It may not be a coincidence that, in a country where the vast majority of the population resides in a few big cities, many of the Australian phenomenological figures that we will meet below were born or enculturated in the margins, in the country or the bush. This puts a new twist on an often heard story in Australian philosophical circles. When asked about why Australian philosophers tend to be ‘realists’, David Armstrong responded that “the strong sunlight and harsh brown landscape of Australia force reality upon us”, inclining philosophers in this country away from the sort of “bullshit” that had taken hold elsewhere, including in Europe, which at least on Michael Devitt’s retelling, has “mists and gentle green landscape” that “weaken the grip on reality” (Devitt 1991, viii). This attitude reflects a common misconception about phenomenology, a misconception according to which it is a philosophy that is all about withdrawing from the hard, cold reality to some inner, ephemeral substance – a “woolly mysticism” as Gilbert Ryle once put it. This sentiment finds expression in James Franklin’s *Corrupting the Youth*, a provocative history of Australian philosophy:

> is the inwardness of phenomenology all together healthy? Wallowing in the world of inner experience is all very well, but like drug-taking, it can lead to one’s becoming excessively cut off from the bracing world of the great outdoors …. If phenomenology is the marijuana of the philosophical world, the heroin that beckons the percentage of hardy souls who are always on the lookout for boundaries to transgress is idealism.  

*(Franklin 2003, 151–156, 194)*

In stark contrast, Jean-Paul Sartre once wrote of phenomenology that: “it has been centuries since philosophy has given evidence of such a realist trend. Phenomenologists have immersed man back into the world, they have restored to his anguish and his sufferings, and to his rebellions too, their full weight” (Sartre 2012, 51). In this view, phenomenology made philosophy more “concrete”, describing objects as seen and touched, and extracting philosophy from them. Ironically, then, contra Armstrong and Devitt, Australian phenomenologists can take the strong sunlight and the harsh brown land as an invitation to look away from all theories, speculations and constructions, and to confront reality just as it enforces itself upon us. Here we may have an Australian rendering of the famous phenomenological motto, ‘back to the things themselves!’
The expression ‘Phenomenology in Australasia’ can be used to designate any of the following activities undertaken by an Australasian philosopher: (1) original phenomenological investigations and/or discoveries; (2) the interpretation, exegesis and translation of classical phenomenological texts; (3) the use of classical phenomenology for the purpose of contributing to contemporary philosophical and interdisciplinary debates; or (4) teaching of phenomenology in Australasian universities and the spreading of phenomenological ideas to the wider Australasian public. Australasian phenomenologists have, and continue to, make important contributions to categories (2)–(4). But there is a lack regarding (1). In terms of scope, execution and focus, we have nothing like Alfred Schutz’s *Phenomenology of the Social World* or even Jean-Paul Sartre’s *A Brief Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, not to mention such classics as Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, Heidegger’s *Being and Time* and Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*. Notwithstanding that what phenomenology is contested and continuously transformed, it is still fair to say that in so far as (1) is concerned, ‘Australasian phenomenology’ designates a promise yet to be fulfilled.

Phenomenology in Australia and New Zealand before World War II

A diary entry of a key figure in the history of Australasian phenomenology, William Ralph Boyce Gibson (1869–1935), with whom our historical survey begins, can shed some light on the reasons behind this comparative lack of original phenomenological investigations. Gibson occupied the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Melbourne from 1911 to 1935. In 1928 his sabbatical leave took him to Freiburg, where he spent time with Husserl and where he met other well-known phenomenological figures, most notably Heidegger and Levinas. Thankfully, Gibson kept a diary in which he recorded his impressions of this time, including a discussion with Husserl that lucidly illustrates, on the one hand, Husserl’s insistence that genuine phenomenology calls for actual investigative work and, on the other hand, the reluctance and fear induced by the daunting task of facing the things themselves (here exemplified by Gibson but which is by no means unique to him). The diary entry in question recollects Husserl as claiming that in order to get out of all the conflicting views and theories that we face when we open philosophical books—the empty and symbolic representations of phenomena—it is necessary to go back to the things themselves, to the “This must be so”. Gibson responds to Husserl thus:

I suggested he was a peculiarly *begabter Mensch* and that we ordinary people needed the stimulus of the world’s more or less distracted but always renovating thinking to help one on and enable one to see, even what Phenomenology required one to see.

