

SSPPP 2019

Ca' Foscari University Venice

ABSTRACTS OF THE SEMINARS AND PLAN OF THE ACTIVITIES

Daniele De Santis (Charles University Prague) & Emiliano Trizio (UWE Bristol)

Phenomenology, humanity, and humanism

During the first day, Daniele De Santis and Emiliano Trizio will introduce students to the Summer School's main topics. The introduction will include an explanation of the central terms used in the following seminars as well as a brief overview of the relations between the phenomenological tradition and the themes of humanity and humanism. Authors and ideas evoked in the School's seminars will hold center stage. The hope is to suggest a common terminological and conceptual framework facilitating the following discussions.

Matteo Giannasi (Ca' Foscari University Venice)

Less Anthropology, More Humanity!

The Status of Humans and Humanity in Husserl's Phenomenological Project

The lecture investigates the status of humans and humanity in Husserl's phenomenological project, by examining two distinct but intuitively related groups of notions: 'anthropological'/'anthropologicistic' & 'human'/'humanity'. The presentation addresses the meaning of Husserl's early polemic concept of 'anthropologism' and its role in the definition of his philosophical approach, in *Prolegomena* (1900); it also discusses the role of that same polemic

concept in Husserl's reconstructive justification of his transcendental turn, and excommunication of heterodox phenomenological approaches, in a series of roughly coeval documents, such as the lecture *Phänomenologie und Anthropologie* (1931), and his famous annotations to his copies of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* and *Kantbuch* (1929).

The following related questions are asked: (i) what exactly does the term 'anthropologism' mean? (ii) Does Husserl's use of the term change significantly, after his transcendental turn? (iii) If anthropologism is bad philosophy, what about anthropology? What exactly is its status, especially after the transcendental turn? (iv) Isn't Blumenberg perhaps right, when he accuses Husserl (and Heidegger) of banishing not only anthropologism, but anthropology *tout court*? (v) Is Husserl's allegation of anthropologism against Heidegger fair, considering that Heidegger, in the late 1920ies, seems just as reluctant as Husserl to identify philosophy with anthropology? (vi) What makes the issue of anthropology so pressing, for phenomenology?

The second part of the lecture discusses Husserl's conceptions of humanity: on the one hand, it seeks to understand their meaning, contrasting them with the traditional notion of *humanitas*, but also with alternative phenomenological proposals; on the other, it attempts to indicate the pivotal programmatic role played by the emphatic notion of humanity, with respect to Husserl's philosophy of history, and to his interpretation of the phenomenological project as a whole.

The discussion addresses the difference between the terms '*Humanität*', '*Menschheit*', '*Menschentum*' and focuses on their uses in compounds, such as 'authentic humanity', 'Greek humanity', 'European humanity', 'modern humanity', 'Chinese humanity', from the *Fichte* war-lectures (1918), to the *Kaizo* essays (early 1920ies), through *Formale und transzendente Logik* (1929), and until his *Vienna Lecture* (1936).

The main issues, here are (i) the normative, teleological, and – *au fond* – systematic, role of Husserl's notion of humanity (ii) Husserl's position with respect to the idea of a common human nature; (iii) his possible refusal to identify humanity with the species *homo sapiens*.

The lecture shall end with the question whether Husserl's rejection of anthropologism, his suspicion towards anthropology, and his insistence on the value of humanity, are somehow theoretically related.

Reading List

E. Husserl, *Logical Investigations, I: Prolegomena to Pure Logic* [1900], Routledge, 1970: cap VII, §§ 34, 37, 39, 40;

E. Husserl, *Renewal. Its Problem and Method* [1923], in P. McCormick and F. A. Elliston (eds.), *Husserl: Shorter Works*. University of Notre Dame Press 1981;

Husserl's Marginal Remarks in Martin Heidegger's Being and Time [1929], in Th. Sheehan and R. E. Palmer (eds.), *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927–1931)*, Springer, 1997;

Husserl's Marginal Remarks on Martin Heidegger's Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics [1929], in Sheehan and Palmer (eds.) 1997;

E. Husserl, «*Phenomenology and Anthropology*» [1931], in Sheehan and Palmer (eds.) 1997;

E. Husserl, «*Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity*» (*The Vienna Lecture*) [1936], in E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Northwestern University Press, 1970.

Burt Hopkins (University of Lille | UMR-CNRS 8163 STL Czech Academy of Science, Institute of Philosophy)

The Paradox of Subjectivity and the Problem of the Generation of the Phenomenological Manifold

As presented in the Crisis, the paradox of subjectivity concerns the seemingly impossible dual being of the phenomenological Ego, as at once a constituting and therefore subjective phenomenon and a constituted and therefore objective phenomenon. Husserl's resolution of the paradox stresses the uniqueness of the subject-being of the Primal-Ego as monad, which as the source of all constituted being is radically distinct from the object-being it functions to constitute. The primal-Ego as monad, then, functions for Husserl as the "ultimate foundation" (Letzbegründung) of the manifold of objective being, which includes the objective being of both its own worldly incarnation as human and that of the community of other human egos. My seminar will explore how precisely Husserl thinks the unitary phenomenal being of the primal-Ego as monad is capable of generating the manifold of objective, worldly human being, without appealing to transcendent and therefore metaphysical presuppositions of unity and multiplicity.

Reading list

E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Northwestern University Press, 1970.

