

Some examples of proposals for videos accepted to for the series.

Proposal for the Video of the Broadcast Series on the 75th Anniversary on
“Phenomenology of Perception”, a joint project of the International Merleau-
Ponty Circle and Chiasmi International

1. Working title of the video: "Learning, Teaching and Researching on Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* in Chinese in Hong Kong and Beijing"
2. Name of author:
 - Principle author: LAU, Kwok-ying, PhD, Professor, Department of Philosophy, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)
 - Associated author 1: NING Xiaomeng, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Peking University
 - Associated author 2: Mr. KUM Long-Yin, MPhil, Department of Philosophy, CUHK
 - Associated author 3: Mr. LI Ka Ho, MPhil, Department of Philosophy, CUHK
3. Abstract/plan of broadcast:

The video will consist of 5 parts (about 28 min.):

 - i. Brief introduction to the history of teaching and research on Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* in Chinese in Hong Kong since 1995 by LAU and the linguistic and cultural conditions under which teaching and research are carried out (lectures and tutorials in Cantonese Chinese with the English translation of *Phenomenology of Perception*) (about 2 min., in English).
 - ii. Interview with Mr. LI Ka-Ho, currently PhD student with a MPhil in philosophy, on how the initiation to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body during his undergraduate years under LAU has contributed to the orientation in further advanced study in philosophy (about 3 min., in Cantonese Chinese and English, with English subtitles)
 - iii. Interview with Mr. KUM Long-Yin, an animal lover, on his experience of writing a MPhil thesis under the supervision of LAU on the ontology of animal from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology (about 5 min, in Cantonese Chinese and English, with English subtitles)
 - iv. Interview with Dr. NING Xiaomeng, first trained in Chinese aesthetics, on her experience of writing a doctoral thesis in Chinese entitled “From Speech to Painting: Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Expression” under the supervision of LAU at CUHK, and later her of teaching and researching on Merleau-Ponty and aesthetics at Peking University and publishing the first monograph in Chinese on Merleau-Ponty entitled “Expression and Existence: Studies in Merleau-Ponty's

Phenomenology” (2013) (about 8 min, in Mandarin Chinese and English, with English subtitles)

- v. LAU’s own reflections on his teaching and research on Merleau-Ponty which include: a) his painstaking efforts to translate Merleau-Ponty’s key concepts such as “le corps-sujet”, “le schema corporel”, “la chair” directly from French to Chinese in order to build up the basic vocabulary of phenomenological philosophy of Chinese expression; b) his discoveries of Merleau-Ponty’s conceptual and methodological innovations (e.g. the pathological reduction in *Phenomenology of Perception*); c) how Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology serves as the conceptual basis and guidance for his practice of intercultural philosophy; and d) his invention of the concept “cultural flesh” to explicate the task and method of intercultural phenomenology (about 10 min, in English)

4. Brief CVs

- i. Principle author: LAU, Kwok-ying
- PhD, University of Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne 1993 with a thesis on “Merleau-Ponty ou la tension entre Husserl et Heidegger: sujet et monde dans la *Phénoménologie de la perception*”
 - Currently Professor, Department of Philosophy, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK);
 - Director of Edwin Cheng Foundation Asian Centre for Phenomenology, CUHK;
 - Founding Editor-in-chief of *Phenomenology and the Human Sciences* (journal in Chinese) (2004-18);
 - Founding Director of MA in Philosophy Programme, CUHK (2003-2020).
 - Book publications:
 - *Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding: Toward a New Cultural Flesh* (Springer, 2016) (awarded the 2019 Edwin Ballard Prize for an outstanding book in phenomenology by the Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology, USA) ;
 - *Traces of French Phenomenology: From Sartre to Derrida* (in Chinese, Taipei, 2018);
 - *Persona: Figures of Contemporary European Philosophy: From Husserl to Lyotard* (in Chinese, Taipei, forthcoming, 2020);
 - *Phenomenology and the Arts: Logos and Aisthesis*, eds. Kwok-ying Lau & Thomas Nenon (Springer, 2020);
 - *Border-Crossing: Phenomenology, Interculturality and Interdisciplinarity*, eds. Kwok-ying Lau & Chung-Chi Yu (Würzburg, 2014);
 - *Phenomenology and Human Experience*, eds. Chung-chi Yu & Kwok-ying Lau (Nordhausen, 2012);
 - *Identity and Alterity. Phenomenology and Cultural Traditions*, eds. Kwok-ying Lau, Chan-Fai Cheung & Tze-Wan Kwan (Würzburg, 2010);

