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# PHENOMENOLOGY

Critical Concepts in Philosophy

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**Volume I**

Phenomenology: Central Tendencies and Concepts

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Date	Author	Chapter/article	Reference	Vol.	Chap.
2002	Jean-Luc Marion	Sketch of the saturated phenomenon: the horizon	<i>Being Given: Towards a Phenomenology of Givenness</i> , translated by Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press), pp. 199–221. (Originally published as 'Esquisse du phénomène saturé: l'horizon', in <i>Étant Donnée: Essai d'une Phénoménologie de la Donation</i> , Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997.)	IV	59
2002	Ulrich Melle	Edmund Husserl: from reason to love	John J. Drummond and Lester E. Embree (eds), <i>Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy: A Handbook</i> (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers), pp. 229–248.	III	57
2003	Lester Embree	The possibility of a constitutive phenomenology of the environment	Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (eds), <i>Eco-Phenomenology</i> (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003), pp. 37–50.	IV	65
2003	Dermot Moran	Making sense: Husserl's phenomenology as transcendental idealism	Jeff Malpas (ed.), <i>From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental</i> (London: Routledge), pp. 48–74.	I	5
2003	Hans Rainer Sepp	Homogenization without violence? A phenomenology of interculturality following Husserl	Chan Fai Chung, Ivan Chvatik, Ion Copoeru, Lester E. Embree, Julia Iribarne and Hans Rainer Sepp (eds), <i>Essays in Celebration of the Founding of the Organization of Phenomenological Organization</i> (published on the Internet: <a href="http://www.o-p-o.net">www.o-p-o.net</a> ).	IV	73

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Anthologies never please everybody and, in this case, while there are some 2,000 pages of some four score selections, there could easily have been two or three times as many. Difficult editorial choices had to be made, and here we shall sketch how our decision-making has been guided. To begin with, we have sought to include only selections of lasting value, ones that provide key insights into fundamental areas of phenomenology, regardless of their level of difficulty. In compiling this set of selections for the Critical Concepts in Philosophy series, the readers we have in mind are our fellow philosophers, especially those not fully versed in phenomenology, as well as other academics in related disciplines and, above all, students who are seeking guidance concerning the core concepts and central themes of phenomenology. We have also preferred articles that were clearly written, in the hope that students can follow and appreciate them without undue difficulty.

In addition, our selections endeavor to illustrate the geographic breadth and historical depth of what has become a worldwide tradition. The phenomenological movement began in Germany at the turn of the last century, spread quickly to France, Japan, Russia, Spain and elsewhere in Eastern as well as Western Europe, Asia, and South and North America. It is now entering its second century with no sign of waning. It is an enormously rich, complex and evolving tradition, expressed in many languages. To reflect this breadth, selections have been made from each of the major historical periods and from each of the main cultural regions involved in the flourishing of phenomenology.

Due to the European origin of phenomenology and its spread outside of the anglophone world, many phenomenological writings originally appeared in languages other than English; but we are fortunate that a great deal is available in English, which is not to say either that competence in other languages or that more translations are not needed for more advanced study of phenomenology. Since most of the translation work (and related commentary) has been done in the United States, American authors are strongly represented here. It may even be wondered whether, at least in terms of

languages, the German and French periods of the tradition have been succeeded by an English one. In any case, English is the most widely spoken language on earth at the start of the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately for the contemporary reader, a great deal of the phenomenological literature is expressed in an almost Gothic style of nineteenth century German academic philosophy or in a somewhat literary French style, about both of which Anglophone readers are at best ambivalent. Hence, many have shied away from studying phenomenology and most of those who have not shied away have tended to approach it in terms of the thought of this or that major figure, beginning with Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, even though this 'major figures' approach can lead to distorted perspectives and unnecessary partisanship.<sup>1</sup> In the best of cases, the result is then like a map that shows only what seem to be the tallest mountains, mountains whose seeming height is enhanced when the terrain from which they rise is represented as flat.

Here the attempt has been made to turn the traditional emphasizing of major figures to advantage, for there are not only anthologies of their primary work but also of secondary literature available in most cases and the interested student can turn to them. And in view of that, a map can be drawn that shows something of the ranges of mountains and even the valleys in between, and thus the map-reader can gain a better understanding of the whole terrain that is the phenomenological tradition. There is a difference between what one sees from the surface of a land mass, which is one's immediate surroundings, and then the higher elevations, whether near or far, but especially the nearest one, and what a historical survey can yield, which is like the view from a balloon that floats above and privileges no mountain tall or not so tall and grasps how the localities connect.<sup>2</sup>

While we thus happily benefit from the figure-focused anthologies being available, there is another decision we are less comfortable with. This is the exclusion of selections from phenomenologists belonging to disciplines other than philosophy, such as psychiatry. Until recently and increasingly in the Anglophone world, phenomenological philosophers have also been much involved in disciplines beyond philosophy. By contrast, the present anthology confines itself to works by philosophers. Another anthology containing the work of phenomenological scientists (cognitive scientists, cultural anthropologists, educational theorists, geographers, nurses, psychologists, sociologists, and so on) would be required in order to show the full breadth of our multidisciplinary tradition, but currently there is unfortunately no anthology of this sort to which students can be referred.

