

Course Outline

Part 2 - Merleau-Ponty

By Prof. Renaud Barbaras

18 August (Monday): First Lecture

This introductory lecture aims at clarifying the husserlian legacy in Merleau-Ponty's work, particularly concerning the status of intentionality. This lecture establishes the way in which Merleau-Ponty brings to the fore the finiteness of subjectivity in order to criticize husserlian idealism. This enables him to understand intentionality as "being-in-the-world" rather than as an apprehension of a meaning.

19 August (Tuesday): Second Lecture

This lecture explores Merleau-Ponty's theory of intentionality in his first two works : *The structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception*. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is focused on perceptual intentionality and the only way to account for this intentionality is to take as starting point one's own body (*Corps propre, Leib*). In Merleau-Ponty's first two works, the theory of intentionality is grounded on a phenomenology of that phenomenal body. This lecture establishes the way in which this phenomenology uses a lot of results coming from gestaltpsychology and Goldstein's physiology by showing their convergence with the phenomenological account of our perceptual experience.

21 August (Thursday): Third Lecture

This third lecture is focused on Merleau-Ponty's last work : *The visible and the invisible*. This work is characterised by a very marked shift in relation to the earlier works, still dependant on the philosophy of consciousness and a form of idealism. This last work tries to overcome the philosophy of consciousness by radicalizing the notion of body, which leads to an ontology of Flesh (*Chair*). But, insofar as intentionality is a determination of consciousness, we will have to wonder if, in Merleau-Ponty's ontology, there is still room for intentionality.

22 August (Thursday): Fourth Lecture

This concluding lecture tries to evaluate Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of intentionality. More precisely, we will wonder to what extent Merleau-Ponty manages to overcome the philosophy of consciousness, which is his husserlian legacy. We will show that, even in the last work, Merleau-Ponty does not question deeply enough body's phenomenological meaning, which prevents him to account for intentionality as he had defined it previously, that is to say as a genuine opening to the world. We will show finally that the only way to reach this goal is to exploit Patočka's phenomenology of existence and movement.