Husserl’s responds by humbly denying that he has any special gift. Phenomenology does not call for some special gift (of course, as in any other field, there will be gifted phenomenologists, but not every phenomenologist need be gifted, hard work can make up for it). What it does call for is hard work and a sustained effort: “Husserl rather implied that if there were not more phenomenologists in the world at present it was because they shirked the hard work” (Spiegelberg 1971). Gibson’s own chief contribution, not just to Australasian phenomenology but to the phenomenology in the entire English-speaking world, is without a doubt his translation of Husserl’s *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie I* in 1931. This was the standardly used translation of Husserl’s classic work until the 1980s. Gibson authored a number of articles on Husserlian themes, including “The Problem of Real and Ideal in the Phenomenology of Husserl”, read before the Australian Association of Psychology and Philosophy conference in Melbourne in May 1923. Gibson also wrote on the work of Nicolai Hartmann, contemplated...
translating Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* and conspired (ultimately unsatisfactorily) to have Levinas lecture in Australia.

Gibson appointed J. McKellar Stewart (1878–1953) to the University of Melbourne in 1912. Stewart lectured at Melbourne until 1923 and in 1924 he moved to the University of Adelaide, where he was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy, a position in which he remained until 1950. At Adelaide, on the basis of Gibson’s translation, Stewart taught *Ideas I*, wrote a couple of articles on Husserl, including “Husserl’s phenomenological method” (Stewart 1934) published in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy and Psychology*, drew extensively on Husserl’s *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and *Cartesian Meditations* and put together a book manuscript on phenomenology, which was unfortunately destroyed in a fire in 1939 (the publisher’s copy also perished during the Blitz on London), never to be rewritten again (Grave 1984). Gibson and Stewart were the two leading lights of Australian phenomenology before World War II.

In New Zealand, South African–born John Niemeyer Findlay was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Otago from 1932 to 1944. Educated at Oxford, like Gibson he translated a key text of Husserl’s (*Logical Investigations*), and for this reason alone he is also an important phenomenological figure in the English-speaking world. During his time in New Zealand, he revived Hegelianism and despite publishing little in the area nonetheless championed the philosophical significance of Husserl’s early phenomenology. He also influenced Arthur Prior and worked on tensed logic, wrote books on Meinong, “rational mysticism” and transcendental reflection. While Findlay influenced philosophy around the world, his impact on the reception of phenomenology in New Zealand is less clear. Indeed, it is probably true to say that the story of New Zealand philosophy gives phenomenology a lesser role than it occupied in Australia throughout the twentieth century.

**Phenomenology in Australia and New Zealand after World War II**

With World War II, analytic philosophy rose to prominence in Australia (and New Zealand). On his retirement, Stewart suggested that the department take a new philosophical direction and, consequently, in 1950 Jack Smart was appointed the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide (Mortensen et al. 2012). While Smart went on to become one of the best and most well-known Australasian philosophers, his appointment played a role in the decline of Australian phenomenology in general and at Adelaide in particular (much as Wilfrid Quine assuming the Chair at Harvard in 1956 had a related effect on that institution, which had previously had a large number of phenomenologists working there or passing through). Smart’s disdain for phenomenology is no great secret, and he himself once wrote that “I have moments of despair about philosophy when I think of how so much phenomenological and existential philosophy seems such sheer bosh that I cannot even begin to read it” (Smart 1975). This attitude carried over into action. At Adelaide, Smart removed all ‘continental philosophy’ from the syllabus, including Husserl’s *Ideas I*. Smart also encouraged a final year student, Neil Nilsson, who studied *Ideas I* under Stewart and who was prepared to engage in a study of the *Cartesian Meditations*, to drop these topics and to read Ayer and Ryle instead (Grave 1984, 111).3