- *Across a Hundred Schools and Doctrines: A Festschrift for Lao Sze-kwang in Honour of His Eightieth Birthday*, eds. Lau Kwok-ying, Wu Zhi-xue and Lin Biling (in Chinese, Hong Kong, 2010);
 - *Ponder over Yonder: Essays in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Department of Philosophy, CUHK—Faculty’s Contributions*, eds. Kwok-ying Lau and Chan-Fai Cheung (in Chinese, Hong Kong, 2009);
 - *Traces across Interlaces: Essays in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Department of Philosophy, CUHK—Alumni’s Contributions*, eds. Kwok-ying Lau and Chan-Fai Cheung (in Chinese, Hong Kong, 2009);
 - *Husserl’s Logical Investigations in the New Century: Western and Chinese Perspectives*, eds. Kwok-ying Lau & John J. Drummond (Springer, 2007);
 - *Infinite Horizons: Professor LAO Sze-Kwang as Scholar and Philosopher*, eds. LAU Kwok-ying and CHEUNG Chan-Fai (in Chinese, Hong Kong, 2003);
 - *On the Way to Truth: Festschrift for Professor Philip Shen’s Seventieth Birthday*, eds. LAI Chi-Tim, LAU Kwok-ying and CHEUNG Chan-Fai (in Chinese, Hong Kong, 2003);
 - *Philosopher of Perpetual Peace: Introduction to Kant’s Works*, Classics in Humanities Series, No. 8, Introductory Essay & Selected Readings by LAU Kwok-ying (in Chinese, Taipei, 1999).
- ii. Associated author 1: NING Xiaomeng (Ms), PhD from Chinese University of Hong Kong 2008 with a thesis entitled “From Speech to Painting: Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Expression”;
- Currently Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Peking University
 - Book publication: “Expression and Existence: Studies in Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology” (in Chinese, Beijing, 2013)
- iii. Associated author 2: KUM Long-Yin (Mr.), MPhil at The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2018 with a thesis entitled “Is it possible to communicate with animals? A Merleau-Pontian phenomenological review of the ontology of animal”
- iv. Associated author 3: LI Ka-Ho (Mr.), expecting a MPhil at The Chinese University of Hong Kong 2020 with a thesis entitled “Subjectivity and Singularity in Levinas’s Philosophy”

**Proposal for *Phenomenology of Perception Around the World:*
A 75th Anniversary Broadcast Series**

Working title of video:

Phenomenology of Perception and the Toronto Seminar: Method, Embodiment, Interpersonal Relationships, and Health

Name of project contact and group members:

Project contact:

Dr. Laura McMahon (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Eastern Michigan University; President of the Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy; Participant in the Toronto Summer Seminar in Philosophy)

Other members of the group:

Dr. John Russon (Professor, University of Guelph; Director of the Toronto Summer Seminar in Philosophy; Co-editor of *Perception and Its Development in Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*)

Dr. Scott Marratto (Chair and Associate Professor of Philosophy, Michigan Technological University; past President of the Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy; Participant in the Toronto Summer Seminar in Philosophy)

Dr. Kym Maclaren (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Ryerson University; Participant in the Toronto Summer Seminar in Philosophy)

Dr. Kirsten Jacobson (Chair and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Maine, Participant in the Toronto Summer Seminar in Philosophy; Co-editor of *Perception and Its Development in Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*)

Project description and plan for the broadcast:

Overview. Through a series of interactive interviews, this video will explore the profound influence of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* in the work of a number of scholars, all of whom are affiliated with the annual Toronto Summer Seminar in Philosophy. Dr. Laura McMahon will engage in conversation with: Dr. John Russon on the topic of *phenomenological method*; Dr. Scott Marratto on the topic of *embodiment*; Dr. Kym Maclaren on the topic of *interpersonal relationships*; and Dr. Kirsten Jacobson on the topic of *health*. The principal aims of the video will be 1) to showcase the ongoing fruitfulness of Merleau-Ponty's thought, specifically in his *magnum opus Phenomenology of Perception*, for a number of interrelated themes of great existential importance to how we live and 2) to reflect upon the importance of collective study and rigorous philosophical conversation—to which the annual Toronto Seminar is devoted—in shaping our ways of thinking, writing, teaching, and living.

