

Ústav filosofie a religionistiky vás zve na veřejné přednášky uchazečů o místo přednášejícího filosofii 19. a 20. století se zaměřením na fenomenologickou tradici a hermeneutiku.

Kdy: středa 9. května 2018 (rozpis níže)

Kde: místnost 225V

Rozpis přednášek

1. 9:30-10:05 „Husserl, Derrida and the Problem of Phenomenology“
2. 10:10-10:45 „How do we come to experience other selves? Phenomenological Approaches to Intersubjectivity“
3. 10:50-11:25 „Super-Civilized Existence. Beyond Liberalism and Gestell“
4. 11:30-12:05 „Phenomenology and Speculative Object-Oriented Philosophies: Possibilities and Perspectives on a Difficult Relationship“
5. 12:10-12:45 „Shared Emotions and Embodiment: Teachings from Phenomenology“

Jelikož kandidáti nemají znát jména ostatních uchazečů, uvádíme pouze názvy a níže abstrakty jednotlivých přednášek.

Abstrakty:

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### **Husserl, Derrida and the Problem of Phenomenology**

My presentation will revolve around my current research (and some of the philosophical problems motivating it) on the relations between Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and some of the ways in which it was developed over the course of the second half of the last century. In particular, I will discuss how the French philosopher Jacques Derrida contributed, especially in his early works on Husserl, to deeply re-thinking the idea of phenomenology as a transcendental form of philosophy. In a much stronger way: during my presentation I will make the case for considering Derrida's agenda as itself belonging to the history of phenomenology, whose transcendental stance he contributes to transforming with the introduction of a new perspective.

The presentation will be divided into three main sections: indeed, after a quite brief elucidation of how Husserl's "phenomenological-transcendental" project is to be comprehended, I will switch to Derrida's 1962 commentary on *The Origin of Geometry* so as to present and evaluate his proposal; finally, I will bring my presentation to conclusion by showing how my interests in the early Derrida fit

into my overall research agenda concerning phenomenology and history of philosophy.

(2)

### **How do we come to experience other selves? - Phenomenological Approaches to Intersubjectivity**

The issue I want to address is a classical one in the tradition of continental European phenomenology, derived from Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). In that context, it is called the issue of other-experience or of other selves (intersubjectivity), but it is a problem that has plagued also modern philosophy, where it is better known as the “problem of other minds” or as the “problem of empathy”. The basic question addressed under these different headings, is the following: how do we understand others, their intentions, behaviors and psychological states? And more specifically: how do we come to experience other selves? My aim in this talk is to set forth a phenomenological answer to this question. To this end, I will present, in broad strokes, two classical ways of resolving this question that have been criticized and later overcome by phenomenologists: the theory of analogical inference, defended by behaviorists and Cartesian like, and the theory of empathy especially associated to the work of Theodor Lipps. Since this point of departure will serve as a clarifying point of contrast, I will try to give a taste of some of these arguments and of the phenomenological critiques developed by phenomenologists, including Max Scheler, Aron Gurwitsch, and later, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In a second step, drawing support from the work of E. Husserl and M. Merleau-Ponty, I will map an alternative way to address this issue that radically undercuts the problem of other minds in modern philosophy, by showing the essential role played by the lived body and its relationship to a shared perceptual field, against which we first experience other selves and within which our respective perspectives are brought together and spontaneously slip one into the other’s. Specifically, I will concentrate on three key and original features of the approach to intersubjectivity found in merleau-pontian phenomenology that I wish to emphasize: the primacy of bodily motor intentionality in our relationship to other selves, an original conception of the living body as “theatre” of the experiential life of the Other, and a refined conception of the life-world — in which we all participate as a “We” — and which includes both the natural and the cultural world.

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### **Super-Civilized Existence. Beyond Liberalism and Gestell**

This talk takes inspiration from Jan Patočka’s reflections on the dynamic of current history. After sketching Patočka’s interpretation of the present world as

that of supercivilization, I focus on the question of who can trigger social change and in what way. In *Heretical Essays*, Patočka famously proposes “the solidarity of those who are capable of understanding ... what history is about”: this solidary community of the shaken “can and must create a spiritual authority, become a spiritual power that could drive the warring world to some restraint”. I will demonstrate that, as a matter of fact, Patočka remains too deeply indebted to Heidegger’s idea of *Gestell* to be able to offer a persuasive account of the grounds and contexts of the present crisis of the world. Moreover, taking inspiration from Heidegger again, his idea of spiritual reversal is ineffective insofar as it conceives human freedom too narrowly. Yet, Patočka’s own concept of the movement of existence, when reinterpreted, has great potential for the civilizational analysis providing that we overcome the duality of technology and spirituality implicit in his concept and accept the irreducible technicity of existence.

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### **„Phenomenology and Speculative Object-Oriented Philosophies: Possibilities and Perspectives on a Difficult Relationship“**

Recent years have demonstrated a growing interest in speculative, realist, and materialist approaches that are emphatically object-oriented. They attempt to give an account of entities or “things” in themselves, or independent of the ways in which they appear to a human subject. The key question common to these approaches could be summarized as follows: How can we understand things in their capacity to create a world in which humans once appeared and in which they will cease to exist again at a certain point in time? As I will argue in my presentation, there are good reasons, both philosophically and in the broader view of a reformed attitude to being, for raising this question. However, as I also will argue, the transition from epistemology to ontology is happening too quickly within these new object-oriented approaches; often with the result that they involuntarily continue to operate within a reifying subject-object division. As a remedy, I propose a certain phenomenological approach. Phenomenology has been attacked by speculative materialists like Quentin Meillassoux for its supposed anthropocentric “correlationism,” and its reducing being to “appearing-for-a-subject”. Yet, as I will demonstrate, it is precisely its specific correlationism that allows phenomenology, as “opposed to all free-floating constructions and accidental findings” (Heidegger, *Being and Time*), to let things show themselves in themselves. To account for the self-giving of things in a radical sense, however, it will be necessary to detach appearing from “appearing-for-a-subject,” or rather, to put the former before the latter. That is to say: things show themselves by virtue of appearing itself and not by virtue of appearing-for-a-subject. The general contours of this idea will draw upon and develop synthetically in greater detail

notions already found (for example) in the work of Heidegger, Patočka, and Marion.

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### **Shared Emotions and Embodiment: Teachings from Phenomenology**

Doubts about the possibility of shared or collective emotions are often motivated by considerations about the body. If we understand the body as “the theatre of emotions” (Damásio), it is reasonable to assume that feelings are always felt within one’s own body. If this is the case, it appears doubtful whether something like a genuinely shared emotion can exist, unless we want to assume the existence of a group body as the bearer of such feelings. In my talk, I will present a phenomenological understanding of embodiment (drawing mostly on Merleau-Ponty and Max Scheler) in order to show that the way in which current debate is set up leads to a wrong dichotomy: It is assumed that we either need to accept the dubious notion of a group body, or we need to reject the notion of feelings shared beyond individual bodies altogether. However, between the claim of feelings being locked inside individual bodies, and the claim of a group body, there is ample room for a nuanced understanding of how feelings can be experienced together by a plurality of individuals. In my talk, I will present prolegomena for such an understanding of embodiment.