

MERLEAU-PONTY'S UNDERSTANDING
OF TRUTH

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PREFACE

The question "What is truth?" which is as old as philosophy, often prompts groans, looks of exasperation and is often considered to be a banal, worn-out and, in some cases, an unanswerable question. Old though the question may be, it still catches our interest no matter how many times our search for an answer has been fruitless. Repeatedly, we try to find an answer to this question, knowing that the answer is of great significance.

In this thesis, I discuss Merleau-Ponty's new answer to this old question. Those looking for a clear-cut discussion in his writings in which he examines truth explicitly and at length, will be disappointed. Instead, they will find throughout his writings, short discourses and statements about truth. In my thesis, I have attempted to pierce through Merleau-Ponty's various ways of describing truth to discover the kernel of his thought, to find what he understood truth to be and, also, to argue that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth was a departure from traditional ways of understanding truth.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I	The Problem of Truth	page 1
Chapter II	The Ground and Structure of Truth	page 10
Chapter III	The Act of Truth	page 43
Chapter IV	A New Answer	page 64
Footnotes		page 101
Bibliography		page 113

I

THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH

Le souci de la vérité
extérieure denote la bassesse
contemporaine et l'art deviendra,
si l'on continue, je ne sais quelle
iocamboie au dessous de la religion
comme poésie et de la politique comme
intérêt. 1

G. Flaubert

To philosophize is to seek the truth. Hence, man's understanding of the nature of philosophy and of truth have always been intimately associated. A philosopher's answers to the questions "What is philosophy?" and "What is truth?" bask in each other's light, sustaining and supporting each other. In other words, the answers are co-reflexive. The thought of Maurice Merleau-Ponty is not an exception to this long tradition. However, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth is a radical departure from the traditional notions of truth. Throughout the history of philosophy truth has usually been considered to be something external to man or within man, the subject. Truth was an object or a property of an object which was to be known, experienced or achieved, often after a long,

arduous pursuit. Attendent upon the early phenomenologists' call for philosophy to be radical reflexion which would open up a "promised land" was a new understanding of truth.

Merleau-Ponty agreed with Edmund Husserl that the task and service of phenomenology was to clarify the meaning of the world and to render understandable the precise sense in which everyone accepts with undeniable right the existence of the world and of themselves. In his attempt to understand man's experience in the lived, familiar world (Lebenswelt), Merleau-Ponty found inadequate the traditional subjective and objective philosophies and attempted to go beyond these traditional ways of understanding man and his relation to the world to an understanding of man and his relation to the world which was more faithful to man's lived experience in the world. In the course of this this thesis, the reasons why Merleau-Ponty considered it necessary to find an alternative to traditional objectivism and subjectivism will be discussed.

The early phenomenologists suggested that man's relationship to the world and to truth did not have the dualistic subject-object form. Thus, truth is not external to man and, on the other hand, truth is not "within" man. "Truth does not 'inhabit only the inner man' or more accurately there is no inner man, man is in the world and only in the world does he know himself. When

I return to myself from an excursion into the realm of dogmatic common-sense or of science, I find not a source of intrinsic truth, but a subject destined to be in the world."² It is evident that Merleau-Ponty's approach to the problem of truth is indebted to Edmund Husserl who, considering that man inhabiting the world is at the junction of nature, body and philosophical consciousness, maintained that the solutions to all problems are not to be found within us or in the world. If these two avenues are cul-de-sacs, what alternative is open to us? In order to solve this problem of truth we must return to our presence in the world, the body subject (le corps propre). Man who is in the world, is in truth. Like being, truth is a condition for and of man's being-in-the-world (être-au-monde). Given that truth is here, in the world engulfing us, it will present problems for one trying to study truth--the transparency supporting and permeating our lives. We are embedded in what we are trying to see. In the perceived world, "we experience a truth which shows through and envelops us rather than being held and circumscribed by our mind."³ Our wonder "in the face of the world" is a wonder in the sight of truth. Just as the only way to understand the world we find ourselves living through is the method of radical reflexion or, in other words, a consciousness of our ultimate dependence on an unreflective

life which is our initial situation, unchanging, given once and for all,⁴ the only way to understand the phenomenon of truth is by means of the method of radical reflexion. Reflexion, states Merleau-Ponty, "tries to render explicit an experience of truth."⁵

If one is to understand Merleau-Ponty's view of the nature and purpose of philosophy, it is necessary that one understand his conception of truth. Thus, this thesis will attempt to examine Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth. In response to the old questions "What is philosophy?" and "What is truth?" Merleau-Ponty does not think that one can accept the traditional answers. He suggests that the inadequateness of past responses is due to a misunderstanding of the nature of philosophy and, secondly, the nature of man's relationship to the world. Instead of turning our back on the old answers, Merleau-Ponty recommends that we look anew at the source of these fundamental questions:

Philosophy does not raise questions and does not provide answers that would little by little fill in the blanks.... Philosophy does not take the context as given, it turns back upon it in order to seek the origin and the meaning of the questions and of the responses and the identity of him who questions.....⁶

Often it is thought that in light of Merleau-Ponty's premature death in 1961, prior to the completion of L'Origine de la Vérité, it is not possible to understand

Merleau-Ponty's theory of truth. Throughout his works, he has led us to a pinnacle:

We are obliged to answer these questions first with a theory of truth and then with a theory of inter-subjectivity.... But the philosophical foundations of these essays are still to be rigorously elaborated. I am now working on two books dealing with a theory of truth.⁷

His project was unfinished. Expectations were not met. Thus, it is often argued that Merleau-Ponty left unanswered the question "What is truth?" This view naively overlooks the fact that all projects are left unfinished. None of us will say our "last word". Recognizing this basic fact in his memorial, Dufrenne wrote: "Merleau-Ponty mourrait sans avoir dit son dernier mot, mais peut-être l'amitié l'emportait-elle alors sur la raison: nous savons bien qu'il n'y a pas de dernier mot, que nulle mort ne vient à son heure, et que nulle pensée ne s'achève. Une oeuvre est toujours un projet."⁸ To argue that Merleau-Ponty died prior to the writing of L'Origine de la Vérité and, therefore, that it is impossible to understand his theory of truth is akin to arguing that by virtue of Mozart dying without writing a book on the theory of aesthetics, we can not know Mozart's views regarding aesthetics. Just as Mozart's understanding of beauty permeates and is manifested in his music and, ultimately, is the raison d'être of his music, Merleau-Ponty's under-

standing of truth permeates and is manifested in his writings and is the raison d'être of his work.

Throughout all his writings, Merleau-Ponty's constant interest in the notion of truth is evident. For instance, in his first article, published in 1933, which was a review of Jean-Paul Sartre's article "L'Imaginaire", Merleau-Ponty wrote:

... On sait en effet que pour Husserl ce n'est même pas une psychologie éidétique qui nous donnerait la vérité concernant la conscience; cette vérité ne pourrait être atteinte que si l'on abandonne l'attitude naturelle, le réalisme de la connaissance commune et de toutes les sciences pour une attitude transcendentale où toutes les choses se résolvent en significations.⁹

On another occasion, in one of his last published articles, Merleau-Ponty revealed that the problem of truth had not been discussed by himself to his satisfaction. Unhappy with his efforts to understand truth in terms of perception he stated that it was necessary "to give a precise description of the passage of perceptual faith into explicit truth as we encounter it in the level of language, concept, and the cultural world."¹⁰

Thus, although Merleau-Ponty did die before completing his discussion of truth to his own satisfaction, his understanding of truth is to be found in all of his writings. Hence, in this thesis, I will take a point of view contrary to that of Jean-Paul Sartre's. "Sartre a

dit que Merleau-Ponty mourrait désespéré parce que l'existence ne trouvait pas sa vérité et qu'il se réfugia dans cette historicité primordiale, cette ontologie fondamentale."¹¹ I will argue that Merleau-Ponty died, as we all will die, without finishing his task but that he did not die in despair.

Merleau-Ponty states that man is condemned to meaning. We find ourselves in a world which is not only "there" but also in a world which has meaning. "The philosopher is the man who wakes up and speaks."¹² Therefore, the philosopher is condemned to be expressive and philosophy is expression. Addressing the College de France, Merleau-Ponty explained the relationship of philosophy and expression in this manner:

...Expression presupposes someone who expresses, a truth which he expresses, and the others before whom he expresses himself. The postulate of expression and of philosophy is that it can simultaneously satisfy three conditions. Philosophy can never be a tête-à-tête of the philosopher with the true. It cannot be a judgment given from on high on life, the world, history as if the philosopher were not part of it--nor can it subordinate the internally recognized truth to any exterior instance of it. It must go beyond this alternative.¹³

That which is expressed is always inseparable from its expression. Thus, truth is always inseparable from the expression which accomplishes and conveys truth.

In one of his last essays. "Le Philosophe et la Sociologie" Merleau-Ponty suggested that the only way to

understand the truth which we are embedded in is by means of our "inherence" in the world. At first it may appear that our inhabiting of the world destroys all truth; however, an understanding of our relationship to the world will pave the way to a new notion of truth.¹⁴ Man must realize that he can never search beyond his inherence in the world when trying to understand the idea of truth. The source or ground of truth is the perceived world (le monde perçu) and my "natal bond" with the world. The meaning of this union can only be found and understood within the all-encompassing bounds of my contact with the world. An understanding of the world we are grafted into on account of the inseparable union of le monde perçu and le corps propre is necessary if we are able to come to understand being, meaning and truth which are engulfing us who are implanted in the world. There is only one way to come to an understanding of the world and that is by means of our inherence or contact with the world:

The secret of the world that we are seeking must necessarily be contained in my contact with it. Inasmuch as I live it, I possess the meaning of everything I live, otherwise I would not live it; and I seek no light concerning the world except by consulting, by making explicit, my frequenting of the world, by comprehending it from within.¹⁵

Considering that we have an idea of truth and that we are inescapably rooted in being and truth, we can only come to understand truth within the bounds of our being-in-the-

world.

9

On the one hand, Merleau-Ponty states that we are always in the truth and, on the other hand, he states that we bring truth into being. We discover and, at the same time, create truth. In order to clarify Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth, I plan, first, to discuss the ground and structure of truth and, secondly, the act of truth. Then, in the final chapter, I will discuss Merleau-Ponty's new answer to the old question "What is truth?"

II

THE GROUND AND STRUCTURE OF TRUTH

Everything, indeed, is at
least two-fold. 1

M. Proust.

As we have seen Merleau-Ponty proposes than an alternative is needed to the traditional views that truth can be found "within" or "outside" of man. Phenomenology must go beyond these alternatives. Before proceeding to discuss Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the world and man's relationship to the world which is the basis of his understanding of truth, we should first examine why Merleau-Ponty found it necessary to depart from traditional subjectivism and objectivism and, at the same time, the traditional subjective and objective theories of truth.

Merleau-Ponty's philosophy can be characterized as an attempt to go beyond the either/or way of understanding the world: either one accepts subjectivism or objectivism, idealism or realism. None of these philosophical dispositions are adequate suggests Merleau-Ponty. Let us see why Merleau-Ponty found these approaches unsatis-

factory.

Early in his first published book, The Structure of Behaviour, Merleau-Ponty characterizes the ways of accounting for man's being in the world which he proposes must be replaced because they fail to assist him in his attempt to understand the relationship between consciousness and nature:

... there exists side by side a philosophy on one hand which makes of every nature an objective unity constituted viv-à-vis consciousness and, on the other hand, consciousness which treats the organism and consciousness as two orders of reality and in their reciprocal relation, as "effects" and "causes".²

Merleau-Ponty's criticisms of these philosophical views are based upon his understanding of man's relationship to the world. Traditional subjective and objective accounts of man's relationship to the world are forms of what Husserl called the natural attitude. These accounts are unsatisfactory because:

they reduce all phenomena which bears witness to the union of subject and the world, putting in their place the clear idea of the object in itself and of the subject as pure consciousness. It therefore severs the links which³ unite the thing and the embodied subject.

These approaches fail because they are unfaithful to our lived experience in the world. Prior to any analysis I know that I exist and that the world exists. Proofs of the world's existence and my existence are unfaithful to my most primitive belief in the world's existence and my

inherence in the world. Of all things, I can be certain that the world exists and that I am inhabiting the world. Analysis and proof of the world's existence overlook and presuppose our primordial belief in the world's existence.

This primordial belief, called Urdoxa by Husserl is:

the momentum which carries us beyond subjectivity, which gives us our place in the world prior to any science and any verification, through a kind of 'faith' or 'primary opinion'---⁴

The proper concern of philosophy is not to analyze the status of the world and man's relationship to the world, because our relationship to the world which we live every moment can not be clarified by further analysis: "philosophy can only place it once more before our eyes and present it for our ratification."⁵ Philosophy's task is not to prove the existence of what we experience but, instead, to bring to our attention once more our relationship to the world in order to deepen our understanding of our lived experience in the world.

We will not reach a deeper understanding of our relationship to the world if we suspend our belief in the world or detach ourselves from the world because all our knowledge springs from our presence in the world in which we find ourselves inhabiting prior to any analysis or deduction of its existence. In directing his inquiry towards a study of man's being in the world, Merleau-Ponty

offered an alternative to either idealism or realism in which consciousness and the world would be reciprocally related and interdependent. Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, "phenomenology became a way of showing the essential involvement of human existence in the world, starting with everyday perception."⁶

Considering that the source of all knowledge is my lived experience in the world, one should leave behind all scientific idealistic or realistic explanations of existence. Neither is man "a 'living creature' nor even a 'man', nor again even 'a consciousness'."⁷ What is man, then? In response to this question, Merleau-Ponty states:

I am the absolute source, my existence does not seem 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 world can have for me)⁸ the tradition which I elect to carry on,...