Regional reception of Merleau-Ponty: The Toronto Seminar. John Russon began the Toronto Summer Seminar in Philosophy in 2003. The Toronto Seminar brings together an invited group of professors and graduate students in Continental Philosophy for 1-2 weeks of intensive study of a major work or major works in the History of Philosophy. Participants have engaged in collective study of works by figures such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Locke,

Smith, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Derrida. Perhaps the principal mark of the unique style of the Toronto Seminar is the participants' commitment to thinking *through* philosophical texts phenomenologically, rather than engaging in scholarly reports *about* philosophical texts. Emphasizing constructive, collective conversation rather than adversarial debate, the Toronto Seminar enables participants, to paraphrase Merleau-Ponty in his discussion of dialogue in *Phenomenology of Perception*, both to lend their thought to others and to have their own creative possibilities for thought drawn forth. The Toronto Seminar is a unique space for ongoing philosophical education, and has over the years significantly shaped the philosophical lives of many of its participants.

Scholarly work to be highlighted in the video. Many of the participants of the Toronto Seminar have research specializations in Phenomenology, and many of them have been especially inspired in their own phenomenological thinking by the work of Merleau-Ponty. Phenomenological work on Merleau-Ponty by many of Toronto Seminar participants (including the five participants in this video) is gathered in the volume *Perception and Its Development in Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*, edited by Kirsten Jacobson and John Russon (University of Toronto Press, 2017). Jacobson and Russon write in the introduction to the volume:

One of the most striking features of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*—perceptible already in its mere table of contents—is that his study of perception begins with sensation and ends with freedom. Merleau-Ponty's study makes clear that under the name “perception” are ranged all the forms of our apprehension of the real, from the most basic, minimal phenomena of bare sensitivity to our engagement with the deepest matters of existence. (4)

Taking off from Merleau-Ponty's thesis concerning the primacy of perception, the essays in the volume go on to explore the implication of this thesis in diverse areas of human life, from our relationship to other people, to our experience of time and space, to the nature of objectivity, to the nature of language, expression, and thinking.

Contributions of participants and structure of the video. Inspired by the structure of *Perception and Its Development in Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology*—itself inspired by the structure of *Phenomenology of Perception*—this video will highlight four of the volume's authors on a diverse range of themes for which Merleau-Ponty's thought is a unique resource. 20-25 minutes long, the video will be comprised of an introduction by McMahan, followed by four segments of about five minutes each with each of the featured scholars. During the five-minute segments, each scholar will speak to 1) the importance of the Toronto Seminar in the development of their own philosophical thinking and 2) the ongoing relevance of the *Phenomenology of Perception* for the philosophical topic at hand. Much as Merleau-Ponty opens the Preface to *Phenomenology of Perception* with a sustained reflection on the question, “What is phenomenology?,” the first segment of the video will be devoted to Russon—author of numerous books and articles on phenomenology—speaking about the ongoing relevance of Merleau-Ponty for our understanding of the phenomenological method. The second segment will center on the topic for which *Phenomenology of Perception* is perhaps most famous: Marratto—author of *The Intercorporeal Self: Merleau-Ponty on Subjectivity*—will speak to the ongoing relevance of Merleau-Ponty for thinking about the central place of embodiment in human existence. The third segment will feature Maclaren—author of numerous articles on the phenomenology of emotion and intimacy—speaking about resources in Merleau-Ponty's thought for understanding the nature of interpersonal relationships. Finally, the fourth segment will

interview Jacobson—author of numerous articles on existential approaches of health and illness—on how Merleau-Ponty helps us to think about issues in medicine, disability, and aging.

