Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological philosophy and his subsequent ontology can be characterized as a continuous attempt to disclose and resolve the tensions secretly polarizing Husserl’s phenomenology. In his last work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty concentrated on how those same tensions insidiously entered his own thought in his earlier masterwork *Phenomenology of Perception*. Just as he labored to reveal the “impensé,” the circumscribed but “unthought of” dimension creatively animating Husserl’s whole philosophical itinerary, so Merleau-Ponty sought to draw up the submerged “impensé” of his own thought. This effort has important consequences for evaluating the significance of his early work and, for that matter, of his entire philosophical project.

About this last period of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, John Bannon writes:

> There have, in fact, been rumors that Merleau-Ponty was engaged in a serious revision of his thinking prior to his death, and one wonders if we might have seen a change of position on such questions as perception and the nature of man comparable to that change in his position on Marxism which make his *Les Aventures de la Dialectique* such a dramatic event.

*(1966, 384)*

In *Humanism and Terror* and other essays written in the 1940s, Merleau-Ponty credited Marxism with providing the concrete interpretive perspective on social and political life in the twentieth century. But his consequent disenchantment with the communist praxis of the early 1950s led him to withdraw this privilege and to relegate the work of Marx to the status of a classic, as that which ceases to be true in the sense that it believes itself true but maintains, nonetheless, a serious heuristic value. Does Merleau-Ponty’s later critical reflection on *Phenomenology of Perception* lead likewise to a disaffection with Husserl’s style of philosophizing? Does it too become for Merleau-Ponty another classic?

These questions are dramatically situated by Jacques Taminiaux when he writes:

In his recent work *Le Sense du temps et de la perception chez E. Husserl*, G. Granel writes: “Phenomenology’s attempt to survive as a philosophical school has produced
epigones, or has led to the ritual murder of the father, which Merleau-Ponty piously and pitilessly had set out to perform, and would have performed had he not himself died.” And Granel characterizes The Visible and the Invisible as a wonderfully “agonizing reappraisal.” The expressions “ritual murder” and “agonizing reappraisal” suggest that Merleau-Ponty’s itinerary from Phenomenology of Perception to his last works involved some kind of reversal of his attitude toward phenomenology.

(1972, 307)

There is much discussion of a ‘Kehre’ a reversal of direction, when interpreting Heidegger’s later approach to the meaning of Being. Regarding the last writings of Merleau-Ponty, Taminiaux, in effect, questions the same possibility: “Do these texts authorize us to speak of a rupture or of a murder?” (Ibid., 308). Are we justified in speaking of Merleau-Ponty’s “Kehre”?

The concern expressed here reflects Merleau-Ponty’s self-criticism in The Visible and the Invisible when he writes in a “working note” of July 1959 that “the problems posed in Phenomenology of Perception are insoluble because I start from the ‘consciousness-object’ distinction” (1968, 200). In a “working note” of February 1959 he claims that “the problems that remain […] are due to the fact that in part I retained the philosophy of ‘consciousness’” (Ibid., 183). He proposes relative to the results of Phenomenology of Perception “the necessity of bringing them to ontological explication” (Ibid.). For Merleau-Ponty, “ontology would be the elaboration of the notions that have to replace that of transcendental subjectivity” (Ibid., 167), and this will involve a “disclosure of wild or brute being by way of Husserl and the Lebenswelt upon which one opens” (Ibid., 183). The later citation contravenes any claim about a ritual murder of the father.

In commemoration of the living Husserl, the perpetual beginner, the philosopher inhabiting the chiaroscuro of his own questions, Merleau-Ponty devotes an article, “The Philosopher and his Shadow,”2 published in 1960, where he takes up some of the themes of Ideas II in order to unveil the questions which motivated Husserl’s thought at its deepest level. Here Merleau-Ponty says that “Husserl’s thought is as much attracted by the haecceity of Nature as by the vortex of absolute consciousness” (1964, 165). To show how this is the case and the meaning that it has vis-à-vis Husserl’s formulated philosophy is, for Merleau-Ponty, to disclose the “unthought-of element” operative at the source of Husserl’s vision.