It is futile to attempt to prove and analyze my existence and the world's existence by means of detaching consciousness from the world because, even if one could separate consciousness from the world, to detach oneself from the world would not lead one to a proof of the world's existence. We do not need to prove that the world does exist because the world's existence is self-evident. The task of one philosopher is not to prove the world's existence but to describe the wonder of the world. "The real

has to be described, not constructed or formed",⁹ advises Merleau-Ponty. Although analytical reflexion's starting point is our experience of the world, it returns to a subject "as the condition of possibility distinct from that appearance, revealing the all-embracing synthesis as that without which there would be no world."¹⁰ Thus, analytical reflexion leaves the realm of experience and offers instead a "reconstruction"¹¹ of our experience in the world.

The world we are rooted in is not an intentional object whose being is bestowed upon it by a consciousness and neither is the world an entity existing independently of man and, also, the world is not an object from which man can detach himself or suspend belief in. The world "is not an object such that I have in my possession the law of its making; it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions."¹² Furthermore, the true cogito which for Merleau-Ponty is being-in-the-world does not define the subject's existence in terms of the thought he has of existing and, also, "does not convert the indubitability of thought about the world, nor finally does it replace the world itself by the world of meaning."¹³ Instead of taking either of these courses, "it recognizes my thought itself as an inalienable fact, and does away with any kind of idealism

in revealing me as 'being-in-the-world'."¹⁴

Furthermore, we must not question whether we perceive a world. Instead, we must say: "the world is what we perceive."¹⁵ The final court of appeal in these matters is experience. I know that there is a world because I find myself present in the world:

The world is not what I think but what I live through: I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it; it is inexhaustible. 'There is a world'; or rather: 'There is the world'; I can never completely account for this ever-reiterated assertion in my life.¹⁶

We choose the world and simultaneously we are chosen by the world. Together, the world and man are the setting or field of our lived experience. The subject which I am, is inseparably united with the body and the world in which the body, in turn, is inseparably bound.

Traditional subjectivist and objectivist theories are unsatisfactory because they overlooked man's primordial belief in the existence of the world and were unfaithful to man's lived experience. Considering that man's relationship to the world and its contents can not be adequately understood by either of these two traditional approaches, neither can truth be understood in terms of traditional subjectivist or objectivistic theories. Traditionally truth has usually been considered to be a property of a proposition or an object, As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty

does not think whatever is apprehended in the world has its meaning bestowed upon it by a consciousness and neither does anything exist independently of the subject: they are both reciprocally related. Like the world, truth is not an intention whose meaning is bestowed upon it by an act of consciousness and neither is truth a property of an event or object existing independently of the subject. Furthermore, and more significantly, the traditional theories of truth are unacceptable because they consider truth to be a property of an object, proposition or judgment. For Merleau-Ponty, truth is not a property: it is our milieu, a mode of being-in-the-world, which is brought into existence by philosophy like beauty is brought into existence by art.

Having discussed why Merleau-Ponty considered truth to be something not found "within" or "outside" of man, we are now in a position to examine "Merleau-Ponty's alternative to traditional subjectivist and objectivist accounts of man's lived experience and theories of truth.

"The way out is via the door. Why is it that no one will use this method?" asked Confucius. In this case, the door is the ground: the door to truth is the ground of truth which is the phenomenological, perceived or natural world "inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity."¹⁷ The ultimate philosophical problem, admits Merleau-Ponty,

is to understand how we are projects of the world.

To begin with, contrary to Husserl, Merleau-Ponty does not consider the world to be a correlate of a pure ego. The world's existence is not dependent upon the constitution of the world by a consciousness, not upon my "thinking the world", but instead upon my living through the world. What does this mean? The world is not constituted by my consciousness of the world. To the contrary, consciousness finds itself already at work in the world which is presented to us through perception prior to any analysis on our part. The world we find ourselves living through is not the "real" objective world and neither is the world the correlate of an intending consciousness. The world and man are inseparably bound together:

The world is inseparable from the subject, but the subject is nothing but a project of the world, but from a world which he himself projects. The subject is being-in-the-world, and the world remains 'subjective' since its texture and articulations are indicated by the subject's movement of transcendence.¹⁸

Although Merleau-Ponty is critical of traditional realistic and objectivistic thought, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the world is subjective because he considers the world's existence to be relative to the existential projects of the bodily subject. Merleau-Ponty is not sug-

gesting that the world is an intention of consciousness and neither is he suggesting that the world can exist independently of the subject . The world, suggests Merleau-Ponty, has meaning solely in terms of its relation to the body-subject, which is a power of meaning and expression, and, thus, it can be said that Merleau-Ponty has idealized the world. The world which is the correlate of our bodily subjectivity is the phenomenal, perceived or natural world:

The natural world is the horizon of all horizons, the style of all possible styles, which guarantees for my experiences a given, not a willed unity underlying all the disruption of my personal and historical life. Its counterpart within me is the given, general and pre-personal existence of my sensory functions in which we have discovered the definition of the body.¹⁹

Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the world is deeply influenced by Husserl's notion of intentionality. Husserl had suggested that the world was an intention of a transcendental ego and, on the other hand, Merleau-Ponty suggests that the world exists for the body-subject. One realizes the inadequacy of objectivist thought when one discovers that the world one inhabits can not exist in-itself. Contrary to realism's suggestion that consciousness is a representation or a reflection, Merleau-Ponty proposes that the realm of experience is not a diluted reproduction of a world "out there" existing in-itself and independently of the mind. By virtue of not accepting

the idea that the world is merely a conceived world and, secondly, by virtue of not accepting the idea that consciousness is a fabrication or a reflection of a world existing independently of consciousness, Merleau-Ponty tries to unite extreme subjectivism and objectivism: every subject is a project of the world, or, in other words, a being in the world and, simultaneously, the world is a correlate of our bodily existence. In short, the subject and the world are inseparably united together and the existence of each is relative to the existence of the other. It is not a relationship in consciousness "but a relation in being."²⁰ Merleau-Ponty has avoided Husserl's idealism because the subject for whom the world exists is not a constituting consciousness. For Merleau-Ponty, the subject is the existence of our body-subject which finds itself at work in a world it did not create ex nihilo. In order to understand the sense in which we do constitute the world, one must understand what Merleau-Ponty means by subjectivity. First, there is the usual meaning of subjectivity: the thinking, reflecting, subject and explicit awareness of our experience of our experience. Subjectivity in the sense of a body-subject or incarnate subjectivity underlying our natural and aware subjectivity is the second sense of subjectivity. The body-subject "forces his ipseity into reality only by actually

being a body, and entering the world through that body."²¹
The thinking subject, aware of his existence does not structure or constitute the world. However, I, a subjectivity in the second sense of subjectivity, do constitute the world. Hence, only in terms of this new sense of subjectivity can Merleau-Ponty's philosophy be considered to be subjective.

To question whether the world would exist if man did not exist and whether man would exist if the world did not exist is to question the meaning of the world. In short, this question is not an ontological question, but a question of meaning. The world is the world that I experience, that I participate with; it is not a world which I think of and create ex nihilo. In order to decide whether the world could exist, prior to man finding himself in the world one would have to probe beyond the world and the realm of experience which is an impossibility. Absurdity arises in philosophy, warned Husserl "when one philosophizes and, in probing for ultimate information as to the meaning of the world, one fails to notice that the whole being consists in a certain "meaning" ..."²² According to Husserl, the meaning of the world presupposes an absolute consciousness which is the field from which all meaning is derived. Although Merleau-Ponty does consider the meaning of the world to be derived from

a subject, the subject in Merleau-Ponty's view is not a constituting consciousness but a bodily subjectivity. Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty would agree with Husserl's view that questions regarding the status of the world prior to man's presence fail to take into account that the being of the world exists in a meaning which is constituted, in Merleau-Ponty's view by a bodily subjectivity. Although Merleau-Ponty does suggest that the perceived, phenomenological world is drawn from a pre-world existing prior to the fusion of the body-subject and the world, he fails to explain clearly the manner in which the phenomenological world emerges from the pre-world and more significantly, he fails to establish that a pre-world does exist.

The most important aspect of the subject's relation to the world is the fact that the world's self-giveness or presence to the subject is not the result of a constituting activity on the part of bodily subjectivity. When I perceive the world I do not possess the world in thought. Instead, I abandon myself to the world and the world thinks itself in me. The world is given in perception not as something which is made by consciousness but as something which is already present. Subjectivity "does not constitute the world, it divines the world's presence around about it as a field not provided by it-

self; nor does it constitute the word;... nor again the meaning of the word."²³ The world's meaning emerges in relation to bodily subjectivity. In reply to the question, "For what precisely is meant by saying that the world existed before any human consciousness?"²⁴ Merleau-Ponty replies that an example of what is meant is the nebula of Laplace which, it was proposed, existed at the origin of the world. This explanation of the world's origin fails because "nothing will ever bring home to my comprehension what a nebula that no one sees could possibly be."²⁵ To say that there is no world without a being in the world is not to say that:

the world is constituted by consciousness, but on the contrary that consciousness finds itself at work in the world. What is true, taking one thing with another is that there is a nature which is not that of the sciences, but that even the light of consciousness is, as Heidegger H says, lumen naturale, given to itself.²⁶

In the lived experience of the world which is presupposed by all scientific explanations of the origin of the world's existence is found a body-subject which discovered itself at work in a world "already there" prior to its analysis of the world. On one hand, it is the case that the world is defined in relation to a body-subject and, on the other hand, the body-subject is defined in relation to the world. The world exists and has meaning because it is present to a subject and the subject exists by virtue

of being present in and to a world. Thus, to question whether the world could exist if man did not exist and whether man could exist if the world did not exist, which are questions concerning the meaning of the world, is to overlook the most important aspect of man's relationship to the world and the world's relationship to man--the simultaneousness of the perceiving subject and of the perceived world.²⁷

Perception is the life-giving presence which nourishes and sustains all of our knowledge of the world, being and truth:

Perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position, it is a background from which all acts stand out and is presupposed by them.²⁸

To perceive is "to see surging (jaillir) forth from a constellation of data, an immanent significance without which no appeal to memory is possible."²⁹ In other words, to perceive is not to judge, "it is to apprehend an immanent sense in the sensible before judgment begins."³⁰

Our experience of perception at the moment when the world takes on meaning is called the primacy of perception by Merleau-Ponty. By virtue of the primacy of perception, there is a natal bond between man and the world. Perception provides the milieu needed for the emergence and growth of truth and our knowledge of the world. The perceiving subject who is rooted in the world and his point

of view which is his body must reach towards and take a grip on those things for which the perceiving subject possesses, "in advance, no key and for which he nevertheless carries within himself the project, and open himself to an absolute other which he is making ready in the depths of his being.."³¹

I am able to perceive on account of being a body. I do not have a body, I am a body. The body provides man with his point of view of the world. The body, in harmony with the world's logic, is a condition of the possibility of our knowledge of the world:

...To have a body is to possess a universal setting, a schema of all types of perceptual unfolding and of those inter-sensory correspondences which lie beyond the segment of the world we are actually perceiving.³²

Perceiving is not a simple matter of the transference of truth and being from the world to man. To think that the light of perception provides life and nourishment to man by means of a simple, one-way continual transference is akin to naively arguing that the sun gives life and nourishment to plants which bask in its light by means of a simple, one-way transference of the sun's light to the plants. Instead, perception, like photosynthesis is a complex process involving actively the entire environment:

...A thing is, therefore, not actually given in perception, it is internally taken up by us in so far as it is bound up with a world, the basic structures of which we carry with us, and of which

it is merely one of the many possible concrete forms.³³

Looking at the table before me, I am unable to separate my act of perceiving from the writing pad that I see on the table. The act of perceiving and that which is perceived (le perçu) are inseparably united. Hence, it is not possible for me to separate my perceiving of the writing pad from the perceived which, in this case, is the writing pad. Frequently it is argued that I can be certain of my perceiving of the writing pad but that I cannot be certain that the writing pad is there, before me on the table. Considering that 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,"³⁴ it is impossible that I can be certain of my perceiving a writing pad on the table without there being the perceived, which in this instance is the writing pad. "Perception and the perceived (le perçu) necessarily share the same existential modality, since perception is inseparable from the consciousness which it has, or rather is, of reaching the thing itself."³⁵ Thus, any argument "that the perception is indubitable, whereas the thing perceived is not, must be ruled out."³⁶

Although the world has meaning, being and truth by virtue of my living through the world, I am not the creator of the world and the world's meaning and truth.

The world was "there" prior to my perception of the world or my reflexion upon the world:

It is there before our undivided existence that the world is true or exists,...which is to say that we experience in the world a truth which emerges on its own or which possesses us rather than being held or delineated by ourselves.³⁷

I am the absolute source of meaning, being and truth, or in other words, my existence, in the sense that I am inseparably rooted in and engulfed by the world. I am unable to separate my being from the world's being. Hence, I who am inseparably united with the world, can not be the creator of the meaning, being and truth of the world. My existence does not spring from a crack in the plenitude of the world. Instead, my being moves toward the world in which, at the same time, it is rooted, and sustains the world for "I alone bring into being for myself (and therefore into being in the only sense that the word can have for me) the tradition which I elect to carry on..."³⁸

The perceiver is neither a subject nor another object in objective space. As we have seen, the perceiver has an ontological relation to the world. The perceiver is neither a subject nor an object; he is a subject-object. How can one be both a subject and an object at the same time? Merleau-Ponty is suggesting that one perceives and is perceived at the same time. One is visible and sees at the same time. In other words, one is a subject-object,

a "perceiving-perceptible", at the same moment.

In his final writings, Merleau-Ponty proposes that our relationship to the world is not dialectical. Instead, he suggests that the ultimate and final truth is the reversibility permeating and structuring man's perceptual world. This thesis was supported by Merleau-Ponty's study of the relationship between the visible and the seeing, the touched and touching, and also between meaning and speech.

