à habiter autrement nos villes, nos territoires et à concevoir différemment nos enracinements, nos corps, nos pratiques politiques, sociales et artistiques. L'instabilité et le déséquilibre de l'île déserte sur laquelle nous nous trouvons ouvrent de formidables possibilités de recommencement et de transformation: «L'île est le minimum nécessaire à ce recommencement, le matériel survivant de la première origine, le noyau ou l'œuf irradiant qui doit suffire à tout reproduire» (G. Deleuze et F. Guattari, «Causes et raisons des îles désertes», dans *L'île déserte et autres textes. Textes et entretiens 1953–1974*, Paris: Minuit, 2002, 16). Mais pour que cela devienne possible, il faudra probablement renoncer à l'illusion d'une unité originelle, d'une unité d'avant la séparation, d'une origine perdue que l'on pourrait un beau jour retrouver. Il faudra au fond apprendre à renoncer à toute forme de nostalgie et à accepter la persistance d'un chaos et de ses devenirs. Car toute origine est déjà séparée d'elle-même, disloquée, soumise à une altérité qui fait que nous ne sommes nous-mêmes qu'en étant conscients des parts d'hétérogénéité irréductibles qui nous constituent. Or pour Manola Antonioli, l'aventure de la «mondialité» ne sera possible que dans un monde en archipel, «monde aux multiples interfaces, qui multiplie les échanges, les passages et les rencontres. Deleuze et Guattari n'ont jamais cessé de soumettre l'image de la pensée au tremblement et à la discontinuité, ont inlassablement décrypté les ritournelles et les clichés qui figent notre temps vécu, les visages et les paysages qui uniformisent nos espaces et notre relation à autrui» (256–7).

PIERRE-ANTOINE CHARDEL, *Collège International de Philosophie (Paris)*

Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France
MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY. Compiled by Dominique Séglard. Trans. Robert Vallier
Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003; 313 pages.

If you too are the sort of person who feels guilty saying good morning to your books after oversleeping until seven on a Saturday morning, adding this one to your Merleau-Ponty collection will hit you something like adopting a child of an uncertain species. But you will have none of the certainty of a *Stuart Little* here—even the happy existential dilemma of *Mighty Aphrodite* will seem like (somebody's) child's play in comparison. But just like the best of Woody Allen, or a delightfully sappy Herman's Hermits tune that reminds some of us of days before we had ever even heard of Proust, phrases from

this book will haunt the back of your head for the rest of the weekend. You will occasionally suspect that the spirit of Albertine is being alluded to in *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, but you will never be sure, even when the bells are being rung with all of the uncertain author's might. This translated "book" was not actually "written" by Merleau-Ponty. About 200 of its 284 pages of text proper consist of transcriptions of notes taken by students who attended three of Merleau-Ponty's courses, in 1956–57, 1957–58, and 1959–60. As the translator tells us, "They are ... the 'written traces' of three courses he gave at the Collège de France on the theme of the concept of Nature" (xiii). (Reader beware: the *theme* of the concept of Nature!) As the translator properly cautions us: "Because of the nature of these 'Course Notes on Nature,' because they are either student notes or personal notes to himself, and, at any rate, are not polished pieces that Merleau-Ponty himself wished to publish, the reader must be attentive to certain hermeneutical risks" (xiv). Also: "Like the working notes, these course notes need to be read and interpreted with hermeneutical care and rigor; and like the working notes, these course notes reveal the mind of a philosopher at work. In short, even if we cannot say that this is a text 'by' Merleau-Ponty, there is a wealth of material in these courses that allows us to see Merleau-Ponty's thinking in action, unfolding itself, groping its way to expression, coming into its own; and so this material will repay careful study" (xv).

With the publication of the translation of this "book" in the Northwestern series, we witness the loudly announced birth of the Merleau-Ponty Industry. This is not necessarily a bad thing—especially if it can supplant the intellectually corrupt Heidegger Industry that has preoccupied "Continental philosophy" (and a good chunk of the Northwestern series) for the past half century. But this text embodies bad habits that yield hermeneutic nightmares. This "book," marketed by Northwestern as "by" Merleau-Ponty, pays more attention to the words than it does to the ideas, and it is suspicious already on that count (traces of traces of traces, all in the name of the "author"). But it also does an abysmal job of attending to the words. This appears to be entirely an editorial issue, and not the fault of the authors, whoever they may have been. Here are two of the problems (and they are as representative as they are glaring): (1) The cover page tells us that the text is "Compiled and with notes from Dominique Séglard. Translated from the French by Robert Vallier." But when we consult the copious notes—which are, in themselves, outstanding—we read things like this (287, n. 14 to Chapter 1, Part 1, First Course): "Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, bk. 3, prop. 4. Merleau-Ponty translated this text himself during the course, and so I have here translated his translation." Who is the "I" here? It must be

Vallier. But then how do we establish the authorship of all of the other notes—of any of the notes? Which are Vallier's and which were penned by Séglard (who is cited as their author)? There is no apparatus offered in the text, so it is impossible for an honest scholar to make an honest reference to any of the notes in this text. Despite the obvious erudition of the authors of the notes, their efforts were wasted. Nobody can cite any of these notes from this translation. This crucial part of the text is useless for the purpose of scholarly reference, and this is a great shame (for the notes really are instructive). Again, the Press and the editors are to blame for this, not the author or translator. (2) The second problem I will mention is purely typographical, but it suggests a lack of scholarly attention (or perhaps competence) that is as shameful as it must be embarrassing to the Press and the editors. Page 3 quotes (it seems) from Lachelier as follows: "The words of a language are not tokens and are themselves a Φυσιζ ." Anybody who has done even a couple of weeks of undergraduate Greek should be able to recognize the two problems in that presentation of the Greek word (no accent; ζ instead of ς). It is obvious that this is not a simple oversight (and neither can it be attributed to sloppy scholarship on the part of Lachelier), for we find the same (ζ instead of ς) error consistently repeated (e.g. at pages xix and 199).

Such excruciating textual problems as these serve only to exacerbate those hermeneutic difficulties already signaled by the translator. While the serious student of Merleau-Ponty will have to read these texts—but they are definitely best read in the original French (first published by Éditions de Seuil in 1995, with subsequent collections of notes published in 1996 and 1998)—we shall all do better to stick with *The Visible and the Invisible*. (It would be hard to improve on Alphonso Lingis's translation, which works admirably at following that *logos*.) Northwestern has long been a major publisher of works in phenomenology. This makes it especially disappointing to see that they have failed to proofread basic Greek (i.e., the alphabet) and to attend carefully to the texts they quote.

JEFF MITSCHERLING, *University of Guelph*