

About the things themselves

Newsletter of the Society of

Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture

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About the things themselves

Chief Editor:

Gregory Cameron, grcameron@wlu.ca

French Language Editor:

Frédéric Bruneault, fredbruneault@hotmail.com

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1. Editor's Comments

Gregory Cameron

Hi Folks,

I hope the term is winding down nicely for all, not too much grading distracting you from writing papers for EPTC/TCEP's meeting in Ottawa. Yes, folks, it is that time of year again. The time for reminders – the purpose of this newsletter. As you will see from scrolling through the various calls for papers many of the deadlines for submission are in just over a month. Check the calls carefully as many of the panel deadlines are earlier than that of the general call for papers. You will also see that this year there are more panel sessions than in the past. It is worth pointing out that sometimes panels for one reason or another have to be cancelled. If this does happen your paper will be automatically submitted to the general call for papers.

As most of you know, the annual EPTC/TCEP meeting is somewhat unique in that each presenter is given a full hour to present his or her paper. Papers, in other words, can be up to thirty minutes in length, about 3500-4000 words. After presentation, each paper receives a response from another EPTC/TCEP member, lasting about 10 minutes, and this is followed by about twenty minutes of general discussion. This means that each presentation receives substantially more attention than is usual at such large meetings. It also means that papers have to be submitted in full prior to decision about acceptance. Once your paper has been accepted, you will however have a few weeks to revise it if you so wish or if it is suggested that you do so by the panel organizer. It should also be pointed out that papers for the general call and for many of the panels can be submitted in either English or French. Check with the panel organizer if you are unsure about this.

This year's meeting in Ottawa is important beyond the fact of our presenting papers: we will also be choosing a new president. If you know someone you think would be right for the job or if you yourself feel you would be right for the job you should think about nominations as soon as possible. Contact information is provided in the second entry below.

Besides informing EPTC/TCEP members about our yearly meeting, the newsletter also attempts to keep people informed about upcoming events in phenomenology and existentialism. Reviews of new books, promotions, conference announcements, calls for papers, info or news that would be of interest for EPTC/TCEP members, are all welcome and called for. Unfortunately, since the newsletter only appears three times a year, it is not always possible to get a call out before its deadline, but we do try our best...

Back to grading and writing. I look forward to hearing about your papers and seeing how the meeting shapes up, and I look forward to seeing you all in Ottawa.

Gregory Cameron: Chief Editor
grcameron@wlu.ca

2. New EPTC/TCEP President Search.

During the AGM at EPTC/TCEP 2009 (to be held at Carleton University in Ottawa in May 2009) EPTC/TCEP will be electing a President. Currently, the society is receiving names of persons who are interested in possibly being nominated for the position. Please contact outgoing President John Duncan <jduncan@trinity.utoronto.ca> for more information as soon as possible.

3. General Call for Papers: EPTC/TCEP Ottawa 2009.

The society for the study of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture (EPTC) invites papers discussing any aspects of existential or phenomenological theory or culture. For example, papers or panel proposals dealing with theoretical or cultural issues in relation to authors such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Beckett, Husserl, Heidegger, Jaspers, Levinas, Malraux, Marcel, Buber, Frankl, Sartre, Camus, Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir, Irigaray, or Laing are all welcome. Submissions from all disciplines are welcome. EPTC will meet at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, from May 26 to May 29, 2009, in conjunction with the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities of Canada. The Congress will bring together some 100 learned associations and more than 9000 scholars from Canada and the international community for approximately 10 days of interdisciplinary symposia, cultural events, and public discussions. (For more information on Congress, see: <http://www.fedcan.ca/>.)

I. Interested authors should submit the following electronically in Rich Text Format: 1. A copy of your paper, not more than 4500 words, and prepared for anonymous review (identifiable by paper title only). 2. A separate abstract, not more than 100 words, also listing the paper's title, author's name, complete mailing address, institutional affiliation, and e-mail address.

II. If you are interested in either presenting a commentary (of not more than 1000 words) on a paper, or chairing a session, please submit a brief e-mail note indicating as much, including your name, complete mailing address, institutional affiliation, e-mail address, and relevant areas of interest.

EPTC is able to waive Congress fees for a few delegates each year. Such awards will be made according to criteria of financial need and quality of paper at the discretion of the conference program coordinator. Non-tenure-stream delegates interested in this award should append a note indicating as much to their submission materials.

