**Philosophical Anthropology Course 2019**

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**Announcement**

The information is made of: class notes + notes about the text + parts from the PPT’s for this course.

Good Luck!

**Classification of Topics**

HOMO NEGATIVUS

Max Sheler

HOMO MORTALIS

Martin Heidegger

HOMO EXISTANS

Jean Paul Sartre

VITA ACTIVA

Hannah Arendt

HOMO DISCIPLINATUS

Michael Foucault

HOMO SEXUALIS

Simon De Beauvoir

HOMO BARBARUS

Franz Fanon

ALTER HOMO

Bret Davis

HUMANISM-POSTHUMANISM

Donna Haraway

**Introduction**

Questions

1. What, or who is anthropology about?
2. What is philosophical anthropology about?
3. What are the main questions of philosophical anthropology?

Content

1. “Anthropos, from ancient Greek, is an ambiguous term.
	1. Individual ≈ Collective?
		1. ***Man ≈ Mankind***
	2. Male ≈ Gender neutral?
		1. ***Man ≈ Human being***
	3. Essential ≈ Relational?
		1. ***Human* ‘*nature’ ≈ ‘Human’* in relation to *‘divine’, ‘animal’, ‘machine’, ‘natural,’ or other ‘humans’”*** (Intro PPT)
2. Philosophical anthropology investigates ‘the human’ through philosophical methods. Philosophical methods use but are not limited to empirical research. Philosophical methods are: meta-reflections, arguments, questioning of methods and presuppositions, critique of premises or implications, holistic and systematic theories etc.
3. Philosophical anthropology answers mainly three questions: What’s the definition of a human being? What is the ‘essence’ of humanity? What is the ‘nature’ of man?

Answers

1. Anthropology is about humans. Anthropology can mean more things: Individual/Collective, Man/Gender Neutral, Essential/Relation (Human Nature/Human in relation to divine, animal, machine, etc.)
2. Philosophical anthropology investigates ‘the human’ through philosophical methods.
3. What’s the definition of a human being? What is the ‘essence’ of humanity? What is the ‘nature’ of man?

**Further details about the introduction:**

It presents general positions, of philosophers, about human nature. These positions are not per se philosophically accurate; they more reflect how their positions are understood in popular culture. Also, the introduction affirms that philosophical anthropology as a sub-discipline of philosophy emerged in early 20th century. Why is philosophical anthropology needed besides anthropology? This is so since philosophers can bring new insight by brining philosophical methods of reflection. Philosopher’s approached the question ‘what is human’ before anthropologists did.

Questions

1. How are the aim concerns of philosophical anthropology (compared to epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, etc.)?
2. What are the questions of philosophical Anthropology?

Content

1. **“Philosophical Anthropology” as a Discipline of Philosophy (such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, etc.):**
	* In connection with the empirical sciences
	* About the human being as a unity of psyche, organic body (*Körper*), and lived body (*Leib)* (psychic/physical body)
	* In the context of human environment (‘*Umwelt’*≈culture) and world (‘*Welt’*≈nature) (culture/nautre)
	* As a *foundation* of both natural (*Naturwissenschaften*) and cultural sciences (*Kulturwissenschaften*)” (culture/nature as scientific subjects) (Introduction PPT)
2. **“Philosophical discussions of the ‘human condition’**
* What does it mean to live a ‘human’ life?
* What makes us feel ‘human’?
* Are there distinct ‘human’ features or qualities?
* What are the typical contemporary conditions humans live in?
* How is the human positioned in relation to animals, machines, nature, or culture)?
* Posthumanism” (Introduction PPT)

Answers

1. The main concerns of philosophical anthropology are to discuss the relationship between mind-body, culture-nature, culture-nature as scientific disciplines.
2. Those mentioned just above.

HOMO NEGATIVUS—Max Sheler

Questions

1. Why is this section named Homo Negativus?
2. Why has become, in the 20th century, human nature problematic?
3. What distinguishes humans from plants and animals?

Content

1. This is so since Sheler’s main idea is what makes one human compared to animals and plants is that humans are capable of saying ‘no’, of refusing reality as it is, of being able to oppose it.
2. In the 20th century, what distinguishes humans from animals is unknown and not only unknown, the problem is that people think that they know it. Human existence has many aspects, as depicted in history. Rational animals-ancient Greece, God’s children (Judeo-Christian Theology), Descendants of ape-Darwin. (“a. part of the ‘animal kingdom’ and yet distinct. b. ‘ascent’ of increasing complexity and flexibility, but also increasing deterioration and dependence”, Max Sheler PPT).

For Sheler, what makes us human is problematic due to the gradual aspect of evolution. The evolution from inorganic to organic life, the border between the two, and the border, between humans and animals, is subtle… an inferior form of existence transforms through evolution in a superior one, and yet there is a difference in quality between humans and animals.