This video will pay homage both to the ongoing significance of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and to the ongoing work of collective study and conversation in the style of the Toronto Summer Seminars. It will showcase the impact of Merleau-Ponty on a specific group of people in a specific time and place, that will be of interest more broadly to members of the International Merleau-Ponty Circle, to individuals involved in Continental Philosophy in Canada, and to scholarly and popular audiences interested in Merleau-Ponty and his legacy. It will aim to be accessible and engaging throughout, using Merleau-Ponty to help us think phenomenologically about our lives and the world around us.

Video Title: IMR (Imagerie par Résonance Corporelle)

Project: Phenomenology of the Body

Authors: María Clara Garavito, Verónica Cohen, Ariela Battán Horenstein

Our contribution to the 75th Anniversary of Merleau-Ponty's work *Phenomenology of Perception* is motivated by a theoretical interest: namely, the idea of intersubjectivity as intercorporeality. We are three female researchers interested in Merleau-Ponty's work who use *The Phenomenology of Perception* as a reference point for a myriad of interests coming from psychology, cognitive sciences, pedagogy, theatre, and dance performance.

We work together although we live in different parts of the world: namely, Paris (France), Bogota (Colombia), and Cordoba (Argentina). Because of the physical distance which separates us, we have always already worked together online, so we were already used to finding ways to stay close to each other virtually before the current global pandemic situation began. Given this context of experiencing virtuality as a familiar intersubjective environment, we take the challenge of using Merleau-Ponty's work as a point of departure for thinking about the possibilities and the particularities of understanding that intersubjective situation as a pure intercorporeal experience. In order to translate our theoretical conclusions into an audiovisual production, we ask ourselves about the material consistency of any intercorporeal encounter: what are these encounters made of? What does remain of the body in a place where physical contact has vanished?

Moreover, and getting to the heart of the purpose of this project: what are *virtual encounters* made of? Is it possible to talk about intercorporeality when all that one can give is one's voice, and an image of oneself which may be less than ideal? What are the bodies that we never touch made of?

It seems something is missing through these virtual encounters. For instance, bidimensionality cuts off the thickness of bodies, and sometimes one even loses synchronicity. There are aspects of the physical encounter - such as olfactory elements - that we miss in this virtual experience. Image, reflection, shadow, and phantom - these are the kinds of notions we use to understand intercorporeality in these new environments.

The relation between the body as presently given and the habitual body makes us think of the intersubjective-intercorporeal encounter as a habit. In presence, bodies rest in their habitualities: gestures, verbal, and non-verbal expressions rely upon different strata of sedimentation instituted through communications and past encounters. Virtuality, as a kind of irruption of habit, confronts the subject with his or her current body - a body that appears cut off at the chest, mobile in the upper trunk, and as a mere image without depth or thickness. At the same time, the subject confronts the other as a "*phantom body*": as another body suspended *between absence and presence, between reflection and illusion*.

The notion of a phantom "other" in virtuality is linked to the phenomenon of a phantom limb as presented by Merleau-Ponty in the section called "The

body as object and mechanistic physiology” in the *Phenomenology of Perception*. There the phantom limb reminds us that the body is in a situation: a specific situation summons the limb through a habit. Similarly, in virtuality, a phantom other is summoned by the sedimentation of a habit related to an intercorporeality based on tridimensional, synchronic, warm, and odorous bodies. When the encounter lacks that presence, the habit that summons the other, makes us to experience that something is lost.

This relation between breaking habits and lived experience is translated by D. Morris to the notion of a “phantom earth” in *The Sense of the Space*¹: “When Earth is cut off by hurling the body into weightless conditions a ‘phantom earth’ appears, and we learn how earth is not simply a physical function but is the moving counterpart of a habitual, moving body. As with the phantom limb, phantom earth is a deeply emotional and existential matter.” (Morris, 2004: 113).