Australian phenomenology was all but dead during the war years and in the period immediately afterwards. Almost single-handedly, Max Charlesworth brought it back to life. (Incidentally, Charlesworth’s heroics teach that even a single phenomenological voice, unwavering in the face of social pressures and current trends, has the power to significantly alter the direction of philosophy in Australasia.) Charlesworth took a position at the University of Melbourne in 1958, after having studied at Louvain, the home of the Husserl Archives and at the time the centre of phenomenology, the place where Merleau-Ponty and other well-known phenom-
enologists would visit to get access to Husserl’s *Ideas II* and other significant texts that had not yet been translated. Working against the current orthodoxy of ‘Wittgensteinian Melbourne’, Charlesworth’s primary interest was in French, existentialist phenomenology, as developed by Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Simone Beauvoir. In 1967, he conducted what was Australia’s ‘first full course in contemporary continental philosophy’, the focus of which was on the just mentioned phenomenological figures (but he also discussed Husserl’s *Ideas*). In 1974 Charlesworth was appointed Foundation Planning Dean of the Humanities at Deakin University and fostered a culture that continued to encourage phenomenology, appointing staff like Douglas Kirsner, who published a book on Sartre (Kirsner 1977), and R. D. Laing in the 1970s. Charlesworth played a significant role in helping spread existential ideas to the wider Australian public: in 1975, he produced a series of programmes for the ABC on existentialism, in particular that of Sartre, from which his book *The Existentialists and Jean-Paul Sartre* was born. The radio programme was an overwhelming success. This—interest in existential phenomenological philosophy amongst the general public—was not just a localised phenomenon. Facing the void left behind by the war, the whole world felt the immediate reality of such questions as: What does it mean to be free? (This question must have felt especially real in the occupied lands, such as France.) What is death? What is anxiety? What is the purpose of life? And so on. Given the nature of the times, it is perhaps unsurprising that an existentially oriented phenomenology, which can be understood as the application of the phenomenological method to existential themes, would capture the common imagination. Around this same time Melbourne’s Existentialist Society was formed (which is still running), with the objective of making existential ideas accessible to the general public. Arguably the nature of the times also played a role in the shadowing of Husserlian phenomenology by its existential successor, just as they arguably did in post–World War I Germany and the Heideggerian eclipse of Husserl too (Philipse 2003).

William Doniela, an undergraduate of the University of Sydney and who completed his doctorate at Freiburg, taught at the University of Newcastle from the early 1960s until his retirement in 1987. Doniela’s primary focus was Hegel but he also had a strong interest in the Husserlian variety of phenomenology. This was evident early on: Doniela was seriously considering the University of Göttingen as the place to undertake his doctoral studies largely because of the phenomenologist and ontologist Nicolai Hartmann who was working there at the time. Hartmann’s unexpected death put an end to those plans. During his professorship at Newcastle, Doniela took an interest in the work of Heidegger and Husserl, and was one of the founding members of the Australian Phenomenology Association. Doniela never saw a sharp line between continental and analytic philosophy and it is in him that we find one of the clearest examples of that integrationist spirit that is so characteristic of Australian phenomenologists.

This spirit was also embodied by Max Deutscher, who was appointed as the Foundation Professor of Philosophy at Macquarie University in the early 1970s. The story of Deutscher’s philosophical evolution, through which an analytic philosopher turned into one with a serious academic interest in existential phenomenology, further reinforces the notion that interest in the latter is often motivated by the real need to make sense of the darker sides of life. During the Korean war, before he studied philosophy, Deutscher’s life was “disturbed” by his conscription into the army (Deutscher 2007). “Everything”, he says, “… was thrown into a confusion”. The need to make sense of it all led Deutscher to the works of Sartre, amongst others. This sparked his interest in philosophy in general, which he took up academically. Deutscher was a graduate from the University of Adelaide, where he studied under Jack Smart. His studies eventually took him to Oxford, then the home of Gilbert Ryle and a key centre of analytic philosophy. At Oxford, Deutscher did not pursue phenomenology academically (but he did read a paper on Sartre at Oxford, in large part because no-one else was familiar
with his work). His early philosophical output was solidly placed in the analytic tradition and one of his early papers, “Mental and Physical Properties” (Deutscher 1967) defends a Smart/Armstrong kind of physicalism. Things changed in 1969, however, when he moved to the USA. Finding himself in the middle (quite literally, he ended up renting a house located on the border of the white–black divide) of the racial division that so tainted American society at the time, Deutscher became preoccupied with the phenomenon of making someone into an Other, a phenomenon that he felt analytic philosophy did not have the resources to handle. This brought back his earlier interest in Heidegger and Sartre and other phenomenological figures, including Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Despite this (re)turn, in a sense Deutscher always remained true to both of his philosophical parents, phenomenology and analytic philosophy. This is exemplified in his more recent book, Judgment After Arendt, which draws upon, besides Arendt, such classical phenomenological figures as Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre, but also on the work of his mentor at Oxford, Ryle.

