Editors' Preface

The present volume of essays is generated from part of the papers presented at "Border-Crossing: The 4th International Conference of P.E.A.CE (Phenomenology for East-Asian CirclE)" held in December 2010 at the National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Inaugurated in 2004[1] and continued to be a biannual meeting gathering phenomenological philosophers from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan as well as their counterparts from Australia, Europe, and North America, the P.E.A.CE conference has proved itself to be one of the most important platforms for the promotion of phenomenological research and intercultural philosophical exchange in East Asia. Under the general theme of "Border-Crossing," the 4th P.E.A.CE conference invited reflections on intercultural understanding and interdisciplinary research, as well as on the crossing-over of different experiential genres of humankind from a widely defined phenomenological perspective. This volume, entitled *Phenomenology and Human Experience*, is comprised of essays related to the latter theme.[2]

The eleven essays collected in this volume are sub-divided into two parts. All the five essays in Part I are original phenomenological reflections on different aspects of human experience. In "Ethics and the Commitment to Truth," Jeff Malpas undertakes a close discussion on the relationship between the space of the ethical and the space of truth. Referring to the Heideggerian usage of the term "truth" in the sense of unconcealment, i.e., the opening up of a space that renders possible what is perceptible in speech and in action, Malpas demon-

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[1] The proceedings of the 1st P.E.A.CE conference is published as *Identity and Alterity: Phenomenology and Cultural Traditions*, ed. Kwok-ying Lau, Chan-fai Cheung and Tze-wan Kwan, series "Orbis Phaenomenologicus Perspektiven" (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann, 2010), xii + 379 pp.

[2] A separate volume will be published under the title *Border-Crossing: Phenomenology, Interculturality and Interdisciplinarity*, ed. Kwok-ying Lau and Chung-chi Yu, series "Orbis Phaenomenologicus Perspektiven" (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann, forthcoming, 2012).

strates with force that while the space of the ethical is a common space opened up in the world between self and other, between self and self, as well as between self and world, it grounds itself upon the space of truth. The space of truth is the very space which renders possible the space of speaking, of action and of decision. It is a primordial space to which our speaking refers and constantly returns in so far as such speaking always bears a truth claim while it tries to articulate meaningful speech acts in view of decisions and actions. Understood in this manner, Malpas draws our attention to the intertwinement of the space of the ethical and the space of truth. In contrast to discourses which undermine the importance of truth in the name of promoting dialogue, Malpas argues that "plurality and conversation, far from being opposed to truth, thus already presuppose it, and far from being a source of danger, truth turns out to be that which guards us and protects the possibility of human sociability and collectivity" (*infra*, p. 13). In short, it is within the space of truth that ethical life, namely the interactive and responsive modes of engagement with life proper to human existence, is possible.

Since the later part of the 20th century, the rapid development of biotechnologies has given rise to new ethical issues. In his essay "Crossing the Boundary of Being Human: Enhancement Technology and the Problem of Free Will," Junichi Murata takes issue with the impact of advanced biotechnologies on discourses in bioethics and neuroethics. Envisioning the utopian effect of crossing the natural boundaries of human being brought about by the rapid progress of biotechnologies, some of such discourses hail the future arrival of a "transhuman" or "posthuman" era which is a kind of Brave New World. Yet underlying the optimistic outlook of a Brave New World is a technological determinism which, Murata insists, is neither desirable nor probable. A technologically deterministic Brave New World would be governed by a super-powerful world controller who will extinguish people's desires and wills by all means and leave no room for expression of people's quest for freedom and happiness. The utopist projection of technological determinism is neither probable according to Murata. Based on the critical insights in some recent trends of philosophy of technology which focus on the multidimensional, ambiguous, and contingent characteristics of technological development, Murata concludes that even in a technologically enhanced world "the concept of a free will that can be achieved without any ambiguity and contingency is nothing but a magical and unrealistic concept" (*infra*, p. 28).