Claudio Majolino (University of Lille)

Unus homo nullus homo. Husserl on Collective Humans and Higher Order Persons—a prequel

In one of his manuscripts on intersubjectivity, Husserl writes: “Der Staat, sagt Platon, ist der Mensch im Grossen” (Hua XIII, 106). But in what sense should a political institution like the State be considered as a “human being ...im Grossen”, i.e. “in a greater size” but also “in its full-size”. Starting from this text, in our seminar we will try to (a) trace back Husserl’s reference to Plato’s actual claim in the Republic; (b) see how Plato’s original account is transformed—and contaminated with some Aristotelian themes spelled out in the Politics—within the framework of Husserl’s portrayal of social intersubjectivity and the constitution of “Higher Order Persons”; (c) we will finally question the phenomenological relevance and possible echoes of the ancient idea according to which human beings can only achieve their humanity “politically”, i.e. acting within or striving towards a form of togetherness that is, in turn, “humane”.

Nicolas de Warren (Pennsylvania State University)

The Quest for Deathless Death

Recent years have seen an increased effort among various scientific institutions, intellectuals, and visionaries to promote and to pursue by modern technological means the achievement of immortality from human life. Whether in the form of cryogenic freezing, digitizing of brains, or

transplantation of consciousness to non-biological carriers, the dream of immortality -arguably the most archaic and defining dream of human existence - would seem to no longer seem to be but a dream. In this session, we will explore the complex questions raised by such a promise and prospect of immortality through a discussion of Don DeLillo's novel *Zero K* and Philip K. Dick's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. Our exploration to these visions of immortality will draw on the phenomenological resources of Heidegger, Anders, and Arendt as we address the existential, political, and aesthetic implications of wanting to be and perhaps becoming immortal. We want ultimately to ask whether Augustine's statement still holds in this time of chasing a humanity less than human in becoming more than human: *And never can a man be more disastrously in death than when death itself shall be deathless.*

Gian Luigi Paltrinieri (Ca' Foscari University Venice)

Martin Heidegger and the Human Difference

On the one hand, Heidegger (*Logic. The problem of truth*, 1925) claims that beasts do not die but, rather, they kick the bucket. They live in their environment without being-in-the-world. On the other hand, he rejects the traditional perspective according to which human beings would have some peculiar power in addition (logos, reason, language added to their animality). The human difference does not consist in any exceptionality or superiority with respect to nature. Heidegger (*Being and Time, Letter on Humanism*) tries to let the different way human beings are in the web of relations and anticipations that he calls world emerge.

Reading list

Matthew Calarco, "Another Insistence of Man": Prolegomena to the Question of the Animal in Derrida's Reading of Heidegger", in «Human Studies», Vol. 28, No. 3 (Nov., 2005), pp. 317-334.

Gavin Rae, "Re-Thinking the Human: Heidegger, Fundamental Ontology, and Humanism", in «Human Studies», Vol. 33, No. 1 (May 2010), pp. 23-39.

Sophie Loidolt (TU Darmstadt)

Hannah Arendt on the Human Condition

This lecture introduces students to the key elements of Arendt's notion of the "human condition" by looking at her main work of the same name and her earlier discussion of the French Existentialists and their notion of the human condition. With the "human condition" Arendt famously proposes a unique five-fold structure without drawing too much on traditional elaborations of the *condition humaine*: The two major conditions, natality and mortality, constitute the frame for the three activity-bound conditions: life, worldliness and plurality. By focusing on labor, work, and action/speech, and thus on *activities which enact conditional structures*, Arendt develops a new phenomenological approach which locates "existentialia" in worldly, bodily, and intersubjective conditions. Historical shifts in the composition of these conditional structures also allow her to address "paradigm shifts." All of this indicates that this constitutes a major methodical issue for Arendt. Yet, she gives us only little hints about the background and structure of "conditionality" in *The Human Condition* itself. This will be elaborated in the lecture.

On the first pages of *The Human Condition*, Arendt makes clear that "the human condition is not the same as human nature" (HC 10). Human nature, the *essentia* of man, is a question that remains "unanswerable" (HC 10) for Arendt, since it lies in *existentia*. If "human nature" remains inaccessible as the impossible "what" of *Dasein*, then the "human condition" is its accessible "how": *how* it appears in the world; *how* it unfolds in special circumstances; *how* it actively responds to its conditions in its activities and thereby becomes what it is. Self-made conditions add another complexity to this basic conditional structure: Arendt claims that the "human condition comprehends more than the conditions under which life has been given to man" (HC 9). Human beings are thus conditioned and shaped by the world they themselves have made. Consequently, the term "human condition" has a threefold meaning for Arendt: First, it designates the five-fold quasi-transcendental or ontico-ontological structure of appearance and actualization (the *basic conditions*); second, it denotes the conditions we produce ourselves and which shape our ways of life; and third, it designates our subjection to *conditionality as such*: even if we can change or invent a whole universe of self-created conditions we cannot abolish being conditioned as such.

Reading list

Arendt, Hannah 1998. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (HC).

Arendt, Hannah 1994. *Essays in Understanding 1930–1954*. Ed. with an introduction by Jerome Kohn. NY: Schocken.

“What is Existential philosophy?” Trans. Robert and Rita Kimber, in Arendt 1994, 163–187.

“Concern with politics in recent European philosophical thought,” in Arendt 1994, 428–447.

Francesco Tava (UWE Bristol)

Workshop on a text

During the last day, Francesco Tava will briefly present a text dealing with some central aspects of the Summer School’s theme. The text will be sent in advance to all participants. After the presentation, students will work in groups on the text for about an hour, and will formulate comments and criticisms. Such comments and criticisms will then provide the basis for a final open debate, which will conclude the School’s activities.