

SUMMARY OF THESIS

The aim of the thesis is to consider the position of phenomenology in contemporary thought in order to argue that only on its terms can a political ontology of difference be thought. To inaugurate this project I begin by questioning Heidegger's relation to phenomenology. I take issue with the way that Heidegger privileges time over space in "Being and Time". In this way, the task of the thesis is clarified as the need to elaborate a *spatio-temporal* phenomenology. After re-situating Heidegger's failure in this respect within a Kantian background, I suggest that the phenomenological grounding of difference must work through *the body*. I contend that the body is the ontological site of both the subject and the object. I use Whitehead and Merleau-Ponty to explore the ramifications of this thesis. I suggest first of all that architecture should be grounded ontologically in the body, and as such avoids being a 'master discourse'. Secondly, by theorising the body and world as reciprocally transformative, my reading of Merleau-Ponty emphasises the ways in which his thinking opens up a phenomenology of embodied difference.

It is on the basis of these themes that I develop this thinking in the direction of race, exploring the dialectics of visibility and invisibility in the work of Frantz Fanon and James Baldwin. I argue that embodied difference attests to variations in the agent's freedom to act in the world. If freedom is understood through Merleau-Ponty as being the embodied ground of historicity, we must ask after unfreedom. I suggest that the "flesh" ontology of a pre-thetic community should be rethought as a regulative ideal, the ideal of a justice that can *never* be given. In this light, phenomenology becomes a politics as much as a poetics. Beyond being thought of as conservative, phenomenology henceforth unleashes the possibility of thinking a transformative embodied agency.