

Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding: Toward a New Cultural Flesh

Introduction

This book approaches the topic of intercultural understanding in philosophy from a phenomenological perspective. It provides a bridge between Western and Eastern philosophy through in-depth discussion of concepts and doctrines of phenomenology and ancient and contemporary Chinese philosophy. Phenomenological readings of Daoist and Buddhist philosophies are provided: the reader will find a study of theoretical and methodological issues and innovative readings of traditional Chinese and Indian philosophies from the phenomenological perspective. The author uses a descriptive rigor to avoid cultural prejudices and provides a non-Eurocentric conception and practice of philosophy. Through this East-West comparative study, a compelling criticism of a Eurocentric conception of philosophy emerges. New concepts and methods in intercultural philosophy are proposed through these chapters. Researchers, teachers, post-graduates and students of philosophy will all find this work intriguing, and those with an interest in non-Western philosophy or phenomenology will find it particularly engaging.

Contents

1	Introduction: Cultural Flesh and Intercultural Understanding: A Phenomenological Approach	1
1.1	The Need for Intercultural Understanding	1
1.2	Antithetic Aspects of Husserlian Phenomenology with Respect to Intercultural Understanding: the Closed-Nature of Husserl’s Idea of Philosophy and the Openness of the Phenomenological Method and Practices	3
1.3	Three Aspects of Intercultural Understanding in Philosophy	9
1.4	Cultural Flesh and Its Cultivation: The Way to Enter into the Horizon of Another Culture	15
2	Para-deconstruction: Preliminary Considerations for a Phenomenology of Interculturality	21
2.1	A Double Epoché	23
2.2	Husserl: Double Exclusion.....	24
2.3	Derridian Deconstruction: Cultural Transgression Forbidden	27
2.4	Para-deconstruction: Deconstruction and Re-appropriation	29
2.5	Lévi-Strauss: Hybridity of Cultural Formations	31
2.6	Merleau-Ponty: From the Pre-objective World to Inter-worlds	32
3	To What Extent Can Phenomenology Do Justice to Chinese Philosophy? A Phenomenological Reading of Laozi	35
3.1	Contrasting Attitudes in the Western Representation of Chinese Philosophy.....	36
3.1.1	Daoist Philosophy as Anti-rationalism.....	36
3.1.2	Philosophical Daoism as One of “Heidegger’s Hidden Sources”.....	37

3.2	Is a Phenomenological Reading of Chinese Philosophy Committed to Eurocentrism? Return to Husserl's Eurocentric Conception of Philosophy	40
3.3	Elements of a Phenomenological Reading of Laozi	42
3.3.1	<i>Dao</i> as Inchoative Nature	42
3.3.2	Deployment of the <i>Dao</i> : Dialectic and Retrieval	46
3.3.3	Characteristics of the <i>Dao</i> : Vacuity and Quietude, Tenderness and Weakness	48
3.4	Concluding Remarks	51
4	Husserl, Buddhism and the Crisis of European Sciences	53
4.1	Husserl, Hegel and the Eurocentric Conception of Philosophy	54
4.2	Husserl's Praise of Buddhist Scriptures	56
4.3	Buddha: The Eastern Socrates?	59
4.4	Husserl's Conception of Philosophy, the Crisis of European Sciences and Buddhism	64
5	Jan Patočka: Critical Consciousness and Non-Eurocentric Philosopher of the Phenomenological Movement	67
5.1	Introduction: Patočka as Non-Eurocentric Phenomenological Philosopher	67
5.2	Patočka's Significance for the Chinese Philosophical Community Today	69
5.3	Patočka as the Critical Consciousness of the Phenomenological Movement	70
5.4	Post-European Humanity and the Aporia of the Meaning of History	77
5.5	Phenomenology of the Natural World and Its Promise	79
5.6	In the Place of a Conclusion	82
6	Europe Beyond Europe: Patočka's Concept of Care for the Soul and Mencius. An Intercultural Consideration	85
6.1	Introduction	85
6.2	Patočka's Critical Reading of Husserl's Diagnosis of the Crisis of European Humanity	87
6.3	Care for the Soul and the Philosophical Anthropology Underlying the Mythical Framework of the Greeks	93
6.4	The Philosophical-Anthropological Framework of Mencius' Theory of the Fourfold Human Spiritual Disposition: A Chinese Counterpart to the Idea of Care for the Soul?	98
7	Disenchanted World-View and Intercultural Understanding: From Husserl Through Kant to Chinese Culture	103
7.1	Disenchanted World-View and Intercultural Understanding: Eurocentrism of Husserl's Idea of Philosophy and Rediscovery of Certain Moment of Its "Rational Kernel"	104

