

**SSPPP 2024**

***Ca' Foscari University Venice***

**ABSTRACTS OF THE SEMINARS**

**Nicolas de Warren (Pennsylvania State University)**

***The Great Camouflage***

Strangers, foreigners, alien are terms that aptly capture the plight of colonized peoples who find themselves unable to recognize themselves, their culture, or their world, on their own terms, on terms not imposed by an estranging violence that renders having a home in the world impossible. In this session, I propose to examine Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*, the writings of Suzanne Césaire, and Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*. Through this concatenation of readings, my aim is to outline a phenomenology of racialized estrangement. How do these forms of alienation compare and contrast with economic and political alienation? What psychiatric symptoms express colonial alienation? What does it mean to inhabit and perceive a body not entirely of one's own and speak a language not of one's own?

**Reading list**

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*  
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*  
Suzanne Césaire, *The Great Camouflage*  
Ralph Ellison, *The Invisible Man*  
Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

**Matteo Giannasi (Ca' Foscari University Venice)**

***Stranieri Ovunque/Foreigners Everywhere: a tentative phenomenological introduction to La Biennale di Venezia's 60<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition***

The seminar will address philosophical and phenomenological issues raised by the 60th International Art Exhibition, *Foreigners Everywhere/Stranieri Ovunque*, curated by Adriano Pedrosa.

Over the past fifty years, biennials have evolved into curated exhibitions whose format, structure and content are informed and legitimated by explicit philosophical and political arguments as well as aesthetic or artistic ones. Contemporary art exhibitions can, therefore, be experienced and interpreted from a philosophical perspective as well as from an artistic one.

La Biennale di Venezia's International Art Exhibition is the largest contemporary art exhibition in the world, with more than three-hundred artists in the main exhibition, eighty-seven

autonomous exhibitions organised by the participating countries and over thirty collateral exhibitions submitted by non-profit organisations. The 60<sup>th</sup> edition is entitled *Foreigners Everywhere/Stranieri Ovunque*.

The title of the exhibition is inspired by a series of neon sculptures by the artist collective Claire Fontaine, that render the phrase "Foreigners Everywhere" in more than fifty different languages. The words 'Foreigners', 'stranieri', 'étrangers', 'Fremde', 'ξένοι', 'זרים', 'иностранцы' play linguistically similar roles, but have slightly different connotations, which correspond to different interpretations of otherness: Claire Fontaine's artwork introduces the issue of translation into the political and social question of the relation between otherness and identity. What does it mean to be a foreigner? How is foreignness expressed by different linguistic communities? What is the opposite of being a foreigner? What is it like not to be a foreigner? Is the foreigner the outsider, the stranger, the guest, the enemy, the newcomer?

The seminar will present artworks and discuss catalogue entries and other texts accompanying the 60th International Art Exhibition, which articulate the curatorial choices and discourse of the artistic director in terms of categories that are both politically and philosophically charged. In particular, the discussion will address the curator's and artists interpretations of the following four forms of strangeness or otherness:

- 1) the nomad, the diasporic subject, the expatriate, the migrant, the refugee;
- 2) the queer, the gender non-conforming, the individual who does not fit in received categories or views regarding identity and attraction;
- 3) the outsider, the self-taught, the informally trained, the one whose output is not part of official circles;
- 4) the indigenous, the member of a community that identifies itself also via a special relationship to an ancestry and a territory, in opposition to a legal or political system which has marginalised it as a consequence of a process of colonisation or settlement.

The seminar will also introduce epistemological issues pertaining to the inclusion or exclusion of artists and artworks in the canon of modern art as a consequence of their associated with a specific culture, gender, or nationality.