The 20th century has also witnessed an immense growth of world population and the rapid extension of urbanization. These phenomena, while constituting a tremendous threat to the conservation of natural environment, have facilitated the

spread of ecological consciousness across geographical and cultural borders. Tetsuya Kono's article "Culture, Wilderness, and Homelessness: Eco-Phenomenology 2" is a courageous attempt to advance deep ecology from a phenomenological perspective. By distinguishing between pastoral nature, which is nature domesticated by human civilization in view of habitation, and nature as wilderness which is a place for passage and nomadic encounter, Kono's consciousness of deep ecology criticizes home-centrism. He calls for the safeguard of nature from human domestication and exploitation by virtue of the intrinsic value of nature as wilderness, which incarnates a form of value independent of any human utility. In opposition to the homogenization of the humanized environment through extension of pastoral nature and urbanization resulting in the loss of wilderness as otherness, Kono strives "to deepen our eco-phenomenology of place in order to celebrate the wilderness of otherness" (*infra*, p. 43).

While deep ecology calls our attention to nature as wilderness, nature can be approached through a more or less aesthetic attitude, namely by viewing it as landscape. In "Toward a Phenomenological Reading of Landscape: Bachelard, Merleau-Ponty, and Zong Bing," Kuan-min Huang embarks on the virgin soil of philosophy of landscape from a phenomenological approach. Extending the usage of the ontological term "flesh" coined by the late Merleau-Ponty, Huang tries to understand landscape as concrete illustration of the flesh of the world. Through preliminary discussions of landscape with respect to Bachelard's poetics of the imaginary and Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh as wild being, Huang arrives at a philosophical determination of landscape as the topos where the perceptual joins the imaginary and the corporeal intertwines with the spiritual. With this in mind, Huang goes on to expound the philosophical significance of traditional Chinese landscape painting. The latter is a creative activity initiated by the experience of landscape as bodily oriented. Joined by imagination which orients the strokes of the painter with a cosmic vision, the act of Chinese landscape painting is the interplay of the kinesthetic and spiritual orders which aims at bodily and spiritual transformation towards fusion with the universe. Traditional Chinese landscape painting is thus a dynamic corporeal and spiritual correspondence with the cosmic order which is never a mere mapping of an ocular vision onto the painting tissue. Viewed under this optic, landscape is neither a mere object of knowledge and design nor a place for construction; "landscape inspires thoughts and living art, it also deploys itself as a way of thinking and living" (*infra*, p. 62).

Human life is punctuated by ups and downs, activity and passivity, actions and reflections. Wisdom is often seen as locating a balance point between the

extremes. In a profession of faith unique in its genre, Lester Embree reviews his long and rich academic career in "Some Phenomenology of *Not* Retiring." Finding himself no longer needed to precipitate the formation of phenomenological organizations as he did in the past, he will continue to do research, especially in interdisciplinary phenomenology. He will foster reflective analyses as a means to train future generations of phenomenologist in the strict sense of the term, and not as mere scholars of phenomenology.

The six essays in Part II are devoted to novel discussions of classical phenomenologists' attempt to confront divergent aspects of human experience. Husserl's reflections on the transcendental meaning of death caught the attention of Xianghong Fang. In his contribution "A Phenomenological Attempt to Cross the Border: On Husserl's Meditation on Death in *Manuscripts C*," Fang scrutinizes the late Husserl's attempt to make sense of death, i.e., to constitute death from the standpoint of transcendental phenomenology. In some manuscripts Husserl considers that the death of the transcendental I, which as a pure monad has no psychosomatic existence, does not mean the material decomposition of the individual subject but the loss of consciousness of the world and the stepping out of the transcendental community of subjects. Thus the process of transition from life to death, considered transcendentally, is analogous to the transformation of consciousness to unconsciousness, from awareness to sleep, from action to pause. However, an unconscious constitutive subject is a contradiction in terms from the perspective of transcendental phenomenology. Husserl himself has admitted in another manuscript that it is unthinkable that the I can "cease" in a transcendental sense. This dilemma has driven Husserl to ask the enigmatic question about the ontological status of a non-functioning constitutive subject: Is there such a being, "a not-functioning and still as something functional, a being in the other sense, that plays its role together as underground, as a condition—as a 'not-being,' which makes Being possible together through this Not-Being?" (*infra*, p. 88) Confronted to the human phenomenon of death, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology can never be as paradoxical as postulating the "existence" of some sort of "not-being" as the condition of the functioning of a transcendental subject.

