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The concept of Geography and Post-phenomenology "has the capacity to refigure our knowledge of the relation of the body to the world"

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Abstract

This essay looks at how geography has interacted with phenomenology. The paper locates the creation of a distinctive post-phenomenological mode of thinking by tracing the influence of phenomenology from early humanist reflections on the lifeworld through non-representational conceptions of practise. However, there is currently no clear definition of what sets post-phenomenology apart from phenomenology as a body of theories or concepts, and there is no obvious path along which such a distinction may be further explored. In response, the study identifies three crucial aspects that set phenomenology apart from post-phenomenology and call for more investigation. First, intentionality needs to be rethought as an emerging relationship with the environment rather than an innate requirement for experience. The second is the acknowledgment that things exist independently from how humans perceive them or use them. The third step involves reevaluating our interactions with alterity, which is crucial to the formation of phenomenological experience given our irreducible connection to the outside world. The paper explores these variations and makes recommendations for how post-phenomenology can benefit the larger field of human geography.

Key word: post-phenomenology, Objects; Materiality; Subjectivity; Intersubjectivity

Introduction: This essay looks at how geography has interacted with phenomenology. A school of thought called phenomenology "give[s] a direct description of human experience as it is, without taking into account its psychological foundation and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian, or the sociologist may be able to provide" (Merleau-Ponty 2002: vii). Phenomenology has always piqued the interest of geographers. This is especially clear in the humanistic geography of the 1970s and 1980s (Buttimer 1976; Buttimer and Seamon 1980; Ley and Samuels 1978a, b). Here, phenomenology provided a counterpoint to positivist scientific rationality by creating "ideas and languages to describe and explain the human experience of nature, space, and time," along with a variety of other "humanistic" methods (Buttimer 1976: 278). This use of phenomenology was criticised for a variety of reasons, including the claim that it was unable to address how people were manipulated by impersonal social forces (Smith 1979), ethnocentrism (Bonnet 1999), and aesthetic masculinity (Rose 1993). Given contemporary interest in practise (Simonsen 2004; Thrift 1996) as well as the rise of what Rose and Wylie (2006) refer to as a "post-phenomenology," there has been somewhat of a return to phenomenology in geography. Don Ihde, a philosopher of technology and science, is credited with popularising the phrase post-phenomenology (2003). According to Idhe (2003), Husserl's transcendental subject or ego and the subject-centered aspect of traditional phenomenological philosophy are both targets of post-phenomenology.

On the basis of this, we may pinpoint three interconnected characteristics of this important relationship to phenomenology. First, there has been a shift away from the presumption that a subject existing before experience and toward an investigation of how the subject arises in or as a result of experience. Second, it has resulted in the realisation that things have lives of their own independent of how people perceive them or use them (Harman 2002, Meillassoux 2008). In light of these considerations, there has been a reevaluation of our relationships with alterity (Wylie 2009; Rose 2010), assuming that alterity is essential to the formation of phenomenological experience given our irreducible being-with the world.

Post-phenomenology "has the capacity to refigure our knowledge of the relation of the body to the world," according to Lea (2009: 374). Post-phenomenological geographies, as a separate field of research, "are...not especially cohesive," acknowledges Lea (2009: 377). In the paragraphs that follow, we list a number of major themes that are essential to this re-engagement with phenomenology through post-phenomenology and offer suggestions for how to further explore these themes in order to maintain a wide-ranging engagement with

phenomenological thought. This is not intended to regulate this new area of research, but rather to identify promising directions for future investigation.

Geographical phenomena and phenomenology

The development of phenomenology has a complicated past (Moran 2000). Paul Ricoeur, for instance, claimed that "Husserlian heresies are the history of phenomenology" (Zahavi 2006: n.p). There are at least two approaches to account for this. The first major revision Husserl made to his phenomenological work was from his early critique of psychologism to his descriptive phenomenological studies of various acts of consciousness to his mature transcendental phenomenology (Zahavi 2003). Second, a variety of phenomenologists from various eras have adopted Husserl's ideas and advanced them in various ways. Geographers have used phenomenology in a variety of ways, which highlights the variability in what it actually is, how it is applied, and what it ultimately seeks to accomplish. Buttimer (1976) made an important contribution to humanistic geography's interaction with phenomenology when he attempted to comprehend how people experience space by delving into the idea of a "lifeworld." Husserl's works on "world" and "reduction" were crucial in this context, as were Heidegger's writings on "dwelling," Merleau-on Ponty's the body-subject, and geography writing on time-space, which all incorporated more existentialist elements. A common physical and social environment known as the "lifeworld" is where "experience is produced" and where awareness is made apparent (Buttimer 1976: 280). Buttimer maintained that this lifeworld is typically "taken-for-granted," with its significance mostly going unrecognised in the course of our daily activities.

The incorporation of phenomenological elements into such humanistic maps was not without opposition. Pickles (1985), for example, contended that because geographers only dealt with phenomenology in caricature form, "Husserl's entire project [was] presented exclusively in caricature form and hence to the empiricist looks to make no sense." Pickles contends that humanistic geographers largely misunderstood the philosophical motivation and method of phenomenology, even though Husserl's project to uncover the transcendental structures of intentional experience undoubtedly poses an enormous challenge that Husserl himself arguably failed to meet. This led to the realisation that we are being in, alongside, and toward the world rather than being subjects manipulating objects in the external,'real' physical world, which is still contested by many phenomenologists today. For instance, Relph (1976: 143) claimed in his seminal work on place that placelessness was on the rise in modern society, which he defined as "the undermining of the importance of place for both individuals and cultures, and the casual replacement of the diverse and significant places of the world with anonymous spaces and exchangable environments." Malpas' (2006) explanation of the ways that place, or placement, is crucial to Heidegger's concerns with existence or being-there, is noteworthy as well. Heidegger's "topology" focused on how our "attunement" to the universe as it is revealed to us through moods and embodiment plays a crucial role (Larsen and Johnson 2012).

Approaching Post-phenomenology

Idhe aims to challenge earlier phenomenological work that starts with an abstract and undifferentiated body-subject in his seminal work on post-phenomenology. In doing so, Ihde (2003: 11) "substitutes embodiment for subjectivity" and shifts her perspective to one that is existential as opposed to transcendental. According to Ihde, the body is made up of two different bodies: a lived body and a socialised body. These bodies do not conflict with one another but rather coexist, according to Idhe's (2003: 13) argument: "First, I reject the idea that body one [the lived] may be assimilated into culture. It is the prerequisite for being a body and is best described as a corps vecu [lived body]. However, body one is also embedded in and influenced by body 2, or the social and cultural significations that we all encounter. Actional-perceptual and cultural factors both contribute to embodiment."

Idhe's key post-phenomenological shift, nevertheless, is the dialogue he starts between phenomenology, pragmatism, and technoscience. This move is made in light of later phenomenological work, particularly Merleau-Ponty. Idhe (2009) uses the emphasis on practise that characterises pragmatism to challenge the idealistic inclinations of phenomenology. This prompts a consideration of techniques using "a nonsubjectivistic and

interrelational phenomenology" and "an organism/environment model rather than a subject/object model" (Idhe 2009: 10-11). Ihde's studies of variation analysis, embodiment, and the lifeworld do, however, uphold phenomenology's more exacting analytical approach. Idhe (2009) integrates technoscience with an interest in the function that technology performs in social and cultural life as well as how certain technologies can mediate consciousness.

There are some similarities between the post-phenomenology of Idhe and the post-phenomenology that has recently been tentatively defined (and actually designated as such) in geography by Rose and Wylie (2006), Simpson (2009), and Ash (2012), though a clear connection is by no means obvious. A shift away from a subject-centered perspective on experience is the main point of convergence. Ihde's work is heavily influenced by pragmatism philosophy, yet geographers frequently use post-structuralist theory in connection with post-phenomenology (see Rose 2006; Wylie 2006). A major focus of the post-phenomenology being produced in geography in this connection with post-structuralism has been "intentionality" (Wylie 2006). According to the idea that experiences are experiences of something, we are always looking at, listening to, thinking about, and so on. This "aboutness" suggests the existence of a deliberate subject before experiencing anything. There must be an author of this aboutness and a point from which the directedness of the experience originates for it to be "about" something. Consequently, this idea of intentionality is strongly related to a specific idea of subjectivity in which the subject rules through "internal representational thought" (Rose 2006: 546). Therefore, the evolution of a phenomenology beyond intentionality might be viewed as the most straightforward interpretation of the post-phenomenology that has so far emerged in geography (Moran 2000). However, this shift away from intentionality does emphasise a division between the post-phenomenology of geography and the post-phenomenology of Idhe. While Idhe (2007) upholds a belief in the intentional correlate of experience, even though it has been re-conceptualized in terms of being interrelational (something shared with work in geography on practise), this is not necessarily upheld within the version of post-phenomenology emerging in geography.

Post-Phenomenology and Geography

After briefly describing the history of geography's involvement with phenomenology and the evolution of post-phenomenology, the next section outlines a number of essential themes for a post-phenomenological geography and suggests potential future development pathways. The body, (inter)subjectivity, objects, and the social are all related to these.

Body: The body is at the centre of any post-phenomenology. Of our four themes, this one has already received the most attention in the geographic literature. The writings of Merleau-Ponty, who contended that the experiencing "I" and the body are not ontologically distinct and that "[t]he union of soul and body is not an amalgamation between two mutually external words," are frequently mentioned in this context (2002: 102). One is their own body (Morris 2008). The body is "the perspective from which I must view the world...the body cannot be comprehended by itself in an impartial, detached manner" (Gutting 2001: 190). This body, in turn, is entangled with the environment it inhabits (Merleau-Ponty 1968). Due to Merleau-emphasis Ponty's on a non-dualistic, contextual view to the body, several geographers have referenced his ideas (see Allen 2004; Cresswell 2003; Davidson 2000; Longhurst 1997; Simonsen 2004; 2013). In addition, the creation of a post-phenomenology of embodied experience has been influenced by his work (see Wylie 2002; 2005). Wylie's (2006) post-phenomenology of visual self-landscape interactions, which borrows from Merleau-later Ponty's embodied ontology of the visual, is noteworthy in this context. By treating "seeing as a perceptual actualisation of landscape and self, or materialities and sensibility," Wylie (2006: 519) rethinks the gaze subject and claims that "the depth of the visible world is the affordance and sustenance of particular senses and perceptions of landscape." Here, landscape is redefined as defining "the materialities and senses with and according to which we view" as opposed to being an external, inanimate reality that is perceived (Wylie 2006: 520 [emphasis added]). The "body-subject is now 'of' the world: body and world, subject and object, are wedded as flesh," rather than a pre-existing subject, is given experience (Wylie 2006: 525). As a result,

experience does not result from a subject's directedness towards the environment but rather emerges alongside it.

Similar concerns might be raised about the agential function of "world" in this context. For instance, the emphasis on pre-conscious physical intentionality in Seamon's (1979; 1980) work on "place-ballets" significantly broadens geographic understandings of what might be included under the title of "the human." The agency of the "world," in which such action and movement takes place, is discussed far less in depth. In Seamon's analysis, the "dynamism of place" is principally derived from the behaviour of its human residents rather than from the vitality of its non-human constituents and the material surroundings present, which are primarily there to be "manipulated" by the body-subject. Post-phenomenology therefore calls for a focus on both the vitality of embodied experience, the dynamism of felt intensities that find corporeal expression in the feeling body, as well as the ways in which the body-subject undergoes continuous processes of "affectual composition" in and through its relations with a material-agential world (Seigworth and Gregg 2010). It's also crucial to remember that such vibrancy and affective composition isn't always inclined toward the optimistic and expansive. Affects can be both pleasant and bad, as Henry explains. By focusing on a phenomenology of life, one essential aspect of the body's liveliness—its finitude—is highlighted. Using the concept of finitude Harrison (2007b; 2008) has drawn attention to the necessity of taking into account the body's vulnerabilities and passive nature by thinking about embodiment within and through these contexts (also see Romanillos,2008; 2011). Harrison (2008: 427) argues against the idea that vulnerability is a bad thing that needs to be avoided and instead interprets it as describing "corporeal life's inherent and continuous susceptibility to the unchosen and the unforeseen - its inherent openness to what exceeds its abilities to contain and absorb." In order to create a post-phenomenology of the body, we must take into account both passive bodies—those that are asleep (Bissell 2009; Harrison 2009) or at ease (Bissell 2008)—and active, "skilled" bodies.

Subjectivity

The rejection of the late-Husserlian intentional subject, which serves as a prerequisite for the world's potential appearance in its Cartesian "status as a separate and independent sphere of being," is a defining characteristic of post-phenomenological works (Zahavi 2003: 51). Husserl (2001b) assigned the intentional structure of consciousness a key, constitutive position in his attempt to attend to genuine lived experience. However, this directedness of perception suggests the existence of a self-grounding, autonomous subject as the source of those intents prior to that experience. The globe comes after the subject in this context. Post-phenomenology, in contrast, emphasises ongoing processes of subject development. In the sense of a change from a pre-existing dormant or passive subject that becomes an active subject in the turning of its intentions towards a phenomenon, this does not present any binary between a passivity and an activity (Husserl 2001a). Instead, the subject itself is more fundamentally and continuously constituted in the context of its embodied being in connection to the outside world. The goal of post-phenomenology is to "resituate something which might still be called subjectivity inside a pre-symbolic/[pre-]linguistic and material dimension," according to its definition (James 2012: 13).

The history of phenomenology after Husserl can be traced along this post-phenomenological path. We can go back to Merleau-Ponty, who attempted to change Husserl's interpretation of intentionality by emphasising the body more. Intentionality expresses, in the words of Merleau-Ponty, "the inextricable union of world and consciousness, with neither assimilating to the other" (Gutting 2001: 188). Merleau-Ponty preferred to think of the unity of the world as "lived as ready-made or already there" rather than trying to subjugate the "phenomenological field" to a transcendental subject (2002: xix). Due to the fact that Merleau-work Ponty's begins with the subject-object dichotomy, there is a risk that he may reinstate a human transcendence in his explanation of embodied subjectivity. At least in his early writing, Merleau-Ponty establishes the subject-object difference by stating that an object exists only when there is someone to observe it, upholding the idealistic terminology he gained from Husserl (see Merleau-Ponty 1964).

A post-phenomenological account of subjectivity and intersubjectivity ultimately entails developing and upholding the notion that the subject is not "the ground or wellspring of intelligibility," or "the secure foundation from which our comprehension of the world and others is to be achieved" (Anderson and Wylie 2009: 323). Though it is feasible to construct explanations for how the self and the environment as well as the self and other continuously descend from their mutually constitutive being. This explanation does not reduce the world to the operations of the Husserlian subject's constitutive mental acts of "appresentation" (defined as "the process by which the direct perceptual presentation of one object mediates or makes possible the indirect perception of certain other aspects of that object that are themselves inaccessible to direct perception"; Sanders 2008: 143) or "pairing" (defined as the connection made "when one object is regularly presented - thereby "associated" - ") or "pairing" (Instead, self-appearance and dis-position with oneself, others, and the world are present.

The Objects

The nature and significance of materiality have been extensively discussed in geography literature (Anderson and Wylie 2009; Jackson and Fanin 2011). These explanations frequently rest on the notion of relationality. According to Anderson and Wylie," The qualities and/or capacities of materialities afterwards become effects of that assembly when heterogeneous materialities "actuate or emerge from within the assembling of various, differential relations" (2009: 320)."From this angle, post-phenomenology enables us to think about how things possess relational abilities that humanistic phenomenological systems would typically reserve for people. Instead of eviscerating or degrading human status, as Simonsen (2013) concerns, this is meant to enhance the status of objects and recognise that they interact with the environment using comparable structures (though not entirely equivalent capacities) to how phenomenology claims humans do. According to Morton, the interaction of objects is an aesthetic experience similar to how a human may view the object rather than a crude type of causality. He said this:" "Causality is entirely a phenomenon of aesthetics. Events that are aesthetically pleasing are not just interactions between people, or between people and paintings, or even between people and the dialogue in plays. They occur when a saw incises a brand-new piece of plywood. When a worm seeps out of some moist soil, they occur (2013: 19)."Understanding that aesthetic causality undermines phenomenological conceptions of the object as a tool or a set of interactions. This broadens a phenomenological analysis for geographers to include and investigate non-human entities. Post-phenomenology can explore relationships between non-human items without restricting these relationships to how they appear to humans by considering the autonomy of objects seriously (see Ash 2013).

The Social

There have long been concerns about "the social" in work that is informed by phenomenology in geography (see Ley 1978). To return to Merleau-Ponty once more, one component of our embodied existence that Merleau-work Ponty's may not have sufficiently considered is the socialisation of our bodies into particular behaviours and the ways in which the body is performatively interpolated within larger societal frameworks (Hass 2008). While Merleau-Ponty (2002) does discuss how the biological and the human are intertwined in terms of habit development or the relationship between the sedimented and spontaneous, he acknowledges little to nothing about how "culture coerces our bodies in a political way" (Hass 2008: 94). What remains of "the social" as it is understood through categories like age, gender, and race from a post-phenomenological standpoint? This is a significant query. According to Colls (2012), phenomenology frequently presents an unexamined body-subject. She recommends an alternative paradigm of difference that "is neither pre-given, hierarchical or oppositional" in its place (Colls 2012: 441). Here, difference is a "question whose potential is still yet to be completely recognised" rather than a matter of categorical differentiation (2012: 438). A post-phenomenology would argue that these categories are not only social constructs or the results of specific discourses or power relations, but rather what Colls, borrowing from Grosz (2005), calls forces that are open and corporeal in nature (or what we have been calling objects). These forces:" operate at various scales and levels of intensity. Intangible and unknowable, yet sometimes felt by the body and travelling between bodies (fear, hope, love, wonder, hate,

confidence), they are produced by and active in the formation of larger social, economic, and political processes. They can pass through and inhabit bodies (metabolism, circulation, ovulation, ejaculation) (Colls 2012: 439)."

Humanist conceptions of the social as a field of corporeal sedimentation are challenged by this expansion of the concept of retention. This sedimentation is based on the reversibility of the body, according to Simonsen (2013: 16–17), who states that "Body-subjects are visible-seers, tangible-touchers, audible listeners, etc., enacting an ongoing intertwining between the flesh of the body, the flesh of others, and the flesh of the world." Although Simonsen acknowledges that reversibility can occur in relationships with both the world and other people, in the end, the body's reversibility is what allows sociality to occur and serves as the container that either receives or incorporates social sediment into it. If Irigaray's explanation of air is taken seriously, it would imply that the human body is merely one node in a continuous flow of objects that do not necessarily require the human body to perceive them in order to have certain social effects. The social is then actually formed by the things that encircle, cross over, miss, and engulf human bodies in a way that is frequently contingent and that is not always focused on the goals or concerns of those working in the social field.

Conclusion

The texts we have gathered under the heading of "post-phenomenology" come from a wide range of intellectual traditions and frequently make use of distinct onto-epistemological worldviews that are by no means entirely consistent. However, we think that these differences are unified by something. In order to summarise how a post-phenomenology draws from, while being obviously distinct from, existing modalities of phenomenological study and theory, we want to call attention to these areas of coherence. We also make some recommendations for how post-phenomenology can benefit human geography more generally by highlighting the contrasts between phenomenology and post-phenomenology. The dedication to overcoming the subject-object, human-world correlation and, in doing so, upsetting the intentional correlate of experience is the first significant point of coherence among the concepts presented here. While many phenomenological thinkers assert that they have solved the subject-object puzzle, in reality they simply avoid the issue by arguing that it is impossible to adequately distinguish between subject and object. This is actually a return to idealism, according to which everything in the world has existence, but only because people experience it and only through structures of interest and familiarity that are solely human. A lot of approaches are different in post-phenomenology. For example, some schools of post-phenomenology are more interested in how the self and the world, or the objects themselves, devolve or appear in the relations they enter into, as opposed to seeing the subject as directing its attentions toward a world in terms of an intentional, and so sense-bestowing, directedness. We should begin with the relations themselves (Nancy 2000) or the givenness of the world itself (Marion 1998) rather than a subject and object correlate, where the subject is ultimately the primary term, and treat anything that appears to be secondary to this underlying implication/givenness. This is furthered by various schools of post-phenomenology, which take an attitude toward "determinate objects that exist both in and out of contact" and acknowledge the autonomous existence of the world outside of the ways in which it appears to people (Harman 2012: 106, our emphasis). These advancements offer a toolkit for questioning the world in all of its complexity. One can start to reconsider'social' constructions like gender or race as actual constructions caused by interactions between various human and non-human objects by theorising such appearance and objects.

The second point of coherence is that post-phenomenology acknowledges that most of the phenomenon known as "human consciousness" occurs "with," rather than "in," the human body, in the complex web of factors that support and influence human thought (Hutchins 1996). As a result, non-human politics and sociality must coexist with human politics and sociality. External things enable and transfer the ability to express and communicate cognition. The feeling of the world arises continually from the unfolding of the interrelations between those items in the playing out of the world, neither from a source outside or transcendent to the world, nor from within those objects themselves (Nancy 1997). The distinctiveness of the objects

through which language is formed cannot be divorced from the transmission of language, which is the basic foundation of political expression. A post-phenomenology promotes an examination of these things that does not reduce them to being mere instruments used by people to accomplish their pre-existing objectives and ambitions.

With post-emphasis phenomenology's on objects, we can go beyond mere curiosity or provocation to start thinking about the aesthetic causes behind how things relate to one another. We can also explore what non-human things are and what they do by focusing on them as objects rather than as relationships or processes. In conclusion, post-phenomenology does not mean ignoring the foundational ideas of phenomenology. Instead, it involves reconfiguring and extending the analytical and conceptual bounds of phenomenology. It involves investigating what Quentin Meillassoux (2009) refers to as "the big outdoors"—an expansive universe that exists outside of the correlation between humans and their environments but is crucial for forming human capacities, relationships, and experiences.

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