NATURAL TIME AND IMMEMORIAL NATURE

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The shift in perspective that distinguishes Merleau-Ponty's last writings is often described as a turn from privileging the lived body as a methodological starting point, as we find in *Phenomenology of Perception*, to the standpoint of an ontology of flesh. Within this later ontology, as we see it emerging in the courses on nature as well as the manuscript of *The Visible and the Invisible*, the human body is a remarkable variant of flesh, but only a variant nonetheless. In other words, the shift from the earlier to the later perspective involves a de-centering of human subjectivity, which loses both its status as primary methodological point of access as well as its cardinal ontological position as the keystone of the perceived world. This de-centering is more than simply a critique of consciousness, which Merleau-Ponty had always considered secondary to our fundamentally corporeal engagement with the world; now it is the intentionally oriented body as well that is asked to relinquish its privileged status. In *Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty could still describe the body as "in the world as the heart is in the organism," keeping the "visible spectacle alive" by "breath[ing] life into it and sustain[ing] it inwardly," thereby emphasizing the singularity of this relationship, the essential correlation of body and world, and the dependence of the perceived on its intentional bonds with the human perceiver.[1] By contrast, as Renaud Barbaras has noted, the later Merleau-Ponty "suspends subjectivity and becomes interested only in natural being, at the heart of which he discovers a constitutive reference to perception."[2] The starting point is no longer the embodied subject but nature, so that Merleau-Ponty's final ontology illustrates the "mutation in the relationship between man and Being" that he felt was underway in our epoch.[3]

Temporality is the pivot of this transformation in Merleau-Ponty's philosophical approach. The climax of *Phenomenology* is the discovery that time is nothing other than the auto-affection of "ultimate" subjectivity (PP 483/490, 487/494). Merleau-Ponty makes an effort to distinguish this subjectivity from consciousness, it is true, but only by affirming the pre-thetic correlation of subject and world: "The subject is being-in-the-world and the world remains 'subjective' since its texture and articulations are traced out by the subject's movement of transcendence" (PP 492/500). This is why nature, at the close of the chapter on temporality, can be equated with "that which perception presents to me" (PP 494/502). In this work, then, both time and nature are a function of subjectivity. But Merleau-Ponty's later writings tell a different story concerning the relation between time, subjectivity, and nature. *The Visible and the Invisible* speaks of a past that cannot be related to any series of *Erlebnisse*, a past that belongs to a "mythical time, to the time before time."[4] Describing the reversal by which the things have us, rather than our having them, Merleau-Ponty speaks of the "Memory of the World," a notion developed in his reading of Whitehead from the first course on nature (VI 247/194). There, Merleau-Ponty describes a "natural passage of time" that is "not a pulsation of the subject, but of Nature."[5]

The transformation in Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the relation between subjectivity and nature, as mediated by the concept of time, is nevertheless not as linear as the foregoing suggests, for two reasons: First, although Merleau-Ponty generally affirms the correlation of subject and world in *Phenomenology of Perception*, the descriptions of the thing and the natural world in that text already demonstrate a resistance and aloofness of nature that stretches the concept of intentionality to its limits. Our everyday, practically oriented perceptions tend only to disclose the familiar presence of things, yet beneath this superficial appearance is hidden a "non-human element" that "holds itself aloof" from our body's perceptual advances. Setting aside our instrumental involvement, we discover the natural thing as "hostile and alien, no longer an interlocutor, but a resolutely silent Other" (PP 372/376).[6] We note, therefore, that as Merleau-Ponty's

writings increasingly recognize a "back side" of nature that exceeds and resists explanation in terms of intentionality, he is following out the implications of the descriptions already laid down in this earlier work.[7]

Second, despite Merleau-Ponty's effort to equate temporality with subjectivity in *Phenomenology*, there is a notion of "natural" time at work in this text that similarly resists intentional explanation. This is not "objective" time, the metrics of clocks, but rather the time of the anonymous and pre-personal body. The body maintains a certain autonomy with respect to the personal and reflective self precisely because it lives a distinctive temporality: whereas the personal self follows a linear and historical time, the anonymous body is like an "inborn complex" that lives a cyclical, repetitive time, the rhythm of the heartbeat (PP 99/96–97). It is through an account of "radical" or second-order reflection that Merleau-Ponty aims to think the jointure of this cyclical and linear time, revealing that, for reflection, the time of the body remains an impossible time, the past of all pasts, or the immemorial. Radical reflection therefore prepares the path for the alternative account of temporality that emerges in Merleau-Ponty's later works.