Deutscher’s colleague at Macquarie, Luciana O’Dwyer, was a phenomenologist in a purer sense of the term: her primary interest was in Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology; she drew on Husserl’s conception of the transcendental as developed in such works as the Cartesian Meditations and the Krisis and published a number of important articles in this area, including ‘The Significance of the Transcendental Ego for the Problem of Body and Soul in Husserlian Phenomenology’ (O’Dwyer 1983). Indeed, O’Dwyer has been described as being “Australia’s leading Husserl scholar” at the time (Bilimoria 1997).

Sinnerbrink and Russell describe the contrast between Deutscher’s integrationist and O’Dwyer’s purist approaches to phenomenology in the following way:

O’Dwyer’s ‘purist’ tendencies as a phenomenologist present an interesting counterpoint to Deutscher’s more ‘integrationist’ approach, which became paradigmatic of the way a number Australian philosophers approached Continental philosophy—namely, as an alternative source of ideas that could contribute to ‘mainstream’ philosophical inquiry rather than a specialised approach in its own right.

(Sinnerbrink and Russell 2014)

The integrationist approach to phenomenology is also nicely embodied by Maurita Harney. In 1984, Harney published “Intentionality, Sense and Mind”, wherein she attempted to connect Husserl and Frege by identifying the former’s noema with the latter’s Sinn. Harney contributed to Australian phenomenology in a number of other ways: she taught phenomenology and existentialism at the ANU from 1973 to 1980, offered courses on phenomenology and neuroscience at Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy, ran phenomenological courses at adult education groups and gave talks on phenomenology at the Existentialist Society. Her very recent work, which continues the integrationist approach, explores the possibility that phenomenology can contribute to such emerging fields as biosemiotics (Harney 2015).

The lack of strong Husserlian heritage during this period is a point of distinction between phenomenology in Australasia and the corresponding story in the USA, but it is important to recognise the influence of Marion Tapper at the University of Melbourne who taught and researched in the area from the late 1970s until at least her retirement in the mid-2000s. Tapper completed an honours thesis on Heidegger under the supervision of Bill Doniela and a doctorate with Deutscher at Macquarie. In the mid-1980s she was appointed at the University of Melbourne and published two important articles on Husserl: “Husserl and the Subject-Object Dichotomy” (Tapper 1985) and “The Priority of Being or Consciousness for Phenomenology”. Many postgraduate students worked with her on continental and phenomenological theses,
some of whom came to found the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy and be leaders within the Australasian Society of Continental Philosophy (see below).

Australia’s first phenomenology conference was held at the ANU on June 12–14, 1976, organised by Harney. Eleven papers were discussed in front of an audience of over 70 who came from a variety of academic backgrounds (Harney 1977). In 1981, under the imperative of Deutscher, Doniela, Harney, O’Dwyer, Tapper and others, the Australasian Association of Phenomenology was formed. The organisation later changed its name to the Australasian Society of Phenomenology and Sociology and, in a further alteration, ‘Sociology’ was dropped in favour of Social Philosophy (AAPSP). In the same year, the AAPSP organised the second Australian phenomenology conference in Brisbane. Significantly, in 1990 the AAPSP held the first international phenomenology conference in Melbourne, in the attendance of which were two notable modern phenomenological figures: J.N. Mohanty and Don Ihde. AAPSP underwent a demise in 1994 before a kind of metamorphosis took place in 1995 when the society turned into \textit{The Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy} (ASCP).

