

# THE THEORY-PRAXIS PROBLEM

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## Introduction

In this presentation, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophical/psychological understanding is utilized and highlighted by Thomas S. Kuhn. The focus of this work is the theory-praxis problem as it currently exists in psychology, specifically, problems which result from any division between the two. According to the scientific paradigm, theory AND praxis are seen as separate entities. Theory is formulated then applied. Problems arise when the theory is applied. Separation of these two allows integral aspects of human experience to drop out of the final psychological interpretation. Concepts no longer fit the lived human reality that they are purported to explain. A gap separates the theory and its successful application. This gap hampers true working relationships inherent to theory-praxis and distorts psychological meaning.

## The Scientific Paradigm Paradox

Using the natural science paradigm in psychology brings living paradoxes. How can what has come from the life world no longer fit what it first proposed to explain? The *what* of theory and the *how* of praxis become inversed and distorted. As a result the person becomes separated from the world. Personal aspects of experience are removed. The person is conceived apart from the world, studied as a set of before and after events (stimulus-response).<sup>1</sup> These causal events are understood as separate. Scientific thought and its resultant concepts are constructed in terms of linear functionality, stimulus leads to response, before causes after and theory precedes lived reality. As Merleau-Ponty says:

From the moment that causality loses its mythical meaning of productive causality to be reduced to the functional dependence of variables, laws can no longer be conceived as that which engenders the existence of the facts.<sup>2</sup>

From the causal standpoint, theory precedes experience. This is the point at which the gap between theory-praxis becomes most prolific and in psychology, most stubborn. It does not allow findings to address the ways persons conceive, perceive and live in the world.

## Theory as What Should Be

The reversal in thinking about theory and experienced reality holds one key to the solution of the theory-praxis problem. Presently, many

theories attempt to say what should be rather than revealing “what is.” Kuhn illustrates this problem by the following, “Those theories, of course, do ‘fit the facts,’ but only by transforming previously accessible information into facts that, for the preceding paradigm, had not existed at all.”<sup>3</sup> The natural scientific view not only removes itself from the experience (accessible information) but also goes on to try to make experience fit into an already-existing theoretical framework. This transforms the nature of what is originally given in experience. To make matters worse, if the experience does not fit after its transformation, then it no longer exists as an active influence in the final interpretation by the researcher. At this moment results become three times removed from the original meaning of an experience that was, at one time, the object of study once important enough to initiate investigative work.

A question arises. Is it necessary to transform experience in the first place? Looking into this problem, one begins to see the movement of natural scientific thought. To break away from this attitude and construct an all-encompassing scientific view allows a partial view of the world including the psychological meaning of the person. This is at one and the same time, a way toward progress and moving away from what is given. Since this attitude transforms the original given by placing it into a pre-determined view, it no longer exists in the way it is experienced by the person. One problem inherent to this natural scientific attitude in psychology is that this initial transformation in experienced meaning truncates the potential to disclosed implicit, sedimented meaning. The natural scientific attitude offers only a partial understanding in that it turns away from the initial perceptual given. Instead of turning away from the experience for Merleau-Ponty this is a beginning, “There are certainly more things in the world and in us than what is perceptible.”<sup>4</sup> The natural scientific attitude would have one believe that in a psychological experiment, for example, the researcher provides meaning. Again, the partiality in perspective emerges. Whereas Merleau-Ponty’s stance is that human beings receive and bestow meaning through their actions. Meaning is always-already present. This is a double possibility. The natural scientific attitude so objectifies an experienced reality that the person is at worst lost and at best, becomes an object. From this attitude, it is not scientific to be other than objective. Is the natural science attitude objective when it approaches a given human phenomenon with predetermined biases that include concretized interpretative methods by which to understand human reality? Further, is it objective to attempt an adequate understanding of the diversity and range in human experience from such a partial perspective? As Merleau-Ponty says, “But absence is itself rooted in presence.”<sup>5</sup> This given offers an entry point, a direction for interrogating the fullness and richness of lived human reality. The natural scientific attitude chooses to turn away from the given by transforming it into something other than “what is.” For the psychologist this is a built in conflict. Saying what should be is speaking in absolutes. People do not live

in absolutes. This is an impossibility.