1. For answering this question, one needs to understand Sheler’s description of evolution and the relation between biology and psychic. Biology and psychic are equiprimordial for him. For Sheler, all life forms have a life-impulsion, a desire for thriving (a sort of will to power).
* Plants: passive life-urge towards reproduction and growth (impulsion). Without a ‘center’, they do not have consciousness but ‘expression’. (“a certain physiognomy of their internal states”; unified wholes, but simple (pp. 13-14)
* Animals: active life-urge towards reproduction and growth (instinct).
1. purposeful for the whole of the organism; 2. fixed and unchanging rhythm—reproducing at the same place in the same way etc. 3. for the benefit of the species (as opposed to learning and comprehension [*Verstand*], which serve individuals); 4. Uninfluenced by habit and learning (repetition); 5. memories and sensations are “enclosed and entrenched by instinct” (pp. 15-17).

Animals have a ‘center’, they start to have consciousness in the form of (1. emergence of relatively single sensations from diffuse complexes and associations among them; 2. emergence of specific drives seeking gratification from the complex of instincts (doing x just for pleasure, pleasure starts to be separated from utility); 3. the beginning of intelligence that restores sense to an auto-mechanism, originally devoid of sense (p. 16-17). Animals are based on habits and learn through imitation and have practical intelligence.

Animals: organically bound practical intelligence (e.g., selection): in the face of a new situation (for species or for individual) and independent of trials (‘suddenly’); in the service of needs; action-oriented

Intelligence: “insight to state of affairs… on the basis of a structure of relations whose foundation is partly given in experience and partly complemented in an anticipatory fashion in representation” (p. 21)

* Humans: Sheler considers that humans are not distinguished from animals just because their intelligence or ability to choose is bigger. It is not about quantity of ability but of a new quality. This quality Sheler names spirit.

Answers

1. This is so since Sheler’s main idea is what makes one human compared to animals and plants is that humans are capable of saying ‘no’, of refusing reality as it is, of being able to oppose it.
2. In the 20th century what distinguishes humans from animals is unknown and not only unknown, the problem is that people think that they know it. For Sheler, what makes us human is problematic due to the multiple aspects involved in human existence and the gradual aspect of evolution. The border between animal and human life is subtle.
3. Sheler considers that humans are not distinguished from animals just because their intelligence or ability to choose is bigger. It is not about quantity of ability but of a new quality. This quality Sheler names spirit.

**The main anthropological idea of Sheler is that of Spirit:**

Question

1. What is Spirit?
2. How are spirit and homo negativus related?
3. What are the characteristics of spirit?
4. How is the relation between spirit (a being able to say no) and the world?

Content

1. 2.“The new principle is, first of all, *opposite anything we call life, including life in the human being*: it is a genuinely new, essential fact which cannot at all be reduced to the ‘natural evolution of life.’”

“This term also contains the concept of ‘reason,’ but it encompasses, in addition to the *thinking of ideas*, a specific type of an ‘intuition’ of primordial phenomena and essential contents, and it encompasses also a specific class of volitional and emotive acts such as kindness, love, repentance, awe, states of wonder, bliss, despair, and free decision-making: this more comprehensive term is ‘spirit’ [*Geist*]. The center of acts…through which this spirit appears…is what we designate as ‘person’.” (p. 23)

1. The answer is provided in point one.
2. The characteristics of Spirit

a. Objectivity (‘present-at-hand’ vs. ‘ready-to-hand’, not merely in terms of what satisfies their drives)

b. Value (motivated by the good, structured according to *agape,* a charitable a self-sacrificing love)

c. Self-consciousness (also aware of themselves as being seen by others and as having a different world of experience than others)

d. World-openness

1. The relation is that of detachment. A spirit is no longer bounded to the instincts of life and to the drive-related intelligence. “Hence, a being having spirit is not tied anymore to its drives and environment, but is ‘non-environmental’ or, as I wish to put it, ‘world-open’: such a being has ‘world’.’ Furthermore, a being having spirit is not only able to rise above its basic given centers of ‘resistance’ and reaction to its environment…but this being turns its centers of resistance and reaction into ‘objects’ in order to grasp the ‘what’ of all objects itself.” (p. 23)§

Answer

1. 2. The new principle is, first of all, *opposite anything we call life, including life in the human being*
2. The answer is provided in point one.
3. Objectivity, Value, Self-consciousness, World-openness.
4. The relation is that of detachment. A spirit is no longer bounded to the instincts of life and to the drive-related intelligence. A spirit is non-environment, it is not defined by its environment.

HOMO MORTALIS—Martin Heidegger

**The Basics of Heidegger’s position:**

Questions

1. What’s Heidegger’s anthropological position?
2. Why Heidegger uses a unique and confusing language?
3. What does Dasein mean?

Content

1. For Heidegger, an ‘ontology’ of Dasein is necessary before and anthropology. Heidegger resists the idea of ‘human nature’, of dealing with anthropology. What Heidegger treats is related to anthropology, but his approach is ontological, his main concern is with what there is.

Heidegger wants to study being in general. Heidegger claims that his teacher, Husserl (and other philosophers), failed to put the question of Being. Heidegger wants a new approach to Being, not based on the existent theological and philosophical tradition. For Heidegger, everybody has access to being, even if one did not study philosophy or theology, since we *are the king of being* *who care about being, who ask questions about* being, about what is or what can be or what ought to be. Heidegger’s focus is not on our understanding of us as humans (with all the conceptual baggage of the term ‘human). What is most distinctive about ourselves (in terms of what kinds of being we are) is that we are the kinds of beings for which being can be an issue (we can ask questions about being).