What happens when I look at the world? My relationship to the world when feeling, seeing or thinking is not akin to a beach lying beside a huge ocean--each lapping against each other. When I look at the world, there is an immersion of the seeing into the visible. I am no longer gazing at the figure against a background because I have been incorporated into the landscape. Whether I am looking at a painting of a sunset or I am watching the sun set, I am immediately possessed by the visible and, thereby, become another visible in an ocean of visibles whilst, at the same time, being a seer. The seer "is one of the visibles, capable by a single reversal of seeing them--he who is one of them."³⁹ When Rodin's work The Age of Bronze was exhibited in the Palais de l'Industrie of Paris, Rodin vehemently objected to the presentation of his work. The sculpture was there for all to see, maintained the exhibitors. Why, then, did Rodin object

to their mode of presenting his work? The work had not been placed in a large, well-lit, airy room but, against his wishes, had been placed in the corner of a small, dark room. Furthermore, the statue had been elevated higher than Rodin had requested. Therefore, the viewers were forced to stare up at the sculpture and were not able to walk around the statue. Whilst catching some of the power of the work by means of craning their necks and by seeing only one side of the statue, the viewers were unable to see and to come to understand the beauty, truth and meaning that the sculpture bore. Thus, most viewers were overpowered by the immensity and nakedness of The Age of Bronze. If the viewers were to see the sculpture, it was necessary that they be able to walk around the statue, be ensnared by its beauty, being and truth, and, thus, become part of the sculpture and the sculpture to be able to become part of the viewer: then, the perceiver and the perceived would be inseparably united. Only when the viewer and the visible were welded into one, would the viewer have seen the sculpture.

On account of vision, there is a visible. Furthermore, on account of vision, I am one of the visibles. My seeing of the world is supported by the visibility of the flesh (la chair) of the world whilst, at the same time, my seeing of the world "actualizes" the world's visibility.⁴⁰

My seeing of the world is an act of appropriation which renders the world visible. What is the flesh of the world which one sees, touches and shapes? First, the flesh of the world is not composed of matter. The flesh is "the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body..."⁴¹ The wrapping of the visible around the viewer or of the touchable upon the toucher is witnessed on the occasions when:

the body sees itself, touches itself seeing and touching the things, such that, simultaneously as tangible it descends among them, as touching it dominates them all and draws this relationship and even this double relationship from itself, by dehiscence or fission of its own mass.⁴²

The flesh of the world which is the underlying and most fundamental reality is not a contingency or chaos but "a texture that returns to itself and conforms to itself."⁴³ Being the medium in which both the subject and the object emerges, the flesh of the world precedes the birth of the subject and the object and is the condition of possibility of their emergence. Furthermore, we must not consider the origin of the flesh was body and spirit because "then it would be the union of contradictions."⁴⁴ Instead, we must consider the flesh of the world to be an element, "as the concrete problem of a general manner of being."⁴⁵

Just as there is a reversibility between the visible and the viewer, there is a reversibility between the touched and the touching. When my right hand touches my left

hand, my left hand is touched and, at the same moment, it is touching. Just as the seer and the visible adhered together, the toucher and the touched adhere together. At the moment when two people shake hands and their bodies touch each other's bodies, it is as if the sandbanks between two reservoirs had been suddenly removed and, thus, two worlds had opened up to each other whilst, at the same time, they rushed forward to each other. Explaining how man can be a perceiving perceptible, Merleau-Ponty states:

the body sensed and the body sentient are as the obverse and the reverse, or again, as two segments of one creative course which goes above from the left to the right, but which is one sole movement in its two phases.⁴⁶

Furthermore, reversibility manifests itself in, and supports, man's relationship to the world. "And everything said about the sensed body pertains to the whole of the sensible of which it is a part, and to the world."⁴⁷

There is a reversibility between the visible and the seer, and also between the touched and the toucher. Similarly, there is a reversibility between speech and meaning:

As there is a reversibility of the seeing and the visible, and as at the point where metamorphoses cross what we call perception is born, so also there is a reversibility of speech and what it signifies;...⁴⁸

When one speaks, one's words give meaning and expression

to a thought. The meaning of the thought which did not exist prior to the expression of the thought in speech "supports our speaking and likewise is its result."⁴⁹ The meaning of a thought which is accomplished and conveyed by speech is also antedated by the meaning which is the result of our act of speech because the meaning guided our expression:

...the signification rebounds upon its own means,...it antedates itself by a retrograde movement which is never completely belied-- because already, in opening the horizon of the nameable and of the sayable, the speech acknowledges that it has its place in that horizon;...⁵⁰

There is no thought to be expressed until the thought is spoken but the meaning of the thought guides the expression of the thought. When one breaks his silence and speaks, the speaker discovers that the idea and the thought that he has expressed were originally present in the world.

Furthermore, there is a reversibility between the inner world of silence, alive with words, out of which speech arises and the world of speech. When one reads a book, one discovers what was present in the realm of our inner silence, is the source of all meaning, and was waiting to be discovered. When we read phenomenological texts, Merleau-Ponty suggests that we discover what we had always known. For instance, when one reads Husserl or Heidegger, one has the impression "not so much of encour-

tering a new philosophy as of recognizing what they had been waiting for." 51

Just as the visible is the reverse side of the seeing and the tangible is the reverse side of the touching, meaning is the reverse side of speech. However, the seen, touched and meaning are not on the other side of the acts of seeing, touching and speech in the sense of being in a separate, autonomous realm. Instead, the relationship of the visible to seeing, of the tangible to touching and of meaning to speech is like the relationship of one side of a piece of fabric to the other side of the fabric. The warp and the weft of both sides are interwoven and form a unity--our being-in-the-world. Engulfed by the world and rooted in the world, we are all "like weavers working on the wrong side of the fabric who suddenly find themselves surrounded by meaning." 52 What is there between the visible and the viewer, between the hand touched and the hand touching, between meaning and speech, between one side of a piece of fabric and the reverse side? There is not an ontological void or, in other words, a chasm of non-being. Instead, the two sides are spanned by the total being of my body and the world's being.

The most important accomplishment of phenomenology is its union of extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world or rationality. Paradox-

ically, phenomenology which Merleau-Ponty characterized as a "disclosure of the world" establishes its own foundations. All our knowledge, states Merleau-Ponty, "is sustained by a 'ground' of postulates and finally by our communication with the world as the primary embodiment of rationality."⁵³ Ultimately, I have knowledge of the world, of being and of truth on account of my consciousness of the world which is the ultimate foundation of all being, meaning and truth and is beyond justification. By virtue of my consciousness of the world, the world has meaning, engulfs me and, thereby, exists. Merleau-Ponty acknowledges that one of Husserl's most significant contributions was his characterization of intentionality in terms of consciousness and the world being completely united. Husserl called this general intentionality which was the ground of man's inherence in the perceived world fungierende Intentionalität. For Merleau-Ponty, this general intentionality was perception, which was "the consciousness through which from the outset, a world forms around me and begins to exist for me."⁵⁴ The general type of intentionality as opposed to particular intentionality provided an environment for the emergence of meaning, being and truth. Intentionality is neither purely creative nor completely passive. Instead, intentionality, which in Merleau-Ponty's hands became percep-

tion, is the act of signification by means of which the body conveys and accomplishes meaning.

The phenomenological world is not a second-order reality--the first order or most primordial reality being a pre-existing Logos. There is no second-order reality. There is only the world which is the only pre-existing Logos. The phenomenological world is not a refinement of a pre-existing being but is the "laying down of being."⁵⁵ The first truth that one discovers and upon which all other truths are founded is the presence of the world and one's inherence in the world. Considering that no pre-existing or antecedent realm of being existed prior to the world's existence, philosophy can not be a reflexion upon a pre-existing being and truth. Like art, philosophy "is the act of bringing truth into creation."⁵⁶ However, how can one bring truth, meaning and being into existence without the foundation of a pre-existing reason or world? The answer lies in the fact that the only pre-existing Logos or reason is the world itself. The philosophy which promotes this Logos to visible existence, states Merleau-Ponty;

does not begin by being possible; it is actual or real, like the world of which it is a part, and no explanatory hypothesis is clearer than the act whereby we take up this unfinished world in an effort to complete and conceive it.⁵⁷

Ultimately, the ground of all truth is the ontological contingency of the world;-- the simple fact that the world is here, a plenitude of being which engulfs us.

We know that rationality is not a problem or a puzzle to be solved either inductively or deductively on account of our presence in the ontologically contingent world. Every moment we witness the "miracle of related experiences and yet nobody knows better than we do how this miracle is worked, for we are ourselves this network of relationships."⁵⁸ Although rationality and the world are not a problem, they can be problematic. The mystery of the world and reason, although problematic, defines and shapes the world and reason. Considering that they are "on the other side of all solution,"⁵⁹ phenomenology's task is to unveil the mystery of the world and reason.⁶⁰

For Merleau-Ponty, Husserl's famous dictum--
return to the things themselves--meant:

...a return to the world which precedes all 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 countryside in which we learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is.⁶¹

In short, the basis of all knowledge and truth is man's adherence to the world through his body. I am my body and "I am my life,"⁶² which is rooted in the phenomenal world. Merleau-Ponty admits that the perceptual world is funda-

mentally Being in the Heideggerian sense, which when apprehended by philosophy appears to bear everything that will ever be said and, yet, leaves us to create it.⁶³ Truth and philosophy are not artifacts adorning our cultural world. They are creations emerging from our inherence in being and our condemnation to meaning and expression.

As we have seen perception and the perceived, and similarly, expression and truth are inseparable. Perception and expression are both two-sided because they neither solely create nor discover meaning and truth. Perception, like expression, simultaneously discovers and creates truth and meaning. Perception creates with one stroke, "along with the cluster of data, the meaning which unites them--indeed which not only discovers the meaning which they have, but moreover causes them to have meaning."⁶⁴ When we apprehend the world it appears "to contain everything that will ever be said and yet leaves us to create it (Proust)."⁶⁵ Therefore, like perception and expression, truth is two-sided. First, truth is that which is recovered or discovered in the inner realm of silence. Secondly, truth is that which is created and promoted to existence by expression. In other words, at the same time, truth has an archeological and teleological nature. Truth does not precede the act of reflexion and expression;

truth is the result of these acts. In order to understand the two-sidedness of truth, let us examine the structure of truth. In other words, let us proceed to discuss the archeology and teleology of truth.

Truth is unable to exist prior to the act of expression which brings truth into existence from an inner world of silence, the background of pre-language which supports and sustains language. Hence philosophical thought is unable to have meaning or exist prior to being expressed. Truth, meaning and being, like beauty, come into existence by means of expression. "In the silence of primary consciousness can be seen appearing not only what things mean; the core of primary meaning around which the acts of naming and expression take place."⁶⁶ From the moment the philosopher seeks the truth, he does not think that truth has to wait for his discovery and expression of this hidden treasure in order to be true. He seeks the truth as what has always been true for everyone.⁶⁷

On account of our being-in-the-world, we will always be expressive and be in meaning. We are unable to do anything without causing ripples on the ocean of meaning we are engulfed by. True or authentic speech signifies and "renders 'l'absent de tous les bouquets' present and frees the meaning captive in the thing."⁶⁸ Expression's ability to signify is a secondary power derived from the inner

world of language. By virtue of truth coming into existence from a "core of primary meaning" truth has an archeological nature. Truth arises from and manifests a latent and operant meaning which is grounded in and engendered by a prior archē. When one looks at the world, he always returns to his world, his silent world because the gestures by means of which he can express the world are within this realm. Within this silent world is found an inner Logos.

When Carter and Lord Caernarvon were searching for the tomb of Tutankhamun, mere empirical studies of pyramids, maps, or previously found treasures did not lead the men to the lost tomb. It was necessary to transcend time, to consider the area before pyramids were built, to learn to read the manuscripts dating from that period. In order to discover this hidden world, these men had to throw themselves back into the world in which the pyramids were built. In short, the men searching for Tutankhamun's tomb were not solely surveyors, cartographers, excavators, historians or readers of hieroglyphics--they were archeologists. The same method must be employed if one is looking for the silent world which is the hidden background of our present world. We are all like children when we discover or learn a new world or language. For those learning a new language, language always precedes

itself and the learner. Without the prior existence of language, no language could be learnt. Language is its own precursor. Radiating its own meaning, language teaches itself. The entrance to the world of language is from within. "Only language as a whole enables one to understand how language draws the child to himself."⁶⁹

Finding oneself in a world that is there, full of meaning, one experiences un logos sauvage which one is compelled to elucidate by the logos itself. All forms of expression, such as painting, sculpting, writing or composing have the same sort of genesis (Sinngensis). When we speak, we are making truth. Hence, truth is teleological. Why does man speak? We speak because we have something to say and, secondly, because we find ourselves in a world that is inexhaustably expressible. True speech always signifies and, thereby, renders the absent present. When speech is not used as a tool it is "a manifestation, a revelation of intimate being and of the psychic link which unites us to the world and to our fellow men."⁷⁰ It is a "miracle" that our body allows itself to be invested with a figurative significance that is conveyed beyond our body. In order for this "miracle" to come about, "phonetic 'gesticulation' must use an alphabet of already acquired meanings."⁷¹ Authentic expression is always creative on account of expressing what had, hither-

to, not been thought. Expression draws upon what we think we have thought but which we will never think until we express it. Man's most primordial essence is his ability to be expressive, creative and productive. This essence is most eminently manifested in the creation of language.

It is necessary to speak in order to begin the creation of language and in order to preserve language, it is necessary to create language. We would not be able to speak unless the "pre-world" or bed-rock of all speech was present within us. An utterance is possible because previously discovered, appropriated and sedimented meanings provide the ground for future discoveries, appropriations and sedimentation of meanings. A painting is not a painting until it is painted and similarly, "the only way to grasp an idea is to produce it."⁷² While the idea may be "made" by man, an idea, like a painting is not "made" ex nihilo. We are able to think and be expressive just as painters can paint because of the sedimentation of previously apprehended meanings. At the same time, language is being sedimented and rejuvenated. Given that "a language is in effect a tradition but a tradition that is an appeal to renew expression, to begin again the initial creative work,"⁷³ in order for the constant appropriation, sedimentation and rejuvenation of meaning to occur, language must be alive and creative.

Hence, from the teleological point of view, expression is the creation or promotion of existence to truth. At the same time, expression is the discovery and recuperation of a latent or operant meaning, Logos and truth. Philosophy, as the study of the lived world and the "laying down of being" is neither exclusively creation nor exclusively discovery on account of the two sidedness of truth. Whatever philosophy creates or brings into being is defined and delineated by the world in which it is rooted. "What there is is a creation that is called forth and engendered by the Lebenswelt as operative, latent historicity, that prolongs it and bears witness to it---."74

Merleau-Ponty realized that any attempt to understand the lived world (Lebenswelt) would be dependent upon the discovery of the world of silence existing prior to speech. In other words, it is necessary to consider the underlying structure and horizon of language which is "the background of silence which does not cease to surround it speech and without which it would say nothing."75

In response to the question "Did the world of silence exist before man spoke?" Merleau-Ponty replies that the world was present as a non-thematized Lebenswelt. Furthermore, replies Merleau-Ponty:

In a sense it is still involved as non-themalized by the very statements that describe it: for

the statements as such will in their turn be sedimented, "taken back" by the Lebenswelt, will be comprehended in it rather than they comprehend it--.⁷⁶

Considering that we do not know what we think until we express ourselves and, secondly, considering that by means of the act of expression, truth and meaning emerge from a world of silence; in order to understand why truth can, at the same time, be archeological and teleological, we must examine the act of truth.

III

THE ACT OF TRUTH

Our view of man will remain superficial as long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence, and as long as we do not describe the action which breaks this silence. The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning, a world.¹

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Man's most fundamental impulse is to speak or, in other words, to be expressive. "Language is everything," said Valéry, "since it is the voice of things, the waves and the forest."² Philosophy turns towards this anonymous symbolic activity of inner silence and towards the personal discourse developing within us--which we are. Philosophy tries to catch sight of the moment in which a meaning takes possession of itself. Philosophy "recovers this meaning and also pushes beyond all limits. The becoming of truth which presupposes and brings it about that there is only one history and one world."³ Everything comes to pass as though the philosopher wished to put into words, and promote to truth his inner world of silence which is

pregnant with meaning. The act of truth is the act through which thought immortalizes itself as truth. We follow Husserl's advice to return to the things themselves by returning to the world preceding reflexion, of which knowledge and experience always speak. The phenomenon of truth which is theoretically impossible, "is known only through the praxis which creates it."⁴ Hence, let us now proceed to examine the act of truth. It is by studying expression and language that we will come to understand that the act of truth is an act which establishes and manifests the coherence of the world.

The most important characteristic of man is his ability to accomplish and convey meaning, or, in other words, to be expressive. Considering that I can only experience the consciousness which I am, only I have access to the origin of sense. In the silence of our primary consciousness "can be seen appearing not only what words mean but also what things mean: the core of primary meaning around which the acts of naming and expression take shape."⁵ A return to the origin of being, meaning, truth and language is a return to the world of silence.

Why does man break his silence and speak? Why is man expressive? As we have seen, man speaks because he finds himself in a world full of meaning. He speaks because he has something to say. Man's intention to

speech can only be engendered by and reside in man's open experience in the world. "Language is borne by our relationship to the world and to others, which in turn supports and creates it."⁶ By means of language "our horizon is open and endless (endlos), and it is because we know that 'everything has a name' that each thing exists and has a way of existing for us."⁷ Man breaks his silence in order to accomplish his thoughts and bring meaning and truth into existence. Language accomplishes and conveys, and also, recovers and presents the meaning of our thoughts. To search for the origin of man's act of expression is, ultimately, to search for the origin of the world's existence on account of language's power of bringing the expressed into existence.

Experiencing an urge to speak, we break our silence. By breaking our silence, we bring into existence our thoughts and, therefore, we are expressive and we give birth to language. Without the background of language which surrounds language, we would not be able to be expressive. Thus, in order to understand speech, we must study speech before it is spoken, or, in other words, the background of silence. The philosopher enjoys a privileged position 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 else that what is lived is lived spoken,

that, born at this depth, language is not a mark over being...but the most valuable witness to Being, that it does not interrupt an immediation that would be perfect without it, that the vision itself, the thought itself, are, as has been said 'structured in language' are articulation before the letter, apparition of something where there is nothing.⁸

In what manner do meaning and truth emerge together from this silence alive with meaning? "Pure" thought reduces itself to a certain void of consciousness and a momentary desire to speak and fill this void. The new sense giving intention knows itself only by means of donning already available, sedimented meanings which are the result of previous acts of expression. The meaning of an object or state of affairs "is given only as a systematic deformation of our universe of experience, without our ever being able to name its operative principle."⁹ With a sudden thrust, available meanings in accordance with an unknown law, link up and "once and for all a fresh cultural entity has taken on an existence."¹⁰ Meaning and truth emerge according to an unknown law in the sense that within each of us there is an unknown Logos or order according to which meaning and truth comes to the surface. The emergence of a particular meaning can not be explained by laws of association because "the link between the word and its living meaning is not an external link of association, the meaning inhabits the word, and language 'is not

an external accompaniment to intellectual processes'.¹¹
Then, in turn, this "fresh cultural entity" becomes sedimented into the residue of available meanings out of which it emerged. A thought and, therefore, the truth and meaning of the thought and of the world come into being simultaneously. The meaning of the spoken word is a world. In short, thought and expression are inseparable. One speaks what one thinks and thinks what one speaks.¹² Hence, prior to expression of a thought, there is no thought to express.

The common-sense view of thought and speech in terms of external relations suggests that the speaking subject and the words are a representation or a translation of thoughts. If this was the case, one would be able to think before one spoke. It is impossible to think before speaking because in thinking one speaks and in speaking one is thinking. Our "inner life" is alive with words. The inner world is an inner language. Hence, it is not the case that prior to expression, there is thought. Prior to the invention of the printing press and the subsequent distribution of books and the rise in literacy,¹³ scops or raconteurs travelled and told stories. These men were able to compose an original story for a new audience on account of their possession of what was called a word-hord.¹⁴ In their word-hord was contained a

vast selection of fragments of stories, myths, parables and recent news along with certain turns of phrases, idioms and sayings. Every scop had travelled different routes and sedimented his hoard of words in a different manner. Furthermore, every scop had his own distinctive way of telling a tale in a new manner--of drawing upon his collection of words and bringing to existence an original story. We are no different than the raconteurs of past ages. Each of us possesses our own distinctive word-hord which we partly inherit and also add to during our life. On account of our hoarding and sedimentation of previously apprehended, conveyed and accomplished meanings we are able to be expressive. Considering that each of us inherits and inheres in a different situation, each of us has a different word-hord and tells our tale in a different style. If one tried to pry open the scop's word-hord one would find just as one does when one tries to discover what is behind speech, an inner word-hord. Our realm of silence out of which thought and words emerge is alive with words having an inner language. Thus, within our word-hord we find another word-hord full of thoughts, words and meaning.

According to empiricists we speak in response to certain stimuli which in accord with laws of neurological mechanics cause excitations capable of causing to occur

the articulation of a word. On the other hand, intellectualists suggest that certain states of consciousness by virtue of acquired associations prompt the appearance of an appropriate verbal image. For the empiricists the meaning of a word is given with the stimulus and according to the intellectualists the meaning is transferred with the states of consciousness. All intellectualistic and empiricist explanations of speech are inadequate because they fail to take into account that a word has the meaning--that the word is the meaning. If thought was prior to speech and if expression was "primarily a matter of meeting the object through a cognitive intention or through a representation, we could not understand why thought tends toward expression as towards its completion."¹⁵ Empiricist and intellectualistic explanations do not recognize that a word accomplishes and bears meaning and truth--that a word lives.

The philosopher is the man who wakes up and speaks. Seeing that the world is a plenitude of being full of meaning and things to be expressed, he is compelled to speak. This urge to speak is heightened by man's discovery, as Husserl brought it to our attention, that the essence of things always have an etcetera and, secondly, by man's discovery of his intimate relationship with time. The candle is burning at both ends of the tallow. When man

discovers that the world is inexhaustibly expressible, at the same time, man discovers the limitations placed on his ability to be expressive which are imposed upon him by time.

Like the world, time exists for me on account of my finding myself in time. "Time exists for me only because I am situated in it, that is because I become aware of myself as already committed to it."¹⁶ Why is this the case? Time exists for me in this manner because:

the whole of being is not given to me incarnate, and finally because one sector of being is so close to me that it does not even make up a picture before me--I cannot see it, just as I cannot see my face.¹⁷

Time exists for me now and always because I have a present. To be in the present is to have a hold on the world and to be of the world. Time is someone:

Temporal dimensions, in so far as they perpetually overlap bear each other out and ever confine themselves to making explicit what was implied in each, being collectively expressive of that one single explosion or thrust which is subjectivity itself.¹⁸

When man realizes that the world is inexhaustibly expressible and that he is time and, therefore, that his encounter with all dimensions of time is an encounter with himself, he is overcome by his desire to express the expressible world. The realization that time is "running out" and, therefore, that he is "running out" in the face

of the world, prompts man to be expressive.

When I break my silence, I am conscious of reaching for an object. I have the object's meaning and the word simultaneously. Hence, at the same moment, I have speech and I am speech. Expression and thought can not be understood in terms of a stimulus-response mechanism or in terms of states of consciousness or awareness because a thought is born in and borne by a word by virtue of speech's power to accomplish and bear a thought. Thus, thought and expression are inseparable and come into being at the same time. Hence, thought is not antecedent to expression. When I am thinking, I am speaking, and when I am speaking, I am thinking.

On account of thought being spontaneous, it never coincides with itself but is always out-distancing itself. An expression, because it is heavy with meaning, can out-run what has been previously thought. To speak is to take up a situation in the world and, at the same time, to transcend the situation. Hence, a speaker often discovers more meaning in his words than he thought he had said. Therefore, all thought, including solitary thought, seeks expression. A painting is not a painting until it is painted because expression is the realization and adequation of a sense-giving intention. Speech is the paradoxical operation through which:

by using words of a given sense and already available meanings we try to follow up an intention which necessarily outstrips, modifies, and itself, in the last analysis stabilizes the meaning of the words which translate it.¹⁹

Truth and meaning are present in the world from the beginning but as a task to be accomplished. The phenomenon of expression which promotes the meaning and truth of being into existence does not translate or envelop thought. Thought, like truth and meaning is not an "internal thing" and neither does it exist independently of the world and of words. Thought, as empiricist and intellectualistic theories fail to consider, is present in speech.²⁰ In order for an external relation to exist between thought and speech, both thought and speech would have to be thematically given, "whereas in fact they are interinvolved, the sense being held within the word, and the word being the external existence of the sense."²¹ Furthermore, words are not "strong-holds of thought" by virtue of words having the power to signify and convey meaning. Words are the "presence" of thought in the world. Words do not swaddle the meaning of a thought: the word is the body of the thought. In short, thought, like truth and meaning is not an "internal thing" and does not exist independently of the world and of words on account of its inherence in speech.

What is a word? A word is a gesture. By means of our gesture we shape the world and give it meaning. A word does not envelop, transfer, translate or refer to meaning because a word has meaning. What, then, is the relationship of a word to meaning? Truth and meaning are embodied in and conveyed by the words:

Beneath the conceptual meaning of words is found an existential meaning which is not only rendered by them but which inhabits them and is inseparable from them.²²

Meaning is not spread on an expression like "butter is spread on bread, like the second layer of 'psychic reality' spread over the sound."²³ Instead, meaning is spread on a word in the same manner in which an artist spreads paint on a canvas: the paint is not a layer superimposed on a canvas because the paint is taken up by the canvas. The paint and the canvas are inseparably bound together and form a totality which bears meaning. In the case of a spoken word, the meaning is "the totality of what is said, the integral of all differentiations of the visible chain."²⁴ Just as the meaning is conveyed through a painting for all those who have eyes, meaning is conveyed with words "for those who have ears to hear."²⁵ If I only heard what I "put" into the words, communication and learning would be impossible. Why, then, do I learn something when listening to a lecture, reading a book, looking at a painting or listening to a piece of music. In other

words, how does my consciousness apprehend and retain new meanings? First, a necessary condition of possibility for communication is the use by the speaker of a language readily understood by the listener. Every language by definition conveys its own teaching and its meaning into the listener's mind. "The linguistic gesture, like all the rest, delineates its own meaning."²⁶ If a language does say something, it will create its own listeners.

When one speaks, the words accomplish and convey one's thoughts. The words are not a translation of one's thoughts: they are the presence of one's thoughts. When one hears, one receives the speaker's thoughts from his words. In communicating, the consciousness constructs a milieu which provides other consciousnesses with a means of sharing in the same thoughts. Hence, I am able to think the speaker's thoughts.

On account of the word being a meaning and, secondly, on account of speech being an originating realm, each word is apprehended, absorbed and re-combined or modified by the hearer. Listening to a word may prompt the listener to re-consider a previously held meaning and to re-cast a previously held meaning in a new word. When I listen and learn, I am taking up another's thoughts which are aired in speech and I am, therefore, able to think according to his thoughts. The meaning of the words are induced by

the words themselves. The conceptual meaning is formed by a type of deduction from a gestural meaning immanent in speech.

I know a word when I possess its articulatory and acoustic style as one of the possible uses of my body. When I have acquired another way in which I can use my body and, therefore, shape the world, I know a word. In order for a word to be understood, the gesture must express a possibility for me. The sense of a gesture is not given but is understood. The meaning and truth of an expression are seized upon by the listener. When the gesture is understood, this understanding is immediate. When my hand is shaken, immediately I know that the person shaking my hand is greeting me and wishing me well. When my hand is slapped, I immediately know that the person slapping me is angry at me. The communication and understanding of gestures or words comes about through:

the reciprocity of my intentions and the gestures of others, of my gestures and intentions discernible in the conduct of others. It is as if the other person's intentions inhabited my body and mine his.²⁷

Communication occurs when one recognizes a meaning present in his world which is present in another's word or world. The word is a question and an invitation for me to recognize the gesture as bearing truth and meaning, and therefore, having something to say to me. At the same moment

that I understand the gesture's meaning and truth, I am united with the gesture. A genuine conversation is an open road into "thoughts that I did not know myself capable of." Furthermore, occasionally, "I feel myself followed in a route unknown to myself, which my words, cast back by the other, are in the process of tracing out for me."²⁸ In genuine conversation, there is a mutual confirmation between the speaker and the listener that the meaning is understood.

