

Introduction to Volume 5

THE BREADTH OF PHENOMENOLOGY

by

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This volume of selected philosophical essays from North America is part of a celebration of phenomenology in 2008. That celebration found its clearest expression in an international meeting of representatives of various local phenomenological organizations throughout the world belonging to the Organization of Phenomenological Organizations (OPO) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong under the leadership of Professor Chan-fai CHEUNG and his staff under the guidance of Joyce CHEUNG. The meeting, which took place between December 15 and 20, 2008 and included nearly 100 presentations, was supported by Dr. Edward CHENG, the Executive Committee and the Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology, Inc. This meeting in Hong Kong was the third in a series that began with the meeting in Prague 2002, was followed by one in Lima in 2005, and a fourth is planned for Segovia in 2011.

The OPO recognizes five regions of the world and these assembled essays developed from the Hong Kong conference in 2008 are divided by region: Asia-Pacific, Euro-Mediterranean, Latin-America, North America, and Northern Europe. Each region is again producing a set of collections of essays entitled in general *Phenomenology 2010* and written by authors representing local phenomenological organizations, each organization being entitled maximally to two representatives. There are two parts of

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the North-American volume in this 2010 collection, one dealing with phenomenological analyses of problems pertaining to disciplines beyond philosophy and this one, dealing with phenomenological philosophy in the sense of critical treatments of issues addressed by distinguished philosophers within the phenomenological tradition. This introduction is continued at the start of the second part and, among other things, lists there the new local phenomenological organizations that have been founded in North America since *Phenomenology 2005* was published.

Even though this volume represents half of the essays from the North American region, it reflects the breadth and scope of interest that characterized the international meeting of phenomenologists in Hong Kong. It contains nineteen essays from Canadian and United States phenomenologists representing thirteen different phenomenological organizations. This volume is organized roughly—give that there is an inevitable overlapping—in terms of the historical figures in the phenomenological movement, beginning with Edmund Husserl, and then following with sections devoted to the Contemporaries of Husserl, The First Generation after Husserl, and Other Authors and Themes. Of course, each of these section headings often embraces a variety of philosophers, with, for example, “The First Generation” including the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, and Paul Ricoeur. In addition, in each section the essayists take up different aspects of the thought of these figures in the tradition or find novel applications to areas that these figures might never have anticipated. One has the sense in these essays that phenomenology is a growing philosophical movement encompassing a rich variety of thinkers and topics, across generations and across continents. To the extent that one acquires this sense in reading this volume, this volume will have conveyed to its readers what those who attended the meeting Hong Kong in 2008 experienced.

The summaries of essays that follow in the order in which these essays appear in the volume expose one to the breadth and

pluralism that characterizes the phenomenological movement in our day.

Elizabeth Behnke, beginning with Merleau-Ponty's eventual rejection of constitution and his recognition of the body as a "never completely constituted *object*," undertakes a rich phenomenological investigation of the different types of that incompleteness on the basis of Husserl's comments that reveal the body to both be and not be a thing (insofar as it can never be completely constituted). It is, then, a "remarkably incompletely constituted *thing*." Rather than give up constitution, Behnke explores constitution itself as understandable only from within the practice of constitution, continually guided by the attitude of reduction, ordered to noetic and noematic dimensions, and operative in a variety of settings and problem contexts. She concludes by contrasting the practice of constitution with phenomenological philosophy's building of systems, though they are also complementary.

Lester Embree analyzes Husserl's comments on the courageous and good warrior in "The Prolegomena" to the *Logical Investigations* by explaining first of all the unreflective apprehension of the warrior's behavior and then the reflective examination of how such behavior correlates with encounterings and intuitive processes, noetic and noematic dimensions, and the three species ofthetic or positional components in *Erlebnis*: believing, willing, and valuing—the latter of which is central for norms. Justification, a higher level of reflection (e.g., whether courage is rational or not), considers the motivations at play and the foundedness of valuing ultimately on evidencing.

Saulius Geniusas analyzes Husserl's notion of "horizon," which makes possible the appearance of phenomena, is constantly reconfigured as experience alters, and is relative to one's present situation. Every appearance refers to every other in its horizon within an implicit system of reference, and every appearance refers to a horizon of potential modes of appearance, in

which validation can be achieved. Horizons also characterize the experiencing of objects and embrace ultimately the whole world. While these dimensions of horizon are bound up with objects experienced, the horizon of subjectivity, including the whole life of consciousness, is implicit in each lived experience of the world—and an examination of origins leads toward both subjectivity and the givenness of phenomena.

