itself, how can I claim that it is the world itself that I see and that it is I the seer, that the world sees? How can I have an access to the world itself, be the last subject and yet have an outside. We have seen that consciousness must in some sense be in space and in time, but in Euclidean space of *partes extra partes* and objective time as an infinite series of 'now' moments, consciousness would be fractured into parts and the only relationships possible between those parts would be external. How can space and time enter on 'this' side of consciousness without cutting it off from the world and from itself. It would certainly be inconceivable for my perception of the world to be synonymous with the world's perception of me, if my perception is taken as the representation of data or objects, and the world's perception of me, reveal me as a physiological entity.

"The Weltlichkeit of minds is ensured by the roots they push forth, not in the Cartesian space, to be sure ..."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968:216)

"He has his place not in that objective space, which, as Descartes has said, is without mind, but ..."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1973:138)

"As far as the body is concerned, even the body of another, we must learn to distinguish it from the objective body as set forth in works on physiology. This is not the body which is capable of being inhabited by a consciousness ... How significance and intentionality could come to dwell in molecular edifices or masses of cells is a thing which can never be made comprehensible, and here Cartesianism is right"  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:351)

Since the "I think" must always be followed by its object, the cogitatum, the encounter with the physiognomy and the integration of consciousness into existence would be inconceivable if consciousness were conceived as an "I think". If I am fundamentally an "I think" it would be inconceivable that I could be more sure of being in the world than that I think I am in the world, and the contradiction of immanence and transcendence would ultimately defy thought and all our descriptions would be quite meaningless (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:365).

But a closer examination of perception will reveal a new approach to the subject and its world, an approach that will point towards a resolution of these antinomies (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:351). For example, we will see that the subject is not primarily an "I think" but an "I can" and that the world and the

body are not in Cartesian space but "in" a space of purpose, a space in which the ultimate meaning and being of distance and orientation are synonymous with my purposeful orientation towards my tasks in the world.

What is important about "having" and "being" an outside is that objects transcend me, that objects are not whatever I take them to be. Although it is the object itself, and not a private image of it that I encounter, nevertheless the object is not a *cogitatum* because it **eludes** me or **escapes** from me in some way.

"The aseity of the thing, its unchallengeable presence and perpetual absence into which it withdraws, are two inseparable aspects of transcendence. Intellectualism overlooks both ... "(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:233)

"If the thing itself were reached, it would be from that moment arrayed before us and stripped of its mystery. It would cease to exist as a thing at the very moment when we thought to possess it. What makes the reality of the thing is therefore precisely what snatches it from our grasp" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:233)

"The perceptual thing, offering itself always through some particular aspect or other, thereby presents itself as simultaneously holding itself in reserve - that is, as not reducible to what it is for - me, as surpassing what it offers to my gaze, as transcendent: 'the thing holds itself aloof from us and remains self-sufficient'". (Sallis, 1973:39)

This elusiveness of the world cannot be conceived in a realistic manner.<sup>1</sup> I cannot think of myself as a psychological ego genuinely transcended by the world, for as such an ego, I could have no original experience of this elusiveness. I would be confined to signs that the real world lay beyond my experiences,

and hence I would not encounter the reality of the world.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand however, nor could the elusiveness of the object be given to me as it itself, for then the elusive object, would not elude me, it would only have the nominal sense of an elusive object and as such I would be in full possession of it. The object must elude me as the last subject, it is not an 'eluding-me' for me, but an eluding me 'eluding-me'.<sup>3</sup> This paradox is brought out clearly in the experience of depth and the experience of an object retreating from me. Let us return to our example of the binocular perception of the thread. As we have pointed out, the moment both eyes are focussed on the thread the monocular images "fall back" of their own and disappear into the real concrete thread.

"Monocular images float vaguely in front of things having no real place in the world; then suddenly they fall back towards a certain location and are swallowed up in it, as ghosts, at day break, repair towards the rift in the earth which let them forth."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:233)

Speaking about the perception of a drawing done in perspective, i.e. where distant objects are drawn smaller than those close by, Merleau-Ponty says that;

"The perspective drawing is not first of all perceived as a drawing on a plane surface, and then organized in depth. The lines which sweep towards the horizon are not first given as oblique, and then thought of as horizontal. The whole of the drawing strives towards its equilibrium by delving in depth. The poplar on the road which is drawn smaller than a man, succeeds in becoming really and truly a tree only by retreating towards the horizon. It is the drawing itself which tends towards depth as a stone falls downwards."  
(1962:262)

But what is this "falling back" or "retreating" ? As we have seen this is not something I infer from signs. I do not for one moment believe there has been an actual falling back of the real thread in the real world. But if it is not a real "falling back" is it the falling back of an image? Since images are conceived of as "subjective" (or as private phenomena) and hence as equidistant from me. The "falling back" is neither an image nor a cogitatum, it is not one of my contents, it is not a "falling back" for me and I could never limit myself to a description of the pure phenomenon of "falling back" because it is a "falling back" from me ... not from me as a thing in the world, but from me as the last subject. The falling back of the thread is the emergence of its eluding me, its being more than what it is for me, its being snatched from my total possession. Speaking about the perception of depth Merleau-Ponty says,

"When I look at a road which sweeps before me towards the horizon, I must not say either that the sides of the road are given to me as convergent or that they are given to me as parallel: they are parallel in depth. The perspective appearance is not posited, but neither is the parallelism. I am engrossed in the road itself, and I cling to it through its virtual distortion, and depth is this intention itself which posits neither the perspective projection of the road, nor the 'real' road." (1962:261)

and speaking about the perception of a retreating object he says;

"Taking the various 'apparent sizes' of the retreating object, it is not necessary to link them in a synthesis if none of them has been specifically posited. We 'have' the retreating object, we never cease to 'hold' it and to have a grip on it, and the increasing distance is not, as breadth appears to be, an

augmenting externality: it expresses merely that the thing is beginning to slip away from the grip of our gaze and is less closely allied to it. Distance is what distinguishes this loose and approximate grip from the complete grip which is proximity." (1962:261)

Clearly these descriptions presuppose the suspension of our belief in the existence of a real world, real space and of a real psychological ego. Merleau-Ponty is not simply describing a private experience which would signify an actual distance in the world. If he says that proximity is the complete grip, he does not mean to say that there is an experience of proximity, such as the experience of the proportionately large size of the retinal image, which would represent an actual state of affairs in the world, such as a set of actual relations between my organs of grasping and the object, which from an external point of view could be judged as a complete grip. Nor on the other hand does he mean that there is an experience of the complete grip, such as an experience of kinesthetic sensations in the grasping organs, associations and projections of kinesthetic sensations and images, which would be a sign of the object's proximity.

It is clear that for Merleau-Ponty the relationship with the world expressed in "I cling to the road", "I am engrossed in the road it-self", I "have" the retreating object, and "the thing is beginning to slip from the grip of our gaze", are all 'original' relationships, they are relationships between the last subject and its world. Realism will always misconstrue the grasping

relation because it insists on seeing both the grasp and the perceiving subject's experience of his own grasp as real events in the world numerically distinct from the object grasped. In so doing it surreptitiously introduces another subject whose perspective is last and which opens up to the world itself. For Merleau-Ponty the grasping and clinging relations, like the acts of the transcendental ego are not relations within the world since they are that through which there is a world. If I reflect on a real act of grasping such as grasping the telephone receiver in my right hand, I will not be led back to a perceiving and thinking subject, one which infers and controls the positions of its hand on the basis of kinesthetic experiences and representations of the world. I will find that for him who grasps, grasping is a way of being present to the object or making the object present to himself. It is an original relation because it can bring about this presence without internal or external perceptions, without representations, images or thoughts.

"The plunge into action is from the subject's point of view, an original way of relating himself to the object, and is on the same footing as perception."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:110/1)

Similarly, perception is a form of grasping and visual perception is a grasping with the gaze, not an intuition of images or representations.

"My eye for me is a certain power of making contact with things, and not a screen on which they are

projected. The relation of my eye to the object is not given to me in the form of a geometrical projection of the object in the eye, but as it were a hold taken by my eye upon the object, indistinct in marginal vision, but closer and more definite when I focus upon the object." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:279)

Both the real act of grasping, such as grasping the telephone receiver, and the act of perception manifest the same originating relation to the world, which is why De Waelhens argues that *The Structure of Behaviour* and *the Phenomenology of Perception* are devoted to the same object.<sup>4</sup>

For he who grasps, whether he grasps with his hands or with his gaze, there is no numerical distinction between the grasp and the object grasped, just as there is no numerical distinction between the proximity of an object and the completeness of the grip of the gaze (1962:261). If we ask what is depth, or, what is my most original experience of depth, i.e. what is depth for me when I experience depth itself as opposed to images, signs or definitions of depth, the answer, Merleau-Ponty suggests, is that depth is the measure of the grip of my gaze. The "falling back" of the object in binocular perception, which is the emergence of its being a real object situated at a certain distance from me, is the gearing of the grip of my gaze on its object. In his discussion of Stratton's experiment, "Vision without Inversion", Merleau-Ponty tries to reveal the meaning and being of orientation, of upright and inverted. As with "falling back" my experience of upright and inverted cannot be explained in terms of the orientation of images or perceptual

data, nor can it be constituted by a pure last subject for whom space is one of its objects. The conclusion he comes to is that in our most original encounter with orientation, orientation expresses the hold our body has on its object or on its world.

"What counts for the orientation of the spectacle is not my body as it in fact is as a thing in objective space, but as a system of possible actions, a virtual body with its phenomenal 'place' defined by its task and situation." (1962:249/50)

".... the vertical and horizontal too are ultimately to be defined as the best hold our body can take upon the world." (1962:267)

Similarly, speaking about the sizes of objects and their distances from me Merleau-Ponty says,

"When we say that an object is huge or tiny, nearby or far away, it is often without any comparison, even implicit, with any other object, or even with the size and objective position of our own body, but merely in relation to a certain 'scope' of our gestures, a certain 'hold' of the phenomenal body on its surroundings." (1962:266)

This is not an anthropomorphism, it is not an association of kinesthetic and other experiences of a hold on my objects, with their size distance or orientation, so that we are still free to ask what distance, size and orientation are in themselves. We are in the process of trying to reveal our most authentic experience of reality, i.e. of anything in itself. Like distance orientation and size, the reality of the object expresses the fact that it holds itself aloof from me, that it is never fully

possessed, that it is an object grasped either by my gaze or my hand, rather than being an object for consciousness. If with the aid of the reduction we reflect on our experience of distance, size, orientation and ultimately reality, we will be lead back not to a constituting consciousness relating to itself, but to an embodied subject defined by its grasping and clinging relation to its world.

I am not primarily an "I think" but an "I can". I am more sure that I grasp, or that my grasp is beginning to slip, than I am sure that I have certain kinesthetic sensations or that I think that I grasp. To account therefore, for my experience of distance, size orientation etc., there is no necessity to explain how I come to know or experience myself as a grasping being in the world, because the grasping body is not an external instrument, but my mode of existence and because knowledge and experience will themselves be revealed as modes of grasping. I am a grip on the world and any loss of grip is a change in the scope of my being. If we insist on asking how I come to know whether the grip of my gaze is loose or complete, we will once again be unfaithful to our experience of space, and instead of allowing this experience to teach us our fundamental mode of being in the world, we will be subjecting the experience to the formal assumptions of "traditional thought". There is for me a difference between an object being close by or far away, being upright or inverted, being large or small etc., such that I am able to deal with space without relying on blind reflexes or

abstract formulae. Geometric proofs make sense to me, I can see at a glance that the cube must have six sides, that doubling the length of its sides will increase the volume eight times, without there being any act of consciousness, without the intelligibility or essence of space being constituted or thought, because the essence and being of space cannot be traced back to the interiority of a subject, but to the grasping relation to the world in which I am incarnated.

Once we accept that grasping is an original relation to the world, that I do not need kinesthetic and other information to enable me to infer whether my grasp for example is loose or approximate, we can see that the experience of "falling back" of "upright" "size" etc, is not an experience in the sense of providing me with a representation of a state of affairs, the experience is the gearing itself. We have in the experience the integration of consciousness into existence, the lived resolution of the contradiction of immanence and transcendence, of inside and outside turning about each other. Consequently, whether we attempt to reveal the grasping relation by reflecting on our own experience of grasping, i.e. from the inside, or whether we reflect on the grasping act of another, we will be led to the same object.

It is with this act of grasping that we will compare the act of speaking, and it will therefore be useful at this stage, to summarize some of the consequences of this notion of the grasp

as a last relation to its world, in order to establish some points with which our comparisons can begin.

If it is true that my perception of the proximity of the object must be re-integrated into the "complete grip", it means that we can no longer think of perception as providing us with contents or with phenomena that I could scrutinize, phenomena which would be left after the real world and all my practical concerns have been put into brackets. The grasp does not open up a world which is represented or thought but a world which is the pole of my grasping activity.

"In the action of the hand which is raised towards an object is contained a reference to the object, not as an object represented, but as that highly specific thing towards which we project ourselves, near which we are in anticipation, and which we haunt."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:138)

"For the player in action the football field is not an 'object' ... It is pervaded with lines of force (the 'yard lines'; those which demarcate the 'penalty area') and articulated in sectors (for example, the 'openings' between the adversaries) which call for a certain mode of action and which initiate and guide the action as if the player were unaware of it. The field itself is not given to him, but present as the immanent term of his practical intentions; the player becomes one with it and feels the direction of the 'goal', for example, just as immediately as the vertical and the horizontal planes of his body." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:168)

To say that the grasping act is an original way of relating myself to the object is to say that the act does not require internal or external perceptions, acts of representation or acts of thought. Within the bounds of traditional thought movement is

either automatic and blind i.e. made up of a system of stimulus response mechanisms and determined by a pre-established network of nervous connections, or it is consciously executed by a free agent which can guide the movement, because it can represent to itself the position of its organs and the location of the object to be grasped. If I grasp the telephone receiver it is because through kinesthetic and visual images I know where my hand is and where the receiver is, and so I am able to guide the former towards the latter. But the most important thing that my experience of grasping teaches me is that the grasp, just like the experience of "the same man seen at a distance" or "the circular plate seen from an angle", demands the contradiction of immanence and transcendence. Through the grasping act I am in, and act in, the world itself without requiring images informing me of a state of affairs in an external world. The more I attempt to confine myself to my own private experience of grasping, such as to kinesthetic sensations and images of the object and of my hand, the more I find myself, as seen by the world, a grasping act in the world. In the grasp outside is inside and inside is outside. The act has its own outside without having to rely on images.

"The background to the movement is not a representation associated or linked externally with the movement itself, but is immanent in the movement inspiring and sustaining it at every moment." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:110)

Goldstein's patient, Schneider, is able to grasp his nose and

scratch a painful spot on his body when it is clear from the rest of his behaviour that he is unable to represent to himself the objective location of his nose or of the spot (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:103).

Because grasping is an original relation to the world it does not take place in the real world of space **partes extra partes,**

"The whole operation takes place [Schneider scratching the spot where he has been stung by a mosquito] in the domain of the phenomenal; it does not run through the objective world ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:106)

nor does it take place in time understood as an infinite series of 'now' moments, a time which is infinitely divisible into smaller and smaller intervals. In the execution of a grasping act the subject does not have to execute a series of partial movements one after the other.

"At each successive instant of a movement, the preceding instant is not lost sight of. It is, as it were, dovetailed into the present ... But the impending position is also covered by the present, and through it all those which will occur throughout the movement. Each instant of the movement embraces its whole span, and particularly the first which, being the active initiative, institutes the link between a here and a yonder, a now and a future which the remainder of the instants will merely develop." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:140)

Being a last relation to its world it will be impossible to establish a numerical distinction between the grasping act and its goal.

"A patient, asked to point to some part of his body, his nose for example, can manage to do so if he is allowed to take hold of it. If the patient is set the task of interrupting the movement before its completion ... the action becomes impossible ... From the outset the grasping movement is magically at its completion; it can begin only by anticipating its end, since to disallow taking hold is sufficient to inhibit the action." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:103/4)

The grasping movement can be from the outset at its completion because although it is not a constitutive act of consciousness, and although it has and is its outside, it does not take place in a space *partes extra partes*, or in objective time seen as an infinite series of 'now' moments. Because it is a last relation to its object, there is no numerical distinction between the outset and the conclusion.

" ... the felt movements will be linked together by a practical intention which animates them, which makes of them a directed melody; and it becomes impossible to distinguish the goal and the means as separable elements ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:173)

The space separating my hand and the object and the time interval separating the onset and the conclusion of the act are not an "externality" they express merely the degree to which my grasp on the object is loose and approximate or complete (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:261). I do not have to represent to myself the location of the object or imagine the moment in which my arm will be sufficiently extended to allow my fingers to grasp it securely, from the beginning of the act I have that moment and that place "in hand". Consequently, although we are not speaking

about a blind reflex movement, there is no necessity for "motor images", i.e. a representation of the movement to be executed, a representation which would serve as a model.

It is wrong to suggest that my ability to grasp the telephone receiver presupposes a perception of the spatial location of the telephone and the distance to be traversed by my hand. As we have seen our most original experience of distance is an experience of that which distinguishes a loose from a complete grip. Grasping cannot presuppose a perception of spatial locations and distance. Being on the same footing as perception it is that through which there is distance, orientation etc., which is why Merleau-Ponty says that the background of movement is not a representation associated or externally linked to the movement but is immanent in the movement itself (1962:110).

But for the same reason it is wrong to suggest that if the grasping act is not a blind reflex, then the subject must represent to himself the action to be performed and the goal to be reached. We have seen above that if the past and the future were available to me only in the form of memories and anticipations occurring as images or representations in the present, I would have no original experience of past or future, and these dimensions would be meaningless to me.

"Even if, in fact we form the idea of the future with help of what we have seen, the fact remains that, in order to project it ahead of us, we need in the first place a sense of the future." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:414)

Nor on the other hand could I have an immediate openness to the future itself for then it would not be ahead of me and would not be future. What makes the future real for me is that ultimately it eludes my full possession. I can "reach" the future only by outrunning myself and the present. What makes it real is that it is the goal of a grasping, reaching relationship and not the object of an act of thought.

"The future is not made up exclusively of guesswork and daydreams." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:416)

Without having to think or anticipate the evening to come it exists for me, or "weighs" on me. If my present goes beyond itself and "bites" into the future (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:416) this is not because I think of the future or represent it to myself, it is because the goals of my gestures and more generally the goal of my existence as a task in the world, lie in the future.

" ... I am already at the impending present as my gesture is already at its goal ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:421)

It is the gesture which subtends the future and the spatial distance of the object from me, it is therefore absurd to suggest that the gesture presupposes "motor images" of the gesture to be executed or the goal to be reached, or representations of the space to be traversed by my hand.

Merleau-Ponty argues in various places that the relationship between two subjects perceiving the same world must be understood by means of the analogy of binocular perception. If we are to integrate speech into his general theory of intercorporeality we must interpret binocular perception as a mode of grasping one identical world.

Once we have accepted that vision is not to be understood as the intuition of images but as a gaze at grips with the world, it becomes possible to accept that two gazes, since their 'outsides' place them in the same world, can work together as one single organ of grasping, just as the five fingers of my hand can together realize one indivisible act of grasping. I perceive one cube in binocular perception not because I think there is one cube, or because two images have through focussing become superimposed. There is no way that volume can be contained in images, even if they are superimposed. I perceive one cube because my two eyes have ceased "to function each on its own account and are used as a single organ by one single gaze" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:232), making of my two eyes "the channels of one sole Cyclopean vision" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:141). The unity of the object is synonymous with this co-operation or synthesis of the two eyes as modes of grasping. The unity is neither reducible to an image nor is it a cogitatum, it is subtended by the focussing activity through which the organs are synthesized.

Merleau-Ponty refers to Aristotle's celebrated illusion in order to demonstrate the synthesis of the perceiving body. If the index finger is crossed over the third finger and a marble is placed so that it touches the outer side of the third finger and the inner side of the index finger, the subject has the illusion of perceiving two marbles. Merleau-Ponty argues that the illusion is due to a disturbance of the synthesis of the two fingers in a joint exploration of the marble.

"What makes the synthesis of the two tactile perceptions in one single object impossible ... is that the right face of the middle finger and the left face of the index cannot combine in a joint exploration of the object, that the crossing of the fingers, being a movement which has to be imposed on them, lies outside the motor possibilities of the fingers themselves and cannot be aimed at in a project towards movement. The synthesis of the object is here effected, then, through the synthesis of one's own body ... it is literally the same thing to perceive one single marble, and to use two fingers as one single organ." (1962:205)

Similarly, we can say that in the binocular perception of an object, it is literally the same thing to perceive one object, and to co-ordinate or focus the two eyes.

"The identity of the thing through perceptual experience is only another aspect of the identity of one's own body throughout exploratory movements: thus they are the same kind as each other." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:185)

Of course it would be impossible to speak of a synthesis of the body or of an identity of the body if the body is conceived as a physiological entity in Euclidean space, a space *partes extra*

**partes.** To say that the last subject is an 'I can' is to say that we have an ontology not of being but of doing. There is therefore no necessity to co-ordinate the parts of the body in a single exploratory or grasping movement, because the "part" derives its "being" from the role it plays in the total movement. If the two eyes participate in one grasping act, they form one organ without any co-ordinating mechanisms.

If it is literally the same thing to perceive one object and to focus the eyes, focussing cannot be an activity in the world and in time, distinguishable from its goal. It must be the act of a last subject, it must like the grasp, be an original relation with its object, nevertheless although it is the act of a last subject, it is not the act of a constituting consciousness.

"The movement of my eye towards the thing on which it is about to focus is not the displacement of an object in relation to another object, but progress towards reality." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:279)

To speak of progress towards reality is to accept that reality is not possessed, is not a cogitatum and escapes me in some sense. It is not whatever I take it to be. Although it is the object itself that I see nevertheless I must learn to see it (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:4). Like the grasp, focussing is pro-spective, it can have the object "in hand" without completely possessing it. It too can have a loose and approximate grip, or a complete grip, it can possess at a distance.

"Suddenly I start to focus my eyes on the table which is not yet there, I begin to look into the distance while there is no depth, my body centres itself on an object which is still only potential, and so disposes its sensitive surfaces as to make it a present reality. ... the act of looking is indivisibly prospective, since the object is the final stage of my process of focussing ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:239)

There is therefore no sense of trial and error as there is in the mechanical focussing of the lens of a camera, and what has been lost in patients who are unable to focus or co-ordinate their eyes, is not a control of the muscles of the eye, but this pre-possession of the object which characterises the grasp.

"In the case of people born blind and operated on for cataract, it is impossible to say, during the period following the operation, whether it is non-co-ordination of the eyes which hampers vision, or whether it is the confusion in the visual field which favours non-co-ordination - whether they fail to see through failure to focus, or whether they fail to focus through not having anything to see." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:231)

Two fingers can be used 'as one organ' and two eyes can become the 'channels of one sole Cyclopean vision' without any real co-ordination which would have to be automatic or consciously effected. The synthesis of the body refers to its being one original relationship with the world. It is impossible to say whether there is one object because the exploratory organs are synthesized, or whether the organs are synthesized because they subtend one indivisible world.

Although we cannot start by putting the grasping act in the

world as one of its processes, although it is an original relation to the world, what characterizes it as a grasp and distinguishes it from an act of thinking or dreaming, and what distinguishes the real world from a cogitatum or a dreamt world, is that the world aimed at in the grasp, offers a resistance or an inertia, presupposes a certain engaging of myself, or an abandoning of myself to its beckoning, encroaches on me or seduces me in some way.

We have seen that the act of focussing is not a process of trial and error, that it is pro-spective, that from the beginning it already has "in hand" the object on which it is going to focus. This implies, not only that the object precedes my consciousness of it, but that if I reach it there where it is, that I must adapt myself in some way. Even when my eyes focus as I look into the stereo-scope, it is as if my focussing is a response to a question put by the situation ... a response which is contained in the question, it is as if my focussing is taken possession of by the about to be seen three dimensional object. Certainly the unity of my body in its exploratory or focussing activity, is experienced as synonymous with the unity of my body in its exploratory or focussing activity, but it is as if there is a secret alliance between the object and the focussing.

"All the more it is the case that in normal perception the significance of what is perceived appears to me as built into it and not constituted by me, and the gaze as a sort of knowledge machine, which takes things as they need to be taken in order to become a spectacle, or which divides them up in accordance with their natural articulations." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:264)

"The look, we said, envelopes, palpates, espouses the visible things. As though it were in a relation of pre-established harmony with them, as though it knew them before knowing them ... so that finally one cannot say if it is the look or if it is the things that command. What is this prepossession of the visible, this art of interrogating it according to its own wishes, this inspired exegesis? " (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:133)

I need to look in order to see, but it is only in the perception of ambiguous figures where I have some choice as to how I will look, and some choice as to whether I see two faces or a vase. In normal perception however the manner of looking is "recommended" or dictated by the phenomena

" ... but, in a normal visual field, the segregation of planes and outlines is irresistible: for example, when I walk along an avenue, I cannot bring myself to see the spaces between the trees as things and the trees themselves as a background." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:263)

"It is not we who perceive, it is the thing that perceives itself yonder ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:185)

"The visible about us seems to rest in itself. It is as though our vision were formed in the heart of the visible." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:130)

This encroaching of the world on me, or the irresistible aspect of the segregation of planes, is not perceived by me for this perception would in turn presuppose another "recommendation" from the phenomena. Similarly, if the grasp is an original way of relating to the object, it is not an act of thought because it is under the tutelage of the situation and the object to be grasped. The grasp is itself held from the outside.

" ... the idea of Chiasm, that is: every relation with being is simultaneously a taking and a being taken, the hold is held, it is inscribed and inscribed in the same being that it takes hold of." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:266)

" ... and to move one's body is to aim at things through it: it is to allow oneself to respond to their call, which is made upon it independently of any representation. Motility, then, is not, as it were, a handmaid of consciousness, transporting the body to that point in space of which we have formed a representation beforehand. In order that we may be able to move our body towards an object, the object must first exist for it, our body must not belong to the realm of the 'in-itself'. Objects no longer exist for the arm of the apraxic, and this is what causes it to remain immobile." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:139)

We cannot say that in order for the object to exist for my body, it must actually exist, as if there were some more fundamental sense of exist (and as if the relationship between my body and the object were a relationship in the real world). Our investigation of the grasping relation to the world is meant to reveal the most original sense of the being of the world. What makes the object real, is that it exists for my grasping intentions, that it exerts a remote attraction on my arm, that I am not free to approach the object as I wish, that the particular manner of grasping, or palpating with my gaze, is irresistible. If the object exerts a remote attraction on my arm it does not do so through its physical and chemical properties, nor do I guide my grasping act having understood the nature of the object from certain signs. The object, as the pole of my grasping does not affect me through a blind causality, nor does it offer me, as a mind, something to understand. If the segregation of the planes and outlines of my visual field are

irresistible, it is neither irresistible mechanically nor logically. What we must reveal is not a freely constituted "irresistible", but an irresistible irresistible. Just as I cannot mundanize myself so I cannot, in complete freedom think of myself as constrained by the world. We must reveal an irresistible which limits the freedom of the last subject. The philosopher who attempts to reflect on the meaning of being must reveal the encroaching of the phenomena on his powers of revelation or reflection. He must reveal his own being enveloped-in-a-horizon-which-he-cannot-reveal. This means that the problem of the being of the world can never be cleared up, because being cannot be profiled against an horizon of nothingness or constituted by an absolutely free subject, absolutely transparent to itself. It is of course contradictory to expect of a philosophy that it overcome the problem of solipsism and that it captures the being of the world, and the being of the subject in the world, in a clear and distinct idea i.e. reduce them to cogitata of a perfectly self contained cogito.

What this does mean is that philosophy as the revelation and communication of essences from one thinking subject to another, becomes impossible. The philosopher who attempts to reflect on the meaning of being must reveal the encroaching of the phenomena on his act of revelation. He must embrace in thought his own being enveloped in an horizon which he does not embrace in thought. But if we can understand the project of philosophy,

not as a revelation of pure essences, but as speech, as that paradoxical form of grasping whose power of revelation and access to truth is synonymous with its being encroached on, and if communication is not the transfer of ideas but a mode of grasping the world itself, **with others**, philosophy and truth will be possible. All of which explains why the problem of language has become the central problem in phenomenology.

## FOOTNOTES

1) To say therefore, as Merleau-Ponty does that I feel or know that part of the object is hidden from me, is to be misleading.

"When I see an object, I always feel that there is a portion of being beyond what I see at this moment, not only as regards visible being, but also as regards what is tangible or audible." (1962:216)

"Doubtless I know that my present experience of this desk is not complete ... I know that 'the desk' is not reducible to the determinations with which it is presently clothed." (1967:186)

It should be clear that 'feeling' and 'knowing' cannot be taken as actual events in a psychological ego which correspond to an actual state of affairs.

2) It is true of course that Husserl had recognised this aspect of the transcendent world long before the 5th meditation. In the 3rd meditation he points out that we can encounter the real objective world only through 'external experience' and that in external experience the synthesis of the object is always 'presumptive', that in every experience of a transcendent object there is always a "multiform horizon of unfulfilled anticipations".

