

Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture

e p t c - t c e p

Théorie et culture existentialistes et phénoménologiques

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

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## EPTC 2019 Schedule (Draft)

June 3	Allard 112	Allard 115
9:30 - 10:00		<b>Panel: Workshop on Phenomenology and Marxism</b>  <b>• Introduction</b> Bryan Smyth (Mississippi)
10:15-11:15	<b>• Camus' Kierkegaardian Conception of the Good Life</b> Johannes Abel (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität) Commentator: Stuart Dalton Moderator: Angela Joosse	<b>• The Problem of Form and the Very Idea of a Return to the Concrete</b> Ian Angus (SFU)
11:30-12:30	<b>• Three Systems in Kierkegaard's Philosophy</b> Stuart Dalton (Western Connecticut State) Commentator: Johannes Abel Moderator: Angela Joosse	<b>• Meaning and Being: Towards a Phenomenological Account of Modes of Production</b> Richard Westerman (Alberta)
<b>LUNCH</b>		
2:00-3:00	<b>• On the Meaning of Suffering in Paul Ricœur and Michel Henry</b> <b>Phenomenological Understanding of Suffering</b> Nuno Proença (NOVA, Lisbon) Commentator: Griffin Klemick Moderator: Nina Belmonte	<b>• Paci, Phenomenology, and Revolutionary Subjectivity</b> Christopher Araujo (Winnipeg)
3:15-4:15	<b>• Hannah Arendt, Human Rights, and the Priority of Community</b> Griffin Klemick (Toronto) Commentator: Nuno Proença Moderator: Nina Belmonte	<b>• Scenes from Within the Crowd: Intersubjectivity, Anaesthetics and a Phenomenology of Misrecognition</b> Paul Mazzocchi (York)
4:30-5:30		<b>• Marxism, Phenomenology, and the Mythico-Political</b> Bryan Smyth

## EPTC 2019 Schedule (Draft)

June 4	Allard 112	Allard 115
9:00 - 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ambiguity, Freedom, and Virtue: Beauvoir and Virtue Ethics</b> David Collins (McGill) and Tiger Zheng (Guelph) Commentator: Brett Robinson Moderator: Nina Belmonte</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Transformational Model of Authenticity: Authenticity and Inauthenticity in <i>Being and Time</i></b> Renxiang Liu (McGill) Commentator: James Snyder Moderator: Daniel O'Shiel</li> </ul>
10:15- 11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speaking Nearby</b> Hamza Karam Ally (York) Commentator: Neal DeRoo Moderator: Bryan Smyth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Husserl's Late Phenomenology: The World Strikes Back</b> Zahra Donyai (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität) Commentator: Daniel O'Shiel Moderator: James Snyder</li> </ul>
11:30- 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expression as Phenomenological Method</b> Neal DeRoo (Kings) Commentator: Hamza Karam Ally Moderator: Bryan Smyth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack, Escape and Hypervirtuality: On the Existential and Phenomenological Conditions for Addiction</b> Daniel O'Shiel (Universidad Diego Portales) Commentator: Zahra Donyai Moderator: Grant Yocom</li> </ul>
LUNCH	Executive Committee Meeting	
2:00- 3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joint Panel: On the Advantages and Disadvantages of Posthumanist Methods for Life (with the Posthumanism Research Network)</b></li> <li>• <b>Introduction: Whither posthuman(ist) methods?</b> Christine Daigle (Brock)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Primacy of Love or Culture: A Treatment of (De)coloniality in Levinasian and Merleau-Pontian Ethics</b> Annalee Ring (Oregon) Commentator: Audrey Yap Moderator: Stephen Burgess</li> </ul>
3:15- 4:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Anthropessimism and Human(ist) Remains</b> Anthony Gavin (Victoria)</li> <li>• <b>AnthropoThing: Moving Beyond the Human Gaze</b> Chelsea Heikes (European Graduate School)</li> <li>• <b>Reversal, Time and Horror in Haraway and Land</b> Emile Fromet de Rosnay (Victoria)</li> <li style="text-align: center;"><b>Break (3:30-3:45)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Embodied Repair</b> Audrey Yap (Victoria) Commentator: Annalee Ring Moderator: Stephen Burgess</li> </ul>
4:30 - 5:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governing cerebral crystallizations: Posthuman methods for the edges of life</b> Petra Mikulan (UBC)</li> <li>• <b>Plasticity and Contagion: Educational Methods for Another Life</b> P. Taylor Webb (UBC)</li> <li>• <b>Conclusion: Withering Posthumanist Methods?"</b> Mickey Vallee (Athabasca)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Technophobic Impediments to the <i>Phronesis</i> Revival</b> Ken Archer (Independent Scholar) Commentator: Steven Burgess Moderator: Grant Yocom</li> </ul>

**EPTC 2019 Schedule (Draft)**

June 5	Allard 112	Allard 115
9:00 - 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Here We Live</b> Grant Yocom (Brock) Commentator: Angela Joosse Moderator: Neal DeRoo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Who's Thinking Right Now?</b> Chris Drohan (Oklahoma State) Commentator: Emile Fromet de Rosnay Moderator: Renxiang Liu</li> </ul>
10:15-11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Place of Finite Thinking</b> Marie-Eve Morin (Alberta) Commentator: Ian Angus Moderator: Neal DeRoo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heidegger and the Question of Eternity</b> James Snyder (Mercyhurst) Commentator: Renxiang Liu Moderator: Chris Drohan</li> </ul>
11:30-12:30	<i>Annual General Meeting</i>	
LUNCH		
2:00-3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Force of Metaphor</b> Nina Belmonte (Victoria) Commentator: David Collins Moderator: Anthony Gavin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Tacit Environmental Norms of Ethical Agency</b> Don Beith (Maine) Commentator: Kathryn Lawson Moderator: Ian Angus</li> </ul>
3:15-4:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plastikos: The Formation of Aging</b> Al Whitney (Western) Commentator: Anthony Gavin Moderator: Nina Belmonte</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Simone Weil's Environmental Philosophy</b> Kathryn Lawson (Queens) Commentator: Don Beith Moderator: Ian Angus</li> </ul>

## Abstracts

### **Johannes Abel, "Camus' Kierkegaardian Conception of a Good Life"**

The aim of this paper is to show, against contemporary comparative research, that Albert Camus' position in *The Myth of Sisyphus* corresponds neither to the 'aesthetic stage' nor to 'demonic despair' in the works of Søren Kierkegaard, but is in turn structurally very close to Kierkegaard's own conception of a good life – in terms of methodology, relating to metaphysical truth via negation, the role of death, and the necessity of translation. In Camus, we see what a Kierkegaardian conception of a good life turns into when its foundational religious layer breaks away.

### **Ken Archer, "The Technophobic Impediments to the *Phronesis* Revival"**

This paper argues that the revival of *phronesis* in contemporary thought has been impeded by a technophobia that has its roots in Heidegger's destruction of Western philosophy and in particular his interpretation of a hard distinction between *techne* and *phronesis* in Aristotle. The effect of this hard distinction has been to narrow the grounds for a revival of *phronesis* to vague opportunities for dialogue and action and to cede a determinism to technology. I provide an interpretation of Aristotle that uncovers a much closer structural relation between *techne* and *phronesis*, one with striking parallels to that found in *Being and Time*. Rather than interpreting *phronesis* as threatened by *techne* (Heidegger's Aristotle) or as governing *techne* from the outside (conventional Aristotelianism), Aristotle and the Heidegger of *Being and Time* interpret *phronesis* as a constant possibility from within *techne*. The paper closes with a phenomenology of *techne* that develops this account, based on phenomenological work by Jonas, Schon and Feenberg.

### **Nina Belmonte, "The Force of Metaphor and the Logic of Discovery"**

*Logos* comes to self-awareness in contradistinction-from *muthos*. This is not just any difference; it is the founding difference. The problem, of course, is the creative nature of language itself, its power to transform itself to express or engender discovery. A good philosopher is always also a "maker". Using the work of Paul Ricoeur, this paper explores the source and operation of the force of metaphor as a critical philosophical concern, and then examines the way in which a particular metaphor might be seen to command and organize central themes and values throughout a philosophical text, or an entire corpus – even when the work is deliberately metaphorical, for which I take Nietzsche as prime example. Finally, I suggest that philosophy's discomfort with the productive force of its own metaphors is indicative of its discomfort with the heuristic, poetic nature of language, and what might be the fundamentally metaphorical, creative (rather than logical) nature of thinking.

### **David Collins and Tiger Zheng, "Ambiguity, Freedom, and Virtue: Simone de Beauvoir and Virtue Ethics"**

Existentialist thought is seldom, if ever, brought into contact with contemporary analytic moral philosophy. This is likely because, as Christine Daigle notes, existentialist thinkers "strive to offer an alternative to the overtly rational and [supposedly] 'inhuman' philosophical approach" of much modern philosophy." However, we contend that this divide is not as intractable as it might appear, and that there are commonalities worth exploring between Simone de Beauvoir's ethics and the neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics that has gained prominence in recent decades. Daigle's own work on Beauvoir's ethics characterizes her position in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1948), as "a kind of virtue ethics concerned with the flourishing of the individual." However, Daigle notes that the kind of virtue ethics she has in mind is not Aristotle's but that found in the work of Christine McKinnon. While not part of Daigle's project, we find in her work, and in that of Kristana Arp, common ground between Beauvoir's ethics and neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. In our talk we outline several points of compatibility between the two approaches, address an objection about their potential incompatibility on the issue of human nature, and say why we think attending to these theories' compatibilities could be fruitful.

### **Stuart Dalton, "Three Systems in Kierkegaard's Philosophy"**

I argue that while Kierkegaard criticizes the very idea of a system of existence, he is not opposed to systems or systematic thinking in general, and that he deploys several systems of his own in his criticism of existential systems. I focus in particular on three of Kierkegaard's systems: (1) his systematic style of criticism; (2) his systematic theory of education; (3) his systematic theory of indirect communication. These systems are generally overlooked because readers of Kierkegaard become allergic to all systematic thinking. I outline these three systems in Kierkegaard's philosophy and argue that understanding them as systems is essential for understanding Kierkegaard's authorship as a whole.

**Neal DeRoo, "Expression and Phenomenology: The Question of Method"**

This paper makes a *methodological* case for the centrality of expression to phenomenology. It does this by explaining the (apparent) tension that is present within the phenomenological method between 'the world' and the subject/consciousness as the legitimating 'sources' of phenomena. After (briefly) explaining expression as it functions in phenomenology, the paper then demonstrates how the reduction opens our conscious reflection to an (expressive) distinction implicit within our experience, such that the (experienced) *unity* brought about by expression enables us to solve the 'tension' inherent in the phenomenological method. As such, phenomenology assumes something like expression in its methodological basis.

**Zahra Donyai, "Husserl's Late Phenomenology: The World Strikes Back"**

This paper aims how in Husserl's late phenomenology, the notion of transcendence of the world differentiates itself from transcendence of the thing, and how the peculiarity of the world and its peculiar transcendence sets up some revisions in Husserl's late thought. It explains the rejection of the equation of the world and the thing by examining the reconstruction of the annihilation-hypothesis as chaos-hypothesis and by studying Husserl's earlier Cartesian way of reduction. It reveals the unique evidence of the world by presenting two objections raised by Husserl himself as rejection of the annihilation-hypothesis.

**Christopher M. Drohan, "Who is Thinking, Right Now?"**

"Who is thinking, right now?" is a phenomenological exploration of the titular question. In it, the author asks the audience to consider how the structure and expression of the question affects agency, and how both agency and affect shift as the question is pronounced differently. The author then argues that if it is uttered in a particular way, both agency and temporality become uncannily amorphous leading to the possibility of a new semiotic altogether.

**Hamza Karam Ally, "Speaking Nearby: Toward a Phenomenological Language of Alterity"**

This essay considers the possibility of a language of phenomenological insight, one that mediates between the experience of alterity and its distillation in speech. I draw the connection between experience and expression through Trinh T. Minh-ha's observations about "speaking nearby" rather than "about" (i.e. the other), thereby eschewing direct description or signification. I cite Virginia Woolf's frustrations with the artifices of language against the ephemerality of lived experience and Emmanuel Levinas' chaotic, wordless *il y a*. Finally, I invoke Maurice Blanchot's "essential" language of literature to raise the possibility of a spontaneous and self-reflexive discourse in proximity to phenomenological revelation.



### **Griffin Klemick, "Hannah Arendt, Human Rights, and the Priority of Community"**

Hannah Arendt offers a critique of the normative framework of human rights that is evocative, yet unclear: it is unclear that the critique applies to the framework in principle, rather than simply as historically conceived; as well as how, without appealing to universal human rights, Arendt can justify her (clearly correct) position that the Holocaust constitutes a wrong to its Jewish victims. I interpret Arendt as objecting, at bottom, to the metaphysical and axiological priority the framework ascribes to human rights-bearing as against human participation in community. A revised framework of human rights can avoid this objection without rejecting universal human rights. But the problem of leveraging this point into an adequate explanation of how the Holocaust constitutes a wrong to its Jewish victims is deepened by aspects of Arendt's philosophical psychology of life under totalitarianism.

### **Kathryn Lawson, "Simone Weil's Environmental Philosophy: The Absence of Nature and God"**

This paper will draw predominately on Weil's collections *Gravity and Grace* and *Love in the Void* in order to argue that nature, human, and God are simultaneously intertwined modes of connected recognition and separated stark modes of alienation. Using Weil's emphasis on in-worlded ethical philosophical practice, I argue that her environmental ethics is grounded in a negative theological movement that allows the reader of her work to recognize the alienation and loss of environmental degradation while leaving space for ultimate beauty and meaning in nature. Most importantly, I posit that Weil's environmental ethics, like her social political philosophy, demands that the reader act upon environmental injustices.

### **Renxiang Liu, "The Transformational Model of Authenticity: On Authenticity and Inauthenticity in *Being and Time*"**

In this paper, I start from an ambiguity in Heidegger's *Being and Time* about the order of primacy between authenticity and inauthenticity. I argue that the solutions commentators give (notably Dreyfus' and Zimmerman's attempts to distinguish between an inauthentic and an "undifferentiated" mode of existence) are unsatisfactory. Then, with a distinction between the existential and the existentiell levels of discourse, I propose a transformational model of authenticity, in which 1) a transformation of Dasein at the existentiell level and 2) an authentic understanding of Dasein's existential constitutions facilitate each other, thus forming the grand hermeneutic circle in *Being and Time*.

### **Marie-Eve Morin, "The Possibility of Philosophy and the Place of Finite Thinking"**

In this presentation I challenge the Husserlian understanding of the aspiration of European philosophy found in the *Vienna Lecture* with the help of Nancy's idea of finite thinking. While in much of Continental philosophy the idea of the conditionality and contingency of finite thinking is put into play on a temporal register, that is, as indebtedness to a tradition, it is less often thought spatially, that is, as a thinking that is indebted to a place that not only makes it possible but marks its actuality. In developing the idea of a finite thinking in a specifically spatial register, I ask: What does it mean for me to think not merely *about* the place where I live and think, but *from* and *toward* it?

### **Daniel O'Shiel, "Lack, Escape and Hypervirtuality: On the Existential and Phenomenological Conditions for Addiction"**

This paper provides the existential and phenomenological conditions for addiction. There are four sections. The first discusses the main characteristics of addiction, as well as introduces a definition of wants felt as (damaging) needs. The second provides the existential (Sartre and Levinas) conditions required, not least the ideas of transcendence, desire, lack and escape. The third fills this idea out further with a key phenomenological notion of hypervirtuality, inspired by Husserl. This latter finally leads to some very brief comments on new technologies and how they are providing new opportunities for addictive behaviour.

### **Nuno Miguel Proença, "On the Meaning of Suffering in Paul Ricœur and Michel Henry"**

By suspending temporality and representations, suffering seems to deprive us of symbolic mediation and to reduce us to what is *immediate* in self-affection, impacting intentionality and diminishing our openness to something other than ourselves, which results in a progressive erasure of the world as a horizon. Yet, when we suffer, are the world and its temporality lost, according to Ricœur, or is it a self-affecting life that manifests itself as capable of world making? Adopting Henry's material phenomenology, we can answer this question by recalling the two modalities through which things reveal themselves and manifest themselves to us: the world and life.

### **Annalee Ring, "The Primacy of Love or Culture: A Treatment of (De)coloniality in Levinasian and Merleau-Pontian Ethics"**

This paper considers the danger of ethics prior to culture, exemplified in Levinas, and argues that Merleau-Ponty's work allows for situated ethics which includes cultural sedimentations, such as habituated traditions of perceptions. Merleau-Ponty's work can consider the other given the historical/cultural situations and cultural sedimentations. This paper (1) considers Levinas' critique of phenomenology and his ethics, (2) demonstrates the contrast in Levinas' and Merleau-Ponty's understandings of self and other, (3) expresses places in Merleau-Ponty's work that serves as a foundation for situated ethics, and (4) shows how Linda Martín Alcoff and Alia Al-Saji use Merleau-Ponty in their critical phenomenology.

### **James Snyder, "Heidegger and the Question of Eternity"**

This paper grapples with the question of eternity (*Ewigkeit*) in Heidegger's work, arguing that it is the highpoint and endpoint of Heidegger's thinking, the ultimate thicket (*Holzweg*) and clearing (*Lichtung*) of his philosophy. Certainly, if eternity is to have any positive meaning, then it must make sense in terms of Dasein's authentic temporality, which emphasizes existential anxiety (*Angst*). Yet, in *As When on a Holiday*, Heidegger speaks of time not in terms of anxiety, which is always temporally oriented, but in terms of eternity and serenity (*Heiterkeit*), saying that "nothing more primordial can be thought" than "the eternity of the eternal." What is the significance of this?

### **Al Whitney, "Plastikos: the Formation of Aging"**

Highlighting Malabou's reading of Hegelian conceptions of subjectivity, temporality, and *le voir venir*, I posit the idea of a *plasticity of aging* as a mechanism to both express and disrupt how we *think* about aging, and how we *experience* aging. We can anticipate the coming of our future aging selves, but we cannot *know* what will come or what we will *become*, nor can we know if we will remember who or what we once were. The future is waiting for us as we await the future; we are passively formed as much as we actively form.

### **Audrey Yap, "Embodied Repair"**

Hilde Lindemann's account of personal identity takes it to be a matter of narrative construction, in which many different stories interact - both those we tell about ourselves and the ones others tell about us. This paper will extend Lindemann's narrative account to consider those that are not written linguistically but expressed in our embodied life. This has implications for identities that are damaged through oppression and trauma. I argue that Lindemann's account of narrative repair can be given an embodied interpretation that can have implications for how we might remake ourselves in the face of trauma.

### **Grant Yocom, "Here We Live, Here We Shall Live: Nietzsche, Projective History and Activist Practice in Detroit"**

Jerry Herron argues, in his "I remember Detroit," that the city of Detroit culturally represents a humiliation of history; one stemming from the statement made by Henry Ford: "History is more or less the bunk." Substantive history, Herron argues, adds up to something that transcends the individual and offers a sense of belonging within a cultural context, while humiliated history produces a forgetting, is nostalgic, and individuating. John P. Beck, in *Detroit Resurgent*, articulates an activist form of history that relies upon a notion of posterity that aims at "...leaving Detroit better off..." This paper will use the treatment of history offered by Nietzsche to explore this activist history that yields a third and projective alternative to the opposition posed by Herron.

## **Joint panel of the Posthumanism Research Network and EPTC**

Organizers: Christine Daigle (Brock),  
Ada Jaarsma (Mount Royal), and Mickey Vallee (Athabasca)

### **On the Advantages and Disadvantages of Posthumanist Methods for Life**

In the midst of environmental and political uncertainties, we find ourselves in need of renewed social and historical critique, and perhaps also in need of post-critical methods that foreground experimentation and resistance. We propose that the interdisciplinary field of posthumanism has emerged as a radical means of laying the infrastructure for such critical and post-critical projects. Posthumanism displaces the human from its privileged (and, by consequence, we argue, pernicious) position—and it opens up space for developing new methods, protocols and forms for thought.

Enter the posthuman!

And so, we want to ask: what comes after, beyond, underneath, above and alongside, humanism? Re-appropriating Nietzsche's phrase about history and putting analysis to work on posthumanism as a methodology for life systems, this panel explores posthumanism less as a survey or a list of canonized theories and more as an array of methods for approaching problems and issues that seem irresolvable by humanist or human-centric thinking. We explore questions like: what is the potency of posthumanist methods, and what are their potential shortcomings? What problems become more open and available to us when human exceptionalism is no longer a guiding norm? How do posthumanist methods help us to grapple with materiality, animacy, elemental media, mediation and interconnectivity? Are posthumanist conversations conducive to breaking with disciplinarity and work across and between disciplines, studies, and modes of reflections and inquiries? How do methods become recognizable *as* posthumanist? Is there a form to posthumanism?