

Society for Interdisciplinary Feminist Phenomenology
FEMINIST PHENOMENOLOGY CONFERENCE

Saturday, May 31, 2008
Fir Room, Erb Memorial Union
1222 East 13th Avenue
University of Oregon

Inaugural conference bringing together the following scholars. (Please note slight changes from the poster!)

Schedule of Events

9:30 am Introduction to the Conference (Bonnie Mann and Beata Stawarska)

10:00-11:15 “Feminist Phenomenological Voices”
Dr. Linda Fisher, Central European University, Hungary
Comments: Dr. Gail Weiss, George Washington University, USA

Abstract:

The idea of finding a voice has always been a central motif for the feminist imaginary and praxis. Voice, voicing, and vocality thus become powerful metaphors as well as tools for awareness and representation, expression, and inclusion and participation. In my paper I revisit the question of the (inter)relation of phenomenology and feminism, with a view to assessing the nature and task of an integrated feminist phenomenology. In considering the respective voices of phenomenology and feminism within feminist phenomenology, I question whether the feminist voice has been heard sufficiently in this conversation. In examining aspects of a heightened feminist voice within feminist phenomenology, I discuss the association and imagery of the feminine and the voice, while exploring the contours of a feminist phenomenology of voice and vocality.

11:30-12:45 “Personality, Anonymity and Sexual Difference: The Temporal Formation of the Transcendental Ego”

Sara Heinamaa, Helsinki University, Finland
Comments: Helen Fielding, University of Western Ontario, Canada

Abstract:

The main thesis of this chapter is that Husserl defines the transcendental person as a temporal structure and that his genetic concept of personality allows us to develop *a transcendental philosophical account of sexual difference*. Thus understood, sexual identity and difference would not just be a research topic for empirical human sciences

and empirical life sciences, such as anthropology, psychology, biology and physiology. More fundamentally, they would allow and require a phenomenological analysis, and would belong, not to the margins of phenomenology – to phenomenological psychology or eidetic anthropology – but to the very center of this philosophical enterprise, that is, to the transcendental eidetic studies of experience.

12:45-2:15 Lunch

2:15-3:30 “Are Butler’s Theory of Performativity and Merleau-Ponty’s Theory of Expressivity Really Contradictory?”

Silvia Stoller, University of Vienna, Austria

Comments: Eva Simms, Duquesne University, USA

Abstract:

Until now post-structuralism is widely regarded as an opposite to phenomenology. This is also true for the relation of Butler’s post-structuralism and Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology. The aim of this paper is to show how close they are to each other. For this purpose, I will focus on Butler’s poststructuralist theory of performativity to confront it with Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological theory of expression. While Butler accuses theories of expression of being essentialist, I argue that Merleau-Ponty’s theory of experience resists such a criticism. “Expressivity” and “performativity,” and thus phenomenology and post-structuralism, are not opposites but partners in the search for an anti-essentialist concept.

3:45-5:00 “Feminism, Phenomenology and the Problem of Empathic Understanding” Sue Cataldi, Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville, USA

Comments: Mariana Ortega, John Carroll University, USA

Abstract:

This paper brings phenomenology to bear on two problems in contemporary feminist theorizing: the problem of difference in feminist theory and the problem of empathizing across differences. Special attention will be paid to racial differences and to resources that exist in the phenomenological tradition to help feminists think about race, especially race privilege, in ways that advance rather than hinder the cause of a more just and inclusive feminism. Edith Stein’s account of empathy and Merleau-Ponty’s view of perception as essentially two-sided experiences will figure into my exploration of some possibilities and limitations of empathic understanding in feminist contexts.