

Key Concepts in Phenomenology (Intentionality, Embodiment, Empathy, Intersubjectivity)

The Tang Chun-I Visiting Professor Chinese University of Hong Kong 2019

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PHIL5180/7180.

Class schedule:

27 Sept (Fri): Intentionality 2:30pm-5:15pm (SWH LT2).

4 Oct (Fri): Embodiment 2:30pm-5:15pm (SWH LT2)

8 Oct (Tue): Empathy 6:30pm-9:15pm (LSK202)

18 Oct (Fri): Intersubjectivity 2:30pm-5:15pm (SWH LT2)

Required reading

1. Dermot Moran & Tim Mooney, eds, *The Phenomenology Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002) [please purchase but there are also library copies. **B829.5 .P44 2002**]
2. Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2000). [In library: **B829.5 .M647 2000**]
3. Dermot Moran, *Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction*. Cambridge Introductions to Key Philosophical Texts Series. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Course Description:

This course offers an advanced critical introduction to key concepts to phenomenology, one of the most important movements of twentieth-century European philosophy, through readings of selected classical texts and discussing selected problems. This module will trace the key phenomenological themes intentionality, consciousness, embodiment, empathy and personhood through several key thinkers: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Edith Stein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Ludwig Binswanger, Aron Gurwitsch, Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi. The course will have both a historical and a contemporary orientation with an emphasis on reading selections from primary sources in English translation in order to understand the central phenomenological concepts.

1. **Friday 27th September 2019. Lecture One. Intentionality. 2:30pm-5:15pm (SWH LT2).**

Intentionality is the claim that all conscious experiences are defined by their object-directedness. Franz Brentano re-introduced the notion of intentionality into philosophy as a way to define mental phenomena and distinguish them from physical phenomena. Edmund Husserl seized on the concept of intentionality as the key problem of phenomenology. Conscious life is intentional, it is meaning-directed. But there are many

problems. Do all conscious phenomena display intentionality? Are all genuinely intentional phenomena conscious? Does the intentionality of consciousness rely on a relation to existing object or is it entirely independent of the existence of that which is intended? Both phenomenologists and analytical philosophers have engaged separately with these questions but recently these questions have again become the focus of shared investigations.

Required Readings

- Brentano, Franz. ‘The Distinction Between Mental and Physical Phenomena’, *Phenomenology Reader*, pp. 32-56.
- E. Husserl, ‘Consciousness as Intentional Experience’, in *The Phenomenology Reader*, pp. 79-108.
- **Further Reading**
- Husserl, E. ‘Noesis and Noema’ in *The Phenomenology Reader*, pp. 134-150.

Further Reading

- Dermot Moran, “Intentionality: Lived Experience, Bodily Comportment, and the Horizon of the World,” in Dan Zahavi, ed., *The Oxford Handbook for the History of Phenomenology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 579–603.
- Dermot Moran, “Intentionality: Some Lessons from the History of the Problem from Brentano to the Present,” Special Issue on Intentionality, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* Vol. 21 No. 3 (2013), pp. 317-358.
- Dermot Moran, “Heidegger’s Critique of Husserl’s and Brentano’s Accounts of Intentionality,” *Inquiry* Vol. 43 No. 1 (March 2000), pp. 39–65.
- Dermot Moran, “Our Germans are Better Than Their Germans”: Continental and Analytic Approaches to Intentionality Reconsidered,” *Philosophical Topics* Vol. 27 No. 2 (Fall 1999), pp. 77–106.

2. **Friday 4th October 2019. Lecture Two: Embodiment. 2:30pm-5:15pm (SWH LT2)**

In this lecture I will discuss the phenomenology of embodiment and also of agency focusing primarily on Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (Heidegger neglected the body). Phenomenology maintains that all conscious experience is embodied in an organic, active, lived body (*Leib*) and embedded in a social world. Contrary to Descartes, phenomenology maintains consciousness and thought cannot be separated from the body. All experience is incarnate. The phenomenology of embodiment --a term Husserl himself employs--begins by distinguishing the physical body (*Körper*) from the animate lived body (*Leib*). As physical, the human body belongs to nature and is subject to the laws of gravitation, impact, and so on. As the organ of my will, however, the living body is what Husserl’s terms ‘I-body’ (*Ichleib*) in his *Logical Investigations* (V § 4). The body is experienced as a centre of agency, of what Husserl calls ‘I can’ (*ich kann*), the capacity for self-movement and for initiating actions rather than just passively responding to the world. According to Husserl, there is an *intertwining* ‘*Verflechtung*’ between *Leib* and *Körper*. This deep ‘circularity’ within the body is called ‘flesh’ (*la chair*) by Merleau-Ponty. Flesh, according to Merleau-Ponty’s late account in *The Visible and the Invisible* (‘VI’), is essentially characterized by ‘reversibility’ (*réversibilité*), ‘the finger of the glove that is turned inside out’ (VI, p. 263; 311) and ‘doubling’—‘the doubling up of my body into inside and outside’ (VI, p. 264; 311). This reversibility is prefigured in the single subject but also describes the relations between subjects. Subjects touch each other in, e.g., a handshake. Merleau-Ponty calls this ‘intercorporeality’ *intercorporealité*, VI, p. 142; 184). The world, for him, is actually an ‘intercorporeal being’; my body ‘couples’ with the ‘flesh of the world’ (VI, p. 144; 187).

It is for this reason that Merleau-Ponty concludes that the world is ‘universal flesh’ (VI, p. 137; 179), ‘a texture that returns to itself and conforms to itself’ (VI, p. 146; 190). Intertwining, furthermore, belongs to the very essence of human symbolic activity. For Merleau-Ponty, for instance, this intertwining captures the being of art, especially painting, which is both an embodied activity of brush strokes and a produced visual meaning sense.

Required Readings

- Husserl *Ideas* II § 18; and §§ 36-37.
- Husserl, *Thing and Space* §§ 46-47
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. ‘The Intertwining- The Chiasm’ in *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. A. Lingis, Evanston: Northwestern U.P., 1968), pp. 130-155 [also in Merleau-Ponty, *Basic Writings*, pp. 247-271]
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Further Reading

- Dermot Moran, “Lived Body, Intersubjectivity and Intercorporeality: The Body in Phenomenology,” in Luna Dolezal and Danielle Petherbridge, eds, *Body-Self-Other. The Phenomenology of Social Encounters*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2017. Chapter 10, pp. 269–309.
- Dermot Moran, “Intercorporeality and Intersubjectivity: A Phenomenological Exploration of Embodiment,” in Christoph Durt, Thomas Fuchs and Christian Tewes, eds, *Embodiment, Enaction, and Culture. Investigating the Constitution of the Shared World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017, pp. 25–46.
- Dermot Moran, “The Personal Self in the Phenomenological Tradition,” in Rafael Winkler, ed. *Identity and Difference. Contemporary Debates on the Self*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2016. pp. 3–35.
- Dermot Moran, “Lived Body, Intercorporeality, Intersubjectivity: The Body as a Phenomenological Theme,” in Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Andreas Elpidorou and Walter Hopp. eds. *Philosophy of Mind and Phenomenology: Conceptual and Empirical Approaches*. New York & London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 57–78.
- Dermot Moran, “Phenomenologies of Vision and Touch: Between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty,” in Richard Kearney and Brian Treanor, eds, *Carnal Hermeneutics. Perspectives in Continental Philosophy*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2015, pp. 214-234.

