

With Spinoza, we call a process “immanent” if it is not determined by any external rule. In the case of an immanent experience, the possibility of eluding the process depends on failures and errors in the experience itself, which, nonetheless, as Hegel makes clear, can be reoriented. This type of experience, ungoverned by any external rule or pattern determining the experience, can be called “errancy”. A process is “contingent” if its trajectory cannot be described according to the norms of causality but thereby does not escape description altogether: It runs its course.

David-Ménard conceptualizes the drive in its movements and meanings without recourse to irrecoverable origins or demands of continuity that suppress the accidental and contingent feature of what happens to us when we come to desire. The work of the clinical setting, which proceeds by “trial and error”, seeks an immanent way that can transform the impasses of lived sexuality but cannot eliminate the risk inherent in all desiring. In her talk, David-Ménard will emphasize the transferential repetition as a necessary errancy by which the impasses of the patient’s life “take shape”, having previously worked in silence or even with great destructiveness.

In the life of concepts, errancy concerns the heterogeneous fields each system puts together without mastering their connections. It is an errancy that constructs a form of thinking destined to ignore itself. In a cure, errancy can mean the therapist’s capacity to create not only the conditions of a struggle against norms but also conditions in which the absence of a solution to both suffering and jouissance becomes liveable.

**Monique David-Ménard** has a double career, as a professor of philosophy and a practicing psychoanalyst. As the Director of the Centre d’études du vivant (2005-2011), she established the field of research « Gender and Sexualities » at the University Paris-Diderot/Paris 7. She has been invited to teach at a wide variety of universities worldwide: Ruhr University Bochum, Diego Portalès, Santiago de Chile, Universidad de Chile, Universidad de Sao Paulo, UNAM, Mexico, as well as Columbia University. As a psychoanalyst, she has been a member of the *Société de Psychanalyse Freudienne* since its foundation in 1994. She is also a co-founder of the ISPP (*International Society for Psychoanalysis and Philosophy*) and a member of the *International Network of Women Philosophers* (UNESCO).

### ICI Lecture Series **ERRANS**

The English verb ‘to err’ has largely lost its positive connotations. It no longer invokes wandering, rambling, or roaming, and is now understood negatively in relation to a prescribed path or goal. To be sure, errors are acknowledged to play an important role in the pursuit of knowledge and happiness, but usually only to the extent that their recognition allows for their elimination, correction, and avoidance. Recognizing that a critique of ideals of productivity, success, goal-orientation, and determination is necessarily paradoxical, the **ICI Lecture Series *ERRANS*** takes the shifting meanings of ‘erring’ – connoting the violation of norms as well as the activity of wandering – as a prompt to explore the critical potentials and risks of embracing error, randomness, failure, and non-teleological temporalities, and to do so across different disciplines and discourses.

# Monique David-Ménard

**Errancy,  
Contingency,  
Immanence**