1. Heidegger uses such a language because he wants to think about ‘ontological’ questions in a new way, not affected by the existent tradition. Heidegger is fascinated with everyday language and uses it to create philosophical terms. Heidegger believes that natural language already contains the ingredients for understanding being.
2. Originally, before Heidegger turning it in a technical term, Dasein just meant existence. For Heidegger, there is no general Dasein, it is always about a being which relates to itself in a specific way — “The Being of any such entity is in each case mine” (SZ, 41 f.) “Beings comport themselves towards their being” (SZ, 41 f.)—in normal English: *we are not simply the way we are, we are all the time concerned with how we are, (with how we should act etc.)*. We relate to ourselves and how we are as being. The most concise definition of Dasein: “Dasein is a being for which being is an issue” (SZ, 41 f.) ‘To be an issue’ is not about what one thinks in this moment (one is not thinking about being all the time) but is about the essence of Dasein but of ‘how’ Dasein is? What is the ‘mode’ of its being?

Answers:

1. For Heidegger, an ‘ontology’ of Dasein is necessary before and anthropology. Heidegger resists the idea of ‘human nature’, of dealing with anthropology. What Heidegger treats is related to anthropology, but his approach is ontological, his main concern is with what there is.
2. Heidegger uses such a language because he wants to think about ‘ontological’ questions in a new way, not affected by the existent tradition. Heidegger is fascinated with everyday language and uses it to create philosophical terms.
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Death & dasein

Totality: Death is a not-yet but stills belongs to us. Dasein is full of possibility 🡺 indeterministic. The totality of dasein is a present-at-hand.

Being authentically and inauthentically

Making decisions as they are your owned. ≈bad faith.

“Dasein has always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine .”

Dasein’s Facticity and Fallenness

Facticity: indisputable fact, Dasein’s Facticity: it is thrown into the world.

Fallenness: continue on the same trajectory.

Dasein as ‘potentiality-for-Being’

“Dasein is as an understanding potentiality-for-Being, which, in its Being, makes an issue of that Being itself.” (as care for being asks what is ahead of the being/ what it can be)

Completeness as Loss & The Death of Others & The Death of Others as ‘Dis-illusion’

Mentioned above

Life of Dasein =/= life of other

Death (of Dasein) : impossibilities of possibilities

perishing (of life of other) : biological/ material misfunctioning

**The Death of Others**

Heidegger's move is to suggest that although Dasein cannot experience its own death as actual, it can relate towards its own death as a possibility that is always before it—always before it in the sense that Dasein's own death is inevitable. Peculiarly among Dasein's possibilities, the possibility of Dasein's own death must remain only a possibility, since once it becomes actual, Dasein is no longer. Death is thus the “possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all” (Being and Time 53: 307). And it is this awareness of death as an omnipresent possibility that cannot become actual that stops the phenomenological analysis from breaking down.

One possible response is to suggest that Dasein understands death through experiencing the death of others. However, the sense in which we experience the death of others falls short of what is needed. We mourn departed others and miss their presence in the world. But that is to experience Being-with them as dead, which is a mode of our continued existence (there is a way of someone’s ”being-as-death”, which is still a mode of being. )

There are possibilities for sharing other experiences as we have the same environment. But death is unique, as it is the lack of your own possibilities (not being in different environment) . 🡺 cannot experience death of others.

death is mine in a radical sense; it is the moment at which all my relations to others disappear. Heidegger captures this non-relationality by using the term ‘ownmost’. And it is the idea of death “as that possibility which is one's ownmost”

**Death as the Ownmost ‘potentiality-for-being’ and Inauthentic Approach Towards Death**

Inauthentic Being-Towards-Death

Dasein thinks about death. (How? authentic vs Inauthentic way)

Inauthentic way: indefiniteness of death: e.g. one dies, not me. transform from/ denying the certainty

Inauthentic taking up of one’s possibility

In anxiety: Dasein finds itself *face to face* with the ‘nothing’ of the possible impossibility of its existence 🡺 Being-towards-death is essentially anxiety (not Dasein is essentially anxiety)

≈ “nausea” in Sartre

Fear, as a mode of disposedness, can disclose only particular oncoming events in the world. To fear my own death, then, is once again to treat my death as a case of death. This contrasts with anxiety as we have seen, discloses my death via the awareness of the possibility of a world in which I am not

**Anxiety and Authentic Being-Towards-Death**

Anxiety to Fear

Fear vs anxiety: anxiety is specific . Fear is general.

Why be anxious about dying? Because it is certain and not to be outstrip. (It is essential to be anxious.)

Authentic Being-Towards-Death

Authentic Being-Towards-Death is a mode of existence of Dasein that has contemplated and understood that Death is its ownmost possibility that cannot be outstripped and is non-relational. As such, Dasein is distanced and removed from the ‘they’ (Das Man). This confrontation with death allows Dasein to realize that its Being towards a possibility ‘can’ be made in the absence of the ‘they’, and as such discloses to Dasein its ‘lostness’ in the world.