Our audiovisual proposal aims to provide, from a phenomenology of corporeality, a “hopeful” view of our current situation in which a restriction of “flesh and blood” presence affects the bonds of solidarity and affection that sustain us. We recognize that the body, as an infinite affective-expressive potentiality, has the power to constitute meaningful experiences with others even in contexts of virtual mediation. It is possible to constitute intercorporeality in virtuality, since “Habit expresses our power of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments” (PhoP, 166).²

For this purpose, our video will be approximately ten minutes long. It will be composed of three different elements that aim to immerse the viewer in a hypnotic experience through variation in repetition, inspired by minimalist procedures such as Philip Glass’ musical arrangements or Lucinda Childs’ dance performances. A first element will be images in movement. We will generate images which approach something that, rather than being representational, responds to vivid experiences. Our strategy is to work through filming shadows, reflections, and backlit visions to express how others are given to us in fragments but, paradoxically, more corporeally. Water, sun, and skin are elements that will be repeated throughout the frames, varying from detailed to more general planes. In the latter, we will play with the superimposition of frames, generating diffuse images that are not easily located. The second element will be the sound. This will be in stereo in order to oscillate between sound outputs from the right and the left speaker to create spatiality. Finally, we will include quotes from the work *Phenomenology of Perception* in French, its original language, but also in both English and in Spanish, which will give us three different linguistic life-worlds in which the same author is incorporated, and also will give us an idea of how language is a part of intercorporeal approaches. These quotes will be presented in a written form and/or through voice.

¹ Morris, D. (2004). *The sense of the space*. Albany, SUNY Press.

² English version, translated by C. Smith.

Call for Videos

“Phenomenology of Perception Around the World: A 75th Anniversary Broadcast Series”

1) Working title of video.

Pregnancy

2) Name of the author/creator/ project contact (for groups), followed by a list of other members of the group, if any, with very brief identification of each member's affiliation and role in project.

2.1 **Silvana de Souza Ramos.** Faculty member at the Philosophy Department of the University of São Paulo (FFLCH, USP). *Creator, actress, mom.*

2.2 **Clémie Ferreira Blaud.** PhD candidate at the Philosophy Department of the University of São Paulo (FFLCH, USP). Graduated in Cinema (ECA, USP). *Creator.*

2.3 **Toni Nogueira.** Professional cinematographer. *Cinematographer.*

2.4 **André Pessoa.** Photographer. Specialist in rupestrian images,. *Rock art images.*

2.3 **Silvio Ricardo Gomes Carneiro.** Faculty member at the Federal University of ABC. *Trumpeter, amateur photographer, dad.*

2.4 **Eduardo Landulfo.** Astrophysicist and Professor of Nuclear Energy. *Train images.*

2.5 **Pablo Pamplona.** PhD candidate at the Psychology Institute of the University of São Paulo. *Film editor.*

2.6 **Sara Soldera Modenez,** M.D. Ob/gyn, specialized in fetal medicine and ecocardiography. *Ultrasound, 1st and 2nd trimesters.*

2.7 **Juliana Miorin,** M.D. Gynecologist. *Ultrasound, 9th week.*

3) A 750-1000 word abstract/plan for the broadcast, including your vision of the form of the broadcast, e.g., talk by a single person, interview, video essay. (Please note that the preferred language for the abstract/plan is English or French--these are the languages that all the panelists have in common.)

3.1 Duration: 20 min.

3.2 Abstract/Plan for the broadcast/Conceptual synopsis:

The intended video is an audiovisual essay guided by the mode of phenomenological description of perceptual experience developed by Merleau-Ponty in the *Phenomenology of Perception* and in “Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie”. Employing a Merleau-Pontian appropriation of Gestalt psychology, the video aims to explore the relationship between figure and background, as well as the horizon of time, as elements that structure perception. In it, various analogies will be mobilized as an attempt at a possible cinematic reconstruction of the experience of pregnancy. Experimenting with the possibilities opened by Gestalt psychology, the video will play with different image capture formats to construct a mosaic from five different sequences (1. Body and prehistory, 2. Body and liberty, 3. Pregnant body, 4. Heartbeats, 5. The prose of the Pandemic new world), resulting in the intended broadcast format.

