

# **Conference Program**

**Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Room: Jubilee G36**

**10:00 – 10:40      Registration and Coffee**

**10:40 – 10:50      Welcome**

**10:50 – 12:10      Session 1**

Speaker 1: Gregory Jackson (Maynooth): *Historical Poetic Projection: The Significance of the Poets for Heidegger and Dilthey*

Speaker 2: Jana Elsen (Sussex): *Essential Belonging: Parmenides' Χρῆ and Hölderlin's Hymns in Martin Heidegger's Was heisst Denken?*

Chair: Dimitri Kladiskakis (TBC)

**12:10 – 13:00      Lunch Break**

**13:00 – 14:20      Session 2**

Speaker 1: Justine Shaw (Sussex): *Children as 'Natural Phenomenologists' in the Work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Virginia Woolf*

Speaker 2: Eugenia Lapteva (Sussex): *Language and the Original Poet*

Chair: Tom Marshall

**14:20 – 14:30      Coffee Break**

**14:30 – 15:50      Session 3**

Speaker 1: Sylvia Solakidi (Athens School of Fine Arts): *Time is Present: Merleau-Ponty's Flesh of Time in Durational Performances by Marina Abramović*

Speaker 2: David Markwell (UCD): *Phenomenology, Fiction and Emotions: A Merleau-Pontian Answer to the Paradox of Fiction*

Chair: Gabriel Martin

**15:50 – 16:00      Coffee Break**

**16:00 – 17:20      Keynote Address**

Professor Wayne Martin (Essex): *The Work of Confession and the Work of Art*

Chair: Dr. Tanja Staehler

**17:30**        **Drink in IDS Bar (on campus)**

**19:00**        **Dinner in Brighton**

Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>

Room: Arts A 108

**9:00 – 9:50**        **Registration and Coffee**

**9:50 – 10:00**       **Welcome**

**10:00 – 11:20**      **Session 1**

Speaker 1: Irene Delodivici (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg/Universität Wien):  
*“To Compose This Worldly Talisman and to Make Us See the Visible”. Aesthetic of the  
Vision and Phenomenology of the Living Body in Merleau-Ponty’s Later Philosophy*

Speaker 2: Steven DeLay (Oxford): *Life, Art, and Painting the Invisible: Michel Henry on  
Kandinsky*

Chair: Areti Giannopolou

**11:20 – 11:40**        **Coffee Break**

**11:40 – 13:00**       **Session 2**

Speaker 1: Liam Sprod (Kingston): *Against Concept: Phenomenology and the Theory and  
Materiality of Modern Art*

Speaker 2: Matteo Settura (Padova): *Unity of the Artwork, Unity of Consciousness, Unity of  
Knowledge: The Concept of Antilogos in Deleuze’s Marcel Proust et les Signes*

Chair: Robb Dunphy

**13:00 – 14:00**        **Lunch**

**14:00 – 15:20**       **Session 3**

Speaker 1: Alice Sundman (Stockholm): *Modes of Placial Relations in Toni Morrison's Novel A Mercy: A Phenomenological Approach*

Speaker 2: Artur Willemse (Sussex): *Phenomenology of Bartleby*

Chair: Christos Hadjioannou

**15:20 – 15:35          Coffee Break**

**15:35 – 16:10          Session 4**

Speaker 1: Laszlo Kajtar (Central European University): *The Cognitive Value of Literary Narratives: A Phenomenological View*

Chair: Patrick Levy

**16:10 – 16:20          Coffee Break**

**16:20 – 17:40          Keynote Address**

Dr. Paul Davies (Sussex): *Fiction and its Phenomenology*

Chair: Dr. Mahon O'Brien

**17:40                  Closing Remarks**

**17:50                  Drinks at IDS Bar (on Campus)**

**Abstracts**

**Gregory Jackson (Maynooth):** *Historical Poetic Projection: The Significance of the Poets for Heidegger and Dilthey*

This paper looks at the influence of Wilhelm Dilthey on Martin Heidegger's developing theory of poetry in light of his reflections on the historicity of Being. Dilthey's influence on Heidegger's *Being and Time* has been noted (O'Donnell, 2007), however there is still much to be discovered about how this influence developed after *Being and Time* and into the *Kehre*. This paper thus looks specifically at Heidegger's understanding of poetry in his later texts such as 'What are Poets for?' and 'Poetically Man Dwells' taking into account the influence of Dilthey's understanding of life experience and poetic expression, and asks about the extent of this influence for the developments we see in these later texts. Dilthey's early attempts (1887) to develop a theory of aesthetics will be contextualised in his initial concerns about the contemporary state of aesthetic theory as it stood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and his dissatisfaction of this earlier attempt will be explored in light of his re-evaluations in 1907-1908, with particular attention to the hermeneutical-Ontological method of this later work as noted by Owensby (1988). This paper argues that although there are certainly developments in the later Heidegger after *Being and Time*, Dilthey's influence, particularly as his theory stood in the later (1907-08) *Poetic Fragments*, still exert their influence on Heidegger's later texts. For example, this paper suggests that Dilthey's understanding of the interdependence of 'lived experience' as expressed in literature and the historically determined 'life-nexus' can be seen in Heidegger's developing conception of the belonging together of Being and Dasein in *Ereignis* thinking. Therefore, Heidegger's criticisms of *Erlebnis* for its subjective connotations (*A Dialogue on Language*, 1959), and so with it Dilthey's understanding of poetry, need to be re-evaluated in this context. As a comparison between both thinkers understanding of poetry is thus underway, contribution is made to understanding the central importance poetic reflection had for philosophy and truth for Heidegger. As this discussion comes to a close, concluding remarks will then inquire into the place poetic and more creative forms of thinking might have for the future of philosophy and, inversely, the value that artistic engagement could hold for future developments in methods of thinking.



**Jana Elsen (Sussex):** *Essential Belonging: Parmenides' Χρή and Hölderlin's Hymns in Martin Heidegger's Was heisst Denken?*

Underway in the question 'what calls us into thinking' ["*was heisst uns denken?*"] Heidegger introduces us to Parmenides' saying Χρή τὸ λεγειν τε νοειν τ' ἔδν ἔμμεναι because according to him, this saying speaks 'of the highest and deepest, the farthest and nearest, of the most veiled and the most shining, of all that is sayable in mortal speech.' He takes on the task to find a new translation, an effort which is informed by the aim of the lecture course to think about that which gives us to think, and for Heidegger, to think authentically on the gift of thinking would entail a transformation of our relation to language. In other words, in order to twist free of metaphysics and think the twofoldedness of being, we must also twist free from a metaphysical relation to language. While Heidegger is not particularly explicit on how this transformation could take place and when, or if indeed, it is possible at all; his account of the distinction

between *Worte* and *Wörter* appears to be one of the most promising resources to understand what this transformation might entail, or what a first step towards this transformation might be.

To sketch his account of language briefly here, the movement from *Worte* to *Wörter* is presented as the movement from the inceptual and singular [*Einmalig*] occurrence of the word to the rifting movement [a sort of breaking up] into language, metaphysically understood as a system of signs and signification. But for Heidegger this also means that within the dictionary terms of instrumentalized language in metaphysics [*Wörter*] we find sheltered and preserved *words* [*Worte*]. Within this movement towards a retrieval of *Worte* he opens up the possibility of a different relation to language

In this paper I will discuss how Heidegger gives poetry an essential role in bringing about a transformation of our relation to language. I will focus in particular on the translation of  $\chi\rho\eta$ , the first word of Parmenides' saying, and, according to Heidegger, the one that provides the grounding tune of the saying. The German translation "Es brauchet" has according to Heidegger a higher more meaningful sense than "It is necessary." In order to tune our ears to hear these higher meanings Heidegger introduces us the hymns of the poet Hölderlin, "Der Ister" and "Die Titanen." How these hymns are meant to allow us to hear those higher and deeper meanings, and thus perhaps allow us to hear the resonances of the singular saying of the words rather than dictionary terms, shall be the main question of my paper.



**Justine Shaw (Sussex):** *Children as 'Natural Phenomenologists' in the Work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Virginia Woolf*

Arguably, it is in his posthumous text the *Sorbonne Lectures* that Maurice Merleau-Ponty advances the first phenomenological account of childhood. He explores childhood not just as the grounding for adult experience as Freud does, but also as a valuable and complete period of existence in its own right. Talia Welsh, the translator of the lectures, comes to the conclusion that Merleau-Ponty presents children as "natural phenomenologists". This paper will argue that Virginia Woolf in her 1931 novel *The Waves* similarly presents children as "natural phenomenologists". Thereafter it will seek to bring these literary and philosophical accounts of childhood into dialogue with one another.

Merleau-Ponty claims that childhood experience marks "a change in the structure of consciousness, the establishment of a new dimension of experience, the setting forth of an *a priori*" (*Phenomenology of Perception* 30). In both the *Sorbonne Lectures* and *The Waves* the argument is made that the primary sensual experience of the world is indistinct and symbiotic. That it is "a question of a *totality* of given sensations experienced through the intermediary of the *whole* body" (Merleau-Ponty *Child Psychology and Pedagogy* 145). In Woolf's novel the children's primary perceptions clearly mingle inner with outer, tactile with visual, collective with singular. Merleau-Ponty provides a possible term for the experience that Woolf's text describes when he adopts Claparède's term 'syncretic' to denote the synthesized perception of children.

In addition to this similarity, both writers suggest that the primary experience of the world is fundamentally as well as sensually non-dualistic. “The child begins with a total identification with the other” (CPP 24). Moreover, both Merleau-Ponty and Woolf contend that this original connectedness to others is shattered by the intrusion of a separate sense of self. An awareness that thrusts the children out of the world of anonymous collectivity and forces them to articulate independent dualistic relationships with themselves, with the world of things, and with others. In Woolf this process of retraction is portrayed as being particularly torturous. “We suffered terribly as we became separate bodies” (*The Waves* 186). However, this is also one of several points at which the two texts’ phenomenological accounts of childhood diverge. So, whilst Merleau-Ponty views the psychogenetic moment as being triggered by a Lacanian mirror-stage, Woolf’s text presents two variant causes for the development of a personal sense of self – one externally and one internally motivated.

Therefore, the key questions that this paper will ask are, in what ways it is possible to read Virginia Woolf and Maurice Merleau-Ponty as presenting children as natural phenomenologists, and therefore whether Woolf can be said to pre-empt Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological description of childhood. It will also question how far their separate accounts of the lived experience of children coincide with or undermine one another. Finally, the paper will address whether Woolf, in her interrogation of her own position as the (re)writer of childhood; her acknowledgement of the child’s experience of “non-being”; and her conception that childhood remains as a stream that is “alive and deep” at the back of adult experience; provides a more complete treatment of the lived experience of children and, concurrently, a more compelling model for on-going intersubjective human engagement than the more processional theory of development that Merleau-Ponty’s account describes.



### **Eugenia Lapteva (Sussex): *Language and the Original Poet***

The power of language, writes Maurice Blanchot in *The Space of Literature*, ‘consists in making the immediate appear to us not as the most terrible thing, which ought to overwhelm us – the error of the essential solitude – but as the pleasant reassurance of natural harmonies or the familiarity of a native habitat’. Language gives us the comforting illusion of an immediacy which is actually only the foreign passing for the customary. As a result, Blanchot notes, language seems to be the source of a immediately granted truth; the sign that truth is immediate, always the same and always at our disposal.

Drawing on Mallarmé’s observations of language and literary creation, Blanchot acknowledges a distinction between everyday language and poetic language. According to Blanchot, the way in which everyday language operates is such that we cannot discover *at the same time* the two elements that constitute language, that is, meaning and word. It serves primarily as a tool for human understanding, and aspires above all to eliminate the absence of the object by communicating the illusory presence of its meaning. The word is transmuted into meaning, the meaning, into word. This power of everyday language to hide itself leads Blanchot to recognise a paradox or mystery inherent in all language.

Poetic language, however, is allusive. By emphasising the materiality of the word, the poem dramatizes rather than denies the absence of the object. In poetry, words are juxtaposed, defamiliarized, reinvented and split, disrupting the reassuring metamorphosis of meaning in word and word in meaning. And yet, as Blanchot beautifully puts it, everything happens as if poetry demanded 'a fundamental unity, an awareness superior to the two poles, a kind of androgyny of language, starting from which, by a split, actually less decisive than the other, the two functions, originally united in one single relationship, began to exist apart, like two independent beings, most of the time forever strangers'. Thus between the mystery of language in general and poetic language in particular there is similarity as well as opposition.

Turning now to the thoughts of the British psychoanalyst and writer, in her study *On Not Being Able to Paint*, Marion Milner states: 'Moments when the original poet in each of us created the outside world for us, by finding the familiar in the unfamiliar, are perhaps forgotten by most people; or else they are guarded in some secret place of memory because they were too much like visitations of the gods to be mixed with everyday thinking'. Much like D.W. Winnicott, Milner's work is deeply concerned with the origins of human creativity. Central to both, is the absolute significance of infantile experience for our capacity as creative beings for symbolisation and figurative representation. Indeed for Winnicott, the mother's adaptation to the infant's needs is paramount insofar as it gives the illusion that there is an external reality which corresponds to the infant's own capacity to create. This early paradoxical state of relatedness is a closely merged unit-space where the baby must be able to freely express, as well as rely upon, the satisfaction of his or her selfish needs. The *experience* of illusion and harmony is thus fundamental for the nascent ego that is just beginning to organise itself and symbolically create a sense of interiority.

By staging a dialogue between Blanchot and Winnicott I intend to show how psychoanalysis and literary theory can be brought to bear on our understanding of the relations between poetry, language and truth. To borrow Derrida's words, 'The deconstruction of philosophy does not renounce truth – any more, for that matter, than literature does. It is a question of thinking this other relation to truth.' In my paper, I will suggest thinking the mystery of poetic language in conjunction with the primary relation between baby and mother, as a way of investigating the unthought ground of philosophy: the original moment which, being the precondition of language and creativity, fundamentally escapes us.



**Sylvia Solakidi (Athens School of Fine Arts):** *Time is Present: Merleau-Ponty's Flesh of Time in Durational Performances by Marina Abramović*

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the philosopher of embodied existence and pre-conceptual being-in-the-world, engaged with temporality in phenomenological and political writings. Performance artist Marina Abramović investigates the limits of the body and its interaction with alterity, especially through durational works. Both philosopher and artist privilege the time of the present, although the former expresses temporality linguistically while the latter performs it in silence. By following Merleau-Ponty's paradigm of accessing phenomena through the art of Cézanne, this paper focuses on performances "Artist is Present" (2010) and "512 hours" (2014) by Abramović as well as "Nightsea Crossing" (1981-1987), which she performed with her

former partner artist Ulay and inspired her subsequent works. The aim is to approach durational works by Abramović as enactments of key phenomenological and ontological concepts of Merleau-Ponty and investigate their possible catalytic function in phenomenological research, as well as an insider standpoint adopted by phenomenology in theory of contemporary art. Merleau-Ponty conceives the subject as the upsurge of time, the temporal present as a dynamic structure of retentions and protentions and all experience as expressing this temporal structure by constant taking up and coherent deformation of the past towards the future

“Nightsea Crossing” will be described as an enactment of sexuality not limited to sexual relationships but rather as a manner of being-in-the-world. By elaborating the concepts of motor intentionality, symbiosis and sedimentation will be argued that the work be the result of interrogation and taking up of the couple’s intimate relationship and its expression as vital communication through mutual gaze, which enacts primordial intercorporeality. Furthermore, influences of this performance on subsequent ones will not be limited to visual similarities but discussion will be based on the eroticised relations implied by envelopment in the flesh of the world. “Artist is Present” will be described by the notions of motivation, body schema, intentional arc, reversibility and chiasm as an enactment of the enigma of visibility, a large-scale experiment in which a complex network of human and digital gazes, that is a network of intentionalities, expresses itself as a temporal network, revealing the temporal sense of the flesh of the world. In “512 hours” the triggering role of touching and double sensation will be stressed in the enactment of the intersensorial unity of the body which turns the performance space into a generator of lived temporality, since only through acting and relating do we temporalize ourselves. Thanks to the artist’s moderating role relations of embodied expressions are formed, which contribute to the thickness of the flesh of the world and allow it to appear as the flesh of time in both works

In conclusion, the performances mentioned help us not only realize the primacy of time implied in the writings of Merleau-Ponty, but also suggest an answer to Claudel’s “What time is it?”, the unanswered question by which the philosopher chooses to interrogate existence in “Visible and Invisible”: it can be the time of the visible, transcendent present, the time of the presence of the present



**Irene Delodivici (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg/Universität Wien):** *“To Compose This Worldly Talisman and to Make Us See the Visible”. Aesthetic of the Vision and Phenomenology of the Living Body in Merleau-Ponty’s Later Philosophy*

In the last paper Maurice Merleau-Ponty published during his lifetime, he suggested the following double edge as delimiting art from philosophy (and literature) and painting from other forms of art: „[...] painting draws upon this fabric of brute meaning [...]. From the writer and the philosopher, in contrast, we want opinion and advice. [...] We want them to take a stand; they cannot waive the responsibilities of men who speak. Music, at the other extreme, ist too far beyond the world [...].“ (Eye and Mind, 293).



In his previous works on aesthetics, specifically in his famous paper *Cézannes doubt* (1945) Merleau-Ponty claims that the philosopher, like the artist, faces the same difficulties as the first speaking human being. The novelty of the ideas expressed in *Eye and Mind* lies among other things in the clear split between the two activities: painting and philosophizing. In his early work Merleau-Ponty stresses the idea that both artists and philosophers can awaken experiences in the other that allow their ideas to take root within the consciousness of the other, whereas in his later work *The Eye and the Mind* he stresses that it is the painter alone, who is „entitled to look at everything without being obliged to appraise what he sees“ (EM, 293).

In my contribution to the conference I would like to show that the reasons of this transformation are to be found in the changing role of the individual living-body [Leib] which distinguishes the last phase of Merleau-Ponty's thought. In order to do this I will try to show that this change runs parallel to Merleau-Ponty's gradual departure from Husserl's description of embodiment. The living body still plays a central role in our experience, but it does so by virtue of its participation with a more general ontological category, specifically the „flesh“ [chair]. Since the painter, as described in *Eye and Mind*, „lends“ his body to the world to create a work of art (EM, 294), it is the main aim of this contribution to outline how the concept of living-body should be understood in the final period of Merleau-Ponty's thought.

Further remarks will also be dedicated to answer the question, whether Merleau-Ponty's consideration of De Saussure's *Linguistics* in another important paper, *Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence* (1952), also influenced this change. His reading of De Saussure could have caused Merleau-Ponty to understand the work of art as an autonomous system of signs and therefore to draft its specificity as it relates to the pictorial and philosophical activity.



**Steven DeLay (Oxford):** *Life, Art, and Painting the Invisible: Michel Henry on Kandinsky*

On one widely accepted view, phenomenology investigates the modes of a thing's appearing: where other forms of inquiry investigate the "what" or "why" of entities, phenomenological inquiry investigates how entities manifest themselves. Yet as Michel Henry has done so well to note, the life of subjectivity manifests itself in a way totally unlike the way in which the world and its objects do, precisely because life itself is not an object. On the contrary, the life of subjectivity is an invisible pathos—a force that remains concealed from the visibility and exteriority of intentionality because it experiences itself immediately without any intervening rupture, delay, or ek-stasis. It does not, that is to say, manifest itself in the exteriority of the world. To live, thus, is to at once enjoy and suffer one's own experience of oneself. Art, on such a view, is understood as the paradoxical attempt to make the invisible visible, since art attempts to express the invisible essence of life. According to Henry, "The goal of abstract painting is to give feeling to everything that can be felt and to give experience to everything that can be experienced." And this is precisely what we find in the work of Kandinsky, he claims. By liberating the form and content of art from the constraints of representation—the rules governing ordinary perception and worldly visibility—the abstract work of Kandinsky's painting achieves the paradoxical: In evoking the tonalities in us that it does, it renders the essence of invisible life visible. Taking the works of Kandinsky as his cue, Henry accordingly explains how this is so: abstract painting expresses the force of life by means of its impeccable

and precise use of point, line, picture plane, and colour, marshalling, deploying, and stoking the essence of subjectivity in all of its unceasing perturbations, undulations, swells, ebbs, advances, and retreats. Consequently, art and phenomenology indeed are one, because they are both works of life.



**Liam Sprod (Kingston):** *Against Concept: Phenomenology and the Theory and Materiality of Modern Art*

This paper will examine the claim that the philosophical discourse of phenomenology had a decisive effect upon the development of art and art theory in the 60s and 70s, and then use the resources of phenomenology and its own philosophical progressions to re-assess the divergent discourse of art theory and its relation to artistic practice and artworks. I will start with Rosalind Krauss's claim from her 1977 book *Passages in Modern Sculpture* that: "The history of modern sculpture coincides with the development of two bodies of thought, phenomenology and structural linguistics" (4). Krauss argues that this occurred through the artistic developments of minimalism (specifically Robert Morris, Donald Judd and Richard Serra) and the notion of performativity (Robert Rauschenberg), both of which were precursors to (more explicit) conceptual art. I will argue that it was the recognition of the coupling together of subjectivity and objectivity by phenomenology that shifted the importance of art from the material externality of the artwork (the object) to the internal (transcendental if you will) conceptual framework of the subject. This emphasis on conceptual frameworks then uses the tools and theory of structural linguistics to build the self-supporting and self-justifying theoretical scaffold now necessary to explain art. However, just as structural linguistics separates the signifier from the signified, so too does modern art theory detach its conceptual frameworks from the specific materiality of the artwork. This means that not only can any object be art, but also that any theory can, and must, be used to 'explain' any artwork. These two assertions are similar to Peter Osborne's more recent arguments that artworks must *necessarily* have both an aesthetic and a conceptual side, neither of which alone is *sufficient* for the artwork (2013, 48). I will argue that this is problematic for art, art theory and art practice in two ways: firstly, from the side of the artwork itself, which is now always so radically insufficient that any complicity with the material or materiality of the work is excluded; and secondly, from the side of theory, which appropriates more and more from philosophy but always neglects to address the problems caused by the contingency of the relation between such conceptualization and art. I will argue that these problems can be addressed by returning to the explicitly philosophical discourses that helped precipitate the extension of theory into art, i.e., phenomenology and structural linguistics, and then use the post-structuralist critique of structuralism and new realist and materialist attacks on phenomenology to argue against the conceptual shift in art (or the very theorization of art), to expose the philosophical inadequacy of contemporary art theory, and through philosophy itself to argue for a return to a thought of the necessity of the materiality of the artwork.



**Matteo Settura (Padova):** *Unity of the Artwork, Unity of Consciousness, Unity of Knowledge: The Concept of Antilogos in Deleuze's Marcel Proust et les Signes*

The unity of the artwork is one of the main issues in the history of aesthetics. Of which does consist the unity of an artwork? Which is the relation between its parts and the whole? Which is the nature of the connection that ties together the different moments of its developing? Similar questions cross the entire history of aesthetics. Moreover, for instance in German idealism, they also became terms for comparison in the problem of the unity of knowledge. Subsequently, the definitive crisis of classic aesthetics during the second half of 19th century has been understood in strict connection to the crisis of the classical systematic conception of knowledge and of experiencing in its entirety. This crisis led to the new formulations of the artistic avant-gardes, in the first half of 20th century, and was represented in literature by masterworks such as *À la recherche du temps perdu* by Marcel Proust. In my exposition, I would like to concentrate on the interpretation which Gilles Deleuze gives of Proust's work in his *Marcel Proust et les signes*. Numerous scholars have already analysed this text and given account of its phenomenological inspiration, as well as of the centrality of concepts such as «essence», «sign» and «encounter». However, my aim is to emphasize the problem of the «unity of the work of art» as focal point of Deleuze's reading. According to Deleuze, the new statute of time, which emerges from the *Recherche*, throws into crisis the classical concept of unity as organic totality. Furthermore, the Proustian theme of «involuntary memory» reveals a multiplication and fragmentation of the I: the manifold "I" of remembering slips away from the totalizing point of view of the narrating I. Therefore, the crisis of the artwork unity corresponds to the crisis of the I unity and it imposes the necessity, for philosophy, of rethinking radically the concept of unity itself. This circumstance involves the opposition between *logos* and «*antilogos*»: the challenge, for the philosopher, is to understand unity no more as *logos*, as hierarchical, ordained connection of discourse, rather as «style» or as characterised by a particular «*transversalité*». The latter concept forbids considering unity as a logical presupposition and stresses its aspect of creation. Finally, it is my intention to suggest a comparison between this idea of unity and the phenomenological problem of the monad unity. In Husserl's genetic phenomenology, the plurality of the I and the essential relation between egoity and temporality, both highlighted through the analyses on *Vergegenwärtigung* and inner time-consciousness, lead to the fundamental problem of the unity of consciousness. The correct understanding of intentionality, which confers to consciousness its openness and relatedness by, at the same time, providing its unity, seems widely dependent on the clarification of the distinction between the logical unity of subject and predicates and the nexus which pertains to the passage from one content to another in time-consciousness. In my view, the Husserlian term «style» plays a decisive role in the individuation of the latter.



Alice Sundman (Stockholm): *Modes of Placial Relations in Toni Morrison's Novel A Mercy: A Phenomenological Approach*

Critical studies of Toni Morrison's fiction, quite understandably, tend to favour explorations from the perspectives of, e.g., race, African American Culture, and history of slavery as well as narratological and stylistic investigations. What these approaches lack, however, is a way of accounting for *the world as experienced*. A phenomenological method, on the other hand, has the potential to elucidate precisely this. This paper, therefore, suggests a phenomenological reading of Morrison, inspired by Edmund Husserl's notion of the *epoché*; my focus will be on textual layers that are not reducible to issues of 'the natural attitude,' such as external theories or re-

presentational interpretations. Instead of imposing specific theoretical frameworks on the text, I will adopt a procedure of letting the text 'speak for itself.'

The paper focuses on the novel *A Mercy*, which is perhaps the Morrison text that most obviously presents interrelations between the human being and the natural world. Taking a phenomenological understanding of *place* as a starting point, I will explore tensions between various modes of placial relations, most notably attitudes of mastering of place, bonding with place, and receptivity to place. At first glance, the protagonist, Florens, seems to remain homeless and placeless, lacking a fundamental bond with concrete place. However, a phenomenological analysis, together with a phenomenological understanding of place, uncover a development in the protagonist from an initial lack of a bond with place to an incipient receptive, pre-reflective openness to place as well as an emerging sense of bonding with place by way of body.

I will argue that Florens's attitude to place stands in contrast to and presents an alternative to the attitude of mastering of place presented by the male European characters. Moreover, in line with Edward S. Casey's view of a bond with the earth as tied to ethics, I will discuss Florens's attitude as holding a possibility of ecological responsibility. With bell hooks, a bond with place can also be seen as rendering possible a resistance to attitudes of dominion. Thus, I will suggest that ultimately, the protagonist's attitude to place implies ethical dimensions.



### **Artur Willemse (Sussex): *Phenomenology of Bartleby***

The philosophy of Giorgio Agamben – philosophical archaeology – presents an intriguing combination of phenomenology and deconstruction. For Agamben, the phenomenon is only ultimately given in the exposure of its archē – its moment of arising and fulfilment. However, this moment of archē means also, by a Hegelian influence, the disintegration of the phenomenon's vitality. The phenomenon, then, must be rendered inoperative before it can be understood. In this sense Agamben's archaeology is an inverted phenomenology, its work spent unearthing the phenomenon in the first place, analysing the way in which a concept is withheld, rather than the way in which it is given.

For example, to Agamben the archē of Greek drama emerges in the moment of its parody – wherein the drama is stripped of its force by way of the exposure of its own inner truth. Similarly, Agamben exposes the meaning of the theological thesis of the trinity as it exhausts itself in a profane economy. Most noted, however, is Agamben's exposé of the inner truth of the law in the paradigm of homo sacer, of whom the law in its absolute condemnation is powerless. This is the messianic programme of Agamben's philosophy: to absolve philosophy of its presuppositions – to think the absolute.

Agamben's oeuvre is entirely a philosophical archaeology on the concept of potentiality – the quintessentially withheld or reserved concept. The pivotal figure in this archaeology, I argue, is the figure of Melville's scribe Bartleby and his passion for writing. By focussing on the figure of

Bartleby we get the clearest account of potentiality – Bartleby’s formula “I would prefer not to” insists on his capacity for writing – and yet we gather the ways in which that potentiality is exactly not given, but suffered on the white sheet of Bartleby’s body. By way of Bartleby’s formula Agamben is able to unearth the concept of potentiality from a philosophical history that, on his reading, has only meant to obscure it – has meant to keep its operation secret. What Bartleby releases from the spell of potentiality is a contingent existence: redeemed of potentiality, it has fulfilled its capacity to not be.

In this paper I will reflect on the way in which a work of literature, by evoking and satisfying the passion of writing, becomes phenomenologically pertinent and furthermore on the phenomenological notion of givenness as juxtaposed with the premises of philosophical archaeology. Indeed, philosophical archaeology might appear at the hinge between phenomenology and deconstruction: between the discipline that studies the modes of experiential givenness and the discipline that exposes experience in excess *of* its conditions of possibility (I emphasize *of*, as this excess still depends on what it exceeds) there is the work of the undoing of the phenomenon’s reserve.



**Laszlo Kajtar (Central European University):** *The Cognitive Value of Literary Narratives: A Phenomenological View*

The complex relationship of art and truth is at stake in many philosophical discussions about narratives of literature. Can we learn from literature? Do literary works provide knowledge? If we can and if they do, is this essential to their nature as works of literature? Does truth, knowledge and learning have impact on aesthetic value? These are the questions of the cognitive value debate that can be traced back to an ancient disagreement: whereas Plato condemned poets, Aristotle declared poetry more philosophical than history. In contemporary aesthetics, the most dominant position is propositionalism: there are true propositions implicit or explicit in literary narratives, and their truth is important for aesthetic and literary merit. I describe and argue against such a view: true propositions are not the most important loci of cognitive value. Truth should not be the focus of the discussion

I take my cue from a development in the work of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger attempted to formulate a conception of truth that is more fundamental than the correctness of propositions in corresponding to certain states of affairs. Heidegger claimed that uncoveredness is primordial truth, while true statements uncover things as they are. Famously, Ernst Tugendhat raised an important critical point: uncoveredness itself cannot distinguish between truth and falsity because false statements uncover as well. Heidegger later conceded that since the notion of “truth” is tied too strongly to propositional correctness, it is a better move not to apply the notion of truth to uncoveredness. But even without the label of “truth,” uncoveredness is fundamental.

Similarly, the most significant cognitive value of literary narratives might not reside in the implicit or explicit true propositions they contain. This does not mean that there are no such propositions or that there is no cognitive value. Instead, Heidegger’s claims open up a new position in the debate: what is cognitively valuable in the reader’s engagement with literary narratives is the simulated, imaginative living through of the experiences that these narratives occasion. Such an engagement, I argue, is actually a precondition for one’s ability to articulate

true or false propositions about literary narratives, just like uncoveredness is a precondition for making true and false statements about the world. In the end, my argument is that the practice of telling stories in literature has a fundamental connection to how we are in the world and how the world is disclosed to us in experience. Philosophers and literary scholars have often attempted to understand the feeling of depth and a certain completeness accompanying the reading of literary narratives by referring to “worlds”: possible worlds, fictional worlds. One of the consequences of a Heideggerian position in the cognitive value debate is shedding new light on the worldliness in literary narratives: instead of spatiotemporal containers or collection of states-of-affairs, literary works project unfamiliar contexts of significance, webs of meaningfulness. This is what makes them cognitively valuable in the first place.



**David Markwell (UCD):** *Phenomenology, Fiction and Emotions: A Merleau-Pontian Answer to the Paradox of Fiction*

This paper offers an explanation of how phenomenology can be used to provide a solution to the so-called paradox of fiction. The paradox of fiction asks: how is it that we have a real emotional response to fictional characters or situations when we do not believe that these characters or situations actually exist? This paper will attempt an answer to this so-called paradox by arguing for a phenomenological solution that utilises Merleau-Ponty’s highly ontological approach to aesthetics. For Merleau-Ponty the work of art is an expression of a particular artist’s lived point of view on the intersubjective world of experience. The work of art is an artefact of that expression that can then be re-experienced by those who engage with the work mediated through their own lived experience. What one responds to when one has an emotional reaction to a piece of fiction is not the character *per se*, but rather the possibility of a different lived perspective on the world that the character opens up for the reader. The emotional response then is to the expression of the possible point of view on the world, and the existence of the character as such is inconsequential. By providing an expression of different points of view on the world, fiction allows for the development of one’s emotional life through the phenomenological engagement with those emotions in a controlled environment. This phenomenological approach to fiction bears not just on one’s emotional development, but it also fosters the development of one’s aesthetic, ethical, and inter-personal life. Since first person description of lived experience is a hallmark of phenomenology, fiction, by providing phenomenologically rich descriptions of how other people experience the world is of the utmost importance to phenomenology.