

"JEAN-LOUIS CHRÉTIEN: THE CALL AND THE RESPONSE"

STEVEN DELAY

DATE TBA

LOCATION Rice University, Religious Studies
Department, Humanities Building

The philosopher, theologian, and poet Jean-Louis Chrétien is probably most associated with the “theological turn” in contemporary French phenomenology. A main concern of his work at the thresholds of phenomenology and theology is the distinctively human way in which we are called: by things, by others, and even by God. One common form that response takes is our speech. When something has called us, it summons us to answer and sets our voice into motion. I review his account of human speech, surveying this recurring theme in many of his works, paying attention to his analysis of natural beauty, the body, time, and silence. Doing so explicates the audacious thesis lying at the heart of that account. For Chrétien, I show, the essence of speech is praise.