What is the significance of this last event for Australasian phenomenology? Is it a matter of a mere name change or does it reflect a more substantive transformation in philosophical outlook? On this, Sinnerbrink and Russell comment as follows:

This transition between the AAPSP and the ASCP marked a new phase in the history of Continental philosophy in Australia. It symbolised the shift from the older generation of scholars working on phenomenology and existentialism to a younger generation of postgraduates keenly interested in French poststructuralism and critical theory, a shift that had already been occurring in some departments from the late 1970s.

(Sinnerbrink and Russell 2014)

While it is arguable that related transformations have also taken place at SPEP (the USA’s Society of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy) notwithstanding the retention of ‘phenomenology’ in the name of the organisation, this new phase may also reflect Australasia’s forgetfulness of phenomenology. How many from this new generation actually got to learn what phenomenology is? How many read Husserl?\textsuperscript{5} How many tried doing their own phenomenological investigations? How much of this transition from phenomenology to other forms of ‘continental philosophy’ was well-informed and how much of it was just following the latest European trend? Most Derrida scholars, for example, did not follow Derrida and spent ten years reading Husserl, including one sometime Derridean coauthor of this article!

**Contemporary scene**

In what may very well be a reflection of our multiculturalism, this historical survey suggests that Australasian philosophers have tended towards the integrationist approach to phenomenology, which involves drawing on phenomenological ideas and insights, not for the sake of developing phenomenology per se but for the purpose of contributing to wider philosophical or extra-philosophical issues, perhaps in regard to other trajectories in analytic philosophy, or in regard to a particular theme that has a phenomenological aspect (technology, say). It is fair to say that this continues to be the trend of Australasian phenomenology today.

The \textit{University of Tasmania} is currently the home of Jeff Malpas and Ingo Farin. While both philosophers describe themselves as working in the hermeneutical tradition, they have made contributions to phenomenology, especially to the exegesis, translation and interpretation of Heidegger’s thought. Malpas can be described as a topical thinker: his primary interest is
in the philosophical significance of place or topology, which he has explored in such works as *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World and Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Malpas 1999). That Malpas embodies the integrationist spirit is seen through his attempt to bring together, through the topic of place, the ideas of Heidegger and Donald Davidson. Ingo Farin has translated Heidegger’s *The Concept of Time: The First Draft of Being and Time* and (together with James G. Hart) Husserl’s *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Husserl 2006; Heidegger 2011).

At *Deakin University*, Jack Reynolds’ recent book, *Phenomenology, Naturalism and Science* (Reynolds 2018), argues that phenomenological investigations and discoveries—e.g. Husserl’s analysis of time-consciousness, Merleau-Ponty’s study of the lived body, Heidegger’s notion of being-in-the-world, Sartre’s investigations of Others—have an important role to play in contemporary philosophical and empirical issues that have to do with embodiment, time and social cognition. He also argues that phenomenology itself must be constrained by empirical findings, relax its traditional bias against all forms of naturalism, and be open to a kind of middle way that he argues was earlier practised by Merleau-Ponty. His earlier book, *Chronopathologies* (2013), attempts a similar kind of bridge-building, the focus here being time and politics, and he has a general interest in phenomenology of embodiment since his first book on Merleau-Ponty and Derrida in 2004.

A number of phenomenologically oriented scholars have found a home at *Murdoch University*. L’ubica Ucnik focuses on the work of the Czech phenomenologist Jan Patočka, a student of Husserl and Heidegger, a friend of Eugen Fink and an important phenomenological figure in his own right. Paul S. MacDonald has written a number of interesting articles on Husserl’s thought, including “Husserl, the Monad and Immortality” (2007). Horst Ruthrof had earlier done significant work in the phenomenology of language. Heath Williams, who began his PhD at Murdoch and is currently completing it at the University of Western Australia, is working on the problem of intersubjectivity from a Husserlian perspective and is also the author of a number of articles, including “Husserlian Phenomenological Description and the Problem of Describing Intersubjectivity” (Williams 2016). In 2014, the fifth meeting of the Organisation of Phenomenological Organisations held a conference at Murdoch University, with a number of well-known phenomenological names in attendance, including Dermot Moran, Burt Hopkins and the late Lester Embree.

