the present is something almost self-explained. 10

In a normal person there is no distinction between the physiological and the mental processes. This distinction holds good only in the case of pathological or abnormal behaviour. The normal man is an integrated man in whom the contributions of both the somatic and the mental are united into a whole.

Instead of a causal relation, there is a dialectical relation among the three orders of being - physical, vital and human - so that one cannot be explained in terms of the other. If the relation among them were of the nature of a causal one, we could not expect to have something new in the effect which was not previously in the cause. But as the relation in question is a dialectical one, new relations appear, which cannot be compared to those of a physical system and its surroundings.

Freud's general theory is causal, and he has accepted the existence of some repressed desires and motives as the causes of all our abnormal behaviours. But Merleau-Ponty has tried to discard it by showing that in some particular aspects

of it Freud's theory is not causal. Freud said that every symptom always has several meanings. Therefore, they are not causally determined. If they were so determined, then the symptoms always would mean the same thing. Thus Merleau-Ponty says: "It would be a mistake to imagine that even with Freud psychoanalysis rules out the description of psychological motives, and is opposed to the phenomenological method: psychoanalysis has, on the contrary, helped to develop it by declaring, as Freud puts it, that every human action 'has a meaning.' "

III

According to Merleau-Ponty, the Gestalt psychologists also are influenced by the naturalistic outlook. Gestalt theory as it is developed by Köhler is not free from the same defects. The theory has the same orientation as physics which is one of the natural sciences. A way of thinking which is current in physics, introduced by Köhler in the field of psychology. Thus the psychological concepts of field and dynamic process have been borrowed from physics. The Gestaltists no doubt hold that consciousness is a unified

which, whole, like many natural objects is not divisible into its parts and whose parts have no independent existence apart from the whole. Nevertheless, they are influenced by naturalistic attitude. They regard consciousness as an object of the natural world and they try to define consciousness in the same way as the object of the external world can be defined. They say that consciousness is a form. Their conception of 'Gestalt' is equally applicable to consciousness as well as to the objects of the world. In this sense, the Gestaltists naturalise consciousness. They do not recognise any property which belongs uniquely to consciousness.

Regarding the relation between perception and the brain process, the Gestaltists have introduced the notion of form in physiology. We perceive a figure against a background. But the figure-ground notion is derived from the perceptual world. But just because this notion is derived from the phenomenal world, we may have doubts as to its applicability to the physiological realm.

According to the objectivist, behaviour is caused by the stimulus. The Gestaltists hold that our behaviour cannot
be the direct effect of the physical world. The relation between stimulus and response is not a relation of cause and effect. They are common participants of a structural system. In spite of this valuable insight, the Gestaltists, according to Merleau-Ponty, remain victims of causal and naturalistic attitude. According to them, corresponding to the physical field there is a physiological field. Our behaviour is not directly caused by the stimulus coming from the physical world, but it is the result of the physiological process. Whenever we perceive something the object of the physical world acts upon our sense organs, as a result of which we have a corresponding psychophysical process or a process of organisation within our nervous system and in our cortex. It is this physiological process which determines the nature of perception. Behind the physical and the physiological fields there is a mental field whose existence is taken into account in order to explain symbolic forms of behaviour. Merleau-Ponty's main point against the Gestalt theory is that it is a naturalistic theory which places too much importance on the superiority and causal control of physical phenomena over the psychical phenomena. To him this attempt is nothing but a kind of unphilosophical realism.
By perception he means the perceptual process as it is; he never accepts any scientific explanation of perception, which postulates a definite brain process as a result of which we come to perceive. The behaviorists try to explain perception with the help of their stimulus-response formula. The Gestaltists try to modify the position of the behaviorists and hold that our brain as a whole responds to a stimulus. The physical, physiological and the mental fields are regarded by them as three forms of structure. The notion of form is equally applicable to them all. Quantity, order and significance, which are present in the entire universe of form, are regarded by them as the dominant characteristics of matter, life and mind, respectively. "But if knowledge in Physics, to the extent that it deals with the structures, accepts the very categories which are traditionally reserved for the knowledge of life and mind, biology and psychology should not in contrast withdraw in principle from mathematical analyses and causal explanation."  

Matter, life and mind are participants in a common structure, but there must be a structural difference among them. It is impossible to hold that the physical field has the same form and structural organisation as

12 Merleau-Ponty, The Structure of Behaviour, p. 132.
the physiological or the mental. According to the Gestaltists, behaviour cannot be explained by the formula of stimulus and response. There must be a physiological or mental organisation between the stimulus and response. But so far as we remain within the psychological point of view and regard behaviour as a mundane event, occurring within a particular time and place, we have no right to accept the existence of mental or physiological mediation. The mental mediation can be the passage that leads one plane of reality to that of another. Physical and biological structures will be regarded as motor causes. Thus there will be no integration. The notion of form fails to fulfil its purpose.

Our behaviour is supposed to have its cause in the geographical environment. Our brain as a whole is taken to respond to a situation. But the situation to which it responds is not a geographical but a behavioral environment, i.e. the environment as it appears to me. The geographical environment or the physical situation as it is, is not similar to the environment as it appears to me. The geographical environment is the
physical world, it is the world of physics; while the behavioral environment is in a sense inside us. The stimuli from the external objective world act upon our sense organs, as a result of which I have a process of perceiving within me. And this perceptual process enables me to have a behavioral environment before me. Thus the cause of the behavioral environment is the physical world. But "How can a cause in one universe of discourse produce an effect in another? All our causal laws refer to events within the same universe of discourse and, therefore, since, the geographical environment belongs to the universe of physics, we require its effects to belong to it also." 13

Gestaltists hold that no form can have any cause outside of itself. But they have accepted the notion of physical world. The structure is found, according to them, not only in the physiological but also in the physical world. Even in the physical world there is no point to point correspondence between the cause and the effect. Influenced by external conditions a physical system exhibits that characteristic which we find in an organism when it is influenced by physical environment.