To clarify this alternative temporality and the changed relation with nature that it represents, we begin by tracing Merleau-Ponty's notion of "natural" time as it develops in his early work, and in particular its relationship to the "natural self" of the body. The notion of natural time, we will see, is central to the problematic of reflection on the unreflective. Yet natural time is not restricted to the rhythm of the body, since body and world are "co-natural." This leads us to see that the rhythm of the body is continuous with an immemorial depth of nature as such, and that our pre-reflective lives open onto and are incorporated into this "absolute past" of nature. The significance of this recasting of the relationship between reflection and the pre-reflective only becomes clear when Merleau-Ponty returns to the problem of reflection on the unreflective in *The Visible and the Invisible.* There we learn that reflection, in its effort to interrogate the antecedent being that precedes it, "remembers an impossible past" and "anticipates an impossible future" (VI 164/123). The disclosure of this absolute past is not an effort to coincide with a lost origin, but rather involves the "good error" of expression. Consequently, nature appears as always "at the first day." We will see that this notion of nature "at the first day" is ambiguous, since it may refer either to a bare repetition of the same, or to an unending process of productive creation that would grant a wholly different relation between past and future. This alternative account of nature's past as productive creation draws inspiration from Merleau-Ponty's reading of both Claudel and Whitehead, for whom the insertion of the sensing body into nature catches subjectivity up in "the system of a cosmic time, in a subjectivity of Nature" (N 161/119). Natural time embraces us to the extent that the body is an event within Nature's process, that is, to the extent that our lives participate in the "memory of the world." The resistance of natural time is no longer to be attributed to its status as prereflective, therefore, but rather to the *poiesis* by which it is continually renewed.

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Merleau-Ponty's effort to describe the sensible world as an expressive unity in *Phenomenology of Perception* rests upon his account of the body as a "natural self" that would be the "subject of perception" (PP 239/239). In this text, he repeatedly and consistently distinguishes between the perspective, on the one hand, of the reflective personal self and, on the other hand, of the pre-reflective anonymous body. The body is not "I," the personal self that makes decisions and creates a situation through conscious acts, but "someone" who I find already there ahead of me, someone already engaged with the world and taking its side. As Merleau-Ponty writes,

> I ought to say that *one* perceives in me, and not that I perceive. Every sensation carries within it the germ of a dream or depersonalization such as we experience in that quasi-stupor to which we are reduced when we really try to live at the level of sensation. . . . This activity takes place on the periphery of my being. I am no more aware of being the true subject of my sensation than of my birth or my death. (PP 249/250)

This anonymous *someone* who is the subject of perception can remain aloof from my conscious, personal self, and even act autono-

mously: "Each time I experience a sensation, I feel that it concerns not my own being, the one for which I am responsible and for which I make decisions, but another self which has already sided with the world, which is already open to certain of its aspects and synchronized with them" (PP 250/251; cf. 99–100/96–97, 277/279, 502–03/511-12, 513–14/522–23). Of course, this "someone" is none other than my body, my "natural self" in its "synchronization" with the world. This "natural self" of the body is not, of course, to be confused with the "objective" body studied by the physiologist; it is not an inert or mechanical object, but precisely a manner of existing and of intending a world. It is a "natural spirit" with its own "momentum of existence" (PP 294/296, 99/97).

