ISSN (online) : 1445-7377 ISSN (print) : 2079-7222

Post-Intentional Phenomenology as Ethical and Transformative Inquiry and Practice: Through Intercultural Phenomenological Dialogue

by **Younkyung Hong**

Abstract

This study is a conceptual dialogue aimed at attaining insight into reading and developing post-intentional phenomenology as intercultural philosophical inquiry. This conversation commences with the problem of Eurocentric phenomenology and introduces several examples of intercultural phenomenological attempts which fail to move beyond the validation of non-European philosophy using a Eurocentric viewpoint. The first section of this study introduces possible conditions and approaches for intercultural phenomenology, drawing mainly on Kwok-Ying Lau's (2016) work on phenomenology and intercultural understanding, with a view to extending the scope of phenomenological research beyond the limitations of a Eurocentric attitude largely influenced by and inherited from Husserl. The second section considers ways in which the understanding and approach of post-intentional phenomenology could be widened and deepened by the intercultural dimension, and vice versa. Building on these discussions, the paper concludes with a brief consideration of the implications for phenomenological research and of how an intercultural understanding and approach inform research design. Following "lines of flight" in these discussions, post-intentional phenomenology is proposed as an ethical and transformative inquiry.

Introduction

Post-intentional phenomenology (Vagle, 2014, 2018) opens up generative space to explore how a researcher is intentionally related to a phenomenon through conceptual dialogues with various philosophies, theories and ideas. As post-intentional phenomenology is inspired by post-structuralism, it disrupts rigid hierarchies and structures which have been constructed as conventions in qualitative research. This empowers researchers to explore and initiate discussions about phenomena, and especially those which have been restricted by research traditions and procedures researchers have felt methodologically constrained to follow.

Despite the generative space that post-intentional phenomenology offers, it has been difficult for me personally to ignore the manifestation of the Eurocentric history and characteristics of phenomenology in general. This manifestation had led me to wonder what it means that a researcher, whose being is rooted in and predominantly influenced by non-European philosophy and culture, takes up phenomenology as an approach to explore her intentional relationships with the phenomenon. Am I perpetuating the positioning of Western/Eurocentric research methodologies as benchmarks for understanding and validating phenomena, including those oriented to and evolving in a non-European lifeworld? Next, I confronted the dilemma of my using phenomenological

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
www.ipjp.org
DOI: 10.1080/20797222. 2019.1693106

research methodology to understand my own being and becoming in this world as well as the phenomenon of becoming a socially just educator, which involves the effort of dismantling the dominant power structures in society. This manifestation of conflicts calls for overcoming the Eurocentric aspects of phenomenology and moving on to the intercultural phenomenological discussion.

Limitation of Eurocentric Phenomenology

My preliminary literature search about issues regarding Eurocentric phenomenology shows that the majority of these studies are centred on the review and discussion of Husserl's attitude on philosophy, especially his response to the crisis of Europe and European humanity. I do not intend to limit the scope of this discussion of Eurocentric phenomenology by focusing on Husserl; however, in light of previous work on this topic, it seems difficult not to centre this discussion on Husserl and his Eurocentric tendency. Further research is needed on this topic in respect of how Husserl's phenomenological heirs have inherited and/or challenged the Eurocentric tendency in phenomenology.

It is still vital to start examining Husserl's Eurocentric attitude and how his work and attitude have influenced the Eurocentric attitude in phenomenology at large. In particular, reviewing Husserl's Eurocentrism provides the opportunity to understand the sociohistorical context of Husserl's work in which his perception of "crisis" and his envisioning of the solution to rescue Europe is grounded.

Husserl's Eurocentric Phenomenology

Both Husserl's egocentric viewpoint and his assertion of the Eurocentric civilization of non-European cultures in considering ways to overcome the crisis and seek "truth" are often represented as his limitation of philosophizing humans and phenomena. Due to his strong Eurocentric stance, and especially given his position as the founder of phenomenology, Husserl's defininition of philosophy and ways of seeking truth have remained an assignment for philosophical practitioners who seek intercultural phenomenological discussion (Lau, 2016). Besides this, Husserl's assertion of the need for universality in phenomenological investigation led phenomenologists to inquire into the general attitude in phenomenology. Lao (2004) argues that the lack of both Western and non-Western phenomenologists' attention to the non-European lifeworld continues to exhort Chinese philosophers to regard phenomenology as being a branch of European philosophy, which hardly makes sense with non-European being and thinking (Lao, 2004).

According to Tava (2016a), Husserl's stance in respect of the Europeanization of all other cultures is based on his firm belief and confidence in European culture. Tava states that, "For Husserl, European culture is not only the highest culture ever achieved in human history, but also 'the first realisation of an absolute norm of development, which is called [*berufen*] to revolutionize every other self-developing culture'" (Tava, 2016a, p. 207, citing Husserl[1]). Husserl's obsession with a universal ground for all other cultures can be better explained by the social and historical context within which Husserl founded phenomenology. When Husserl diagnosed the crisis of European humanity and put back together the subject-object separated by Descartes, he was concerned with the problem of positive science and its tendency to understand and view the world from a mathematical perspective while avoiding looking at meanings and the constitution of phenomena (Simms, 2005). Husserl, in contrast, was hopeful of universal and rational science – European science before positive science – which influenced his conception of the lifeworld as valid and universal regardless of cultural differences (Lau, 2016; Yu, 2004).

Limitation of Eurocentric Phenomenology

Husserl's exclusive idea of the world and philosophy not only denies the legitimacy of non-Western/non-European philosophies, but also fails to acknowledge a significant amount of wisdom shared by and inherited from Western thinkers as philosophy (Lau, 2016). More specifically, "Husserl's judgement is based on his own predetermined idea of philosophy as '*pure thêoria*', which is in turn based on his own understanding of the philosophico-scientific attitude of the Greeks as a 'purely theoretical attitude'" (Lau, 2016, pp. 125-126). This idea of philosophy has bolstered the Euro- and egocentric response to the problems in Europe which encourages humans to control the world with their power and to keep their borders safe (Tava, 2016b). Husserl had faith in the Europeanization of all other cultures as the best solution for fixing problems and conflicts in the world, and he was not much concerned about erasing cultural heritage from sociopolitical and intellectual diversity (Tava, 2016b; Yu, 2004).

Gubser (2013) and Yu (2004) point out that Husserl's idea of Europe is geopolitical, and not philosophical. Compared to the philosophical idea of Europe, which will be discussed later, the geopolitical idea of Europe influences people to be obsessed with a subject-centred worldview and exclusive attitude toward others in which a culture of dominance and superiority becomes deeply entrenched (Gubser, 2013; Tava, 2016b; Yu, 2004). Lau (2016) contends that an exclusive attitude toward others, such as ethnocentrism, counteracts the finding of truth. Other scholars also propose the criticality of

[1] Husserl, E. (1989). Fünf Aufsätze über Erneuerung. In T. Nenon & H. R. Sepp (Eds.), *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*. Husserliana, Vol. XXVII, pp. 3–94. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer. Author's translation.

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

recognizing others and understanding "lifeworld" as plural (e.g., Gubser, 2013; Ruggenini, 2004; Yu, 2004). For example, drawing on the interdependence of humans and the world argued by Patočka, Gubser (2013) assesses that only recognition of the intersubjective community "could render subjective phenomena worldly, and thus open a horizon for activity" (p. 163). Ruggenini (2004) furthermore points out the danger of Europe's attitude of self-sufficiency, in that defending and locking off themselves from others can only cause conflict. At the end of his *Phenomenology and Intercultural Understanding*, Lau (2016) reminds us that no culturally discrete part of the world can be self-sufficient, since its own cultural identity is defined in relation to other cultures in a world that has always been shared. This point enlarges the possible interpretation of and inquiry into what "finding an [European] identity again" (Ruggenini, 2004) means and can be.

Several Attempts Toward Establishing Intercultural Phenomenology and Their Limitations

Lau (2016) introduces a phenomenological reading of Eastern philosophy, such as Daoism based on Laozi's work and Husserl's stance on Buddhism. For instance, Lau (2016) discusses the similarity between the Dao as the primordial nature and "the world of wild being" addressed by Merleau-Ponty. Laozi and Merleau-Ponty both urge cultural renewal in the world of crisis through what we can learn from the order of primordial being and nature. This reading of Laozi through Merleau-Ponty identifies the commonality between one branch of Eastern philosophy and a Western thinker who appears to be inspired by Husserl. However, without there being any work disputing Husserl's stance on Eastern philosophy, it is a logical leap to relate Husserl's phenomenology and Daoism. After introducing a possible phenomenological reading of Laozi through Merleau-Ponty's work, Lau (2016) expresses doubt "whether Husserl would accept to dialogue with a so-called 'anti-rationalist' Chinese thinker" (p. 52).

It is challenging to start intercultural philosophical dialogue, especially with a philosophy denigrated by its own founder. Acknowledging this difficulty, I found two possible ways to enable this dialogue: one involves the restoration of Eastern philosophy through Husserl's approval, drawing on his verbal and textual remarks, and the other is by disputing Husserl's stance on non-European philosophy and complementing its limitation through philosophical dialogue across other phenomenologists' works. Lau's (2016) chapter about Husserl and his comment on Buddhism introduce the approach closer to the first way by focusing on Husserl's reading and appreciation of Buddhism.

According to Lau (2016), Husserl expressed his excitement regarding Buddhism in a short review article in 1925 after encountering a German translation of Buddhist scripts. In this article, Husserl praises the Buddhist attitude as a way of transcending worldly life through comparing its significance with his transcendental phenomenology (Lau, 2016). However, despite his acknowledging of Buddhism as a valuable theoretical attitude, Husserl did not define Buddhism as a philosophy, given his perception of the absence in Buddhism of the "universal science of being" (Lau, 2016, p. 61). Thus, Husserl's enthusiasm for Buddhism and his comparison of Buddha with Socrates are not sufficient to validate Eastern philosophy as fulfilling the requirement of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology (Lau, 2016).

