



# **The Incarnate Subject: Malebranche, Biran, and Bergson on the Union of Body and Soul (Contemporary Studies in Philosophy and the Human Sciences)**

*Maurice Merleau-Ponty*

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This volume is the English translation of sixteen lectures by Maurice Merleau-Ponty given at the École Normale Supérieure in 1947-48 and reconstituted on the basis of notes taken by some of his most outstanding students. Devoted to three of the great names in the French philosophical tradition, Malebranche, Maine de Biran, and Bergson, these lectures center on a classic problem: the union of the soul and the body. They reveal a line of reasoning that Merleau-Ponty had already traced in *The Structure of Behavior* and *Phenomenology of Perception*, and anticipate later developments of his innovative philosophical inquiry in *Signs* and *The Visible and the Invisible*.

In these lectures Merleau-Ponty demonstrates how Malebranche had articulated an early phenomenology of the human condition, how Maine de Biran had anticipated the central project and related themes of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, and how certain features of Bergson's method announce key elements of the philosophical methodology expressed in Merleau-Ponty's later works. This volume contains one of Merleau-Ponty's most sustained explications and critiques of Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, and, more important, his only major presentation and critique of the thought of Maine de Biran.

The serious student of Merleau-Ponty and of the history of philosophy will find this unique volume of a hitherto-untranslated work of great value.

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