To say that the body is "synchronized" with the world means, of course, that it shares the time of the world, what Merleau-Ponty calls "natural time." Here again, "natural" does not mean "objective," as if the time of the body were the mechanical metrics of a clock; natural time is not a "time of things without subjectivity" (PP 516/526). But the subjectivity that lives through natural time is generalized and depersonalized; in Merleau-Ponty's words, this is the "time of our bodily functions, which like it, are cyclic, and it is also that of nature with which we co-exist" (PP 517/526). This generalized time of nature is an empty repetition, "a recurrent and always identical 'now'" that "adumbrates the empty form of the true event" (PP 192–93/191). This is because, in Merleau-Ponty's words, "Bodily existence which runs through me, yet does so independently of me, is only the barest raw material of a genuine presence in the world" (PP 193/192).

The anonymous body and the personal self therefore live through distinct temporalities that encroach upon each other without coinciding. In a section of *Phenomenology of Perception* labeled in the contents as "Intertwining of Natural Time and Historical Time," Merleau-Ponty describes the effort of the personal self to construct an interpretive narrative about its history. This process is essentially tentative and open-ended because of the debt to natural time. As he writes:

> My voluntary and rational life . . . knows that it merges into another power which stands in the way of its completion, and gives it a permanently tentative look. Natural time is always there. . . . Since natural time remains at the center of my history, I see myself surrounded by it. ... For example, in pre-natal existence, nothing was perceived, and therefore there was nothing to recall. There was nothing but the raw material and adumbration of a natural self and a natural time. This anonymous life is merely the extreme form of that temporal dispersal which constantly threatens the historical present. In order to have some inkling of the nature of that amorphous existence which preceded my own history, and which will bring it to a close, I have only to look within me at that time which pursues its own independent course, and which my personal life utilizes but does not entirely overlay. (PP 399/404)

According to this description, the reflective subject is encompassed and exceeded by natural time, yet when the subject turns inward, it also discovers this time at the very core of its personal history, in the cyclical rhythms of its organs, as near as its own heartbeat. Reflective reconstructions of our personal history never manage to "silence its protests" (PP 398/403). Yet while this time is at the heart of the reflective present, it remains irremediably absent, always on the margin of personal time; it is the time of birth or death, a time that does not represent my own possibilities, an irrecuperable and impossible time. This is why Merleau-Ponty repeatedly refers to natural time as "the opacity of an originary past" (PP 403/408), a "thinking older than myself" (PP 404/410), a "prehistory" (PP 277/279, 293/296), an "absolute past of nature" (PP 160/158), and, most famously, as "a past that has never been present" (PP 280/282).

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the tension between these two temporalities when he compares the time of the body to a repression in the psychoanalytic sense of this term. On his interpretation, repression occurs when the subject remains imprisoned within and constantly relives a moment of the past as if it were the present: "one present among all presents thus acquires an exceptional value; it displaces the others and deprives them of their value as authentic presents" (PP 99/95–96). And yet this past moment is not itself ever directly given,

since "personal time" comes to a halt, and the traumatic moment that is relived stands behind the back of the consciousness that it ensnares—beyond representation or memory. As Merleau-Ponty writes:

> All repression is, then, the transition from first person existence to a sort of abstraction of that existence, which lives on a former experience, or rather on the memory of having had the memory, and so on, until finally only the essential form remains. Now as the advent of the impersonal, repression is a universal phenomenon, revealing our condition as incarnate beings by relating it to the temporal structure of being in the world. . . . In so far as I inhabit a "physical world," in which consistent "stimuli" and typical situations recur—and not merely the historical world in which situations are never exactly comparable—my life is made up of rhythms which have not their *reason* in what I have chosen to be, but their *condition* in the humdrum setting which is mine. (PP 99/96)

The fundamental or originary repression is therefore that of the body itself and the temporality of rhythmic repetition that it constantly adumbrates beneath my personal awareness, providing me with the bare form of temporality on which my personal history is constructed, yet constantly threatening that edifice with the germ of anonymous resistance. Thus my body may be described as a "prepersonal cleaving to the general form of the world, as an anonymous and general existence" that "plays, beneath my personal life, the part of an *inborn complex*" (PP 99/97).