When I encounter some form of expression, I am encountering a way of being in the world. When I understand that I am apprehending a way of shaping the world, I am responding to the intention of the gesture that is present in the phenomenal world. The response or "synchronized change of my own existence" alters my being in the world. I know a word when its style which is constituted by its formation and use remain with me. The meaning of a word is the word's style which is constituted by the word's use. Style must be understood in terms of perception. For instance, in the case of a painter we must see his style appear in the context of the painter's perception of the perceptual world. For the painter, "style is an exigency that issued from that perception."³⁰ One's style is one's way of inhabiting the world, of being in the world, of shaping and responding

to the world. Every moment, our porous being secretes our style. For the painter, as for all of us, a style is a system of equivalences that are made by the painter for the work which manifests the world he sees. Style is "the universal index of the 'coherent deformation' by which he concentrates the still scattered meaning of his perception and makes it exist expressly."³¹

Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the notion of style leads to his conception of truth as the coherence of expression. On account of style's system of equivalences, an act of expression is coherent---its parts cohering in a gesture which is the true expression of one's thoughts and of one's presence in the world. One's style does not resemble one's way of seeing the world or being in the world. Instead, one's style is one's seeing and being in the world. Thus, for instance, modern painters want nothing to do with a truth defined as the resemblance of painting to the world. For example, if you have looked at Géricault's painting of horse races, have you noticed anything which does not agree with your seeing of a race horse? Géricault and, also Degas, painted race horses with their four legs simultaneously extended, which never occurs in reality. Hence, the paintings do not resemble reality. However, the paintings are a truthful rendering of our perception of a horse race. Géricault

painted his visual feelings which may be illusory but the paintings "are nearer to the truth than any photographs."³² Hence, Géricault's paintings can not be considered to be false representations of the real, perceived world. Modern painting's rejection of the idea that painting should resemble the world was well expressed by Paul Klee in his famous statement, "Art does not render the visible, rather it makes visible."³³ Modern painters have accepted "the idea of a truth defined as a painting's cohesion with itself, the presence of a unique principle in which it affects each means of expression with a certain contextual value."²⁸ Hence, modern painting, like modern thought obliges us to admit of a truth which does not resemble things "which is without any external model and without any pre-destined instruments of expression and which is nevertheless truth."³⁴

Truth is an act which establishes and manifests the coherence of the world. Truth and meaning are in the world from the beginning but as a task to be accomplished by means of expression. The act of truth structures, articulates and promotes to existence the meaning, Logos and truth of the world. Furthermore, the act of truth is an expression emerging from the sedimentation of the world's perceptual logic, or in other words, its system of equivalences which is truth itself. An expression of

truth always uses words previously employed, appropriated and sedimented. The Louvre, said Cézanne, is the book where we learn to read. Every new intention and truth is rooted in the past. Expression sweeps the past into the present and the present into the future. Sweeping the past into the present and the present into the future, expression opens us a new temporal cycle in which acquired thought will reside as a dimension without our needing in the future to summon up or reproduce it.³⁵ Furthermore, each act of expression not only draws upon sedimented meanings, but also opens up "a new field of truths"³⁶ which in turn will be sedimented.

Each expression does not wipe the slate clean and erase away all previous expressions. The present expression, like all past expressions have done and all future expressions will do, salvages, preserves, rejuvenates and, insofar as an expression contains some truth, takes the expressions up again and re-works them into another expression. Our previous acts of truth settle like sands on the bottom of a water-bed which are constantly being re-settled in a different manner by the most recent current or disturbance. Previous expressions are taken up again if they have something to say--are rich in meaning and contain some truth. When one says that an expression contains some truth,

one is not saying that the expression contains some truth as opposed to no truth. Instead, it is a question of the degree of truth contained in the expression. We have all had the experience of reading an acclaimed book and of discovering, to our disappointment, that the book did not "say" very much to us. On the other hand, we have all had the experience of reading a book which has "moved" us because it was richer in meaning, or in other words, contained more truth. The degree to which a book, painting or news report moves us is not a test of the truth of the book, painting or news event. Instead, the degree to which we are moved is an indication of the depth of the truth borne by the book painting or news item. It is not a matter of either being true or false but a matter of some truth as opposed to more truth.

"A telling utterance or a good book impose their meaning upon us. They carry it with them in a certain way."³⁷

A novel is truer than a recounting of an incident because "it gives a totality and because it can be created from details which are all true," points out Merleau-Ponty.

Similarly, a news item is truer than the story of a little incident because "it wounds us and is not pretty to look at."³⁸

The body, which in one fell swoop places me in the world, is the meeting place where all communication with

the world and time takes place--it is the place where past, present and the future merge. In remembering, our body converts "a certain motor essence into vocal form, spreads out the articulatory style of a word into audible phenomena and arrays the former attitude, which is resumed into the panorama of the past, projecting an intention to move into actual movement, because the body is a power of natural expression."³⁹ The transcendence of expression allows language to originate or "incarnate" the world in a new way on the basis of the past. Speech as an originating realm is a mode or structure which permits man to transcend himself and, therefore, prohibits man from ever coinciding with himself.

In order to be considered authentic, an expression must incarnate a new sense which is accomplished and conveyed by an initiating gesture. Language is alive when it ceases being a tool or a sign and is a manifestation and unveiler of our being or presence in the world which unites us to the world and to others. A language is dead when it no longer signifies or appropriates truth and meaning. In authentic speech, words have meaning and truth but in a dead language the meanings are ossified in the words. In other words, the meaning and truth have become stunted and impotent. Consequently, these words are not able to initiate new meanings. In

contrast, an authentic language "is a manifestation, a revelation of intimate being and of the psychic link which unites us to the world and to our fellowmen."⁴⁰ Authentic speech puts up a new sense because it is an initiating gesture. In short, second-order speech as opposed to authentic speech does not initiate meanings but uses words whose meanings have been previously acquired and established.

The essence of expression is to be creative. However, paradoxically, expression only produces what it discovers in the world. Thus, for instance, the painter is able to paint while he is looking at the world because "he thinks that he is spelling out nature at the moment he is recreating it."⁴¹ Expression is not a tool with which I discover my "inner world" or the "external world". Expression unites man to the world which it creates, discovers and manifests. On one hand, truth is a creation and, on the other hand, truth is a creation which creates itself. Not only is expression creative but what is expressed is inseparable from it. It is only by means of the act of expression that what is said is promoted to truth. Speech is precisely that act which promotes meaning and being into existence and through which thought "immortalizes itself as truth."⁴²

The meaning of the world, of being, of language

and of the logos is not given in advance. Their meaning is discovered and brought to light by means of man's perception of the world. Through perception and reflexion, meaning and truth emerge from the inner world to that of the realm of a speaking logos, to truth. The philosopher must transcend his situation in the world if he is to understand the "anonymous symbolic activity" from which all sense and truth emerges. In other words, the philosopher tries to grasp those moments in which truth and being take possession of themselves.

We, as projects of the world, sculpt the world. We give the world shape, meaning, being and truth. We, the sculptors, are sculpting ourselves, or, in other words, the world. Hence, the dichotomy of the subject-object collapses when we try to understand the act of expression and of truth. At the same time, we are the beings that are sculpting and are being sculpted. We transcend ourselves and at the same time, are rooted in the world. The act of truth serves to illuminate language's power of bringing the thing expressed into truth, of recovering meaning from the realm of silence and promoting truth to existence. Thus, the ultimate miracle is the recovery and promotion of sense from the non-sense in the act of truth.

IV

A NEW ANSWER

Nevertheless, the most ultimate business of philosophy is to preserve the force of the most elemental words in which Dasein expresses itself, and to keep the common understanding from levelling them off to that unintelligibility which functions in turn as a source of pseudo-problems. 1

Martin Heidegger

Let us say that our purpose was to discover what music is. We could discuss the conditions of possibility of music being composed or appreciated. Also, we could discuss the act of composing or listening to music and our discovery of meaning and truth in the notes. Yet, after looking at these aspects of the phenomenon of music, the study would only be two-dimensional. Still remaining would be the question: "Why are these notes and sounds music? What is music?" We are in a similar situation. Thus far, we have discussed the conditions of possibility of truth, the structure of truth and the act of truth. If our study is not to be two-dimensional, which is to say, if we are to go behind the apparent, we must study Merleau-

Ponty's responses to the questions: "What is this apparently two-sided structure?" "What is grounded in our perceptual life?" or, in other words, "What is truth?" We are now in a position to understand and characterize fully Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth.

We have seen that truth cannot be understood in terms of the traditional dualistic world-view. Truth is not an object but a condition of life. Like being, truth is everywhere engulfing us. "...We are in the truth and cannot escape it."² For Merleau-Ponty the two notions of being and truth are synonymous. As we have seen, the phenomenological world "is not the bringing to explicit expression of a pre-existing being, but the laying down of being."³ Philosophy is not reflexion upon a pre-existing being but "is the act of bringing truth into being."⁴ I bring both truth and being into existence. Furthermore, I am in and I am engulfed by the transparent structures and horizons of being and truth. In other words, being and truth are two sides of the coin being-in-the-world. Not only are being and truth conditions of possibility for our being-in-the-world and not only are we embedded in being and truth--we are being and truth:

We are true through and through, and have with us, by the mere fact of belonging to the world and not merely being in the world in the way that things are, all that we need to

transcend ourselves.⁵

Finding ourselves in a world having meaning, being and truth, "we experience a participation in the world and 'being-in-truth' is indistinguishable from being in the world."⁶ How is the world's meaning, being and truth given to us? When I see a tree outside the window, the knowing that there is a tree outside the window is instantaneous. I do not know that there is a tree by means of a series of inductions. "It is Gestaltung and Rückgestaltung. 'Retrograde movement of the true' that phenomenon that one can no longer undo oneself from what has been thought, that one finds it again in the materials themselves..."⁷ If we are to understand why I recognize the tree outside the window without a series of inductions, we must understand the retrograde movement of truth which in turn requires that we understand the sedimentation of prior perceptions.

"Truth is another name for sedimentation which is the presence of all presents in our own."⁸ Truth is the present which is the accumulation and amalgamation of all previous meaning and truth. Every act of perception is absorbed by our porous being. Also, to perceive is to render the present, present. To perceive is to push to the surface all previous presents into that present whilst, at the same moment, the present is sedimented

into all previous presents. Furthermore, to perceive is to see an immanent sense surging from a constellation of data and to "seize an immanent sense in a sensible form prior to any judgment."⁹ Although my view of the tree is cluttered by my seeing of the window-sill, the verandah and the street or, in other words, the whole field of my vision, my vision pierces through the "constellation of data" and focuses upon the tree. The meaning of the tree stands out, is discovered and given forth immediately. Thus, the meaning is perceived and "the Rückgestaltung is a perception."¹⁰ What does this mean?

This means: there is germination of what will have been understood (Insight and Aha Erlebnis)
 --And that means: the perception (the first one) is of itself an openness upon a field of Gestaltungen -- 11

Hence, a certain fragrance, word or scene may "trigger off" a stream of remembrances which, on account of this sudden swell, are raised to the surface.¹²

"Perceiving is pinning one's faith, at a stroke, in a whole future of experiences, and doing so in a present which never strictly guarantees the future; it is placing one's belief in the world,"¹³ and truth is like a wedge we drive into our own present. Merleau-Ponty compares truth to a milestone which bears witness and will testify to the fact that:

in this moment something has taken place

which being was always waiting for or 'intending to say' [voulait dire], and which will never stop if not being true at least signifying and stimulating our thinking apparatus, if need be by drawing from it truths more comprehensive than the present one. At this moment something has been founded in signification; an experience has been transformed into its meaning, has become truth.¹⁴

Perception does not bring to light truths like those of geometry. Instead, perception unveils presences. The truth which is revealed, unlike the truths of geometry, is that which is presented---that which is given forth---and sedimentation or truth is that which is given forth. Past perceptions are pushed to the surface and are given forth on account of the retrograde movement of truth.

Considering that "we are in the realm of truth" and that we are "true through and through", truth is what presents or gives itself to us. What is given forth is the result of the accumulation and amalgamation of past meanings and truths being thrust into the present. The world pregnant with being and truth is "here" before any analysis by me is possible. Our certainty of the existence of the sensible world common to each of us is the seat of truth within us. If I am to accept what is given forth, it is necessary that I first think that there is a world offering something, an order having an order---a world existing prior to my analysis of the world.¹⁵

The residuum of sedimented meaning that we inherit and are rooted in is a being and truth in which we are immanent and, at the same time, transcendent by virtue of truth being that which gives itself as present, as "there".

"When through the water's thickness I see the tiling at the bottom of a pool, I do not see it despite the water and the reflections there; I see through them and because of them."¹⁶ Similarly, when I look at the world's thickness, I see being not despite but on account of the sedimentation or truth which is the milieu and the condition of possibility of my seeing of the world. Like the water, this sedimentation of truth does not block my view: it is my view. There is a tree outside my window. I recognize the tree and know it to be a tree on account of my inherence in the world, the sedimentation of previous meanings and, thirdly, the tree presenting itself to me.

The sedimentation and truth of my life, which is my life, has the possibility of becoming thicker and richer in meaning, or, in other words, more true, the longer that I live and am expressive. For this reason, contrary to most of his critics, Jacques Lipchitz considers his most recent sculptures to be his best sculptures and expects the sculpture he does in the future to

be his favourites. "They have more," he states. Why do they have "more"? "The more you live, the more your horizons are broadened--the more you see, the more you hear."¹⁷ Again, we see that it is not a matter of some truth as opposed to no truth but of degrees of truth. On account of the length and richness of his perceptual life, Lipchitz thinks that his latest pieces of sculpture which draw upon an ever-increasing sedimentation of previous perceptions have more meaning and truth--they say more.

