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THE REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE “TO LET THINGS BE!
EDMUND HUSSERL 160, MARTIN HEIDEGGER 130”
(December 10–12, 2019, Riga, Latvia)

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The current report gives an overview of *The International Interdisciplinary Conference: To Let Things Be! Edmund Husserl 160, Martin Heidegger 130*, which took place at the University of Latvia, December 10–12, 2019. The report outlines the philosophical aims of the conference, analyses the contribution of the researchers from fifteen countries around the world, and introduces the main conclusions concerning the interdisciplinary development of phenomenology.

Kew words: phenomenology, hermeneutics, interdisciplinarity, Husserl,

LĀCIS, 2020

HORIZON 9 (1) 2020 373

ОТЧЕТ О МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ МЕЖДИСЦИПЛИНАРНОЙ
КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ «ДА БУДУТ ВЕЩИ!
160 ЛЕТ ЭДМУНДУ ГУССЕРЛЮ, 130 ЛЕТ МАРТИНУ
ХАЙДЕГГЕРУ» (10–12 декабря 2019 года, Рига, Латвия)

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Данный отчет представляет собой обзор Международной междисциплинарной конференции «Да будут вещи! 160 лет Эдмунду Гуссерлю и 130 лет Мартину Хайдеггера», которая состоялась в Латвийском университете 10–12 декабря 2019 г. В докладе представлена информация о философских задачах конференции, анализ содержания докладов исследователей из пятнадцати стран со всего мира, а также важные выводы относительно междисциплинарного развития феноменологии.

Ключевые слова: феноменология, герменевтика, междисциплинарность, Гуссерль, Хайдеггер.

The International Interdisciplinary Conference: To Let Things Be! Edmund Husserl 160, Martin Heidegger 130 (December 10–12, 2019, Riga, University of Latvia) was organized by Department of Philosophy and Ethics of the University of Latvia, chaired by Dr. Raivis Bičevskis, and Interdisciplinary Research Centre of the Academic Library of the University of Latvia, chaired by Dr. Ineta Kivle. The Scientific Committee was represented by Dr. Raivis Bičevskis (Latvia), Dr. Ineta Kivle (Latvia), Dr. Debika Saha (India), Dr. Harald Seubert (Switzerland), Dr. Paola Ludovica Coriando (Austria). The conference was organised with the financial support of the University of Latvia, Austrian Embassy Riga, State Culture Capital Foundation, State Research Programme: Latvian Language, 6.1. Ontology of Language. Participants from Latvia,

374 INETA KIVLE, RAVIS BIČEVSKIS, KRIŠJĀNIS LĀCIS

India, Belgium, Poland, Austria, Afghanistan, Switzerland, Russia, Austria, Georgia, Honk Kong, USA, Slovenia, Germany, the Czech Republic, Iran and Norway discussed their research on several topics in seven sections. The titles of sections covered comprehensive view on heritage of Husserl and Heidegger accentuating crucial points of interdisciplinary discussion: (I) World and Time, Intersubjectivity and Sociality; (II) Consciousness and Body, Medicine and Technic; (III) Philosophy, Religion and God; (IV) Phenomenology, Ontology and Metaphysics, History; (V) Art, Poetry and Language; (VI) Being and Existence, History and Ethics; (VII) Aesthetics, Transcendentalism, Ideology (Kivle & Bičevskis, 2019).

At the welcome address to the participants of the conference the governance of the University of Latvia, prorector Ina Druviete focused on importance of interdisciplinary approach to Philosophy and Humanities in general. Austrian Ambassador in Latvia Stella Avallone quoted from Edmund Husserl's text *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*:

There are only two escapes from the crisis of European existence: the downfall of Europe in its estrangement from its own rational sense of life, its fall into hostility towards the spirit and into barbarity: or the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy through a heroism of reason that overcomes naturalism once and for all. (Husserl, 1970, 299)

Director of Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia Maija Kūle overviewed the basic facts on phenomenological movement in Latvia concerning a presence of phenomenology in Latvia from the time of its origin until today. The beginning of phenomenology in Latvia is connected with the name of Teodors Celms (1893–1989), a student of Edmund Husserl and a philosopher of the first generation of interpreters and critics within the phenomenological movement. She characterizes Latvian contribution to phenomenological investigations in soviet times and today—collaboration with such Russian phenomenologists as Nelly Motroshilova, Viktor Molchanov and others, and organization of international phenomenological discussion (Patkul, 2015). Since 1990 Riga has hosted several international phenomenological conferences in collaboration with The World Institute for Advanced Phenomenological Research and Learning (USA). A remarkable part of Husserl's and Heidegger's works are translated into Latvian and their insights are employed in philosophical studies as well as in other sciences—literature, art, life sciences and social sciences. Head of Department of Philosophy and Ethics of the University of Latvia, Head of Martin Heidegger Society in Latvia Raivis Bičevskis and researcher Uldis Vēgners gave introduction to the recent activities in the field of phenomenology and hermeneutics: organization of international conference *Martin Heidegger in*

HORIZON 9 (1) 2020 375

Riga (2018), *Phenomenology and Aesthetics* (2017) (Vēgners & Grīnfelde, 2017) and activities, research aims and objectives of CEESP—Central and East Europe Society of Phenomenology.