The submission deadline for the above materials is Monday, February 2, 2009.

Submissions should be sent to: eptc2009@gmail.com.

4. Panel Calls for Papers: EPTC/TCEP - Ottawa, 2009.

A) Foucault and the Sciences of the Soul

Organizers: Bettina Bergo (Université de Montréal) and Chloë Taylor (University of North Florida)

The massive contribution of Michel Foucault to the history of madness as structural mutations in the cultural and political approaches to a diverse group of 'others' can be neither ignored today nor even outstripped as the revolution in the epistemology of the normal and the pathological. Indeed, when read with his recently-published 1973-1974 Collège de France lectures *Le pouvoir psychiatrique*, we gain a richer vision of Foucault's inquiry into the "microphysics of power." Nevertheless, the Foucaultian revolution is enriched by the addition of a critical moment: the internal evolution of psychiatry, its intra-professional polemics and its struggle to come to terms with an object whose character was changing along with the therapeutic methods.

We invite papers which consider the history of madness and its political formations, as well as the psychiatric narrative of the normal and the pathological as unfolded by Foucault and by his contemporaries in the fields of philosophy, psychiatry, and existentialist psychology. We welcome papers which consider Foucault's works on psychiatry and psychology in conjunction with the works of thinkers such as Marcel Gauchet, Gladys Swain, Georges Canguilhem, Ludwig Binswanger, Ronald David Laing and David Cooper, among others.

The panel will be part of the annual meeting for the Society for Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture (EPTC) in Ottawa, Canada, from May 26-29, 2009. Interested authors should submit the following in electronic format: 1. A copy of your paper, not more than 4,500 words, and prepared for anonymous review (identifiable by paper title only). 2. A separate abstract, not more than 100 words, also listing the paper's title, author's name, complete mailing address, institutional affiliation, and e-mail address.

Please send submissions by Monday, February 2, 2009 to both:

bettina.bergo@umontreal.ca
chloe.taylor@unf.edu

B) Phenomenology of Disorientation

Organizer: Ami Harbin

Descriptions of disorientation frequently ground phenomenological accounts of physiological, psychological, sexual, social, ethical, and political transformation. This panel will explore disorientation from various phenomenological stances, focusing on such questions as: What disorients? Who can be disoriented? Why is disorientation fruitful/harmful? How might disorientation be necessary for group/individual transformation and change? When, where, how, and to what ends do experiences of disorientation take place? How can focusing on themes of disorientation in the work of specific philosophers help us better interpret, find overlaps between, and make use of their analyses?

This panel aims to highlight the position of disorientation(s) in a wide range of philosophical accounts, in part in order to support or challenge the claim that persons, groups, spaces, theories, outlooks, projects, technologies, histories, politics, and movements need to be disoriented before they can be reoriented, reinterpreted, or resisted.

Full papers should be sent to Ami Harbin at amiharbin@dal.ca by Word or RTF email attachment by January 5, 2009. Papers should take no longer than 30 minutes to read (generally less than 4000 words), and should be prepared for anonymous review (identifiable by paper title only). Please include a separate attachment listing the paper title, the author's name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and email address, and including a short abstract (not exceeding 100 words).

C) Doing Phenomenology: Back to the Things Themselves! "Methodologies and Practices"

This panel of collaborative phenomenological description will take place as a workshop during the Society for the study of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture's (EPTC) annual meeting at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Ottawa, Ontario, May 26-29, 2009. For more information, see the EPTC website.

Back to the Things Themselves! is an attempt to temporarily liberate ourselves from textual exegesis, and return to the lived world to divine the essential structures of experience through rigorous phenomenological description. Husserl's call to return zu der Sachen selbst has only been intermittently heeded by subsequent generations of phenomenologists, the majority of which have generally focused on contributing to and elaborating on the enormous critical apparatus issuing from the founding texts of the movement. Back to the Things Themselves! proposes to build on the important contributions of such scholarship by using them to guide our reflections on phenomena in the lifeworld.

The Theme: "Methodologies and Practices"

For next year Back to the Things Themselves! invites submissions that offer an original and

rigorous description of a phenomenon of the author's choice, but which also explicitly addresses issues related to the methodology or practices used to reveal the meaning of the phenomenon under analysis.