The conception of truth as that which presents itself has some of its roots in Husserl's thought. "Self-evidence itself," stated Husserl, "is an act of most perfect synthesis of fulfillment. Like every identification, it is an objectifying act, its objective co-relate being called being in the sense of truth, or simply truth!"¹⁸ Husserl clearly distinguished between being and truth in a broad and narrow sense. They are defined in the broad sense in this manner:

Truth would then have to be defined...as the Idea of adequation, or as the rightness of objectifying assertion. Being would then have to be pinned down...as the identity of the object as one meant and given in adequation, or (in conformity with the natural sense of the words) as the adequately perceivable thing as such, in an indefinite relation to an intention that is to make true or fulfil adequately.¹⁹

Thus, Merleau-Ponty's idea that truth is that which is

presented, or, in Husserl's words, "that which is given as it is meant," can be seen in Husserl's understanding of truth. However, also evident is Merleau-Ponty's ambivalent relationship to Husserl's thought. Unlike Husserl, Merleau-Ponty does not define truth in the idealistic terms of subject and object and, secondly, Merleau-Ponty does not differentiate as markedly as Husserl between being and truth. For Merleau-Ponty, being and truth are two indistinguishable modes of being in the world:

...there is no doubt that, in what concerns the mind and truth, they rest on the primary stratum of the sensible world and that our assurance of being in the truth is one with our assurance of being in the world.²⁰

As we have seen, the ground of truth and being is the perceived, sensible world. The certitude that there is truth and being will always remain "obscure".²¹ Our "unjustifiable certitude of a sensible world common to us is the seat of truth within us."²²

To be in truth, is to be and to be, is to be in truth. To be is to be living in a world full of meaning and truth while, at the same time, to be "true through and through."²³ For Merleau-Ponty, neither is the world an object nor is man a subject. Both man and the world are the fields or natural setting for thought and perception. We recall that "truth does not inhabit the 'inner man' or more accurately, there is no inner man, man is in

the world, and only in the world does he know himself."²⁴

Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth as that which is present and his associating of being and truth was influenced more by Heidegger, who had earlier discussed the relationship of being and truth in ontological terms. Heidegger's self-proclaimed aim was similar to Merleau-Ponty's--to shatter the notion that truth was a true thing or a true proposition which is right and corresponds with "Being true". Truth in this sense, means correspondence in a double sense:

firstly the correspondence of a thing with the idea of it as conceived in advance, and secondly, the correspondence of that which is intended by the statement with the thing itself.²⁵

The propositional theory of truth is unsatisfactory because it leaves unanswered the most crucial questions concerning the nature of truth. If one limits the notion of truth to propositional truth, one is led to the traditional concept that truth is the likeness or agreement of a statement to a given thing. However, what is meant by "the likeness or agreement of a statement to or with a thing? Do we know that?" asks Heidegger.²⁶

All human acts are characterized by being performed in the world, within the realm of the open or Overt ("das Offene"). On account of all human action occurring in

the openness of the world, it will always relate to something manifested and evident "as such", or in other words, "that which is present" and "that which is (das Seiende)."²⁷ All behaviours are open to the world and, therefore, to what is. Our daily life is carried out and sustained in the world within which what-is "can expressly take up its stand as and how it is what it is, and thus become capable of expression."²⁶ We can only express what-is on the occasions, when, explains Heidegger:

what-is represents itself with the representative statement, so that the statement submits to a directive enjoining it to express what is 'such as' or just as it is. By following this directive, the statement 'rights itself' by what is directing itself in this way, the statement is right (true) and what is thus stated is rightness.²⁷

Hence, the statement is "right" on account of the overt-ness of behaviour which, in turn, is overt on account of my porous presence in the world. By virtue of my presence in the world, anything which is manifested can become "the criterion for the approximation implicit in the representative statement."³⁰ One should not look for the ground of truth in the propositional statement but, instead, in the ability of overt behaviour to postulate a criterion. Our attention must be directed towards man's overt behaviour, or, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, towards man's being-in-the-world.

Considering that overt behaviour's ability to make

"rightness" a possibility for a statement is grounded in freedom, Heidegger concludes that the essence of truth is freedom. Essence is understood by Heidegger to mean "the basis of inner possibility of whatever is accepted in the first place and generally admitted as 'known'."³⁰ In order to understand Heidegger's suggestion, it is necessary to understand his notion of freedom. Freedom reveals whatever is evident and allows whatever is, to remain what it is. "Freedom reveals itself as the 'letting-be' of what-is."³¹ Freedom can unveil things for us on account of its "existence"--the innate capacity to stand out from or to transcend ourselves. Ex-sistence, grounded in truth is "the exposition into the revealed nature of what is as such."³² Ex-sistent Da-sein, which is the letting-be of what-is, allows man to be free and to accept his freedom. When man embraces this freedom and becomes this freedom, he has a choice between actual possibilities. Hence, freedom or the power to allow things to be, is not an attribute of man. Instead, Da-sein or freedom possesses man and dictates the terms of his relationship with the world. In summary, Heidegger states:

Freedom, so understood as the letting-be of what is, fulfils and perfects the nature of truth in the sense that truth is the unconcealment and revealment of what-is. 'Truth' is not the mark of some correct proposition made by a human 'subject' in respect of an 'object' and which then--in precisely what

sphere we do not know--counts as 'true'; truth is rather the revelation of what-is, a revelation through which something 'overt' comes into force. All human behaviour is an exposition of that overt-ness. Hence, man is in virtue of his ex-sistence.³³

It is evident that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth is similar to Heidegger's in several respects. Both consider truth in ontological terms and agree that the most fundamental truth is being-in-the-world. Furthermore, both agree that truth is not a "mark" or property of a proposition. Merleau-Ponty says that we are "in the realm of truth"³⁴ inescapably and Heidegger states that Dasein "is in the truth."³⁵ For Heidegger, truth is the unveiling of being by allowing being to be. This unveiling is one and the same thing as being-true. According to Heidegger, the truth is that which we unveil and bring into existence by letting it be what it is. Heidegger explains that freedom is not our possession but that we are in the possession of freedom. Furthermore, Heidegger's views concerning the ground and origin of truth are similar to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth's ground and origin. Meaning, being and truth do spring out of my insertion in the world. However, I do not bestow this meaning or truth; I merely, by means of my body, apprehend and convey the world's meaning. This meaning is present, as we have seen, prior to my analysis

of the world. The world was not waiting for my birth as the world waits through advent, waiting for an incarnation that will "right" things and bring meaning and truth to the world. Merleau-Ponty does not think that the world has meaning and truth on account of man's overt behaviour. Man is the source of all meaning for Merleau-Ponty in the sense that he is the occasion of the world giving forth meaning. Furthermore, as we have seen, for Merleau-Ponty the I which is the occasion of the world having meaning and truth is rooted in the world which it both discovers and promotes to existence.

Not only is truth the revelation of being, it is revealed-being. Thus, our entire life, our being-in-the-world is not revealed by truth: it is in truth, and, more significantly, is truth. By virtue of being in the world, we are condemned to meaning, being and truth. Just as there is no escape from truth and meaning, there is no escape from truth and meaning, there is no escape from being. Therefore, it is evident that for Merleau-Ponty, the three notions of being, meaning and truth rear their heads out of the same ground: These three notions nourish, support and reflect upon each other: they bask in the same light and cast the same shadow because they are interdependent, self-reflexive and co-extensive. Meaning, being and truth could be characterized as three transcendental categories of being-in-the-world.

It cannot be charged that Merleau-Ponty has not

broken away from the traditional notions of truth and has merely presented another subjective understanding of truth. Truth, as we have seen, is the expression of our existence and experience in the world. However, man is not the creator or bestower of meaning, being and truth. The world has life by virtue of our presence but we do not determine the course of its life. We inherit a world, lived in by other men who have all left their mark upon the world:

I take up my dwelling in lives which are not mine. I confront them, I make one known to the other, I make them equally possible in an order of truth, I make myself responsible for all of them, and I create a universal life... The words, lives and colours which express me come out of me as gestures. They are torn from me by what I want to say as my gestures are by what I want to do. In this sense, there is in all expression a spontaneity which will not tolerate any commands, not even those I would like to give to myself....³⁶

The spontaneity of language which embraces and unites all of us is ourselves "with our roots, our growth and, as we say, the fruits of our toil."³⁷

Man finds himself rooted and engulfed in a world already having meaning, being and truth. To say that man is the creator of the world's meaning and truth is akin to arguing that a plant is completely responsible for its fruit. We, like the plant, are rooted in our ground which is the perceptual world and could not live or bear fruit if we were not rooted in the perceptual world. Our fruit,

like the fruit of a plant, is the outcome of the entire environment including the plant and the ground working together. Whilst truth is an expression of our existence and experience of the world, it is evident that truth is not subjective on account of our existence and experience being rooted in and dependent upon the world for its meaning and truth. Man's appeal to history is an "invocation to truth which is never created by what is inscribed in history, but which, insofar as it is truth, requires that inscription."³⁸ Meaning, being and truth are not created by our presence in the world, which is our inscription on the world. Nevertheless, the world requires our presence if it is to convey meaning, being and truth:

'There is only being': each experiences himself given over to a body, to a situation, through them to being and what he knows of himself entirely passes over to the other the very instant he experiences the other's medusan power.³⁹

On account of this experience, we know that we are rooted and "inscribed in the world". The world we are rooted and inscribed in is "of being, has consistency, order, meaning and there is a way to comprehend it."⁴⁰

We must cease thinking that truth is springing forward from the subject; I am inseparable from my ground which is the phenomenal world and together we are one whole. "It is a matter of understanding that truth itself has no meaning outside of the relation of transcen-

dence, outside of the Ueberstieg toward the horizon--that the 'subjectivity' and the 'object' are one sole whole... "41 Above all, we must remember that "it is not we who perceive, it is the thing that perceives itself at the depths of speech."42

If to be in the world, is to be in truth, how is it possible to not be in truth? In other words, is illusion or falsehood a possible mode of being? By traditional standards, in order for a theory of truth to be acceptable, it must be able to account for the occurrence of the opposite of truth--falsehood. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty's theory of truth is a radical departure from traditional theories of truth. Nevertheless, his theory of truth does explain the occurrence of error. Just as Merleau-Ponty did not explain the presence of truth in dualistic terms, he does not explain the occurrence of falsehood in dualistic terms. Neither truth nor falsehood is a relation, a structure, a proposition or a correlate. In trying to understand the occurrence of error, it is not a matter of choosing between "a philosophy of immanence or a rationalism which accounts only for perception and truth, and a philosophy of transcendence or absurdity which accounts only for illusion and error."43

Given that truth is a possibility for man, falsity must also be a possibility for man. Each of us knows that

we have made mistakes. In trying to understand why we make mistakes, it is essential that we think of our life, to use William James' term, as a stream of consciousness and not as a series of isolated, independent incidents. I discover errors in the light of past and future perceptions and my possession of the truth. "We know that there are errors only because we possess truth, in the name of which we correct errors and recognize them as errors."⁴⁴ Similarly, our express recognition of a truth is:

much more than the mere existence within us of an unchallengeable idea, an immediate faith in what is presented: it presupposes questioning, doubt, a break with the immediate, and is the correction of any possible error.⁴⁵

The conditions of possibility for truth and falsehood are identical. As a project of the world, as a being in the world, there is a possibility that I may mis-interpret my relationship with the world:

...I can never coincide with my life which is forever fleeing from itself, in spite of which there are inner perceptions. For the same reason, I am open to both illusion and truth about myself: that is there are acts in which I collect myself together in order to surpass myself.⁴⁶

Merleau-Ponty's conception of falsehood, like his conception of truth, is influenced by Heidegger's understanding of falsehood. Considering that truth is the revelation by way of "letting-be" that which is present,

Heidegger suggests that concealment denying revelation of the overtness of the world is "non-revelation and thus the untruth which is specific of and peculiar to the nature of truth."⁴⁷ The meaning is not perceived because it is not unveiled or revealed to me.

Meaning, which emerges from a situation by means of the retrograde movement of truth, on occasions may not be "triggered off" or to the surface may be brought the wrong series of remembrances. You see a man across the street whom you do not recognize. As you draw closer to the man you see that this man is an old school-friend and not a stranger. Your mistake had been made because what was present had not been fully presented or revealed. The mistake was made on account of the failure to encompass all that is "there" in your vision. The condition of possibility for this mistake is the same as the condition of possibility of not making a mistake--our being in the world. The error occurred because your vision was too narrow or too shallow. Thus, there was an absence of something which is there to be seen. In short, not all the meaning of the field of vision was perceived.

In order to explain how the meaning is perceived, Merleau-Ponty recalls an incident in a tobacconist's shop. Upon hearing the clerk say "Shall I wrap them together?", Merleau-Ponty admits that he understood the phrase, which

for him was spoken in a foreign language, after a few seconds but all at once the meaning came to him. "Once the meaning is given, the signs take on the full value of 'signs'. But first the meaning must be given."⁴⁸ How is this meaning given? "Probably a chunk of the verbal chain is identified, projects the meaning which returns upon the signs."⁴⁹ As discussed earlier the meaning is not perceived by means of a series of inductions but is the sudden surfacing of previous sedimented perceptions. In the case of error, there is a germination of what will have been understood, as is the case when we perceive the truth. The difference between the occurrence of falsity and truth is that, in the case of error, we have not perceived the meaning or have perceived only part of the meaning. Therefore, the germination of what we have understood will be a development of a meaning which has been only partly perceived. Hence, what will have been understood is not the meaning or not the full meaning of the event.