HOMO EXISTANS—Jean Paul Sartre

**The Free-will debate**

There are three positions:

Determines 1) all events are the result of causation 2) all events are caused by past events

Human vs determinism:

Compatibilism (soft determinism)

Incompatibilism (a. hard determinism b. indeterminism c. libertarianism)

b. and c. are pro freedom

**The Subject/Object duality. The Cartesian I think as the starting point:**

Sartre’s phenomenological starting point is the Cartesian, *I think*. This is so since what one firstly knows is that one exists, this is self-evident. Phenomenology is based on the analysis of experience and the body-mind relation. Phenomenology considers that analyzing ‘phenomena’ leads to understanding our place in the world.

Looking at the ‘phenomena’, one perceives the duality between:

 Division. My classification of these dichotomies.

—subject and object (agency)

—persons and things (their state in the world)

—conscious and non-conscious beings (their state of mind)

—each of the three dichotomies is about the same thing, between ‘consciousness and non-consciousness’. I interpreted the class which would each dichotomy is part of.

**Intentionality:**

In phenomenology, the body-mind debate is radically changed. In philosophy of mind, intentionality means that ‘x is about y’. A rock cannot be about a chair. A though, an emotion or a perception can be about something else. Husserl radicalized the notion of intentionality. For Husserl, intentionality means that consciousness is a relation between the body and the world. Consciousness does not consist of mental states, but it is a relation. (My understanding of this: Perception, thinking and feeling are the way one reacts to the world. Each of these three ‘tell us something about something’. Each of these are the result of how our sensibility and thinking is affected by the world).

Heidegger speaks about being-in-the-world. These ‘four worded word’ represents this relation. For Heidegger, one moves from nothingness and consciousness to consciousness-in-the-world. To be is to be in movement. In other words, one is not defined by itself, one is defined by being in relation, by entering in contact with other things.

For Sartre, consciousness is nothing by itself, and this for Sartre Husserl’s definition of intentionality.

“Our own being, says Heidegger, is being-in-the-world. One must understand this “being-in” as movement. To be is to fly out into the world, to spring from the nothingness of the world and of consciousness in order suddenly to burst out as consciousness-in-the-world. When consciousness tries to recoup itself, to coincide with itself once and for all, closeted off all warm and cozy, it destroys itself. This necessity for consciousness to exist as consciousness of something other than itself is what Husserl calls ‘intentionality.’” (Jean-Paul Sartre, “Intentionality: A Fundamental Idea Of Husserl's Phenomenology”, 1939)

**Hegelian ‘Otherness’:**

Oneself, a consciousness, exists in relation to others. By definition, a person is in opposition to the wills of other people. Other people can want different things than I. Hegel’s dialectics is about how every concept has its opposite. The existentialists took this idea of opposition as a way to define the relationship between people. Once one exists, one needs to impose himself on the world.

**Marx concept of ‘ideology critique’ and bad faith:**

History as a class struggle. Men produce their ideas. It is not the consciousness that determines how people are, but the social being which determines their consciousness.

For Sartre, when one is determined by others, or when one is passive, one is practicing bad faith. To be defined by the ‘social being’, I think, would be a form of bad faith.

**Sartre, Being and Nothingness:**

 **(object) (subject)**

* **Being in-itself (*en-soi*) -Being for-itself (*pour-soi*)**
* **Being -Nothingness**
* **Immanence -Transcendence/Existence**
* Object -Subject
* Other -Self
* Facticity -Freedom

\*consciousness, or a free agent, is nothing in the sense that it does not have an essence. One constantly defines oneself by what one does.

(Possible L.P. argument. Non-action is an act->All that man does is an act->To act is a tautology->To say that one acts offers no relevant information. Contra argument: there exists a definite difference between bad faith and transcendence. The difference that one in bad faith refuses to assume responsibility and do what he wants in life. Bad faith is choosing to be passive, to act by not acting.)

**Existence precedes essence:**

“What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means that, first of all, the human individual exists, turns up, appears in the world, and, only afterwards, defines himself. If the human individual, as the existentialist thinks of him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be *something*, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive of it. Not only is the human individual what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence.” (Existentialism is Humanism)

—Humans do not have an already existent purpose. By being able to choose, men are not defined by their circumstances, they are able to oppose this circumstance. Sartre goes on explaining how a knife is made with a purpose. For Sartre, if God existed, just like with the knife God would have given us a purpose. God tells us what is good, what to be. God is a way through which one does not assume responsibility for one’s action.

The main core of “Existentialism is Humanism”:

—Sartre writes this paper to answer to objections against existentialism.

—Objections against existentialism:

* Communism, since existentialism starts with *the cartesian I think*, it is unable to prove the need for solidarity in others.
* Catholics, existentialism forgets about the beauty of the world. It is too gloomy.
* Christians, without God there are no moral laws, everybody is free to do anything.

—Against the communists, Sartre replies that even if the immediate experience is of oneself, one exists in relation to others (intersubjectivity), one fights for what one believes in without the need to ‘hope’ in others. Others might betray the cause, but this does not mean that one must not cooperate with others. One should cooperate with other but without the blind trust in them.

—Against the Catholics, Sartre states that people are in fact upset not on the pessimism but on the optimism of existentialism. **This is Sartre’s main idea.**

—Against the Christians, he invokes the ‘one is responsible for the whole of humanity’ argument. Sartre explains that all we do; we are always responsible. By any act, one establishes the give a model for how other people to act. In this sense, one is responsible for the whole of humanity. Thus, one is in relation with others.