Starting with some criticisms of the Eurocentric-sounding phrases of Husserl's *Crisis*, George Heffernan turns to Amartya Sen's argument that the source of violence between groups lies in some groups conceiving themselves as having a destiny that sets them against others, whom they take to belong to one group alone, namely the one opposed to their group. As opposed to this "singularist" view, Sen proposes human diversity based on a multiplicity of identities. Husserl, however, granting the manifolds that account for diversity, still opts for an identity across those manifolds, an identity based in common human rationality and reflection that lead to respect for the multiple identities common to all humanity and that resists the violence that those who think themselves "destined" are prone to inflict on others.

Zachary Davis explores the task of human loving through Max Scheler's experiential, rather than a substantialized, dualism between life and spirit, that is, in the lived interplay between drives and ideas. Spiritualization of life consists in directing life-drives in accord with the dictates of deeper values. Love is the intermediary between life and spirit. Eros, the loving movement of life, functions as an urge toward these deeper values, and it leads to sacrifice on their behalf in a manner that renders lower (life) values not bad in themselves, but merely less meaningful. Love, as agape, the loving movement of spirit, aims at goodness and opens one's eyes to higher values and thereby produces humanization, namely a unifying of life and spirit as one becomes who one is, despite the tensions.

Eugene Kelly weighs two theses of Max Scheler's philosophy of religion: that essential knowledge of God is universal to humankind and that this knowledge is irreducible to any experience of a uniquely religious kind. Finding the first thesis plausible because of the pervasive distinction between the absolute and the relative at the root of intentional awareness of the world, Kelly is not convinced of the second thesis. For Scheler, empirical experiences of dependency, for instance, presuppose an antecedent (religious) awareness of that on which we depend, an awareness born of our irreducible capacity to view God's light spread over all things (*in lumine Dei*) prior to any proofs for God's existence. For Kelly, though, the phenomenological evidence does not exclude other sources of knowledge whose origins are not always transparent to us.

Retrieving Heidegger's notion of "thinking" as an endeavor to move beyond inherited forms of representation, language, and things, Len Lawlor locates the "outside" for which thinking searches not in a Platonic other world but within this world, as immanent. Husserl's notion of intentionality exemplifies the movement of experience toward the outside that characterizes thinking. The process of temporality, basic to experience, can be thought of, too, as including within itself an outside lying between the repetition of the past and the novelty of the now-event. The oscillation between repetition and novelty takes place around this "outside," the place where each one "leaks" (*fuite*) into the other and escapes the prison of each.

Douglas Peduti argues on behalf of Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology. Criticizing Husserl's alleged solipsism and his view of reality and its accessibility and accentuating the importance of access to the world over the reality accessed, Peduti finds Heidegger's turn to Being-in-the-world and the unveiling of hidden Being more adequate. After *Being and Time*, Heidegger undertook a "destructive retrieval" to break through accepted concepts and the linguistic turn to reinstate community. *Ereignis*,

the manifestation of Being to meditative thinking; *Vorsicht*, the looking ahead that allows reality to appear; and the falling silent of language on the way to Being—all assume prominence in Heidegger's later thought and enable him to achieve the conjunction of multiplicity and unity that eluded Hegel and Derrida.

Even though others have interpreted Jean-Paul Sartre as espousing solipsistic positions, such as the beliefs that the disruption of one's world by the other is catastrophic and that hell is other people, Bruce Baugh offers a surprising interpretation of Sartre. He shows that an all-powerful consciousness in a world of its own making would be enslaved to itself and self-enclosed, as if in a dream world. Such a solitary consciousness would collapse into a present without a real past or future. Similarly, the Other, outside my world, never my projection, situates me in space; makes possible a genuine exteriority of objects, visible to her as they are not to me; and enables the kinds of genuine judgments on the efficacy of my acts that would be impossible for me alone.

Interpreting Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* as phenomenology of action that starts with self-reflection disclosing how being-in-itself is organized by being-for-itself in such a way that reality appears as "human," Eric Duffy proceeds to examine anguish. Anguish is produced when one reflectively recognizes for-itself's meaning-endowing activity and thereby discovers its other possibilities. However, one's concomitant awareness that the future at stake is one's own and that not to decide is also to decide to act leads one to counter-anguish. Likewise, the collapse of projects in *Nausea* issues in a counter-nausea pointing toward decision and action.

Matthew C. Eshleman argues that "bad faith" in Sartre needs to be understood in terms of social engagement rather than as a solipsistic occurrence. Hence, Sartre's discussion of it early in *Being and Nothingness* needs to be interpreted in the light of the later introduction of Being-for-Others and of the discussion of existential psychoanalysis. While preserving the plausibility of

bad faith through a nonthetic awareness of one's freedom to transgress socially proposed identities, an awareness lying between thematic awareness and the unconscious, Eshleman also comments on Sartre's Cartesian methodology of gaining a foothold in solipsistic consciousness and subsequently filling out that consciousness's broader context.