The tension between these two times—of the body and of reflection—defines the problematic of reflection on the unreflective. Since philosophy is, in Merleau-Ponty's words, "the ever-renewed experiment in making its own beginning" and "consists wholly in the description of this beginning," it requires a "a consciousness of its own dependence on an unreflective life which is its initial situation" (PP ix/xv–xvi). It follows that philosophy's task is to reflect on its own debt to the anonymous life of the body. But if natural time is the repressed of reflection, if it is an immemorial moment that can never be made directly present, then this task can only be achieved through a doubling of reflection, what Merleau-Ponty calls second-order or "radical" reflection. This doubling is the acknowledgment by reflection of its liability to an unreflective experience that it can never equal. As Merleau-Ponty writes,

> We must not only adopt a reflective attitude . . . but furthermore reflect on this reflection, understand the natural situation which it is conscious of succeeding and which is therefore part of its definition. . . . Reflection is truly reflection . . . only if it knows itself as reflection-on-an-unreflective-experience, and consequently as a change in structure of our experience. (PP 75–76/72)

Such "radical" reflection includes, as part of its definition, its own unreflective history, which is the kernel of natural time at the core of personal time. Consequently, the immemorial reveals itself to reflection only as the internal limit or *punctum caecum* of its own constitutive history. In other words, the "nature" of natural time and of the body haunts reflection precisely as the excluded supplement that completes it from within.

We have noted above that Merleau-Ponty speaks of the anonymous body as "synchronized" with the world, and of the immemorial as the "absolute past of nature." This raises the question of the relation between the perceptual world of nature and the immemorial time that haunts reflection. In other words, what is "natural" about natural time? In this connection, it is worth remembering that the anonymous body is described by Merleau-Ponty as "conatural" with the world (PP 251/252), and the "time of our bodily functions" is said to be "that of nature with which we coexist" (PP 517/526). In other words, nature follows the same cyclical, repetitive time as does the body. This means that nothing new can happen in nature, and that it can never rise to the level of a genuine history. This is, in fact, exactly the view of nature that Lucien Herr ascribes to Hegel in his entry in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, where he writes that the evolution of nature, in Hegel, is a "logical reconstruction, but not a history of nature." He continues as follows:

> for Hegel, as for Aristotle, nature is at the first day; for as long as it has been, it has been as it is today. Genesis and transmutation of forms are only dreams: nature is inert and its forms are

> eternal; philosophy of nature is the system of nature, but not the history of it.[8]

I call attention to this passage because Merleau-Ponty returns to it several times in his later investigations of nature. But Merleau-Ponty is interested in only a particular phrase from Herr's discussion, "la nature est au premier jour," nature is at the first day (cf. VI 264/210, 320/267; N 76/49).[9] As Herr intends this phrase, it means that nature never changes, that it involves no genuine *passage*. This sense of the phrase is consistent with an understanding of natural time as empty repetition, as Merleau-Ponty presents it in his descriptions of the anonymity of the body

There is, however, another, richer manner of understanding the "at the first day" of nature already in *Phenomenology of Perception*. This interpretation discovers a genuine creative newness within each moment of perception, and links this newness with the accumulation of perceptual memory. For instance, Merleau-Ponty writes that,

> when I contemplate an object with the sole intention of watching it exist and unfold its riches before my eyes, then it ceases to be an allusion to a general type, and I become aware that each perception, and not merely that of sights which I am discovering for the first time, reenacts on its own account the birth of intelligence and has some element of creative genius about it: in order that I may recognize the tree as a tree, it is necessary that, beneath this familiar meaning, the momentary arrangement of the visible scene should begin all over again, as on the *very first day of the vegetable kingdom*, to outline the individual idea of this tree. (PP 54/50–51; my emphasis)