### A brief introduction to phenomenology

Phenomenology may be initially characterized in a broad sense as seeking an unprejudiced, descriptive account of consciousness and whatever

appears to consciousness, precisely in the manner in which it so appears. As thus understood, it emerged as an original philosophical approach at the end of the nineteenth century in the school of the Austrian philosopher and descriptive psychologist Franz Brentano (1838–1917), was paralleled in the early work of William James (1842–1911), and was developed by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and his successors to become a major tradition.

According to Husserl's phrase, which was soon adopted as a slogan by his followers, phenomenology aims to return to 'the things themselves' (*die Sachen selbst*), i.e. it seeks to avoid preconceived starting-points. Phenomenology aimed to be a rigorous investigation of the grounds for all forms of reason in phenomena and not another philosophical 'system'. Instead, fundamental philosophical issues were to be examined through attention to the manner in which the matters show themselves to consciousness, i.e., come to evidence, or as we prefer, how they are evidenced. As the influential German phenomenologist Max Scheler (1874–1928) put it: 'That which constitutes the unity of phenomenology is not a particular region of facts, such as, for example, mental or ideal objects, nature, etc., but only *self-givenness* in *all* possible regions.'<sup>3</sup> In his *Ideen I* (1913), Husserl lays down his fundamental principle, his 'principle of all principles' (*das Prinzip aller Prinzipien*) as follows: 'that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source (*Rechtsquelle*) of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak in its "personal" actuality) offered to us in "intuition" is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there.'<sup>4</sup> In Volume I of this anthology, Dorion Cairns glosses this principle as follows:

No opinion is to be accepted as philosophical knowledge unless it is seen to be adequately established by observation of what is seen as itself given 'in person.' Any belief seen to be incompatible with what is seen to be itself given is to be rejected. Towards opinions that fall into neither class – whether they be one's own or another's – one is to adopt an 'official' philosophical attitude of neutrality.

The phenomenological approach, then, is primarily *descriptive*, seeking to *illuminate* issues in a radical, unprejudiced manner, paying close attention to what presents itself to our cognitive grasp in what Husserl calls an intuition. As Husserl soon realized, an important first step is to put aside or bracket one's initial assumptions including all the information we have on a subject from our cultural, religious and scientific traditions. From the ancient Greeks he borrowed the term '*epoche*' (suspension) for this rigorous attempt to attain unprejudiced reflection through the avoidance of all epistemic commitments (especially those informed by the sciences and by

our cultural formation). There followed a procedure known as the 'eidetic reduction' (from the Greek *eidōs* meaning 'essence') whereby phenomenology attempted to return from theoretical speculation to descriptive reflective clarification of the universal essences of our cognitive, affective and volitional experiences and their correlated intentional objects. This reduction, for Husserl, involved the move from existence to essence but it later became construed as the return to the original sources which give rise to our experience. As the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) put it, phenomenology seeks to restore the richness of the world as experienced; it wants to be present at the birth of the world for us. In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, he wrote: 'Philosophy is not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing truth into being.'<sup>5</sup> Husserl himself developed a further transcendental reduction that moved beyond the attempt to fix the essences of objects and acts to the source of all our cognitive accomplishments, namely, the transcendental ego. Later phenomenologists, however, even when they adopted the transcendental approach, were reluctant to follow Husserl in his analysis of the ego. Heidegger, for instance, rejected all talk of a transcendental ego and his concept of *Dasein* is a deliberate attempt to move away from a subjectivist account of human nature.

Although there are comments about value theory and action theory all along, phenomenology initially aimed chiefly to gain clarity for our fundamental epistemological concepts, especially those concepts that pertained to scientific knowledge, and Husserl himself focused primarily on knowledge in the areas of mathematics, logic, and psychology. But he soon realized the importance of phenomenology for all aspects of human cultural accomplishment. All science involves relations between subjects and the objective, and traditionally both philosophy and the sciences have ignored one or other term of that relation. Perhaps the central recognition in phenomenology, therefore, is that the disclosure of all objectivity – including the very sense of 'world' itself – is correlated to, and indeed achieved by, the processes of subjectivity. What is primary is neither the object nor the subject but rather the unsurpassable subject–object correlation. The world is precisely the world as disclosed to consciousness. The *a priori* structures of consciousness are therefore a central focus for phenomenological inquiry, but they are not its only topic: the nature of things as revealed to consciousness forms the second enormous topic of phenomenology.

One of Husserl's most significant discoveries was his identification of 'the natural attitude' (*die natürliche Einstellung*), first publicly discussed in *Ideas I*, which at once both revealed the world in a certain way while itself remaining concealed. In other words, the very 'naturalness' of the world acts to conceal the manner in which this 'normal' world is constituted by the processes of the conscious subjects who inhabit that world. First of all

and most of the time, we live within the natural attitude, which has, from the point of view of phenomenology, a certain naiveté. The first step in the phenomenological reduction, then, is to overcome this naiveté. The phenomenological attitude is not the normal engaged or absorbed attitude, but requires, as we shall see, a change of orientation, a detachment or disengagement, to bring the nature of the experience more to light. Husserl went on to uncover more and more levels to our lived experiences and to broaden out the scope of phenomenology until it became a genuinely universal and foundational science, namely first philosophy. Not all phenomenologists were willing to follow Husserl into the transcendental idealism that he adopted in his mature years, and the subsequent tradition of phenomenology has been described by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur as a series of heresies in regard to the foundational Husserlian 'orthodoxy'.

### Five phases in phenomenology

Where the history of the phenomenological tradition is concerned, borderline cases abound and interpretations of self and others shift over time, yet there is benefit in recognizing the ideal types of five periods:

- 1 so-called 'realistic phenomenology', which emerged in Germany before World War I, stimulated by Husserl's 'ground-breaking' *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900/1901), continued through the 1920s, and is even still represented today;
- 2 so-called 'constitutive phenomenology', which emerged with Edmund Husserl's second major publication, *Ideen I* of 1913, and influenced the tradition everywhere else thereafter;
- 3 so-called 'existential phenomenology', which began from the early work of Martin Heidegger, and was developed chiefly in France during the 1930s and 1940s, and thereafter sent another wave of influence across the world;
- 4 so-called 'hermeneutical phenomenology', which emerged in Germany with Heidegger and Gadamer, and then in France during the 1960s, and again spread elsewhere, but also combined with increased scholarship on the deeper tradition of Western philosophy as well as with the ever accumulating phenomenological literature;
- 5 and, finally, there are entries on new sets of issues chiefly originating in or being continued in North America, e.g., ecology, ethnicity, gender, and technology, as well as religion in France and interculturality in Germany, along with renewed interest in aesthetics, ethics, politics, religion, etc., that seem to call for the recognition of a fifth period, one that might be called 'cultural phenomenology' due to what is common to the issues of concern.

The regions of the world in which phenomenology currently prospers include the Asian and Pacific area (including Australia and India), Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and North America, while the core region continues to be Western Europe. As intimated, we have sought selections from all of these regions as well as from all of the mentioned historical periods. The reader will certainly not find every period represented for every region, however, much less contributions from every region and period on every theme, which might well have quadrupled the number of selections. But that efforts have been made to include selections from all periods and all regions deserves mention here because these structures are not reflected in the arrangement of selections. Instead, we have chosen a thematic, if not systematic arrangement.

The first volume begins with selections that together indicate the origins and different stages and tendencies, which are still very much alive within the tradition. Then the first volume begins and the second volume continues with a series of crucial themes, to each of which two or three selections are chiefly related. The third volume goes on to include sets of selections pertaining to philosophical sub-disciplines especially cultivated in the tradition and perhaps contrasting it with other traditions. The fourth volume is devoted to the emerging themes of ecology, ethnicity, gender, interculturality, religion, and technology. And the fifth volume is devoted to what might be called the literature of internal criticism, that is reflections by phenomenologists on work by other phenomenologists. Again, specialists will not be satisfied that the problematics or the major figure they are devoted to are adequately covered here, but we believe that most will find interesting work here that was previously unknown to them. And students, who are our chief intended readership, will be helped, we believe, to visit the entire continent of phenomenological philosophy through this set of selections.

Dermot Moran  
Lester Embree

### Notes

- 1 The major early use of this approach is Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* (1st ed. 1960, 3rd expanded ed with Karl Schuhmann (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1982), where partisanship and distortion were ably struggled against.
- 2 The editors have come to their synoptic standpoints through L. Embree's leading the team that edited the *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997) and D. Moran's *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).
- 3 Max Scheler, 'Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition,' in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David R. Lachterman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 145.

- 4 E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Erstes Buch: *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* 1, Halbband: *Text der 1-3. Auflage*, hrsg. K. Schuhmann, Husserliana III/1 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), § 24, p. 43, trans. F. Kersten, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1983), p. 44.
- 5 M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. xv, trans. C. Smith, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p. xx.