**—Existentialism is about optimism (the core idea):**

—For an existentialist, existence precedes essence. In other words, they’re not any preestablished human nature. Our choices create it. One is not born a coward or a hero; one is defining oneself as a hero or as a coward by one’s actions. Thus, a hero can become a coward and vice versa at any time. Not psychological, biological, or childhood circumstances define oneself.

—From the ppt on Sartre:

* Since I freely create myself (my essence), I am responsible for my choices & actions & and what I have created.
* In choosing [for] myself, I choose [for] humanity.
* Therefore, I am responsible for myself and for everyone else.
* “First, what do we man by *anguish*? … This means that the man who involves himself and who realizes that he is not only the person he chooses to be, but also a lawmaker who is, at the same time, choosing all humankind as well as himself, cannot escape the feeling of his total and deep responsibility.”

—en-soi vs pour-soi.

—en-soi, immanence. Immanence=Inside the world. An object is determined by the world.

— pour-soi, transcendence. Transcendence=beyond the world. One creates oneself; one is not determined by the world and determines the world.

—For Sartre, men are not limited by necessity, but are responsible for all they do.

**Existentialism as philosophy of action:**

**—**men are defined by what men does, not by what men hope to achieve. Some have accused existentialism of pessimism. But is the opposite. Existentialism states that one should always act, by acting one creates his future. It does not matter your intention, all that matters is what one does. A coward does not have a coward nature, but the act of surrendering makes one a coward. The act of opposing an order will make that ‘coward’ courageous. Is up to us.

— “Man is nothing but his project; he exists only to the extent that he fulfills himself; he is therefore nothing but the totality of his acts, nothing but his life” (Existentialism is Humanism).

**Constant Becoming:**

No essence, one chooses by each act what to be, coward or brave etc. X is as it is because he chooses to. It is the result of one’s actions.

**Sartre and inter-subjectivity:**

Why even if the immediate experience is of oneself, one exists in relation to others?

This is because when one knows the Cartesian *I think*, one also knows that the presence of others is necessary for defining oneself. You are funny, kind, playful only in relation with and if others tell you. Somethings about yourself are undiscoverable in isolation.

“He realizes that he cannot be anything (in the sense that we say that someone is spiritual or nasty or jealous) unless others recognize it as such. In order to get any truth about myself, I must have contact with the other” (Existentialism is Humanism).

“This being so, in discovering my inner being, I discover the other at the same time, who appears before me as a free being that thinks and wills only for or against me. Hence, let us at once announce the discovery of a world that we shall call intersubjectivity. This is the world in which a person decides what he is and what others are” (Existentialism is Humanism).

**From Human nature to Human Condition:**

—Even if humans do not have a predetermined nature, there are four things common to all humans (the human condition): (1) to exist in the world, (2) to be at work there, (3) to be there in the midst of other people, and (4) to be mortal there.

—These four attributes of man are objective, in the sense that all experience them, but are also subjective, in the sense that each one chooses if one wants to be aware of them. The human condition is about what is fundamental to human’s place in the world.

—Even if people react differently to the human condition, the general tendencies are to 1)try to go beyond this limits 2)to adapt to them 3)to surrender to them 4)to deny them.

**Radical Freedom “condemned to be free”:**

* “[W]hat is not possible is not to choose. I can always choose, and I ought to recognize that if I do not choose, I am still choosing . . .. Man makes himself. He isn’t completely defined at the start. In choosing his values, he makes himself, and the force of circumstances is such that he cannot abstain from choosing a set of values . . .. Existentialism defines the human situation as involving free choice, with no excuses and no hiding places. Everyone who takes refuge behind the excuse that he is driven by his passions, everyone who sets up any kind of determinism, is dishonest [that is, guilty of mauvaise foi, bad faith] . . .” (Existentialism is Humanism).

**Freedom as the foundation of all values:**

—If one wants freedom for freedom’s sake, then one finds out the one’s freedom is dependent on the freedom of others. The freedom of others also depends on our freedom.

—By the definition that man is free there is no need for respecting other’s freedom, but once others are involved, one is obliged to respect their freedom.

* —". I can take freedom as my goal only if I take that of others as a goal as well. Consequently, when, in all honesty, I’ve recognized that man is a being in whom existence precedes essence, that he is a free being who, in various circumstances, can want only his freedom, I have at the same time recognized that I can want only the freedom of others” (Existentialism is Humanism).

**Humanism as Existentialism:**

* —"This connection between transcendence, as a constituent element of human existence — not in the sense that God is transcendent, but in the sense of passing-beyond — and subjectivity, in the sense that man is not closed in on himself but is always present in a human universe, is what we call existentialist humanism. Humanism, because we remind man that there is no law-maker other than himself, and that in his forlornness he will decide by himself; because we point out that man will fulfill himself as man, not in turning toward himself, but in seeking outside of himself a goal that is just this liberation, just this particular fulfillment” (Existentialism is Humanism).
* —The idea is that humans create the way they exist, there does not exist any other law maker. Existentialism is humanism since it gives value to human existence. Man exists by being outside himself in the sense that consciousness is a relation (intentionality). One truly is as long as one acts, as long as he always forms new relations to things.