The conference focused not only heritage of Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophies on the development of contemporary philosophy, but also on the interdisciplinarity of arts, literature, social sciences and humanities in general, in certain respects reaching out to life sciences, philosophy of technology and medicine. The conference argued that the specifics of the phenomenological method and the disclosure of ontological structures describe both: the formation of individual experience and the determinations of its mode of existence, and the way the horizon of meaning unfolds and exists within certain social conditions. The thematic scope of the conference covered such concepts and approaches as empathy, being and existence, time and temporality, phenomenological understanding of artworks, the role of interdisciplinarity in formation of common worlds of meaning, freedom of

choice, concepts of history, religion and life sciences.

Three keynote lectures covered fundamental philosophical notions about intersubjectivity, epistemology and truth. The first keynote speaker Debika Saha (India) gave a lecture titled *The Role of Intersubjectivity in the Global World*. Role of the phenomenological method and its difference from metaphysics was analysed by Mamuka Dolidze (Georgia) in presentation *Does Phenomenology Refer to Metaphysics? A question about truth* was viewed by Klaus Neugebauer (Germany) in the study *Die Frage dem Wahrsein zwischen Dasein (Heidegger) und Bewusstsein (Husserl)*. Debika Saha focuses on the role of intersubjectivity in the global world showing wide range of intersubjectivity as the most basic quality of human existence, the source of objectivity and a mode of participation in the natural and material world, a domain of inquiry and mutual understanding that spans the whole range of human experience. Mamuka Dolidze viewed phenomenology and metaphysics as mutually exclusive concepts that give impulse for understanding of human internal and external life, phenomena that are given to our consciousness and “thing itself” as a transcendent object, which has never been given to consciousness. For explication of the subject matter, Mamuka Dolidze explores the phenomenological method—the bracketing of the phenomenon with the intention to wrest it from the determinism of objective being. Klaus Neugebauer followed the transformation of Husserl’s conception of truth in Heidegger’s critical reception. He showed how, on the one hand, Husserl tries to set up “truth” in the foundations of a pure logic of consciousness, while on the other hand, Heidegger is rejecting various traditional concepts of truth by simultaneously confronting them with an ontological, completely new analysis of “being truth.”

376 INETA KIVLE, RĀIVIS BIČEVSKIS, KRĪŠJĀNIS LĀCIS

The first section dedicated to the world, time, intersubjectivity and sociality was opened by Günther Neumann who offered a comparison of the phenomenological analyses of time and temporality in Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, there by highlighting the fundamental differences of their approaches, especially in their relation to death. It became clear that Heidegger’s question concerning the nature (Wesen) of time and history, with its point of departure from factual-historical life, from the outset moved in a different direction to that of Husserl. Lenart Škof’s investigation *Ludwig Binswanger and Martin Heidegger: Gestures of Love and Worlds of Intersubjectivity* analysis Ludwig Binswanger’s critique to Martin Heidegger

for the absence of love in his *Being and Time* and discussed the role of gesture in Binswanger's thought—employing Binswanger's concept of “loving togetherness” *Dasein* is to be understood as “having a heart.” Lenart Škof's approach to phenomenology of love opts for an alternative epistemology of Heidegger, one that would allow the possibility of love in his thought—and perhaps even allow us to think of love in Heidegger as a gift of being. Ineta Kivle's presentation *The Rhythm of Stability: Husserl's Worlds and Deleuze's Territories* focuses on concepts of stability, rhythm, territory and world. In her research, stability is considered as an organised movement ensuring safety, order, becoming and continuity and rhythm of territories and phenomenological worlds reveal the main correlation between the centre and peripheral elements—for Husserl the centre of stability is an intentional “I”, for Deleuze stability is maintained by a principle of territorialisation and establishing of the centre in chaos. The central question of the report of Ģirts Jankovskis *Norms as a Medium: Phenomenological Approach in Analyzing the Perception of Social Media* is: are norms the objects of thought or are they, perhaps, the rules characterizing the mode of perception? In the presentation is suggested how the dual nature of the norms resonates with the concept of language developed within the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger—language appears as an object of thoughts, on the other hand, language as an object of thought is always situated within language. Ģirts Jankovskis suggested that the same applies to norm—phenomenology norms are always manifesting themselves before their presentation in a mode of perception.

The second section focused on applied phenomenology in the fields of medicine, technic, body and consciousness. Māra Grīnfelde's presentation *Husserl's Phenomenology of Body and Its Implication for Medical Practice* focuses on dialogue between phenomenology and medical practice. The central concept of the problem is the notion of the lived-body introduced by Edmund Husserl that was analysed in four dimensions: body as a seat of free movement; body as a bearer of sensations; body as a material thing in a causal relationship with the material world; body as a

HORIZON 9 (1) 2020 377

thing embedded in a social context. Subsequently, these dimensions can be applied to the experience of the sick body for the better understanding of patient's experience of illness. Report of Uldis Vēgners *Dimensions of*

Temporality in Pain, Suffering and Illness focuses on concept of time as the central topics in phenomenology of medicine

and phenomenological psychiatry. The report develops a conceptual framework consisting of various distinctions between subjective and objective time that could provide systematic analysis of the experience of temporality in pain, suffering and illness: time of experience vs. time of the world; time of lived experience vs. time of intentional objects; time of ownership vs. time of intersubjectivity. Virgil W. Brower's presentation *Myoelectrics & Mundarten: Phenomenology of technical Telepathy by Silent Speech-Recognition Robotics* analyzes silent speech, inner voice as the first non-in-

vasive interface. In comparison of Alter Ego (in this case, silent speech recognition interface that captures neuromuscular signals) and Husserl's *Leiblichkeit* of language the author returns to Husserl's understanding of intention and inner-voice exploring cognitions from *Ideas I*.

In the section on such concepts as being, existence, religion and God were presented the investigation *Heidegger Sein, Rahner's Gott—noch immer aktuelle Frage oder fälling gewordene Antwort* by Richard Kūlis. In report *Criticism and Search for Epistemological Objectivity in the Works of Soren Kierkegaard and Early Martin Heidegger* Krišjānis Lācis argued that both authors, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, criticized the notion of objectivity and its primacy. They made epistemological claims in both cases: through the long detour prescribing immersion in subjectivity, a more objective, clearer, more truthful access to things for conceptualization; through rigorous self-knowledge obtaining a position for a more objective thinking and judgment about things, and knowledge as such. However, a point of departure for both authors is different—Kierkegaard attempts to develop the Christological epistemology, while Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, retaining an eschatologically passionate dimension, excludes eschaton itself, which has considerable implications for the new conception of objectivity proposed by both authors.

Notions about history in the context of phenomenology take an important place in the second day of the conference. Kimio Murata-Soraci's presentation *Überlieferung: Re-moving the History of Being as Presence* discusses the question: Have we become genuinely historical in making stories about ourselves and our ways of being in the world? She views Derrida's text on Heidegger and re-examines the passages about anxiety, death and historicity showing how Derrida reinscribes the Heideggerian notions of ecstatic temporality and history of being. The presentation of Andris Levāns *Das Vergangene denken. Die Poetik des Historischen bei*

378 INETA KIVLE, RAIVIS BIČEVSKIS, KRIŠJĀNIS LĀCIS

lighted the Heideggerian-hermeneutic undertones in the investigative and rhetorical method employed by Kantorowitz; the poetical categories and pathos as such gives in quiring reader the possibility to immerse oneself in a particular historical period, sup plying the necessary prerequisites for involved understanding. Even if many aspects of the historical existence still remain obscured or inaccessible—the darkness of in comprehension, if fully acknowledged, in a typically Heideggerian manner creates the necessary contrast for the particular historical being to shine through. Andrei Patkul's study *Why Does Ontology as the Science of Being Need the Destruction of Its History?* concerns Heidegger's fundamental ontology based on question about being (*das Sein*) and its difference that-which-is (*das Seiende*). The author shows how Heidegger's philosophy of being is irreducible to ontic science of history. For Heidegger being is a phenomenon that is defined as "what shows itself in itself" and is not phenomenon of any direct evidence and therefore of the phenomenological description—this crucial standpoint also relates to Heidegger's approach to history as a history of being. Saulius Geniusas' lecture *Husserl's Concept of Weltapperzeption* gives framework for Husserl's concept of apperception and its types (self-apperception, world-apperception, apperception of mundane things) and defines it as an umbrella term that covers a large variety of non-intuitive modes of consciousness.

Phenomenological and hermeneutical approach to language, poetry and art was developed mainly in four lectures. Tareq I.Ayoub's presentation *A Phenomenology of the Poet: On Translating and Transliterating the Poets World* focuses on the bounds and confines of the ontological language of being and metaphysics in objectifying the poet's speech and grammar—the words of being can be transliterated and, in turn, consented as the primordially of being. Zaiga Ikere's analyses about development of phenomenological and hermeneutical terminology in Latvian language was titled *To Find a Word for What is Said*. She bases on close relation of Latvian nation to German, French, English, Russian philosophical thought and shows how Latvian contemporary philosophical language is enriched in translations of Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer particularly. Māra Rubene's lecture *Transcendental Aesthetics as an Apple of Discord: Husserl, Heidegger* compares Kant's transcendental aesthetics with Heidegger's views on language as well as shows how phenomenological

aesthetics remained a desirable possibility in Husserl's works. Hans Herlof Grelland analyses Munch's art from the phenomenological point of view in research *A Case for Heideggerian Phenomenology: Edvard Munch's "The Sick Child."* His argument that Edvard Munch was a painter who attempted to paint not the things in the world as they were in themselves, but what appeared to his mind helps us understand the phenomenological complexity of an artwork.

HORIZON 9 (1) 2020 379

The notion of authentic existence, ethics, and ideology was viewed in the final day of the conference. Presentation of Anna Malecka and Piotr Mroz *Menaces to the Authentic Existence: A Contemporary Perspective on the Heideggerian Concept of Das Man* shows the essential role of human existence in Heidegger's philosophy—Heidegger shows two kinds of human choices: one is to resolutely face death, while the other is to evade it. The latter choice leads straightaway to our falling—into the impersonal and inhuman mode of existence—*Das Man*. Valerian Ramishvili's lecture *Happiness and Dignity* analyses the phenomenon of Happiness with reference to Socratic question "How one ought to live one's life?" He examines Happiness as a kind of fundamental mood in relation to the forms of understanding of Being and shows how happiness opens the world as the place of human possibilities. Velga Vēvere's notion to phenomenological ethics, titled *Radical Demand and Spontaneity in K.E. Logstrup's Phenomenological Ethics: Contradiction or Grounds for Human Self-Realization*, grounds on ontological fact that the human existence is originally dependent on the existence of others and deeply intertwined with the lives of others. The author develops the question: How the spontaneity of human reactions to the presence of other individuals in his/her life coincides with the absolute and radical ethical demand? Valters Zariņš in the presentation *The Political Ontology: Heidegger and Others* focused on the common traits of political ontology underlying the work of thinkers designated under the moniker "Conservative Revolution," arguing that Heidegger too can be considered as one, albeit atypical representative of this polemical train of thought. For conservative revolutionaries political ontology usually denotes the fullness of being in some supposedly long past period where cultural, political, social forces were united in a highly self-conscious existing in the fullness being while modernity through its corresponding political forms has worked to obfuscate and diminish this primordial potentiality of being into oblivion and

forgetfulness. In the presentation *Critique of Scientism in the Works of Wittgenstein and Heidegger* Reinis Vilciņš gave a comparative analysis of the Wittgenstein's critical remarks on the role of science and technology and Heidegger's views about the essence of technology. He shows how both philosophers turn

away from the scientific approach and focuses on human relation to the world. In conclusion—the conference was undoubtedly successful and indicated the high level of conceptual refinement and questioning true to the cause represented by both thinkers who were celebrated. Overall, it is important to stress the personal involvement of all participants—it was clearly visible that for them the Husserlian and Heideggerian themes play not only roles for career promotion or plainly abstract scholarship points for the filling of reports; those were themes and questions into which every single speaker was involved on the most personal level. Several attending

380 INETA KIVLE, RĀIVIS BIČEVSKIS, KRISJĀNIS LĀCIS

non-philosophers attested that although the given papers and discussions displayed a vibe of Husserlian-Heideggerian dogmatics, it nevertheless could be valued and enjoyed as something positive and delightful in itself, since, in comparison to many contemporary debates and events concerning deconstructive, re-interpretative and postmodern humanities, here each of the speakers at least held fast to a fixed point of departure—the texts and thoughts of both authors themselves—believing that they both really provide something of use for today, yet not wholly explicated and appreciated in their time.

In the end, although the interdisciplinary character of the conference could suggest, otherwise, the main thing what the participants and fellow attendees could take home was the sheer joy and pleasure by engaging in pure philosophical enterprise despite the turbulence and necessary tributes to the age, pursuing questions unencumbered by the daily dose of trivialities, self-justifications and excuses usually demanded of contemporary philosophy. Looking back through the shroud of elapsed time, such conferences as this attest that both great masters, *magisters*, were not teaching in vain. Such events testify that the true timeliness and importance of the thoughts expounded by both authors are not diminishing but gain relevance with each passing year.

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