Understanding is the dimension of human existence which underlies all human activities. It is then not surprising to see that hermeneutics as the art of understanding plays a prominent role in both the Eastern and Western traditions of philosophy. Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is widely accepted as a consequential development of Heidegger's theory of understanding and interpretation presented in *Being and Time*. However, Ka-wing Leung contests this

view in his essay "Heidegger's Concept of Fore-structure and Textual Interpretation." Based on a subtle reading of the differences between Heidegger's own account of Dasein's fore-structure as one of the basic ontological conditions of the activity of understanding and the extrapolation of this conception by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, Leung points out that some well-known elements of Gadamer's hermeneutics are absent or even contrary to Heidegger's conception in *Being and Time*. It is well-known that Gadamer considers prejudice and tradition as conditions of understanding and has presented his famous criticism of "the prejudice against prejudice" ascribed to the Enlightenment by associating two different senses of the German word *Vorurteil*: prejudice as provisional judgment and prejudice as ungrounded judgment. Leung reminds us that while prejudice as provisional judgment can be assimilated to Heidegger's concept of fore-structure, the pejorative sense of prejudice as ungrounded judgment never receives rehabilitation in Heidegger. Leung also points out that to the author of *Being and Time*, tradition in itself not only bears no hermeneutic productivity, it even keeps us from having authentic understanding by blocking our access to the primordial sources of categories and concepts handed down to us through tradition. Thus in contrast to Gadamer who prioritizes tradition as an important form of authority, Heidegger advocates the destruction of tradition in order to release the primordial sources of understanding blocked by it. Leung guards against "those who know Heidegger's concept of fore-structure only through Gadamer's account might misunderstand it, especially in regard to its relation with tradition" (*infra*, p. 93).

Gadamer's hermeneutics is also the focus of Yiu-hong Wong's contribution. In his article "Understanding, Historically Effected Consciousness, and Phenomenology in Gadamer," Wong tries to resituate Gadamer within the phenomenological movement understood in the wide sense. While emphasizing Gadamer's open acknowledgement of his personal and theoretical debt to the young Heidegger and to *Being and Time*, Wong reiterates Gadamer's criticism of Husserl's phenomenology of transcendental subjectivity. Taking Husserl's idealist version of transcendental phenomenology presented in *Ideas I* (1913) as his clue, Wong criticizes Husserl's method of transcendental reflection as inapt to grasp the dimension of pregivenness inherent in the consciousness of historical human life which is a historically effected consciousness. To Wong, Husserl's method of reflection is based on his mode of understanding of inner time which presents no significant difference from that of external perception. Wong thinks that this mode of understanding purifies radically the dimension of absence in human experience, rendering it impossible to understand historicity. Wong also thinks that

Husserl's phenomenology unilaterally favours the selfsameness of the constitutive subject without giving due attention to the constitutive role played by the other in human experience; thus it neglects the ethical dimension of human life. Though Wong credits Husserl's concept of horizon as providing one of the basic elements of Gadamer's hermeneutics, he concludes, without referring to Husserl's later thematization of the life-world and history, that "as Gadamer has clearly demonstrated, the total condition of the historical life and the consciousness of this movement can never be constituted without the pre-reflective life-world and the negativity inextricably embedded in it" (*infra*, p. 135).

Affectivity is another basic dimension of human existence which receives particular attention in the French tradition of phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is well-known for taking the living body and the flesh as clues to the ontological investigation of affective phenomena. Chon-ip Ng revisits Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh in his study "Reversibility and Its Philosophical Implications: A Phenomenological Explication of a Late Concept of Merleau-Ponty." Proceeding from a patient analysis of the concept of reversibility through a careful reading of the late Merleau-Ponty's thematization of the phenomena of double sensation exemplified by the senses of touch and vision, Ng is able to articulate the triple meaning of reversibility conferred by the author of *The Visible and the Invisible*. Reversibility as circulation (may be "circularity" is a better word) is the fold within the sensible Being which liberates a self and thus the subject. Reversibility as reciprocity refers to the interlacement (*entrelacs*) between the touching and the touched as well as between the sensing and the sensed; such interlacement expresses the equiprimordiality of passivity and activity inherent to the ontological character of the flesh. Reversibility as divergence (*écart*) or escape pays attention to the fact that coincidence of the touching and the touched is never complete. Thus the flesh is not an ontological order of pure immanence. Exteriority and plurality of the other are preserved. Understood in this manner, reversibility captures the multitude of meaning of the term "chiasm," which characterizes the phenomenal field as an open space of interplay between different senses and as the interlocking region of in-between among a plurality of subjects never enclosed in their individuality, sovereignty and privacy. Such characterization of the phenomenal field implies that rationality can no longer be understood as the normative and regulative order of things constituted by a sovereign subjectivity from above. To Ng, Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh envisages an embodied rationality which in fact is in plural form as there are always a multiplicity of orders. Contrary to the traditional metaphysical conception of rationality in which the One

or the Unique prevails, Ng concludes that Merleau-Ponty's concept of reversibility liberates a new form of rationality in which "the generality of the wild reason of the flesh consists then not of the ultimate synthesis of the all, but of the reversible intertwining of a plurality of orders" (*infra*, p. 151).