The *Australian Catholic University* has hosted significant phenomenological activity in recent years, especially at its Melbourne campus, developing a connection between phenomenology and religion that Max Charlesworth’s work had earlier made clear. In recent years, Kevin Hart, Jeff Hanson, Chris Hackett and Nick Trakakis established a research group titled ‘Philosophy and Phenomenology of Religion’. The interests here were multiple, but the primary focus was on the so-called “theological turn” of phenomenology, and on such important French phenomenological figures as Michel Henry, Jean–Luc Nancy and Jean–Luc Marion, amongst others. In 2012, the group organised a workshop on the Phenomenology of Emotions, the main speaker of which was the well-known phenomenologist Anthony Steinbock. Although the centre is no longer operational, ACU continues to nurture its interest in phenomenology, through Richard Colledge’s work on Heidegger, and, in a part-time capacity, through the renowned French phenomenologist Claude Romano, who is also familiar with analytic philosophy and is the author of, amongst other works, *At the Heart of Reason*.

With the exception of Karen Green, most scholars with an interest in phenomenology and existentialism at *Monash University* reside(d) outside the philosophy department. This includes Robin Small, who wrote a thesis titled “Heidegger’s Concept of Human Nature” at the ANU in the 1970s and who lectured on existentialism in the department of education (Harney 1992).
Stuart Grant, from the Centre for Theatre and Performance, has a focus on phenomenology and its application in performative arts. Given the almost non-existent interest in phenomenology amongst Monash philosophers, it is quite remarkable that Sartre was taught in the department at least since 1969, when Sandy Boyce Gibson lectured on existentialism (ibid.). In the 1990s Karen Green took over the old Sartre unit, and combined it with the philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir. More recently, one of the authors of this paper, Erol Copelj, is in the process of completing his PhD on the Phenomenology of Mindfulness and is also the author of a couple of phenomenological essays, including “Displaced Feeling: A (Partial) Phenomenological Study” (2016), published in *Husserl Studies*. Monima Chadha also does interesting comparative work on phenomenology and Indian philosophy, taking a particular interest in debates surrounding the self/no-self distinction in a cross-cultural manner that was also a major part of Purushottama Bilimoria’s use of phenomenology at Deakin, another appointment of Charlesworth. In 2015 Chadha was awarded the Annette Baier Prize by the Australasian Association of Philosophy for her article “Time-Series of Ephemeral Impressions: The Abhidharma-Buddhist View of Conscious Experience” (2015), wherein she engages with phenomenology, in particular with the work of Dan Zahavi. Finally, Andrew Benjamin also does significant work on Levinas and Heidegger, for example, although he would likely resist any phenomenological label.

In recent times, Andrew Inkpin has taken on the phenomenological mantle at the University of Melbourne and has done significant work on Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, offering both a new synthetic view on their takes on phenomenology of language, as well as doing new phenomenological analyses, based primarily on his own linguistic experiences in Germany where he worked for some time, including as a translator. In 2016 he published *Disclosing the World: On the Phenomenology of Language* (Inkpin 2016).

The University of Auckland is probably the only institution in New Zealand where phenomenology has had an ongoing presence in a philosophy department: over the last generation or so, Julian Young, Lisa Guenther, Robert Wicks, Stefano Franchi and Matheson Russell have researched in and taught on phenomenology. Russell’s work on Husserl (e.g. *Husserl: A Guide for the Perplexed*) (Russell 2006), and his more integrationist concerns about the relationship between phenomenology and critical theory fit the above narrative well. Guenther has done important phenomenological work on the experience of birth, both in interpreting Levinas’s writings on fecundity and the “gift of the other”, and in developing what she and others have called “critical phenomenology”. Since her departure from New Zealand for the USA and Canada, she has done important philosophical and political work on the phenomenology of solitary confinement and other conditions associated with daily life in maximum security prisons.