VITA ACTIVA—Hannah Arendt

**The Human Condition**

Human nature: unknowable. Human Condition: knowable and concerned

-concerned with the problem of reasserting the politics as a valuable realm of human **action**, praxis, and the **world of appearances.**

Western philosophical tradition has

1. **devalued** the world of human action which attends to appearances (the **vita activa**),
2. **subordinated** it to the life of contemplation which concerns **itself with essences and the eternal (the vita contemplativa).**

E.g. Plato, whose metaphysics subordinates’ action and appearances to the eternal realm of the Ideas.

**Project of Arendt:**

To save action and appearance, and with it the common life of the political and the values of opinion

and

To reinstate the life of public and political action to apex of human goods and goals

The Vita Activa: Labor, Work and Action

1st, 2nd: private . 3rd: public realm

ascending hierarchy of importance

overturning of this hierarchy is central to the eclipse of political freedom and responsibility.

Labor:

* activity which corresponds to the biological processes and necessities of human existence, the practices which are necessary for the maintenance of life itself.
* Never-ending (eat today, eat tmr) 🡺 it creates nothing of permanence, its efforts are quickly consumed. This eternal effort to sustain life is animal-like
* Commanded by necessity 🡺 human being as laborer is the equivalent of the slave (of animalistic nature and the scientific law of nature)
* (But Marx took this animal laborans as primary in his vision of the highest ends of human existence. )

Work

* activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not embedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species' ever-recurring life-cycle
* Work corresponds to the fabrication of an ***artificial*** world of things, artifactual constructions which endure temporally beyond the act of creation itself. 🡺Work creates a world that is more durable (e.g. a statue)
* semi-permanence and relative independence from the individual actors/workers
* building walls (both physical and cultural) which divide the human realm from that of nature
* work is still subject to a certain kind of necessity, that which arises from its essentially instrumental character. As the act is dictated by and subordinated to ends and goals outside itself; work is essentially a means to achieve the thing which is to be fabricated (be it a work of art, a building or a structure of legal relations) and so stands in a relation of mere purposiveness to that end.
* the activity of work cannot be fully free insofar as it is not an end in itself, but is determined by prior causes and articulated ends.

Labour vs work

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| bound to the demands of animality, biology and nature | violates the realm of nature by shaping and transforming it according to the plans and needs of humans |
| Driven by animal nature and natural scientific lawnecessary  | governed by **human ends and intentions** under humans' sovereignty and control, it exhibits a certain quality of freedom |
| concerned with satisfying the individual's life-needs and so remains essentially a private affair | inherently public; creates an objective and common world which both stands between humans and unites themnot in public realm but provides preconditions for the existence of a political community |
|  |  |

Action:

* to act is to 1) be seen and heard by others 🡺 to be recognized by others.
1. To take an initiative, to begin
* ineliminable free. Its status as an end in itself and so as subordinate to nothing outside itself.
* (freedom is active, worldly and public, not an inner, contemplative or private phenomenon)

“We first become aware of freedom or its opposite in our intercourse with others, not in the intercourse with ourselves”

* Action is unpredictable (“one deed, one gesture, one word may suffice to change every constellation”) and irreversible (“there is no author who can undo. Destroy, what he has done if he does not like it or when the consequences prove to be disastrous”)
* Action and its publicity: Arendt's theory holds that actions cannot be justified for their own sake (unlike existentialists), but only in light of their public recognition and the shared rules of a political community action is a public category, a worldly practice that is experienced

in our intercourse with others.

* Importance of publicity and plurality for action is to appreciate that action would be **meaningless unless there were others** present to see it and so give meaning to it. Publicity requires a practice/ability to speech and a public space
* The Greek solution: Polis – “role model” for a space of communicative and disclosive speech deeds demonstrate the ongoing activity of citizens coming together so as to exercise their capacity for agency, to conduct their lives together by means of free speech and persuasion

HOMO DISCIPLINATUS—Michael Foucault

**Detailed Information:**

**Background:**

Since its beginnings with Socrates, philosophy has typically involved the project of questioning the accepted knowledge of the day. Later, Locke, Hume, and especially, Kant developed a distinctively modern idea of philosophy as the critique of knowledge.

Kant: what seems contingent is necessary

Foucault: What seems necessary is contingent.

The focus of his questioning is the modern human sciences (biological, psychological, social). These purport to offer universal scientific truths about human nature that are, in fact, often mere expressions of ethical and political commitments of a particular society. Foucault’s “critical philosophy” undermines such claims by exhibiting how they are the outcome of contingent historical forces, not scientifically grounded truths.

In this text the anthropology is about **man** as influenced by power relations—there are fragments at the end of the text about how power influences the body and the psychic.

**Discipline and Punish:**

—Study of the development of the “gentler” modern way of imprisoning criminals rather than torturing or killing them.

—Reform that aims at more effective control: “**to punish less, perhaps; but certainly to punish better**”.

modern power (disciplinary control): concern with what people have not done (nonobservance), with, that is, a person’s failure to reach required standards. This concern illustrates the primary function of modern disciplinary systems: to **correct deviant (irrational) behavior**.

