

ABSTRACTS OF THE SEMINARS

Claudio Majolino (University of Lille)

The Many and the Many. What has Phenomenology to do with Manifolds?

The seminar will begin by singling out three main headings under which the theme of the “many” can be conceptually framed and has been historically addressed: (1) the Platonic issue of the intelligible Forms as being “one over many”—whose main development can be found in the Medieval set of questions known as the “problem of the universals”; (2) the Aristotelian issue of the manifold meanings of being—still recently at the heart of several Analytical ontologies; (3) the Neo-platonic doctrine of the One (Infinite) beyond being, as opposed to the many (Finite)—a theme rediscovered in recent times also in Hermeneutics. After having identified some defining features of these three headings, we will try to show to what extent, although in different and modified forms, the issue of the many is addressed within this threefold pattern also in Husserl (as it is in some of his scholars: Reinach, Heidegger, Ingarden, Fink). However, a closer understanding of Husserl’s concept of “constitution” will suggest the existence of a fourth unexpected pattern. A pattern in which the many is not subordinated to the one (be it as the unity of an essence; as the focal meaning of a concept; or as the source of being) but appears as related in many ways—by contrast, transformation, foundation, disjunction, fusion etc.—to the appearance of other manifolds. Such a concept of appearance as constituted manifold turns out to be not only the core of Husserl’s transcendental project, but also of Sartre’s theory of political groups in the Critique of the Dialectical Reason.

Daniele De Santis (Seattle University)

The Unity of the Ideal and the Multiplicity of the Real

As is well known, Husserl in the “Second Logical Investigation” (The Ideal Unity of the Species and the Modern Theories of Abstraction) characterizes his position as “idealism.” Husserl here understands not a “metaphysical doctrine” but—more modestly and cautiously—a “theory of knowledge which recognizes the ‘ideal’ as a condition for the possibility of objective knowledge in general.” The goal of the seminar on the “Second Logical Investigation” will be threefold one:

(1) We will first provide a sketch of the Husserl's critique of the “modern theories of abstraction” (Hume, Locke, and Berkeley).

(2) We then move to understand Husserl's conception of ideal as universal objects. We shall also verify the extent to which the problem Husserl tackles here is tantamount to what contemporary philosophers call “the problem of universals” (ie., the problem of the existence of items other than the real and individual ones occurring in empirical experience).

(3) Finally, we will explore what Husserl means by “idealism” as a “theory of knowledge”. The “ideal species” is described indeed as a “unity” opposed to the “multiplicity” of its empirical and factual realizations: “what we mean is the ‘universal’, the ideal unity, and not these individuals and pluralities”. As a consequence, we could describe Husserl's conception of idealism as a theory which recognizes the “unity” as a condition for the possibility of knowledge of the “multiplicity”.

Burt Hopkins (Seattle University)

Husserl and Jacob Klein on Arithmetical Unity and Multiplicity

The phenomenological problem of the arithmetical unity of a multiplicity will be explored by considering Edmund Husserl's early systematic investigation of the concept of number in *Philosophy of Arithmetic* and Jacob Klein's philosophico-historico investigation of the transformation of the ancient Greek concept of number into its modern concept initiated by early modern algebra in *Greek Mathematics and the Origin of Algebra*. This problem addresses the unity of a collection of two or more items of any kind, which is a problem because that unity cannot be traced to the properties of the items unified. The whole of such a collective unity, therefore, is greater than the sum of the properties of the items or their kinds combined by and therefore "in" its unity. An intrinsic connection between Klein's historical and Husserl's systematic treatments of the foundation of this problematic unity will be shown on the basis of Husserl's historical reflection on the formalized meaning fundamentals of the exact sciences and their role in the origin of mathematical physics in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*.

Klein critically departs from what he considers to be Husserl's "intentional-historical" analysis of the origin of mathematical physics in the *Crisis*, by replacing what he characterizes as the latter's amazing piece of historical "empathy" with what he purports to be the actual historical development behind the origin of mathematical physics. Klein does this by situating the actual historical development in question within the context of Husserl's statements about Galilean science in the *Crisis*, after having first extracted from Husserl's analysis of the concepts of history and tradition in the "Origin of Geometry" what he (Klein) refers to as the phenomenological problem of "intentional history." Klein's account of this development presents it in terms of a sedimented understanding of numbers that he maintains is superposed upon the first stratum of sedimented geometrical evidences uncovered by Husserl's fragmentary analyses of geometry in the *Crisis*.

In addition, then, to the task of the intentional-historical reactivation of the origin of geometry recognized by Husserl as intrinsic to the reactivation of the origin of mathematical physics, Klein recognizes a second task: that of the reactivation of the complicated network of sedimented significances that underlies the arithmetical understanding of geometry. According to

Klein, Husserl's analyses in the *Crisis* noted this network¹ but did not pursue the task of its reactivation. Klein argues this task is a crucial aspect of the reactivation of the sedimented history of the exact nature constructed by mathematical physics and therewith of the phenomenological project to rediscover the prescientific world and that physics' true origins in the life-world. In addition, therefore, to the spatial a priori of the prescientific life-world uncovered and targeted for phenomenological investigation by Husserl, Klein's researches uncover—in effect—that life-world's arithmetical a priori: namely, the original evidences behind all arithmetical unity and multiplicity.