The Gestaltists have discovered that the nerve processes have the same structure as that of mental on the one hand and the physical on the other. When we perceive a table as a table, its physical structure, that differentiates it from other objects, acts on the retina and produces an analogous physiological structure in my nervous system. It is true that the stimuli, when they reach our sense organs, are independent of each other and have no physical structure which we ascribe to them. Psychology gives us an adequate explanation of the perceptual process by discovering the laws according to which they are organised in the body; and some of their objective characteristics such as their similarity, proximity etc. show that they inhere in a single configuration and these—similarity, proximity etc.—are the characteristics of the physical form of the external object. From this it is clear that the notion of psychology as a natural science is retained by the Gestaltists.

The Gestaltists think that it is on the physical structure that the biological and the mental structures are founded. Now the question is, if they are so founded,
can their specific originality be maintained? The physical explanation of behaviour holds that the physical form has all the properties of biological and mental structure. There will be no difference between matter, life and mind. Life and mind, on the other hand, must be regarded as nothing but two different words for describing the physical form. But if it be the case, i.e. if behaviour is explained in terms of physical structure, and life and mind are nothing but physical form, then what exists is the physical form. Again, if there is no structural difference between life, mind and matter, then we cannot ascribe to consciousness any unique characteristic. It will be the physiological structure that takes place in the brain. This is the reason why Koffka like the materialist defines consciousness "as that property which certain events in nature have of revealing themselves", as if consciousness always had as objects the physiological processes which accompany it."\textsuperscript{14} Consciousness has its equivalent physical or physiological process. Consciousness is treated by the Gestaltists as a physical event. Whatever significance the notion of form may have

\textsuperscript{14} Merleau-Ponty, The Structure of Behaviour, p. 136.
in so far as it is used in scientific research, it is regarded as a natural event like all other events in nature and is treated as a cause. So far as we treat behavior as a mundane event and reduce life and mind to matter, we cannot escape from the grip of materialism.

IV

Thus after criticising the naturalistic psychologies, Merleau-Ponty seeks to establish his own dialectical and phenomenological view of human behaviour. He aims at discovering a relation between consciousness and nature. He seeks to take up a middle position between naive realism and idealism. The realists err in integrating perception into nature. My perception of a thing is never complete. Only a certain form, shape and colour of the object are presented before us in a single act of perception. But the form, size and colour of the object are relative and may change in different situation. Merleau-Ponty holds that this relation that exists between the thing and its
perspective aspects is not a causal relation. It is not a relation which is similar to the relations existing within nature. "As soon as the presence or the presentation of a 'thing' to consciousness ------ is interpreted as a real operation of the thing on the body and on the perceiving subject, it becomes impossible to reconstitute the descriptive content of perception."\(^{15}\) We cannot construct a perception. We can construct a house by gathering material from the natural world. But such is not the case with perception. We cannot construct perception by gaining material from the senses and from memory. We cannot explain perception by regarding it as an event of nature. It cannot be explained causally. Merleau-Ponty's aim is to sustain the unique nature of human behavior by saving it from the hands of the physiological psychologists whose tendency is to explain behavior mechanically. According to Merleau-Ponty, human behavior has a characteristic or significance of its own, for which it cannot be classed either as exclusively subjective or as exclusively objective. Behavior cannot be explained as our blind reactions to external stimuli. On the other hand, it cannot also be an

\(^{15}\) Merleau-Ponty, The Structure of Behaviour, p. 193.
act which is motivated by our subjective mind. He stresses the dialectical character of human behaviour. Behaviour is "a dialectical interchange between man and the world, which cannot be explained in the traditional causal terms. It is a circular dialectic in which the independent beings of the life-field, already selected by the structure of the human body, exert a further selective operation on this body's acts. It is out of this dialectical interchange that human meanings emerge." These meanings are not caused and determined—as the realists imagined—by the extra-mental reality which is fixed beforehand; nor are they actively constructed by our mind as the idealist imagined. Man has the capacity to master a world. In this world the objects appear to him and are structured by him. He gives meaning and significance to these objects. The physiological psychologists bring forward the cases in which bodily disturbances have some effects upon our conscious behaviours. But our behaviours, according to Merleau-Ponty, cannot be explained in somatic terms. It is disintegrated consciousness which is parallel to physiological process. The man, who has reached beyond the

dialectic of subject and object and has become pure consciousness, can realise the absolute consciousness. To this absolute consciousness the physical world and the body are nothing but the objects of consciousness. The physiological processes are no longer the causes that determine the structure of consciousness. The body is not a fragment of matter. It is nothing but an object of consciousness, it cannot play the intermediary role between things and consciousness. Our body is the bearer of a dialectic. The nature of body is such that in it the physical and the psychical are combined. Our behaviours cannot be regarded as the response to a stimulus. Behaviour is neither physical nor mental. The movement of matter is not behaviour. Behaviour is a whole significative for a consciousness. Behaviour is intentional. Psychology still remains science of behaviour, but in a more pregnant, phenomenological sense of 'behaviour'.