

Phenomaxism: Ideology and Materialism in Critical and Political Phenomenology

Call for Papers

Submission Deadline: January 31, 2027

Guest Editors: [Iaan Reynolds](#), [Christian Lotz](#), and [Marco Cavallaro](#)

Contemporary critical and political phenomenology has often bypassed the historical attempts to develop phenomenology in conversation with Marxist philosophy. If the 1970s saw a wave of translations into English of prominent Marxists and phenomenologists, many of these efforts have been forgotten. Relatedly and at the same time, the conception of “social critique” guiding critical phenomenology has largely been drawn from outside of the Marxist tradition. While these discussions often work with a concept of the social structure, the latter tradition’s resources for thinking through the systematic interrelations between this structure and the racialized, gendered, and oppressive dynamics of social experience have been overlooked.

On the one hand, this issue is an historical one; explorations of the Marxism of prominent phenomenologists can shed light on the already-political nature of some of the classic works and methodologies (see for example, the underappreciated discussion of labor at the end of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*). On the other hand, however, the issue relates to contemporary systematic problems: the interrelation between phenomenology and Marxist philosophy has produced distinct questions not often considered in today’s discussions. Ranging from investigations into sexism and gender oppression’s origin in a class society found in social reproduction theory (see Bhattacharya 2017), to the theory of needs developed as part of a “phenomenology of everyday life” by Ágnes Heller and other theorists in the “Budapest School” (Heller 1974; Markús, Heller and Feher 1986), past developments in Marxist philosophy can shed light on new areas of concern for critical and political phenomenology today, enriching these discussions.

For this reason, we are inviting papers for a *Puncta* special issue on “Phenomaxism: Ideology and Materialism in Critical and Political Phenomenology.” Our goal for this issue is to develop theoretical insights for today’s discussions on critical and political phenomenology through an engagement with the history of Marxist phenomenology. In this way, we hope to strengthen the historical grounding of today’s discussions, while illuminating the distinct areas of research opened up by attention to Marxist social theory in the phenomenological tradition.

We will seek contributions that thematize and critically reflect on the problem of whether phenomenology can itself be understood, spelled out or developed as a not only critically, but political position. In general, submissions, even if they utilize philosophers and philosophies in the Marxist and phenomenological traditions, should contribute to contemporary theoretical debates, developing the concepts through which critical and political phenomenology might be better able to think through contemporary developments.

We could envision contributions on the following topics (but these are just examples):

- Many contemporary critical phenomenologists focus in their contributions on intersubjectivity and embodiment. Are there any other aspects that are important, such as class, class consciousness, and social structure?
- In what sense can phenomenology function as a political intervention by identifying and resisting “reification” or “objectification”? Can phenomenology’s return to “lived experience”

be developed as a critical countermeasure against the totalizing forces of modern scientific, capitalist, and colonial systems?

- Marxist discourse identifies how capitalism transforms human beings into things, but often fails to describe the “non-reified” state of individuals and society that capitalism does not permit to emerge. Can in any sense phenomenology be thought of as “socialist” and/or develop an image of a socialist or communist society? Or do the results of phenomenological analyses point to a social organization that can no longer be described with these two traditional terms?
- Can a phenomenology of embodiment provide a foundation for the critique of capitalist exploitation? Can it improve existing critiques by developing attention to the lived experience of sexism, racism, and class oppression?
- Are the tools of classical phenomenological methodology intrinsically political? Following from Enzo Paci’s work, is the *epoché* a revolutionary act?
- How can incorporating Marxist social critique into phenomenological analysis lead to a better understanding of patriarchy, racism, and xenophobia?
- Phenomenology often was interpreted as “bourgeois” or idealistic, due to its closeness to positivism, idealism, non-material philosophy of history, or abstract level of analysis. How could one respond to this critique? How can phenomenological methods contribute to a robust - and non-simplistic - materialism?
- Is a phenomenological theory of ideological false consciousness possible? How can the relation between ideology and its material base be reformulated in phenomenological terms?

The submission deadline is January 31, 2027. Please submit all papers through the online portal at <https://www.punctajournal.org/> and include a note to the editors that the manuscript is intended for inclusion in the Phenomarxism special issue.

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Iaan Reynolds works on critical theory and phenomenology, with a general interest in the history of social and political critique. His book, *Education for Political Life* (Rowman & Littlefield) investigated the theoretical foundations and contemporary significance of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, with particular attention to his attempt to develop a simultaneously phenomenological and structural theory of political consciousness. His current research is on Adorno's criticism of Husserl, and recent articles have appeared in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, *Theory & Event*, *History of the Human Sciences*, and the *Radical Philosophy Review*.

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Christian Lotz is Professor of Philosophy at Michigan State University. His main research area is Post-Kantian European philosophy with foci in phenomenology and critical social philosophy. Monographs: *The Art of Gerhard Richter. Hermeneutics, Images, Meaning* (Bloomsbury Press, 2015; pbk. 2017); *The Capitalist Schema. Time, Money, and the Culture of Abstraction* (Lexington Books, 2014; pbk. 2016); *From Affectivity to Subjectivity. Revisiting Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology* (Palgrave, 2008); *Vom Leib zum Selbst. Kritische Analysen zu Husserl und Heidegger* (Alber, 2005). Selected Editions: *Christian Lotz zu Marx, Das Maschinenfragment* (Laika Verlag, 2014, with a lengthy commentary); *Ding und Verdinglichung. Technik- und Sozialphilosophie nach Heidegger und der kritischen Theorie* (ed., Fink Verlag). Lotz has published more than 80 papers and 50 reviews in journals and editions on topics, such as the lived body, memory, affectivity, images, society, capital, Marxist method, and social categories, as well as figures, ranging from Marx and Husserl to Arendt and Foucault.

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Marco Cavallaro is Scientific Assistant at the Husserl Archives of the University of Cologne, where he is also Principal Investigator of a DFG funded project on Italian Phenomenology. He received his PhD from the University of Cologne with a work on Husserl's theory of science, now published under title *Wissenschaft als System: Husserls Programm der Wissenschaftslehre* (Phaenomenologica 244, 2026). Cavallaro has published articles and book chapters on different topics in phenomenological research, especially Husserl, habit, imagination, and displacement. He is currently writing an English monograph on the marxist phenomenology of Enzo Paci.