These attempts towards intercultural phenomenology through a reading of Daoism and tracing of Husserl's comments on Buddhism show that these approaches still uphold Husserl's idea of philosophy as undisputed. Without challenging his idea of philosophy, it would be difficult to imagine the capacity of phenomenology "with" non-European philosophies and "about" cultures other than the European while respecting their intellectual and cultural values and specificities. Fortunately, there are philosophers who challenge Husserl's conception of philosophy, both directly and indirectly. Especially, Kwok-Ying Lau, a philosopher based in Hong Kong, has significantly developed intercultural discussion in phenomenology through conceptual dialogue across various philosophers, cultures, countries, languages and eras. While the preceding discussions about readings of Laozi and Husserl's stance on Buddhism are also based on Lau's work, the following sections would not be possible without Lau's intercultural work that introduces underrepresented philosophers and re-readings of well-known philosophers' work.

Grounding of the Intercultural Phenomenological Discussion

Beyond Europe: Jan Patočka

Jan Patočka is a vital philosopher for intercultural phenomenological discussion. Lau (2016) introduces him as one of the first philosophers who urged the necessity of abandoning the Eurocentric viewpoint and approach to the crisis diagnosed by Husserl. Patočka's reflection on the natural world transgresses Husserl's egocentric understanding in that he traces its history back to ancient Greece. Patočka characterizes the natural world as dynamic and human existence as based on the unfathomable order of nature. This approach questions the idea of universality and "humans as truth bearing" subject asserted by Husserl (Lau, 2016). Lau (2016) interprets Patočka's worldview as acknowledging the plurality of lifeworld interculturally and as such inviting philosophies from other cultures to better articulate the meaning of and ways toward the truth of the world.

Patočka's phenomenology of the natural world can be characterized as dynamic, as he views movement as the principle of phenomenality (Lau, 2016). This reflection

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

seems quite distinct from Husserl's phenomenology of the world at large; however, Patočka's thematization of primordial nature inherits Husserl's view on the Earth, that "The original ark, earth, does not move" (Lau, 2016, p. 80, citing Husserl[2]). Human and life in Patočka's phenomenology are represented as the existence of movement; meanwhile, this movement is based on the Earth, which he understands as "the ultimate referent of movement on the other" (Lau, 2016, p. 80). Through this thematization of the natural world, the Earth, Patočka further articulates how human existence is intentionally related to primordial nature and nothingness (Lau, 2016). Lau (2016) assesses that Patočka's point would be better articulated and developed with Laozi's Daodejing, which understands the Dao as essentially the "inchoative nature of the primordial order" (p. 81). He adds the necessity of intercultural dialogue in that, while this way of ontological understanding might sound unfamiliar in the European philosophical tradition, it is not at all new to Eastern philosophy (Lau, 2016). In this respect, Patočka's phenomenology of the natural world and Lau's (2016) interpretation of Patočka's work contribute to establishing the ground for a collective understanding of ontological/ existential being-ness in the world.

One might wonder how this approach overcomes Eurocentrism in phenomenology while Patočka's work is still based on European soil and himself as an heir of European spirit. It is important to note that Patočka's view on humanity transgresses Husserl's scientific rationality in that his understanding of human existence is grounded on the profound order of the lifeworld, which Patočka calls "world mystery" (Lau, 2016). It is plausible to argue that the world mystery echoes the Dao in Laozi's Daodejing, as Patočka's description of the world mystery represents its characteristics of not revealing the surface but rather the principle of all movement. Patočka articulates his world mystery as the common foundation of a particular community, culture and history, and this worldview challenges Husserl's singular lifeworld and notion of diversity to be surpassed through transcendental philosophy (Lau, 2016).

Merleau-Ponty's Interworld and Cultural Flesh

Lau (2016) develops the notion of cultural flesh inspired by Merleau-Ponty's reflection on flesh: that the cultivation of cultural flesh invites us to sense the world beyond the partial world which we have encountered within the boundary of our own culture. He developed this notion by taking up the characteristic of flesh which mediates our contact with the world; at the same time, this contact brings the pre-existing world to us. Merleau-Ponty's notion of flesh aims to understand the meaning of things and the world itself through sensibility (Lau, 2016). Merleau-Ponty describes flesh as "the coiling over the sensible upon the sensing body", and selfhood is born "thanks to the movement of coiling over the flesh" (Lau, 2016, p. 185, citing Merleau-Ponty[3]). Lau (2016) credits understanding the flesh for encouraging us to dive into deeper understanding of and contact with the world, given that this notion restrains us from perceiving things as materialistic and banal.

Based on the review and discussion of Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh, Lau (2016) elaborates cultural flesh as "a state of mind and of carnal dispositions" (p. 190) which allows us to "have the sensibility of other cultures" (p. 190). As in the role of the flesh, cultural flesh leads us to experience and have deeper understanding of other people and their cultures. Lau (2016) reads cultural differences and borders as a potential of intercultural dialogue and also as a vital factor for the formation of cultural identity which creates a space to realize oneself and truth. Acknowledging the idea of the flesh, especially in the context of the heterogeneity of the world, Lau (2016) suggests lateral universality – cultural and plural universality – which conceptually counters Husserl's Eurocentric universality as another ground for intercultural phenomenological dialogue.