¹ Klein refers to the *Crisis*, 44-45, where Husserl discusses the “arithmetization of geometry” and the consequent automatic “emptying of its meaning” as “the geometric signification recedes into the background as a matter of course, indeed drops out altogether” (44).

Matteo Giannasi (Ca' Foscari University Venice)

The Ontological Significance of Intersubjectivity

My contribution shall address the relation between the one and the many with reference to the phenomenological theme of intersubjectivity. Over the past few decades, intersubjectivity has received increased philosophical attention within as well as outside the phenomenological tradition. The concept of intersubjectivity has come to play a fundamental role both in critical theory (e.g. in Habermas and Honneth) and in analytic philosophy of mind, language, and meaning (e.g. in writers inspired by Quine and Davidson, as well as in recent reformulations of Wittgenstein's comments on rule following). In non- and even in post-phenomenological philosophy, intersubjectivity tends to be interpreted as an ontologically delimited, albeit very relevant, domain, and even as a branch of philosophy of mind or social philosophy. The scope and consequences of a theory of intersubjectivity are today typically interpreted as local, or "regional" in Husserlian terms, and are usually accommodated into a broadly "naturalistic" ontological framework. In contrast, Husserlian phenomenology, in particular from the 1920's, ascribes to intersubjectivity a completely general ontological significance, one that bears on the philosophical understanding of all major philosophical concepts. From a Husserlian perspective, an explication of intersubjectivity can cast light on the phenomenological structure of ontologically general notions, such as truth, being, reality, and objectivity, and it is even presupposed by logic and mathematics. Husserl's idea of a "transcendental intersubjectivity", however, faces major theoretical challenges: on the one hand, it must be reconciled with the purported primacy of strictly subjective, solipsistic, experience, which Husserl theorized in the earliest stages of the phenomenological enterprise; on the other hand, it is exposed to the ontological challenge of being squared with psychology, anthropology, zoology and cosmology. My contribution to the Summer School shall attempt to reconstruct and understand the theoretical reasons which led Husserl to take such an unexplored path, and to suggest ways in which his theses may still prove fecund, or even, in some qualified sense, compelling for contemporary philosophical debates.

Emiliano Trizio (Seattle University)

Know yourself and you will know us all. Philosophy, human existence, and self-explication of reason

As Husserl said once, “individual life is just a thread in the fabric of one universal all-embracing collective life” (Hua XXXV, p. 45). Individuals belong to a series of hierarchically structured communities ranging from the family to a people or nation to an entire civilization, and, more indirectly, to the totality of rational beings. To a given community there corresponds an intersubjective environment (Umwelt) as a meaningful horizon of cognition, evaluation, and practice, in which a shared history is sedimented. In this seminar, I will first explore the way in which Husserl’s notion of “spiritual world”, as developed in the second part of *Ideas II*, paves the way for a non-reductionist and anti-naturalist account of culture and history with the purpose of understanding the mode of existence of social phenomena. Subsequently, I will discuss the cultural and historical dimensions of what Husserl calls attitudes (Einstellungen). This notion illustrates the way in which what looks at first sight as a phenomenon occurring only “within” individual subjectivity (eg., the will) can in fact acquire a collective character under the form of specific orientations of our intentional life, which can be shared by professional groups of people (or even social classes). By analyzing the *Vienna Lecture* and the *Kaizo* articles, I will show why, according to Husserl, attitudes are primordial in shaping the culture of an entire civilization, and in what way the birth of the theoretical attitude, which requires the suspension of all practical interests, has marked the beginning of European history and defined its specific teleology. Finally, I will underline that fact that, far from leading to an intellectualist conception of philosophy, Husserl’s view subordinates the theoretical attitude to a new sense of practice, which consists in a radical critique of all forms of knowledge, goals, and values. The universal theory of reason that phenomenology aims to develop becomes in this regard a “universal ethics” or “doctrine of happy life” (Hua XXXV, p. 43) that encompasses the theory of science in the unity of higher-order practical discipline, whose aim is to lead humanity to an authentic life based on reason. In this way, I hope to clarify in what sense Husserl could claim that transcendental phenomenology fulfills the Delphic injunction “gnothi seauton”. To know oneself amounts to becoming aware and giving expression to all dimensions of rationality rooted in transcendental subjectivity, which in turn determine the shape of an authentic human existence.

Nicolas de Warren (Husserl Archives at KU Leuven)

Plurality and the human condition

This seminar will investigate Hannah Arendt's conception of plurality in the *Human Condition* and *On Revolution*. After having identified the main features of Arendt's conception of plurality and the political as the space of appearances, two comparisons will be investigated: a comparison of Arendt's conception of plurality with Ernst Cassirer's conception of the manifold as a unified function of differentiation and integration and Claude Lefort's thesis on the indeterminacy of democratic institutions. The first comparison with Cassirer will further highlight the relationship between Arendt's notion of plurality and the Neo-Kantian Liberal Jewish tradition of political thinking and its anti-metaphysical political cosmopolitanism while the second comparison will explore the connection between Arendt's notion of plurality and the idea of "radical democracy."