Whereas Husserl had argued in Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness that absolute consciousness was the purely noetic and constitutive source of the field of presence, in Ideas II, Merleau-Ponty finds him arguing for a notion of consciousness rooted in the raw openness of sensible being, such that the field of presence is primarily neither a noematic correlate of consciousness nor the dynamic noetic domain of consciousness, but is what is beneath such a distinction, what is fundamentally and originally meant by Nature. Here Merleau-Ponty is pitching the transcendental Husserl against the existential Husserl. Nature or sensible being is “the being which reaches me in my most secret parts but which I reach in its brute or untamed state, in an absolute of presence which holds the secret of the world, others, and what is true” (Ibid., 167).

Merleau-Ponty finds the key to the difficult notion of “an absolute of presence” in Husserl’s analysis of the ontogenesis of the body in the reversibility, the chiasm, between the touching and the touched or between the seeing and the seen, within which each is instituted, making the relation of the body to itself “the viniculum of the self and things” (Ibid., 166). Transcendental phenomenology’s heralded relation of “presence to,” which is based on the sharp distinction between subject and object, is rendered secondary by this primordial reversibility. The indestructible intertwining of the touching and the touched in every act of touching expresses an
“absolute of presence” wherein they are accomplished as variations of what Merleau-Ponty, following Husserl, designates in *The Visible and the Invisible* as ‘my flesh’ and ‘flesh of the world.’

The perceived thing has flesh because my fleshy body is a “perceiving thing,” a “subject-object,” which upsets the classical separation between subject and object so that, to a certain extent, one cannot say that what is proper to the perceiving body is not proper to the thing perceived, because the perceiving body is a thing perceived, and the things “are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrusted into its flesh, they are part of its full definition” (Merleau-Ponty 1971, 163). There is a “double inscription, outside and inside, things touching me as I touch them and touch myself” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 261). In other words, the body, through the reversibility which institutes it, is ‘incorporated’ into things and they are ‘incorporated’ into it. Although the flesh of the world is distinct from my flesh, the term “flesh of the world” is to be taken literally if, by it, we mean that “the world is made of the same stuff as the body” (Merleau-Ponty 1971, 163), i.e., the same intentional fabric, the same crisscrossing of the touching and the tangible, of the seeing and the visible, so that flesh is not simply a property of the perceiving body relative to the world, but is the ‘irrelative,’ the *absolute* of all relations of compresence and ‘presence to’ that encompasses the whole of nature or the world, persons as well as being.

Stated otherwise, the flesh is the savage *Offenheit* of sensible being differentiating itself as what Merleau-Ponty calls “wild-flowering world” and “wild mind.” It is what Merleau-Ponty means by Being, the primordial and transcendent opening of the open, which grounds and determines the relation of incarnate subject and object. Sensitive flesh is both Nature opening itself in touching and seeing to make manifestation possible, and it is the display of Nature itself, within this opening, in the sensing that this sensitive flesh does not only of other things but of itself. The flesh is both the coming to be of phenomenality as such and a specific phenomenon within it.

It is because of his indebtedness to the Husserl of *Ideas II* that Merleau-Ponty can write in a working note of January 1959, “outline of ontology projected as ontology of brute Being – and of logos. Draw up the picture of wild Being prolonging my article on Husserl” (1968, 165). Besides the notion of the flesh and reversibility that he finds already at work in Husserl’s thought, in this article, “The Philosopher and his Shadow” (referenced above), Merleau-Ponty addresses a number of notions that were taken up in the *Phenomenology of Perception* and would be unpacked more profoundly in his later work; for instance, the notions of phenomenological reduction, radical reflection, and operative intentionality. For the purposes of this essay, we will concentrate principally on the phenomenological reduction within which Merleau-Ponty articulates four phases, transcendental, aesthetic, eidetic, and historical, relative to which the other themes will be addressed. Each of these phases is called a “reduction.”

**The transcendental reduction**

In the “Preface” to *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty asserts that the phenomenological reduction is best expressed by Eugen Fink as wonder.¹ Merleau-Ponty argued that, unless the transcendental phase of the reduction, the *epoché*, i.e., the ‘putting out of play’ or ‘bracketing’ of the familiar world, takes place also as a lived experience that evokes a feeling of wonder at the strangeness and mystery of the world, the transcendental reduction would amount to a mere academic exercise of suspending the judgments of the natural attitude. About the natural attitude, Merleau-Ponty writes that,