"The evidence pertaining to particular objects in a real objective world is 'external experience'; and we can see that, as a matter of essential necessity,

no other mode of self-presentation is conceivable in that case of such objects. But we can also see that, on the other hand, this kind of evidence has an essential 'onesidedness' - stated more precisely: a multiform horizon of unfulfilled anticipations (which, however are in need of fulfilment) and, accordingly, contents of a mere meaning, which refer us to corresponding potential evidences ... any such synthesis [of a transcendent object] must always involve unfulfilled, expectant and accompanying meanings. At the same time there always remains the open possibility that the belief in being, which extends into the anticipation, will not be fulfilled, that what is appearing in the mode 'it itself' nevertheless does not exist or is different." (1969:61/2)

It should be clear that Husserl is not returning to a form of realism where we only make hypotheses about the possibility of an actually existing object because he goes on to say,

"That the being of the world "transcends" consciousness in this fashion ... in no wise alters the fact that it is conscious life alone, wherein everything transcendent becomes constituted, as something inseparable from consciousness ..."  
(1969:62)

Husserl is merely explicating the act in which a transcendent object is constituted. The object is constituted as that which is given in "external experience", as that which is experienced as having unfulfilled, expectant and accompanying meanings. Transcendent objects are constituted as objects which are experienced with the open possibility that they will prove to be illusions. But **who** expects and anticipates the accompanying meanings? Whose belief in being could remain

unfulfilled? Clearly it is not the last subject, the transcendental ego. Ultimately, since nothing escapes me, there can be for me no transcendent world.

- 3) Bender and Mallin appear to have adopted an entirely different interpretation of the relation between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.

"In Husserl's view after the bracketing we are able to grasp the 'essences of the acts of consciousness which appear before us in the stream of pure consciousness; this 'intuition of essences' (Wesenschau) is the so-called 'eidetic reduction'. From Merleau-Ponty's point of view, however, the epoche does nothing but destroy the unity of lived existence, the non-duality of subjectivity and world, which is what perception is ... The Husserlian epoche, for Merleau-Ponty, makes it impossible to describe ... the immediate unity of existence and world. As Mallin puts it, paraphrasing Merleau-Ponty, it is misleading even to speak of a contact between two sides, one 'subjective' and the other 'objective' noetic and noematic, for at this basic level there is absolutely no distinction. In his later works, [Merleau-Ponty] describes this bond better as 'flesh and visibility'." (Bender, 1983:183)

I have presented Husserl's reduction as a destruction of the duality of subject and object. The object is reduced to a cogitatum, and subject and world "belong together essentially, they are also concretely one" (Husserl, 1969:84) because consciousness constitutes its world.

"If my consciousness were at present constituting the world which it perceives, no distance would separate them and there would be no possible discrepancy between them ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:238)

Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand preserves a certain kind of discrepancy, without adopting the dualism of the natural attitude, Merleau-Ponty must then make sense of the elusiveness of reality, of its being snatched from my grasp. Without this discrepancy between the subject and the world, the notions of "awakening to the world", and consciousness "moving to where things are", "bursting outwards", the notion of "being beyond oneself", would all be unthinkable.

- 4) "If it is true, as M. Merleau-Ponty maintains, that the natural experience of man situates him from the beginning in a world of **things** and consists for him in orienting himself among them and taking a stand, to describe a man's behaviour and his perception of things is to devote oneself to the same object". (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:xxiv/v)

## BEING-AMONGST-OTHERS AND LINGUISTIC BEHAVIOUR

As we have seen the problem of the existence of other subjects is no longer irresolvable because access to the world and the possibility of truth, no longer presuppose that I am a pure constituting consciousness. Whenever I reflect on my access to the world and my experience of truth and certainty, I find that I am not a self-contained transparent realm of thought, into which nothing can enter and from which nothing can leave, but rather a being which constantly assumes its outside, and which constantly leaves itself, so that whenever, in an act of reflection, I attempt to re-enter myself to find the source of the being and meaning of the world, my reflective act is "rent by an inverse movement" which throws me outside myself. Every act of perception is synonymous with the world's perception of me so that as a perceiving subject, I am my outside. In the experience, for example, of "the circular plate seen from an angle", the possibility of another subject perceiving me and perceiving my perception is already there. In the perception of the plate my being for myself and my being for others is not divisible into two juxtaposed perspectives. It is genuinely I that the other sees, I genuinely am the exterior that I present to others (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:xvii).

"If I experience the inhering of my consciousness in its body and its world, the perception of other people and the plurality of consciousnesses no longer present any difficulty." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:351)

If it is literally the same thing to use two fingers as one organ of grasping and to perceive one indivisible marble, then provided others have access to this use of two fingers as one, they will have access to the unity I perceive.

"The mental we have said is reducible to the structure of behaviour. Since this structure is visible from the outside and for the spectator at the same time as from within and for the actor, another person is in principle accessible to me as I am to myself."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1967:221)

"Through phenomenological reflection I discover vision, not as a 'thinking about seeing', to use Descartes's expression, but as a gaze at grips with a visible world and that is why for me there can be another's gaze; that expressive instrument called a face can carry an existence, as my own existence is carried by my body that knowledge - acquiring apparatus." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:351)

"The experience that I make of my hold on the world is what makes me capable of perceiving another myself..."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1973:137)

What needs to be described now is this particularly intense form of the contradiction of immanence and transcendence, the turning about each other of my being for myself and my being for others, through which there can be another's gaze, through which I become awake to the existence of others and they awake to me, so that my being for myself and the other's being for me, and the other's being for himself and my being for him, are not distinct perspectives juxtaposed in the world, so that we are not distinct consciousnesses existing parallel to each other, but subjects which genuinely engage each other, become embroiled with each other, pass into each other and form one single wake

of public existence (Merleau-Ponty, 1964(b):28). We must describe the movement through which I am projected beyond my own perspective into the perspective the other has, without his perspective and the projecting becoming part of my perspective. We must describe how the other can be both present to me and yet hold himself aloof, (*mir fremde*), how there can be an "aspiration" towards the other without this aspiration being one of my objects. Merleau-Ponty describes this paradoxical movement as follows,

"No sooner has my gaze fallen upon a living body in process of acting than the objects surrounding it immediately take on a fresh layer of significance: ...Round about the perceived body a vortex forms, towards which my world is drawn and, so to speak, sucked in ...Already the other body has ceased to be a mere fragment of the world, and become the theatre of a certain process of elaboration, and, as as it were, a certain 'view' of the world." (1962:353)

"Thus the other is not to be found in the things, he is not in his body, and he is not I ... The other is nowhere in being. He slips into my perception from behind." (1973:136)

"It is not sufficiently noted that the other is never present face to face ... The other, in my eyes, is thus always on the margin of what I see and hear, he is on this side of me, he is beside or behind me, but he is not in that place that my look flattens and empties of any 'interior'." (1973:133)

Clearly these descriptions must be taken literally. If Merleau-Ponty says that my world is "drawn towards" or "sucked into" the vortex, that the body of the other becomes the theatre or a "view" of the world, he is not simply offering a description of impressions or subjective experiences which hide

a multitude of unconscious processes through which the inner life of the other is inferred from his behaviour, so that in witnessing his behaviour I have the irresistible but false impression that I actually merge with his view of the world. The relations with others that Merleau-Ponty is describing, are those relations **through which** there are "subjective impressions" and an "objective world". He who insists that any experience must be an event in my psyche, has already dogmatically assumed that all subjects are private consciousnesses existing distinct from and parallel to, one another in the real world, such that any sense of sharing the world with others, of being sucked into the perspective another has, or of the other slipping into my perspective from behind, can only be an **impression** I have, an impression produced by conscious or unconscious inferences from the other's overt behaviour, inferences that could be described as rational or irrational. But we have seen above that I cannot begin by placing the multitude of consciousnesses as real centres in the real world because my original experience of real as opposed to subjective, and the only meaning that real can have for me, is that it exists "for us", i.e. it exists for subjects which can be drawn into each other's perspectives. My relationship with others therefore precedes the emergence of the real world. Furthermore it would not even be possible to speak of an impression being false or true or to speak of inferences being rational or irrational, for my relations with others precedes the distinctions of false and true, of rational and irrational.

To say that there is rationality is to say that perspectives blend, perceptions confirm each other and that my own experiences and those of other people "intersect and engage each other like gears" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: xix-xx).

"Our experience of the true, when it is not immediately reducible to that of the thing we see, is at first not distinct from the tensions that arise between others and ourselves, and from their resolution."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968:12)

We will discover our original relationships with others therefore only by putting the real world and rationality into parentheses. But if we must put into parentheses the absurd idea of a world existing in-itself, must we follow Husserl and reduce everything to what it is for me. If my being drawn towards the vortex, if the other's slipping into my perspective from behind, are purely phenomena for me, it would not be I who is drawn, and the other would not slip into my perspective, for I would be the self contained consciousness of these phenomena, and my being with others would be an object of thought.

"It is as false to place ourselves in society as an object among other objects, as it is to place society within ourselves as an object of thought, and in both cases the mistake lies in treating the social as an object." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:362)

For Merleau-Ponty, these relationships of being drawn into, of slipping into from behind, of intersecting and engaging like gears, are, like the relationship of grasping, both originating

and "real", both naturans and naturata. They are last relationships with others, yet others are not cogitata. Others are, that towards which I am "drawn", that with which I am engaged.

"Our relation with the social is, like our relationship to the world, deeper than any express perception or any judgement ... We must return to the social with which we are in contact by the mere fact of existing."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:362)

If I perform the reduction I will not be lead back to a pure consciousness of others or of being "drawn" or engaging others, or of others slipping into my perspective from behind. These relations will always remain out of reach of the reflecting act for they precede my contact with myself, they precede the act of reflection.

"The passage to intersubjectivity is contradictory only with regard to an insufficient reduction, Husserl was right to say. But a sufficient reduction leads beyond the alleged transcendental "immanence", it leads to the absolute spirit understood as Weltlichkeit, to Geist as Ineinander of the spontaneities, itself founded on the aesthesiological Ineinander and on the spere of life as sphere of Einfühlung and intercorporeity ..."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968:172)

The question of course is how this being "drawn" into the vortex, this Ineinander of spontaneities, this Einfühlung and intercorporeity can be something I am more sure about than the fact that I think? and why the reduction does not lead beyond this being-amongst-others to an awareness of

being-amongst-others, i.e. to transcendental immanence? As we have pointed out, on various occasions throughout his writings Merleau-Ponty suggests that we compare these original relations with others, which precede both the real world and acts of thought, with the relationship between the two eyes in the act of focussing in binocular vision.

"But we have learned in individual perception not to conceive our perspective views as independent of each other; we know that they slip into each other and are brought together finally in the thing. In the same way we must learn to find the communication between one consciousness and another in one and the same world."  
(1962:353)

Binocular perception cannot be explained as the imposition of one monocular image on another, and it is equally inconceivable that two cogitata of two thinking monads, or two perceptual experiences could engage each other like gears, or could be drawn into each other. Binocular perception cannot be described as the constitution of the idea, or the formulation of the hypothesis that both eyes perceive the same world. Similarly, we can never reduce the worlds being "for us", to an hypothesis, or a cogitatum. The unity of Paul's world and my world is not my cogitatum. The miracle of binocular perception lies in its power of opening me up to a world that transcends me. Similarly, the intercorporeity, the relations of "slipping into ", or "being drawn into" situate me in a common world, with others, a world which is "for us", without this "for us" being grounded in an experience or thought of my own.

For as long as consciousness and perception are taken as powers of opening us to contents, whether these are cogitata or perceptual data, it will be inconceivable that my perception can be drawn into the perspective another has of the world, or that our experiences can engage each other like gears. But we have rejected this notion of consciousness and perception and we have seen that the experiences of "falling back", of "upright", "inverted", of "large" and "small", are not reducible to the intuition of perceptual data or the constitution of ideas. The experiences merge with the actual gearing of my grip on the object. Similarly, just as it can be literally the same thing to perceive one single marble and to use two fingers as one single organ, so it can be literally the same thing for Paul and I together to perceive one and the same world, and for our originating gestures directed towards the world to comprise one integrated exploratory grasp.

"Henceforth, as the parts of my body together comprise a system, so my body and the other person's are one whole, two sides of one and the same phenomenon ... We have a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field, nor I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other and we co-exist through a common world."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:354)

If we insist on asking how I know or experience the fact that our bodies form one intercorporeal system, or that the world exists "for us", we will be unfaithful to the phenomenon. Knowing, or thinking and experiencing are not last

relationships, I am not in essence a centre of thought or experience. The last relationship to the world is that of the intercorporeal grasp. There is a difference for me between my private world and the world existing for us, such that I understand the distinction Descartes begins with, but this difference cannot be discovered by penetrating myself in an act of reflection. Any attempt to reflect on this difference will be rent by an inverse movement throwing me beyond myself, beyond the alleged transcendental immanence to the sphere of *Einfühlung* and intercorporeality. There is a difference for me between my thought of the existence of the world and the existence of the world itself, because there is a difference "for us", and any attempt to represent this difference as one of my "contents", as a cogitatum or experience misconstrues it.

"The communication makes us witnesses of one sole world, as the synergy of our eyes suspends them on one unique thing. But in both cases, the certitude, entirely irresistible as it may be, remains absolutely obscure, we can live it, we can neither think it nor formulate it nor set it up in theses. Every attempt at elucidation brings us back to the dilemmas. And it is this unjustifiable certitude of a sensible world common to us that is the seat of truth within us."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968:11)

There is one particular form of behaviour directed towards its world, one particular form of grasping, which is eminently suited to this joint or synergic grasping of a world by me and others, and that is linguistic behaviour. Almost everything Merleau-Ponty has said about language, and everything we will demonstrate in our reflection on aphasic speech can be seen to

establish and develop this fundamental insight. An unbiased reflection on the production and perception of speech will be a reflection on the movement through which I am drawn into the view another has of the world, and through which the other slips into my perspective "from behind". It will reveal speech as that particular form of grasping the world, in which my body and the body of another comprise one whole, one indivisible grasping of one indivisible world. An unbiased description of our speaking will be a description of the engaging and intersecting of our experiences. It is in language that we are witnesses of one sole world, that there is this unjustifiable certitude of a world common to us, so that ultimately linguistic behaviour is the seat of truth.

"I am dealing with a stranger who has not yet uttered a word, I may well believe that he is an inhabitant of another world in which my own thoughts and actions are unworthy of a place. But let him utter a word, or even make a gesture of impatience, and already he ceases to transcend me: that, then, is his voice, those are his thoughts and that is the realm that I thought inaccessible." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:361)

"Whether speaking or listening, I project myself into the other person, I introduce him into my own self ... Rather than imprisoning it, language is like a magic machine for transporting the "I" into the other person's perspective." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19)

"In speech we realize the impossible agreement between two rival totalities not because speech forces us back upon ourselves to discover some unique spirit in which we participate but because speech concerns us, catches us indirectly, seduces us, trails us along, transforms us into the other and him into us, abolishes the limit between mine and not mine, and ends the alternative between what has sense for me and what is non-sense for me, between me as subject and the other as object." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:145)

Our reflections on speech must enable us to demonstrate that this accessibility, this introducing of the other into myself, this transporting of the "I" into the other person's perspective, this abolishing of the limit between mine and not mine, is not simply an impression that would hide a system of conscious or unconscious processes through which I as a subject existing in parallel, but distinct from another, am able to infer from the speech of this other, his perspectives, his private thoughts and experiences, to such an extent that I am left with the impression that I am transported into the perspective of the other, that the limit between "mine" and "not mine" has been abolished. We must show that the power of this "magic machine" does not presuppose acts of thought or interpretation, or any "experiences". We must show that it is literally true that speech transports the "I" into the perspective of the other, that it abolishes the limit between mine and not mine. The social we must return to is certainly the social that I have contact with by the mere fact of existing, but it is as speech that I exist. We must show that long before existing as substance or as thought I exist as speech.

#### SPEECH, AN ORIGINAL RELATION TO THE WORLD

If speech is to be revealed as a manner of existing, and more particularly as a manner of co-existing, if the comparison between linguistic behaviour and three dimensional binocular

perception is to be pursued, we will have to show that speech, whether mine or that of the other, is an original relation to its world. Like the grasping subject, the speaking subject is a last subject and grasps its world, without the assistance of images or thoughts.

For example, just as the grasping act does not presuppose a representation of the object or of the spatial location of the object, so the act of naming does not presuppose a perception or recognition of the object to be named. The plunge into speech is from the subject's point of view an original way of relating himself to the object and is on the same footing as perception.<sup>1</sup> Naming the object is as immediate or fundamental as seeing it or recognizing it, which is why Merleau-Ponty argues that speech "makes itself a gaze of the mind, *intuitus mentis...*" (1968:155).

"The denomination of objects does not follow upon recognition; it is itself recognition. When I fix my eyes on an object in the half-light, and say: 'It is a brush', there is not in my mind the concept of a brush, under which I subsume the object, and which moreover is linked by frequent association with the word 'brush', but the word bears the meaning, and, by imposing it on the object, I am conscious of reaching that object. As has often been said for the child the thing is not known until it is named, the name is the essence of the thing and resides in it on the same footing as its colour and its form." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:177/8)

"The reason why the thematization of the signified does not precede speech is that it is the result of it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:87)

"It is not because two objects resemble each other that they are designated by the same word; on the contrary, it is because they are designated by the same word and

thus participate in the same verbal and affective category that they are perceived as similar. Thus, even when it is addressed to natural objects, nascent perception is still related to them through certain artifacts, the words; ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:167/8)

"It always appears to us that the operations of experience codified in our language follow the very articulations of being, because it is through them that we relate to being."<sup>2</sup> (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:26)

"For words and language are not wrappings in which things are packed for the commerce of those who write and speak. It is in the word, in language, that things first come to be and are." (Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*;11) (Quoted by Sallis, 1973:112)

For as long as the speech act in which the word is uttered and the object named are taken as real the descriptions given above can only refer to subjective impressions. For as long as the reduction is not carried out we will be able to establish a distinction between the word and the object and the descriptions can refer only to the effect of language on the psyche, the power of language to direct our attention to certain aspects of the object and to give us the illusion of "reaching the object itself".

But if I perform the reduction and put the existence of the world into brackets and accept that speaking is a last relation to the world, I will find that the act of naming the brush ceases to be a real articulatory process or a stream of sounds in the real world, and becomes the emergence of the object itself. Like the transcendental ego, speech cannot be approached purely from the outside. The speaker is a last subject and our only access to authentic speech is from within.

"If language is comparable to that point in the eye of which physiologists speak as what helps us to see everything, according to the evidence it cannot see itself and cannot be observed. If language hides from anyone who seeks it and surrenders to anyone who renounces it, then one cannot look at in the face ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:116)

"Speech in use really undergoes 'a metamorphosis through which words cease to be accessible to our senses and lose their weight, their noise, their lines, their space (to become thoughts) ...'" (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:116)

Just as the grasp is not a physical process in the world so naming the object cannot be reduced to a process of articulating the muscles of phonation to produce sounds. Naming the object is on "this side" of my relationship with the world and makes the object exist for me in a certain way.

"For pre-scientific thinking, naming an object is causing it to exist or changing it: God creates beings by naming them and magic operates upon them by speaking of them." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:178)

"The spoken word is a genuine gesture, and it contains its meaning in the same way as the gesture contains its ... The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning, a world ... The gesture which I witness outlines an intentional object ... The meaning of a gesture thus 'understood' is not behind it, it is intermingled with the structure of the world outlined by the gesture... The linguistic gesture like all the rest, delineates its own meaning ... It would then be found that the words, vowels and phonemes are so many ways of 'singing' the world." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:183/7)

Clearly for Merleau-Ponty these relationships of "causing to exist" "containing" "outlining" "delineating" and "singing" are original. Like the relationships of "clinging", of being

"engrossed" in the road itself, and of "grasping the object with my gaze", they must be taken literally. If we say that speech delineates or sings the world, this is not to be taken as a poetic description of a subjective impression which would hide a real state of affairs, such as a system of unconscious processes through which speech "calls to mind" a certain idea of the world. Our most original experience of "a real state of affairs", is the experience of being a "we subject", and it is through speech that we bring into existence, or become situated with respect to, a world "for us". If I reflect in an unbiased manner on the moment in which I utter, "its a brush", I will find that just as "upright" and "falling back", are neither aspects of images nor thoughts but the gearing of my gaze, so the brush that I name is for me neither represented or thought about, but is indistinguishable from the act of naming, indistinguishable from the adjustment of my power of holding or subtending a world "for us". Just as the grasping act is not a physical process and is not experienced by me as a series of kinesthetic sensations, so the speech act is not experienced as a series of kinesthetic sensations in the organs of phonation, but experienced as the emergence of the brush itself, as that towards which my speech reaches out.

We have said that the plunge into speech is from the subject's point of view an original way of relating himself to the object, and is on the same footing as perception. Clearly it is not with the empiricist model of perception that we are comparing speech,

for speech can grasp "objects" which are not present (in the realist sense) or objects which don't exist, like unicorns. It is with perception as a last relation to the world that we are comparing speech. Neither the speech nor the object it grasps can be reduced to objects in the real world, objects of a pure consciousness. The existence or presence, or the non-existence or absence of the object is itself subtended by the speech act. The sense in which unicorns, for example, could be made to exist in authentic speech, such as in great literature and poetry (the existence for example of Mallarmé's faun in *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*), reminds us of the way a great actor can bring into existence the character he portrays.

"In the same way the actress becomes invisible, and it is Phaedra who appears. The meaning swallows up the signs, and Phaedra has so completely taken possession of Berma that her passion as Phaedra appears the apotheosis of ease and naturalness. Aesthetic expression confers on what it expresses an existence in itself, installs it in nature as a thing perceived and accessible to all, or conversely plucks the signs themselves - the person of the actor, or the colours and canvass of the painter - from their empirical existence and bears them off into another world." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:183)

Like the imagination, speech can put us into the pseudo-presence of a thing, but this does not imply that it puts us into the absolute presence of a pseudo-thing like an image or an idea.

"When I imagine Peter absent, I am not aware of contemplating an image of Peter numerically distinct from Peter himself." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:181)

It will be necessary then to recognize this pseudo-presence as itself an original relation to the object, i.e. one which is not reducible to images or ideas. Similarly speech is an original way of reaching back to a past event or is an original manner of opening up to the future, which means that as a speaker I can relate to the past or future event without images, memories or thoughts of these events and without having to think or recognize the fact that the event referred to is in the past or the future. The grammatical structures, which we call the past and future tense forms of the verb, are not signs appearing in the present, signs to be decoded. We cannot reduce the perception or production of speech to events in the present, which would require of us to "think" about the past or future. It is only through speaking or perceiving speech that I can relate to the temporal dimensions expressed in speech. Speech is that paradoxical synthesis of "from the inside" and "from the outside", a constituted constituter. Because it is a grasp of the past and future events themselves, there where they are, it must itself be in time, and yet, since it is a last relationship past and future exist for me because I grasp them.

The objective grammatical structures of past, present and future, like the distorted retinal image, exist neither for the speaker nor the perceiver, they are the artificial product of disengaging ourselves from the act in order to treat it as the object of a pure consciousness, forgetting, that it is speech which gives us the illusion of a pure consciousness.

What Merleau-Ponty has said about the relationship between speech and perception in the example of naming the brush he has also said about the relationship between speech and thought.

If speech is an original relation with the word, then it does not presuppose acts of thought. It does not presuppose, either for the speaker or for his audience, an idea or a representation of what is to be said or of what is being said.

"The orator does not think before speaking, nor even while speaking: his speech is his thought. In the same way the listener does not form concepts on the basis of signs. The orator's "thought" is empty while he is speaking and, when a text is read to us, provided that it is read with expression, we have no thought marginal to the text itself, for the words fully occupy our mind and exactly fulfil our expectations, and we feel the necessity of speech." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:180)

If speech is an original relation to its world and if, as Merleau-Ponty says, speech for the orator is his thought, or thinking can be "in the throat", then this thinking must not be equated with the thinking of a psychological ego, i.e. with a contingent process which only duplicates or mirrors a situation or an object in the world. It is not with thinking in the psychological sense, that Merleau-Ponty equates the orator's speech, but with thinking in the transcendental sense, with the thinking of a last subject, which is indistinguishable from the emergence of the world itself.

Clearly, just as we distinguished between the transcendental and psychological ego's we must distinguish between authentic and

inauthentic speech. There are of course occasions in which the words I pronounce do not establish an original relation to an object. If I repeat words or sentences as part of a game, or if in my speech I attempt to deceive others, my speech will be the object I relate to, rather than my access to an object. We will have to show that authentic speech does not presuppose the ability to pronounce words and sentences as objects, and that our ability to understand authentic speech does not presuppose an ability to hear the words as a series of sounds.

In our approach to speech and linguistic behaviour, we cannot begin with the distinctions made in the natural attitude, the distinctions between images, thoughts and reality. The ontological status of the world which is grasped in speech or which is made to exist through speech cannot be constituted in thought. Within the bounds of the natural attitude there are only two modes of being, the being of the thing, or the being of thought. It should be clear that if speech is an original relation, if speech brings a world into existence for us, or if it is able to reach back to the past event itself without images, then it is not simply a power of evoking thoughts, nor on the other hand is it a magician like production of substance. Speech is not one of the processes in the world; nor is it equivalent to the act of a constituting consciousness. The mode of existence of the speech act and the mode of existence of the object grasped in speech, can only be approached from within speech.

"A story is told in a children's book of the disappointment of a small boy who put on his grandmother's spectacles and took up her book in the expectation of being able himself to find in it the stories which she used to tell him. The tale ends with these words: 'Well, what a fraud! Where's the story? I can see nothing but black and white? For the child the 'story' and the thing expressed are not 'ideas' or 'meanings', nor are speaking or reading 'intellectual operations'. The story is a world which there must be some way of magically calling up by putting on spectacles and leaning over a book. The power possessed by language of bringing the thing expressed into existence, of opening up to thought new ways, new dimensions and new landscapes, is, in the last analysis as obscure for the adult as for the child." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:401)

Merleau-Ponty often speaks of the meaning or significance of a gesture or of a word, (1962:183/7) but this meaning or signification must not be taken to imply a cognitive act. The meaning is a world (1962:184) and it is the speech act itself that has this world "in hand", that strains towards it, delineates or sings it. Consequently there is no necessity for either speaker or audience to have the meaning "in mind".

"What then does language express, if it does not express thoughts? It presents or rather it is the subject's taking up of a position in the world of his meanings. The term 'world' here is not a manner of speaking: it means that the 'mental' or cultural life borrows its structures from natural life and that the thinking subject must have its basis in the subject incarnate." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:193)

To say that the orator's speech is his thought is to say that he has no privileged access to, or no better idea of what he is expressing, than his audience.

"Even we who speak do not necessarily know better than those who listen to us what we are expressing." (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:88)

" ... my spoken words surprise me myself and teach me my thoughts." (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:85)

"One does not know what one is saying, one knows after one has said it". (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:46)

" ... one speaks not only of what one knows, so as to set out a display of it - but also of what one does not know, in order to know it ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:102)

It is wrong to insist that speaking and understanding speech presuppose acts of consciousness, acts in which the ideas expressed are formulated or entertained in the mind. Speech is not simply an external representation of an internal cognitive act, or a representation of an experience. The ideas expressed in speech cannot be grasped in any way other than through the speaking gesture. We will attempt to show, for example, that children are able to use correctly and understand, tense grammar, long before they are able to grasp the idea of past, present and future.

"Language has, therefore a peculiar signification which is the more evident the more we surrender ourselves to it, and the less equivocal the less we think of it. This signification resists any direct seizure but is docile to the incantation of language." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:116)

If I attempt to reflect in an unbiased way on my experience of speaking, I will not be led back to a thinking subject which has an immediate relation to its cogitata, on the contrary, the movement of return into myself will be "rent by an inverse

movement which it elicits". The impossibility of a complete reduction, will testify that I am a subject,

" ... who has no access to any truth nor to any thought with a claim to universality except through the practice of his language in a definite linguistic situation." (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:266)

What Merleau-Ponty argues and what we will attempt to demonstrate is that this illusion we have of an inner life, of embracing in thought a pure essence, has been produced by language.

"The wonderful thing about language is that it promotes its own oblivion: my eyes follow the lines on the paper, and from the moment I am caught up in their meaning, I lose sight of them." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:401)

" ... Expression fades out before what is expressed ... This certainty which we enjoy of reaching, beyond expression, a truth separable from it and of which expression is merely the garment and contingent manifestation, has been implanted in us precisely by language." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:401)

If speech is an original relation to its world then the speech act is not one of the processes in the world and it is not necessary to "control" the speech organs. In fact, if it were conceivable that I could "control" the speech organs, it would mean that they existed as things in the world. The genuine original relation would not be between speech and its object, but between a thinking subject and its speech organs.

Within the bounds of traditional thought, a speech act is either made up of automatisms, or it is a consciously executed act, presupposing kinesthetic information and verbal images, or representations of the verbal act to be executed. The kinesthetic information would give me, at every moment the degree to which muscles of the organs of phonation are contracted or extended, enabling me to control them, while the verbal image, would serve as the pattern to be copied. Our reflections on aphasic speech will enable us to recognize that normal speech does not presuppose kinesthetic information or verbal images, just as Merleau-Ponty's reflections on Schneider's syndrome, enabled him to show that the grasping act does not presuppose a motor image of the act to be executed.