**Claudio Majolino (University of Lille)**

### ***The Other and the Addressee. Remarks on Husserl's Phenomenology of Communication***

According to Husserl the common world “is constituted by *specifically social acts, acts of communication* in which the ego turns towards the others (*an Andere wendet*), in which the ego is also aware of these others as those to whom it turns (*an welche es sich wendet*), and even as those who understand this turn (*Wendung*), possibly adjust to it in their behaviour, turn back to it (*zurückwenden*) in acts of agreement or disagreement, etc” (Hua IV, 194/204). In this lecture we will focus on the structure of what Husserl calls the “turn” (*Wendung*) or the “address” (*Adressierung*) (see Hua XX/2, p. 48), i.e. the distinctive intentional-constitutive structure responsible for the crucial shift from *sheer intersubjectivity* — understood as the experience of alien otherness (*Fremderfahrung*) grounded on acts of “empathy” (*Einfühlung*) — to *shared intersubjectivity* — understood as the experience of social otherness (*soziale Erfahrung*) built upon acts of communication (*Kommunikation*). Some political implications of this distinction will be also discussed with respect to Husserl's understanding of social conflicts.

## **Reading list**

Husserliana IV  
Husserliana XIII  
Husserliana XX/2

**Ilaria Malaguti (University of Padova)**

### ***The Other and the touch***

I would like to offer a reflection on the subject of touch from a philosophical (specifically: phenomenological) point of view. Although eyesight had been traditionally favoured and preferred for a long time, touch has a privileged position in the phenomenological hierarchy of *sensibilia*, since it involves all the skin and the whole body. In fact, touch is one of the senses that we use to get closer to each other; it constitutes a fundamental requisite for establishing a relationship with others.

## **Reading list**

M. Merleau-Ponty, *Fenomenologia della percezione*, Milano, 2003 [1945]  
J.-L. Nancy, *Il senso del mondo*, Milano 1997.  
J. Derrida, *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, Paris, 2000

**Gian Luigi Paltrinieri (Ca' Foscari University Venice)**

***TBA***

***Audran Aulanier (EHESS, Paris)***

### ***Ethnography of Foreigners or phenomenology of the Alien? A few words about attention, care, and hospitality***

In this talk, I will link two lines of my research. Firstly, an ethnographic study of foreigners: asylum seekers arriving in Europe. Secondly, a philosophical reflection on the phenomenology of the alien, based particularly on the work of Bernhard Waldenfels. The aim is to see how phenomenology can provide solid support for the sociologist in demonstrating the pathologies of attention from which asylum seekers suffer. The work of caregivers will be analysed in particular, insofar as it offers foreigners a way of experiencing hospitality. On the basis of phenomenological descriptions coming from fieldwork, I characterise this inter-attention (between asylum seekers and caregivers – social workers and volunteers) as a particular mode of hospitality. From this, I conclude by sketching an ethics of attention.

I will begin with a brief presentation of Waldenfels' phenomenology of the stranger. For Waldenfels, the self emerges by responding to the requests of the alien. This stranger (Das Fremde) is to be found both in the intersubjective sphere and in the environment (things, noises, events, etc.). This presentation of Waldenfels's work will provide an opportunity to discuss it in relation to pragmatic sociology, which is focused on the capacities of actors and therefore combines well with the idea of responsiveness developed by Waldenfels. This discussion will highlight the capacity of phenomenology to serve as a methodological tool for the social science practitioner. Secondly, I will describe the situation of asylum seekers in Europe, showing that, perpetually stimulated by the states' reception systems and their life as asylum seekers, their capacity to direct their attention becomes jeopardized. Thirdly, I will describe four ethnographic scenes and analyse them using the phenomenological tools mentioned above. Through the prism of responsiveness, phenomenologists such as Schütz, Derrida, Vanni and Depraz will be discussed. Finally, I will develop an ethic of attention and care based on the above descriptions. This ethic distances itself from a Levinasian ethic of the Other, which presupposes the Other as a starting point, and takes on the features of a responsive ethic as described by Bernhard Waldenfels. The ethics of attention as a mode of hospitality that I am proposing is finally a practical variant of the German phenomenologist's developments on intermediate domains, which belongs neither to me nor to the alien.

### Reading list

Alloa Emmanuel, 2010. « Par-delà la reconnaissance. L'attention comme paradigme pour une éthique asymétrique », *Alter. Revue de phénoménologie* 18, p. 125-141.