> the natural attitude … is prior to any thesis. It is, as Husserl says … the mystery of a *Weltthesis* prior to all theses … the mystery of a primordial faith and a fundamental and original opinion (*Urlaube, Unidoxa*) … that gives us not a representation of the world but
Wonder, therefore, was presented as the source and motive of the phenomenological reduction, which should effect an archeology of constituting consciousness, by actively returning categori- cal reflection to its origins in the vast regions of the unreflective and, hence, present reflection with its limit and task: “to operate the reduction is to disclose the wild or vertical world” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 177). Wonder is the most primitive openness at the core of perception; it is what Merleau-Ponty means by ‘wild mind’ and it must be grasped as fundamentally interroga- tive. We do not constitute our wonder. Wonder is not so much one act or attitude among others of the subject as it is the instituting act or attitude that defines the subject, that motivates all his or her acts from the most rudimentary perception to the most abstract thinking. Wonder is not only prior to consciousness, but consciousness is one of its modes. Accordingly, Merleau-Ponty can write: “we constitute constituting consciousness” (1964, 189). Wonder reveals perception as having its own logos intrinsically and dynamically independent of the subsumptive conceptual, categorical, and judgmental structure of thought.

Wonder is the originary mode and force of all interrogation. As such it is “an ontological organ” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 121). Wonder engulfs not only the perceiver but also the existing world, which Merleau-Ponty says also “exists in the interrogative mode” (Ibid., 103). Both perceiver and world are of the same Being, both are reverse sides of each other, both stand in the interrogative transcendent openness of the opening, of Being. Distinct conscious life arises out of the ‘dehiscence’ of Being, that bursting open, that primordial self-differentiation of Being, which is the perpetual advent of wonder within the wild-flowering presence of the world. Thus Merleau-Ponty is able to argue that

Reflection reveals a third dimension in which the distinction between objective and subjective become problematic. From Ideas II on Husserl’s reflections deliberately goes beyond the ideal correlation of subject and object and presents it as relatively founded, true derivatively as a constitutive result. Reflection cannot go beyond this opening to the world except by making use of the powers it owes to the opening itself.

Relative to this, Merleau-Ponty follows Husserl in calling for an intentionality without acts, for an operating or latent intentionality like that which animates time, more ancient than the intentionality of human acts, contrary to the centrifugal activity of thetic conscious- ness and to the intellectual possession of a noema. Intentionality is no longer the mind’s grasping of an essence, no longer the recognition in things of what we have put there.

Ultimately Merleau-Ponty dislodges intentionality from the transcendental subject and finds it animating the world itself, as intentionality within being.

**The aesthetic reduction**

The transcendental phase of the phenomenological reduction is understood by Merleau-Ponty as pointing to the aesthetic reduction. To clarify this move, it is important to cite Husserl’s letter.
to Hugo Von Hoffmannsthal written in 1907 when he was still developing the *epoché*. Husserl claims that the “short dramas” of Von Hoffmannsthal were a great source of inspiration for him.

For me, the “inner states” that are portrayed in your art as purely aesthetic, or not exactly portrayed, but elevated into a sphere of pure aesthetic beauty, these states hold, this aesthetic objectification, a particular interest – i.e., not only for the art lover in me, but also for the philosopher and phenomenologist.

*(Hua-Dok III., Bd. 7, 133–136/26–27)*

Husserl goes on to state that “phenomenological intuiting is closely related to aesthetic intuiting in pure art” (*Ibid.*). In fact, Husserl writes that he performs his research “in a purely intuiting (as if it were aesthetic) fashion” (*Ibid.*).

In *Eye and Mind,* the last work that he published, Merleau-Ponty claims that the philosopher is not in possession of his own vocation, but that he or she must heed the calling of the painter who alone accomplishes the phenomenologist’s *epoché*, who alone genuinely disengages “the watchwords of knowledge and action” (1971, 161), who alone holds the world suspended, who alone practices his wonder, who alone ruminates and creates within the living present, he who silently summons the philosopher into the mystery of presence and presencing.

For Merleau-Ponty, Husserl’s originary transcendental field of consciousness is a pure aesthetic field. Any form of givenness to reflective consciousness and ultimately to transcendental consciousness is a species of aesthetic givenness. Following Cezanne, Merleau-Ponty would argue that primordial aesthetic values permeate all givenness, even what Husserl calls pure consciousness in so far as it can be given in primary reflection, such that we can speak meaningfully of the feeling of consciousness, of the felt experience of cognition. This feeling cannot be “put out of play” without such action already presupposing it. There is always an affective coloration to reflective consciousness, a shunning or seeking, attraction or repulsion. There is a kind of aesthetic pleasure in the very manner of givenness of the powers and performances of consciousness. They all have, as Merleau-Ponty would say, their ‘emotional halo.’