### The Revolution

The theory-praxis problem emerged from an attempt to understand human phenomena using laws and methods offered by the natural sciences. The thrust that emerges from this stance is in opposition to the holistic way in which human phenomena are present in experience. Analysis disassembles without respect to integral experience. In a progressive-regressive approach, an inversion of the scientific attitude occurs. Kuhn raises this issue, “Does a field make progress because it is a science, or is it a science because it makes progress?”<sup>6</sup> It is possible to be rigorous and systematic in psychology without using methods from the field of the natural sciences. This can be achieved by a regressive approach, a way of investigating *what* a phenomenon is and *how* it is integral to personal self-understanding. This allows for reflection. By looking into and standing back from the phenomenon, one can better see a direction. What opens up is the possibility for progressive speculation based on the actual. This point of departure allows for metapsychological<sup>7</sup> issues to be taken into account.

This movement toward holistic understanding can be found in the structures of behavior. Through structures the phenomenal field can be researched. This is a movement away from the notion of the absolutes of human existence measured by scientific methodologies and toward experience. Natural scientific thought measures human reality in terms of behavior over and against absolute criteria. It is thereby judged according to its conformity to an ideal. The bell-shaped curve and other statistical measuring devices reveal the spread. The realization that the researcher helped invent the spread concept with a mathematical formula also indicates that one is presupposing an ideal as a given law that guides, shapes and determines human behavior and reality. The outcome of this approach shows that grouping within a given range in analysis indicates what human beings do within prescribed limits, behave in such and such a manner. Presupposing this investigation to be about human beings who do behave in a particular way in a given situation is what initiates the work. This hypothesis testing means that the researcher already has some intuition in proceeding from already presupposed knowledge to the creation of an ideal against which to measure results. Scientifically, this confirms “what is.” But what does it mean? How do psychologists interpret phenomena already known to exist? This is possible by following the meaning of human phenomena as they are lived. In actuality praxis precedes theory. Theory comes from praxis. The known precedes the explicitly known. Whichever stance one takes with regard to results, theory-praxis mutually involves one another throughout any investigative process.

## The Problem of the AND

The paradoxes that emerge from the theory AND praxis problem evolve from the AND.<sup>8</sup> The whole notion of problem helps create the problem, as well as, when there is a problem, one finds a solution. Solutions in psychology are often conceived in mathematical and statistical terms and are removed from what the problem actually means and how it is experienced. Solution, as an answer, resides in an inversion of the formulation and its possible answers, just as answers already exist in the statement of a problem. Psychologists who adopt a natural scientific orientation and who exclude pre-predictive knowledge often overlook this inherent unity. Merleau-Ponty describes this process of unity:

Situation and reaction are linked internally by their common participation in a structure in which the mode of activity proper to the organism is expressed. Hence they cannot be placed one after the other as cause and effect: they are two moments of a circular process.<sup>9</sup>

One does not ask why or what past events cause a particular behavior to occur in the present. One asks what is the meaning of those things happening together at this moment. Again, Merleau-Ponty articulates:

If behavior is a “form,” one cannot even designate in it that which depends on each one of the internal and external conditions taken separately, since their variations will be expressed in the form by a global and indivisible effect.<sup>10</sup>

The natural scientific method misleads psychological thinking by using causal thinking, by not realizing that every change changes the form. This common participation in the structure of behavior cannot be delineated because in delineation the original phenomenon is changed. Merleau-Ponty says, “The totality is not an *appearance*; it is a *phenomenon*.”<sup>11</sup>

It is now possible to follow this line of thinking: change is a matter of focus. From this perspective, the holistic event is seen as situational which is manifest through and in conjunction with human behavior. Circularity is a symbolic representation for wholeness, for inherent unity in progress. Linearity or cause and effect asks why, while a more synchronous approach to the same phenomenon asks *what* and *how*.<sup>12</sup> It is not so much that one chooses one path over and against the other, one considers reality in more than one way, not necessarily over and against but in sonority with and in relation to each other.

This *shift in focus*, this inversion of attitude reveals the structure or the inner nature of a phenomenon, a presupposed unity. For example, a person

standing at the top of a mountain looking down over the wooded valley does not analyze the landscape as a matter of cause and effect or as many independent activities, it is grasped as a unity, it is given. It is possible to analyze the landscape as an entity by the scientific study of various physical substances contained within it as a whole. The meanings of the landscape are changed according to the project of the investigator. This is another important distinction tied to the temporal aspect of the theory-praxis problem: the difference between the goal of the natural scientific community and the project offered by an existential approach. Goal is an end point and project is a horizontal aspect, it is sonorous with the rhythm of circularity. Repeating Merleau-Ponty's earlier comment, a global response occurs.

### The Temporality of Linearity

One other notion is at work here in the investigation of linearity/circularity paradoxes, the temporal aspect of human existence. What temporal mode is consonant with the natural scientific view of the world and human persons in linear terms? People live in time: past, present and future. Temporal aspects are inherent to all psychological work, knowledge and in ways of thinking. If a transformation occurs in the scientific before-after causal paradigm, the temporal mode of a scientific thought of past, present and future, then a transformation in linear temporality as the predominant mode of temporality will occur. Rhythm is the temporal mode of circularity. Even the scientific view adopted by physical and natural science are based on the rhythms inherent as the innermost nature of being. This is revealed *as* nature expresses itself *as it is* not as it should be. Rhythm is a contextualizer not a beginning and endpoint. It is an ongoing pattern with demonstrations of emphasis and syncopation. This mode of temporality allows for the possibility of natural emergence of phenomena. A being manifests itself according to its innate and learned structures, in "expressive conduct"<sup>13</sup> not in formulated conceptuality. Again, rhythm offers a holistic apprehension of the temporal aspects of human existence as it manifests itself in accordance with its true nature. Merleau-Ponty discusses the role of rhythm in relation to mechanistic conceptions:

But in any case, to understand these biological entities is not to note a series of empirical coincidences; it is not even to establish a list of mechanical correlations; it is to unite the ensemble of known facts by means of their significations, to discover in all of them a characteristic rhythm, a general attitude toward certain categories of objects, perhaps even toward all things. Thus it is necessary in this sense to go beyond mechanism.<sup>14</sup>

Rhythm introduces the temporal aspect in a way that allows for change because it allows for emphasis rather than the rigidity of paradigm. It

seems that the usual temporal mode found in everyday living and in science is that of minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. Time is the uniting thread that weaves experience together and provides it with a coherent frame of reference. Time provides the continuity for one event to occur before or after the other. The before and after or past, present and future are thoroughly engrained in everyday ways of perceiving, understanding and interpreting experience. Time provides a way to locate experience, to find a place to stand in relation to what one is and to what happens to a person as well as to what that person does.

### Paradigm and Approach

Paradigm and approach are two different ways of looking at the same thing. Paradigm is exclusive while approach is inclusive. To exclude any aspect of reality automatically biases results. To close off a portion of the world and common participation in it only promotes the partiality involved. *How* (praxis) can one think about, speak about and investigate *what* is (theory)?

One way to accomplish this is to take a new look at the meaning of paradigm for psychological praxis. A paradigm describes a way to understand how the world is structured. It defines a way to make maps of meaning. Any interpretation presupposes a paradigm. The researcher brings the paradigm to the research situation. As Kuhn says this mode, “aims to refine, extend, and articulate a paradigm that is already in existence.”<sup>15</sup> Several questions arise. What is the possibility for change? Will theories be abandoned when they are no longer useful? Kuhn says there is an aspect of invisibility to revolutions in thought, a crisis comes about in subtle ways. Change comes about when immediate experience no longer fits into an already predetermined paradigm. This precipitates a leap from one paradigm to another. How does the natural scientific attitude get trapped in this leap? It is unavoidable. Paradigm determines the meaning of experience. Paradigm is prior. If change occurs, it must do so in relation to an already-existing paradigm that explains its meaning. What about an experimental situation where exceptions appear and no longer conform to theoretical postulation? The consistent appearance of exceptions to behavior interpretation become shifting points in the formulation of psychological theory. Looking closely at what Kuhn says, a revolution of this sort comes about when a particular scientific community agrees that one paradigm cannot be the prevalent method from which to base interpretation of findings. This reveals that revolutions in thought and praxis are not as subtle as they may at first appear. As Kuhn says, “during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before.”<sup>16</sup>

In looking for one thing another is found.<sup>17</sup> Taking this further, it is

possible to question experiments found to be significant at the .05 or .01 “level.” What about the other side? Is the other side really not significant? Merleau-Ponty would say the problem exists as long as one side is not included in the holistic structure of the behavior. By assuming this perspective, one is no longer concentrated on a preconceived method or meaning content but begins to think in terms of approach. Rather than asking about which way to look at the phenomenon, the researcher lets the phenomenon guide the direction to be followed as it reveals itself to be what it is in its meaning for people. The psychological work remains scientific in human terms without the rigidity imposed by a natural science postulation. To clarify, Merleau-Ponty says:

What is demanded by the actual content of science is certainly not the idea of a universe in which everything would literally depend on everything else and in which no cleavage would be possible, but no more so is it the idea of a *nature* in which processes would be knowable in isolation and which would produce them from its resources; what is demanded is neither fusion nor juxtaposition, rather it is structure.<sup>18</sup>

The natural scientific community, by choosing a method, implies an approach.<sup>19</sup> In the description of what is meant by approach, a transformation in thinking occurs. Merleau-Ponty’s *The Structure of Behavior* outlines just such a transformation in a critique of dualism:

In these cases of disintegration, the soul and the body are apparently distinct; and this is the truth of dualism. But the soul, if it possesses no means of expression—one should say rather, no means of actualizing itself—soon ceases to be *anything whatsoever* and in particular ceases to be the soul, as the thought of the aphasic weakens and becomes dissolved; the body which loses its meaning soon ceases to be a living body and falls back into the state of a physico-chemical mass; it arrives at non-meaning only by dying.<sup>20</sup>

With a new understanding of the body’s relation with the world and the primordial function of perception and its interpretation, persons are seen in new relation to the meaning of what is experienced, to the world and particularly, to an understanding of what psychology is rather than what it should be. As Kuhn says, “Confronting the same constellation of objects as before and knowing that he does so, he nevertheless finds them transformed through and through in many of their details.”<sup>21</sup> The crises through which transformations occur lead to the recognition of anomalies. “And these are terminated, not by deliberation and interpretation, but by a relatively sudden and unstructured event like the gestalt switch.”<sup>22</sup>

## How Do We Speak About Structures?

Merleau-Ponty's transformation of mind-body to body-subject as a lived reality requires an appropriate descriptive language. The approach of an embodied scientist-subject is posited in the language used as well as in the construction of meaning content. Through the structure of both the scientific and the social, human beings share common participation in situations. Language tells one's story. In the construction of language one depicts the significance of an experienced world of meaning. For the community aspect involved in social sciences, language is an entry point into the cohesion of shared meaning. Language and its construction gives form and structure to experience, it remains present even though one is not speaking. It is the ground out of which meaning emerges in a shared world. Meaning is an inherent description of its form and structure, a dialectic of theory *as* praxis. Articulation of the theory-praxis problem may be achieved by an articulation of the dialectic between abstract/concrete dimensions expressed in language. Construction of a world view emerges in community language, is accepted *a priori* as fact and refers back to presuppositions regarding the nature of the human being, how living processes work rather than the natural scientific paradigm which tries to explain why.<sup>23</sup> A descriptive approach reveals over time and in many ways different worlds of signification. Each person adopts a stylistically familiar way of interpreting reality. A psychologist interrogates not only universal structures of experience but also the concrete expression that is given as expressive conduct:

The fact is that every alteration of individual existences in consciousness manifests itself in a modification of the concrete appearance of the objects. A schizophrenic says: "See these roses; my wife would have found them beautiful; for me, they are a pile of leaves, petals, thorns and stems."<sup>24</sup>

These statements demonstrate one way in which the real appears universally but bears specific significance different to each who experiences personal meaning. This illustrates another theoretical barrier with regard to praxis, the universal/concrete dispute. Since knowledge is limited and partial, there is no one theory that can account for all psychological reality. It is easy to see that one cannot once and for all time posit a psychological fact as an absolute truth. Knowledge changes, remains open to revision. Therefore, understanding which guides the field should be pliable enough to accommodate the new, unusual or eccentric. This is the specific point of Kuhn's work regarding the structure of scientific revolutions.

Theory that is universal is naturally made up of the concrete that is praxis. But it must be responsible for encompassing evolutionary changes in meaning. What is required is the ability to explicate the whole person. At the

present time and with the existing methods of natural science in psychology, this does not seem possible. A glimpse of the whole person can be seen only in one's style, an indelible print of one's being in a concretely particularized way of engaging in the universal discourse of human experience and meaning.

### Signification As Style

It is not enough to try to synthesize theory and praxis. The split is too fundamental, as Merleau-Ponty has shown in the fallacy of the mind-body split. The division begins at the root of the tree not in its branches. One does not begin, work through or end with an analysis of isolated parts. The original unity is to be preserved in its significance. For human beings significance is articulated by style. The thematic is a significance while the operative is in flux in human experience.