Important Submission Guidelines for "Methodologies and Practices"

As always, Back to the Things Themselves! is explicitly interested in the application of phenomenology's insights and the generation of detailed, rigorous, extended descriptions of the lived world, which can be expressed in terms of essences or manifold matrices of meaning. As always, we are interested in textual exegesis only to the extent that it complements a given description. As always, our aim is to stay close to the phenomenon itself in order to be faithful to it and describe it vividly to others. Descriptions may arise from phenomenological reflection broadly construed, so long as the phenomenon remains the chief focus of the paper.

Papers for the 2009 panel on "Methodologies and Practices" should therefore bear these general commitments in mind, but also, given the announced theme of the panel, call attention to the phenomenological method the author has employed in generating his or her description. This might be done in a variety of ways, but the goal should be to show the audience how a description was generated. Explications of method should be stated in broad terms, and overly-detailed textual exegesis should be avoided in order to preserve the "flow" of a description. We are not interested in extended retellings of how the major figures of the phenomenological canon have explained their "method," but rather in how authors have learned from, applied, adjusted, merged, questioned, subverted or otherwise deployed these methods in the development of their own phenomenological practice. Our intention is for these methodological reflections to contribute directly to our half-day workshop, in which we will focus explicitly on participants' divergent experiences of "doing phenomenology."

In sum, papers submitted to this panel must contain both:

1. A detailed, rigorous, extended and original description of a phenomenon in the lived world.
2. An explication of the method used to generate this description.

In the spirit of collaborative phenomenology, paper commentators for Back to the Things Themselves! 2009 will view these descriptions in light of their rigor, originality, and the application of method. In other words, commentators in this panel will act less as critics of scholarly exegesis and more as collaborators helping to extend, refine and deepen a paper's description. Criticisms of textual interpretation are welcome so long as they further the aim of collaborative inquiry into phenomenological method.

Papers should be submitted to David Koukal by RTF or Word email attachment at koukaldr@udmercy.edu by January 5, 2009. Papers should take no longer than 30 minutes to read (generally less than 4000 words), should be prepared for anonymous review (identifiable by paper title only), and include a separate abstract not exceeding 100 words. The cover sheet should also list the paper's title, the author's name, institutional affiliation, and e-mail address. Please note that papers will be initially reviewed by the panel organizers, and suitable papers will be forwarded to EPTC for anonymous review.

Workshop: Intertwining Flesh and Space

The four-paper panel will be followed by a three hour moderated workshop and discussion of phenomenological method and practice. The work of the panel will culminate in this workshop, which will take place at the end of the meeting. As always, the workshop will be open to all participants in the EPTC 2009 meeting, and will provide a unique opportunity to dialogue and exchange ideas with colleagues from various disciplines and with various levels of experience. Our workshop facilitator will be Dr. Rachel McCann of Mississippi State University. McCann obtained her Ph.D. in Histories and Theories of Architecture at the Architectural Association (London), and she teaches architectural history, theory, and design. Her research, inspired by French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, investigates the full-body engagement of architecture.

Please address any questions concerning the panel or workshop to:
Astrida Neimanis (astrida@sympatico.ca) and/or David Koukal (koukaldr@udmercy.edu)

D) Phenomenology and Totalitarianism

Since its inception, phenomenology has maintained a tense relation with totalitarianism. On the one hand, there have been those phenomenologically inspired thinkers who have for one reason or another committed themselves to either fascism or communism; on the other hand, have been those who devote their intellectual lives to the analysis of the nature of totalitarianism and the articulation of its causes and modes of prevention. The classic distinction would be between Heidegger and Arendt or between Sartre and Lefort. The distinction, if it can be stated in such a simple form, perhaps indicates a fundamental political ambivalence at the heart of the phenomenological enterprise. This ambivalence it should be stressed is not necessarily absent from Husserl's famous crisis thesis. The very distinction between the phenomenological and the natural attitude or the later distinction between phenomenology and ontology already, perhaps, indicate the space of a politics that points from the 1930s back to the erasure of politics in Plato's Republic and forward to the world condition of today. Arendt and Heidegger chart this trajectory to very different conclusions.