At all levels of constitution, consciousness is valued for itself; we shun the abyss, the night of nothingness, meaninglessness, emptiness, powerlessness, futurelessness. From sleep we awaken to an opening upon the life-world that engulfs us, an experience with its vividness and feeling tone intact, not an abstraction from the vital context of life; we grasp things as their emotional qualities and intrinsic expressive patterns awaken consciousness before analysis has done its work of dividing and abstracting. Even though the ego’s original self-grasping is pre-theoretical, the feelings evoked therein, and in which the ego lives, are extended even to the theoretical attitude that delights in them, so that we might say that the consciousness of joy is rooted primordially in the joy that is internal to consciousness, that the consciousness of anguish is rooted primordially in the anguish internal to consciousness. For Merleau-Ponty, the aesthetic field in its originary mode is fundamentally the pre-objective life-world upon which the primordially intersubjective givenness of all objects is based, from which all other senses and types of objectivity derive. And so he can write “that the transcendent is not constituted in the immanence of constituting consciousness” (1954, 179), that “the transcendental field has ceased to be simply the field of our thought and has become the field of the whole of experiences” (*Ibid.*, 177).

### The eidetic reduction

For Husserl, “the transcendental reduction is inevitably eidetic” (*Ibid.*, 179). Throughout all of Husserl’s work, the eidetic reduction is principally presented under the terms *eidetic focusing,*
Merleau-Ponty

eidetic seeing, eidetic intuition, eidetic attitude, and eidetic insight, all of which would disclose beneath the flow of contingent variations an apriori, i.e., a universal and necessary invariant, an eidos, an essence, a pure sense, a fixed framework for the course of possible experience, finding its expression through logical concepts, regional concepts, and their material particularizations.

This seeing of essences is achieved by the imaginative variation of the phenomenal object under consideration. It is said to be free because the weight of actuality, of the factual world discussed by physics and chemistry, does not restrict it, free also from all metaphysical interpretation, from all doxic positing of existential commitments embedded in the natural attitude, which are “suspended,” put out of play, but not negated. This ‘freedom-from’ is achieved by Husserl’s understanding of the transcendental reduction, which reveals consciousness in its purity and absoluteness, and which liberates consciousness to catch the phenomenon as it is unfolding in the play of its very appearing and appearance, to intuit the phenomenon as pure phenomenon independent of any practical or empirical conceptual interest, to stand in wonder at it. Husserl affirms that the imagination is enriched by possibility and not by existence, and so he lets it roam and play in the field of the logically possible, within an openly endless multiplicity of variants of the object under consideration until an absolute invariant or essence, pervading all variants, is intuited apodictically.

There are two points of interest here for Merleau-Ponty. First of all, the method takes its starting point in the positive experience of the phenomenal object, in the massive presence of the life-world. And, secondly, the fruit of the method, the so-called purified essence, is not something positive. It is simply that which resists any further variation.

But as Merleau-Ponty observes, the so-called apodictic intuition of an essence is not an insight whose term or content would be the positive structure of the thing (in fact, in Phenomenology of Perception, he rejects the idea of the formal essence of the triangle); rather it would be a grasp of the pure limit of its own operations in the face of the thing, and thus presumably a grasp of its own incompleteness and inadequacy vis-à-vis the thing. Merleau-Ponty goes on to note that in order to have an apodictic intuition of the pure essence, it would be necessary to have a pure “spectator himself without secrets, without latency, if we are to be certain that nothing be surreptitiously introduced into it” (1968, 11). The pure spectator, or Kosmotheoros as Merleau-Ponty likes to call it, would have to be totally transparent to itself, which implies that it be its own ground and that it hold the real with all its manifold implications under its sovereign gaze.