Merleau-Ponty indicates that signification is one of the bases for the human order:

In recognizing that behavior has a meaning and depends upon the vital significance of situations, biological science is prohibited from conceiving of it as a thing in-itself (*en soi*) which would exist, *partes extra partes*, in the nervous system or in the body; rather it sees in behavior an embodied dialectic which radiates over a milieu immanent to it.<sup>25</sup>

The vitality of significance referred to by Merleau-Ponty is vitally significant for this discussion. This vitality is the *living* for existential psychology. Meaning is only significant for someone. For it is from this that philosophy springs and it is in philosophy that the roots of all sciences are discovered. Philosophy speaks to unveiling the vital, to what is significant. Existential psychology is attuned to this unveiling. Vital significance is the heart of the social sciences, it tells the story of human beings. By interrogating the vital significance as meaning, one moves toward the structures of society, responsiveness to life. The ability to transform structures, endows the human being with the capacity for work:

...to recognize the originality of the pair: perceived situation-work. It is by design that, instead of speaking of action as do most contemporary psychologists, we choose the Hegelian term "work," which designates the ensemble of activities by which man transforms physical and living nature.<sup>26</sup>

This is in the person's capacity to respond to life as a call, to act in a manner that is consistent with one's perceptual given of the situation, of transforming possibilities, responding as addressed. The ability to transform

possibilities puts the person at the heart of change:

Thus, the human dialectic is ambiguous: it is first manifested by the social or cultural structures the appearance of which it brings about and in which it imprisons itself. *But its use-objects and its cultural objects would not be what they are if the activity which brings about their appearance did not also have as its meaning to reject them and to surpass them.*<sup>27</sup>

This ability to reject and to surpass concerns both theory-praxis and scientific revolutions. The theory-praxis problem is an inherent aspect in the formulation of any problem, including ways to describe it in language. The structure of the problem as it is described by language helps clarify the paradoxical construction of theory which no longer fits lived reality. Articulated speech gives expression to the meaning structures of expression. Each person is confronted by a world of meaning to be expressed, a topic about which Merleau-Ponty comments:

Expression is a matter of reorganizing things—said, affecting them with a new index of curvature, and bending them to a certain enhancement of meaning. There was that which is of itself comprehensible and sayable—notably that which more mysteriously summons all things from the depths of language beforehand as nameable.<sup>28</sup>

By unveiling one discovers the implicit that has given shape and form to that which stands out, to that which is apparent. Language helps to articulate the social structures of human experience by making implicit structures in the paradox of the subject-object split as they stand out, giving expression to the dimensional characteristics of “what is” first and foremost human. This preserves the vitality of experience and offers a fully human interpretation of meaning in place of rigid theories. Psychologists who use this approach find it possible to come to an interpretation of experience that is personal, sociological and universal. This is *theory as praxis* and is an open-ended question rather than a closed-mechanical system.

### Method of the Involved Consciousness

Merleau-Ponty’s work on the structure of behavior elaborates the meaning of persons as an involved consciousness. This approach demonstrates the inadequacy of answers contributed to the field of psychology by laboratory research. De Waelhens emphasizes that:

...the ensemble of facts which, brought to light by scientific investigation, constitutes behavior—is not comprehensible within the ontological perspectives which science

spontaneously adopts.<sup>29</sup>

This provides further evidence of the need to understand the full impact of the theory-praxis problem as it is currently affecting psychology by attempting to reveal the relationship between theory as the *what* and praxis as the *how* in their mutual emergence in human experience and behavior. Within the root problem of the mind-body split one also finds the root problem of the theory-praxis split. How can laboratory results be applied to an involved consciousness? One part of the problem comes from the original formulation of the problem in terms suitable to the nature of the human being. Kuhn offers one alternative that could be envisioned for psychology as the structures of scientific revolutions are examined as a whole. Clarification of a problem is the effort to make explicit the problem within the structure of knowledge as it already-exists. The theory-praxis problem is actually a paradox that calls for an inversion in formulation. This requires a new way to think about what is already known. By inversion of the paradox, the deletion of the AND in the theory AND praxis problem, the original is preserved. Praxis precedes theory. Theory comes from praxis. When psychological methods do not fit the phenomenon they attempt to interrogate, theory is not being true to the structure of “what is” but imposes an inaccurate structure upon actuality by saying what it should be. This inversion precedes the theory-praxis problem. A revolution in thinking is necessary to change this problem, a revolution in action, thinking and describing. “The real has to be described, not constructed or formed.”<sup>30</sup> The method of description, of being true to what is without prejudice, as Merleau-Ponty would say, must necessarily deal with language, with speech. By description the implicit shows through as meaning comes to light and focus in experience.