3. Tuesday 8th October 2019. Lecture Three. Empathy. 6:30pm-9:15pm (LSK202)

This lecture will examine the phenomenological account of empathy (*Einfühlung*), or the ‘experience of the other’ (*Fremderfahrung*) as well as the nature of the ‘personalistic attitude’. The German *Sich einfühlen* is a reflexive verb that literally means ‘to feel one’s way into’. Empathy or ‘intropathy’ means one’s personal experience of another’s subjectivity, i.e. the phenomenon of feeling (or thinking) one’s way into the first-person, experiential life of another person. Empathy, as used in phenomenology refers not just to emotional engagement with other but to all cognitive and experiential states of the other subject (e.g. when I understand what someone is saying). Husserl distinguishes between my original, first-person experience of my own body, the ‘sphere of ownness’ and the experience of the other, what is not-me’. There is the phenomenological problematic of the constitution of ‘otherness’ and especially other persons. For Husserl, empathy is not any kind of *inference* (*Schluss*), whether deliberately and calculatively performed, or, even as

carried out unconsciously. We do not first experience the body of the other and then infer to a state. Rather we experience the other's state directly: we see an angry face. Empathy is essentially connected to grasping others *as persons*, as beings with consciousness, intentionality and agency. Husserl gives primacy to what he calls 'the personalistic attitude'.

Required Readings

- Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns. Fifth Meditation §§ 42-55, pp. 89-128.

Further Reading

- Dermot Moran, "The Problem of Empathy: Lipps, Scheler, Husserl and Stein," in *Amor Amicitiae: On the Love that is Friendship. Essays in Medieval Thought and Beyond in Honor of the Rev. Professor James McEvoy*, ed. Thomas A. Kelly and Phillip W. Rosemann (Leuven/Paris/ Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), pp. 269-312.
- Zahavi, Dan. 'Empathy, Embodiment and Interpersonal Understanding: From Lipps to Schutz', *Inquiry*, 53:3 (2010), pp. 285-306.

4. Friday 18 October 2019. Lecture Four. Intersubjectivity. 2:30pm-5:15pm (SWH LT2)

Husserl understood that all transcendental subjectivity involves an intrinsic relation to others and operates within an interlocking 'nexus' (*Zusammenhang*) of intersubjectivity, as he articulates in the *Crisis* texts that had such a powerful influence on Merleau-Ponty. Husserl's mature conception envisages transcendental subjectivities interpenetrating each other in an *Ineinander* of mutual implication which he chose to express in terms of the Leibnizian conception of 'monadology'. All subjectivities cooperate together to produce the undeniable experience of a shared, common world that is harmonious and unified. Overview of Husserl's conception of spirit and his account of the constitution of culture. Husserl recognizes that humans live in a 'life-world' which is also a world of historicity and tradition. He recognized the plurality of life-worlds but at the same time he rejected all relativism in relation to culture. Furthermore, Husserl recognized the extraordinary transformation in the life-world that was brought about by modern naturalistic science. His later philosophy focuses on the problems connected to living in a multicultural world and yet a world united by contemporary science and technology.

Required readings

- Husserl, "Vienna Lecture", *Crisis of the European Sciences*, trans. David Carr (Northwestern UP 1970), pp. 269-299.
- Husserl, "Edmund Husserl's Letter to Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, 11 March 1935," Translation from the German, with Lukas Steinacher, *New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, Vol. VIII (2008), pp. 349-354.
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Further Readings

- Dermot Moran, "*Ineinandersein* and *l'interlacs*: The Constitution of the Social World or 'We-World' (*Wir-Welt*) in Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty," in Dermot Moran and Thomas Szanto, eds., *Discovering the We: The Phenomenology of Sociality* (London & New York: Routledge 2016), pp. 107-126.
- Dermot Moran, "Everydayness, Historicity and the World of Science: Husserl's Life-world

Reconsidered,” in Lubica Učník, Ivan Chvatík, and Anita Williams, eds, *The Phenomenological Critique of Mathematisation and the Question of Responsibility - Formalisation and the Life-World*. Contributions to Phenomenology (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015), pp. 107–132.

- Dermot Moran, “‘Even the Papuan is a Man and Not a Beast’: Husserl on Universalism and the Relativity of Cultures,’ *Journal of the History of Philosophy* vol. 49 no. 4 (October 2011), pp. 463–94.
- Dan Zahavi: “Intersubjectivity” In S. Luft & S. Overgaard (eds.): *Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*. London: Routledge, 2011, 180-189.