The Czech philosopher Jan Patočka had close personal encounter with German phenomenologists (Husserl and Fink), but his philosophical sensibility seems to be closer to French phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty and Lévinas. In his illuminating essay "The Subjective Movement of Body and World: Observations on the Phenomenology and Metaphysics of Corporeality in the Reflections of Jan Patočka," Karel Novotný demonstrates the originality of Patočka with respect to his thematization of the body in correlation with the world through the mediating concept of subjective movement. Patočka uses this concept to underpin a pre-reflective corporeal subject as a being in the world which, although objectively inapprehensible, is nevertheless the ontological condition of phenomenalization. To Patočka the intentional operation of perception, belief, synthesis or ascertainment can emerge as object of conscious apprehension only on the basis of the subjective movement of the body as a being in the world. Like Merleau-Ponty, Patočka thematizes the subjective movement of the body with regard to her affective and emotional encounter with the world through the senses. The first movement of existence of an embodied subject is not the organizing activity of a free agent (the "I can" emphasized by Husserl), but her being moved in the world. It is through movement in the passive and instinctive sense that a corporeal subject is open to the world by responding to its stimuli by way of feelings and emotional expressions. Thus in contrast to Heidegger the world in which a human subject is immersed is not primarily a goal-oriented and practical milieu, but an all-encompassing sphere of warmth and coldness. To Patočka the world is revealed to the affective corporeal subject both as a warm surrounding which elicits her sympathetic resonance, and as a repellent milieu of alienation and coldness. Novotný concludes that the originality of Patočka's phenomenology of body consists precisely in disclosing this affectively negative aspect of the world which the early Lévinas had paid attention to in his analysis of the impersonal character of *il y a*, while Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of carnal existence did not.

Education is a constant concern across different cultures, ancient and modern. But in the overwhelmingly technological and market-driven mode of society today, is it possible to reactualize the Greek vision of education as *paideia*—as human fulfillment and realization of the whole person in view of intellectual and moral excellence, artistic harmony and physical beauty? Is it possible to attain cognitive development, maturity of emotional intelligence and rationality that, at

the same time, encourage moral perfection? These are the questions underlying Maybelle Marie O. Padua's article "Edith Stein's Phenomenology of Education." Padua finds in the first research assistant of Husserl a philosophical view on the human person which orients her philosophy of education. Against the Enlightenment view that education sets for itself the ideal of attainment of encyclopedic knowledge, Stein insists that education does not aim at external possession of learning, but rather the formation of "a *gestalt* which the human person assumes under the influence of manifold external forces." After a great effort of reconstruction from Stein's dispersed writings with the aid of other theoretical sources, Padua concludes that on the one hand education has the moral aim of helping the person to exercise her freedom in a manner that recognizes the obligatory character of the moral law, on the other that Stein's philosophy of education emphasizes the need to develop the affective life so that even obedience to moral precepts could be embraced with passion and drive. To Padua these two educational principles together can provide a practical guidance to help educators to face their challenge today: "to bring about a strong desire in the students themselves to attain moral growth and personal reform" (*infra*, p. 191).

The interconnection between ethical space and space of truth, freedom in the biotechnologically enhanced world, wild-nature facing the extension of urbanization, landscape as a way of thinking and living, Husserl's meditation on death, the subtle difference between Heidegger's and Gadamer's hermeneutics, Merleau-Ponty's reversibility thesis revisited, Patočka's phenomenology of body and subjective movement, and Edith Stein's phenomenology of education—these are original contributions or renewed reflections from East-Asian phenomenologists, joined by their Western colleagues, on the most divergent aspects of human experience. This volume is another concrete proof that more than a century since its emergence on German soil, phenomenology has spread across linguistic and geographical borders to become one of the most vibrant global philosophical movements.

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