Schütz Alfred, 1944. "The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology", *American Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 6, p. 499–507.

Vanni Michel. 2009. *L'Adresse du politique. Essai d'approche responsive*. Paris : Cerf.

Waldenfels Bernhard, 2012. « Responsive Ethics », in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. D. Zahavi. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

--, 2004. *Phänomenologie der Aufmerksamkeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

--, 1997. *Topographie des Fremden. Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden*, Bd. 1, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.

**Delia Popa (Villanova University)**

### ***The Other Within: Elements for a Feminist Phenomenology of the Stranger***

In response to the question “Which Others are included or excluded, remembered or forgotten, visible or invisible within contemporary societies?”, this seminar will examine the problem of the other from the perspective opened by debates about the sexual difference. What happens if the other is a woman and what does it mean for a woman to feel like another, with its own way of being a stranger in this world? Exploring the contradictions of the feminine mode of appearing, we will focus our attention on its relationship to reproductive labor. How can we understand phenomenologically the attachment women have to domestic work, the care for others, and for the preservation of common spaces of living? Given the fact that women are the ones that often take in charge the material organization of the household, shaping everyone’s broader relationship to the environment and to the lifeworld, how should their otherness be understood?

We will first examine certain aspects of the feminist debate about the sexual difference, highlighting the phenomenological dimension of the feminine as “another within”. We will also revisit Emmanuel Lévinas’, Jean-Paul Sartre’s and Michel Henry’s interpretations of Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity, with the goal of reflecting more broadly on the possibility of a feminist phenomenology of the other. More directly to the problem of sexual difference, we will ask ourselves if the feminine is a mere variation of the Husserlian pairing, passively associated to a generic consciousness that is neutral, or if it should be rather considered as part of an asymmetric relation that is largely responsible for the power dynamics of our social world.

#### **Reading list**

Edmund Husserl: *Cartesian Meditations V*

Emmanuel Lévinas: “The Dwelling” and “The Ambiguity of Love” in *Totality and Infinity*

Jean-Paul Sartre: “The Gaze” in *Being and Nothingness*

Michel Henry: “Pathos-with” in *Material Phenomenology*

Simone de Beauvoir: *The Second Sex II*

Luce Irigaray: *This Sex which is not One*

#### **Other resources:**

Silvia Federicci: *Wages against Housework*

Shulamith Firestone: *The Dialectic of Sex*

Frigga Haug: *Beyond Female Masochism*

**Emiliano Trizio (Ca' Foscari University Venice)**

***Contribution to the phenomenology of occupation***

Within classical phenomenological accounts (i.e., Hua XXXIX), the sense of community that makes possible an emergence of an “us” is spelt out in terms of several interconnected notions revolving around a shared environment (*Umwelt*). Such environment in turn displays: (1) a structure of familiarity as well as number of parameters identifying normality/abnormality (*Narmalwelt*), (2) a shared, sedimented and traditionalized way of apperceiving reality and giving value to it, and, finally, (3) a distinction between a close and a distant world (*Nahwelt/Fernwelt*), as well as, more importantly, between a home-world and an alien world (*Heimwelt/Fremdwelt*). Again, classically, such a sense of “*being-an-us in our environment*” grounds and legitimises the development of institutions, laws, while at the same time being reinforced by them. However, in specific historical situations, these conditions are only partially met, or even co-exist with opposing forces. In this paper, I will move away from such an idealised situation by considering the social lifeworld of occupied Kashmir and attempt to show how this specific situation requires a fine-tuning of these morphological/phenomenological categories and the introduction of the specific phenomenological concept of *occupation*. The paper will draw on research on Kashmir carried out by Emma Brännlund (Mid Sweden University).

**Reading list**

Husserliana XXXIX

Anthony J. Steinbock (1995) *Home and Beyond. Generative Phenomenology after Husserl*  
Brännlund, E. (2024). *In/secure childhoods: Children and conflict in Kashmir*. Childhood,