There is only one act which with one stroke breaks through "all possible doubts to reach complete truth: this act of perception, in the wide sense of knowledge of existences."⁵⁰ When my perception has not cut through all possible doubts, has not unveiled the meaning, a mistake has been made. I can only "be assured of genuine

willing, living or believing provided that in the first place I actually do will, live or believe and thus fulfill my existence."⁵¹ Desdemona truly loves Othello. Othello falsely believes that Desdemona loves Cassio because he does not "feel" or "experience" Desdemona's love for him. Furthermore, he is mistaken because the meaning of Desdemona's relationship to him and to Cassio is not perceived by Othello. Her feelings are not encompassed by his presence in the world. To use Heideggerian terms, her feelings are not uncovered by Othello's Dasein.

If the truth is that which is given forth or revealed, then, falsity, which is the unrevealed, is antecedent to truth. Falsity is being which is covered and not yet evident. Hence, it is in need of being promoted to truth. Falsity can be promoted to truth on account of man's openness to the world and to truth. Although falsity is unrevealed being, it is not non-being: it is still being. Falsity becomes truth once it is unveiled and the meaning is given forth or is evident. "The truth is," states Merleau-Ponty:

that neither error nor doubt ever cuts us off from truth because they are surrounded by a world horizon in which the teleology of consciousness summons us to an effort at resolving it.⁵²

Falsity which is antecedent to truth is only a possibility for man on the ontic level of his existence. Hence, false-

hood is merely an "eddy" on the surface of the "stream of consciousness" and, therefore, fails to affect significantly the course of our lives. Our implantation in the world can not be swept away or nullified by the occurrence of falsity.

Prior to the devising of methods of proof and theories of cognition by thought already present and established in the world, our perceptual faith which is "an adherence that knows itself to be beyond proofs"⁵³ assures us that there is meaning, being and truth, and that we are engulfed by this world. Our certitude is on account of our spontaneous recognition prior to a series of deductions that we are inhabiting a world full of meaning and that our inhabiting of truth is by "our whole selves, without there being need to choose nor even distinguish between the assurance of seeing the true, because in principle they are one and the same thing-- faith,..."⁵⁴

By virtue of perceptual faith we are able to launch into philosophy and, thus, are able to interrogate man's nature. Philosophy which emerges from perceptual faith is "perceptual faith questioning itself about itself."⁵⁵ Our body, senses, look, ability to understand speech and to speak are "measurants (mesurants) for Being." Furthermore, states Merleau-Ponty:

the perception of the world and of history is the practise of this measure... If we are ourselves in question in the very unfolding of our life, it is not because a central non-being threatens to revoke our consent to being at each instant; it is because we ourselves are one sole continued question, a perpetual enterprise of taking our bearings on the constellation of the world.⁵⁶

On account of this continual questioning and attempting to understand this perceptual faith which turns back upon itself and interrogates itself, we ask such questions as: "What is philosophy?", "What is there in the world?" and "What is truth?" Not only are we condemned to meaning, we are also condemned to perpetually interrogating our perceptions of the world and of ourselves rooted in the perceptual world. All our questions arise from the central question--ourselves. Thus, the question "What is truth?" is rooted in the question "What am I?" As we have seen, there is only being and we are not only in truth, we are truth. These questions and all our questions find their answers in our being-in-the-world. Our questions do not require for an answer the "exhibiting of something said."⁵⁷ Required is the unveiling and understanding of a being and truth which does not need to be posited on account of its silent presence behind all our questions, affirmations and negations.⁵⁸ This "disclosure of Being" and, therefore, of truth and meaning is the reconversion of silence and speech into

one another. In other words, "It is the experience still mute which we are all concerned with leading to pure expression of its own meaning."⁵⁹

Although Merleau-Ponty died before completing L'Origine de la Vérité in which he planned to go beyond the realm of perception which initiated us, the uninitiated, to the truth, it is evident that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth is present in his previous writings. If one accepts the definition of Impressionism as "the rejection of the objectivity of realism, and the selection of one element from reality (light) to interpret all of nature;"⁶⁰ then Merleau-Ponty, who in the writings prior to L'Origine de la Vérité primarily tried to understand the world in terms of the light of perception, can be considered to be an impressionist in the realm of philosophy. However, just as Cézanne discovered that one cannot interpret nature solely in terms of light, Merleau-Ponty also realized that he must go beyond his attempts to understand truth in terms of the light of perception and, thus, he began to write his unfinished work L'Origine de la Vérité.

As long as men have asked the fundamental questions: "Who am I?", "Why am I here?", men have also been trying to answer the question "What is truth?" We have seen that whilst following in the long tradition of associating

being and truth, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth departed from the traditional theories and looked for answers to these old questions in himself, in his being-in-the-world which is the only source of meaning, being and truth.

II

Thus far, we have discussed the ground and structure of truth, the act of truth and finally Merleau-Ponty's answer to the old question "What is truth?" Hence, now we are in a position to draw some conclusions in regard to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth.

To begin with, a theory of truth is usually judged to be acceptable if it meets the following requirements: has a definition of truth, has a criterion of truth and, thirdly, can account for the occurrence of error. In the course of this thesis, it has been shown that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth fulfils these three requirements.

First, for Merleau-Ponty, truth is synonymous with being. Thus, to be in the world is to be, simultaneously, in the truth and to be in the world is indistinguishable from being in truth. We, who are "true through and through" find ourselves in the truth. Truth and being can be characterized as two transcendental categories of being-in-the-world.

For those who are unfamiliar with Merleau-Ponty's thought and are attempting to understand his notion of truth, their task is a difficult one. Nowhere in his writings is there to be found an explicit, clear-cut discourse on truth, similar to Heidegger's On the Essence of Truth. Throughout Merleau-Ponty's writings are found statements and short discussions about truth. If one is searching for a crystal-clear statement such as "Truth is X," one will be disappointed. However, to say that Merleau-Ponty's view of truth is not clearly and explicitly stated at length is not to say that Merleau-Ponty's view is not presented in his writings.

If one was to ask the man on the street what he thought truth was, he most likely would respond, "Truth is what really is." When pressed further, to explain his answer he might reply "Well, something is true if it really exists." If he was asked "How do you know you are wearing a shirt?" he most likely would reply "Because, I can see that I am wearing a shirt." In other words, the statement is true when my statement, judgment or proposition corresponds to an event or state of affairs and, furthermore, truth is a property of a statement, judgment or proposition. Truth, as most of us have thought, is not a property of a proposition, suggests Merleau-Ponty. Instead of being a property, truth is a

mode of being in the world. Both being and truth are grounded in our presence or being in the world. We find ourselves already at work in a world which has being and truth before we begin to analyze the world. We, who are rooted in the world are rooted in being and truth which, as mentioned earlier, are like two sides of the coin of being-in-the-world. The task of philosophy is not to reflect upon a pre-existing truth but to bring truth into being. The philosopher's task, like that of the artist's is a difficult one because, in the words of Cézanne, "there must not be a single loose stitch, not a single hole for the truth to slip through..."⁶¹ The truth has been laid down when the canvas "has locked its fingers, it does not waver, it is close-knit, it is full."⁶² Philosophy, like art, brings truth into existence in the sense of promoting to existence or laying down truth which we do not invent or create ex nihilo. Truth, like the world, is not something we either create or discover. Going beyond the either-or alternative, Merleau-Ponty proposes that simultaneously we discover and promote to existence, truth. There exists between the subject and truth, as there exists between an artist and beauty, mutual participation. One is able to promote truth to existence because of the latent presence of truth and the self-givenness of truth. Truth presents itself to

us and, at the same time, we bring truth into existence. When what had been waiting to be said, has been said, it will henceforth, never cease "if not being true, at least signifying and stimulating our thinking apparatus, if need be by drawing from it truths more comprehensive than the present one."⁶³

Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty states that truth is "another name for the sedimentation, which is itself the presence of all presents in our own!"⁶⁴ Previously apprehended and sedimented truths, constantly being shifted and rejuvenated, bring to the surface, new or more complete truths. We are what we experience and our experiences are sedimented within us. This sedimentation or collection and integration of previous experiences allows us to bring into being more truths and also to discover our past errors. We can only recognize and identify errors and illusions in "the light of some perceptions which at the same time gave assurance of its own truth."⁶⁵ We are, in short, our sedimentation of previously apprehended truths which as long as we are a presence in the world, are being incessantly shifted, re-shaped and rejuvenated. Thus, there is a connection between Merleau-Ponty's equation of being and truth and his statement that truth is sedimentation. We, who are "true through and through" are the sedimentation of truth. At this moment, we are a

sedimentation of previously apprehended and stored truths which is the presence of all presents, or, in other words, truth. Simultaneously, we are truth and we are in truth. On account of the sedimentation of truth stimulating our "thinking apparatus" and, therefore, allowing us to reach more truths or correct past errors, we are a spawning ground for truth. Like fish who are unable to escape from water, we, who are in the world, can not escape from truth. By virtue of the sedimentation of past presents within us, we are able to promote to existence more truths and, at the same time, to be inseparably bound to our environment. Like fish who are engulfed by water, we are engulfed by being and truth which nourish and support our presence in the world.

To continue, the second criterion of an adequate theory of truth is whether the theory can account for the occurrence of error. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth does fulfil this requirement. If truth is a possibility for man, then falsity is a possibility for man. Error can only be understood in terms of truth. "The true cannot be defined outside of the possibility of the false."⁶⁶ The condition of possibility for truth and for error is man's being-in-the-world. A mistake is made when all that is present and given forth, or, in Heideggerian terms, the "what-is", is not fully revealed and given forth. For instance from where I am

sitting, the table across the room appears to have three legs. When I change seats, I see that the table has four legs. The first judgment was erroneous because what was there before me was not fully unveiled by perception. Upon closer examination, the full meaning was presented and revealed. Our presence in the world is a continuous on-going flow which can not be divided into segments--a life is not like one long string of pearls. Instead, a life, like a stream, is one continuous, uninterrupted affair having a past, present and future. Hence, when discussing whether something is true or false, the discussion must take place in light of previous and future truths and not in terms of a single judgment because one can not separate any incident or statement from the stream of one's life: everything occurs and has meaning and truth only in the context of our entire life. For instance, every day I open the front door and notice the brass knocker nailed to the door. However, yesterday, I did not see the knocker. Today, when I looked at the door, the knocker was nailed to the door. Considering that every day I have seen the knocker on the door and considering that it is there today, I decide that I was mistaken yesterday when I thought that the knocker was missing. Every day in the past, the knocker has been on the door and, in the future, it will be there. Hence, in light of

past and future perceptions I have no reason to think that the knocker was not on the door yesterday. Our experience in the world denies the suggestion that we do not make mistakes and correct some of our mistakes. Each of us knows through experience that error does occur and is a possibility for man. Truth "dawns" on us when subsequent meanings shed more light on our previous views and allow more meaning to be revealed and given forth. In short, error occurs when we "miss the mark".

The third test of a theory of truth is whether it has a criterion by means of which a truth can be judged to be true or false. In other words, an adequate theory of truth should provide a means of deciding if what is considered to be true is true. Two popular theories of truth are the correspondence and coherence theories which have their respective tests of truth. Simply stated, the correspondence theory suggests that a sentence, proposition or assertion is true if it conforms to the facts or a state of affairs. A classic formulation of the correspondence theory is Aristotle's statement: "To say of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is, or of what is not that it is not, is true."⁶⁷ According to the correspondence theory, if an assertion or proposition is true, it corresponds to the facts or a state of affairs: veritas est adecuatio rei et intellectus.

The coherence theory maintains that our beliefs, judgments or propositions derive their truth from coherence or consistency with a system of human beliefs, judgments or propositions taken as a whole. Hence, consistency, is the criterion of truth. It is evident that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth is not a version of either the correspondence or coherence theory of truth and, therefore, that Merleau-Ponty's test of truth is not correspondence or coherence. Let us see why this is the case.

The correspondence theory is based upon the presupposition that truth is a property. If a statement, postulate or judgment corresponds to the state of affairs, the statement, postulate or judgment is a true statement, postulate or judgment. For instance, why is the statement "The table is red," a true statement? According to the correspondence theory, in order for the statement to be true, there must be an object or state of affairs, in this case, a red table, to which the statement corresponds. The statement would be false if the statement did not correspond with the facts. Thus, if one says "The table is green," the statement is false because there is not a correspondence relationship between the statement and the facts. It is evident that Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth is not a version of the correspondence

theory for several reasons. First, as we have discussed, for Merleau-Ponty, truth is not a property or of a proposition, judgment or assertion: truth is in the state of affairs as they are given forth to us and, simultaneously, revealed by us. Thus, Merleau-Ponty does not accept the framework in which correspondence theorists discuss and test truth and error. For Merleau-Ponty, truth is given in the act of perceiving. A statement is not true on account of corresponding to the facts or a state of affairs because truth is present in the state of affairs and springs forth from the state of affairs through perception. "To perceive in the full sense of the word (as the antithesis of imagining) is not to judge, it is to apprehend an immanent sense in the sensible before judgment begins,"⁶⁸ states Merleau-Ponty. Returning to our example, how do I know that "The table is red," is a true statement? We must first realize that truth is based upon my presence in the perceptual world. The statement is true because "what-is" or, in other words, that which is evident, which, in this case, is a red table, presents itself to me and, at the same time, is unveiled by me. The statement is true by virtue of the red table being presented as it is meant by perception and not on account of the statement "The table is red" corresponding with a state of affairs. "The phenomenon

of true perception" gives forth, therefore:

a meaning inherent in the signs, and of which judgment is merely optional expression. Intellectualism can make comprehensible neither this phenomenon nor the imitation which illusion gives of it.⁶⁹

Although correspondence theorists may inspect the world to see if the facts or states of affairs do correspond with judgments, postulates or assertions, their inspection of the world does not discover or establish truth because truth and meaning is present in the state of affairs prior to the mind's inspection of the world and was offered through the perception of the constellation of data. The truth given forth by perception is unaffected by the mind's inspection of the cluster of data in order to verify that a judgment about the data does correspond with the state of affairs. If the "grouping" is effected by an "inspection of the mind," it would follow that:

the mind runs over the isolated impressions and gradually discovers the meaning of the whole as the scientist discovers unknown factors in virtue of the data of the problem. Now here the data of the problem are not prior to its solution, and perception is just the act which creates at one stroke, along with the cluster of data, the meaning which unites them--indeed which not only discovers the meaning which they have, but moreover causes them to have meaning.⁷⁰

The correspondence theory proposes that it is the case that a judgment is true if it corresponds to the state of affairs. Merleau-Ponty can not accept the correspondence

test of truth on account of truth being seated in the act of perception. Prior to any analysis on the part of man, truth, like the world, is present and engulfs us. A statement is not true because it corresponds with the "grouping" or state of affairs. A statement is true because the "grouping" was offered to us by perception. The criterion of correspondence is an inadequate test of truth because truth which is a basic mode of being-in-the-world is not a property which can be tested by means of correspondence to a "cluster of data".