- 7.2 Modern Science and the Disenchanted World-View:
From Weber Through Nietzsche Back to Kant 108
- 7.3 Chinese Culture’s Contribution to the Disenchanted
World-View: The Chinese Chronology Controversy and the
Chinese Rites Controversy in Seventeenth and Eighteenth
Century Europe 113
 - 7.3.1 The Chinese Chronology Controversy 115
 - 7.3.2 The Chinese Rites Controversy and the Debate
Around the Nature of Chinese Culture..... 117
- 7.4 Conclusion..... 124
- 8 Self-Transformation and the Ethical *Telos*: Orientative
Philosophy in Lao Sze-Kwang, Foucault and Husserl..... 125**
 - 8.1 Introduction: Hegemony of “Cognitive Philosophy”
and the Rise of “Orientative Philosophy”
in Contemporary West..... 125
 - 8.2 Lao Sze-Kwang’s Concept of “Orientative Philosophy”
with Zhuangzi and Mencius as Examples 128
 - 8.3 “Self-Transformation” and Orientative Philosophy in the
Final Foucault: Ethical Turn and Self-Transformation of
the Subject..... 135
 - 8.3.1 Contribution and Insufficiency of Archaeology
of Knowledge and Genealogy of Power in the Earlier
Foucault..... 135
 - 8.3.2 Foucault’s Ethical Turn: *Askēsis* (Techniques of the Self)
and the Formation of the Autonomous Ethical Subject 139
 - 8.3.3 Techniques of the Self in Hellenistic and Roman
Philosophy: Morality of Autonomy and Aesthetic
of Existence through Self-Mastery and *Askēsis*
(Orientative Philosophy in Twofold Sense) 141
 - 8.3.4 Ancient Western Philosophical Practice as
Spirituality or Spiritual Exercise 144
 - 8.4 Phenomenological Epoché: Husserl’s Philosophical
Practice as Orientative Philosophy?..... 146
 - 8.5 Concluding Remarks 150
- 9 Lévi-Strauss and Merleau-Ponty: From Nature-Culture
Distinction to Savage Spirit and Their Intercultural
Implications 153**
 - 9.1 Nature, Culture and History: Lévi-Strauss’ Challenge
to Phenomenology as Philosophy of Consciousness 154
 - 9.1.1 What Is Nature?..... 154
 - 9.1.2 The Nature-Culture Distinction..... 155
 - 9.1.3 Structural Method’s Challenge to Philosophies
of Subject 159

9.2	Merleau-Ponty's Response to Lévi-Strauss: From the Nature-Culture Distinction to Brute Being and Savage Spirit	160
9.2.1	Structural Anthropology as a Mode of Thinking Close to Phenomenology.....	160
9.2.2	Savage Mind and the Emergence of Culture and History: Lévi-Strauss and Merleau-Ponty's Ontological Search for Brute Being and Savage Spirit of the Primordial Order	162
9.3	Intercultural Implications of Structural Anthropology: Merleau-Ponty's Reading.....	165
9.3.1	Psychoanalysis as Myth and the Primitive Side of Western Civilization.....	165
9.3.2	Distance and Other Cultures as Co-constitutive of Total Being and Total Truth	166
9.3.3	Broadening of Reason by Lateral Universals.....	167
9.3.4	Indian and Chinese Philosophies as Other Relationships to Being That the West Has Not Opted for	169
9.4	Conclusion.....	171
10	The Flesh: From Ontological Employment to Intercultural Employment.....	173
10.1	Introduction	174
10.2	Has the Notion of Flesh Any Theoretical Validity?.....	176
10.3	Going Beyond Metaphysical Dualism While Taking into Account Ontological Duality: The Flesh as Two-Dimensional Being	179
10.4	The Flesh or Thinking the Domain of the In-between: Interpenetration, Interdependence, Intertwining, Encroachment, Intercorporeity, Interworld	186
10.5	Interworld: Explication by Intercultural Experience.....	188
10.6	Cultivation of a Cultural Flesh as Condition of Possibility of Intercultural Understanding	190
10.7	In the Place of a Conclusion.....	191
11	Conclusion: Toward a New Cultural Flesh.....	193
11.1	Recapitulation	193
11.2	Further Reflections on the Concept of Cultural Flesh.....	196
11.2.1	Lévinas' Appraisal of the Concept of Flesh and the Enigma of Ontological Separation	196
11.2.2	Non-sympathetic Reception of the Notion of Flesh by Deleuze and Derrida.....	200
11.2.3	Michel Henry's Radical Phenomenology of Flesh and Its Theocentric Concept of Life, History and Culture	206

11.2.4 Philosophy of Pure Immanence and Eurocentrism of Deleuzian Geophilosophy.....	210
11.2.5 Advantage of Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh for a Theory of Intercultural Understanding	216
11.2.6 What Is New in the Concept of Cultural Flesh?.....	225
Bibliography	231
Author Index	243
Subject Index	245