In this respect, it is also important to recognise the contributions (sometimes critical) of Australian feminist philosophers to phenomenology since the 1970s. Philosophers like Moira Gatens (Sydney), Elizabeth Grosz (Sydney, Monash), Philipa Rothfield (La Trobe) and Rosalyn Diprose (UNSW) have also undertaken internationally known analyses of embodiment, temporality and our experience of alterity, as well as dance in Rothfield’s case. Diprose’s work, and her interpretations of Merleau-Ponty and Levinas amongst others, have also been very influential on many postgraduate students. Diprose and Gatens have both been keynote speakers at the annual meetings of the Merleau-Ponty Circle in the USA.

Since the 1970s conference, the ANU has continued to employ staff working on and teaching phenomenology, despite it being the notional “home” of analytic philosophy in Australia, including Richard Campbell, Penelope Deutscher (in particular on de Beauvoir and Sartre) and Bruin Christensen. The latter has done important work on the thought of both Husserl and Heidegger, and in one paper, “Getting Heidegger off the West Coast” (1998) he contests the ‘West Coast’ (of the USA) interpretation of Heidegger’s thought. Christensen has also been
productive in comparing and combining phenomenology and analytic philosophy, especially the work of John McDowell, as in his book *Self and World – From Analytic Philosophy to Phenomenology*.

*Macquarie University* has also continued to be strong in phenomenology, albeit with perhaps no-one who would proclaim to be a card-carrying ‘phenomenologist’. Of particular note, Jean Philippe Deranty’s research on labour draws on phenomenological accounts of our experience of working life, and Robert Sinnerbrink’s various publications on cinema use the insights of phenomenological philosophers like Heidegger and others, while also offering new insights into the phenomenology of cinematic experience. From a more cognitive science-oriented perspective, John Sutton and his collaborators have also made significant use of descriptions of the phenomenology of skilled action in their work.

This, of course, is a potted and selective account, both as history and a survey of the contemporary scene. Nonetheless, it suffices to show that phenomenology remains a significant part of the Australasian philosophical landscape, albeit often in impure and hybrid ways. Whether that is to be embraced or bemoaned depends on one’s perspective, but despite the earlier twentieth-century influences (e.g. Gibson) Australasia has not had the kind of solid education in phenomenology that is still available in the USA, for example. Philosophers in this region are more inclined to use phenomenology for particular purposes, rather than exposit the work of the great and the good, or do sustained phenomenological analyses for their own sake.

Notes

1 Excerpts from Gibson’s diary have been published in (Spiegelberg 1971).
2 Harvard University had significant connections with German phenomenology both sides of World War I, with many of their students studying with Husserl, including J. Leighton, W. Hocking (Husserl’s first American student in 1902), and Winthrop Bell, who supervised Dorion Cairns who was an influential figure throughout much of the twentieth century. This may explain the manner in which certain US philosophers were key players in bringing Husserl to an English-speaking audience, whether we think of Cairns, Marvin Farber or others. For more on this American story, see (Livingston, forthcoming).
3 In similar fashion, in the 1960s Ryle himself advised the (now) famous film-maker, Terrence Malick, to abandon his thesis on Heidegger and Wittgenstein on the grounds that its concern with being-in-the-world was insufficiently philosophical. Cf. (Crichley 2002).
4 Ryle did study, publish on and meet Husserl, and in fact devoted two (out of 15) pages of his autobiographical essay to phenomenology, but he was often polemically against phenomenology despite (perhaps because of) some metaphilosophical proximity concerning the relationship between philosophy and science. His famous idea of a category mistake derives substantially from his earlier reading of Husserl, as does, arguably, the use he makes of the know-how/know-that distinction (Thomasson 2002).
5 The neglect of Husserl’s work is particularly acute in Australasia. For, after World War II, Australia did not have a group of significant and internationally renowned Husserlians in the manner that the USA did. This is illustrated by a story told to me by Karen Green, then of Monash University (private correspondence). When she took out Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* from the departmental library in the early 1990s, she noticed that the book had not been borrowed once since its arrival in 1976. Incidentally, after Karen, the next person to borrow the book was myself (Copelj), in 2010.
6 For more on this, see (Bilimoria 1997).

References


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