To continue, for similar reasons, Merleau-Ponty considers coherence or consistency to be an inadequate test of truth. According to the coherence theory, consistency or coherence is a test of truth and consistency or coherence is a property of all true propositions, judgments or assertions. As we have seen, Merleau-Ponty's way of understanding truth is dissimilar to the coherence theorists because he does not consider truth to be a property of a proposition. Furthermore, the deliberations of the coherence theorists, like those of the correspondence theorists, are instances of what Merleau-Ponty critically called "high altitude" discussions because these theories overlook the fundamental fact that truth is present in the world prior to any analysis by man. A statement is true not by virtue of it being consistent with

other statements but by virtue of the state of affairs being given forth by perception. Again, truth is not brought into being by an "inspection of the mind" because truth, like the world, was there before man began his analysis.

It may be argued, returning to a former example, that the conclusion that the knocker was nailed to the door the day I did not see it on the door, commits Merleau-Ponty to a form of the coherence test of truth. This is not the case because my decision that the knocker was not on the door was an error, was based upon the realization that every day the truth which, in this case is the knocker nailed to the door, is offered to me and I failed to unveil what was given forth on that one occasion. The decision that I had been mistaken was not based upon the fact that this judgment was inconsistent with past judgments and would be inconsistent with future judgments. The judgment was not false because it is "not coherently connected with our system of judgments as a whole"⁷¹, but because I did not reveal and receive all that was offered or presented. The fact that the judgment was inconsistent with past judgments brought to my attention the fact that I had not unveiled the "what-is". Although coherence is a mark of truth, it is not a test of truth. Error, like truth, comes into being at the level of perception.

The "total grouping" was not perceived and, thus, a mistake was made. The judgment made yesterday, that the knocker was not nailed to the door is false not because it is inconsistent with previous and expected future judgments but on account of my failure to lay down the truth which was offered. The continuous stream of experience does bring to our attention an error but it is not the reason why error or truth occurs and is experienced. In summary, considering that a statement is not true because it corresponds to a "grouping" of data, Merleau-Ponty rejects the correspondence theory of truth and, secondly, considering that a statement is not true because it is consistent with other statements, Merleau-Ponty rejects the coherence theory of truth.

To test whether what we consider to be true is true, we must go back to our perception of the object through which truth is presented. In other words, truth is not tested by means of the mind's or consciousness' various methods of inspecting the world. In order to decide if something is true, we must rely upon our perception and experience of truth. The test of truth is my experience of truth. To ask whether there is truth is akin to asking whether there is a world. How do I know that there is a world? I find myself at work in a world and living through the world before I begin to examine

the world. If I attempted to prove that the world did exist, I would be "unfaithful to my experience of the world and, thus, would be looking for what makes that experience possible instead of looking for what it is. The self-evidence of perception is not adequate thought or apodeictic self-evidence."⁷² Just as the world is not what I think but what I live through, truth is not what I think but is what I live through and am engulfed by. Just as I would be unfaithful to my experience of the world if I challenged the self-evidence of perception, I would be unfaithful to my experience of truth if I asked whether truths which are given forth and experienced by me are truths. We must not question whether we do perceive a world:

we must instead say: the world is what we perceive. In more general terms we must not wonder whether our self-evident truths are real truths, or whether, through some perversity, inherent in our minds that which is self-evident for us might not be illusory in relation to some truth in itself.⁷³

I know that there is truth and that something is true because I am in truth and I experience truth. "We are in the realm of truth and it is 'the experience of truth' which is self-evident."⁷⁴ In short, the final court of appeal is experience. For some, this answer is unsatisfactory. How do I know that I am experiencing the truth?

How do I know that I am living through the world? To ask these questions is to attempt to go beyond our experience in the lived, familiar world we inhabit, which is impossible. We can go no further than our experience in the world which is the foundation upon which all our knowledge is based.

Therefore, it is evident that although Merleau-Ponty's understanding of truth is a radical departure from traditional ways of understanding truth, his understanding of truth does meet the three requirements of an adequate theory of truth.

Starting with what is often considered to be a banal, exhausted question, "What is truth?" in this thesis I have discussed and examined Merleau-Ponty's complex understanding of truth which is his new answer to a question which is as old as philosophy. We are engaged in philosophy, stated Heidegger, when what at first appeared to be banal becomes complex.

FOOTNOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

- E In Praise of Philosophy
ET On the Essence of Truth
I "An Unpublished Text by Maurice Merleau-Ponty"
PP Phenomenology of Perception
S Signs
SNS Sense and Non-sense
SZ Being and Time
VI The Visible and the Invisible

CHAPTER I

1. G. Flaubert, L'Éducation Sentimentale, p. 46.
2. PP p. xvi.

3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "An Unpublished Text by Maurice Merleau-Ponty", in The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty, p. 371. This article is a translation of a paper which was first published in Revue de métaphysique et de morale, no. 4 (1962), pp. 401-409. The text was prefaced by the following introductory note, signed by Martial Guerolt:

The text given below was sent to me by Merleau-Ponty at the time of his candidacy to the Collège de France, when I was putting together a report of his qualifications for the presentation to the assembly of professors. In this report, Merleau-Ponty traces his past and future as a philosopher in a continuous line, and outlines the perspectives of his future studies from L'Origine de la vérité to L'Homme transcendentale. In reading these unpublished and highly interesting pages, one keenly regrets the death which brutally interrupted the elan of a profound thought in full possession of itself and about to fulfil itself in a series of original works which would have been landmarks

in contemporary French philosophy. (p. 367 of the english translation).

4. PP p. xiv.

5. VI p. 45.

6. VI p. 105.

7. I p. 371.

8. M. Dufrenne, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty", Les Etudes Philosophiques, xxxvi (1962), p. 81.

9. M. Merleau-Ponty, "J-P Sartre - L'Imagination", Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique, xxxiii (1933), p. 758.

10. SNS p. 94.

11. Jean Hyppolite, Sens et Existence, p.25.

12. E p.63.

13. E p. 30.

14. S. p.109.

15. VI p. 33.

CHAPTER II

1. M. Proust, Sweet Cheat Gone, p. 362.

2. M. Merleau-Ponty, The Structure of Behaviour, p. 4.

3. PP p. 320.

4. PP p. 343.

5. PP p. xviii.

6. H. Speigelberg, "Phenomenology", Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. xvii, p. 811.

7. PP p. xii.

8. PP p. ix.

9. PP p. x.

10. PP p. ix.
11. Ibid.
12. PP p. xi.
13. PP p. xiii.
14. Ibid.
15. PP p. xvi.
16. PP p. xvii.
17. PP p. x.
18. PP p. 430.
19. PP p. 330.
20. SNS p. 74.
21. PP p. 408.
22. E. Husserl, Ideas, p. 153.
23. PP p. 404.
24. PP p. 432.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. I am indebted to G.B. Madison for the phrase simultaneousness.
28. PP pp. x-xi.
29. PP p. 22. I have altered C. Smith's translation of this passage, first, by translating jaillir as to surge and, secondly, by translating constellation as constellatiom.
30. PP p. 35.
31. PP pp. 325-326.
32. PP p. 326.
33. Ibid.

34. PP p. 374.
35. Ibid., I have altered C. Smith's translation of le perçu and translated the word as the perceivent.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. PP p. ix.
39. VI p. 135.
40. R.C. Kwant, From Phenomenology to Metaphysics, p. 87.
41. VI p. 146.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. VI p. 147.
45. Ibid.
46. VI p. 138.
47. Ibid.
48. VI p. 154.
49. R.C. Kwant, From Phenomenology to Metaphysics, p. 87.
50. VI p. 154.
51. PP p. 8.
52. S p. 45.
53. PP p. xxi.
54. PP p. ix.
55. PP p. xx.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.
 59. Ibid.
 60. PP p. xxi.
 61. PP p. ix.
 62. PP p. 174.
 63. VI p. 170.
 64. PP p. 36.
 65. VI p. 170.
 66. PP p. xv.
 67. S p. 100.
 68. S. p. 44.
 69. S p. 45.
 70. PP p. 196.
 71. PP p. 194.

72. M. Merleau-Ponty, "Limits of Phenomenology", Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952-1960, p. 116.

73. This quotation is taken from a conversation between Merleau-Ponty and Jean Daniélou which is quoted in Albert Rabil's book, Merleau-Ponty, Existentialist of the Social World, p. 195.

74. VI p. 174.
 75. S p. 46.
 76. VI p. 170.

CHAPTER III

1. PP p. 184.

2. P. Valéry quoted by Merleau-Ponty in The Visible and the Invisible, p. 155.

3. E p.58.
4. S p. 96.
5. PP p. xv.
6. M. Merleau-Ponty, "Limits of Phenomenology", op. cit., pp. 117-118.
7. Ibid., p. 118.
8. PP p. 126.
9. M. Merleau-Ponty, "The Sensible World and the World of Expression", Themes from the Lectures at the Collège de France, 1952-1960, p. 4.
10. PP p. 183.
11. PP p. 193.
12. A. de Waelhens, Existence et Signification, p. 127. The quoted passage is a translation of the following sentence: "... il dit ce qu'il pense et pense ce qu'il dit."
13. This turn of events and the subsequent, far-reaching ramifications have been aptly called the Gutenberg Revolution by Marshall McLuhan.
14. Word-hord is an old english word meaning a collection of old tales, idioms, clichés and words upon which a scop or travelling storyteller drew when telling stories.
15. PP p. 177.
16. PP p. 423.
17. PP pp. 423-24.
18. PP p. 422.
19. PP p. 389.
20. PP p. 183.
21. PP p. 182.
22. Ibid.

23. VI p. 155.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. PP p. 186.
27. PP p. 185.
28. VI. p. 13.
29. PP p. 184.
30. S p. 54.
31. S pp. 54-55.
32. Herbert Read, A Concise History of Modern Sculpture, p. 17.
33. S p. 57.
34. Ibid.
35. PP p. 394.
36. Ibid.
37. PP p. 388.
38. S p. 313.
39. PP p. 181.
40. PP p. 196.
41. S p. 56.
42. PP p. 388.

CHAPTER IV

1. SZ p. 220.
2. S p. 109.
3. PP p. xx.

4. Ibid.
5. PP p. 456.
6. PP p. 395.
7. VI p. 189.
8. S p. 96.
9. PP p. 22.
10. VI p. 189
11. Ibid.

12. For instance in the novel La Peste by Albert Camus, the quarantined citizens who were separated from their friends, families or lovers attempted to keep fresh, in their minds and in the minds of those that were separated from, the love between them. Thus, the citizens of Oran sent telegrammes to each other which at first contained certain words or phrases rich in meaning for the correspondents only. These phrases would bring to the minds of the correspondents certain past events and help to keep alive the memory of the other. Camus expressed the retrograde movement of truth and the sedimentation of meaning in the following manner:

Les télégrammes restèrent alors notre seule ressource. Des êtres que liant l'intelligence, le coeur et la chair, en furent réduits à chercher les signes de cette communion ancienne dans les majuscules d'une dépêche de dix mots. (p. 82).

13. PP p. 295.
14. S p. 96.
15. PP p. x.
16. M. Merleau-Fonty, The Primacy of Perception, p. 182.
17. Newsweek, June 9, 1972, p. 101.
18. E. Husserl, Logical Investigations, volume II, p. 765.
19. Ibid., p. 768.

20. VI p. 12.
21. VI p. 11.
22. Ibid.
23. PP p. 456.
24. PP p. xi.
25. ET p. 295.
26. ET p. 298.
27. ET p. 301.
28. ET p. 303.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. ET p. 305.
32. ET pp. 307-08.
33. ET p. 309.
34. PP p. xvi.
35. SZ p. 220.
36. S p. 75.
37. Ibid.
38. S.p. 74.
39. VI p. 163.
40. Ibid.
41. VI p. 125.
42. Ibid.
43. PP p. 295.
44. Ibid.

45. PP p. 395.
46. PP p. 383.
47. ET p. 313.
48. VI p. 189.
49. Ibid.
50. PP p. 40.
51. PP p. 382.
52. PP p. 398.
53. VI p. 28.
54. Ibid.
55. VI p. 103.
56. Ibid.
57. VI p. 129
58. Ibid.
59. VI p. 129. In this passage, Merleau-Ponty is quoting E. Husserl's Cartesian Meditations, translated by D. Cairns, The Hague, 1960. pp. 38-39.
60. John Rewald, The History of Impressionism, p. 338.
61. W. Haftman, Painting in the Twentieth Century, volume I, p. 33. Mr. Haftman is quoting from a letter which Cézanne wrote to Dr. Gasquet in regard to his method of painting which interested the doctor.
62. Ibid.
63. S p. 96.
64. Ibid.
65. PP p. xvi.
66. M. Merleau-Ponty, "Limits of Phenomenology", op. cit., p. 121.
67. Met., Book 4, 1011 b26.

68. FP p. 35.

69. Ibid.

70. FP p. 36.

71. E. S. Brightman, An Introduction to Philosophy,
New York: Holt Reinhart and Winston, 1925, p. 61, quoted
in J.G. Brennan's The Meaning of Philosophy, p. 85.

72. FP p. xvi.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

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