We find, then, a creativity that can only be termed "natural" at the core of each perception. Furthermore, this creative event is linked by Merleau-Ponty with the immemorial time of my own personal history, as when he writes that "my first perception, along with the horizons which surrounded it, is an ever-present event, an unforgettable tradition; even as a thinking subject, I still am that first perception, the continuation of that same life inaugurated by it" (PP 466/473). This account of the creativity of natural time conflicts with its presentation as empty repetition. What must be understood is precisely the sense in which the passage of nature may yet entail its creative renewal, so that its being always "at the first day" does not deny its establishment of a genuine history. This would seem to be what Merleau-Ponty has in mind when he interprets this phrase in a late working note: "It is a question of finding in the present, the flesh of the world (and not in the past) an 'ever new' and 'always the same.' . . . The sensible, Nature, transcend the past present distinction, realize from within a passage from one into the other" (VI 320–21/267). Our question, then, is how this passage between past and present is to be conceived according to a richer conception of natural time.

Two sources are indispensable for understanding the broadening of Merleau-Ponty's conception of time. The first of these is Paul Claudel's *Poetic Art*, which Merleau-Ponty cites repeatedly in the manuscript of *The Visible and the Invisible* (VI 140/103, 161/121, 233/179). It will be remembered that *Poetic Art* also provides an epigraph for the Temporality chapter of *Phenomenology*: "Time is the *sense* of life (*sense* as in the direction [*sens*] of a stream, the sense of a sentence, the sense of smell)" (PP 469/476).[10] Here time lies at the intersection of direction, meaning, and sensibility. But whereas Merleau-Ponty's chapter on temporality emphasizes the fundamental equivalence of time and subjectivity, for Claudel time discloses the creative differentiation of the universe as a whole. This is, in fact, the meaning of his title, a reference to his call for a "new Art of Poetry of the Universe," in the sense of *poiein*, which would be the "autochthonous art used by all that which is born" and which is "practiced before our eyes by nature itself" (AP 50–51/31–32). This poetry of nature is the metaphor, harmony, or proportion by which each thing calls for precisely the completion that it finds in the rest of the universe. As Claudel writes,

> No thing is complete in itself and each can only be completed by that which it lacks. But that which each particular thing lacks is infinite; we cannot know in advance the complement it calls for. Only through the secret taste of our spirit, do we realize when effective harmony is

> achieved, that is, the essential and generating fundamental difference. (AP 22/12)

This "essential and generating fundamental difference" may call forth "effective harmonies" among the natural objects that we encounter, as Claudel describes the "green of a maple tree" answering the "appeal of a pine," or as he insists that "the plantation of this bouquet of pines, the shape of this mountain are no more due to chance than the Parthenon or this diamond" (AP 50–51/31–32). More pertinently, what makes nature always appear as "at the first day" is the generative difference of the past. As Claudel explains,

> The past is an incantation of things to come, the generating difference they need, the forever growing sum of future conditions. It determines the *sense*, and, in this light, it does not cease existing anymore than the first words of a sentence when the eye reaches the last ones. Better still, it does not stop developing, organizing within itself, like a building, whose role and aspect is changed by new constructions, or like a sentence made clearer by another sentence. In a word, what has been once, never loses its operating virtue; it increases with each moment's contribution. The present minute is different from all other minutes, in that it does not border on the same quantity of past. . . . At every breath, the world remains as new as it was at the first gulp of air out of which the first man made his first expiration. (AP 44–45/27)

The world is, at every moment, entirely new, not because it eternally repeats an unchanging beginning, but because the passage of becoming guarantees the uniqueness of each combination of generating differences. This becoming is the *poiesis* of a nature for which "to be is to create," such that the whole universe, for Claudel, is "nothing but a time-marking machine" of which human clocks are "unwitting copies" (AP 43/27, 34/20).

