

David Morris and Kym Maclaren, eds. *Time, Memory, Institution: Merleau-Ponty's New Ontology of Self*. Ohio University Press 2015. xiv, 280. US \$64.00

This edited volume comprises thirteen essays written by some of the most insightful and highly regarded contemporary specialists in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The quality of the contributions is uniformly very high. Each of the essays advances careful, well reasoned arguments that will be thought provoking for even the most seasoned Merleau-Ponty scholars. The essays are divided into three sections, the themes for which are suggested in the title of the book: "Memory and the Temporality of the Self," "Expression, Institution, and Ontology," and "The Ontology of Time." In what follows, I will highlight the key ideas that are developed in each section. Owing to limitations of space, I will not be able to address each essay individually.

The essays in Part One express in different ways an idea that John Russon articulates most straightforwardly in his contribution: that the I's very possibility rests upon the impossibility of its ever fully meeting up with itself. Kirsten Jacobson develops this idea in an especially clear, intuitive way, arguing that our identities are sheltered in the things of the world, and not within the closed-off space of self-consciousness. Jacobson suggests as an example the experience we sometimes have when we enter a building we had not been in for many years: we immediately and involuntarily find another version of ourselves there. We would not have been able to summon this version of ourselves strictly through our own efforts, which suggests that memory is given to us as a kind of gift. This shows that our narratively constituted identities are made possible by something

that exceeds our conscious grasp. Glen A. Mazis reaches a similar conclusion by means of a wonderfully rich description of the phenomenon of depth.

The essays in Part Two address the ideas of expression and institution, to which Merleau-Ponty gave special emphasis in his works from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s. All of the essays engage with what Bernhard Waldenfels has called the paradox of expression: what is given to us as “to be expressed” does not precede its expression, so that the act of expression happens as a response to what will exist only after it has been successfully expressed. Continuing a theme developed in Part One, Scott Marratto argues that since expression is always responsive to an intimated sense that is never fully given, I can never be certain precisely what I had intended to express or even who “I” am. And Donald A. Landes applies the idea of the paradox of expression in a highly original and compelling way to questions of ethics, arguing that we are responsible for the potential harms that are contained virtually within the sense that is given to us as “to be expressed.”

Finally, the essays in Part Three examine the ways in which Merleau-Ponty’s thought calls for us to understand subjectivity in terms of time and not vice versa. Michael R. Kelly provides a compelling argument that the “Temporality” chapter from *Phenomenology of Perception* gives us the resources to overcome the kind of consciousness-centric account of subjectivity that the later Merleau-Ponty reproached himself for having produced. And Bernhard Waldenfels argues persuasively for a conception of subjectivity that is based on the out-of-joint temporality proper to expression. Specifically, he shows that the responsive subject is both younger and older

than herself: older because her response calls upon an irretrievable past and younger because this past opens onto an unreachable future.

Despite the extraordinary complexity of the subject matter, each of the essays is written with remarkable clarity. Because of this, the book should be accessible to highly motivated undergraduate students in philosophy. But I believe that the book will be most valuable to graduate students and professional philosophers who specialize in the work of Merleau-Ponty. Since research focusing on the concept of institution is still in its relatively early stages, perhaps the essays in Part Two will be of greatest interest. But the book as a whole is truly excellent, and I recommend it highly.

BRYAN LUECK, Department of Philosophy, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville