

Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture  
e p t c - t c e p  
Théorie et culture existentialistes et phénoménologiques

## Conference 2018 / Conférence 2018

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28 May to 30 May 2018 / 28 mai au 30 mai 2018

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## PhaenEx

*PhaenEx is a journal affiliated with the Society for Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture.*

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**EPTC/TCEP - 2018  
Schedule (Draft)**

**May 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Location: Classroom Building 313**

Time	Presentation
9:00 - 10:00	Neal DeRoo (King's Univ.) "Expression and the Task of Philosophy: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and the Promise of Phenomenology" Commentary: Griffin Klemick (Toronto) Moderator: Chris Nagel
10:05 - 11:10	Keith Robinson (Arkansas-Little Rock) "Becoming and Continuity in Bergson, Whitehead and Zeno" Commentary: Neal DeRoo (King's Univ.) Moderator: Nina Belmonte
11:15 - 12:15	Griffin Klemick, (Toronto) "Levinas' Transcendental Argument for Moral Objectivity" Commentary: Nina Belmonte (Victoria) Moderator: Neal DeRoo
<b>LUNCH</b>	
1:30 - 4:30	<b>Special Joint Panel (with the Posthumanism Research Network): "Growing Posthuman Subjectivities in the Dirt of Nihilism?"</b> • Sean Braune (Brock) "Chaos, Language, Emptiness: A Study in Transjects" • Terrance McDonald (Brock) "Bodies and Relations, Relations and Bodies" • Christine Daigle (Brock) "(No)Thing and (No)Thingness: Becoming Posthuman

## EPTC/TCEP - 2018

### Schedule (Draft)

May 29<sup>th</sup>

Location: College West 308

Time	
9:00 - 10:00	Lykkefry Melone, (Colorado) "A God Called Love: Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky on Love, Logic, and Growth" (Via Skype) Commentary: Steven Burgess (Benedictine) Moderator: Dave Koukal
10:05 - 12:15	<b>Panel: Feminist Phenomenology after de Beauvoir</b> Moderator: Kristin Rodier <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Charlotte Knowles (Groningen) "Rethinking Woman's Complicity in Her Own Unfreedom: The Heideggerian Roots of Beauvoir's Analysis"</li><li>• Neal DeRoo (King's Univ.) "Is White Supremacy a "Spiritual" Problem?: Husserlian Spiritual Analysis and Oppression"</li></ul>
LUNCH	
1:30- 2:30	Steven Burgess, (Benedictine) "Nietzsche on Descartes: The Hidden Target of <i>Gay Science</i> , 344" Commentary: David Collins (McGill) Moderator: Keith Robinson
2:35- 3:35	David Collins (McGill) "Bad Faith and the Corruption of Consciousness: Collingwood and Sartre on Inauthentic Social Awareness" Commentary: Keith Robinson (Arkansas-Little Rock) Moderator: Steven Burgess

# EPTC/TCEP - 2018

## Schedule (Draft)

May 30<sup>th</sup>

Location: College West 308

Time	Location
8:30 - 12:30	<p><b>Panel: Back to The Things Themselves! (8:30-12:30)</b></p> <p>Moderator: Dave Koukal (Detroit Mercy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Jessica Brown (New College of Florida) "Phenomenological Investigation on the Distinct Experiences of the Intercorporeal Sexual Act and a Masturbatory One"</li><li>Commentary: Emilia Russo (Southern Illinois University)</li><li>•Emilia Russo (Southern Illinois University) "(Not) Feeling Your Gender: A Phenomenology of Gender Dysphoria"</li><li>Commentary: Jessica Brown (New College of Florida)</li><li>•Ian Gerrie (Humber College) "Colonialism Set in Stone: What is Phenomenologically Present in a Monument to the Past"</li><li>Commentary: Neal DeRoo</li><li>•Neal DeRoo (King's University) "What IS expression?: A Phenomenology of Expression"</li><li>Commentary: Chris Nagel (CalState-Stanislaus)</li></ul>
LUNCH	
1:30 - 3:40	<p><b>Workshop: Back to The Things Themselves!</b></p> <p>Chris Nagel (CalState-Stanislaus) Dave Koukal (Detroit Mercy)</p>

## Presentation Abstracts:

### Sean Braune , "Chaos, Language, Emptiness"

Continental philosophy has been concerned with the negation of binaries since Nietzsche—arguably, since the dialecticism of Hegel was popularized by Kojève - and Deleuze (one of Nietzsche's inheritors) explores the negation of binarism in the serial, the assemblage, and the multiple. The rhizome, the fold, the monad, and the transition from monadology to nomadology each suggest the movement of an *immanent becoming* rather than a *transcendent being*. Deleuze (and Guattari) are concerned with the line of flight of a becoming that does not exist in a dualistic split, but rather exists in an immanent nomadism that gives way to a new. I am interested in the space of potential that is up by whatever is beyond *Gut und Böse*, by whatever is beyond the binary. Is this the *whatever* Agamben speaks of in *The Coming Community*? Is this a post-capitalist subjectivity that becomes in a rhizome? What of the assemblage itself? Which is to say, how can a new assemblage of disciplines connect to an image of a future philosophy that incorporates continental philosophy, analytic philosophy, the various branches of the humanities, and the sciences?

This paper will look towards this possible interdisciplinary assemblage to try and map out, in very provisional terms, the future philosophy that Nietzsche envisioned. I claim that this future philosophy will be an assemblage of chaos theory, fractality, and semiotics—an assemblage that will speak to a contemporary theory of subjectivity, Being, and language. This essay will develop this conceptual assemblage through the concept of "the subject-of" that I first theorize in my book *Language Parasites: Of Phorontology* (2017), (59). What I mean by the term "subject-of" is that the word "of" is not necessarily linked to the concept of "history," but can be related to numerous, nonlinear linkages that permit the emergence of a "subject." Certainly, this "of"—or these "ofs"—would be partly related to the ideological and the historical, but there would be other influences as well: social, cultural, mythological, personal, and neurocognitive. The importance of the seemingly simple preposition "of" is that the "of" is constantly shifting in relation to the complex interplay of self and environment or subject and object.

The subject-of grows in the "dirt" leftover from nihilism and postulates a way forward to the question of "what comes after the subject?"

### Steven Burgess, "Nietzsche on Descartes: The Hidden Target of Gay Science, 344"

Very few studies have assessed the influence of Descartes on Nietzsche's work. Although Nietzsche says relatively little about Descartes explicitly in his published writings, examination of his unpublished notebooks reveals Descartes to be a consistent point of interest. Appreciating this presence in Nietzsche's thought also sheds light on some important passages in the published writings; in doing so, we are able to uncover previously veiled shades of textual meaning by recognizing Descartes as the tacit target of critique. In this paper, I will take up just one example of this phenomenon, the crucial second aphorism (344) of Nietzsche's *Gay Science*, Book Five.

### Jessica Brown, "Phenomenological Investigation on the Distinct Experiences of the Intercorporeal Sexual Act and a Masturbatory One"

I present a phenomenological investigation of the masturbatory act and the intercorporeal sexual act in order to demonstrate important distinctions between them. Through a focus on the intertwined elements of the proprioception, affective states, and sensations which constitute the experiences I explore the significant phenomenological aspects of these components of the sexual sphere. Phenomenology is important to a philosophy of sex which has been underutilized and this project is a part of an ongoing attempt to use phenomenological tools in my studies of the sexual. I conclude with the significance of other beings in our experience of the sexual world.

## **Presentation Abstracts (cont):**

### **David Collins, "Bad Faith and the Corruption of Consciousness: Collingwood and Sartre on Inauthentic Social Awareness"**

This paper focuses on connections between Collingwood's idea of the corruption of consciousness and Sartre's notion of bad faith, arguing that each fundamentally involves the other, and thus that they are descriptions of the same activity of consciousness. As this is the first part of a larger project aiming to show the relevance of these ideas for a critical examination of current social phenomena, including current approaches to critiquing said phenomena, I conclude by outlining some implications of the present paper for this larger project, including connections to be developed further with the thought of Gabriel Marcel and Hannah Arendt.

### **Christine Daigle (Brock University), "(No)Thing and (No)Thingness: Becoming Posthuman"**

I posit that a posthuman subjectivity can only ever be a "thing" that is grounded in the material entanglement of its being. I start by briefly revisiting the Sartrean existential-phenomenological concept of consciousness as this nothingness which is made by its intentional insertion and creation of the world. As Sartre would have it, the nothingness of consciousness exists in relation to a Being that it covers up through its conscious activity of world- and consciousness-making. I quickly depart from this view and emphasize instead the always already material interconnectedness that is the condition for the emergence of the (no)thingness of consciousness and its very fabric. Consciousness is a (no)thing that constitutes itself at the intersections of vibrant relations and assemblages - a (no)thingness - but this constitution collapses as soon as it consolidates. We are dealing with an uncertain, dynamic, ever-changing, fleeting spark of consciousness that may qualify as a subjectivity. This subjectivity is born out of the unfolding of nihilistic processes. While posthumanist material feminist thinkers would resist the use of a term such as consciousness - it carries too much humanistic, Cartesian, rationalistic, and mind/body dualism baggage - many are still concerned with establishing a locus of agency, albeit a minimalistic one, to which we can ascribe ethical and political responsibility. What kind of subjectivity can emerge out of material, dynamic, relational processes? Is the subject - or rather the transject, as I wish to conceptualize it - ever not a (no)thing? I will explore Samantha Frost's proposals for a biocultural creature (Frost 2016) as a fertile ground for establishing the minimal agent the (no)thing we are can be.

### **Neal DeRoo, "Expression and the Task of Philosophy: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and the Promise of Phenomenology"**

This paper shows how Merleau-Ponty helps us better understand both the key phenomenological doctrine of expression and the task of philosophy. To do this, I will begin by briefly laying out the promise of phenomenology, as it emerges out of Husserl's early debate with Frege, and the role expression plays in living up to that promise. Next, I will show how Merleau-Ponty's work adds something unique to the phenomenological understanding of expression. I will end by looking at what this new understanding of expression does to help us achieve the 'task of philosophy.'

### **Neal DeRoo, "What IS expression?: A Phenomenology of Expression" Neal DeRoo (King's University)**

In this paper, I would like to undertake a phenomenology of expression. I hope to describe, as clearly and distinctly as possible, the main components of expression and how they function in the generation of meaning. I will begin with an eidetic examination of the essential characteristics of expression (Section I), before moving on to a brief (genetic) sketch of our acquisition of expressive abilities and their role in connecting us to the broader, common lifeworld (Section II).

### **Ian Gerrie, "Colonialism Set in Stone: What is Phenomenologically Present in a Monument to the Past"**

In the wake of shifting attitudes towards controversial statues and monuments honouring Civil War heroes in the U.S., this paper seeks to provide a phenomenological examination of a monument to Canada's colonial history. Taking up a critical, interpretive stance modelled on Husserl's genetic, and later generative, phenomenological method, the paper challenges us to consider what would have passed unnoticed at the time of the monument's unveiling in contrast to what arrests one's attention a century later while gazing at its exact same features.

## Presentation Abstracts (cont):

### Griffin Klemich, "Levinas Transcendental Argument for Moral Objectivity"

I reconstruct a transcendental argument Emmanuel Levinas gives for *moral objectivity*: the thesis that some moral commitments capable of generating binding practical reasons are rationally non-optional for all human beings. On my reading, the argument starts from the claim that a necessary condition of the possibility of meaningful thought is a relation to exteriority, together with an account of intentional relations (particularly as analyzed by Husserl and Heidegger) as failing to relate the subject to exteriority. I explain how Levinas thinks the subject can relate to others without vitiating their alterity, as well as how these relations carry moral implications.

### Terrance H. McDonald, "Bodies and Relations, Relations and Bodies: Wong Kar Wai and a Cinematic Posthuman Ontology"

1. "We neither feel nor perceive any singular things," states Spinoza, "except bodies and modes of thinking" (Ethics, 32). Therefore, a return to materiality is a return to thinking because only through materiality does the not yet thought unfold. The conscious subject of Humanism is a transcendent ideal that severs bodies and relations to fabricate the rational human that knows in spite of affects.

2. Consciousness was always an illusion. If you want to know what thought is then perceive bodies and if you want to know what bodies are then feel relations. And, if you want to know what relations are then map the modes of thought.

3. "The encounters a body undergoes elaborate, develop, transform the powers of the nature of bodies and thoughts to act and be acted upon;" states Grosz in a discussion of Spinoza, "living beings are not autonomous entities but capacities for embodied engagement, action, and conceptualization that are strengthened or weakened by their relations with other forces and powers" (2017, 56-57). Thoughts are changed by the last thing you ate. Thoughts are created from touches and smells. Pressures and threats can unfold the new whether you persevere to see the new or not. If you are ever at a loss for thought then seek new relations.

4. No. This is not a negation. The conscious subject is a denial. The conscious subject is an assumption that the conditions of possible experience are the conditions of real experience (Bryant 2008). A body is never more than, or separate from, its relations. Relations form thoughts. Thoughts are the ongoing processes of our bodies.

5. "Each human is a heterogeneous compound of wonderfully vibrant, dangerously vibrant, matter. If matter itself is lively," states Bennett, "then not only is the difference between subjects and objects minimized, but the status of the shared materiality of all things is elevated" (2010, 12-13). You can't enrich something that is immanent. You can't grow more than you've grown. You can't flourish beyond your potential. The powers of affection are all around us, and in us, and through us.

6. Pay attention to forms as they can generate maps. Affects matter. Our bodies can increase and decrease the power to affect and be affected. The force of affects structure relations. Do you want to see the existence of thoughts?

7. The films of Wong Kar Wai can be read for the forms of thoughts. Don't forget that thoughts are the ongoing processes of bodies affecting and affected by relations. We can map thoughts by closely reading cinematic forms where images have the capacity to capture the materiality of relations. This is not a method that interprets affects as effects felt by a spectator's body, but the meticulous readings of form as meaning (Brinkema, 2014).

8. Wong Kar Wai's *Chungking Express* (1994).

9. What is at stake in this paper is a conceptualization of a posthuman ontology that reads cinematic forms as affirming bodies and relations, relations and bodies, as all that is ever thought.



## **Presentation Abstracts (cont):**

### **Lykkefry Melone, "A God Called Love: Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky on Love, Logic, and Growth"**

This paper explores the interdependency between Love, God, and Logic and how they give meaning to human lives. The essay focusses on Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoevsky provides a concept of love where love serves as the foundation for a working logic. Kierkegaard proposes the idea of the loving person as a gardener. With this theoretical basis, the essay analyzes Dostoevsky's character Dmitri. Overall, this essay is an inquiry into the nature of love aiming to offer thoughts on how to live a meaningful life.

### **Keith Robinson, "Becoming and Continuity in Bergson, Whitehead and Zeno"**

Although both Bergson and Whitehead respond to Zeno in their mature works they take opposing paths. For Whitehead Zeno's paradoxes are formative for his own conception of time and process such that there can only be, as he says, a "becoming of continuity". For Bergson, by contrast, Zeno's paradoxes are 'false problems' because essentially they rely upon a spatialized conception of time that covers over the "continuity of becoming". In this paper I will use Whitehead's and Bergson's contrasting approaches to Zeno to bring out their differing conceptions of time and process. The focus on Zeno will enable us to present a sharp contrast between their respective conceptions of becoming so that they can be viewed as inversions of each other. In the final section I will briefly compare Bergson's and Whitehead's methods insofar as these are related to their conceptions of time and their shared effort to think becoming and continuity.

### **Emilia Russo, "(Not) Feeling Your Gender: A Phenomenology of Gender Dysphoria"**

This paper investigates gender-dysphoria as reported by many transgender people. Using a phenomenology of feeling I argue gender-dysphoria and the choice to transition doesn't primarily concern bodies but rather are primarily moral and interpersonal phenomena. Trans people's experiences indicate that gender is an aspect of interpersonal existence with others, and our person imposes certain norms of who we ought to be interpersonally. Gender-dysphoria, I conclude, is a mode of self-hating, the choice to transition is a form of self-loving, and the progress of suffering gender-dysphoria to seeking treatment by transitioning is a form of vocational experience.