In the foreground, there will be a sense-based exploration of pregnancy as currently experienced by the actress/protagonist. To this end, several materials will be mobilized: photos of rock art located at the Serra da Capivara Archaeological Site (PI – Brazil), ultrasound images of the baby's development, shots of the actress/character in her apartment (the latter inspired by scenes from films that address the issue of motherhood, such as *Je vous salut, Marie*, by Jean-Luc Godard), paintings by Cézanne, sound recordings of the baby's heartbeat and blood circulation in the umbilical cord, images of a moving train, and images captured from the window of the aforementioned apartment, in São Paulo. In the background, excerpts from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* will be presented, alongside text excerpts commenting on the book, taken from the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Iris Young, and the protagonist/actress herself, Silvana Ramos. By exploring different potential analogies between these images and organizing the material as mosaics, the film will attempt to reconstruct a perceptual experience of/through pregnancy itself.

As may be seen in the Storyboard attached to this proposal, image-capture formats are as follows: still images, ultrasound images of the fetus, cell phone camera images, open access digital reproductions of art pieces, and computer camera and video camera images. The Gestalt play will be established through the poetics of the capture and organization of these images: on the one hand, framing options and camera movement functions will be experimented with (close up, subjective, fixed plane, pan, hand-held camera, etc.); on the other, the video will explore the language of editing (fusion, inserts, fade in/fade out, match, jump or invisible cut, etc.), so as to allow one to articulate or alternate with another, sometimes serving as figure, sometimes as background in the context of the description of the phenomenon. The Gestalt play can also come into effect through a third path, that of sound and sound experimentation: the interplay between narrative voice, noises, uterine sounds and music.

Examples of this audiovisual experimentation will be present throughout the video. In Part 1, static rupestrian images function as background, and are followed by moving ultrasound images of the fetus to which ochre light has been applied, which then function as figure. The idea explored here is that the pregnant body is not confined, for it brings with it not only a personal history, but also the prehistory of human existence. Part 4, in its turn, builds, through the use of long takes captured by a cell phone camera inside a high-speed train, images of distorted trees and lampposts in a tense contrast with retinal theories of optic perception refuted by Merleau-Ponty in his texts. In this scene, the captured image of the train stands as the figure, while uterine noises and the sound of fetal heartbeats function as the off-screen background. In Part 3, public domain images of paintings by Cézanne introduce the apartment the pregnant body inhabits. The aforementioned figure-background dynamic is once again employed, with the living room standing as the background and the pregnant body as the figure; the latter inhabits the space, wanders about then turns on a TV set to watch an ultrasound video of the fetus. Finally, Part 5 describes the proximity of the baby's birth to establish the baby's interplay with the world: night falls and, from the balcony of the house, the pregnant body watches the full moon and the lights that come from neighboring buildings. The audiovisual form of this final Part is a *mise en abyme* composition, in which the phenomenon of a film within a film is linked to the phenomenon of pregnancy. The overall aim of the video is to offer an audiovisual narrative of the very philosophy of perception developed by Merleau-Ponty.

As aesthetic reference points for the design of the five Parts of the intended video, certain films were selected that explore the theme of pregnancy, that are autobiographical in character, whose narratives take place in a single domestic space, and/or that are experimental in character. The following filmmakers are of particular relevance: Chantal Akerman (Belgium), Jean-Luc Godard (France), Jafar Panahi (Iran) and Andrea Tonacci (Brazil). The intent of the present project is to assimilate experiences of filmic perception to be found in the work of these directors, in light of Merleau-Pontian ideas.

In view of the difficulties we face in making the video, mostly due to the impact of the current Pandemic in Brazil and to a lack of funding, the images of the protagonist and her voice will be captured with domestic audiovisual equipment, and there will be no attempt to conceal the limitations of the film set, with the occasional error being not only admissible, but treated as a metalinguistic layer of the intended work. The images of rupestrian art and of the train have been provided by artists who are friends/collaborators, listed among the personnel of the video.

Attachments

3.2.4 Selected texts, quoted in the video:

Part 1. Body and prehistory

“It is therefore by temporality that the opacity of the world is explained, and it is also in temporality that the opacity of the subject has its root. While Sartre, in *Being and Nothingness*, first emphasizes the opposition of the “for itself” and the “in-itself” and the nihilating power of the mind in the face of being, and the absolute freedom of the mind, Merleau-Ponty, on the contrary, concentrates on describing the concrete character of the subject that is never, according to him, a pure for-itself. Actually, he thinks that our existence never grasps itself in its nakedness but as it is expressed by our body. And this body is not enclosed in the instant but implies an entire history, and even a prehistory” (Beauvoir, 2004, p. 163).

Part 2. Body and liberty

The *Phenomenology of Perception* shows that self-consciousness is simultaneous with the consciousness of the world. Being in the world, someone draws a project, intends an open future, full of possibilities of realization. From consciousness in its structural form, which is time, human history arises. This description allows us to see the abyss that separates biological life from human life. The first one cannot go beyond its own conservation (*leben*). For human life (*erleben*), on the contrary, the world is not only a horizon of self-preservation, but of creation. In this book, however, Merleau-Ponty also describes the voice and gestures of a diseased human body whose consciousness is fragmented. Schneider is limited to an immediate relationship with the world, and his movement is driven by routine needs. He does not have access to the abstract dimension of experience, because his existence does not support any *questions*: he cannot plan for the future, dance, tell a story, fall in love or make friends (RAMOS, 2013, pp. 138 et ss). His life is limited to *leben*. In this case, pathology is an obstacle to freedom.

Part 3. Pregnant body

“We should not be surprised to learn that discourse on pregnancy omits subjectivity, for the specific experience of women has been absent from most of our culture’s discourse about human experience and history. [...] Through reference to diaries and literature, as well as phenomenological reflection on the pregnant experience, I seek to let women speak in their own voices” (Young, 2005, p. 46).

“The pregnant subject, I suggest, is decentered, split, or doubled in several ways. She experiences her body as herself and not herself. Its inner movements belong to another being, yet they are not other, because her body boundaries shift and because her bodily self-location is focused on her trunk in addition to her head. This split subject appears in the eroticism of pregnancy, in which the woman can experience an innocent

narcissism fed by recollection of her repressed experience of her own mother's body. Pregnant existence entails, finally, a unique temporality of process and growth in which the woman can experience herself as split between past and future" (Young, 2005, p. 46-7).

"Pregnancy, I argue, reveals a paradigm of bodily experience in which the transparent unity of self dissolves and the body attends positively to itself at the same time that it enacts its projects" (Young, 2005, p. 47).

"[...] pregnancy as a condition that deviates from normal health [?]" (Young, 2005, p. 47).

"Pregnancy roots me to the earth, makes me conscious of the physicality of my body not as an object, but as the material weight that I am in movement. The notion of the body as a pure medium of my projects is the illusion of a philosophy that has not quite shed the Western philosophical legacy of humanity as spirit. Movement always entails awareness of effort and the feeling of resistance. In pregnancy this fact of existence never leaves me. I am an actor transcending through each moment to further projects, but the solid inertia and demands of my body call me to my limits not as an obstacle to action, but only as a fleshy relation to the earth" (Young, 2005, p. 52).

Part 4. Heartbeats

« Si le corps peut symboliser l'existence, c'est qu'il la réalise et qu'il en est l'actualité. Il seconde son double mouvement de systole et de diastole. D'une part, en effet, il est la possibilité pour mon existence de se démettre d'elle-même, de se faire anonyme et passive, de se fixer dans une scolastique. Chez la malade [...], le mouvement vers le futur, vers le présent vivant ou vers le passé, le pouvoir d'apprendre, [...] d'entrer en communication avec autrui se sont comme bloqués dans un symptôme corporel, l'existence s'est nouée, le corps est devenu 'le cachette de la vie'. Pour le malade, il n'arrive plus rien, rien ne prend sens et forme dans sa vie – ou plus exactement il n'arrive que des 'maintenant' toujours semblables, la vie reflue sur elle-même et l'histoire se dissout dans le temps naturel » (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, pp. 191-192).

Part 5. The prose of the Pandemic new world

I am an indeterminate subject, who appears as an interrogation, whose body is a symbolic machine: I am an expression of flesh insofar as, by refusing to be reified, I am the result of a disembodiment. This means that the subject, as flesh, appears as a fold of an affective context of coexistence and promiscuity. If this subject does not find the final image of myself on the outside, I am also not capable of totalizing the relational context in which I live by means of a closed identity. For me, every identity and every authority is questionable. My world is open to a free exploration of desire and produces

a plurivalent narrative of experience that reveals the prose of the world (by Silvana Ramos).

Bibliography:

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