The historical reduction

But, according to Merleau-Ponty, these requirements, once met, destroy the very experience of thinking the essence, an experience that is durational and not atemporal, that is situational and not free from every point of view. Here he sees that the eidetic reduction entails a historical reduction. For Merleau-Ponty, we cannot understand the full nature of theoretical thought if we have failed to see it in its proper context, namely, in its relation to the historicity of the life-world. The eidetic reduction occurs in and is thus mediated by a historical context, one which may well limit the range of free variation. Even though Husserl’s persistent concern for history and origins is not a betrayal of his transcendental phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty consistently criticizes this transcendental form of phenomenology. In his Course Notes for “Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology”, which takes up Husserl’s Origin of Geometry, Merleau-Ponty calls for a “total remanipulation of the distinctions between fact and essence, real and ideal” (2002, 19) showing that “there has to be an ideality which has need of time” (Ibid., 19), what is not “intemporal,” not a “positive quiddity that would dominate genesis and engulf it,” (Ibid., 28) “that would separate ideality from history” (Ibid., 30). Merleau-Ponty remarks that, in his Origin
of Geometry, Husserl is to be credited for arguing for the role of historicity in the constitution of the ideal, but nonetheless he continued to “maintain intemporal formulations when describing the world, such as “unconditioned general validity” (Ibid.) or ‘apodictic certainty,’ and thus viti- ated the “historical apriori” that is formalized in this work.

Eidetic variation and intuition draw their certainty at each moment from the temporal cohesion of experience and the wild presence of the world, from what Merleau-Ponty calls the flesh of time that is the tissue in which all moments are originally connected and thus gives the idea its historicity, that makes the same idea intuitively endure through the process of variation and that thereby makes the process of variation possible. It is “that very cohesion in depth of the world without which the essence is subjective folly and arrogance” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 112). If thought does not possess in transparency the being of its ground, if it is secretly nourished by a presence older than it, it cannot flatter itself that it reveals the essential. At most, according to Merleau-Ponty, it has the power to “determine the inessential” (Ibid).

The essences that it provisionally fixes are simply expressions of what would not be inessential in the thought of Being, but they nowise express what necessarily belongs to Being or what an adequate idea of Being would be or if it is even possible on the model of the essence. The determination of the inessential is likewise something provisional, since “there is no positive vision that would definitely give me the essentiality of the essence” (Ibid.). Merleau-Ponty points out that Husserl himself never obtained one sole Wesenschau that he did not subsequently take up again and rework, not to disown it, but in order to make it say what at first it had not quite said. To claim that the facticity and historicity of the thing is inessential to its meaning, that its intelligible structure lies behind its temporal and spatial articulation, is to assume that the real is a simple variant of the possible, that Being is merely the possibility of all possibilities instead of the actuality of all actualities.

In order to avoid such an outcome, Merleau-Ponty proposed that philosophy dispense with “the myths of inductivity and the Wesenschau” (Ibid., 116), which are predicated on the classical distinction between essence and existence. But the question of the essence is important, and Merleau-Ponty admits that ontology cannot dispense with intuition as a methodological tool, but he claims that it requires a different kind of intuition than that of the pure gaze of a worldless subject which flattens the world and robs it of its depth. He claims that

what is false in the ontology of the blosse Sachen is that it makes a purely theoretical or idealizing attitude absolute, neglecting or taking as understood a relation with being which founds the purely theoretical attitude and measures its value.

(1964, 163)

What is required is an intuition that is in the world and of the world, which is an opening out of the self from and upon the depths of the world and which expresses the turning-in of the world upon itself. Merleau-Ponty describes this intuition as an “auscultation or palpation in depth” (1968, 128) of the Being that surrounds us and makes its path through us in order to reveal the logos that grounds ontological predication, which is the universal ground of sense.

Intuition as ‘auscultation in depth’ requires that reflection become radically self-critical if it is to be an indispensable tool for ontology. It must become ‘hyper-reflection’ that would take itself and the changes it introduces into the spectacle into account … it must plunge into the world instead of surveying it, it must descend toward it such as it is instead of working its way bay up toward a prior possibility of thinking it – which would impose upon the world in advance the conditions for our control over it. It
must question the world, it must enter into the forest of references that our interrogation arouses in it, and it must make it say, finally, what in its silence It Means to Say. (Ibid., 39)