These passages from Claudel are significant in two respects: First, they demonstrate the "passage between past and present" that joins the "ever new" with the "always the same," as Merleau-Ponty seeks in his working notes. In other words, they demonstrate a positive and creative sense for nature being always "at the first day." Second, they do so not by tracing time to the subject, but rather by recognizing a fundamental resonance between the natural time within and without: "What time is it within and outside me, according to my closing or opening myself? I hear my heart within me, and the clock in the very middle of the house. I am. I feel, I listen, within myself, to the beating of this machine, confined between my bones, a machine through which I continue to be" (AP 46/28). The marking-time of the heart resonates with the marking-time of the universe, such that time is neither reducible to my subjectivity nor independent of it, situating me within an infinite fabric of differences by which my being is generated. I emerge as part of the same wave of the past as all other things that I encounter, so that "there is no cause but a total one" and "each effect is the varying evaluation of the whole moment" (AP 55–56/35). The entire passage of the universe continues to exert its efficacy with each following moment, such that the present is never a point but a growing fabric that is at each instant wholly different and wholly demanded as the complement to the entirety of what has preceded it. In this case, there is no truly cyclical time of the body any more than of nature writ large, save through the isolating effects of our understanding.

It is from Whitehead that Merleau-Ponty draws the completion of this line of thinking, which is to recognize a "passage of nature" that is neither an empty repetition nor simply correlated with the embodied subject. Merleau-Ponty's survey of historical conceptions of nature in his 1956–57 course reaches its completion with Whitehead, and while the latter's work receives no direct discussion in the text or notes of *The Visible and the Invisible*, we do have another clue to Whitehead's significance. Sartre recounts a conversation from 1959 in which Merleau-Ponty suggested that he may write about Nature. "And then, to lead me on," Sartre writes, "he added, 'I read a sentence in Whitehead which struck me: "Nature is in tatters."'"[11] Sartre admits his puzzlement about the meaning of this phrase, which undoubtedly refers to Whitehead's remark, in *The Concept of Nature*, that "nature as perceived always has a ragged edge."[12] As Merleau-Ponty recognizes, this phrase expresses Whitehead's rejection of punctual spatiotemporal existences (N 153–54/113). In

contrast with the "flashpoint" of classical physics that reduces time to the punctual moment, Whitehead proposes an overlapping relation of events as the foundation of space-time. On Merleau-Ponty's reading, Whitehead's critique of unique emplacement makes salient the ontological value of perception: "What I perceive is both for me and in the things. Perception is made starting from the interior of Nature" (N 159/117). In other words, the perceiving body is itself one event within the overlapping series of events that constitutes space-time, and the mind equally participates in this "passage of nature." Consequently, Whitehead's descriptions suggest a reversal of the role played by nature and subjectivity in the unfurling of time. Ironically, it is with reference to Sartre that Merleau-Ponty makes this contrast explicit when he writes that,

> with Sartre, Being is without exigency, without activities, without potentialities. Sartre, like the whole of the philosophical tradition from Saint Augustine to Bergson, defines matter by instantaneity, the instantaneous present, and conceives memory and the past only by mind; in the things there is only the present, and correlatively, the "presence" of the past or of the future requires mind or the For-itself. (N 161/118–19)

By contrast, for Whitehead, nature need not be leavened with subjectivity to effect its own spatiotemporal unfurling. While measured or serial time is relative and subjective, "there is a time inherent to Nature":

> This time, in Whitehead, is inherent in the things, it embraces us, to the extent that we participate in the things, or that we take part in the process of Nature. It is essential for us, but insofar as we are Nature. Subjectivity is caught up in the system of a cosmic time, in a subjectivity of Nature. (N 161/119)

Rather than nature requiring subjectivity for its passage, the passage of subjectivity is an event of nature.