The answer to the theory-praxis problem is in the formulation of the problem, in its description. Natural science demands linearity and paradigm as its primary thinking mode and methodological tool, whereas existential psychology allows for an inclusive approach. Ambiguity often leads to discovery. Pure logic often leads to paradox.

## Notes

- 1) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans. Alden L. Fisher, foreword John Wild (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 31. Merleau-Ponty articulates this, “The adequate *stimulus* cannot be defined in itself and independently of the organism.” *Ibid.*, p. 31. A stimulus is defined by a response.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- 3) Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, second

- edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 141.
- 4) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans., intro. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 171.
  - 5) *Ibid.*, p. 172.
  - 6) Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, *op. cit.*, p. 162.
  - 7) Starting from the given, which is the ground of experience, it is possible to move to metapsychology. The idea works like a coffee pot that percolates, it percolates down. This is an inseparable relatedness.
  - 8) This is derived from Merleau-Ponty in discussion of consciousness (*en soi*) and (*en et pour soi*), “The problem of perception lies completely in this duality.” Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
  - 9) *Ibid.*, p. 130.
  - 10) *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.
  - 11) *Ibid.*, p. 159.
  - 12) The difference between linearity and circularity (structure) can be shown in this way: thinking from a linear perspective one would say, if A, then B. From an integral approach one would say, if a change in A, then a change in B. This allows for the multiplicity of the interwoven phenomenon that is an always-already-situated structure. It is an always-already-there situation.
  - 13) *Ibid.*, p. 209.
  - 14) *Ibid.*, p. 158.
  - 15) Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
  - 16) *Ibid.*, p. 111.
  - 17) Serendipity.
  - 18) Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
  - 19) Kuhn helps clarify this issue, “If we can learn to substitute evolution-from-what-we-do-know for evolution-toward-what-we-wish-to-know, a number of vexing problems may vanish in the process.” Kuhn, *The*

*Structure of Scientific Revolutions, op. cit.*, p. 171. Here we see Kuhn speaking to the theory-praxis problem. Kuhn goes on, "I cannot yet specify in any detail the consequences of this alternate view of scientific advance." *Ibid.*, p. 171. But then again Merleau-Ponty has already shown the way, we just need to catch up. Speaking of structure changes our thinking. In this way we are beyond substitution. If we take this further, we can see what Merleau-Ponty means, "language is present when we are not speaking it." Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior, op. cit.*, p. 178. Here there is an allowance for structure. In a later work this is enhanced, "absence is itself rooted in presence." Merleau-Ponty, *Signs, op. cit.*, p. 172. The thought has been extended here and the consistency is apparent. Moving with this thought it is possible to see how this allows for further possibilities. There is a totality of structure but this remains open. It is open to the emergence of an absence rooted in structure. There is no closure as in a paradigm. This structure allows for ambiguity because the absence is not known. This is how one can speak of the lived and the known. The lived is a stream of consciousness in flux. The known is the significance by which things hang together.

- 20) Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior, op. cit.*, p. 209.
- 21) Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, op. cit.*, p. 122.
- 22) *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- 23) Description is explicative (*what* is there) while analysis is explanatory (*why* it is true).
- 24) Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior, op. cit.*, p. 174.
- 25) *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- 26) *Ibid.*, p. 162.
- 27) *Ibid.*, p. 176.
- 28) Merleau-Ponty, *Signs, op. cit.*, p. 19. This point is elaborated in the following way, "Expression is a matter of acting in such a way that the two gather one another in or cross one another." *Ibid.*, p. 19. Expression, speech and thought are interrelated in an integral unity, "Thus things *are said* and *are thought* by a Speech and by a Thought which we do not have but which has us." *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 29) Alphonse De Waelhens, "A Philosophy of the Ambiguous", foreword

to the second French edition, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, *op. cit.*, p. xxv. De Waelhens says, “The scientist cannot make the rejoinder here that he thinks without ontological background. To believe that one is not doing metaphysics or to want to abstain from doing it is always to imply an ontology, but an unexamined one—just as governments run by ‘technicians’ do not make political policy, but never fail to have one—and often the worst of all.” *Ibid.*, fn. 15, p. xxviii.

- 30) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1962), p. x.