"When I am actually speaking I do not first figure the movements involved." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19)

"Speaking subject: it is the subject of a praxis. It does not hold before itself the words said and understood as objects of thought or ideates. It possesses them only by a Vorhabe which is of the same type as the Vorhabe of place by my body that betakes itself unto that place." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:201)

"The speaking subject does not think of the sense of what he is saying, nor does he visualize the words he is using. To know a word or a language is ... not to be able to bring into play any pre - established nervous network. But neither is it to retain some 'pure recollection' of the word, some faded perception ... I do not need to visualize the word in order to pronounce it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:180)

"To speak, as we have seen, is not to call up verbal images and articulate words in accordance with the imagined model. By undertaking a critical examination of the verbal image, and showing that the speaking subject plunges into speech without imagining the words he is about to utter, modern psychology eliminates the word as a representation, or as an object for consciousness, and reveals a motor presence of the word which is not the knowledge of the word." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:403)

"In the same manner, the sentence of a speaker must be organized all by itself, as it were, as happens in fact in the normal use of language in which an awareness of the means of expression for themselves, the contemplation of verbal images', is already a pathological phenomenon." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:87)

But to say that the sentence "must be organized all by itself", without the contemplation of verbal images, is not to say that the execution is automatic or a reflex.

If speech is an original relation to the world then the speech organs cannot be conceived as an external instrument, as extended matter, but as the living envelope of my intentional grasping of the world. It is not with the objective, physiological body that I speak and I do not have to execute a series of articulemes in accordance with an objectively definable grammatical structure. The act of speaking is not the movement of the organs of phonation in space, but is like the movements of the eyes in focussing, ... **progress towards reality.** We will be obliged to introduce automatisms, or pre-established nerve connections, only if we maintain the natural attitude thesis of speech being a physical process in the objective world and the organs of speech being defined as physiological entities.

"Thus thinking can be 'in the throat,' as the children questioned by Piaget say it is, without any contradiction or confusion of the extended and the non-extended, because the throat is not yet an ensemble of vibrating cords capable of producing the sonorous phenomena of language." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:189)

As we have argued above the grammatical forms of past, present and future, exist as objective structures neither for the speaker nor for his audience. The man standing twenty meters away, we said, is perceived as neither smaller nor the same size as when he is standing close by. He is perceived as "the same man seen from a distance". We must now recognize that if we compared authentic speech acts, one delineating an event in the present and the other, the same event in the past, the two acts would be neither the same, nor different, they would be incomparable. The second would be "the-same-event-sunken-into-the past", grasped from the present.

There is no necessity for the past grammatical forms to be actualized either consciously or automatically, and there is no necessity for them to be perceived and understood, whether consciously or unconsciously. It is enough that in my speaking I reach back to the past event. If thinking can be "in the throat" then, like the eye, in space, speech is a power of reaching through layers of time to where its object is. For the speaker, the time separating the present from the past is not an externality but a measure of this reaching, and pronouncing the past grammatical structure is not to execute movements, in space and in the present, it is to reach back. My most original relation to this "past", is not to think it, or represent it to myself in some or other way but to grasp it in speaking. For the child, learning to use the past and future grammatical forms is indistinguishable from situating himself with respect to past

and future temporal dimensions, which he does not grasp in thought but which are dimensions of his co-existence. Speech like grasping, presents us with the paradox of immanence and transcendence. While it opens up to its world it nevertheless has and is an outside, and is therefore accessible to others. Even though it is accessible to others we cannot establish a numerical distinction between the act and the object grasped. This means that although it has an outside it is not a process taking place in objective time and cannot therefore be divided into separate articulemes, or into separate phonemes. It is literally the same thing to grasp in speech one indivisible signification, and to use the articulemes as one indivisible verbal act.

" ... the significance is what comes to seal, to close, to gather up the multiplicity of the physical, physiological, linguistic means of elocution, to contract them into one sole act, as the vision comes to complete the aesthesiological body." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:154)

We must substitute for the ontology of being, an ontology of grasping, so that just as two fingers or two eyes can become one indivisible organ of grasping, so the various articulemes can become one indivisible verbal act, without there having to be mechanisms which would co-ordinate them. In the execution of the verbal act each articuleme embraces the entire act. As I speak the preceding articulemes are not lost sight of, they are dovetailed into the present. From the outset the speech act is at its goal. Since the speech act is accessible to others, what

we have said of articulemes, we can say of phonemes.

Certainly speech is not thought and it does not constitute its meaning or its object. Speech only possesses its object at a distance. The relationship between the speech act and its object is not the relationship of the binding to the bound. Although we cannot establish a numerical distinction between the two, the signification that my speaking grasps, always eludes it, is never possessed by it. My speaking "strains towards" it rather than embracing it fully.

"... the spoken word (the one I utter or the one I hear) is pregnant with a meaning which can be read in the very texture of the linguistic gesture ... and yet it is never contained in that gesture, every expression always appearing to me as a trace, no idea being given to me except in transparency, and every attempt to close our hand on the thought which dwells in the spoken word leaving only a bit of verbal material in our fingers." (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:86)

"Thus signification resists any direct seizure but is docile to the incantation of language. It is always there when we start to evoke it but always a bit beyond the point where we think we discern it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:116)

"Ideas that are too much possessed are no longer ideas; I no longer think anything when I speak of them, as if it were essential to the essence that it be for tomorrow, as if it were only a tacking thread in the fabric of the words." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:119)

Speaking and understanding speech is not constituting or dreaming because the world to be delineated, or subtended, the past and future to be reached, are always "already there". Like the grasping act, the speech act projects itself towards a

world, aims at a world. To speak is to allow one-self to respond to a call which is made upon one's speech independently of any representation. In order that I may express something, or aim at something in speech, the "object" must first of all exist for my speaking. In order for me to use the past tense grammar in authentic speech, the past must exist for my speaking. Just as Merleau-Ponty shows that objects no longer exist for the arm of the apraxic, we will show that motor forms of aphasia are neither due to a mental deficiency or to motor disturbances of the speech organs, but due to the fact that the world of objects which speech aims at no longer exists, or has been severely diminished for the aphasic's speech. For the non-aphasic the state of affairs to be expressed exerts an irresistible attraction, sets a muddled problem for his speech to solve.

"Schneider never feels the need to speak; his experience never tends towards speech, it never suggests a question to him, it never ceases to have that kind of self-evidence and self-sufficiency of reality which stifles any interrogation, any reference to the possible, any wonder, any improvisation."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:196)

For the non-aphasic on the other hand,

"Signification arouses speech as the world arouses my body - by a mute presence which awakens my intentions without deploying itself before them. In me as well as in the listener who finds it in hearing me, the significative intention ... is at the moment no more than a determinate gap to be filled by words ..."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1974:86)

Speech is not the handmaid of consciousness, it is the maturation of the situation. Just as the visible takes hold of the look, so the signification to be grasped takes possession of my speech. This "mute presence" of the signification to my speech, this attraction at a distance, resembles for Merleau-Ponty the presence of the entire musical composition, not to the thoughts of the musician performing it, but to his playing.

"The performer is no longer producing or reproducing the sonata: he feels himself, and the others feel him to be at the service of the sonata; the sonata sings through him or cries out so suddenly that he must 'dash on his bow' to follow it." (1968:151)

But it is not so much that my speech is at the service of the signification, but that our speech is at the service of a truth for us. The "object" exerts an irresistible attraction, or is present to our speaking, rather than to his or my speaking. My speech merges with the speech of the other to form one indivisible whole so that, not only is it impossible to tell whether I speak or whether it is the situation that speaks through me, but it is also impossible to tell whether I speak or the other.

"In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are interwoven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:354)

"Speaking is not just my own initiative, listening is not submitting to the initiative of the other, because

as speaking subjects we are continuing, we are resuming a common effort more ancient than we, upon which we are grafted to one another and which is the manifestation of truth." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:144)

In the dialogue our behaviours concord, reinforce, echo each other so that ultimately they comprise one indivisible act of grasping, so that there is no necessity for any mechanisms responsible for the co-ordinating reciprocity. There are no causal relations between his behaviour and mine and no acts of interpretation, there is only one common signification. It is literally the same thing for both of us to be directed towards one unique world and for our speaking and listening to become one indivisible grasping act. This means that the distinction between speaking and listening, in the dialogue, becomes blurred, just as in binocular vision we can no longer distinguish the contributions made by left and right eyes taken separately.

"Speaking and listening, action and perception, are quite distinct operations for me only when I reflect upon them." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:18/19)

Certainly if I am genuinely to be drawn into the other's perspective or if he can slip into mine from behind, we cannot begin with the assumptions of the natural attitude viz. that we are numerically distinguishable monads, each confined to his own perspective. Speech manifests that circular relation to the world which we have found in perception. The more carefully I attempt to confine myself in my reflections to my own experience

of speaking the more I discover myself as my audience. Speech demands the contradiction of my being for myself and my being for others.

In our reflections on language we will have to show that the distinctions between myself and the other, between speaking and listening, between being active and passive, are in a certain sense secondary. Merleau-Ponty refers to hallucinations which affect the experience of speaking and listening which would be incomprehensible if the distinction between myself and the other, between speaking and listening were fundamental

"Certain sick people believe that someone else is talking inside their head or in their body, or that someone else is talking when it is they themselves who are pronouncing or at least mouthing the words. Whatever one's view of the relation between healthy and pathological behaviour, speech must, in its normal functioning, be of such a nature that disorders in it are always possible. There must be something in the very heart of speech which makes it susceptible to these pathologies." (1973:17)

"If the patient hears voices in his head, this is because he does not absolutely distinguish himself from others and because, for example, when he speaks, he can just as well believe that someone else is speaking. The patient, says Wallon, has the impression of being 'without boundaries' in relation to the other, and this is what makes his acts, his speech, and his thoughts appear to him to belong to others or to be imposed by others ... Lagache thinks that the question 'How can we understand a subject who believes that he is hearing when it is he who is speaking?' can be answered only if one conceives language to be a kind of 'we-operation' [operation a' deux]. There is a sort of indistinction between the act of speaking and the act of hearing ... In a dialogue, the participants occupy both poles at once, and it is this that explains why the phenomenon of 'speaking' can pass into that of 'hearing'. It is the primordial unity that reappears in pathological cases ... What this observation reveals when we rid ourselves of sensationalist prejudices, says Wallon, is

the 'inability to distinguish the active from the passive' myself from the other." (1964:134)

What is important here is that if the distinctions between speaking and listening are secondary, if we can speak of a 'we-operation', then, whatever we have said about the relation between the speaker and his speech we can say about the listener and the speech he hears. For the orator, we said, his speech is his thought. There is no thought marginal to his speaking. He doesn't need to think about what he wishes to say, nor does he need to listen to his own speech to be sure that it expresses what he had intended. He can be sure that he means what he says without having to compare his uttered speech with his 'intentions'. The orator's speech is not an object for him. He is his speech, and in speaking he establishes an original relation to the signification. Speaking is a last relationship. For the listener, the orator's speech is also a last relation to its world, it is not an object for him and there is no need to perceive it or understand it because there is no numerical distinction between the act and the object it grasps. It is enough that he becomes drawn into this "we-operation" in order for him to open up to the signification itself, the identical signification that the speaker grasps in his speech.

"When I am listening, it is not necessary that I have an auditory perception of the articulated sounds but that the conversation pronounces itself within me. It summons me and grips me; it envelops and inhabits me to the point that I cannot tell what comes from me and what from it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19)

Like the orator, the listener has a last relation with the signification grasped. This means that there is for me as a listener, no necessity to verify my access to the signification. Being a last relation, we cannot establish a numerical distinction between the signification itself, and the signification grasped by the listener.

If it is true that the distinction between speaking and listening are secondary, if the notion of a "we-operation" is not just a manner of speaking, our reflections on language and linguistic behaviour will oblige us to give up the ontology of things and adopt an ontology of acts, so that in the dialogue, our reciprocity can become one act of grasping and so one 'Cyclopean vision', without the necessity of causal mechanisms or acts of understanding.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1) "For phenomenology, however language is not an object but a mediation, that is to say, it is that by which and through which we move towards reality (whatever it may be). For phenomenology, language consists in saying something about something: it thereby escapes towards what it says; it goes beyond itself and dissolves in its intentional movement of reference." (Ricoeur, 1967:16)

Merleau-Ponty points out that this approach to language is already present in many of Husserl's writings

"In more recent writings, on the other hand, language appears as an original way of intending certain objects, as thought's body ..." (1974:81)

"In Formal and Transcendental Logic, published during his lifetime, he already expressly indicated that to speak is not at all to translate a thought into words. It is rather to see a certain object by the word." (1974:266)

- 2) "It may seem that our friends, being who they are, could not be called by any other names, that in naming them we simply deciphered what was required by eyes that colour, a face like that, that walk - though some are misnamed and all their lives carry a false name or pseudonym (like a wig or mask). In the same way, an expression and what it expresses strangely alternate and, through a sort of false recognition, make us feel that the word has inhabited the thing from all eternity." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:6)

## PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE SCIENCES OF LANGUAGE

The notion of the speaking subject that we have been led to in this comparison with the grasping subject, shares in all the contradictions of the latter. Speech is a last relation to its world yet it is accessible to others, it demands the contradiction of immanence and transcendence. In my speech my access to the world and the access of others to me are indistinguishable. The object which speech grasps is neither real nor is it a cogitatum. There is no numerical distinction between speech and the object it grasps, yet my speech is irresistibly beckoned by it. Speech makes its object exist and yet the object precedes it and transcends it. Can a philosophy take as fundamental notions, notions which involve such irresolvable contradictions? Why is this entire enterprise not ultimately a *reductio ad absurdum* argument showing the impossibility of overcoming Husserl's problem of accounting for the existence of other subjects, or the impossibility of a philosophy which attempts to solve the problem of solipsism while remaining committed to an informal intelligibility? Merleau-Ponty's reply would be that in his description of the grasp and its relation to the world, (made possible through an analysis of Schneider's syndrome), we must discover a broader concept of rationality, a new and more radical manner of understanding and reflecting, than is possible within the bounds of traditional thought.

"It will perhaps be maintained that a philosophy cannot be centred around a contradiction, and that all our descriptions, since they ultimately defy thought, are quite meaningless. The objection would be valid if we were content to lay bare, under the term phenomenon or phenomenological field, a layer of prelogical or magical experiences. For in that case we should have to choose between believing the descriptions and abandoning thought, or knowing what we are talking about and abandoning our descriptions. These descriptions need to provide us with an opportunity of defining a variety of comprehension and reflection altogether more radical than objective thought."  
(1962:365)

The contradictions of the speaking subject and its relations to the world and others cannot be resolved in thought. Nor is it a question of simply labelling or defining the speaking subject as that which demands the contradiction of immanence and transcendence. It is not a question of turning notions like 'body consciousness' or 'being-beyond-oneself' into formal concepts and then proceeding by a mechanical manipulation of these terms. Nor, on the other hand is it a question of relying on a power of pure intuition which would enable us to grasp the resolution of these contradictions. It would be contradictory for a phenomenological philosopher to achieve an unambiguous, untrammelled reflection on his rootedness in the world. Merleau-Ponty was critical of philosophers like Scheler and Heidegger who on the one hand, assert that man is a being-in-the-world and that he is unable to withdraw from the world in order to be conscious of himself and his relation to the world, and yet on the other hand, assume for the reflecting philosopher an unconditional

philosophical intuition.

"Scheler expresses the curious juxtaposition of a philosophy which on the one hand seeks 'alogical essences' and on the other hand conceives of itself as having an unconditioned power of arriving at the truth.

This comment also applies to Heidegger, who devotes himself to the description of being in the world. One might expect, therefore, that the philosopher who finds himself thrown into the world might also find some difficulty in arriving at an adequate state of knowledge. But Heidegger defines the attitude of the philosopher without recognizing any restriction on the absolute power of philosophical thought." (1964:94)

For Merleau-Ponty,

"philosophy is language, rests on language ... that language that can be known only from within, through exercise, is open upon the things, called forth by the voices of silence, and continues an effort of articulation which is the Being of every being." (1968:126/7)

It is because philosophy is not based on a pure intuition or pure thought that it can grasp or open up to a world that could not be embraced in thought. While a notion like the subject demanding the contradiction of immanence and transcendence, being simultaneously *natura naturans* and *natura naturatus*, cannot be resolved in thought, it is "docile to the incantation of language". The philosopher's writing is not a recording of the intuitions he has been led to through the reduction. His writing is the performance of the reduction and is his reflection. Reflection is thus no longer a private withdrawal into the self. It is not possible to distinguish between

Merleau-Ponty's analyses and the essences he wishes to reveal. For the phenomenological philosopher himself his speech is not the handmaid of consciousness, it teaches him what he wanted to say.

"This book, once begun, is not a certain set of ideas; it constitutes for me an open situation, for which I could not possibly provide any complex formula, and in which I struggle blindly on until, miraculously, thoughts and words become organized by themselves."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:369)

Even though I may be sure that I have understood the notion of a body consciousness, whenever I withdraw into myself to reflect on this "understanding" I find that I am thrown beyond myself into speech. My only way of representing to myself the essence of the body consciousness is by taking up the cases Merleau-Ponty considers, or similar ones, and dealing with them in an analogous way. In this way we will attempt to reflect on the paradoxical existence of a speaking subject and his being amongst others, in a discussion of the various forms of aphasia.

But if phenomenological reflection and speech cannot be distinguished does this not imply that we have returned to formalism and given up the pursuit of the informal essence? If my speech is my reflection, will the essence I reveal be genuine essences or merely concepts rooted in language (Merleau-Ponty, 1974:259), if the philosopher's speech is his thought, how can he avoid installing himself in the order of things said, how can he avoid "word-meanings", avoid providing a verbal substitute for

the world we see?

Like our inherence in the world and in history, speech both cuts us off from the world and opens up to the world. It will be a source of error and inauthenticity for as long as truth is defined in terms of the absolute relation between consciousness and its object, but we have seen a new concept of being in truth, one which does not presuppose that I am a pure constituting consciousness. We have seen that my most original experience of truth is an experience of having an outside and waking up to a world which is already there, which surrounds me, transcends me and presupposes that in some way I am always cut off from it and only 'strain' towards it. In the same way, authentic speech, while it is not the handmaid of consciousness, grasps a world that transcends it, that lies beyond the world of things said. Unlike the definition and the formal system of symbols, authentic speech is a response to a truth that exerts on it an 'attraction at a distance'. If we wish to break with the world of pre-constituted speech, the world in which we are confined to what 'one says', we need a speech which is supple enough to allow it to be taken possession of by this signification which transcends it, just as the perceived object takes possession of the gaze, a speech therefore, which would allow things to speak for themselves.

"It would be a language of which he [the philosopher] would not be the organizer, words he would not assemble, that would combine through him by virtue of a natural intertwining ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:125)

Particularly in the **Phenomenology of Perception** and **The Structure of Behaviour**, Merleau-Ponty reveals a method of taking up Husserl's thought without simply repeating what he has said. By bringing the Husserlian project, the idea of the reduction, the idea of the informal essence, into contact with the sciences of human behaviour, he was able to delineate notions, such as the notion of the incarnate subject and its world, which couldn't be resolved in thought, or intuited in a withdrawal into the self.<sup>1</sup> This implies that phenomenology does not precede the behavioural sciences. It is not as if we must first of all discover through reflection on ourselves, the informal essences on which the intelligibility of these sciences rests. Unlike for Scheler and Heidegger, for Merleau-Ponty there is an interdependence between phenomenology and the behavioural sciences.

" ... when Scheler defines intuition of essence in his famous book on Ethics, he says that we may know an essence without the slightest intervention of physical, physiological, psychological or historical factors arising from our individuality. He maintains that, in seeing the 'unities of ideal meaning', there is no need to pay any attention to these factors of peculiarity ... at the beginning of *Sein und Zeit*, he [Heidegger] said that the task of philosophy is to explore the natural concept of the world, independently of science, by the primordial experience we have of it. To determine the structure of that natural world, he adds, it is not at all necessary to have recourse to ethnology or to psychology. Those disciplines presuppose a philosophical knowledge of the natural world and one can never find the principle which will enable us to order psychological or ethnographical facts by making inductions from these facts. In order to do this, the spirit itself must first possess the principle." (1964:93/4)

Merleau-Ponty argues that even for Husserl, as his thought matured, the relation between philosophy and science ceased to be one of opposition or one of the absolute priority of philosophy. Husserl too recognized a relationship of interdependence and reciprocity. This means that phenomenology does not precede the science of neurolinguistics. We cannot discover the informal essences of speaking listening, and understanding in some pure reflection on ourselves; a reflection owing nothing to our historical and social situation and owing nothing to the state of neurolinguistics and aphasiology. As in binocular perception we can be thrown into a three dimensional world which is neither an object of thought nor a superimposition of monocular images, so in taking up the basic problems of neurolinguistics and bringing them into the context of Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophy, we can, through our analyses, be awakened to a world of signification which could neither be grasped in a pure intuition, nor conceived within the scientific standpoint of neurolinguistics itself.

In recent years A.R. Luria has become recognized as one of the leading neurolinguists. Many of his works such as **The Working Brain, Traumatic Aphasia and Basic Problems of Neurolinguistics** have come to occupy a central position in contemporary discourse on aphasia and have become the standard texts in teaching programs on speech pathology. This reputation seems to be due, not only to his meticulous attention to detail,

but also to his attempt to take into account the contributions made by both intellectualists like Goldstein and Jackson and atomists like Broca and Wernicke.

Luria presents his investigations, conclusions and theories within the traditional scientific framework. He appears to accept the naturalistic assumption of a clear dichotomy of the body and the mind, of a physiological realm and a psychological realm. We will attempt to demonstrate that the phenomena Luria reveals and many of the expressions he adopts in his explanations are incompatible with this naturalistic dichotomy. We will try to show how an unbiased account of the various forms of aphasia bring out by contrast, certain features of normal speech and speech perception which corroborate the theory of language we have been lead to. We will see also that our descriptions and analyses provide us with an opportunity of defining a variety of comprehension and reflection altogether more radical than objective thought (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:365).

## FOOTNOTES

1) We disagree therefore with Spiegelberg who suggests that Merleau-Ponty had reached an understanding of his position before his critical discussions of the traditional views. He suggests that it would be possible to isolate his "phenomenological insights" from the context of his discursive arguments.

"Most of the presentation of his own position takes the form of simple assertions of findings that he seems to have made long before. Rarely does he carry out the analysis before our very eyes or invite us to look with him at the phenomena by a methodical and painstaking investigation. Instead, he gives us his results ready-made leaving it to us to do our own verifying. These results are usually imbedded in the context of a discursive argument without being identified as new and original intuitions. Hence if one wants to isolate his most original phenomenological insights, it is necessary to extricate them from the context which is not made any easier by the often inordinately long paragraphs of his texts". (1969:559)

## APHASIAS AFFECTING THE PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF SPEECH

Luria identifies and distinguishes between two main forms of aphasia affecting the perception and understanding of speech. They are Semantic aphasia and Sensory (or Acoustico-Gnostic) aphasia. He lists and describes other forms (1976:202/29) but we will attempt to show that these can be dealt with as forms of Semantic aphasia once its true nature has been established.

## SEMANTIC APHASIA

In many forms of aphasia, but particularly in the syndromes Luria describes as semantic aphasia patients are able to understand simple phrases, but are unable to cope with complex constructions, particularly those constructions which relate various parts of a sentence to one another.

"The patients of this group (i.e. those suffering from "semantic aphasia") have definite difficulty in understanding sentences with a complex system of subordinate or relative clauses, especially sentences containing the relative pronoun "which" or still more, prepositions and copulatives such as "despite", "instead of", and so on .... However, the greatest difficulty of all, and one which is virtually insurmountable, occurs whenever these patients are confronted with constructions expressing the relations of one object with another and, in particular, reversible constructions of the type we have already discussed ("the father's brother" - "the brother's father"), constructions expressing spatial or temporal relations ("a circular under a square" and "a square under a circle", "Peter went in front of John" and "John went in front of Peter", "summer before spring" or "spring before summer") ... and in particular, all comparative constructions ("an elephant is bigger than a fly" and "a fly is bigger than an elephant; and, more especially, "Olga is fairer than Sonya but darker than Kate"). In all such cases the patients of this group easily understand the individual lexical elements of

the construction (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and even copulatives), but all these elements remain isolated and are not united into the essential logical-grammatical systems ... Having listened to the expression "a cross below a circle" or "an elephant is bigger than a fly", such a patient will be unable to decode the expression or relationship and will helplessly exclaim: "What can it be ... a cross ... and a square ... and below ... but I can't put them together ..." or "an elephant ... well of course an elephant is big ... and the fly ... of course it is small ... and so you see "an elephant is bigger than a fly" ... or "a fly is bigger than an elephant" ... something must be right - I can't make head or tail of it" (Luria, 1976:197/8).

How are we to understand the above deficiencies? If the patient is able to understand the individual parts of the sentence, but is unable to put them together, it would seem that understanding a complex sentence consists of at least two distinct operations; grasping the meanings of the individual parts of the sentence and grasping the relationships between them and so grasping the general meaning of the sentence as a whole. In the semantic aphasic it would appear that while the former operation has remained intact (in contrast to the sensory aphasic), the latter operation has been disrupted. If the patient is unable to grasp relationships such as bigger than, below etc., the syndrome would seem to be due to a weakness of the understanding. The aphasic appears to have lost the concept of 'bigger than' and this is why he is unable to relate the elephant and the fly or why he is unable to subsume elephant and fly under the concept of one thing being bigger than another.

But explanations of this kind accord very little with the entire clinical picture which these patients present. Luria points out

that in spite of their aphasia, these patients are able to arrive at the general meaning of complex constructions by "guessing" the possible links between the fragments of a text presented to them.

"The patients of this group can still make active efforts to grasp the general meaning of verbal communication. They can still obtain guidance from the intonational and melodic (prosodic) organization of expression ... and they steadfastly attempt to reconstruct the general meaning of a text; indeed they may have partial success as a result of their efforts to join together the fragments of a semantic text as they come to them, by guessing possible links between them, avoiding distraction by irrelevant associations, never going beyond the bounds of the context, and attempting to use this context as a means of compensating for their primary speech defects.

It is this feature which enables the patients of this group to create hypotheses regarding the general meaning of a fragment, although they can never be completely sure that they have understood the meaning correctly." (Luria, 1976:198)

Rather than presenting a picture of intellectual deficiency these patients show remarkable intellectual ability and it is quite clear that 'concepts' have not been lost, since without the concept "bigger than" the 'hypothesis' or the 'guess' would be impossible. On the contrary, what characterises these patients, and what distinguishes them from the non-aphasic is that their only possibility of understanding the sentence is through such an intellectual operation. The aphasic goes about deciphering a given sentence in the same way that the student of a foreign language translates a difficult text. Given the meanings of the individual words, both are obliged to invent a

series of hypotheses about the meaning of the whole and then to cross-check each hypothesis with the given words.

The procedures carried out by the patient contrast with, and by so doing throw into relief, the spontaneous and direct access of normal perception in which the meaning of the expression as a whole is immediately grasped. The sentence as a whole expresses one indivisible meaning embodied in the sentence as an indivisible gestalt. The words do not have to be perceived or deciphered individually.

We can say of the patient, what Merleau-Ponty says of Schneider,

"The thought of others will never be present to him, since he has no immediate experience of it. The words of others are for him signs which have to be severally deciphered, instead of being, as with the normal subject, the transparent envelope of a meaning within which he might live. Like events, words are for the patient not the theme of an act of drawing together or projecting, but merely the occasion for a methodical interpretation." (1962:133)

The procedures carried out by these patients remind us of the procedures we argued, could be used to compensate for a lack of intuitive insight into the way the volume of a cube would change if the length of its sides was doubled. We could compensate through a series of steps in which we blindly adhere to the formula for the volume of a cube, and the rules for the manipulation of symbols (see above pages 23/4).

Luria cites some of the procedures used by patients to arrive at an understanding of constructions like 'the elephant is bigger than a fly'.

"I have seen patients with lesions of the left parieto-occipital cortex who could not grasp the meaning of such constructions over a period of 26 years ... and who eventually succeeded in decoding them only by an extended series of consecutive operations. For example, given the sentence "Slon bol'she mukhi" (an elephant is bigger than a fly), they say: "Slon (elephant) ... it is big ..." and so "bol'she mukhi" ... that means it is bigger, and the fly is smaller ... the elephant is ... bol'she, chem mukha ... that means that an elephant is ... bol'she chem mukha (bigger than a fly)" and so on" (Luria, 1976:198).

Basil Haigh, the translator of Luria's **Basic Problems of Neurolinguistics**, suggests that the basic principle underlying the use of these operations, is the substitution of one form of expressing a relation of comparison, in which 'chem' and the nominative case is used for another in which the genitive only is used.

"Part of the difficulty is that in Russian the subject of comparison is expressed in the genitive case as a rule: slon (elephant, nom. sing.) bol'she (bigger" mukhi (than a fly, gen. sing. of mukha). "Mukhi" could also be nom or acc. pl., which adds to the confusion. The patient overcomes his difficulty by using the alternative construction which is similar to the English: slon bol'she chem (than) mukha (nom. sing)." Luria, 1976:228-229)

Surely this explanation is unacceptable. Firstly, it does not take into account the other constructions which the patient is unable to understand, and secondly, if it were simply a question

of substituting one form of making the comparison with another this would surely have been recognized by Luria especially since he had studied the patient's syndrome for 26 years, and Luria would simply have described the syndrome as an inability to understand the use of the genitive in making comparisons.