Phenomenology Transgressing a Theoretical Attitude

Orientative Philosophy and Rereading of Husserl

This section discusses philosophy beyond the theoretical enterprise centring on Lao Sze-Kwang's notion of orientative philosophy. Lao Sze-Kwang coined the term "orientative philosophy" as a counter term for cognitive philosophy to thematize a philosophy which involves "self-transformative" and "transformation of the world" aspects (Lau, 2016, p. 129). He exemplifies Daoist philosophy and Confucian philosophy to explain that orientative philosophy asks "Where should we go?" in contrast to cognitive philosophy, which asks "What is it?" (Lau, 2016, p. 129). Lao emphasizes the ethical faculty of orientative philosophy through the example of Mencius's Confucianism, which upholds morality as the disposition which distinguishes human beings from other animals (Lau, 2016). Mencius considers moral faculty as "the special faculty of the human mind" (Lau, 2016, p.133).

As Lau (2016) starts the discussion of the limitation of Husserl's idea of philosophy, he points out that cognitive philosophy fails to provide a deeper understanding of human knowledge since it is not situated in either a social or a historical context. Then, he introduces

[2] Husserl, E. (1981). Grundlegende Untersuchungen zum phänomenologischen Ursprung der Räumlichkeit der Natur [Foundational investigations of the phenomenological origin of the spatiality of nature] (F. Kersten, Trans.). In P. McCormick & F. Elliston (Eds.), *Husserl: Shorter works* (pp. 213–221). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. (Original work published 1934)

[3] Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The visible and the invisible* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1964)

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].

Foucault as a vital philosopher who argues the cruciality of including power relations in understanding knowledge, as it naturally brings social, historical and political considerations into the process. Foucault's work asserts that human beings are morally bound to strive for the ethical in their endeavours and practice because human beings always exist with others, and this calls for them to be moral subjects (Lau, 2016).

Based on this dialogue, Lau (2016) provides a different reading of Husserl's phenomenological attitude, focusing on the epoché in that this philosophical inquiry is not possible solely through cognitive philosophy without a self-transformative endeavour. This rereading contends that suspension of preconception – the essential purpose of the epoché – for transcending the individual's worldly experience requires self-understanding and self-transformation through critical reflection on oneself (Lau, 2016). Also, he assesses that Husserl ultimately aims for a phenomenologist's vocation to be extended to the universal level; he describes it in his *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936) as "a far-reaching self-transformation of the whole praxis of human existence, i.e. the whole of cultural life" (as cited in Lau, 2016, p. 149). The next section discusses how Patočka's phenomenology also transgresses "pure speculative theoretical thinking" (Lau, 2016, p. 128).

Patočka's Care for the Soul

Patočka emphasizes self-transformative and reflective practice in seeking truth. His idea of philosophy can be represented as a philosophical project of "thinking and acting with clarity", overcoming the obscuring of truth due to humans' precarious status (Lau, 2016). This idea is influenced by Husserl and Heidegger's shared understanding of the human being as a being of truth, but Patočka develops this idea through a more profound and distinctive approach based on a "pre-reflective mythical framework" (Lau, 2016). Lau (2016) interprets Patočka's idea of philosophy and his approach as a European version of "how a particular cultural ground and mythical environment was transformed and elevated into a universal motivation and movement of human civilization" (p. 96). Patočka legitimizes his statement by contending that the ultimate goal in Greek philosophy must have been handed down from the mythical environment of archaic Greece (Lau, 2016). As it is an ontological framework which transcends Ancient Greek and European spirituality, Lau (2016) again emphasizes Patočka's "care for the soul", which is founded on profound philosophical and anthropological reflection and understanding.

By representing the Mencius theory as a Chinese version of how a human civilization understands and practises the human being as a being of truth, Lau (2016) develops his discussion of Patočka's world mystery. He identifies the celestial order in Mencius's Confucianism as corresponding with Patočka's world history; Mencius addresses the existence of the human being rooted in four spiritual dispositions, and two of the dispositions, *zhi* and *yi*, can be considered Chinese versions of truth and justice respectively (Lau, 2016). Regarding their concept of philosophy and the way of seeking truth, both Mencius and Patočka consider philosophy to be not only an ontological project, but also a political and social project which involves critical reflection and praxis (Lau, 2016; Szakolczai, 1994; Tava, 2016). Lau (2016) respects both philosophers as those who pursue the truth through their ethical practice – which transgresses biological life, albeit towards the higher order and value of truth and justice.

Patočka's idea of philosophy and the conceptual dialogue initiated by Lau in the matter of overcoming the narrow and exclusive idea of philosophy provides indispensable ground to direct our questions of what philosophy is; more specifically, what is phenomenology, and what can be phenomenology? As a researcher, I take up and expand this inquiry into how phenomenological research can be re-imagined through the intercultural dialogue of phenomenology.

Intercultural Post-intentional Phenomenology

In his discussion of post-intentional phenomenological research, Vagle (2018) emphasizes that the prefix "post" in post-intentional phenomenology does not denote "after" intentionality; instead, as his further articulation clarifies, it rather connotes the meaning of "displaying" and "pinning/hanging" intentionalities to wait and see their movements and actions instead of defining them as static and singular in their being. While post-intentional phenomenology infuses dynamic movements and capacity into its understanding of intentionality, it still draws on core concepts and approaches created and developed by preceding phenomenologists, such as intentionality, bracketing, and reduction. This approach develops these core concepts in a critical manner and encourages a researcher to commit to the radical and generative space produced by the mode of an inquiry influenced by post-structural ideas, such as the "lines of flight" of Deleuze and Guattari[4] (Vagle, 2018).

This characteristic of post-intentional phenomenology identified by Vagle (2018) kept manifesting during the process of reviewing intercultural phenomenological approaches which drew mainly on Lau's (2016) work. It was noted that both scholars create new spaces and expanding possibilities in phenomenological studies through their mode of using of conceptual dialogues. Despite quite a few similarities between the scholars' approaches and discussions, there are also aspects that appear distinctive in the work of each. Reminding us that a characteristic of conceptual dialogue is that it can-

[4] Deleuze, G. , & Guattari, F. A. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Trans.). London, UK: The Athlone Press. (Original work published 1980)

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

not be unidirectional, the discussion proceeding below not only proposes how the intercultural discussion can be used in post-intentional phenomenology, but also points to how provocation occurs in the intercultural dialogue.

When Post-Intentional Phenomenology Meets Intercultural Phenomenology

Vagle (2018) identifies what most distinguishes post-intentional phenomenology from the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger as "through-ness", which connotes post-intentional phenomenology's generative and dynamic capacity and potential. He further asserts that this through-ness of post-intentional phenomenology leads us to view intentionality as both plural and always moving. Vagle (2018) identifies this characteristic of post-intentional phenomenology as an ontological project, but the natural world including the profound ground of every order and all existence is not much discussed. Also, while post-intentional phenomenology adopts a radical and critical stance in its approach to phenomenological research, it has not developed much as an intercultural and/or decolonizing research methodology oriented towards challenging traditionally Western – or, more specifically, Eurocentric – perspectives and forms of knowledge production.

As introduced earlier, Patočka's phenomenology of the natural world and movement of existence is a crucial foundation for intercultural phenomenology, given its opposing of Husserl's Eurocentrism and supplementing of the idea of the natural world which was not fully articulated in the phenomenology of Husserl and his successors. For this reason, it is suggested that post-intentional phenomenology take up Patočka's idea of primordial nature as the abyssal and unfathomable order of the world as its ontological ground. This ontological understanding allows post-intentional phenomenological inquiry to be grounded on a common foundation for intercultural dialogue with philosophies from different cultures and countries. Furthermore, this ontological understanding is indispensable to Patočka's notion of "world mystery," which Lau (2016) considers a vital ground for intercultural phenomenological discussion. Concurrently, the understanding of intentionality in post-intentional phenomenology provokes other attributes of the natural world and of the inquiry based on the natural world, such as non-linear and inconsistent movements of intentionality, which include partial, fleeting, generative, and undoing activities. This way of understanding would embrace possible conflicts and contradictions which are likely to occur in intercultural discussion; Lau (2016) also addresses its messiness and the complexity of intercultural work in his discussion of cultural flesh.

Post-intentional phenomenology inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's post-structural idea frees contemporary phenomenologists from pressure to follow conventional hierarchies and procedures, such as defining what "is" and "can be" philosophy when conducting conceptual dialogue (Vagle, 2018). Instead, it desires to observe generative possibilities and accomplishments imagined through the conceptual dialogue, which outcomes would not be possible with a single philosophy, theory or idea or within the boundary of certain philosophies, theories or ideas. In other words, the conceptual dialogue through the understanding of the natural world and the post-structural idea would infuse extra movements and depth into phenomenological understanding and encourage phenomenologists to pay careful attention to the diverse features of manifestations in this radical form of dialogue. For instance, Patočka's reflection of the intersubjective constitution of the world and hence his emphasis that "only the primordial recognition of intersubjectivity" could grant us "access to the wider world as trans-subjective horizon" (p. 163) would push the bounds of post-intentional phenomenology even further by posing questions and inspiring pondering on how and what this reflection ultimately provokes and becomes in phenomenological research.

Another distinctive feature in post-intentional phenomenology is its emphasis on individuals and phenomena as social beings. Its interests and views on intentional relations differ from those of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology in that it understands a phenomenon as always in intentional relations with larger social dimensions, such as its history and tradition. Contrary to a-historical and a-social understandings of phenomena, it provides a crucial ontological and epistemological perspective to advance intercultural understanding and development of phenomenology; this enables us to understand a phenomenon from a viewpoint which considers an individual as playing either a subject or an object role or even both roles (drawing on the idea that the line between subject and object is blurred in post-intentional phenomenology) in their experience of a phenomenon. It draws phenomenologists toward contemplating intentionality in an existential sense which acknowledges the multifarious possibilities of relationships and manifestations rooted in different civilizations, values and practices. Moreover, this viewpoint counters Husserl's proposal of the universality of all cultures through the Eurocentric idea of scientific rationalism, which accompanies surpassing and erasing other forms of relations with the world in other cultures. Based on this concept of phenomenon and human existence, I propose the need to expand phenomenological research to view the human being as a moral subject, which Foucault addresses in his reflection on knowledge, and which constitutes both Patočka's and Mencius's understanding of human dispositions – in addition, more specifically, to human dispositions as beings of justice.

Lau (2016) introduces the idea of the human being as a moral subject with Foucault's work, through which he addresses the importance of including power relations

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

in understanding knowledge. According to Foucault, the fact that human beings always exist with others unavoidably involves human beings in power relations, locating each of them as a moral subject (Lau, 2016, citing Foucault[5]). This conception of individual and phenomenon not only brings social, historical and political dimensions to our phenomenological understanding of the world, but also draws our attention as phenomenologists to human existence in relation to its moral disposition and ethical practice. The foundation in which we can ground this understanding of human existence effectively enables twofold consideration in post-phenomenological research: on the one hand, it allows us to dispute the exclusive idea of philosophy as a purely cognitive enterprise; on the other, we can widen the capacity and possibility of philosophical research beyond mere theoretical contemplation, for example by positing praxis as a vital philosophical endeavour.

Post-intentional phenomenology adopts a critical stance towards using the term "consciousness", which is a core concept in Husserl's phenomenology (Vagle, 2018). Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "lines of flight" connotes the possibility of intentional movements beyond human consciousness and control (Vagle, 2018), and so post-intentional phenomenology's drawing on this idea embraces the limitation of human consciousness and control in relation to phenomena. Acknowledging that egocentrism pulls us back from disrupting egocentric boundaries and limiting the possibilities of a generative inquiry, Patočka's critique of Husserl's description of the world as horizon supports Vagle's (2018) endeavour of distancing phenomenologists from an egocentric call and tendency. Patočka interprets Husserl's description of the world as that which reduces intentionality to "mere" intentionality which is both anticipatable and limited within the capacity of human consciousness. Lau (2016) develops this analysis further, pointing to Husserl's understanding of the world as the basis of his belief in a "single life world". While Patočka recognizes Husserl's struggle in respect of thematizing particularity in each culture and history, he proposes the lifeworld as plural, based on the world mystery, so that any one in isolation can never be *the* lifeworld (Lau, 2016).

In this respect, Patočka's understanding both buttresses a non-egocentric approach to post-intentional phenomenology by pointing out the pitfall of the egocentric worldview, and paves the way to acknowledging and further articulating the plurality of lifeworld. We can furthermore argue that it directly challenges the egocentric tendency prevalent in academia and also raises our awareness of egocentric calls which reduce humans to beings that control the world with their power. Based on this dialogue, I propose that post-intentional phenomenology pay explicit attention to the plurality of the lifeworld and take this approach as a political inquiry disrupting a Eurocentric and exclusive attitude in human research.

The last point to be discussed in this subsection is post-intentional phenomenology's interest in the work which is produced when we try not to "reconcile the edges and margins of the theories" (Vagle, 2018). I interpret this point as implying acceptance of conflicting and contradictory aspects in conceptual dialogue and take these edges and margins as space for unrestricted questioning and pondering to flourish, rather than avoiding these risks or forcing harmonization among different philosophies, theories and ideas. This attitude resonates with the attitude which Lau (2016) cherishes throughout the intercultural phenomenological discussion, in that it is of the essence not to subsume cultural diversity to universality of the kind Husserl envisions as the Europeanization of all other cultures. This radical demand of post-intentional phenomenology widens the intercultural phenomenological inquiry, and vice versa.

We can either develop this intercultural conversation further or, alternatively, take a radical turn through/in the post-intentional phenomenological space which invites us to be inspired, to be open, and to re-imagine all kinds of possibilities. Simultaneously, appreciating the cultural diversity addressed in the intercultural consideration calls for post-intentional phenomenologists to pay close attention to different possibilities and forms of intentionality and manifestations based on a profound understanding of life and human existence. Furthermore, this requires critical reflection on theoretical frameworks which influence a researcher's phenomenological work; there is always the possibility that philosophies/theories/ideas which ground a framework have in fact legitimized exclusive and discriminatory ideas about others as well as inherited oppressive power structures.

What Does It Mean to Understand Intentionality in a Post- and Intercultural Manner?

Vagle (2018) states definitively that "the practice of a post-intentional philosophy is to remain open, flexible, and contemplative in our thinking, acting and decision making" (pp. 135-136), the implication of which is that this research methodology encourages a phenomenologist to distance her/himself from dichotomous thinking and practice. Drawing on some ideas introduced in Lau's (2016) discussion, I read this statement further to imply that self-reflective and transformative practice is based on understanding oneself as a moral subject and hence understanding philosophical activity as transgressing a purely cognitive endeavour. In the rereading of Husserl's notion of epoché, Lau (2016) interprets the epoché as a process that requires self-understanding and ongoing self-transformation in order to return to encounter the world itself. In similar vein, I read the "open, flexible, and contemplative" (p. 136) attitude which Vagle (2018)

[5] Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality* (R. Hurley , Trans.). New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

advocates as a self-reflective and self-transformative practice, as one has to understand what aspects of one's being and biases distance oneself from achieving and/or maintaining the desired attitude. Also, one has to strive to transform oneself based on this understanding in order to come closer to the attitude required.

Vagle (2018) defines intentionality as "those in-between spaces where individuals *find-themselves-intentionally-in* relations with others in the world" (p. 127). In post-intentional phenomenology, these in-between spaces are full of "fleeing, eluding, flowing, and leaking movements" of intentionalities, as Vagle (2018) animates the trait of intentionality from a post-structural perspective. Despite this understanding of intentionality in the post-intentional phenomenological approach being already complex and dynamic, the intercultural consideration further complicates and adds additional dimensions to this process. This allows us to consider the process of understanding intentionality in intercultural and post-intentional phenomenology as the continued process of self-understanding, critical reflection, self-responsibility, caring for others, and commitment, which all calls for a courageous attitude and decisions. In this regard, I argue that the intercultural discussion solidifies post-intentional phenomenology as a philosophy for social change.

Vagle (2018) responds to the critique of phenomenology as marked by a "total lack of any political philosophy" (p. 131) by saying that phenomenologists have in fact been doing the political work in their ontological and epistemological work. Regarding the "on the ground" level of political work, Vagle (2018) suggests that the theoretical conversations of phenomenology be joined with other theories. Lau's (2016) intercultural phenomenological discussion exemplifies theoretical dialogue, while he advances the conversation mostly at the ontological and epistemological level. Intercultural post-intentional phenomenology is already a political philosophy without a conversation with politically-oriented theories and ideas, even though further conceptual dialogue is still worthwhile.

On the one hand, this approach not only questions and challenges phenomenology's most fundamental belief and understanding of the world, but also requires self-reflective and self-transformative practice and decision. This process does not stay on the ontological and epistemological level of contemplation, but rather it requires tenacious body and mind practices, which the notion of orientative philosophy implies. On the other hand, understanding intentionalities following the "lines of flight" and ethical commitment transverses hierarchies and procedures in conventional philosophies and research methodologies which tend to be stable and conformative. A phenomenologist who takes up this approach is encouraged to take the risk of fewer/unpredictable outcomes and also to bear the tensions and conflict s/he is likely to encounter. Vagle (2018) reminds us that understanding intentionality through post-intentional phenomenology is difficult in terms of resisting the force trying to pull us back to linear, clearer and dichotomous thinking. Besides, both Mencius's Confucianism and Patočka's life-long endeavour of his brave philosophical practice have us keep in mind that one should put one's theoretical and cognitive enlightenment into action, and this is not an easy road mentally, nor even physically (Lau, 2016).

Implications for Research Design and Process

In this paper, I have continued a conceptual dialogue with the hope of gaining insight into reading and developing post-intentional phenomenology as intercultural philosophical inquiry. The conversation started with the review and discussion of intercultural phenomenology based on the understanding that mere comparison of non-European philosophy with European philosophy and identification of what they have in common hardly overcome the Eurocentric disposition and its role as a philosophical benchmark of validity. The review and discussion of intercultural phenomenology developed by Lau (2016) imply that the intercultural understanding of phenomenology calls for a renewal of ontological and epistemological viewpoints in phenomenology. Based on the different possibilities projected in the discussion, I proposed ways in which post-intentional phenomenology and intercultural phenomenology could become within the generative in-between space enabled by the conceptual dialogue between the two. Regarding the (tentative) outcomes of this process, the fact that the ideas of the world and intentionality in post-intentional phenomenology are not the same anymore requires that researchers take up post-intentional phenomenology differently in terms of their research design and implementation processes. In this respect, I propose how an intercultural post-intentional phenomenological study could look by adopting Vagle's (2018) approach as the ground for this discussion.

Vagle (2018) provides guidelines for designing and implementing post-intentional phenomenological research in accordance with his "five-component approach". The five components are as follows: (1) Identify a post-intentional phenomenon in context(s), around a social issue; (2) Devise a clear and yet flexible process for gathering phenomenological material appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation; (3) Make a post-reflection plan; (4) Explore the post-intentional phenomenon using theory, phenomenological material, and "post-reflexions"; and (5) Craft a text that engages both the production and provocation of the post-intentional phenomenon in context(s) around social issues (see Vagle, 2018, pp. 139-161). With an intercultural understanding of phenomenology, a phenomenological study should be designed on a ground which acknowledges the plurality of lifeworld and the idea of philosophy as an on-going project of both self-transformation and

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

responsibility for others which involves both body and mind. This means that each of the components needs to be re-imagined and re-articulated, given that the extra dimensions and movements that intercultural phenomenology implants complicate the approach as well as provoke unprecedented questions and considerations in post-intentional phenomenology itself.

The self-reflexive process is already a core part of post-intentional phenomenology. However, intercultural phenomenology posits that self-reflexion is not only a cognitive enterprise, but also an ethical and political practice, since it involves self-transformation and care for others. In this regard, post-reflexion and its role in phenomenological research need to be revised as a space for self-understanding and reflection on the decisions and actions one has implemented. Beyond this level, it should also include reflection on responsibility and the act of caring for other people.

Building on the post-reflexion suggestion in Vagle's (2018) approach, post-reflexion needs to begin with the very first step of a phenomenological study and continue with every process. I want to emphasize that this is an inquiry which is grounded upon the understanding of the human being as a being of truth and justice, and also a philosophical practice which cultivates flesh to better sense other people and communities. The responsibility and care for others does not mean a reflection on what an individual may have done to others on a daily basis. While this is also a valuable reflection, what is implied methodologically is maintaining a critical perspective and practice toward oneself and society, considering others and other communities, and examining intentional relationships and responsibilities from the renewed definition of a philosophical attitude. This practice not only helps a researcher to understand her/his intentional relationships as an ethical subject, but also allows scope for a researcher to make social changes in direct and indirect ways.

In terms of a literature review and theoretical framework, post-intentional phenomenology encourages a researcher to partially review literature and think with theory rather than proceeding from than a heavy review of literature and tuning his/her viewpoint and analysis to theories s/he draws on. Its benefit is that we can just follow "lines of flight" in how they move and take different shapes, given that theories in this approach do not play a role as a border or a framework which defines and/or limits the possibility of an inquiry in a post-intentional phenomenology. However, the intercultural consideration of phenomenology informs us that the field of philosophy is predominantly Eurocentric; so, as theories and ideas are rooted in these philosophies, we have to pay attention to how the "lines of flight", which take off and lead us to the new space, are intentionally related to dominant and oppressive power structures. For instance, we can distance ourselves from immersion in the Europeanized/Westernized intellectual world by thinking with non-European/Western philosophies, ideas and theories. We also have to strive to create a space in which different forms of wisdom are valued the same as intellectualized and theorized ideas. These attempts can be used in the literature review process by including non-Eurocentric theories or challenging the dominant narratives in the world, such as post-colonial studies and the notion of cultural hybridity. Also, in the stage of exploration of a phenomenon, we can think with various forms of knowledge and wisdoms rooted in a variety of different cultures and thinkers.

The five-component approach encourages phenomenologists to be aware of their intentional relationships in the societal dimension; this becomes more complicated and more deeply demanding by the addition of the intercultural consideration, especially due to its implication of lifeworld as plural. This acknowledgement informs two significant questions to consider: (1) How can this approach be restated and rearticulated with the idea of plural lifeworld? and (2) How can a researcher capture and understand a phenomenon if each lifeworld is particular and connected and manifested in a specific form? The first question asks how this method needs to be re-imagined considering both researchers' and individual participants' positionality and context, and also the intentional relationships among them. The second question raises awareness of the impossibility of an individual scholar capturing more than partial understanding of a phenomenon, especially if a phenomenon has intercultural intentional relationships, and asks how post-intentional phenomenology would embrace and take up this challenge.

This paper represents just the start of the discussion of intercultural post-intentional phenomenology, and so further work should be continued by phenomenological researchers as they pursue their research. As Vagle's (2018) reading of "lines of flight" tells us, we will have to see how the points addressed in this paper take off and assume shape in various ways. It is also important to be open to accepting when such inquiry leads a researcher to undo some or many arguments made here. For this reason, continuing a phenomenological inquiry is making a commitment to a brave struggle for truth and justice.

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Referencing Format

Hong, Y. (2019). Post-intentional phenomenology as ethical and transformative inquiry and practice: Through intercultural phenomenological dialogue. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, *19*(2), 11 pp. doi: 10.1080/20797222.2019.1693106

About the Author

Younkyung Hong
Doctoral Candidate and Graduate Instructor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA
E-mail address: hongx272@umn.edu

Younkyung Hong is a doctoral candidate in elementary education, with specific focus on curriculum and instruction, at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where she teaches an undergraduate course in the Elementary Teacher Education programme and supervises Master's degree students in their licensure programmes.

Previously a public elementary school teacher in Seoul, South Korea, Younkyung Hong, before embarking on her doctoral studies in the United States, participated in educational activism as a member of the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union (KTU).

Younkyung's research interests include situating and challenging Western/Eurocentric perspectives in contexts beyond the USA, and in this regard she has been developing her work on topics related to elementary education, social justice education, teacher education, and discourse analysis with a phenomenological perspective.

Younkyung Hong's work aims to encourage preservice teachers to ask critical questions about social issues and to connect their academic learning with their teaching practice and daily lives.

References

Gubser, M. (2013). Jan Patočka's transcendence to the world. *Investigaciones Fenomenológicas: Monográfico*, *4*(2), 155–175.

Lao, S. (2004). Making Chinese sense of phenomenology. In D. Carr & C. Cheung (Eds.), *Space, time, and culture* (pp. 1–2). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4020-2824-3_1

Lau, K. (2004). Intersubjectivity and phenomenology of the other: Merleau-Ponty's contribution. In D. Carr & C. Cheung (Eds.), *Space, time, and culture* (pp. 135–158). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4020-2824-3_10

Lau, K. (2016). *Phenomenology and intercultural understanding: Toward a new cultural flesh*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-44764-3

Ruggenini, M. (2004). *Krisis*: The power of sense. Time, history and the crisis of Western culture in Husserl's phenomenology. In D. Carr & C. Cheung (Eds.), *Space, time, and culture* (pp. 15–29). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4020-2824-3_3

Simms, E.-M. (2005). Goethe, Husserl, and the crisis of the European sciences. *Janus Head*, *8*(1), 160–172. Available at: http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Simms.pdf

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Szakolczai, A. (1994). Thinking beyond the East-West divide: Foucault, Patočka, and the care of the self. *Social Research*, *61*(2), 297–323.

Tava, F. (2016a). Phenomenology and the idea of Europe: Introductory remarks. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, *47*(3), 205–209. doi: 10.1080/00071773.2016.1180851

Tava, F. (2016b). The brave struggle: Jan Patočka on Europe's past and future. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, *47*(3), 242–259. doi: 10.1080/00071773.2016.1180854

Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Vagle, M. D. (2018). *Crafting phenomenological research* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9781315173474

Yu, C. (2004). Lifeworld, cultural difference and the idea of grounding. In D. Carr & C. Cheung (Eds.), *Space, time, and culture* (pp. 177–187). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4020-2824-3_12

© The Author(s). This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0].
The *IPJP* is published in association with NISC (Pty) Ltd and Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.