The main goal is not revenge (as in the case of the tortures of premodern punishment) but reform, where reform means primarily coming to live by society’s standards or norms

**Knowledge as a social/ political construction:**

The examination (for example, of students in schools, of patients in hospitals) is a method of control that combines hierarchical observation with normalizing judgment. It is a prime example of what Foucault calls power/knowledge, since it combines into a unified whole “the deployment of force and the establishment of truth”. It both elicits the truth about those who undergo the examination (tells what they know or what is the state of their health) and controls their behavior (by forcing them to study or directing them to a course of treatment).

**Knowledge=power:**

Foucault’s point is rather that, at least for the study of human beings, the goals of power and the goals of knowledge cannot be separated: **in knowing we control and in controlling we know.**

Bentham’s Panopticon is, for Foucault, a paradigmatic architectural model of modern disciplinary power. Monitors do not in fact always see each inmate; the point is that they could at any time. **Since inmates never know whether they are being observed, they must behave as if they are always seen and observed**. As a result, control is achieved more by the possibility of **internal monitoring** of those controlled than by actual supervision or heavy physical constraints. (punish better). Thus, the idea of being controlled than the actual control is the main form of power.

**Modern prisons, not punishing the body, but the soul:**

Rationality and crimes: modern penal institutions (e.g. Prison) operate with markedly different rationality than those that are aimed solely at retribution through pain. They do not focus on punishing the body but **correcting** the soul/mind and forcing the soul to be rational again.

—the gradual shift in penal practice from a focus on the crime to a focus on the criminal, from the action to agency and (irrational) personality. The judge judges not only the criminal act, but also the soul of the criminal. Judges give verdicts about one’s human nature.

—The modern prison does not just punish by depriving its inmates of liberty, it categorizes them as delinquent subjects, types of people with a dangerous, criminal nature.

—Initially, at the start of the modern prison system, madness was considered as a sufficient reason for erasing guilt. However, as the system evolved, madness is not affirmed in most cases, but is always taken as a possibility.

**Additional Notes:**

**Introduction**

—Foucault is against self-knowledge, for him the idea is not that of knowing oneself but of becoming something else. For Foucault all action is dangerous, it is not bad, but even benign ideas can become harmful. Thus, man always has something to do, to defend from (hyper-and-pessimistic activism).

—Foucault is not writing for an audience, his texts are tools people can use for interpreting what they want.

**Foucault on History, Structuralism and Evolution**

—Foucault does not have an evolutionary approach to science and truth. For him the biology of the past is not falser than what’s now.

—structuralism=the idea that for studying human nature one needs to study its structure. An individual exists in a structure. But the structure is ahistorical in a historical context.

—For Foucault, the ‘theory of relativity’ spoke through Einstein. New ideas for Foucault are the result of change in episteme, in our ability to know.

**The movement from Archeology to Genealogy**

—Genealogy, without looking at the origin, just by looking at its transformation.

**Discipline and Punish**

—This is a genealogy not only of punishment but also of human ‘mind’ (souls). We need to focus on what punitive power does, represses people.

—For Foucault, one should not focus only on the negative effects of power, but also on the positive effects, what power does or produces?

**Foucault’s four advice in D&P**

1. focus on the positive instead of the negative aspects of power
2. punitive methods have their own rationality. Each method of power serves a certain function (e.g. the function of social media is to expose oneself). Powers are not necessary working together; one can use a form of power against another (e.g. U.E. regulations for limiting media exposure)
3. “Make the technology of power the very principle both of the humanization of the penal system and of the knowledge of man”. Investigate the common matrix of the juridical system and of ‘human science’. The two are connected, through new scientific discoveries the juridical approach to prisons changed.
4. To examine whoever not the soul is the effect of a transformation through which the body is invested with body relations.

**Undermining progressive narratives**

It is not the idea that punishment changed it object, from the body to the soul, the essential remained the same—to establish the division between the permitted and not permitted. New, the idea is to punish the person, not the body

**The Body**

* “But we can surely accept the general proposition that, in our societies, the systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain ‘political economy’ of the body: even if they do not make use of violent or bloody punishment, even when they use ‘lenient’ methods involving confinement or correction, it is always the body that is at issue – the body and its forces, their utility and their docility, their distribution and their submission.” (D&P, 25) (PPT Foucault)

—the political technology of the body, to know how to control other people (to master others, not only conquering them).

**Power**

* “What the apparatuses and institutions operate is, in a sense, a micro-physics of power, whose field of validity is situated in a sense between these great functionings and the bodies themselves with their materiality and their forces.” (26)
* Power as strategy, not a property = Power exercised rather than possessed.
* Not a simple prohibition, power invests and transmits itself through the bodies of those it controls.
* Hence these power relations are not localized in some center, but goes through the depths of the entire social body.
* These power relations constitutes different nodes of power, focuses of instability, potentials of conflicts and reversion. (PPT Foucault)

**What is then human nature according to Foucault?**

* The problem is not to recover some lost essence, or a lost identity. “To free our imprisoned nature, our deepest truth; but instead the problem is to move towards something radically Other.”
* “The center, then, seems still to be found in Marx’s phrase: man produces man. […] For me, what must be produced is not man identical to himself, exactly as nature would have designed him or according to his essence; on the contrary, we must produce something that doesn’t yet exist and about which we cannot know how and what it will be.”
* This production is not that of an economic type. “It’s a question rather of the destruction of what we are, of the creation of something entirely different, of a total innovation.”