Hyper-reflection, as a highly poised form of wonder, makes use of eidetic reflection, but only in order to show the extent to which the life-world both converges with and diverges from the fixed eidetic invariants, the extent to which the world transcends the relation between thought and its object. But this process is not so easy. It discovers an endless dialectical movement of differentiation and integration within which radical reflection itself is caught and which undermines any alleged transparency of its own self-relationship. It discovers its own historicity; it discovers the self-mediation of its own present by the projected futures of the past that were realized or unrealized and that either open or block the path of the present toward its future and which that future may affirm or negate. It discovers that any effort to capture thought or thing in one sole thesis breaks up before the capacity of each to differentiate itself endlessly within the historical labyrinth of the life-world. Accordingly, Merleau-Ponty proposes that radical reflection be founded on a “hyper-dialectic, i.e., one which criticizes itself and surpasses itself as a separate statement” (Ibid., 94). The hyper-dialectic is that labyrinthian thought of labyrinthian Being, of the Being that cannot be eidetically intuited or reflected through an apodictic judgment but that thought must follow, not knowing the route in advance or whether it is indeed traversable, and along which and in terms of which thought discovers its own inherent logic of reversibility beneath reflection and intuition and the imperative of non-contradiction.

Merleau-Ponty asks whether what he calls the hyper-dialectic leads to “skepticism, vulgar relativism, or the reign of the ineffable” (Ibid., 95). He answers that within the hyper-dialectic, truth is both possessed and not possessed. It is possessed in so far as, by attending to the multiplicity and ambiguity of relationships within Being, certain problems and certain apparent solutions are eventually eliminated. It is not, however, something definitely possessed. The only truth which is definitely possessed is that of idealization or theses detached from experience and the concrete historical movement of Being. But, as Husserl himself came to understand, this merely logical order of truth, if absolutized, is, in the end, what positively discourages thought from deciphering the truth of Being, a truth that can be progressively revealed only by an operation beneath the predicative logic, by an operation of radical interrogation that is the soul of the hyper-dialectic.

Conclusion

From his earliest major works to his last meditations in Eye and Mind and The Visible and the Invisible, Merleau-Ponty embraced the existential phenomenological project. He continued to approach in a distinctly phenomenological manner the classical epistemological and ontological problems that polarized the Western tradition, especially as these problems were taken up in competing ways by Cartesian rationalism and British empiricism, problems such as the relation of mind to body, of soul to matter, of perception to intellection, of percept to concept, of subject to world, of necessity and contingency, of time and eternity, etc.

In relation to Husserl, there is no Kehre in Merleau-Ponty’s later thinking. Jacques Taminiaux is quite right when he says that Merleau-Ponty does not abandon Husserl but resumes with renewed vigor the interpretation of his texts. As shown above, Husserl’s Ideas II leads Merleau-Ponty to a more profound rumination on the ontological bases of the phenomenological relation of the presence of the subject to the world. He does not exile phenomenology to being another of the classics of our rich tradition, nor does he ever uproot it from his thinking. However,
Merleau-Ponty always had problems with the ‘transcendental’ Husserl, as does Husserl himself, whose thought was in part strongly motivated by the classics produced by Descartes, Berkeley, and Kant. Merleau-Ponty always argued the case for the ‘existential’ Husserl who challenges and reworks the consciousness–object distinction. But even a thought as rigorous and cautious as Merleau-Ponty’s succumbed to the temptations embedded in the use of reflection and unwittingly assumed Husserl’s transcendental attitude in some of his key analyses. Accordingly, the later Merleau-Ponty sensed the necessity of a rigorous interrogation of presence that would establish his thought definitively beyond the transcendental starting point of presence-to, an interrogation that would ground it firmly in the presencing that is the transcendent process of Being. The phenomenological reduction, with its four phases, reveals the unmotivated upsurge of wild Being in its unfolding as wild mind and wild-flowering world. It is only in so far as Being, as the ultimate subject of ontology, factors in and as what Husserl called an “absolute of presence” that anything can be said of it at all. In the last analysis, Merleau-Ponty’s ontology is nothing more and nothing less than a phenomenological ontology.

Notes
1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty held the prestigious Chair of Philosophy at College de France from 1952 until his death in 1961 at the age of 53. His major works are *The Structure of Behavior*, *Phenomenology of Perception*, *Eye and Mind*, and *The Visible and the Invisible*.
3 Merleau-Ponty 2014, XXVII.
4 Merleau-Ponty 1971, 169.
5 Merleau-Ponty 2014, 408.
6 Merleau-Ponty 2002, 11–89.

References