Emma Jones examines criticisms of Merleau-Ponty's anonymous body, the pre-personal connection between organism and world, our cleaving to the world, which sexual and cultural differences inflect. Jones argues that the pre-personal character of this anonymity ought not be equated with a neutrality that codes white and male, that such anonymity does not ensure communication but makes it possible, and that it refers not to a self-enclosed entity but a process of world engagement that prevents self-coincidence. Jones compares such anonymity with Luce Irigaray's discussion of air that is the precondition of personal subjectivity and the site of potential communication and that connects subjects while allowing for their autonomy.

Merleau-Ponty, according to Matthew Goodwin, moved away from the traditional understanding of phenomenological reduction through his study of artists. "Slackening intentional threads," in Goodwin's view, implies passively allowing the world to appear but also moving actively toward transformative expression—a process artists exemplify insofar as they present the world as coming into being and open up new dimensions of being through their active interventions and bodily movements (e.g., painting). As instances of artistic transformations of experience, Goodwin points to Cezanne, who from abstractly separated facial features was able to bring forth a human gaze, as if from stone, and Renoir, who, beginning with the visible Sea of Cassis, brought to expression the stream of *The Bathers* as if for the first time.

Shazad Akhtar examines the relationship between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty by considering the progression of Merleau-Ponty's texts and his discussion of the phenomenology and eidetic

reductions. Akhtar shows how Merleau-Ponty's thought converges with Husserl's or even moves in directions Husserl only indicates (e.g. toward greater engagement with the natural and social sciences), and how it discloses the limits to reflection's transparency or to its ability to grasp essence.

Sarah LaChance criticizes Levinas's writings as reflecting patriarchy, though she entertains Lisa Guentner's view that Levinas does not set out to dictate women's roles or rights, but describes parallels between mothers' responsibility and broader ethical obligations. Criticizing Levinas also for neglecting the ambivalence of feeling in mothering, LaChance paradoxically suggests that recognizing that ambivalence heightens a mother's sense of the vulnerability of her child, thereby evoking more caring.

Michael Barber explores how Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel's ethics of liberation makes use of Levinas's ethical perspective. Barber argues that Dussel assimilates that perspective too closely with cognition and ontology and overlooks the eidetic nature of Levinas's claims, which imply that the other, too, ought to assume the role of the responsible "I." Further, Dussel does not recognize the resources ethics offers for producing a self, particularly for the victims of globalization.

The paradoxical nature of testimony, revealing a past it never exhausts and uncovering what happened while also showing how it continues to have meaning in the present, is the focus of David Leichter's discussion of Paul Ricoeur's *Meaning, History, Forgetting*. Leichter summarizes various meanings of the trace, of which testimony is the primary form, and he presents the different types of testimony: the archive, the historian's narrative, and the unrepresentable representation of trauma. The structure of testimony appears in its asymmetry, in the giver's "Something happened, I was there, believe me, or ask someone else," in the trustworthiness of the witness, and in its *habitus* character. History involves critically re-appropriating testimony in a reconstructive endeavor that makes the historian another witness. Finally there is the testimony related to twentieth century atrocities undertaken as

part of a debt, aimed at an excess, and suffused with ethical dimensions.

Caroline Lindquist sensitively considers the heart-wrenching tragedy of rape-related pregnancy, and she opposes moralistic judgments about the agent's decision and recommends instead supporting or comforting her while making the decision and afterward. Lindquist analyzes pro-life propaganda against abortion or for putting the child up for adoption, and she faults its rhetoric for transmuting a tragic situation into a golden ethical opportunity to conform to a prescribed gender role and for claiming that mothering is therapeutic and abortion harmful. Lindquist shows how the American ethos that resists acknowledging luck and morally assesses people for things that are not up to them is inappropriate for cases of rape-pregnancy, in which the having to choose itself is not up to the victim. Alternate possibilities for thematizing such pregnancies are explored, the most promising being feeling pity for the tragic situation, acknowledging to victims one's own vulnerability, and legitimizing victims' entire lived experience.

Peter Westmoreland develops Rousseau's account of the differentiation and constitution of self and world as described by the Savoyard Vicar. While the Self as agency differentiates between itself and the world, sentiments pertain to the Self's interior and sensations convey input from exterior elements. The Self, however, is penetrated by the World and the earlier mentioned distinctions are not so easy to draw, especially insofar as the presence of the world via sensations is felt on the interior of the Self. This experience reveals the unity of mind and body and the inseparability of the body from the Self, though, for purposes theological consolation, the Vicar admits the possibility of substance dualism. On the basis of this analysis, Westmoreland asserts that the Self is a differentiating and constituting being, setting off its Self from the world and yet correlating inner sentiment of and outer sensation.