

Dottorato in Filosofia

Corso di eccellenza 2020-2021

Etienne Balibar (Anniversary Chair of Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University, London)

8-12 febbraio 2021 ore 16.00-18.00

“*The Human Species : a Mutant Concept.*”

As a consequence of the environmental catastrophe, giving rise to the notion of the “Anthropocene”, and the outbreak of Covid-19, a pandemic arising from the “crossing of the Species Barrier”, the concept of the “Human Species” is undergoing a crucial mutation. No longer meaning either a zoological category allowing it to classify *Homo Sapiens* and study its evolution, or an ethical ideal governing the actions of individuals, it refers to a *material entity*, globally and instantly interacting with itself, which as such could be the “subject” and the “object” of political decisions. At the same time, however, *internal divisions*, which discriminate among nations, classes, genders, races, cultures, and pit “humans” against one another, appear as essential characteristics of the “species” itself. They lie at the center of a cosmopolitics which is also a biopolitics. This situation calls for a genealogy of the concept in Modern Times and a new foundation of the idea of “species-being” (*Gattungswesen*) once installed by Feuerbach and Marx at the root of their articulation of nature and history.”

1) 8 February 2021: From Anthropocene to the pandemic: rethinking the Human species as a subject-object of politics (how the “species-barrier” was “crossed”)

Readings:

MAIN: Mark S. Kempner and Daniel S. Shapiro “Crossing the species barrier – One Small Step to Man, One Giant Leap to Mankind” (The New England Journal of Medicine, March 13, 2004) (pdf will be provided)

ADDITIONAL:

Donna HARAWAY : *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, Prickly Paradigm Press, Chicago 2003

Jacques DERRIDA : *The animal that therefore I am*, translated by David Wills, Fordham University Press 2008

Stathis GOURGOURIS: “Human/Animal”, *Political Concepts* (A Critical Lexicon), <https://www.politicalconcepts.org/humananimal-stathis-gourgouris/>

“The Manhattan Principles on One World, One Health” (Wildlife Conservation Society, 2004) http://www.wcs-ahead.org/manhattan_principles.html

2) 9 February 2021: Sketching a genealogy of the concept of “species” applied to/deriving from the Human “case”

Readings:

MAIN: Thomas A.C. Reydon : “On the nature of the species problem and the four meanings of ‘species’”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* (2005) 36: 135-158. (will be provided)

ADDITIONAL:

Ernst Mayr : *Population, Species, and Evolution*, Harvard university Press 1970

Claude Levi-Strauss : “Race and Culture” (1971), in *The View from Afar*, translated by [J. Neugroschel](#) and P. Hoss. 1985

E.O. Wilson: *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1975) (see *The Abridged Edition*, Harvard University Press 1980, chap. 26 : “Man, from Sociobiology to Sociology”)

Stephen Jay Gould: *The Mismeasure of Man*, Norton 1981

3) 10 February 2021: The “modern” dilemma (normativism vs naturalism) (or Kant vs Darwin) and its limits

Readings:

MAIN: Immanuel Kant : *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) and *Perpetual Peace* (1796); Charles DARWIN : *The Descent of Man* 1871 (extracts from Part One)

ADDITIONAL:

Arnold GEHLEN : *Man: his nature and place in the world*. New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press 1988. [Gehlen, Arnold. 1940. *Der Mensch: Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt*]

Primo Levi: *Se questo è un uomo* (1947)

Maurice Blanchot: “Humankind” (on Robert Antelme’s *L’espèce humaine*), in *The Infinite Conversation* (1969, translation by Susan Hanson, University of Minnesota Press 1993), page 130 to 135

Edmund Husserl: extracts from *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1937/1954)

4) 11 February 2020: The Marxian idea of “Species Being” (*Gattungswesen*) and its possible reformulation

Readings:

MAIN: Karl Marx: *Economic Philosophical Manuscript* (1844) (in *Early Writings*) (First Manuscript)

ADDITIONAL:

G.W.F. Hegel: extracts from *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*

Luca Basso: *Marx and Singularity. From the Early Writings to the Grundrisse*, translated by Arianna Bove, Brill 2012 (chapter One)

Jürgen Habermas: *The Future of Human Nature*, Polity Press 2003

Pope Francis : *Fratelli tutti* (lettera enciclica del santo padre)
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.pdf

5) 12 February 2021: A Divided Species reflecting on its own Unification (or the reverse: a United Species reflecting on its own Divisions).

Readings:

MAIN: Reinhard Koselleck : “The Semantics of Asymmetric Counter-concepts”, in *Futures past; on the semantics of historical time*. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press (1985)

ADDITIONAL:

Frantz Fanon : *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

Roberto Esposito: *Immunitas. Protezione e Negazione della Vita* (Einaudi 2015)

Judith BUTLER: *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (verso reprint 2006)

Judith BUTLER: Interview with George Yancy: “Mourning Is a Political Act Amid the Pandemic and Its Disparities”, <https://truthout.org/articles/judith-butler-mourning-is-a-political-act-amid-the-pandemic-and-its-disparities/>

Etienne BALIBAR: « Ontological difference, anthropological difference, and equaliberty”, The Mark Sacks Lecture 2018, Birkbeck College, *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2020: 1-12 (John Wiley & Sons)

Il corso si svolgerà on-line tramite la piattaforma Zoom.

Docenti, dottorande e dottorandi sono cordialmente invitati.

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