*Remarks on Marx* (1978)

HOMO SEXUALIS—Simone De Beauvoir

**Introductory Information**

—Simon de Beauvoir had the same type of education as Sartre

—Simon de Beauvoir writes in an accessible, nice way.

—Hegel, master-slave dialectic influenced the existential French movement. (it is about the influence of Hegel on Sartre and Simon)

—being human invariability means being in a struggle between self and other. (The Hegelian idea of one vs other). For existentialists, we try to dominate others or protect ourselves against domination.

—Simon tried to do a similar thing with gender. Simon tried a women-man dialectic. (intersectionality=the idea that class struggle, gender struggle etc. are related. Simon did not use this term )

—Simon de Beauvoir like Sartre makes the idea of intentionality center to her work. Intentionality, the Husserlian idea of the relation between consciousness and objects. Instead of being focused on the mind/world split, Husserl focuses on the relation between the two. (a table can relate to a chair, but a table has no aboutness of that chair)

—Intentionality before Husserl meant the attribute of aboutness. Thoughts/emotions can be about something, about a thought/emotion or other physical object.

—For Husserl, Sartre etc. consciousness is not a box of mental states, it is not made of mental states, but is a relation to thing.

—Sartre, Being and Nothingness (1943)

—Being human means to constantly transcend yourself. For Sartre this means not only to always realize new things, but also that one always has new things to do.

—For Sartre consciousness is nothing, in the sense that it is just ‘aboutness’ of something.

—Being is the being for which being is an issue, Heideggerian approach.

—what is distinct of being human is the inevitable relation to something other and also the inevitable self-relation. The idea that consciousness is not only consciousness of another, but also consciousness of ourselves. (The idea is not of always of thinking about us).

**Consciousness and Embodiment**

—This idea is crucial for understanding Simon

—Simon, Husserl and Ponty analyze the body while Sartre does not quite do that.

—Consciousness for phenomenologists is a relation, is an act.

—Embodiment for phenomenologists is the opposite to that of Descartes. Is not the idea that consciousness is in the body. For phenomenologists consciousness is embodies, cannot be distinguished, separated, from the body (it is not identical but neither different than the body)

— (see more on recording)

—Simon opposes the idea that our bodies determine consciousness, how we think and what we think. Simon is against the reduction of man to the body.

—But Simon considers that consciousness is limited to a body, and thus invariably is limited to that perspective. (As any person is limited to only to what one sees, any person is limited to the perspective of being a woman. Is not about that the body influences what a woman can see, but that of being-a-women-in the world—as I understood this idea)

**Notes on the reading. Main points Introduction:**

‘Eternal Feminine’ vs women in the womb:

Women are not women by virtue of their body, or by birth. Culturally, one is considered to be a woman if it ‘becomes’ and ‘embodies’ the ‘eternal feminine’. The idea of the ‘eternal feminine’ is the ideal of a submissive, fragile and irrational female. Men justify their position considering women inferior by nature. But women become inferior only after men put them there.

The ‘eternal feminine’, as the ‘good Negro’, is a notion created by the ruling class for giving a good connotation for a certain behavior of the oppressed class. In this way, the oppressed class is praised if it behaves. Today, even if technically men and women are equal, men still consider women inferior in term of career opportunities. Some men are unaware of their privilege as men and not realize the importance of the feminist debate. The idea is that in the present debate objectivity is needed even if any opinion is in one way or another biased.

The male gender for ‘neuter human’:

In French and English, the ‘neuter human’ is expressed by ‘man’. To refer to humanity in general you refer to man. Thus, women are defined just as a set of particular traits, but without referring to humanity in general. Being a man is a normality, being a woman is something specific. The consequence of this is that women are defined and judged in terms of their bodies. Men often state that women think with their glands, as if their body makes them different. The male body has glands too but to be a man is the normality.

Hegelian Otherness:

Otherness is the idea that consciousnesses oppose each other and one consciousness defines the rest as ‘other’, as enemy, inferior etc. The ones inside a group are the ‘they’ and the rest the other. In case of women, men always have created the rules, and thus women are always considered inferior. Regarding nations, the otherness becomes relative because each foreigner in another country is the ‘other’. But, between the sexes there is no equality.

Women is considered to be defined as an imperfect man, as Aquino and Aristotle Consider. (As the bible Considers, women is produced out of the rib of men). Women is a lack of the qualities of men, women cannot be understood without a man.

‘Otherness’ and collectives:

Negro and Jews, which are considered the ‘other’, have united in history and opposed the oppressors. By this they declared that they are ‘they’ and that the oppressors are the ‘other’. Women however lack the historical, religious and solidarity unity, to unite. To accept the inferior position as the other, that side needs to be submissive enough. The problem is the women are too submissive

The negro and the Jews are too groups which have escaped relatively recently from the oppression of a class. Women are starting to escape too, but their writes on paper are not respected in reality. Men is advantaged when he gets a job, men get all the high positions.

Women cannot even unite:

Women is too dependent on men for forming a unity to oppose men. Women have been considered inferior from the beginning. Some women are unconscious of and even like the position of the ‘other’. