

## BOOK REVIEW

Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*. (London, Routledge, 2000),  
xx + 568pp. ISBN 0-415-18373-3 (hardback)  
ISBN 0-415-18373-1 (paperback)

ALLAN CASEBIER

*Department of Philosophy,  
University of Miami,  
Coral Gables, FLORIDA 33124-7640  
USA*

*acasebie@miami.edu*

The principal value of *an* historical survey of a philosophical movement is that it situates that movement in its historical context. The reader's understanding of the writings central to the movement is enriched by an appreciation of the relationships of influence holding among members of the movement, an appreciation of the manner in which crucial terms in the analysis were typically used at the time in which the movement's writings were composed and an appreciation of the legacy of the movement in contemporary developments. Too often historical surveys offer a recitation of each thinker's individual views, without providing an historical fabric to tie them together. For this reason, among many others, readers of twentieth-century European philosophy will welcome Dermot Moran's *Introduction to Phenomenology*.

The work carefully lays the context for knowing, for example, what a term such as "constitution" meant for Husserl and for other philosophical writers of the time. Moran traces the meaning of the term from the pre-Kantians through Kant and the post-Kantians to its appearance in Husserl. The term is vexing if one simply relies upon Husserl's scattered remarks about its meaning. However, with the his-

tory of the use of the term in mind from its appearance in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century thinking in Europe, Husserl's use of the term comes more clearly into focus. The crucial debate about whether "constitution" in Husserl is to have an ontological or epistemological interpretation can be dealt with more felicitously with this history of the term in mind.

The work admirably traces the influence of earlier works on central writings in the phenomenological movement e.g., in Stumpf and Brentano on Husserl, and writings from the earlier years of the movement on later writings e.g., Heidegger's concept of destruction as a source for Derridean deconstruction.

The title of the work, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, might mislead since the work is written at the highest level of sophistication. Unlike many surveys of twentieth-century European philosophizing, it makes no concessions to non-professional readers of philosophy. The work is for the scholar of philosophy and for prepared readers with considerable introduction to these writings well behind them. The selection of authors and writers upon which to focus is well chosen – Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre – but with one notable exception namely, Jacques Derrida. Moran's justification for including Derrida in a survey on phenomenology is that the latter's central claims about meaning emerge from his engagement with phenomenology (p. 436), and that Derrida's path beyond philosophy is "essentially a route that went *through* phenomenology" (*ibid.*). Moran also argues that Derrida's critical method does not constitute a complete abandonment of the phenomenological mode of inquiry; "rather he wants to liberate phenomenology from its attachment to the very metaphysical standpoint it claims to have overcome, ... an addiction to the intuition of presence" (*ibid.*). While it remains true that Derrida is "deconstructing phenomenology," as Moran characterizes Derrida's approach, it seems rather implausible that such a strategy leaves him within the phenomenological movement. The inclusion of Derrida as a phenome-

nologist in Moran's *Introduction to Phenomenology* is problematic. Derrida's early engagement with the writings of Husserl and others associated together under the banner of a phenomenological movement will probably seem to many readers of Moran's volume not to be enough to classify him with them.

On an associated issue, as many writers have pointed out over the long course of writings from Husserl onwards in European philosophy in the twentieth-century, it is not clear that there is a movement among the writers covered in the Moran book that may properly be called "phenomenological."

Husserl's notion of a new science of consciousness, to be called "phenomenology" which is to stand alongside natural science, whose object is nature, and human science, whose object is "*Geist*," is distinctive to Husserl's approach to philosophizing. In the same vein, the methodological approach of employing the reductions – phenomenological, transcendental, and eidetic – are distinctive to Husserl. The epistemological concepts of noema/noesis are distinctive to Husserl. Is one following the Husserlean project of phenomenology if one does not include these elements? Moran throughout his work makes a case for cohesion among the writings but at times the effort to have a movement as the object of his study seems strained. Nevertheless there are many well-known common elements among Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, et *alii*. such as the concepts of the life-world, intentionality, horizon-analysis and so on that may usefully be traced throughout these writings. Moran traces them in the most searching ways, everywhere in lucid style, and always with an historical perspective that could hardly be improved upon. However loosely or tightly these writings may be classified together in terms of common elements and influence relations to justify a sense of a movement, the exposition of their philosophical meaning and their influence relations among them is of the highest quality.

Readers who are distressed by an overly rigid distinction between two philosophical traditions – continental versus Anglo-American analytic – or phenomenological versus Anglo-American analytic – may wish for more indication in Moran's history of the ways in which Husserl and his followers are really just doing philosophy as Russell, Frege, Quine, Putnam, Kripke, *et alii*, are just doing philosophy. Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Heidegger are rather widely read in America, perhaps as much as they are read in European scholarly circles. The views of the former tradition of writers bear directly upon the issues of concern to the latter tradition of writers. There are many places in Moran's book where such connections might have been made in an effort to indicate the interconnections and interpenetrations of the two traditions. One can hope that a day is not too far removed where the writings of Husserl and his followers can be considered as much a part of anyone's philosophical education as are the writings of Frege in the Anglo-American tradition. A superb history of the writings of these seminal thinkers such as Moran has provided might have been extended somewhat more so that it may help to break down the highly artificial distinction between so-called "phenomenology" and so-called "analytic philosophy."

In Moran's exposition, the analysis of the meaning of noema/noesis is a model for how such a survey should be accomplished. Its analysis is deeply embedded in the controversies surrounding the proper interpretation of these crucial terms in Husserl. The same may be said for the meaning of "*Dasein*" in Heidegger. The range of credible interpretations is surveyed with an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of each specification of the meaning of the terms involved and the role of the concepts in the overall analysis. In a few other places, the reader may wish for more sense of a controversy about the nature of a given philosophical analysis. Notable in this connection is the central controversy about the role of the transcendental ego in Husserlean phenomenology. Moran clearly sides with one of the

central interpretations but might have given a greater sense of an alternative view which has much currency.

The survey should help immensely in assisting the prepared reader to grasp the overall direction and meaning of difficult writings by Sartre, e.g., in *Being and Nothingness*, by Merleau-Ponty in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, works which deserve to have much more prominence on the philosophical scene but which offer some stubborn resistance to the non-specialist in encountering the writings of these major thinkers. The inclusion of Levinas, Gadamer, and Arendt is a major strength of the volume. Too many such surveys have made it seem as though to know this period in European philosophizing is to know Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre. Moran corrects this vision. The superb bibliography provides an enrichment that should lead the reader beyond Moran's exposition to a deeply forged engagement with the primary and secondary sources to be properly associated with the texts forming the basis for *Introduction to Phenomenology*.