It appears rather that the procedures of the patient do not merely lead him through a reformulation of the expression to one which he is able to grasp in one indivisible act. On the contrary, the entire series of consecutive operations appears to be the patient's act of grasping, and resembles the processes through which Schneider comes to recognize the pen (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:131/2) (see above pages 27/8). The patient's understanding advances 'pari passu', each part of the expression suggests certain associations. From "the elephant", the patient moves to "the elephant ... it is big", and from "big", he moves to "bigger", from "fly" he moves to "the fly ... it is small", etc. The patient proceeds blindly, using his knowledge of the world or simply exploiting associations between the words elephant and big, big and bigger, fly and small etc. This is evident from the fact that patients have more difficulty understanding expressions where they are unable to exploit this knowledge of the world or these associations between words. Luria explains the difference between the two types of expressions as follows:

Two sentences expressing spatial relationships: (27a) "A picture hangs **above** the bed" (27b) "A circle **above** a square" are absolutely identical in their grammatical structure. However, in the first of them

the position of the picture is prompted by the listener's practical experience and the sentence has an unambiguous meaning which can be guessed without any special analysis of the formal construction; in the second case the spatial arrangement of the objects is not given by previous experience and decoding of the sentence as a whole depends on analysis of its grammatical construction." (Luria, 1976:169)

In contrast, for the non-aphasic, the sentence 'speaks' and is significant, the arrangement of sounds "straight away 'means' something, whereas in the patient the meaning has to be brought in from elsewhere by a veritable act of interpretation" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:131).

Luria says that these patients have partial success in reconstructing the general meaning of a text by guessing the possible links between the parts of a sentence ... "as a means of compensating for their **primary speech defects**". But what are these primary speech defects? The patient understands 'the elephant'; 'bigger than' and 'the fly' and with this understanding of the elements and by 'obtaining guidance from the intonational and melodic organization of expression' and by 'avoiding distraction by irrelevant associations' etc., he is able to guess the meaning or produce an hypothesis about the meaning of the expression. Is Luria suggesting that for the non-aphasic there is some other way of arriving at the 'overall meaning'? Could he be suggesting that in the non aphasic the production of hypotheses takes place instantaneously and unconsciously and that the aphasic, having lost this unconscious automatic decoding function must carry out the process

consciously. But such an explanation relies on a rather bizarre account of normal perception and understanding of speech. If the process of understanding speech were automatic or unconscious I would never be sure whether the meaning I grasped was the meaning of the sentence or whether it was simply an idea produced in me by some irrelevant aspect of the sentence. Listening to someone speak would be like those experiences we have in dreams where someone speaks and the ideas they express somehow fill the mind without us having heard what was said.

The explanation is incompatible with the syndrome. Luria points out that these patients who produce hypotheses are never completely sure that they have arrived at the correct interpretation. How is it possible then that the non-aphasic, who is not conscious of the rationality of his associations, since they are 'automatic', or for whom the hypothesis production is unconscious and for whom therefore, there is no guarantee that "irrelevant associations" have been avoided or that intonational and melodic information has been used correctly, how is it possible that he is confident that he has understood the meaning of the speech, while the aphasic, who performs all the required functions consciously and is therefore aware of the rationality of each step taken, is not confident?

We cannot argue that the sense of certainty or confidence is 'associated' or 'produced' only under certain circumstances such

as when speech is decoded unconsciously and automatically. Any attempt to deal with the sense of certainty in this way introduces all the difficulties attached to psychologism (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:44) (see above pages 41/56). It would deprive the theorist and his audience of the right to accept as true any argument or statement which presents itself as self-evident.

The certainty or confidence of the non-aphasic suggests that he has another, more immediate relation to the meaning of the sentence, one which does not presuppose the association of ideas or the production of hypotheses. For as long as we remain with the assumptions of the natural attitude, as long as we begin by placing the speaker and perceiver in the world as two distinct and parallel consciousnesses, any such immediate relation would be unthinkable.

If my interpretation of the other's speech were based on an association of ideas or the production of hypotheses, I would never be sure of having reached the correct interpretation. I would ceaselessly be taking apart misleading associations, reintroducing parts of the sentence I had excluded in the first place, or reconsidering the intonational and melodic organization of the sentence. But this does not happen. The speech I hear does not await my acts of interpretation, it is meaningful immediately and all the parts and intonations have always already been taken into account. My greatest attempts at

being impartial in the construction of the hypotheses would never provide me with anything more than my 'opinion' about the possible meaning of the sentence (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:355) (See above page 75).

The assumptions of the natural attitude will never enable us to understand this 'perceptual faith' for, placing the perceiver in the world, it will always transform it into a belief, i.e. something for which there can be reasons or proofs. Even though I sometimes make mistakes and my interpretation is not always perfect yet my certainty lies beyond proofs.

"The methods of proof and of cognition invented by a thought already established in the world, the concepts of object and subject it introduces, do not enable us to understand what the perceptual faith is, precisely because it is a faith, that is, an adherence that knows itself to be beyond proofs, not necessary, interwoven with incredulity, at each instant menaced by non-faith." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:28)

To speak and to understand speech is to be thrown beyond one's own sphere of private thoughts and hypotheses, it is to have an openness onto others and onto speech which is pregnant with its meaning.

#### LURIA'S NOTION OF SIMULTANEOUS SURVEYABILITY

If understanding a sentence involves the production of an hypothesis about its overall meaning, then it is clear that all the parts of the sentence need to be taken into account. If the

sentence is perceived as it is pronounced, the parts of the sentence will succeed each other and the perceiver will need to recall the earlier parts to be considered with those that follow. If the entire sentence cannot be surveyed simultaneously in this way, the formation of an appropriate hypothesis will be impossible. This would mean that semantic aphasia was not due to a loss of concepts, but due to an inability to bring about a simultaneous presentation of all the parts of the sentence to the scrutiny of the hypothesis producing function. This is the explanation Luria himself prefers:

"The tertiary (parieto-temporo-occipital, or parieto-occipital) posterior zones of the cortex in man ... play an important role in the analysis of incoming external information. They combine successively arriving visual, tactile, auditory and vestibular stimuli into a single simultaneous scheme, i.e. they carry out simultaneous (spatial) synthesis of this information. That is why a lesion of the cortical zones, while not disturbing the perception of isolated stimuli, prevents their simultaneous synthesis and, as Head (1926) and Pötzl (1928) pointed out many years ago, it produces the picture of "simultaneous" or spatial agnosia and apraxia.

Naturally this inability to fit incoming impressions into a single simultaneous, spatial scheme (or, as Pötzl expressed it - the loss of ability to switch from the process of successive survey to the function of simultaneous surveyability) - is bound to be reflected in the analysis of verbal information ... the patient begins to have great difficulty in fitting incoming lexical elements into a single simultaneously surveyable logical-grammatical (quasi-spatial) structure." (Luria, 1976:196)

It is not clear from the above however whether semantic aphasia is due to a restriction of something equivalent to a short term memory, or whether it is a limitation of the actual quantity of

auditory sensations that can be combined or included in one simultaneous spatial scheme. Nevertheless neither interpretation seems possible.

The syndrome cannot be due to a loss of short term memory, for the difficulties of the patient are not overcome even when the entire expression is given in its printed form where all parts are presented simultaneously and where the patient is free to read and re-read the text as often as he wishes.<sup>1</sup>

Could we argue that the cause of the aphasia is an actual restriction in the amount of acoustic material that can be surveyed simultaneously? If this were the case the patient should have less difficulty if the sentence was uttered more quickly reducing the acoustic content of each phoneme. And the patient should have less difficulty with constructions made up of fewer phonemes or fewer words. Those constructions consisting of two words such as 'father's brother' or 'brother's father' should be easier than constructions like 'the elephant is bigger than the fly' but there appears to be no evidence for this. Furthermore, if it were simply a question of the scope of this simultaneous surveyability the patient would have as much difficulty understanding sentences which have the same length but which do not express complex relations between objects. But this is not the case. Luria points out that these patients have no appreciable difficulty in understanding sentences such as 'the dog barks', 'the house burns', 'the boy hit the dog' and 'the girl drinks tea' (Luria, 1976:196).

The difference between the structures the patients do understand and those they do not understand is not a difference in the quantity of acoustic material but in the complexity of the semantic structure. Are we then to interpret 'surveyability' as a power of subsuming elements under a certain complex concept? (which the word 'logical', in Luria's expression 'a logical-grammatical structure' strongly suggests, in contrast to the notion of a 'single simultaneous spatial scheme'). But this will mean that we are once again obliged to describe semantic aphasia as a disruption of the intellect or as a loss of concepts which we have seen is unacceptable.

The syndrome remains incomprehensible for as long as we have to choose between the scope of a survey of acoustic images and the power of an act of judgement, between the passivity of intuition and the pure activity of the act of subsumption. It remains inconceivable for as long as we place both the perceiver and the speech in the world and establish a numerical distinction between the two.

If we interpret the simultaneous spatial scheme as a search-light or as a cinema screen, that is, as something with an objectively definable width, we will have to say that the width of simultaneous surveyability expands and contracts with different sentences so that all the parts of a sentence with a complex semantic structure will not be surveyed simultaneously. This implies that the width of surveyability is measured, not in

terms of the actual quantity of acoustic material, but in terms of semantic-acoustic wholes.

On various occasions Merleau-Ponty has referred to an analogous feature of the width of the visual field. In **The Structure of Behaviour** he refers to experiments reported by Koffka in **Principles of Gestalt Psychology**, which demonstrate that the visual field has no determinate size and that the quantity of space encompassed at any particular moment is related to the object in the world.

"If a subject fixates a spot marked on the side of a screen upon which letters are projected, the objective distance from the fixation point to the letter which appears the clearest varies only slightly whether the subject is placed at one or two meters from the screen ... If the size of the letters on the screen is varied, it is observed that the objective distance from the fixation point to the point of clearest vision, and consequently the objective size of the field encompassed by our perception increases with the dimension of the projected letters ... It seems then that the quantity of space encompassed by our perception and the place of the zone of clear vision in the phenomenal field express certain modes of organization of the sensory field related to the characteristics of the objects presented to the eye much more than the geometrical projection of objects on the retina ..." (Koffka, 1935:202-208). (Quoted by Merleau-Ponty, 1967:41-42)

Since the width of the simultaneous surveyability changes with the different kinds of constructions and with the different lengths of the sentence, it would appear that the limitation of the simultaneous surveyability in the semantic aphasia is the effect rather than the cause of the syndrome.

In both the aphasic and the non-aphasic the span of simultaneous surveyability would be related to the length of the expression as that system of sounds through which a certain significance presents itself. It is related to significant wholes and not to the stream of acoustic images, or the stream of sounds in the physical world. This means that the semantic features of the linguistic gesture play a role before there has been any act of interpretation or association of meanings. What characterises the semantic aphasic is the loss of this power of being present to these significant wholes. The human world which the aphasic finds himself in is made up of linguistic gestures that have lost their physiognomy. They no longer "speak to him" as whole expressions. His attempts at constructing hypotheses is an attempt to introduce his own relationships between the debris of the disintegrated physiognomy.

But how are we to understand this 'openness' to the expressive whole which underlies the perceptual faith of the non-aphasic? How are we to understand a certainty which lies beyond proofs which nevertheless depends on perception and can become disrupted? It is by considering the perceptual syndrome of efferent motor aphasia together with semantic aphasia that we can begin to answer these questions.

#### DISTURBANCES OF THE PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF SPEECH OF PATIENTS WITH EFFERENT MOTOR APHASIA<sup>2</sup>

Luria describes the perceptual difficulties of these patients in

terms of a loss of "language sense." Certain words, when used in particular expressions, especially idiomatic expressions take on a different meaning from what they have when used alone. They have, as Luria puts it a "language sense" which differs from their "free meaning". The efferent motor aphasic, according to Luria, is unable to understand idiomatic expressions because he only associates the free meanings. He may for example be unable to understand expressions like "the train goes" or "the clock goes" even though he has no difficulty in understanding "train", "clock" and "goes". His failure to understand the expressions is due to the fact that he always associates with the word "goes" its free meaning, the meaning it has in non-idiomatic use or the meaning it has when used alone such as in the order "go!", which in Russian always means to walk step by step. For some reason the "language sense" of goes in these expressions, which is close to "it works" or "it functions" or "it moves", never occurs to him.

"This loss of "language sense" is the basic symptom of the patients of this group. As a result ... they are unable to understand even such idiomatic expressions as "Poezd idet" (the train goes) or "Chasy idut" (the clock goes: in Russian the word chasy = clock is a plural noun and takes a plural form of the verb), which are readily and immediately understood by a person with an intact sense of the Russian language. Many of these expressions are assessed as incorrect by the patients of this group. The reason is that contextual or coherent (to use V.V. Vinogradov's terminology) word meanings have disintegrated, whereas the direct, or free, word meaning is retained (Ryabova, 1968). Since they receive the word idte (to go on foot, infinitive) only in the sense of "to walk step by step" these patients regard all expressions in which the word has meanings linked with the context as incorrect." (1976:210)

We need to ask why the aphasic only associates the free meanings. Could it be that the contextual meanings have been lost? Could we argue that the lesions of the inferior zones of the left premotor area have destroyed the neurological structures responsible for the association of the contextual meanings, but left intact those responsible for the association of the free meanings? Such an explanation would rely on an atomistic model of the brain as a collection of anatomically defined centres. As we will see below models like this have been found to be unacceptable. Furthermore, as Luria points out, under certain circumstances, "with additional stimuli" and supporting aids the patient's difficulties can be overcome and the contextual meanings can be recovered (1976:209).

Luria attempts to account for the phenomenon by suggesting that the free meanings are more firmly established. It is generally accepted that any disruption of neurological processes affects the recall of less firmly established concepts more severely than it affects the recall of others. But it would be difficult to argue that the meanings of 'go', in the expressions "the train goes" or "the clock goes" are less firmly established i.e. are less habitual or more specialized, less in common usage or acquired later in life, than the free meaning viz. to walk step by step.

What the example of the idiomatic expression brings to our attention is the fact that generally the meaning of a sentence

cannot be inferred directly from the meanings of its words since the meanings taken up by the words are often determined by the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Psychological and linguistic theories which attempt to describe the way in which a sentence is decoded generally take this peculiarity into account. The Frazier-Kaplan 'Context-Construction hypothesis' for example, claims that the comprehension process involves formulating hypotheses about the meaning of the sentence, while the sentence is being perceived. These hypotheses guide the comprehension of the latter parts of the sentence which in turn make possible the testing of the hypothesis. Understanding a sentence involves a continuous process whereby the 'sensory input' is "being matched or mismatched with the output of an ongoing hypothesis refining process" (Rieber, 1976:16).

In terms of this approach, efferent motor aphasia would appear to be the result of a break down of this testing or matching process. The patient associates free meanings with certain words and yet, in spite of the fact that this results in the sentence being meaningless or "incorrect", he does not attempt to try out any other meanings. There is therefore a kind of obsessive association of the free meaning, or as Luria puts it an "inert fixation on the direct meaning of the verbal elements" (1976:209). How are we to account for this obsession? There is nothing in the patient's overall behaviour to suggest that he is genuinely obsessive, that the syndrome is only symbolic, hiding a deeper psychological problem.

If the obsession does not affect the personality of the patient as a whole but only his decoding of speech, are we to argue that the hypothesis-producing and testing functions are carried out by 'another mind', one which could become disrupted without affecting the general personality of the patient? Interpreting the hypothesis-producing function as the act of another mind, even as an 'unconscious mind' would simply re-introduce the problems the Frazier-Kaplan theory was meant to resolve, for now we will have to explain how the perceiver himself becomes aware of and understands the solutions produced by this other mind. Since a direct communication of minds is ruled out from the start, the mind producing hypotheses would have to express itself in symbols of some sort, but it is difficult to explain why these internal symbols would be any easier to understand than the original perceived speech.

An alternative would be to argue that the conclusion produced by the decoding process, the meaning of the sentence, is **caused** to appear in consciousness through some neurological activity without relying on symbols. But in such a case there would be no sense of having heard what was said. For the patient, thoughts would seem to come to him from nowhere and listening to someone speak, as we have seen above, would be like listening to someone speaking to us in a dream. Since the patient is not himself obsessive it seems unlikely that he would remain committed to an idea which simply occurred to him and which was not consciously derived from the perceived sentence.

Since the patient manifests no other forms of obsessive behaviour and since his fixation on the free meanings of words cannot be located in an unconscious mind, we will have to find the disruption below the level of thought; we will have to find it at the level of perception provided that perception is taken as that power of opening up to sound already pregnant with a meaning. The patient's obsessive fixation on the free meaning is not due to a conscious or unconscious association of the meaning, but due to the fact that the free meaning embedded in the sound of the word is as undeniably present to him as is the sound. The word does not await his acts of association or judgement. The meaning is imposed on him and he is possessed by the speech (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:180). The patient's obsessive fixation is due to the fact that in his perceptual experience he is more sure that he encounters 'iduut (they go) - meaning - to-walk-step-by-step' than he is sure that he encounters 'iduut' as a series of phonemes.

Since there is no distinction between the intellectual powers of the aphasic and the non-aphasic, if the non-aphasic has access to the correct meaning of the idiomatic expression or the complex construction it cannot be because he possesses a superior intellectual power enabling him to produce the appropriate hypotheses. It must be because he can grasp the signification without the intervention of a single thought (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:180). If the non-aphasic is not fixated on the free meaning, it is not because the free meaning was found

to miss-match the sensory input, to be incompatible with the rest of the sentence. It is because the expression he encounters does not contain the 'word' 'iduut - meaning - to-walk-step-by-step' 'Iduut' as it appears in 'they walk' and iduut in "the clock goes" are for him incomparable, just as are the lozenge shaped figures found in monocular perception and the "squares-seen-from-an-angle" found in binocular perception.

It is only for the linguist who attempts to hear the expression as a stream of words or sounds, that the same word or the same collection of sounds appears in both expressions. It is therefore only for the linguist that the same word can have a free meaning and a contextual meaning.

What we need to describe is this opening onto the speech of others which in the aphasic has been disrupted. We need to explain why the patient does not have access to the expression as a whole and we need to account for that to which he does have access.

Here, against Luria's advice, we need to introduce a notion of simultaneous survey, although in a modified form.<sup>3</sup> We will attempt to show that both the syndromes of semantic aphasia and efferent motor aphasia are due to a disruption of a mode of being open to speech which resembles the access to the world Merleau-Ponty referred to as a perceptual synthesis, an opening onto significant wholes, but an opening which is neither

'simultaneous' nor a 'survey'.

If it is true that 'iduut' when used in the idiomatic expression is incomparable with 'iduut' when used alone, then we must accept that the perceived expression cannot be cut up into pieces or individual words as can a tape recording made of the expression. If the expression cannot be cut up into parts it is because the part, even on the level of perception, is what it is because the idiomatic phrase as a whole manifests itself through each of its words. The kind of access which is brought out in a reflection on the phenomena of semantic and efferent motor aphasia is what Merleau-Ponty referred to (not unambiguously) as 'perceptual synthesis' and later in *The Visible and the Invisible* as 'metamorphosis'.

"It is not a synthesis; it is a metamorphosis by which the appearances are instantaneously stripped of a value they owed merely to the absence of a true perception. Thus in perception we witness the miracle of a totality that surpasses what one thinks to be its conditions or its parts ..." (1968:8)

In our reflections on binocular perception we have seen how through the metamorphosis two monocular floating pre-things, the images, disappear into the concrete object as into their daylight truth. We have seen that the three dimensional object encountered manifests itself, through its sides. The perceived three dimensional cube is a 'whole' and the sides cannot be isolated from the whole as can the lozenge-shaped figures from the mosaic pattern. The speech act I perceive takes place in

time and the metamorphosis here would imply an integration of the various moments in my perception into one act of grasping so that there is no need to fit the "successively arriving auditory stimuli into a single simultaneous scheme" (Luria, 1976:196), just as in binocular perception there is no need to bring together and present to an inner eye the two monocular images. We have seen that it is literally the same thing to use two fingers or two eyes as one organ of grasping and to perceive one marble (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:205). It is literally the same thing for a sequence of moments in my perception of the speech act to be integrated into one opening throughout time and to perceive one indivisible expression.

To say that it is "literally the same thing" is to say that speech-perception does not present me with an object or contents for consciousness. The unity or wholism of the expression, and hence its semantic structure are not audible and the subject does not survey an object. As in the metamorphosis of binocular perception I am thrown beyond myself into the world. The synthesis of my perceiving body is not the effect of an act of consciousness. I am in the world and in time. My relationship with the expression demands the contradiction of a view from the inside and a view from the outside, so that I am related to something or open to something without it existing as an object for me.

It is because the synthesis of the perceiving body in its

exploratory behaviour is indistinguishable from the unity of the object that the scope of simultaneous survey is related to the quantity of acoustic material which is synthesized through the expression of its unitary semantic structure.

"The identity of the thing through perceptual experience is only another aspect of the identity of one's own body throughout exploratory movements; thus they are the same in kind as each other."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:185)

What is disrupted in the aphasic is this being-beyond-oneself in relation to the expressive whole, which is translated on the one hand as a loss of the synthesis of the perceiving body and on the other as a loss of the physiognomy of the expression as a whole.

The miracle of the metamorphosis is that it opens me up to an irreducible whole without leaving the realm of the sensuous and temporal and ascending to a realm of thoughts. Unlike the subsumption of elements under a concept, the metamorphosis does not destroy the sensuous and temporal aspect of the expression. If the meaning of the expression were produced by me in an hypothesis it would come into being instantaneously. Even though the expressive whole to which perception gives me access is not divisible into parts, nevertheless it is not a-temporal, it 'spans' time.

"The idea would be free, intemporal, aspatial. The Gestalt is not a spatio-temporal individual, it is

ready to integrate itself into a constellation that spans space and time - but it is not free in regard to space and time, it is not aspatial, atemporal, it only escapes the time and space conceived as a series of events in themselves ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:205).

The experience I have of hearing and understanding someone speak is not like those experiences we have in dreams where the meaning the other expresses occurs to us in an instantaneous flash, the meaning I encounter is created in time.

#### SENSORY APHASIA

In sensory aphasia, which "arises in lesions of the superior zones of the left temporal region (Wernicke's area)" (Luria, 1976:106), the disruption of the ability to understand speech at first appears to be due simply to a disturbance of the acoustic image, or, as Luria puts it, due to a disturbance of 'phonemic hearing'. The patient is unable to understand speech because he is unable to distinguish the phonemes which make up the words. More typically, these patients have lost the ability to distinguish between 'oppositional' phonemes i.e. phonemes that differ in the characteristics of voiced - unvoiced (b-p, d-t), hard - soft (l-l', t-t'), and so on (Luria, 1976:106). The result is that they are unable to distinguish between words such as "bachka" and "pochka", "dochka" and "tochka", "zalo" and "salo" etc. When such a patient is asked, for example, to point to his eye (glaz), he responds by repeating "glash ... glas ...

glaz ... gaz" (Luria, 1976:186). The patient substitutes words which are acoustically similar i.e. he provides "literal paraphasias" which for Luria is proof that the primary disorder is "sensory in nature" (1976:107).

What is particularly interesting however, is that these 'literal paraphasias' usually occur together with 'verbal paraphasias' (Luria, 1976:185). In a verbal paraphasia the patient substitutes for a given word one which has a common semantic feature. When asked for example to repeat the word 'dog', the patient replies with the word 'cat'. For the word violin he substitutes the word 'maestro', for 'concert' he substitutes 'show' etc.

As a vivid illustration of sensory aphasia and these two forms of paraphasia, I quote Luria's summary of the difficulties of a patient whom he refers to as patient Mark.

"All the difficulties found in tests of word understanding could be divided into two clearly defined classes.

First, the patient could not pick out significant phonemic characteristics sufficiently clearly, he easily replaced one such characteristic by another, repeated a word received by ear incorrectly and produced literal paraphasias [for example, instead of "nos" (nose) he would say "nosh ... nozh .." or instead of "plecho" (shoulder) he would say "pliso" ... plyasho", and he was unable to understand the precise meaning of spoken names simply as a result of the impreciseness of their acoustic composition. Second, often when the patient could not repeat a word given to him correctly ... he replaced it by another word in the same semantic category (verbal paraphasia); in response to the instruction to point to the nose - he said: "Point to the tongue?" and carried out the modified

instruction, or when asked to point to a lamp he said:  
 "Do you mean point to the window?"..." (Luria,  
 1976:190-191)

When asked to point to his elbow (lokot') the patient replied,  
 "Point to my nose ..." when asked to point to the blackboard  
 (doska), the patient replied "cupboard (shkaf)?" and pointed to  
 the cupboard.

What we need to understand is the relation between these two  
 forms of paraphasia and why patients which exhibit the one form  
 are always equally likely to exhibit the other. Luria persists  
 in arguing that the basis of the aphasia is sensory, that it is  
 due to a disturbance of the acoustic image, and that the two  
 paraphasias reflect different degrees of the severity of the  
 syndrome. While literal paraphasia results from the failure to  
 distinguish between oppositional phonemes (1976:106), verbal  
 paraphasias result from the inability to distinguish even those  
 phonemes that are completely different.

"In patients with more severe disturbances of this type  
 not even widely distant phonemes can be distinguished  
 and the phenomenon known as "alienation of word  
 meaning" arises" (1976:107).

This explanation cannot be reconciled with the facts. If we  
 begin by assuming the existence of the real world we will be  
 obliged to place the speaker and his audience in this world  
 separated from each other by their bodies and the space between  
 them. Conceived as two consciousnesses existing parallel to each

other each confined to his own thinking, each would be able to infer the internal life of the other through the interpretation of signs. Speech could traverse the space between them only as sound waves, which could play its role by striking the eardrums and producing acoustic images or sensations. The perceiver understands speech only by associating in some or other way the appropriate concepts with these images. Whatever theory of decoding speech we adopt, it will always be possible, at least theoretically, to distinguish between acoustic images produced by speech as a physical reality in the world, and the meaning, produced by the perceiving subject.

Within the bounds of such a naturalistic approach, verbal paraphasias would imply a precise acoustic image. The fact that the patient substituted for the word 'nos' (nose) a word like mouth or tongue, i.e. a word semantically related to nos, and not a word like fork or spoon, implies that in some way he must have heard clearly that the word was nos and not nosh (knife). Yet his literal paraphasia showed that he was unable to distinguish between nos, nosh and nozh. Similarly, his literal paraphasia showed that he was unable to distinguish between 'd' and 't', yet in his verbal paraphasia he substituted for the word doska (blackboard), words with semantic relations to doska, such as cupboard, and not words with semantic relations to toska (grief or anguish), which implies that he must have distinguished between doska and toska and therefore between 'd' and 't'.

Are we to argue that sensory aphasia is due to an unconscious decision to misperceive or misunderstand the word, an unconscious decision to exhibit the symptoms of sensory aphasia? Are we to say that the patient unconsciously perceives and understands the word correctly but that only acoustically and semantically related words are manifest in consciousness? There is nothing in the patient's behaviour to suggest that his inability to perceive and understand speech is only symbolic and that it hides a deeper psychological disturbance. Luria describes patient Mark as "fully orientated" and his behaviour as "adequate to the circumstances" (1976:109).

Furthermore, a closer examination of the patient's verbal paraphasias suggests that he does not have "in his mind" a clear idea of the object he substitutes. If the word 'nos' (nose) is given to him he has neither a distinct image of the word 'tongue' nor does he possess the clear idea 'tongue'. We should note that the patient's replies, as he makes the verbal paraphasias, always end with a question mark. Everything points to the fact that the patient has a general or rough idea of the meaning. The patient appears to have an access to the semantic category rather than to the specific meaning of a word which belongs to that category. The actual word he utters in his verbal paraphasia should be seen as an attempt to circumscribe or exemplify this vague or imprecise meaning. This is brought out clearly in another test in which the patient is required to state the meaning of a given word.

"meduza" (jellyfish)  
 "... something living, but what it is I don't know ..."  
 "mamont" (mammoth)  
 "... I can see quite well that this is something living, but what - I don't recall ... of course - a whale (rit) ... a large whale!"  
 "ledokol" (icebreaker)  
 "led ... aa ... it is ... an airplane (samolet) ... no ... a fish (ryba) ... rybit ... oh yes ... I remember! - atomic! - it breaks up ..."  
 "grib" (mushroom)  
 "This is something close, must be an apple ... no ... something else, it grows in the forest ..."  
 "Dirizher" (Conductor of an orchestra)  
 "... Dirizher ... nothing like it here ... it is music ..."  
 "Sekretar'" (secretary)  
 "What can this be? ... something to do with time ... telephone!" (Luria, 1976:192)

The nature of the patient's responses indicate that the verbal paraphasias are not due to having in mind the wrong signification, but due to having no specific signification at all. The patient encounters a vague or general signification, or he is directed towards a meaning which he grasps only loosely or ambiguously. If I can have such an opening onto such a vague meaning without a precise perception of the sound of the word, we will have to reject the traditional assumption that for the speaker the relation between the meaning and the sound of the word is based on a convention. If the sound were an arbitrary sign linked to the meaning through a convention the reference would be **all or nothing**. If the disruption of the perceived sound implied a blurring of the meaning, we would have to reject any external relation between sign and meaning and accept that speech 'sings' or delineates its signification. The relation between the sound and its meaning must be similar to the

relation between the sounds of the sonata and its musical meaning. In some way the meaning must be embedded or 'pregnant' in the sounds themselves so that it will be impossible to establish a numerical distinction between the two. Speech pregnant with its meaning must be accepted as an irreducible phenomenon so that any loss in clarity of the sound is a loss of semantic precision.

This implies that in the perception and understanding of speech there is no pure sound or pure acoustic image. The meaning announces itself through the sounds just as the cube announces itself through its sides or the true colour of an object announces itself through its variations. Just as the white of a paper lying in the shade is not simply gray and cannot be compared with the white of the paper lying in the sun, and consequently cannot be classified in the black/white range of colours, so the sounds used in speech cannot be compared purely as sounds and cannot be classified as the basic sound units of a language, i.e. there can be no science of phonetics.

#### The Notion of the Phoneme.

In '**Sound and Meaning**', Jakobson explains why it has been impossible to erect a pure science of acoustic phonetics, why it has been impossible to identify and list in any given language the basic units of sound, the phonemes, from which all its words are synthesised. While we do not accept his solution, he reveals

some interesting aspects of linguistic 'sound' which argue against the notion of an acoustic image, and which re-inforce our interpretation of the phenomenon of verbal paraphasia.

If we wished to develop a pure science of acoustic phonetics we would have to classify the fundamental sound elements of a language through an objective observation of the actual sounds used by a native speaker of the language. Since each sound produced by a speaker can be decomposed into an innumerable variety of other sounds which in turn can be further decomposed, it is impossible to tell how this stream of sounds should be grouped into the fundamental units and it is also impossible to tell which groups of sounds are the actual basic phonemes.

"When, as is always the case, two sounds show both similarities and dissimilarities, acoustics, having no intrinsic criteria for distinguishing what is significant from what is not, has no way of knowing whether it is the similarity or the dissimilarity which is crucial in any given case. It cannot tell whether it is a case of two variants of one sound or of two different sounds." (Jakobson, 1978:19)

Jakobson suggests that the only possible solution to this problem is to consider the basic elements of language, the phonemes, not as sounds, but as **phonological roles**. The essential role of the phoneme is to differentiate words according to their meaning. He points out that the pair *e* (closed) and *ɛ* (open) have a differentiating function in French, differentiating between words like *dé*(*de*) "dice" and *dais* (*dɛ*) "canopy". In French they are therefore two different phonemes.

While both sounds occur in Russian and Czech they do not have such a differentiating function. In Russian for example whether an e (closed) or an  $\epsilon$  (open) is used depends on whether the vowel precedes a palatalised consonant or not.

"Sounds which have a differentiating value, those sounds which are able to distinguish words, have been given a special name in linguistics. They are called phonemes. Thus in Russian closed e and open  $\epsilon$  are only two variants of one and the same phoneme; they are called combinatory variants, because they depend solely on the combination of sounds: before palatalised consonants the vowel e is closed and in other combinations it is open.

In Czech also closed e and open  $\epsilon$  are unable to differentiate between the meanings of words. Here again they are but two variants of one and the same phoneme, but the distribution of the two variants is quite different from in Russian. In a style that we might call neutral, Czech uses an open  $\epsilon$ , whereas in an affected style - but more particularly in vulgar style, in gutter language - a closed e can be heard. Whereas in Russian the two vowels are combinatory variants, which vary with the phonic context of the phoneme in question, in Czech they function as stylistic variants! the vocative pepiku! ("Joe!" and simply "fellow") becomes pepiku! in speech which is more free and easy. While open  $\epsilon$  and closed e are both pronounced in Russian and in Czech - in the former varying with the neighbouring sounds, in the latter varying with the style of speech - it is nevertheless difficult for both Russians and Czech to use the open  $\epsilon$  and the closed e of French correctly as different phonemes - or even to notice this difference without effort in pairs of words, like le dais and le dé or le lait ( $l\epsilon$ ) 'milk' and le lé (le) 'width'. This is explained by the fact that in these two Slavic languages the difference between these two vowels cannot mark the distinction between the meanings of words." (Jakobson, 1978:29/9)

Jakobson has thus proposed a functional definition of the phoneme. The question of what a phoneme is for a speaking individual he dismisses as being beyond the scope of linguistics

and as a return to a form of "psychologism". He decries the way in which discussions about the essence of the phoneme have merely repeated the famous philosophical debates between the nominalists and the realists, between the adepts of psychologism and those of antipsychologism. Nevertheless the functional definition which he himself proposes is clearly a return to the formalist approach of the intellectualist tradition. His approach would cut linguistics off from neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics and ultimately from all linguistic phenomena.

The real problem with the functional definition is that it does not do away with "outmoded psychological entities", it simply refuses to speak about them. It may well be that the phoneme needs to be understood in terms of the function it performs. Nevertheless the question remains: what characteristics do auditory sensations need in order to function as phonemes, in order, for example, to distinguish between words like 'dais' and 'dé'?

Certainly the attempt to get away from 'outmoded' psychological entities is a good one but it has been pursued only at the expense of ceasing to deal with actual language as it is used and perceived, and of concentrating on entities which are never encountered.

What we need to understand is how it is possible that the Czech is able to distinguish between closed e and open  $\epsilon$  when it is a

question of distinguishing between manners of speaking in Czech, but not when it is a question of distinguishing between two French words. Are we to argue that his perceptual acuity changes from one situation to another, that he is sensitive to the difference between e and  $\epsilon$  only when it indicates a difference in manners of speaking and that this sensitivity disappears when the difference distinguishes between two French words? Are we to look for some psychological mechanism which would account for the raising and lowering of nerve thresholds? Or are we to say that in both cases the Czech hears the distinction but he is unable to discriminate between dais and dé because he ignores the distinction believing that it only indicates a difference in manners of speaking? If it were simply a question of not being aware of the role that the distinction between e and  $\epsilon$  can play in French, he should have equal difficulty distinguishing between la table and les tables, as long as he does not realize that the distinction between a and e can distinguish between the singular and the plural. Furthermore the difficulty he has in distinguishing between dais and dé should disappear as soon as the role of the distinction between  $\epsilon$  and e has been explained to him. But this is clearly not the case.

If the Czech maintains that he can hear a difference between what appears to us to be pɛpiku and pepiku, and that he is unable to hear any difference between dais and dé, we need to take him at his word. If it is a mistake to argue for a changing acoustic sensitivity, it is equally a mistake to insist

that the Czech hears the distinction between  $\epsilon$  and  $e$  and then to invent a psychological mechanism which would explain why he is unaware of what he hears. Such an argument would be unfaithful to the phenomenon and would be invoked simply to defend the prejudice of the acoustic image and ultimately the realist notion of the world.

"To actualize these justifications ahead of time in the form of 'latent content' or 'unconscious knowing' is to postulate that nothing is accessible to consciousness which is not present to it in the form of representation or content." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:173)

Clearly the Czech lacks neither sense data nor the concepts under which they must be subsumed. His difficulties only begin to make sense if we can reject the notion of an acoustic image and accept that "**pepiku** - spoken-in-a-casual-way" is an irreducible phenomenon, so that the Czech can distinguish between **pepiku** spoken in a formal and a casual fashion without being able to distinguish between  $\epsilon$  and  $e$ .

In free and spontaneous perception objects spread out in depth do not have any definite apparent size. A man ten meters from me appears neither smaller nor the same size as when he stands directly in front of me. We have argued that "the same man seen from further away" is an irreducible phenomenon. If I am asked what size he appears to have I can answer only by closing one eye and holding up my thumb. In this way I can attempt to see him as if he were an object floating next to my thumb. The

apparent size of the man we said, is an artificial creation of this procedure and does not enter consciously or unconsciously into normal perception. It is the linguist who attempts to hear all speech as if it expressed nothing, as if it were a stream of meaningless sounds. In this way he is able to reduce "pεpiku - spoken-in-a-casual-way" to pepiku. But such a pure acoustic object is an artificial creation and does not enter either consciously or unconsciously into the Czech's perception of speech. Once the significance expressed in the use of ε rather than e is withdrawn from the word, the word at its most primitive and irreducible level has been changed.

"But clearly, when the word loses its meaning, it is modified down to its sensible aspect, it is emptied."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:193)

It is the linguist who treats speech as one of the objects in the world and it is the linguist for whom it is inexplicable that the Czech should be able to distinguish between pepiku and "pεpiku-spoken-in-a-casual-manner" and yet be unable to distinguish between dais and dé.

What the example of pepiku and the phenomenon of verbal paraphasia in sensory aphasia teaches us is that to perceive and understand a word "it is not necessary the I have an auditory perception of the articulated sounds ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19). What is necessary is that I encounter the word as an irreducible physiognomy.

"... it is possible to perceive a smile, or even a sentiment in this smile, without the colours and the lines which "compose" the face, as one says, being present to consciousness or given in an unconsciousness." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:166)

"But child psychology precisely proposes the enigma of a linguistic consciousness and a consciousness of others which is almost pure and which is prior to that of sonorous and visual phenomena." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:171)

What the Czech hears is the sonorous but porous envelope of a certain attitude or manner. The particular sound of pepiku is nothing but a certain manner of being among the others, 'overtly revealed' (Merleau-Ponty, 196.:229). What the Russian-speaking non-aphasic hears is not nos as a pure sound, but nos as the sonorous envelope of an intention directed towards some aspect of a nose.

"For a child, language which is understood or simply sketched, the appearance of a face or that of a use-object, must from the beginning be the sonorous, motor or visual envelope of a significative intention coming from the another." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:170)

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORD AND ITS MEANING

The notion of speech being the sonorous envelope of an intention or the notion that speech sings or delineates its meaning, implies that the relation between the word and its meaning is not an external relation based on a convention. It implies that the word is not arbitrary but that it literally expresses the essence of the object it refers to (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:187).

"On several occasions, we have questioned the view that language is tied to what it signifies only by habit and convention. The relation is much closer and much more distant." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:115)

According to Jakobson, Benveniste argues that the concept is like the soul of the acoustic image.

"The most profound of modern French linguists, Emile Benveniste, in his article 'Nature du signe linguistique' which appeared in the first volume of *Acta Linguistica* (1939), says in opposition to Saussure that 'the connection between the signifier and the signified is not arbitrary; on the contrary it is necessary. From the point of view of the French language the signified 'boeuf' is inevitably tantamount to the signifier, the phonic group b-o-f. 'The two have been imprinted on my mind together', Benveniste stresses; 'they are mutually evocative in all circumstances. There is between them such an intimate symbiosis that the concept "boeuf" is like the soul of the acoustic image 'b-o-f'." (Jakobson, 1978:111)

The traditional argument for the arbitrary nature of the word and for the purely external relation between the sign and its meaning, points to the fact that in different languages completely different words are used to represent the same or a similar idea, or that sometimes similar-sounding words are used to represent entirely different ideas. The German word 'ab' for example, which as a pure sound, is virtually indistinguishable from the English word 'up', in fact means 'down'. This would seem to imply that the word is arbitrary and the relation between the word and its meaning is based on some or other form of a convention, and that any impression we may have that the word 'literally express the essence of the thing' needs to be

explained in terms of psychological mechanisms, such as the 'association' of word and meaning.

But the argument assumes what it claims to prove. The argument begins by assuming that we can compare English and German words purely as sounds and that we can recognize that the 'same' word is used to refer to opposite directions. To assume that the words of a language can be scrutinized and compared as if they were real objects in the world is to assume that it is always possible to establish a numerical distinction between the word and the object it refers to, i.e. it is to assume that there can only be an external relation between the word and its meaning. We are not arguing that there is some natural or real relation between the two such as we have in onomatopoeia. We are arguing that we cannot begin by placing language in the world as one of its objects, just as we cannot begin by placing all acts of consciousness in the world. It could be, and this is what we will attempt to demonstrate, that our authentic experience of reality, is an experience of reality existing 'for us', and that the meaning and being of language is already implied in this experience of being a 'we subject'. If I wish to reflect on the phenomenon of language and the phenomenon of 'another language', I must begin by putting into parentheses my idea of the real existence of the world and hence of language as a real system of codes, and I must return to that moment in which a foreign language, like German, becomes for me a language in the same sense that English is for me a language.<sup>4</sup> If I witness a

conversation in a language I do not understand, I could infer that these individuals are expressing themselves, and that these words are for them what English words are for me. But this is an inference I make, it is not an experience of the foreign language as a language. This experience I can have only when the foreign language that I am learning to speak ceases to be a game of sounds made according to rules, and becomes a way of thinking, a way of reaching for myself and for others a certain signification. An unbiased reflection on this experience would reveal that it is not the experience of the same word referring to different objects. The sounds used in speech are never simply sounds but the sound of a certain word, and the sound would not be the same if the word did not have the specific meaning it has, just as the blue of the carpet would never be the same blue were it not a woolly blue (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:313) (See above page 22/3).

It may well be that in the early stages of learning to speak German the English-speaking student has certain difficulties as he attempts to use or understand words like 'ab'. Perhaps he needs to remind himself that the word means the opposite of what it sounds like. But at some stage he finds that he no longer needs to decode the word in this way and that it has begun to sound appropriate, that it has begun to sound like 'down'. But how does this change take place and what could be meant by saying that a word sounds like down? Are we to say that when the student hears 'ab' there is an unconscious translation through

which the word 'down' is associated and presented to an 'internal hearing'? But the student does not have the impression that 'ab' has begun to sound like the English word 'down', but that it has begun to sound like what it means. But what does it mean to say that 'ab' sounds like what it means, or sounds appropriate? The word is not appropriate in the sense that onomatopoeia are appropriate. Words like 'bang', 'squeak' or 'plop' imitate in some way the sound of the event they refer to, but in what sense does the direction 'down' make a sound which the word could imitate? It has become as natural to use the word 'ab' to indicate 'down' as it is to kiss in love or shout in anger. But how does this change take place and what could be meant by saying that the word 'ab' is natural. Are we to argue that this natural sound of the word is due to its being continuously associated with the concept? But the association of concepts cannot explain this sound of the word because if a word like 'ab' is repeated over and over, it ceases to 'sound like down', begins to sound strange and even absurd, even though I still know what it means and can still associate the correct concept.

In his description of patients suffering from colour word amnesia, Merleau-Ponty points out that for the patient the names of colours have become useless and emptied, even though he may have retained the ability to associate the correct concepts.

"The patient suffering from amnesia, to whom a colour name is given, and who is asked to choose a corresponding sample, repeats the name as if he expected something to come of it. But the name is now useless to him, it tells him nothing more, it is

alien and absurd, as are for us names which we go on repeating for too long a time. Patients for whom words have lost their meaning sometimes retain in the highest degree the ability to associate ideas." (1962:193)

The association of concepts has nothing to do with the sound the word has for me, because the latter can be destroyed without affecting the former. What has been destroyed in repeating the word, is its 'physiognomy', is the sound pregnant with its meaning. It is only once the true physiognomies of 'up' and 'ab' have been destroyed that they can be said to sound similar. What sensory aphasia and the example of pepiku teaches us is that these artificial creations do not play any role in the perception of speech. Repeating the word over and over again enables us to hear the word as a pure sound. It is therefore as a pure sound that it is for us strange and absurd, as are the paintings of the surrealist artists.

"In adults, ordinary reality is a human reality and when use-objects-a glove, a shoe - with their human mark are placed among natural objects and are contemplated as things for the first time, or when events on the street - a crowd gathering, an accident are seen through the panes of a window, which shuts out their sound, and are brought to the condition of a pure spectacle and invested with a sort of eternity, we have the impression of acceding to another world, to a surreality, because the involvement which binds us to the human world is broken for the first time, because a nature "in itself" (en soi) is allowed to show through. Here again, a mode of esthetic perception which appears absurd to so many adults should not for this reason be made part of a primitive perception." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:167)

To anyone who speaks English and German fluently 'ab' and 'up'

are neither the same nor are they different, they are incomparable. This is true to such an extent that he may well be surprised to discover how similar their phonetic representations are. As pure sounds 'ab' and 'up' are virtually indistinguishable to anyone who has not been trained in acoustic phonetics, yet the similar sound is hardly over noticed. What is it then that is heard when he hears ab and up? What is it that is destroyed when the word is repeated over and over? We have suggested that it is sound pregnant with its meaning, that sound can "literally express the essence" of the object, that the meaning inhabits the word. But it should be clear that this can be no more than a 'verbal solution'.

If, as we have said the real world is without mind, how can we conceive of a synthesis of real sound and meaning? For as long as meaning is conceived as a self-subsistent and self-conscious thought, i.e. as a cogitatum, and sound as an object in the world, the notion of sound pregnant with a meaning is inconceivable. There is no way that a significance can come to dwell in physical sound and here Cartesianism is right (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:351).

"The meaning of the gesture is not contained in it like some physical or physiological phenomenon. The meaning of the word is not contained in the word as a sound."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:193)

Here again, the example of pepiku suggest the direction in which we should search. Speaking about the perception of an angry or

threatening gesture, Merleau-Ponty says, "The gesture does not make me think of anger, it is anger itself" (1962:184).

Similarly if 'pepiku spoken in a casual fashion' is an irreducible phenomenon then the use of e as opposed to  $\epsilon$  does not make the Czech think of casualness; it is casualness itself, or it is itself a casual manner of relating to others. Pepiku and pepiku do not represent two ways of relating to one's audience. Like the kiss or the caress they delineate the relationship itself. The Czech 'understands' pepiku, just as I 'understand' the kiss or the caress, i.e. without any acts of thought marginal to the gesture itself.

Let us suppose for instance that under certain conditions the use of the casual form of speaking insults or embarrasses one's audience. Since the Czech doesn't discriminate between  $\epsilon$  and e, there must be a "blind" recognition of the insult. The insulting gesture must be "given" as the pole of his desires and fears, before the long work of interpretation which would arrive at the meaning of the gesture as a conclusion drawn from the perception of phonemes (Merleau-Ponty, 1967: 72/3). To insult someone is to affect him in some way. It is to bring about, through speech, a situation in which he is insulted. It would certainly be absurd to suggest that the insult could have an effect in terms of its physical properties as a sound. Yet we also know that there is no interpretation of signs. We must therefore imagine a concrete relation between speaker and perceiver, one which is not built

on the epistemological act of perception and interpretation of signs. Because the natural attitude makes a radical distinction between the thoughts and feelings of the individual and the social or public state of affairs, the champions of the natural attitude still have to explain how this insult is perceived and understood. The phenomenon of pepiku obliges us to accept the fact that the Czech's perception of the word is indistinguishable from his situation in the world as an insulted person, it demands therefore the contradiction of immanence and transcendence. There is no answer to the question as to how the Czech experiences or knows that he is insulted other than saying that his being-for-himself and his being-for-others are not two juxtaposed perspectives but engage each other like gears.

There is therefore an existential relation between the perceiver and the speech he perceives. His understanding of the other is not an act of thought but a synchronizing change of existence (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:183/4).

To perceive the insult it is not necessary for the Czech to have an acoustic image of the open e in pepiku, it is sufficient that he is drawn into this world in which he exists as an insulted being (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19). The Czech in this instant perceives with his social being; and this perception is not reducible to acoustic images or acts of thought but to modes of co-existence, modes of being for others and for himself. It is necessary that his perception of the speech be doubled with a

complementary perception: himself seen from the outside, installed in the social world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:134). The perceiver is caught up in what he perceives (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:139). The roles between him and the perceived are reversed. If we insist on asking how he **perceives** or comes to be **aware** of the fact that he is insulted the phenomenon of pepiku becomes incomprehensible. If we insist on trying to find reasons for this belief which he has that he has been insulted, we will be substituting for what Merleau-Ponty calls 'perceptual faith' a belief, which like any other belief, is based on reasons, or judgements and perceptions. Since the Czech does not discriminate between  $e$  and  $\epsilon$  it is clear that in his perception the conclusion comes before the reasons (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:50), and it is because he first of all finds himself in the insulted situation that he perceives the insult in the speech. The certainty he has of being insulted does not rest on the certainty of his thought that he has been insulted, on the contrary, the whole certainty of his belief, is owed to the fact that he is insulted, of which he is quite sure because it is his mode of being, the ground of all beliefs and certainties (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:382).

Of course the Czech is still able to distinguish between the two modes of speaking even when the gestures are not directed at him but at some third party. But if I reflect on this consciousness of the insult which is directed towards another I find that I am not a pure disinterested observer. I am involved and drawn into

a situation such that the insulting gesture is not an object for me but the access to a state of affairs in which I find myself. In his description of the experience of reading a great author like Stendhal Merleau-Ponty brings out the existential relation between the reader and the author. The events and characters in the story are not intelligible because I can subsume everything Stendhal reveals about them under certain concepts. On the contrary, Stendhal draws me beyond my own realm of interpretations into his world to such an extent that he teaches me the concepts with which I understand.

"Before I read Stendhal, I know what a rogue is. Thus I can understand what he means when he says that Rossi the revenue man is a rogue. But when Rossi the rogue begins to live, it is no longer he who is a rogue: it is a rogue who is the revenue man Rossi ... Common words and familiar events, like jealousy or a duel, which at first immerse us in everyone's world, suddenly function as emissaries from Stendhal's world ... The relations between the reader and the book are like those loves in which one partner initially dominates because he is more proud or more temperamental, and then the situation changes and the other, more wise and more silent, rules. The expressive moment occurs when the relationship reverses itself, where the book takes possession of the reader." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:12/15)

But 'for whom' does the book take possession of the reader? Clearly the experience of reading Stendhal is for Merleau-Ponty, one of being thrown beyond the for-itself into a world, it is an experience which demands the contradiction of immanence and transcendence. The reader is 'for-and-in-himself' drawn into this world. Intelligibility is not self-possession but the never-ending turning about each other of from the inside and

from the outside. If words are intelligible, if sound can be pregnant with its own meaning, it is because they too have this power of drawing me into a world and making me exist in a certain way. Intelligibility must be understood in terms of existence. But in what sense could we say that words like 'ab' nos (nose) and doska (blackboard) draw me into a world. How are we to imagine an existential relation here? In what sense do words have this power before they are interpreted and given a meaning?

Merleau-Ponty refers to an experiment which provides us with a vivid illustration of this power, of the non-intellectual, existential access to the signification of the word.

If a word is shown to a subject for too short a time for him to be able to read it, the word 'warm' for example, induces a kind of experience of warmth which surrounds him with something in the nature of a meaningful halo. The word 'hard' produces a sort of stiffening of the back and neck, and only in a secondary way does it project itself into the visual or auditory field and assume the appearance of a sign or a word. Before becoming the symbol of a concept it is first of all an event which grips my body, and this grip circumscribes the area of significance to which it has reference. One subject states that on presentation of the word 'damp' (feucht), he experiences, in addition to a feeling of dampness and coldness, a whole rearrangement of the body image, as if the inside of the body came to the periphery, and as if the reality of the body, until then concentrated into the arms and legs, were in search of a new balance of its parts. The word is then indistinguishable from the attitude which it induces, and it is only when its presence is prolonged that it appears in the guise of an external image, and its meaning as a thought." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:235)

The 'meaning' embedded in the sound is not reducible to a

thought and there is no question here of the sounds producing in me the appropriate ideas or thoughts of warmth or hardness. Nor on the other hand do the sounds produce in me feelings and sensations of warmth or hardness.

"It is not a matter of reducing the significance of the word 'warm' to sensations of warmth by empiricist standards. For the warmth which I feel when I read the word 'warm' is not an actual warmth. It is simply my body which prepares itself for heat and which, so to speak, roughs out its outline." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:236)

The experiment allows us to get behind this 'guise' and capture our most primitive experience of the word, before it has been re-constituted as an object in the physical world separable from its meaning which is reconstituted as a thought. Our original experience of the word is an experience of an irreducible physiognomy, which like any physiognomy cannot be embraced in an act of consciousness but which can be the pole of a certain form of behaviour directed towards it.

"Words have a physiognomy because we adopt towards them, as towards each person, a certain form of behaviour which makes its complete appearance the moment each word is given." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:235/6)

When Merleau-Ponty speaks about a "stiffening of the back and neck", the "rearrangement of the body image" and the search for "a new balance of its parts", he is not referring to events in the real world but to 'last relationships' to the word.

"Whether it is a question of perceiving words or more generally objects, there is a certain bodily attitude, a specific kind of dynamic tension which is necessary to give structure to the image." (1962:236)

Being a last relation to the word there can be no numerical distinction between the bodily attitude and this word. It is certainly inconceivable that consciousness could embrace in thought a synthesis of sound and meaning, but the experiment suggests that my most original relationship to this irreducible synthesis is a bodily attitude. The word 'and' its meaning are therefore not objects. The meaning is not an idea and it is not a question of finding an idea embedded in sound. We have seen in our analysis of grasping and the perception of depth how a bodily attitude situates me in space and establishes a relation, not with images or ideas of depth but with depth itself. We must concede to words a power of putting us in the presence of their **signification**, in the case of a word like 'damp', a power of bringing about for us a quasi presence of dampness. The phenomenon demands a new mode of being present. The dampness is not present to me as a de facto dampness, nor on the other hand is it simply the idea of dampness. In this power of the word to reach out towards something like 'dampness' we have an original relationship which is not reducible to anything else. If the word 'damp' is experienced as appropriate or 'natural' it's because neither the word nor this dampness are expressly posited (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:182) neither are objects for consciousness. Learning to 'hear' in the full sense of 'hear', is comparable to acquiring a new 'organ of grasping', or a new

way of being towards a "fresh core of significance" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:146). Our power of learning a language and of learning new languages expresses our power of dilating our being in the world by appropriating fresh instruments (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:143).

Perhaps one of the most interesting forms of aphasia which reveals this power of the word to open up to its signification before any act of interpretation, and which therefore illuminates the problem of sensory aphasia, is the syndrome of colour name amnesia.

#### COLOUR NAME AMNESIA

In "Uber Farbennamen Amnesie" (1925) Gelb and Goldstein described a form of aphasia which they called 'Colour-name Amnesia'. When presented with a coloured chip these patients were unable to recall the name of the colour and on being given the name of a colour they were unable to point to, or select from a pile of coloured chips, the appropriate chip. They were however capable of sorting chips of the same colour into one pile. This they did, not by recognising 'at a glance' all those which were the same colour, but through a painstaking process of comparing each chip either with a given standard chip or with the previously sorted chip. The patient could sort, for example, the red chips into one pile not because he recognised all the red chips as red, but because he recognised that they resembled

each other or resembled a certain given red chip. This is evident from the nature of the mistakes he made. If for example while sorting out blue chips into a pile the patient dealt with a chip which was pale blue, he very often went on adding to the same pile 'pale' green, 'pale' pink etc., showing that it was the resemblance of the chips rather than an identification of their colours which guided the selection process.

The nature of the patient's mistakes suggests that he sees chips as being similar to each other without recognising the similarity as a similarity of colour. His experience of similarity is not articulated into a similarity of colour or a similarity of degree of paleness or of saturation. This why he appears to be changing from one principle of classification to another. While the patient is not blind to the colour red, he is unable to see a specific colour as an example of red, rather than seeing it as exemplifying a certain level of saturation or paleness. It is because he is unable to see red as red that he is unable to "see all the reds at a glance". Gelb and Goldstein suggest that we can get some idea of the aphasic's experience by passively glancing at the pile of chips without looking for anything in particular. They describe the experience as follows:

"... the heap seems unstable, shifting, and we observe an incessant alteration in it, a kind of contest between several possible groupings of colours according to different points of view." (Geld & Goldstein, 1924:151/2, quoted by Merleau-Ponty, 1962:191)

They argue that the patient is unable to "see all the reds at a

glance" because they are unable to adopt a "principle of classification" (1924:150).

But what does it mean to adopt a principle of classification? How are we to account for the difference between the experience of "seeing all the reds at a glance" and the experience of the pile of chips as "unstable and shifting".

It is clear that the syndrome cannot be understood as a blindness to colours or as a deterioration of sense data. The patient recognises that pale blue and dark blue are similar which means that he cannot be blind to the colour blue.

When I change from passively glancing at the heap of chips to a deliberate attempt to pick out all the reds, the heap ceases to be unstable and I see all the reds at a glance, which means that in some way all the chips which can be classified as red, stand out against the background of all the other colours. But how are all the reds made to "stand out"? Could the reds be made to stand out by changing them in some way?

It is common practice in the preparation of slides for a microscope to identify the areas containing starch and protein with the use of certain dyes. Our ability to see all the blues at a glance will enable us to see at a glance all those areas containing starch. But how could we bring out all the reds by changing them to some other colour? If we changed the red chips

to some other colour why would this new colour stand out if the original reds did not? Clearly if some colours can be made to stand out against others this cannot be due to their particular 'qualia'.

If the patient recognizes the similarity between two chips but is unaware of whether it is a similarity of colour or of paleness or saturation; if he perceives red but not as an instance of red, i.e. if he is unable to perceive red as red, it is tempting to argue that he has lost the concept or idea of the colour red. This would imply that he is unable to name a coloured chip because he is unable to classify the colour under the concept of the colour red. This would mean that seeing red as red or seeing all the reds at a glance, are not perceptual experiences, but a certain way of **thinking** about what is seen. Aphasics and non-aphasics would have the same perceptual experiences, aphasics would simply be unable to subsume what they see under the appropriate concept. But Gelb and Goldstein have shown quite clearly that 'concepts' or ideas have not been affected. When confronted with a coloured chip these patients are often able to rediscover the name of the colour through a process of association. Faced for example with a red chip they might recall some object of the same colour, for example strawberries. And since they know that strawberries are red they are able to name the colour of the chip (Gelb & Goldstein, 1924:177).

Clearly they have lost neither the sensation of red nor the

concept of the colour red. "All the reds at a glance", just like "red as red", must be a gestalt, it must manifest an intelligibility in the colours themselves, an intelligibility that I do not constitute but which I discover as 'already there'. I see all the reds at a glance because the heap of chips presents itself to me with a physiognomy. If I now change my orientation and attempt to pick out all the blue chips, there will be a regrouping of the colours such that I will see all the blues at a glance. This takes place without the reds or the blues changing in terms of their qualia. The red, even in its sensuous appearance, is the role it plays in the configuration. If all the reds can stand out against a background of the other colours, it's because the colours are not positive entities. Each colour is what it is through all the others and the particular role it plays in the gestalt. It is as if the heap of chips is pervaded by a 'colour-question' to which red is the answer. The red that I perceive is thus not a chunk of indivisible being (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:132), but an 'answer'. It is what it is by virtue of its relations with the other colours. Its being red and its standing out are inseparable. There is therefore no necessity to group or to classify all the reds as reds, because the reds I perceive are nothing but the sensuous presence of this grouping ... I see their belonging to each other, and their not belonging to the remaining colours.

What we need to understand is the relationship between this goal-directed activity of sorting out all the red chips and the experience of 'all the reds at a glance'. It is generally accepted that our interests, needs or tendencies have an effect on our visual field. But the relationship between our orientation and our visual field is usually taken to be an external one. My interests or needs are held to focus my attention onto certain data which otherwise would have gone unnoticed, or it is held that my interests or needs lead me to interpret what I see in a particular way.<sup>5</sup> But we have seen above, that 'all the reds at a glance' cannot be accounted for in terms of sensuous data, nor can it be explained in terms of a mode of interpreting the visual givens. We cannot therefore argue that the goal-directed activity of sorting the red chips has had some effect, either on the visual data or on my interpretation of them.

We have seen above that consciousness is not an 'I think' but an 'I can' and that my eye is for me a certain power of reaching and grasping objects. The depth of my visual field or the distance of objects from me is what distinguishes a loose and approximate grip on the object from a complete grip which is proximity. Similarly, we have seen that the spatial orientation of an object, whether it is upright or inverted, is defined in terms of the nature of the grip that my body has on it. Neither my experience of depth nor my experience of spatial orientation can be reduced to sense data or to judgements. It now appears

that 'all the reds at a glance' is a measure of the grip that my sorting activity has on the pile of chips. We have said that its 'standing out' and its being red are inseparable, now we are saying that its standing out is not a content for consciousness, neither a visual data nor a judgement, it exists 'for' the sorting hand. It is inserted into this sorting act. The only way of paying attention to 'all the reds at a glance' is by not paying attention to it and by throwing oneself into the sorting activity. What we have in 'all the reds at a glance' is something to which we could not be closer than by sorting (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:131). The sorting activity must be an original relation to 'all the reds at a glance' it must be impossible to establish a numerical distinction between the act of sorting and the experience of 'all the reds at a glance'. If it were possible to make this distinction it would be possible to objectify both the sorting act and 'all the reds at a glance', and we have seen that this is impossible.

What Merleau-Ponty has said of the relation between the football player and the football field we can say of the relation between the sorting subject and the pile of chips (1967:168/9).

For the subject who sorts out the red chips, the pile of chips is not an 'object'. It is pervaded with lines of force, those demarcating the boundaries between groups of reds and the remaining colours. It is articulated into sectors containing the red chips, which call for a certain mode of sorting movement.

The particular gestalt of 'all the reds at a glance' initiate and guide the sorting action without being an object for consciousness. An unbiased reflection on the gestalt will not be a return to the interiority of a perceiving or thinking subject, but to the sorting act in the world. My sorting gesture is inseparable from the gestalt (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:205). 'All the reds at a glance' is characterised by a system of internal relations between the colours. Each colour is what it is through all the others, it is its role in this configuration. But clearly such a system of internal relations could not be encountered by a subject whose only mode of relating to the world was the relationship cogito-cogitatum. If a subject is to encounter this system of internal relations of mutual determining of one by the other, it could not exist as a contemplating consciousness, it would have to 'participate' in these relationships between colours, it would have to begin to relate to colours as colours relate to each other. We can say of my experience of 'all the reds at a glance', what Merleau-Ponty has said of the experience of the solidity of objects,

"I experience their solidity from within insofar as I am among them and insofar as they communicate through me as a sentient thing." (1968:114)

Just as the football player becomes one with the field and feels the direction of the goal as immediately as the vertical and horizontal planes of his own body, so the subject which sorts chips, becomes one with the configuration and feels the

relationships between colours, which we call 'all the reds at a glance' just as immediately as he feels his gestures from within.

Similarly, the experience of the act of naming the colour of the red chip and the experience of 'red as an example of red' are indistinguishable.

The phenomenon of the influence of language on perception and of perception on language-use has been studied by both linguists and psychologists. Vygotsky and Levine for example have shown that the impairment of object perception at an early age prevents the normal development of speech processes.

"Abnormal child psychology is familiar with the fact, stated originally by Vygotski (1934), that in children who from an early age have defective visual gnosis and who, consequently, have defects in precise visual analysis and synthesis of objects they see, speech does not develop properly and the process of naming objects is affected from the other end - by inadequate preparedness of the necessary categorization of objects to be named on the basis of their visual perception."  
(Luria, 1976:358)

There is on the other hand also considerable evidence showing the effect of language on perception.

"More recently L S Tsvetkova and her collaborators discovered the remarkable fact that patients with lesions of the left parieto-occipital cortex (the so-called speech centre) and with a syndrome of amnesic aphasia (difficulty in naming objects) have a marked disturbance of visual gnosis: such patients cannot complete a drawing started by the experimenter (for example if the experimenter draws the body of an

animal they cannot add the distinguishing features to make it into a "cock" or "duck" or "hare" etc). Such patients characteristically exhibit serious defects if they are asked to describe stylised drawings and to state whether they represent a hare or a cat, a cock or a goose." (Luria, 1976:358)

Luria attempts to account for the role of the word in our perception of objects by invoking the classical argument of the 'education of the senses'. He argues that the word focuses our attention onto specific features of the object or that it influences the way in which we think about the object. In both cases the word can have this effect because it places the object in a network of semantic connections.

"As has often been stated in psychological and psycholinguistic literature ... a word not only stands for a particular object, but also includes it in a complex system of associations and relations and makes it a unique multidimensional semantic matrix; it thereby analyses and generalizes the object it denotes. This function of analysis of the essence of an object, the identification of its significant features and its inclusion in the appropriate system is made possible because of the morphological structure of the word, each part of which (root, suffix, inflection) performs a strictly definite function, picks out the most important cue, relates the object to other objects, places it in a certain category - assigns it its appropriate meaning. For instance, the Russian word "chernil'nitsa (inkstand) ... Its root "chern" (black) distinguishes its color from other possible colors ... the suffix "il" places this object in the category of a tool or material ..." (1976:359)

As with those suffering from colour word amnesia, there is no evidence to suggest that amnesic aphasics have lost concepts. The loss of the ability to name objects accompanies various forms of aphasia but in particular conduction or central aphasia

and, as we will see below, it is clear that there has been no loss of concepts here and that the patients' intellectual powers are perfectly intact. If the loss of the word brings about a disturbance of visual gnosis we must find a closer relation between the word and perception, one which does not depend on concepts or ideas.

As with the goal-directed activity of sorting chips, the act of naming is immediately "reflected" in the perceptual field, polarizing it or placing its seal upon it (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:131). Red as red, cannot be objectified or reduced to visual givens; it is the goal of the naming act. What there is then is not a colour first identical with itself which would offer itself to a seer, but something we could not be closer to than by naming it (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:131). Naming is therefore an original relation to its object, on the same footing as perception. In that it opens up a field of the nameable and the sayable it makes itself a gaze of the mind, an *intuitus mentis* (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:154/5).

"As has often been said, for the child the thing is not known until it is named, the name is the essence of the thing and resides in it on the same footing as its colour and its form." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:177/8)

To name the object is to have grasped or delineated its essence, to have literally expressed its emotional essence. To lose the word or to lose the ability to name the object or the colour is to lose the ability to be orientated towards its essence or, in

the case of the colour, to be orientated towards "red as red". The essence cannot be embraced in an act of a pure consciousness.

"What is this eternally true that no one possesses? What is this thing expressed which lies beyond all expression, and, if we have the right to posit it, why is it our constant concern to arrive at a more precise expression?" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:394)

What Merleau-Ponty has said about the eye we can say of the naming act and of speech. The naming act is a certain power of making contact with things. When I speak, the movement of my organs of phonation is not the movement of objects in space, it is progress towards reality (1962:279).

To learn to use the word and to learn to 'hear' the word, is to acquire a new organ of grasping or being in the world. It is to dilate one's being-in-the-world by appropriating fresh instruments (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:143).

Perhaps it will be replied that since neither sorting nor naming acts can be performed in the dark or while the subject is blindfolded, these acts are not originating but depend on and are guided by visual givens, so that this relationship between the word and the objects takes place within the psyche. But this argument fails to recognize the synthesis of the body in its exploratory movements.

We have seen in the perception of depth how through a

metamorphosis the perceiver of two monocular images can be thrown into the world itself, a world which surrounds him and from within which he perceives. Closing one eye will once again reintroduce an image of the world. To argue that this implies that three dimensional perception is a private phenomenon is to deny the possibility of the metamorphosis, it is to be unfaithful to the experience of depth and focussing and ultimately to deny the possibility of any experience of a transcendent world. It is through the synthesis of the body and my various sense organs that I am thrown into the world itself.

"Let us say rather ... that the life of consciousness - cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life - is subtended by an 'intentional arc' which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:136)

If it is true that I can 'see' the woolly blue of the carpet (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:313), the hardness and brittleness of glass, the springiness of steel, the softness of shavings (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:229), if the thing would not have its colour had it not also its shape, tactile properties and its odour (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:319) if it is the yellow of the lemon that is sour (Sartre, 1969:186) then it is clear that in the power of vision the senses of touch, taste and odour have been raised to a higher level where they too can reach the object at a distance.

As with the metamorphosis of the monocular images, in the power of speech the visual, tactile and olfactory senses are sublimated to a higher level so that the object that speech opens up to is not reducible to any sense data, and through speech they can penetrate the object, being no longer confined to its outer covering and confined to encountering an actually existent object. But this also means that the power of speech can be disrupted if any of my sensory fields are disrupted. The fact that I am unable to name or sort objects in the dark doesn't allow us to infer that speech does not make possible an original relation with the world or that speech presupposes a visual field and is the handmaid of consciousness. The fact that I cease to experience depth as soon as I close my left eye does not allow us to infer that the left eye is responsible for the perception of depth. Just because I am unable to see depth in the dark does not mean that depth is a visual content and that I do not encounter depth itself.

If we can no longer accept an experience of the colours which would precede the sorting and naming acts, if vision is not our primary opening onto the world of colours, what is it that guides the hand to the appropriate chip, on the basis of what do we call one chip red and the other blue?<sup>6</sup>

In their own way the sorting and naming acts are prospective. From the beginning the naming act is already at its goal it already has 'in hand', the red as red. It is as if the speaking

body is taken possession of by this 'about to be expressed essence'. There is a secret alliance between 'red as red' and the naming act such that neither exists without the other. My naming act takes it up as it needs to be taken, in accordance with its own internal structure, as though my speech were in a relation of pre-established harmony with it, so that one cannot say whether it is the naming act which subtends the colour or whether the colour elicits the naming by a remote attraction. To name a colour is to aim at the colour through speech. It is to allow oneself to respond to its (the colour's) call which is made upon my speech independently of any representation. The naming act is therefore not the handmaid of consciousness. In order that I may be able to name the colour, the colour must first of all exist for my speaking body. 'Red as red' no longer exists for the speaking body of the colour name amnestic, and this is what causes him to be unable to recall the name of the colour (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:139).

It is as though the naming act was formed in the heart of the 'red as red', while in the case of the amnestic the word can only be discovered through the explicit association of ideas. Since he knows that strawberries are red, and can see that the chip presented to him is the same colour as that of strawberries, he can infer that the chip is red. There is then in the case of the non-aphasic, a direct relationship between the colour physiognomy and the act of naming. The peculiar roundabout way through which the aphasic attempts to overcome

his deficiency, reminds us of Schneider's inability to draw from a given model.

Merleau-Ponty argues that because Schneider's world has lost its physiognomy, he cannot draw from the model (nachzeichnen), he can only draw from the idea or formula of the object which he must first discover.

"The world in its entirety no longer suggests any meaning to him and conversely the meanings which occur to him are not embodied any longer in the given world. We shall say, in a word, that the world no longer has any **physiognomy** for him. This is what reveals (enables us to understand) the nature of the peculiarities seen in his drawing(s). Schneider never draws from the model (nachzeichnen); perception is not carried directly into movement. With his left hand he feels the object, recognizes certain characteristics (a corner, a right angle), formulates his discovery and finally draws without any model a figure corresponding to the verbal formula.

The translation of percept into movement is effected via the express meanings of language, whereas the normal subject penetrates into the object by perception, assimilating its structure into his substance, and through this body the object directly regulates his movements." (1962:132)

The way in which Schneider draws resembles the way in which the colour word amnesic manages to arrive at the name of the colour. For the non-aphasic, the colour elicits its name by a 'remote attraction', or regulates his pronouncing act directly.

Finally, let us return to this informal meaning embedded in the sound of the word. What is it that the non-aphasic 'hears' in the command, 'pick out all the reds', that the aphasic doesn't

hear? What is it that I begin to hear in the word 'ab' which makes it so different to the word 'up'? What is it that was experienced when the words damp, hard and warm were flashed on a screen so quickly that the subject was unable to read it? What is it that the sensory aphasic who responds with verbal paraphasias 'hears' even though he is unable to hear the word as a sign distinguishable from other signs? What is it that he hears in the word nos (nose) which leads him to reply with words like tongue or mouth, when it is clear that as a sound he is unable to distinguish between nos and nosh (knife)?

Merleau-Ponty describes how the patient with colour name amnesia attempts to **hear** something in the word.

"The patient suffering from amnesia, to whom a colour name is given, and who is asked to choose a corresponding sample, repeats the name as if he expected something to come of it. But the name is useless to him, it tells him nothing more, it is alien and absurd, as are for us names which we go on repeating far too long a time." (1962:193)

We have seen that the patient has not lost the concept of the colour, he has not lost say the idea of the colour red, consequently, if the name is useless, alien or absurd, this has nothing to do with a loss of the concept. The command, 'pick out all the reds' has for him a certain meaning, but it is only an intellectual meaning.<sup>7</sup> What it lacks is a 'perceptual - motor meaning'. The command does not communicate anything to him as a perceiving, sorting subject. For the non-aphasic the word brings

about a certain structure in his environment, a physiognomy in the pile of coloured chips.

"The phonetic 'gesture' brings about, both for the speaking subject and for his hearers, a certain structural co-ordination of experience, a certain modulation of existence, exactly as a pattern of my bodily behaviour endows the objects around me with a certain significance both for me and for others." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:193)

"The meaning of a gesture thus 'understood' is not behind it, it is intermingled with the structure of the world outlined by the gesture, and which I take up on my own account." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:186)

But as we have seen this structure of the world, this significance with which the object is endowed, is not an object or a content, that I could survey or possess like visual contents or ideas. My experience of 'red as red' is the paradoxical experience of being thrown beyond experience into the world, where I discover myself as a naming and sorting subject. As a naming speaking subject I am essentially amongst others. To name the colour of the chip is to address myself to others, and the 'red as red' that this act subtends, is essentially there for all those who speak this language. To speak the word or hear the word in the full sense of speak and hear, is to encounter a world and an object that is not mine, but which belongs to the anonymous community which speaks this language, or to a world which exists 'for us', without this 'for us' being 'for me'. We cannot be consciousnesses existing in parallel because my experience of 'red as red' is not numerically distinguishable from the experience the other has.

It is not as if each of us is confined to his own private representation of the same colour.

"It is said that the colours, tactile reliefs given to the other, are for me an absolute mystery, forever inaccessible. This is not completely true; for me to have not an idea, an image, nor a representation, but as it were the immanent experience of them, it suffices that I look at a landscape, that I speak of it with someone. Then, through the concordant operation of his body and my own, what I see passes into him, this individual green of the meadow under my eyes invades his vision without quitting my own, I recognize in my green his green, as the customs officer recognizes suddenly in a traveller the man whose description he had been given. There is here no problem of the **alter ego** because it is not I who sees, not he who sees, because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:142)

But the concordant operation of his body and my own in speech is not simply a way of getting the other to see what I see. It is not simply a way of verifying my perception. Finding and using the word or the expression allows me to have an access to a world existing 'for us'. In the experience of 'red as red', we witness the power of language in transporting the I into the other's perspective (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19). Speech raises and sublimates my experience of the world to the point that it ceases to be **my** experience, so that I merge with the perspective the other has, or I merge with the anonymous perspective of the speaking community. The paradox is that it is in my experience that I am led beyond my experience. The unity of Paul's world and my world is not simply an idea of unity. The world he perceives and the world I perceive do not become the same world through an inspection of the mind. Like the unity of

the object in three dimensional perception, the unity of our world is experienced or lived. In passing from my experience to the experience of the world with others, I am not simply aware that both of us now sees the same object, I am aware that we are progressing towards the object itself and finally enjoying its concrete presence (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:233). It is our constant concern to find the precise word or expression (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:394) because, just as in individual binocular perception, the object elicits the co-operative activity of my eyes so that it can take up its existence for me as a concrete object, so the word and the expression make possible a certain concordant operation of my speech and that of another, through which the object reveals its concrete essence and transcendent existence which is essentially and only something 'for us'.

## APHASIAS AFFECTING THE PRODUCTION OF SPEECH

The basic prejudice compromising traditional accounts of the perception and understanding of speech viz, the concept of an acoustic image, has its counterpart in traditional theories about the production of speech. Like any other process in the world and in time, the expressive act is taken to be decomposable into its basic elements. The basic elements here are taken to be muscular activities producing sounds, the so-called articulemes. The task of the theory is to explain how these articulemes are ordered so that the speaker produces recognizable words and a correct grammar. In some theories this order is traced back to certain neurological structures, certain pre-established nerve circuits found in the speech centre in the left cerebral hemisphere. In other theories the *vis a tergo* of this ordered activity is taken to be the mind, which consciously (or unconsciously) executes the articulemes so as to conform to a 'verbal image'. Luria appears to belong to yet a third group of theorists who accept that in most speech there is some combination of the effect of pre-established pathways and conscious or voluntary control. This means that any disruption of the production of speech can be traced back to a loss of nervous tissue responsible for the ordered act, or, to a disruption of those elements necessary for the conscious execution, such as kinesthetic information about the speech organs, verbal images and the intellectual powers of the speaker.

## TRANSCORTICAL MOTOR APHASIA

In our reflections on transcortical motor aphasia and in particular the new information that Luria has brought to light concerning the syndrome, we wish to show that there is no need of a *vis a tergo* to account for the order in speech because the most elementary act is not the articuleme but the 'meaningful expression'. Since the orator's speech is his thought, neither the nervous system nor the speech act itself, can be conceived as a physical process divisible into smaller parts.

Patients are classified as transcortical motor aphasics when they are able to repeat words given to them by the examiner, name objects and understand speech addressed to them but are unable to produce fluent narrative speech. The earliest attempts to account for this form of aphasia were based on the 'regional' concept of the brain, or the so-called Lichtheim model. The various functions of the brain were understood to be carried out by corresponding 'regions' or parts. Damage to any one region could leave other regions intact. Sensory aphasia, for example was seen to be due to the disruption of the 'sensory centre' or centre for sensory (e.g. acoustic) images. These patients were able to speak and name objects but they were unable to understand speech addressed to them. Motor aphasia, or Broca's aphasia was held to be due to a destruction of the centre for motor images. These patients were able to understand speech addressed to them, but were unable to express themselves, name

objects or repeat words. Transcortical motor aphasia, and conduction aphasia were explained in terms of a disruption of the fibres connecting these centres. In the case of transcortical motor aphasia the connections between the so-called "centre for concepts" and the "motor centre" have been destroyed while the connections between the "sensory centre" and the "motor centre" remains intact. This is held to explain why these patients are able to repeat words given to them without being able to translate their own concepts into speech.

Having pointed out that the notion of a "centre for concepts" is neurologically unacceptable, Luria goes on to demonstrate that in contrast to the classical picture, transcortical motor aphasics do have certain difficulties in repeating words and sounds given to them, and argues that the nature of these difficulties affords us a new way of understanding transcortical motor aphasia.

The patient Luria refers to as Grish, exhibits the traditional symptoms of transcortical motor aphasia. He is able to repeat single words given to him but all spontaneous narrative speech has been lost. In addition to the above symptoms however, Luria shows that Grish also has great difficulties in repeating a series of two or three isolated words or letters. Instead of repeating the letters given to him, he repeated letters which had been used earlier in the test. Luria refers to this phenomenon as "pathological inertia of previous stereotypes".

This inertia of previous stereotypes became particularly evident when the patient was asked to repeat pairs of sounds. Giving the patient's response below that of the examiner Luria quotes the result of a typical experiment.

"b - k	k - s	k - s	l - p	n - d
<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>				
b - k	b - k	k - s	k - w	k - d
b - l				
<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>	...			
p - z				

Clearly the mistakes arising in this case have nothing to do with the difficulty of differentiation between similar (oppositional) phonemes, but they express the pathological inertia of a previous stereotype." (Luria, 1976:304)

Luria explains the phenomenon of pathological inertia by referring to neurophysiological conditions necessary for the performance of an expressive act.

"The successful performance of the process of choice of the verbal composition of the expression I have described (spontaneous expression) and the inhibition of all irrelevant associations naturally can take place only under certain neurophysiological conditions. The first of these conditions is adequate selectivity of the nervous processes, whereby a structure of excitation, once it has arisen, inhibits all simultaneously arising irrelevant associations, so that dominance of that structure and the planned character of the corresponding selective connections are ensured.

The second condition, closely connected with the first, is adequate mobility (or plasticity) of the nervous processes, by which modern neurophysiology implied the easy inhibition of connections once formed and the switching from the previous connections to new ones so that it is possible to switch relatively easily from one excitation structure to the next.

Both these conditions may be absent in pathological states of the brain." (Luria, 1976:288)

Luria believes that the absence of these conditions lies at the basis of the disruption of the patient's narrative speech. The patient is unable to speak spontaneously because the neurological connections set up for the pronunciation of the first words are not easily inhibited making the pronunciation of the remaining words impossible.

"At the same time it will be clear that the process of narrative speech presents particularly high demands on the ease of inhibition of the previous components of the expression and on the smooth switching to new components. Even slight disturbances of this mobility of the nervous processes and the appearance of pathological inertia, leading to "freezing" of past stereotypes, may prove fatal to the narration of a spontaneous expression although it is not reflected in the repetition of isolated sounds and words, especially if they are included in different contexts and separated from each other by considerable pauses."  
(Luria, 1976:289)

What is clear from Grish's overall behaviour is that this lack of 'plasticity' and 'selectivity' are not forms of intellectual impairment and that the transcortical motor aphasic does not suffer from a loss of memory or from the loss of an ability to represent images to himself.

In a series of experiments in which the patient is required to recall pairs of pictures rather than pairs of sounds or isolated words, Luria has shown that the patient's memory and "power of representation" are perfectly intact.

"The patients is shown two pictures (a cup and a bear) which are then turned over and placed on his left side; he is then shown two other pictures (a dress and a

pear) and these are also turned over and placed on the patient's right side. Next, 15 pictures are spread out before him, including duplicates of both pairs shown to him previously. The experimenter then points to the upturned pictures on his left side and asks him to find them among the set of 15. The test is then repeated with the second pair of pictures on his right side.

In both cases the patient can perform this test easily: no signs of interfering inhibition or pathological inertia are observed.

The observations thus show that the disturbance of recalling a group of words are based in this case (of the transcortical motor aphasic) not on general defects of memory, such as the weakness of traces or ease of their inhibition, but on special defects, the principle factor of which is the pathological inertia of established stereotypes affecting mainly the motor and speech spheres." (Luria, 1976:318/9)

With this notion of a pathological inertia of established stereotypes affecting the motor aspect of speech articulation, Luria believes he is able to account for transcortical motor aphasia. Nevertheless, earlier in his discussion of Grish's difficulties, he points out that while Grish had difficulties repeating pairs of isolated words or sounds he had no difficulty repeating "combinations of words which form a single semantic group such as "communal feeding", "production cooperative", "harsh winter", "rising sun", "mad dog", "snowy winter"" (Luria, 1976:304). He explains this peculiarity by arguing that the unity of the semantic structure makes the two words "components of a single verbal action".

"... the repetition of simple word combinations such as "snezhnaya zima (snowy winter)", "sladkoe yabloko (sweet apple)", "proizvodstvennyi kooperativ (industrial cooperative)" and so on - or phrases such as "devochka plachet (the girl is crying)" and "mal'chik spit (the boy is asleep)" presented no

difficulty to the patient: the unity of the semantic structure, making the two words components of a single verbal action, in this case abolished the difficulties which occurred in the reproduction of a series of isolated semantic units." (Luria, 1976:307/8)

But how are we to understand this effect that the semantic structure has on the articulatory process? Within the confines of the natural attitude 'semantic structure' would at best belong to the realm of thought. How could it exert a co-ordinating effect on a series of muscular acts? In what sense do the two words become components of a single verbal act? Could Luria be suggesting that "snowy winter" is easier to remember than "snow - window" because the former is one idea while the latter is two? But this would suggest that Grish's difficulties stem from a weakening of his memory which contradicts the results of Luria's test. Nor can we appeal to the breakdown of a power of 'representation', which would enable the speaker to represent to himself the words he is to pronounce. Why would the words "snowy winter" be any easier to represent to oneself than "snow - window"?

If the 'unity of the semantic structure' of the speech act is to explain why the problems of selectivity and mobility of the aphasic brain are avoided, 'semantic structure', could not be an idea in the mind of the speaker. If 'semantic structure' were equivalent to an idea, the process through which this idea became translated into an articulatory activity would still presuppose setting up the necessary nerve connections for that

activity and hence would still be affected by the loss of mobility and selectivity of the aphasic's brain.

If the semantic structure of the speech act is not an idea in the mind of the speaker could it be a 'meaning' which a linguistic community attaches to the speech act? But in what way could this attachment of meaning affect the motor process of pronunciation and overcome the aphasic's loss of mobility and selectivity? Within the bounds of the natural attitude 'semantic structures' could only play a role in the actual pronunciation of speech, in an indirect sense.

For example, if a group of words is meaningful, or has a single semantic structure, it implies that the group is often used in verbal communication. Through repeated use the nerve connections set up to articulate this group become more or less permanent and the entire process becomes a reflex. If the ability of the brain to inhibit its connections and to switch to new ones is not presupposed in the articulation of expressions like 'industrial co-operative' or 'snowy winter', it implies that these 'single verbal acts', through repeated use, have become automatic i.e. each is controlled by a single, pre-established nerve pathway.

This interpretation seems highly unlikely. There are many groups of words which do not form a semantic unity and yet they often occur in sequence in every day speech. If it were a question of

habitual sequences of words then at least sections of Grish's speech, used as habitually as say "industrial co-operative", should be fluent. But it is the transcortical motor aphasic which has lost all fluent narrative speech and who has retained the ability to name objects and repeat words, i.e. they are the patients who have lost the functions which are in common usage. If 'a single verbal act' was no more than a sequence of words often used together it seems highly unlikely that Luria would not have detected these combinations. A brief extract of the patient's speech and Luria's summary shows clearly that even habitual combinations of words have not been preserved.

**"How are you? 'fine' Tell me what you did this morning? 'This morning' (silence). What does your family consist of? 'Well now .. my mother ... that is with my mother ... mo ... mother (gives up)'**

The patient's spontaneous speech was thus completely disintegrated and all he could do was to repeat the question echolalically and produce a few odd words which he perseverated and did not form into a complete phrase." (1976:295)

Furthermore if the unity of the verbal act was determined by actual usage we should be able to discover differences between patients depending on their own habitual use of combinations of words. The fact the Luria says quite clearly that it is the unity of the semantic structure which makes the two words components of a single verbal act, indicates that in every case, it was the semantic element which made the difference and not usage.

We are left then with the remaining alternative and that is to accept Luria at face value and to recognise that his own insights into the nature of aphasic and normal speech cannot always be contained within the traditional scientific parameters within which he presents his work. "Snowy winter" is a "single verbal act", while "snow-window" is not, because in the former the two words form a single semantic group. This means that the pronunciation of snowy and of winter no longer take place as two distinguishable articulatory events - they have become enveloped into one indivisible verbal action, which means that the speech act cannot be seen as a physical event, because any physical event is always decomposable into its constituent parts. Luria's distinction between single and multiple in his use of the expression, 'single verbal act' only makes sense in this context, if we can overcome the traditional separation of motor and semantic.

If we cannot account for the pronunciation of 'snowy winter' in terms of pre-established nerve pathways, how can we explain the fact that a meaningful expression is easier or requires less mobility and selectivity of the brain, than a meaningless combination of words, like snow: winter, when, from a purely motor point of view, they are equally complex. The phenomenon seems to suggest that what is simple and what is complex for the brain cannot be defined in purely physical terms. We must take into account experience of the speaker.

"The living physiology of the nervous system can only be understood by starting from phenomenal givens."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1967:88)

For the speaker, to utter 'snowy winter' is to grasp in speech one indivisible idea, it is to perform one act. This is not simply a subjective impression that would hide a real complex system of neurological and muscular acts, the phenomenal given, or what speaking is for the speaker, is inseparable from the act and 'explains' the co-ordination of neurological and muscular activity. We can no longer draw an absolute distinction between the conscious life in which the agent directs himself towards a signification and a material, neuro-physiological realm governed by causal relations, the two existing parallel to each other.

"Since this structure of behaviour and the cerebral functioning which supports it can only be conceived in terms borrowed from the perceived world, this latter no longer appears as an order of phenomena parallel to the order of physiological phenomena but as one which is richer than it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:92/3)

As we have seen, Husserl credits Descartes with being the first philosopher to have caught a glimpse of the transcendental ego. When Descartes concludes that "I think therefore I am" is indubitable, he recognizes that he is not simply revealing some facet of his psychological or neurological make up. The conclusion does not follow because the neurological connections are of such a nature that the thought of himself thinking inevitably causes the thought of himself existing to arise. If the conclusion 'I am' follows indubitably, then there can be

no explanation for its emergence, no account from the outside. We can accept the indubitability of the conclusion only by taking up Descartes position from the inside, and from within, the only account we can give of the emergence is that I think the conclusion follows, **because it does**. As the transcendental ego I am the one for whom there is no numerical distinction between 'I think P.Q' and 'P.Q'. If for the orator his speech is his thought, then similarly there can be no causal explanation for the co-ordination of articulemes and hence of the neurological processes involved in the execution of the articulemes. There can be no extrinsic source of order, neither a pre-established network of nerve connections nor a mental act which would control the activities. "... the sentence of a speaker must be organized all by itself ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:76). Certain articulemes are executed and are co-ordinated in a particular way so that a particular expressive act takes place, so that the speaker grasps in his speech a certain signification, and he grasps this signification because it is something to be grasped.

The pronunciation of 'snowy winter' is one verbal act because it grasps one indivisible signification. The unity of the semantic structure makes the two words components of a single verbal action because it is literally the same thing to grasp one signification and to use the pronunciation of the two words as one single act of grasping.

"... the signification is what comes to seal, to close,

to gather up the multiplicity of the physical, physiological, linguistic means of elocution, to contract them into one sole act, as the vision comes to complete the aesthesiological body." (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:154)

In the speech of the other, as in my own speech we have the paradox of immanence and transcendence. Unlike Descartes cogito, speech is accessible to others and is 'dependent' on its materials, the speech organs and the neurological structures so that if these are damaged in any way speech becomes disrupted. Nevertheless, in the speech act these materials merge, to form one act of grasping, to form an interior in the world, a point of view, that is, something we can only encounter by giving up the position of a disinterested observer, and by allowing ourselves to be drawn into this point of view. It is thus not possible to 'explain' the speech act or to describe these materials purely from the outside.

"... science has not been able to construct the "central sectors" of behaviour from the outside like something which is enclosed in a cranial box." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:205)

If the living physiology of the nervous system can only be understood by starting from phenomenal givens, it is because the speech act is the paradoxical synthesis of 'from the inside' and 'from the outside', because speech is a last relation to its object.

## TELEGRAPHIC SPEECH AND AGRAMMATISM

One of the most widespread syndromes in aphasia is the syndrome of 'telegraphic speech'. It is either fundamental to or accompanies most other forms of motor aphasia. As the name suggests, the patient tends to omit articles, prepositions, adverbs, adjectives and even verbs. His speech has lost all melodic fluency and he gives the impression of reciting words one after the other. Patients who speak languages which are highly inflected, where the grammatical forms of words take the place of prepositions, articles etc., exhibit what is often referred to as 'agrammatism'. These patients use incorrect noun cases, and incorrect verb conjugations. There is a strong tendency to put all nouns in the nominative case and all verbs in the infinitive form.

The most characteristic feature of the patients of this group was that they could easily repeat single words and name single objects; however, when instructed to repeat elementary coherent sentences, they began to have appreciable difficulty: the predicative (verbal) part of the sentence either was omitted or was displaced by the nominative (substantive) part of the sentence: the latter took precedence and was repeated first of all. Frequently the form of both the verbal and the nominative components of the sentence to be repeated was distorted and the patient began to recite the words as from a dictionary, so that the repetitive speech lost its fluent character. For instance, when attempting to repeat the phrase "Mal'chik (the boy) udaril (hit) sobaku (the dog)", these patients repeated it as: "Mal'chik ... Sobaka (dog, nominative case)" or "Mal'chik ... Sobaku (dog, accusative case) ... Udarit' (to hit, infinitive)" and the coherent sentence was broken up into a chain of isolated, syntactically disconnected words ...

Investigations have shown that if these disturbances are severe the speech contains several times fewer

verbs than normal speech, and there is a corresponding increase in the number of substantives. In precisely the same way the number of nouns given in indirect cases falls sharply, and the number of nominative forms rises correspondingly." (Luria, 1976:73/6)

Luria describes the syndrome of a typical agrammatic aphasic, Colonel Vin, as follows:

"He was able to utter single words either imitatively or spontaneously but he was totally **unable to utter phrases or sentences**. He was even unable to repeat short sentences spoken by the therapist. Thus, while he had no difficulty repeating the word "polden" (noon), he was unable to repeat the short sentence. "Byl den" (It was day): he was only able to repeat the word "den" (day). The patient's spontaneous statements consisted of single words in the nominative case "... wounded! ... medal ... commission ... overcoat ... boots." By this he wished to indicate that he wanted his overcoat and boots brought in order that he might go to the commission which awards military medals. There was no hint whatsoever of sentence structure in his speech." (1970:448)

Macdonald and Critchley in 'Aphasiology (using the expression telegrammatism instead of telegraphic) suggests that telegraphic speech and agrammatism are not two different syndromes but the same syndrome as it appears in agglutinative languages and in highly inflected languages respectively.

"Agrammatism is naturally a more important features in Aphasiacs whose natural language comprises one of the highly inflected tongues, and in such the defect may entail considerable errors in the employment of prefixes and suffices ... Telegrammatism is a feature of Aphasic speech in the case of agglutinative rather than inflected tongues. The resulting diction or script is tense and abrupt, reminiscent of the poverty of language utilized in concocting telegrams." (Macdonald Critchley, 1970:16)

Luria's description of the agrammatic aphasic quoted above not only shows that the patient uses fewer verbs than normal, but also, that when verbs are used there is a tendency to use them in the infinitive form. Later, in his discussion of telegraphic features of transcortical motor aphasia, he reveals that there is also a tendency to use the passive form (1976:353).

How are we to account for these forms of motor aphasia? Why is there a tendency for the telegraphic aphasic to 'leave out' prepositions, adverbs, adjectives and even verbs and why does the agrammatic aphasic tend to use nouns in the nominative case and verbs in the infinitive or the passive form?

Here again, from Luria's description of these patients, it is clear that we cannot account for these syndromes in terms of a disturbance of intelligence (1976:73). Are we then to say that a certain set of nerve circuits or reflexes have been destroyed? But it would be difficult to explain why certain reflexes have been destroyed and not others. Why for example have those reflexes involved in the articulation of the nominative noun cases, and of the infinitive and passive forms of the verbs been better preserved than others?

In the penultimate chapter of 'Basic Problems of Neurolinguistics', in a discussion of the agrammatic speech of transcortical motor aphasics, Luria indicates the direction in which an answer to this problem can be found without developing

his insight or exploring its implications.

"As an example I can cite those cases in which a word denoting an intermediate action (for example, *udarit'* to strike - something or somebody) and requiring an object (for example, to strike - a dog) loses its complex intermediate structure in patients with these disturbances and is converted into a word which has lost these potential connections and which does not require syntagmatic connections with another word (*udarit'sya* - the passive form, to be struck). Facts of this type could provide new ways of analysis of the internal mechanisms of disintegration of syntactic structures and could lead to the development of that "telegraphic style" which is such an exceptionally interesting phenomenon for the analysis of the internal mechanisms of syntactic structures." (Luria, 1976:353)

This approach seems to be more fruitful. What characterises the nominative case and the infinitive and passive forms of the verb is that they can be used alone. The accusative and dative cases for example as well as the transitive verbs all presuppose other parts of speech. But clearly such notions as "can be used alone" or "does not require syntagmatic connections with another word", cannot be applied to the speech act as a motor activity, but only as an expressive activity.

How does the fact that these forms can be used alone account for their appearance in the aphasic's speech? Luria would seem to imply that in some way the agrammatic aphasic deliberately chooses specific grammatical forms so that his speech will appear to be a string of individual words and not a coherent sentence expressing one idea, and that the telegraphic aphasic deliberately leaves out the small words for the same reason. Are

we then to regard the aphasia as merely symbolic? Are we to say that the disruption of the speech expresses some deeper disturbance, one which has no necessary relation to speech?

Speech does not disintegrate as a mechanical process, nor does its disintegration simply reflect the disintegration of the mind. Speech is itself a manner of relating oneself to a world. It is that paradoxical synthesis of immanence and transcendence which we have seen in the grasping gesture and in particular in binocular perception. As we have argued above, it is literally the same thing to use the pronunciation of two words as one act of grasping and to be directed towards one signification. What agrammatism and telegraphic speech demonstrate is that it is literally the same thing to use the correct grammatical forms or the correct 'small words', and to use the entire collection of words in the expression as one act of grasping. The grammatical forms and the small words are neither automatically, nor consciously and voluntarily executed. From the point of view of the speaker (and of his audience) they do not exist as objects. Like the lozenge shaped figures of monocular perception they are the distorted projection of the unity of the expression, of the Gestalt of the speech act. Similarly the aphasic's use of the nominative forms of the nouns and the infinitives and gerunds of the verbs, and the loss of the small words is neither automatic nor deliberate. If through the disruption of the synthesis of the speaking body it becomes impossible to use various words as one act of grasping, then each word becomes an individual act of

grasping. The nominative forms of the nouns and the infinitives and gerunds of the verbs are for the speaker and his audience nothing but the synthesis of the articulemes into an act which resembles that particular form of grasping which we have in the act of naming.

We could describe agrammatism and telegraphic speech by saying that the significations of whole expressions no longer exist for the speaking body, even though they may be present to consciousness. Ultimately however it is impossible to say whether he is unable to use the words as one act of grasping because there is for his speaking no signification of a whole expression, or whether there is no signification of a whole expression because he is unable to use the various words as one act of grasping.

#### CONDUCTION APHASIA

The 'conduction' (or central) aphasic retains the ability to understand speech addressed to him and his spontaneous expressive speech is relatively intact. By contrast the ability to repeat words, sounds and sentences on demand is severely disrupted. In the cases cited by both Goldstein and Luria, patients were unable to repeat words which they themselves had used in spontaneous speech (Luria, 1976:265).

"The striking thing, however, was that despite this relatively good conversational speech, he showed a

complete inability to name objects and to repeat on command either letters, words or sentences. Although he might have just used a particular word or sentence in spontaneous speech, he was totally unable to repeat it on demand a moment later. When asked to recite the numbers from one to ten, or the letters of the alphabet, or the days of the week, he could do so only if the first few were given to him. Then, if asked to repeat one of the symbols, he was unable to do so unless he recited the whole series. Thus if after counting from one to ten, he was asked to repeat the number seven, he could do so only by counting consecutively from one to seven. Often in his attempt to repeat a given word, he would utter the other words, which were related as to their contents to the given word. Thus when asked to say "God" he could not do so, but would say "Himmel" for children he would say family ... etc.

He could not name even the most familiar objects, although he was usually able to demonstrate or explain the use of an object which was shown to him, and sometimes uttered the correct word in the course of his explanations. When asked immediately afterwards to repeat the word, however, he could never do so." (Goldstein, 1948:280)

For those who believe that the expressive act is made up of elementary acts, such as the pronunciation of sounds or words conduction aphasia presents the paradoxical picture of a disruption that affects the simple or elementary forms of speech without affecting the complex forms of spontaneous narrative speech (Luria, 1976:239).

Conduction aphasia was at first explained in terms of the Lichtheim model and as its' name suggests, was considered to be a disruption of the 'conducting' pathways between the sensory and the motor centres, while the pathways between these centres and the 'centre for concepts' were maintained. This was held to account for the fact that conduction aphasics were able to

express what they thought (centre for concepts - motor centre), understand whatever was heard (sensory centre - centre for concepts), but they were unable to pronounce what they heard (sensory centre - motor centre).

Beside the fact that such 'centres for concepts' are neurologically unacceptable (Luria, 1976:290), conduction aphasics exhibit other difficulties which could not be reconciled with the Lichtheim model. Generally, they show great difficulties in naming objects, which according to the Lichtheim model would presuppose a breakdown of the pathways between the 'centre for concepts' and the 'motor centres', which in turn would render the fluent narrative speech of conduction aphasics, inexplicable. Neurophysiologists, were forced to consider in what way repetitive speech and naming objects were similar.

Kurt Goldstein had seemed to provide an answer, but his explanation was of a completely different kind. He pointed out, that from a psychological point of view, the repetition of single words was not the most elementary kind of speech activity. In the normal speaking process what is referred to as 'concrete speech', ideas are formulated as wholes into expressions or sentences. The utterance of individual sounds, words or names, referred to as 'abstract speech', requires the speaker to disengage himself from the normal speaking process and pronounce the words in an artificial situation. Conduction aphasia was seen as a loss of this ability to disengage oneself

from the normal speaking process, to become reflective about the speaking process itself. It was seen as due to a disruption of what Goldstein called 'categorial behaviour' which was made possible by a certain intellectual power which was called 'abstract attitude'.

The idea of a disturbance of 'abstract attitude' was taken further by linguists like Pierre Marie who ultimately regarded conduction aphasia as a special form of intellectual insufficiency.

But this intellectualistic solution had its own difficulties. The most important was that it could quite easily be shown that beside their linguistic difficulties, conduction aphasics showed no sign of intellectual disruption (Luria, 1976:242). If 'abstract attitude' was to explain 'abstract speech' or repetitive speech it would have to be an 'intelligence' of the speaking body itself ... and for as long as the speaking body was regarded simply as a system of muscles, organs and nerve circuits, this was inconceivable. For as long as neurolinguists remained attached to the metaphysics of consciousness and substance, the fundamental categories of the natural attitude, conduction aphasia would remain inexplicable.

Luria's attempt to account for conduction aphasia expresses the need to surpass the either/or situation of an explanation in terms of a disruption of thought or a disruption of nerve

circuits. He accepts Goldstein's distinction between abstract and concrete speech. For Luria, the importance of Goldstein's contribution, lay in directing attention to what the two kinds of speech are for the speaker. For the speaker concrete speech is the formulation or the expression of a certain idea in speech, while abstract speech is the reproduction of a group of sounds or a group of words, as an end in itself. Because of his basic commitment to the natural attitude, Luria confuses this phenomenal dimension with the psychological, which ultimately compromises his attempt to understand the distinction between abstract and concrete speech and to account for conduction aphasia.

"Recent Soviet psychological and neuropsychological investigations have shown convincingly that a change in the goal of the task to be performed inevitably leads to a significant change in the psychological structure of any form of activity and, in some cases to equally significant changes in the neurophysiological systems responsible for its performance.

This fundamental proposition applies in full to the processes of speech. In speech communication the main task is the transmission of information or, in other words, the fulfillment of a certain motive or the expression of a certain thought is thus the purpose and the basic activity, while the formulation of this thought as speech is the means of carrying out this activity, or its executive operation. Naturally, most attention in this activity is concentrated on the matter of thought in the speaker's consciousness, whereas the process of verbal formulation, like all executive operations, may be carried out automatically and unconsciously by a person able to speak well.

The psychological structure of the process of repetition of sounds, words or sentences is completely different. In these cases the purpose, and consequently the object of the speaker's activity is to reproduce groups of sounds with the aid of the appropriate articulations. During the repetition of syllables or meaningless combinations of sounds this process does not depend on meaningful components and it occurs in

the pure artificial form, in the repetition of words or sentences it can rest on organized meaningful units; however the object of the speaker's conscious activity is still the processes of acoustic and articular analysis ... although dependence on meaningful organization begins to play a subsidiary role" (1976:242/3). "... the reproduction of such a group of articulated sounds is a conscious, voluntary act requiring the selection of the proper phonemes and articulemes, and is by no means an automatized component of speech activity or an executive operation, as it is during a dialogical exchange of communications or during spontaneous narration." (1976:245)

It seems to us extremely unlikely that Luria would ultimately wish to account for abstract speech in terms of reflex mechanisms or pre-determined nerve pathways. In the first instance there is little ambiguity in the mentalistic terms he uses, e.g. 'a conscious voluntary act' and secondly because of his understanding of voluntary acts in general. Luria claims that the two fundamental conditions of all voluntary movements are the afferent and kinesthetic basis and the afferent or kinetic organization. Since kinesthesia is invariably understood in terms of internal sensations, Luria's kinesthetic base implies an agent who can recognize the sensations and can direct his motor activity accordingly. The executive articulatory activities, which are involved in the pronunciation of meaningful concrete utterances, having often been performed in normal conversations, have become habitual, i.e. a network of conditioned reflexes have been set up enabling the articulatory performances to take place 'automatically'. By contrast those activities involved in the repetition of meaningless sounds and isolated words, being unusual activities, require a voluntary act of consciousness whereby the correct phonemes are identified

and the correct articulemes chosen. Conduction aphasia is thus not a disturbance of abstract set "but a disturbance affecting the process of conscious distinction of the necessary acoustic-articulatory complexes" (Luria, 1976:245).

If in concrete speech the patient can **depend** on 'meaningful components', it means simply that he can make use of certain pre-established nerve pathways which of their own would bring about the execution of the concrete speech.

Luria's distinction between abstract and concrete speech like Goldstein's distinction between **Zeigen** and **Greifen** comes down to the distinction between the mental and the physiological, between existence for itself and existence in itself (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:122). But for as long as we remain within the dualism of consciousness and body we will have to explain how consciousness or a content of consciousness could influence nerve endings. Within the bounds of the natural attitude there could be no account of how an immaterial, non extended substance could effect real physical processes. There could be no account of how the mind, once it had chosen a representation of the movement it wished to execute could cause precisely that movement in the body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:139).

Merleau-Ponty argues that it is impossible to set limits to an explanation in terms of factual connections between nerve pathways (1976:122/3). If we are to account for concrete speech

in terms of pre-established nerve pathways, we will have adopted the objective point of view, taking speech to be one of the processes in the world. But from this point of view, abstract speech is also a real process in the world, which means that it would also have to be 'explained' from the outside, in terms of muscular movements and nerve connections.

Furthermore Luria's description of normal spontaneous speech accords very little with our experience of speaking. Certainly it is true that if one speaks a language fluently one doesn't require the complex mental processes which those learning to speak the language may have to master, but speaking fluently can hardly be described as an automatic and unconscious activity. Luria's account would seem to suggest that as the speaker concentrates on "the matter of thought", the movements of tongue, lungs, lips etc, occur on their own, in the same way that my foot moves when I am tapped below the knee. We can say of Luria's account of speech what Merleau-Ponty says of Liepmann's account of voluntary movement. Luria destroys the essential unity of the speech act by dividing it up into an act of consciousness, which concentrates on "the matter of thought", and a sequence of automatisms, through which the actual speech is carried out automatically. "The problem can be solved only provided that we cease to draw a distinction between the body as a mechanism in itself and consciousness as being for itself", (1962:139) which means that we will have to accept that speech is itself a certain manner of directing oneself to a signification, i.e. that speech can be a last relation to its world.

Luria maintains that the loss of abstract speech in conduction aphasia could be due to a variety of disruptions. Those forms of conduction aphasia which are due to a loss of short term memory, should he argues, be classified as forms of "acoustico-mnestic aphasia" (1976:246); those due to a loss of the ability to identify the phonemes in the words and sentences to be repeated, Luria associates with sensory aphasia, while conduction aphasia due to an inability to execute chosen articulemes, he regards as a form of oral apraxia, which he believes is due to a disruption of the 'kinesthetic base' and is therefore comparable to what he calls afferent or kinesthetic aphasia (1976:245).

#### CONDUCTION APHASIA AS A FORM OF KINESTHETIC APHASIA

As we have seen, for Luria, all voluntary acts presuppose a 'kinesthetic base'. In order to execute a desired act the subject needs to be aware of the muscular processes as they are carried out. Nerve endings in these muscles provide the subject with the so-called kinesthetic sensations which enable him to infer the degree to which the muscles of the organ are contracted or extended. In this way he is informed at all times about the progress of any activity and the position of all of his organs and limbs. The important question here is how we distinguish one kinesthetic sensation from another. How, for example, do I know that certain sensations are sensations of my left arm rather than of my right arm, or that certain sensations signify that the forearm is flexed rather than extended? Clearly

I can tell where any part of my body is, or whether a limb is flexed or extended without actually looking at it. In the case of my 'speaking body', how do I distinguish between the kinesthetic sensations produced when my tongue is in the position required for the production of 'e', and when it is in the position required for the production 'e'?

The traditional answer is that I am able to interpret and distinguish the kinesthetic sensations through their associations with other sensations. I know for example that I have flexed my forearm rather than extended it, because the kinesthetic sensations produced by the nerves in the flexor muscles, are associated with a network of other sensations, for example, the visual sensations I may have seeing the forearm in a flexed position. The system of kinesthetic sensations and their associations is called the body image, since it enables me to represent to myself the exact location of every local stimulus and the exact position of my limbs. Since the associations of the various sensations become established through their being repeatedly presented together, the body image is held to become established gradually through childhood, as the tactile, kinesthetic and visual sensations become associated and are able to evoke each other. This is held to explain why the dexterity and articulatory precision improve as the child develops (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:98/9).

Kinesthetic (or afferent motor) aphasia appears to be due to a

breakdown of the speaking body image. Patients are unable to articulate the sounds they desire because the kinesthetic sensations are no longer distinguishable and the patient is unable to distinguish the various articulatory positions.

"The disturbance of differentiations among similar articulatory positions is one of the most characteristic symptoms of this form of motor aphasia. Thus patients with afferent motor aphasia have special difficulties in articulating the sounds they want, i.e., in differentiating them from other sounds. Often such a patient will attempt to distinguish the articulatory positions for different sounds by feeling his own tongue and lips with his fingers as he pronounces them; he attempts to memorise the positions which produce appropriate sounds. Very often he will begin to use a mirror so as to be able to see the position of his lips and tongue. He attempts to use these visual images for mastering the desired articulations. Discovery of the appropriate positions of lips and tongue turns out to be the primary obstacle to recovery of speech by such patients." (Luria, 1970:153)

The phenomenon would seem to suggest that by feeling his own tongue with his fingers, or by looking at the position of his tongue and lips in a mirror, the patient attempts to compensate for the weakness of his kinesthetic information.

In milder cases of kinesthetic aphasia where the disruption of this kinesthetic information has not been sufficiently severe, the patient only has difficulties in distinguishing between articulemes such as l and d, m and n, b and p, i.e. between articulemes which differ in only one feature.

"In milder cases this picture [of kinesthetic aphasia] is manifest only as the equally probable uttering of closely similar articulemes such as "l" - "d" - "n" or "m" - "b" - "p" (dentolinguals in the first case and labials in the second case), that differ acoustically but differ articulatorily in only one feature; for this reason the patient begins to confuse these articulemes easily and may pronounce "stol" as "slot" or "snot", and "rhalat" as "rhanat" or "rhadat". In patients with more extensive lesions the system of contrasts is disturbed between less similar phonemes and the articulatory contrasts, which differ in their position and the method of their formation, begin to be revealed particularly clearly, the patients very easily confuse plosives, fricatives, the front, middle, and back linguals, close, half-close, half-open and open vowels, hard and soft consonants, and so on." (Luria, 1976:101)

If, as Luria proposes, certain forms of conduction aphasia can be explained as forms of kinesthetic aphasia, and if we cannot account for concrete speech simply as a reflex action, the question will be how the body image could be sufficiently established and the articulatory contrasts sufficient for the execution of concrete speech but not for abstract speech?<sup>8</sup>

The phenomenon suggests that the primary and fundamental differentiation in the speaking body image is not a differentiation based on physical differences between meaningless articulemes, but between meaningful expressive acts. Articulemes are primarily distinguishable from one another not because one is a dentolingual and the other a labial. They are distinguishable because of the roles they play in expressive acts, and expressive acts are distinguishable for me because of the difference in the significations which they grasp or reveal.

The possession of the speaking body which enables us to execute

abstract speech, to distinguish between dentolinguals and labials etc., is a sophisticated power, related to play acting, which is not presupposed in ordinary or authentic speech and which can be destroyed without seriously affecting ordinary spontaneous narrative speech.

Using Merleau-Ponty's reflections on the 'body image' we can show that in authentic speech I do not possess my speech organs as tools for the execution of articulemes but as an original relation to a signification, as an organ for grasping a 'world' for myself and for others. We can show that the expression, "grasping a signification with my speech" must be taken quite literally, that it is not simply a description of a subjective impression which would hide an actual state of affairs in which I grasp the signification in a mental act while my speech is carried out automatically (as Luria has suggested (1976:245)).

The body with which I speak is the incarnation of a last relation to its world, it is nothing but a potentiality for a certain signification (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:106). My possession of my speech organs is indistinguishable from a certain opening onto the signification to be grasped. As such, the speaking body ceases to be an object, 'fades out before what is expressed' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:401) and its ability to make distinctions, its articulatory precision does not rest on any attribute it has as an object, but is indistinguishable from the nature of the signification to be grasped (see above pages 208/11).

In the chapter of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, "The spatiality of One's own Body and Motility" (1962:98/147), Merleau-Ponty argues that the body image as it is experienced and as the notion of a body image has been used in recent accounts of behaviour and behaviour disorders is not simply a sum of its parts in the way that a picture is a collection of its parts. The body image is a 'whole' which works 'downwards' to its parts. The 'whole' is a comprehensive bodily purpose and each part, such as each limb or organ is experienced in terms of the role it plays in this purpose. My left hand, for example, is not for me a collection of tactile and kinesthetic sensations, associated with other visual and tactile sensations, enabling me to identify them as sensations of the left hand. As I am about to grasp some object my hand is experienced as a certain potentiality of grasping, i.e. it is experienced in terms of its role in my project. The rest of my body, instead of being "an assemblage of organs juxtaposed in space", will be 'implied' in the grasping action, swallowed up in this gesture and effort, their positions and postures will be experienced in terms of the potentials or powers they contribute in the grasping gesture. Being the left hand for me, is not an attribute it has because of its position in external space. Left and right are for me primarily my sides of awkwardness and dexterity, they 'express' modalities of a practical relation to a task.

"For the auger, right and left are the sources of the lawful and the forbidden, just as for me my right hand and my left are respectively the incarnations of my skill and my awkwardness." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:285)

Since the experience I have of my hand is that of a power of grasping rather than an anatomical entity, sensorium and motorium are indistinguishable.

Merleau-Ponty cites the example of Allocheiria where the patient feels in his right hand stimuli applied to his left hand. Within the bounds of the traditional theory of the body image, allocheiria would presuppose that each sensation of the left hand, of its own, became disconnected with its normal associations, and became associated with those visual and tactile sensations normally connected with the corresponding sensation of the right hand. In this way each sensation of the left hand could become mistaken for a sensation of the right hand. But how could we account for the syndrome in terms of such an enormous number of chance associations and disassociations? The syndrome becomes intelligible if we accept that the spatiality of the body, its left and right, work downward from the project to its parts, so that the left hand originating in the bodily project could become for me, at one stroke, my right hand.

"... in order that the body image may elucidate allocheiria, it is not enough that each sensation of the left hand should take its place among generic images of all parts of the body acting in association to form around it, as it were, a superimposed outline of the body; these associations must be constantly subject to a single law, the spatiality of the body must work downwards from the whole to the parts, the left hand and its position must be implied in a comprehensive bodily purpose and it must originate in that purpose, so that it may at one stroke not only be superimposed or brought down on to the right hand, but actually become the right hand." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:99)

My experience of my right arm for example cannot be an experience of kinesthetic sensations, for as long as these are understood as private data, as internal representations of events in the muscles of the arm. I must experience my arm as a certain power in the world. Merleau-Ponty argues that my experience of my limbs has **no physiological foundation**, only an existential one, only my purposeful projection towards the world.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of the phantom limb the patient continues to feel the presence of a limb that has been lost, and may continuously attempt to use the limb. This shows that the body image does not always correspond with the actual body and that the kinesthetic sensations do not necessarily have physiological counterparts. In **The Structure of Behaviour**, Merleau-Ponty had discussed the way in which an insect, in the performance of an instinctive act, substituted a sound leg for one which had been cut off. If the leg is merely tied however no such substitution takes place.

"The tied limb is not replaced by a free one because it continues to count in the insect's scheme of things, and because the current of activity which flows towards the world still passes through it." (1967:78)

The patient will continue to experience the presence of the phantom limb for as long as it continues **to count in his being-in-the-world**, for as long as the project which he embodies continues to pass through it into the world, for as long as it is an originating relationship with the world. The

anosognosic on the other hand, who systematically ignores his paralysed right hand, who holds out his left hand when asked for the right hand does so, not because of a genuine anaesthesia or an absence of sensations. The patient continues to describe his paralysed arm as 'a long cold snake' and he is sufficiently aware of his arm and its position to enable him to ignore it as systematically as he does. He ignores his right arm, holds out his left hand when asked for his right, because of a general rearrangement of his body image, because the left hand no longer **originates** in his body project. The distinction between a left and a right hand no longer has any genuine sense for him. His paralysed limb no longer counts for him, because his existence does not pass through it into the world, in other words, the comprehensive bodily purpose, which is existence, working downwards to its parts, no longer works downwards through to his right hand. His right hand is never taken up into his original relation with the world.

"The fact that the paralysed limb of the anosognosic no longer counts in the subject's body image, is accounted for by the body image's being neither the mere copy nor even the global awareness of the existing parts of the body, and by its active integration of these latter only in proportion to their value to the organism's projects." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:100)

My limbs are not for me juxtaposed in external or geometric space. They are not experienced as above, below, to the left or the right of each other. The experience of my arm for example, of the angle between upper and forearm will be **implied** in the

experience of my hand as its grasps an object. The experience of my arm, shoulder and trunk are not other experiences, numerically distinct from that of my grasping hand, but are its depth.

If I stand in front of my desk and lean on it with both hands, only my hands are stressed and the whole of my body trails behind them like the tail of a comet. It is not that I am unaware of the whereabouts of my shoulders or back, but these are simply swallowed up in the position of my hands, and my whole posture can be read so to speak in the pressure they exert on the table." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:100)

It is of course possible for me to maintain roughly the same pressure on the table with a different combination of postures. I could for example straighten my back and provided I simultaneously bent my elbows I would not affect the pressure exerted to any noticeable degree. To say that my whole posture can be read in this pressure, implies that certain combinations will be experienced as equivalent even though they may differ substantially from each other in objective terms. This is because my posture and the arrangement of my limbs is not experienced as so many tactile and kinesthetic sensations spread out in space parts extra parts, but as originating in my project directed towards an object in the world.

Clearly for Merleau-Ponty the body image is not reducible to a subjective experience. The pressure exerted on the table is not reducible to sensations of pressure. What 'swallows up' the shoulders and back is the pressure exerted on the table as an

**event in the world.** The comprehensive bodily purpose is not for me reducible to an experience. My posture and the arrangement of my limbs are experienced as originating in my project in the world, not in my experience of my project.

If the body image was reducible to an experience it could never be used to **explain** behaviour and behaviour disorders. If the body image **explains** Allocheiria, the phantom limb and anosognosia, then there is no need to look behind the experience the subject has of his body, for a real world of associated images or of nerve fibres. The expression 'actually become the right hand' must be taken quite literally (Provided that literally does not refer to the geometric space of the natural attitude). If the left hand were only experienced as if it were the right hand, if the body image was a realm of subjective experience distinguishable from the body itself, it would still be necessary to explain how a stimulus applied to the left hand could provoke a sensation in the right hand i.e. it would be necessary to explain how the subject comes to experience his left hand as if it were his right hand. If the left hand can "actually become the right hand", and if this change can **explain** allocheiria, then it is clear that we need to apply the reduction and that the irreducible body, the body we must account for, must not be confused with the body studied by the physiologist. Like the transcendental ego this body is not accessible to the external observer, it must be taken up from within so that it can be what it is experienced as being,

so that a **description** of the body from the inside is also an **explanation**. If we say that shoulders and arms are **implied** in the gesture of leaning on the table, or are **swallowed up** in the gesture, or if we say that my existence **flows through** a particular limb we are referring to a realm which demands the paradox of immanence and transcendence, which is inseparably experience and being, where a description of experience is indistinguishable from an explanation.

What makes a limb count for me both as a sensory organ and as a motor organ are not kinesthetic sensations, but the fact that my being-in-the-world 'passes through' it or "works downwards" through it. If I attempt to reflect on my experience of having an arm, the movement of return into myself is complemented by a movement throwing me beyond myself. The more I attempt to confine myself to my private experience the more I discover myself from the outside. The more I attempt to confine myself to my present experience the more I am thrown beyond the present to the future goal of my gesture. My experience of the limb is not an experience but merges with my actual being in the world, which we have described as an 'I can'. The body image is therefore not an image at all and my experience of my body is indistinguishable from being a body in the world directed towards its tasks.

"... the body image is finally a way of stating that my body is in the world." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:101)

When I grasp an object I do not have to guide my hand towards the object, for the hand I move is experienced as being, and is, a potentiality for grasping the object. Grasping is a last, or an originating relation with the world.

"... the subject, when put in front of his scissors, needle and familiar tasks, does not need to look for his hands or his fingers, because they are not objects to be discovered in objective space: bones, muscles and nerves, but potentialities already mobilized by the perception of scissors or needle, the central end of those 'intentional threads' which link him to the objects given. It is never our objective body that we move, but our phenomenal body, and there is no mystery in that, since our body, as the potentiality of this or that part of the world, surges towards objects to be grasped and perceives them ... The body is no more than an element in the system of the subject and his world, and the task to be performed elicits the necessary movements from him by a sort of remote attraction ...".  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:106)

This is for Merleau-Ponty the most fundamental relation with our own body. The ability we have to treat the body as an object, to flex our limbs and to move a limb simply for the sake of moving it, is a sophisticated ability which takes place **within** the objective world. It is an ability that can be lost without destroying our concrete involvement in the world through our body.

We are claiming that if we wish to account for conduction aphasia as a form of kinesthetic aphasia, Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body image will enable us to explain how the kinesthetic base of his speaking can be sufficiently refined to account for concrete speech but not for abstract speech. We will begin by

examining the power of the speaking body to discriminate in authentic speech, between articulemes and then turn to its ability to discriminate between grammatical forms. In both cases we will see that the speaking body is not an object but a "potentiality" for a certain world.

We have already referred to the interesting phenomenon which Jakobson has brought to light, namely the difficulty experienced by Czechs and Russians to discriminate in their articulation between the french closed and open, e. Why for example does the Czech have no difficulty distinguishing between e and  $\epsilon$  when it is a question of differentiating in his speech between two stylistic variants of the same word, pepiku and  $\text{p}\epsilon\text{piku}$ , but is unable to make the same distinction when it is a question of indicating in his pronunciation, the difference between the french words 'dé' (de) meaning dice, and 'dais' (d $\epsilon$ ) meaning canopy. The ability to distinguish in pronunciation between closed e and open  $\epsilon$  cannot be based on the possession of articulatory codes and on articulatory oppositions. If the articulatory oppositions were sufficiently clear for the distinction between ' $\text{p}\epsilon\text{piku}$ ' and ' $\text{p}\epsilon\text{piku}$ ' why are they not sufficient for distinguishing between 'de' and 'dais'?

Clearly the use of closed e in pepiku is not a sign with which the Czech indicates his attitude or his feelings, for if it were a sign the pronunciation would presuppose the ability to distinguish between e and  $\epsilon$ , which we know he is unable to do.

Are we then to argue that his feeling casual or his intention to be casual has a causal effect on his speech, so that instead of uttering *pepiku* he utters *pepiku*? Are we to say that such a causal effect could account for a discrimination in his speaking which he would not have been able to bring about voluntarily? But such a description of speaking would leave us with that bizarre account which we have argued against above. For the speaker, there would be a mysterious relation between his feelings or intentions and his speech. He would find his pronunciation changing as I find my leg moving when I am tapped below the knee.

The difficulties faced by the Czech who attempts to discriminate in his pronunciation, between '*dais*' and '*de*', oblige us to accept that while speaking Czech he never distinguishes between the articulemes closed *e* and open *ε* but only between a casual and a formal manner of addressing another person. '*Pepiku*' in this casual approach must be an irreducible speech act. If it is an irreducible act then whatever is expressed in this manner of speaking cannot be an idea in the mind of the speaker while the speech act is executed as a real physical process. Whatever is expressed must permeate the articulatory process itself. Any real physical process is reducible to its parts. The speech act must take place in another world where the 'status' of the audience can permeate the articulatory process and can seal, close or gather up the multiplicity of the physical, physiological linguistic means of elocution, and contract them

into one sole act (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:154). It is only the scientific linguist who attempts to adopt the point of view of the external observer, who is therefore unable to encounter the 'whole', for whom the speech act is reducible to a physical process and for whom the distinction between the formal and the informal greeting can only be indicated with the distinction between  $\epsilon$  and  $e$ , and who consequently finds it odd that the Czech has difficulty making the distinction between 'dais' and 'dé'.<sup>10</sup>

In his use of the formal and informal manners of greeting, the Czech expresses some or other attribute of his audience, such as his status of being simply an acquaintance, a distant friend or being a long standing or close friend. If his speech is to be an irreducible whole there can be for him no distinction between the attribute expressed in his speech and the attribute actually possessed by his audience. If there were such a distinction, his speech would no longer be 'co-extensive with being' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:353), his speech would be for him, like the processes of the psychological ego, real physical events in the world. What characterises authentic speech is that through his speech the speaker situates himself as a last subject, his speech ceases to be an act in the world and becomes a mediation, that by which and through which he moves towards a signification. His speech dissolves in this reference to its object, (Ricoeur, 1967:16) or, what is the same thing, his speech literally expresses this attribute or status of his

audience, or makes his audience exist for him in a certain way. Once we have accepted that *pepiku* pronounced in an informal greeting is an irreducible act we have given up the external observer point of view. If the Czech attempts to reflect on his own experience of speaking in this way he will find himself thrown beyond immanence, beyond private kinesthetic impressions, towards the "familiarity" or that special quality of his audience which makes this way of speaking appropriate.

"The meaning of the gesture is not contained in it like some physical or physiological phenomenon. The meaning of the word is outlined in the structure of the world." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:193)

"The meaning of a gesture thus 'understood' is not behind it, it is intermingled with the structure of the world outlined by the gesture, and which I take up on my own account." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:186)

The ability of the Czech to distinguish between *pepiku* and *pepiku* does not involve an ability to distinguish between the articulemes *e* and *e* because it only manifests or is the incarnation of, modes of being-towards-others. The ability he has to distinguish between *pepiku* and *pepiku* has no physiological or psychological basis it only has an existential one. He will continue to be able to make the distinction for as long as it counts in his being-towards-others, for as long as his existence towards others flows through it into the world. Just as the distinction between the right hand and the left had is not made on the basis of their spatial locations but because they incarnate my sides of dexterity and awkwardness, so *e* and

ε, and by extension all the articulatory oppositions and the distinctions between words are not based on the fact that some are labials and others are dentolinguals or combinations of these, they are distinguishable because of the role they play in the existence of the speaker in his world and amongst others, they are distinguishable because it is through their distinctions that his existence flows into the world.

"In motor aphasia, the list of words lost and preserved does not correspond to their objective characteristics (length and complexity), but to their value from the subject's point of view." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:195)

What we have tried to reveal about articulemes, conduction aphasia demonstrates with respect to words and grammatical structures. The conduction aphasic is unable to repeat sounds, words or name objects, yet his spontaneous narrative speech is relatively intact. For the speaker, spontaneous narrative speech must be an irreducible act, it cannot be made up of words and articulemes. The power of the speaking body to articulate the right words and the correct grammatical forms, has no physiological base, only an existential one. The articulatory precision and law like activity of the speaking body **manifest** the structure of the world towards which speech is directed. It is literally the same thing to be directed towards a certain aspect of the world or a certain signification, and to use the correct words and the correct grammar.

Even the grammatical forms of the verb which refer to the past

present and future do not reflect an understanding of the temporal relations but the temporal structure of the subjects being-in-the-world.

In general children acquire the ability to use tense grammar correctly long before they have acquired an understanding of temporal relations, long before they are able for example to indicate these relations on a linear representation of time. This would seem to suggest that the child has been 'conditioned' into using the grammatical forms in a certain way. Any such mechanistic theory of conditioning however runs up against the fact that the learning process is systematic (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:142). If the child were conditioned to using the grammatical forms the learning process would take place gradually and we would find that the child begins to use the past present and future forms of some verbs, particularly those heard most frequently, before those of other verbs. What characterises the learning process however is that it occurs during a relatively short period and all the verbs in the child's vocabulary are affected more or less simultaneously.

In an article, "The Child's Relations with Others" (1973:109), Merleau-Ponty argues that the correct use of tense grammar is based neither on an "understanding" of time nor on conditioned reflexes, it has an existential basis. The use of grammatical forms is the incarnation of the temporal structure of the child's relations with others. The child begins to use the tense

grammar forms when his **existence-with-others** is dilated into the structure of past-present- and future.

Merleau-Ponty quotes an article by Francois Rostand which describes the younger of two children who shows signs of jealousy when a new brother is born. His status or role in the family as 'the youngest' has been usurped and his jealousy is essentially a refusal to give up this role. By a fortunate coincidence a child older than all three comes to stay in the family. This fourth child robs the elder of the two of his status as the 'absolute eldest'. It is at this moment that the younger brother overcomes his jealousy and begins to use the grammatical structures of past present and future. Rostand argues that the jealousy is overcome "thanks to the constitution of a scheme of past-present-future" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:110). Jealousy, in this child, he argues, is a rigid attachment to a certain present, to the situation in which he is the "latest born". His jealousy is overcome because with the new temporal structure it is possible for him to have the status of one **who was** the youngest born, and one who **has** the same relation to the new baby as his elder brother **had** to him. Rostand suggests that he has overcome his jealousy because he has replaced an attitude which we could describe as "my place has been taken" with one which could be described as " I **have been** the youngest, but I **am** the youngest no longer, and I **will become** the biggest" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:110)

'Corresponding' to this new situation is a sudden acquisition of the grammatical forms. We cannot maintain that the crisis in his relationships with others provided the occasion for him to grasp the 'idea' of time, for this again would suggest that correct grammatical usage presupposes an understanding of the idea of time. His new status is not an idea or a belief, and the attitude Rostand describes should not be regarded as a cogitatum. To be the youngest in the family is to relate to others and to be related to in a certain way. To relate to others as one who was the youngest and who will be the biggest is to relate to others, to be amongst others through the structures of time. The grammatical forms will be in his speech because his being-amongst-others flows through his speech.

There is no evidence to suggest that in authentic spontaneous speech the subject applies rules, or that the ordered aspect of his speech is brought about through automatisms. It is only in certain forms of abstract speech, or whenever we attempt to speak a language which we have not yet made our own that we are obliged to select words and apply grammatical rules. As we have seen the correct use of the grammatical forms of past present and future do not reflect an understanding of temporal relations and a knowledge of the rules, it manifests or incarnates the temporal structure of the speaker's existence-amongst-others. There is no necessity to account for the presence of the articulemes which make up the grammatical forms because for the speaker they are not real acts they are only

abstractions, or the silhouettes of this temporalised being-with-others.

"HENCEFORTH, AS THE PARTS OF MY BODY TOGETHER COMPRISE A SYSTEM, SO MY BODY AND THE OTHER PERSON'S ARE ONE WHOLE ..."

We have seen that conduction aphasics have difficulty not only in the repeating meaningless sounds but also in repeating meaningful words and even meaningful sentences. Demitr for example had no difficulty uttering meaningful sentences as parts of spontaneous narrative speech but she was unable to produce the same sentences in isolation.

"The integrity of the sentence in the context of narration does not mean, however, that this patient could as easily repeat a sentence which she had only just so easily spoken in spontaneous narrative speech" (Luria, 1976:255)

Concrete speech therefore differs from abstract speech not simply because it is meaningful or has a unitary semantic structure. Those forms of speech which present the patient with the least difficulty are those forms in which the patient attempts to 'reach' his audience, to convince him of something or other, to challenge him etc. While those forms which are essentially the making of statements, even meaningful statements are found to be more difficult. Luria himself refers to the well

known case of conduction aphasia where the patient was asked to repeat the word "No". After many fruitless attempts the patient finally burst out saying, "No, doctor I just cannot say the word "no"" (1976:103). The outburst, we are suggesting, is not so much a statement about what he is unable to say, but an act of 'surrender', a way of 'giving up' and withdrawing from the task. This comes out particularly clearly in an interesting experiment which Luria carries out, somewhat by chance, on the conduction aphasic which he refers to as Dimitr.

"... Having just noted the patient's severe difficulty with her speech and the excessive number of pauses, wordseekings and paraphasias, in order to make her speech emotional in character I said to her: "nevertheless your teacher was bad, she didn't work very hard with you and was inattentive" However this immediately drew from the patient a highly emotional and agitated response "Well, Professor, I don't know how you can say that! ... my teacher was in fact very good and clever, and she always worked very hard with me, and now you talk like that!..." This time there were no pauses while seeking words, no paraphasias in the patient's emotional speech.

In sharp contrast with the fluent, intonationally normal narrative speech as just described above, all types of voluntary, motivated speech arising whenever the patient was forced to devote her conscious efforts not to the transmission of thought, but to the speech process itself, were severely disturbed." (Luria, 1976:251)

Luria misses the real difference between those forms of speech which are easier and those which are more difficult for the patient. Her speech was not supported by well exercised 'habitual combinations', nor by the emotion he invoked in her, her speech was fluent and easier for her whenever in her speech

she attempted to persuade Luria of something or other, whenever she challenged him or simply tried to get him to realize something.

This distinction between speech which is directed towards reaching someone, or which attempts to bring about a new situation and speech which is a way of making a statement, of referring to objects ideas or relations, is well recognized. It is always assumed however that the former is just a complex combination of the latter, that one reaches another, brings about a state of affairs, by making a series of statements.

"Men have been talking for a long time on earth, and yet three-quarters of what they say goes unnoticed. A rose, it is raining, it is fine, man is mortal. These are paradigms of expression for us. We believe expression is most complete when it points unequivocally to events, to states of objects, to ideas or relations, for, in these instances, expression leaves nothing more to be desired, contains nothing which it does not reveal, and thus sweeps us toward the object which it designates. In dialogue, narrative, plays on words, trust, promise, prayer, eloquence, literature, we possess a second-order language in which we do not speak of objects and ideas except to reach some person ... Yet we still insist on treating this language as simply a variant of the economical forms of making statements about some **thing**. Thus expression involves nothing more than replacing a perception or an idea with a conventional sign that announces, evokes, or abridges it." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:3)

Within the bounds of the natural attitude I could persuade or convince someone of something or other only by producing the

appropriate gestures or speech acts, which would either have some causal effect on his thoughts and attitudes or which would rely on the interpretation he gives to these acts. In either case my attempts to persuade or convince would still be reducible to the execution of certain acts. If this were the case however, how could it be possible for the patient to be able to pronounce the word "No" in "No doctor I just cannot say the word 'no'" and yet be unable to produce the word 'no' on its own?

The phenomenon suggests that these acts of surrender, of challenging, persuading etc. are irreducible wholes. In these acts we are able to reach others without producing a series of statements or words. But if Dimitr's act does constitute such a 'whole', then her speech must be inseparable from its goal. From the outset it must be magically at its conclusion, it can begin only by anticipating its end (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:104). It must be impossible to establish a numerical distinction between the act and Luria's being drawn into her world. The act must manifest a direct power over the internal life of her audience, as the 'sides' manifest the cube. Concrete speech is not made up of articulatory processes it is the incarnation of this trespassing on others.

"I project myself into the other person, I introduce him into my own self. Rather than imprisoning it, language is like a magic machine for transporting the "I" into the other persons's perspective."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19)

"... speech catches us indirectly, seduces us, trails us along, transforms us into the other and him into us, abolishes the limit between mine and not mine ..."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1973:145)

Dimitr's fluent speech only appears to be made up of words and sentences. It is actually the vortex (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:353) into which the world of her audience is drawn. Her speech not only dissolves in its reference to a signification, but in reference to a signification for her and her audience.

There is no need for verbal images or kinesthetic bases because she is not producing speech acts. Just as the Czech doesn't require the articulatory oppositions e and ε, he simply has to exist through his speech and be directed towards others in certain ways, so Dimitr does not require verbal images and kinesthetic bases if she genuinely challenges or genuinely attempts to convince Luria of something or other. She would require these images and a kinesthetic basis only if she wished to pretend or act as if she was challenging or trying to convince.<sup>11</sup> This direct power of abolishing the limit between mine and not mine, of reaching my audience can be brought out in describing the stages we may go through learning to speak a foreign language.

During the early stages of speaking a foreign language, communication appears to rely on trial and error. The student executes a series of articulemes which he has either learnt by heart or which he reads off from a book of phrases. He puts his

faith in his memory or in his book of phrases and hopes that his audience will attach certain meanings to these sounds and to realize what it is that he wishes to convey. When the face of the foreigner finally lights up with a comprehending smile, although greatly relieved, the student is aware of how precarious the link is between his speech and the comprehending smile. The comprehension seems to come from another world to which he has no access.

At a certain stage this sense of trial and error begins to disappear. The student begins to experience his speech as a power over the internal life of his audience. He finds that he can question, challenge or convince others of something, **directly**. There is no longer any sense of having to rely on the interpretive powers of the other. At this stage he finds that it is not necessary to consider the way in which others might understand his speech or how they will respond to a sequence of sentences. The confidence with which he speaks suggests that he has a direct power over others and that his speech is nothing but an incarnation of this direct power.

"I speak to him as I find him, with a certainty that is at times prodigious. I use words and phrases he can understand or to which he can react." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:19)

What comes to gather up the multiplicity of linguistic means of the elocution and contract them into one sole act is a signification towards which we are directed and the

multiplicity of linguistic means of elocution which is contracted into one sole act is not just my speaking but our speaking (see above pages 224/5).

"and the anonymous existence of which my body is the ever-renewed trace henceforth inhabits both bodies simultaneously." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:354)

The idea towards which we are swept is neither my idea nor his.

"The other's words, or mine in him, do not limit themselves to vibrating like chords the listener's machinery of acquired significations or to arousing some reminiscence. Their flow must have the power of throwing me in turn toward a signification that neither he nor I possessed before." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:142)

My speaking cannot be isolated from this sole act except as an abstraction. Taken on its own we will not be able to explain how I use just those words that my audience understands or how I use just the right words to aim at a signification which is not mine.

"... my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. We have here a dual being ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:354)<sup>12</sup>

We are arguing that this "transformation" is not simply a change in the way the student experiences his speech and his relations with others, which would mean that we still need to

explain his newly acquired fluency, explain how it is that he no longer needs to put his faith in his memory or the book of phrases and explain the new sense of confidence that has replaced the sense of trial and error. We are arguing that conduction aphasia only makes sense if we can accept that the body with which he learns to reach others, is the phenomenal speaking body, the body which is what it is **experienced** as being, so that the transformation we have described is also an **explanation**.

In this experience I have of my body comprising with that of the other, one whole, and in this way being directed towards a signification for us, we have the paradox which overcomes the dilemma which compromised Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity. I have access to a world which is not mine (*mir fremde*) without its 'being not mine', being one of my cogitata. It is because I grasp a signification in speaking, and because the world of the other can be dovetailed into the tension that holds my speech act together, that there can be a signification 'for us'.

The various forms of aphasia that we have examined have enabled us to take up many of the themes Merleau-Ponty developed in his account of perception and motility. This has enabled us not only to reflect on various aspects of the perception and production of speech, but also to **argue** for, or **demonstrate** the claims he has made and the evocative descriptions he has given us concerning speech. His reflections on language are therefore no

longer limited to merely a 'striking a chord'. Not only can they be demonstrated, but we can extend his theory to give an account of other aspects of language or link his reflections into a more systematic revelation.

By taking up the themes developed in the account of perception and motility, in the realm of language we have enabled the meaning of these themes to emerge afresh.

"Thus what is acquired is truly acquired only if it is taken up again in a fresh momentum of thought."  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:130)

On the other hand this exercise would also seem to be important in Neurolinguistic research. As we have seen, Luria has made some significant discoveries, particularly in the perceptual syndrome of efferent motor aphasia and in conduction aphasia. These discoveries seem to have been made by chance, and Luria seems unable to recognize their significance. What we have revealed about language should enable us to develop more profound methods of testing and classifying aphasic patients. It should enable us to avoid having to choose between the atomistic and the intellectualistic traditions without returning, as Luria does, to a form of dualism. Our reflections should enable us to refine the basic concepts Luria uses in his account of aphasic speech, concepts such as 'simultaneous surveyability', 'plasticity and selectivity of the brain' 'semantic unity', 'concrete' and 'abstract' speech.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1) "This patient had great difficulty in understanding whole semantic texts, even during supported attempts to analyze the meaning of the separate parts of the text or of the text as a whole. He read or repeated individual parts of the text several times over, compared them with one another, altered them with different intonations (he was still able to do this), and only then was he able to suggest the meaning of the fragment as a whole, although he always lacked confidence." (Luria, 1976:200)
  
- 2) Luria points out that no systematic investigation of the perceptual disturbance of these patients has yet been undertaken. He says in fact, that very few authors have noted that these patients have any difficulty in perceiving and understanding complex grammatical structures. He regards his own observations as preliminary and hopes that they will point the direction in which research should take place (Luria, 1967:207). What Luria reveals in his observations enables us to pursue the notion of simultaneous surveyability and bring the perceptual difficulties of these patients in line with those of the semantic aphasic.
  
- 3) "However, on this occasion [the examination of the efferent motor aphasic's understanding of speech] all these difficulties in understanding complex grammatical constructions do not arise through inability to convert a successive inflow of information into a simultaneously surveyable scheme (as in the lesions of the tertiary, parieto-occipital zones of the cortex, giving rise to semantic aphasia). In the cases we are now discussing these difficulties arise through the patient's inadequate activity, his inert fixation on the direct meaning of the verbal elements ...". (Luria, 1976:209)

- 4) Jakobson makes the same point when he argues, quoting Saussure, that the relationship between the word and its meaning must be described from within the experience of speaking the language.

"Saussure invokes the differences between languages, but actually the question of the arbitrary relation or the necessary connection between the signified and the signifier cannot be answered except by reference to a given state of a given language. Recall Saussure's own shrewd advice: 'It would be absurd to draw a panorama of the Alps from the points of view of several peaks of the Jura simultaneously; a panorama must be drawn from a single point'. And from the point of view of her native language, a peasant woman from Francophone Switzerland was right to be astonished: how can cheese be called Käse since fromage is its only natural name." (1978:112)

- 5) "It has been clearly shown that animal perception is sensitive only to certain concrete stimulus wholes, the form of which is prescribed by instinct itself; and, rightly, a lived abstraction by means of which what does not correspond to the structure of the animal's instinct is left purely and simply outside its sensory field has been discussed. But the thought of relating the content of human perception to the structure of human action in the same way does not occur. Of course it is said that our "needs", our "tendencies", and our attention oriented by them make the objects of our actual perception emerge from the possible sensory field. But what is ordinarily implicitly understood by this is an ensemble of qualities - colour, weight, flavor - among which attention chooses; and it is from a mosaic of preconscious sensations that one tries to rejoin the actual content of infantile or original perception." (Merleau-Ponty, 1967:165)

- 6) It should be clear that the discussion which follows parallels Merleau-Ponty's argument that Schneider's inability to execute abstract movement is not due to a

disruption of visual contents (1962:103/126).

"The motor disturbances of cerebellar cases and those of psychological blindness can be co-ordinated only if we identify the basis of movement and vision not as a collection of sensible qualities but as a certain way of giving form or structure to our environment ... visual representation does not explain abstract movement, for it is itself endowed with the same power of throwing out a spectacle which is revealed in abstract movement and the act of pointing." (1962:115)

- 7) This phenomenon parallels Schneider's inability to execute abstract movements on demand.

"The patient himself neither seeks nor finds his movements, but moves his body about until the movement comes. The order given is not meaningless to him, since he recognizes the inadequacy of his first attempts, and also since, if a fortuitous gesture produces the required movement, he is aware of it and can immediately turn his piece of good fortune to account. But if the order has an intellectual significance for him and not a motor one, it does not communicate anything to him as a mobile subject ..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:110)

- 8) This is the same question Merleau-Ponty addresses in his discussion of Schneider. Why is it that Schneider finds in his body "only an amorphous mass into which actual movement alone introduces divisions and links" (1962:110), when it is a question of executing abstract movements (Zeigen) but not when it is a question of executing concrete movements (Greifen)?

- 9) Certainly, as Merleau-Ponty has pointed out, the phantom limb disappears when the nerves from the stump to the brain are severed (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:77), but this does not prove that there can be a neurophysiological explanation for the experience, it demonstrates only that a mode of being in the world can be disrupted. Through binocular perception I can find myself in the world situated at a certain distance from the thread, but this does not imply that this being in the world can be explained in terms of the visual contents made possible by the two eyes, even though the loss of one eye will destroy the distance separating me from the thread.
- 10) This reminds us of Schneider's ability to scratch a painful spot on his body to which he is unable to point.

"The whole operation takes place in the domain of the phenomenal: it does not run through the objective world, and only the spectator, who lends his objective representation of the living body to the acting subject, can believe that the sting is perceived, that the hand moves in objective space, and consequently finds it odd that the same subject should fail in experiments requiring him to point things out.  
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962:106)

- 11) It is interesting, to see how Schneider exploits this difference when he attempts to overcome his inability to execute abstract movements by taking the doctor's requests quite seriously. When asked to execute the movements of a salute, Schneider actually salutes. He manages to carry out the movement only by placing himself mentally in the

real situation in which one would salute, such that his whole body and the usual external marks of respect are involved in the act (1962:104).

- 12) "Speaking is not just my own initiative, listening is not submitting to the initiative of the other, because as speaking subjects we are **continuing**, we are resuming a common effort more ancient than we, upon which we are grafted to one another and which is the manifestation of trust." (Merleau-Ponty, 1973:144)

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