Today, however, the concept of totalitarianism appears to have more or less vanished from political discourse. Totalitarianism is the domain of the historian, not the political philosopher. With the striking exception of Claude Lefort's recent claims to the contrary, the challenge of totalitarianism seems to have given way to other distinctions and other challenges. The warnings of Jaspers, Arendt, Aron, even perhaps Lefort have come, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, to have something of an anachronistic ring. Today, it is something other than totalitarianism, though perhaps not the other of totalitarianism, that motivates the thoughts of phenomenologically inspired political thinkers. The goal of this panel is to re-awaken the question of totalitarianism from its too neatly positivistic slip into the merely historical. As such the panel seeks to explore both the general question of the relation between phenomenology and totalitarianism and the more specific question of what if anything the experience and theorization of totalitarianism means today. Can phenomenology simply shed its relation to totalitarianism, to the experience of the twentieth century out of which it was born? Can those phenomenologically inspired political thinkers who struggled with totalitarianism continue to inform our experience of politics and the world condition? And what, if anything, can we say today from a phenomenological perspective of the other of totalitarianism? The goal of the panel is not merely to raise again the troubled question of phenomenology's relation to the various totalitarianisms, but to ask what remains to be thought in and through this relation and to ask whether this major focus of phenomenology continues to resonate with us under conditions described in very different terms.

Papers which deal with the question of the relation between phenomenology and totalitarianism in a manner that takes into account the problem of totalitarianism today will be considered for presentation. Please submit papers no longer than 4000 words, in Word or RTF, to Gregory Cameron at grcameron@wlu.ca. Papers should be prepared for blind review, with a cover sheet indicating paper's title, author's name and contact information by 5 January 2009.

E) Rethinking 1968 – Part II

As part of this year's EPTC conference, we are again looking for papers that discuss the relevance of the events of 1968 for today's world. A selection of these papers will be published in the EPTC's journal PhaenEx in Fall 2009.

We want to ask if the philosophical underpinnings of these revolutionary acts have continued relevance today. In France, the French phenomenologist and existentialist, turned Marxist, Jean-Paul Sartre was held up as one of the intellectuals who could provide an intellectual basis for the revolution. Alongside structuralists like Althusser, Sartre was viewed as an

intellectual god-father of the movement, not only because of his writings critical of capitalism and the bourgeois system, be they his early writings on existentialism, or his later reformulation of Marxism in the Critique of Dialectical Reason, nor because he linked left-wing activism in the first world with support for the oppressed elsewhere, but because he was willing to lend his name and support to the Maoists against the Gaullist government.

In Germany, two philosophers, the phenomenologically-inspired and Marxist Herbert Marcuse and the neo-Marxist and member of the Frankfurt School Jürgen Habermas were central figures for the student revolutionaries. As a member of the Frankfurt School's second generation, Habermas was viewed by the students as safely removed from the alleged post-World War II conservatism of Adorno and Horkheimer. For the first several years following its publication, Habermas's habilitation thesis, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, was text central to the student struggle in Germany. Similarly, Marcuse's texts, *Reason and Revolution*, *Eros and Civilization*, and *One-Dimensional Man*, as well as his occasional writings, were used as rallying cries by the left both in Europe and in the United States.

The question we propose for this panel is, what relevance do these philosophers's works have today, in light of the continued stability and even expansion of the capitalist system, and the fact that student leaders like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Bernard Kouchner, and Joschka Fischer have renounced extra-political activities and joined the political mainstream. We are interested in papers that explore the relevance of the philosophical critiques that inspired the movements of 1968 for present day radical politics, including papers that use the philosophical inspirations behind 1968:

- (1) To critique global capitalism while providing a positive way forward,
- (2) To examine American hegemony,
- (3) To examine possibilities for overturning existing political structures in either the developed or developing world,
- (4) To examine issues surrounding the environment or environmental justice,
- (5) Or any other topic, provided that the paper deals extensively with the philosophical ideas of 1968 and their relevance for today's changed political landscape.

Interested authors should submit the following electronically in RTF or WORD formats:

1. A copy of your paper, not more than about 3,500 words, and prepared for anonymous review (identifiable by paper title only).

2. A separate abstract, not more than 100 words, also listing the paper's title, author's name, complete mailing address, institutional affiliation, and e-mail address.

If you are interested in presenting a commentary (of not more than 1,000 words) on a paper, please submit a brief email note of interest, including your name, complete mailing address, institutional affiliation, e-mail address, and relevant areas of interest. Submissions and queries should be sent to: Kevin W. Gray at kevin-william.gray.1@ulaval.ca. The submission deadline is January 1, 2009.

The panel will be part of the annual meeting for the Society for Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture (EPTC/TCEP) — www.eptc-tcep.net — at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, May 26-29, 2009, held in conjunction with the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities of Canada. Every year the Congress brings together some 100 learned associations and more than 5,000 scholars from Canada and the international community for approximately 10 days of interdisciplinary symposia, cultural events, and public discussions. For more information see: <http://www.fedcan.ca/>.

Papers from this session will be considered for possible publication in a special volume of the journal *PhaenEx*, to be published the end of 2009.

F) Special Panel on Shame

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre begins his account of intersubjective life with a phenomenology of shame. Peering through a keyhole, hidden safely out of view, I suddenly

hear footsteps behind me. The dynamics of the situation are immediately altered: I feel exposed, thrown off balance, no longer at the center of my own world. I realize I have an outside, a skin more visible to others than to myself. The feeling of shame makes me want to escape or disappear; and yet I find myself pinned in place, with nowhere to hide. For Sartre, this feeling initiates an endless cycle of masochism and sadism, of decentering and recentering, which characterizes intersubjective life.

This panel invites speakers to discuss, elaborate, and challenge Sartre's phenomenology of shame. Papers approaching shame in terms of other discourses (such as psychoanalysis, feminism, queer theory...), other disciplines (film, literature, sociology, anthropology...), and other theorists (Levinas, Agamben, Nussbaum...) are also encouraged. Panelists may wish to consider some of the following questions: Is the experience of shame crucial to subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and/or ethical life? How is shame felt in the body? Is it experienced differently in different cultures, genders, races and so forth? What is the relation between shame and pride? To what extent can shame motivate political change or resistance, and to what extent can it entrench conservative reactions (such as denial, resentment and a desire to escape judgment)? What is the social function of shaming: to normalize "deviant" individuals, or to encourage collective responsibility among the privileged, or both?

The panel will be part of the annual meeting for the Society for Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture (EPTC) in Ottawa, Canada, from May 26-29, 2009. Interested authors should submit the following in both electronic and paper formats: 1. A copy of your paper, not more than 4,500 words, and prepared for anonymous review (identifiable by paper title only). 2. A separate abstract, not more than 100 words, also listing the paper's title, author's name, complete mailing address, institutional affiliation, and e-mail address.

Please send submissions by Monday, February 2, 2009 to:

Dr. Lisa Guenther
McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women
3487 Peel St., 2nd Floor
Montreal, QC H3W 1W7

lisa.guenther@vanderbilt.edu or lisa.n.guenther@gmail.com.

5. Journal Announcement: PhaenEx 3.2.

Coming in December! PhaenEx vol. 3 no. 2. "Doing Phenomenology: Edges and the In-Between."

This Special Topics edition of PhaenEx is the product of two "Back to the Things Themselves!" events at EPTC/TCEP's annual meetings in 2007 and 2008, which featured a cumulative total of thirteen papers and two workshops that showcased various phenomenological approaches to diverse manifestations of edges and the in-between.

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6. Call for Papers: PhaenEx 4.2.

PhaenEx vol. 4, no. 2 (fall/winter 2009): Special Topics Issue: Rethinking 1968.
Lead Editor: Kevin W. Gray (kevin-william.gray.1@ulaval.ca): Due Date: July 1, 2009.

We are interested in papers that explore the relevance of the philosophical critiques that inspired the movements of 1968 for present day radical politics, including papers that use the philosophical inspirations behind 1968:

1. To critique global capitalism while providing a positive way forward,
 2. To examine American hegemony,
 3. To examine possibilities for overturning existing political structures in either the developed or developing world,
 4. To examine issues surrounding the environment or environmental justice,
- Or any other topic, provided that the paper deals extensively with the philosophical ideas of 1968 and their relevance for today's changed political landscape.

7. Book Announcement:

Dominic Desroches: Expressions éthiques de l'intériorité

The book *Expressions éthiques de l'intériorité. Éthique et distance dans la pensée de Kierkegaard*, by Dominic Desroches, was recently published by the Presses de l'Université Laval. Since it is dealing with the questions surrounding the grounding of an existential ethics, many of you will find it to be very interesting.