Followed through to its conclusion, this suggests a further complication of the structure of radical reflection. We have shown above that reflection incorporates the natural time of the body as its own immemorial past, and that a radical reflection—what Merleau-Ponty will, in *The Visible and the Invisible,* refer to as hyper-reflection [*surréflexion*] (VI 61/38, 70/46)—aims to take this liability to the unreflective into account. In the wake of Claudel and Whitehead, this structure of radical reflection requires two revisions: First, the immemorial moment that it enfolds cannot be a cyclical time of empty repetition. Insofar as the body is an event within ragged-edged nature, it cannot be isolated from this nature's generative unfurling. Even the time of the anonymous body, such as the rhythmic beating of the heart, must be understood as a poetic event called to respond to the generative differences laid out by the entire history of nature. The creative passage of nature therefore provides the best interpretation of how it is that nature is always "at the first day." On this understanding of Herr's phrase, the perennial novelty of nature is related to its Latin etymology: *nascor*, "to be born" (N 19/3). And, as Claudel notes, "We are not born alone. To be born [*naître*], for everything, is to be born together [*co-naître*]. Every birth is a knowledge [*connaissance*]" (AP 62/40). Natural time *is* the continual co-birth of all in generative difference.

This points toward the second revision of radical reflection, which is the synchrony of the immemorial time at the heart of reflection with the spatiotemporal unfurling of the perceived world. The pyramid of time on which every reflective moment balances is the entire memory of the world, its pure past. Consequently, reflection must also be understood as an event of nature that eventuates its passage. Yet we have associated immemorial time with both birth and death. The temporality of birth is encapsulated in the ever-renewed *poiesis* of nature. Yet the ultimate *sense* of time concerns not birth but death, as Claudel notes in a passage that Merleau-Ponty cites only in part: "Time is the means offered to all that which will be to be, in order to be no more. It is the *Invitation to Death* extended to each sentence, to decay in the explanatory and total harmony, to consummate the word of adoration, whispered in the ear of *Signes*, the Abyss" (AP 57/35, VI 233/179).[13]

ENDNOTES

1. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), 235; *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), 235. Hereafter cited textually as PP with French preceding English pagination.
2. Renaud Barbaras, "Merleau-Ponty and Nature," trans. Paul Milan, *Research in Phenomenology* 31 (2001), 37.
3. Merleau-Ponty, *L'oeil et l'esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 63; "Eye and Mind," in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, ed. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 368. Mauro Carbone provides a useful gloss on this phrase in his Preface to *The Thinking of the Sensible: Merleau-Ponty's A-Philosophy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004).
4. Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible* (Paris: PUF, 1964), 296; *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 243. Hereafter cited textually as VI with French preceding English pagination.
5. Merleau-Ponty, *La nature, notes, cours du Collège de France* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 162; *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, trans. Robert Vallier (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 119. Hereafter cited as N with French preceding English pagination.
6. I discuss this passage at greater length in chapter 2 of my *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Nature* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009).
7. For instance, in "Le Philosophe et son ombre," in *Signes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 227; *Signs*, trans. Richard McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 180.
8. Lucien Herr, "Hegel," in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, v. 19 (Paris: H. Lamirault et Cie, 1894), 1000; my translation.
9. See also Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le concept de nature," in *Résumés de cours, Collège de France 1952-1960* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), 94; "The Concept of Nature, I," trans. John O'Neill, in *In Praise of Philosophy and Other Essays* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 133.
10. "Le temps est le *sens* de la vie (*sens*: comme on dit le sens d'un cours d'eau, le sens d'une phrase, le sense d'une étoffe, le sens de l'odorat)." The original passage appears in Paul Claudel, *Art Poétique* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1929), 33. The English translation (which I have modified) may be found in Claudel, *Poetic Art*, trans. Renee Spodheim (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), 19-20. Hereafter cited textually as AP with French preceding English pagination.
11. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations philosophiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 204; *Situations*, trans. Benita Eisler (New York: George Braziller, 1965), 309: "la Nature est en haillons."
12. Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004), 50. Merleau-Ponty cites this phrase at *Nature* 154/ 114: "les bords de la nature sont toujours en guenilles."
13. An earlier version of this essay was presented as "Merleau-Ponty. L'espace et le temps," Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Husserl Archives, in Paris, June 2008. A French version appeared as "Le Passage du temps naturel," *Alter* 16 (2008): 157–169.

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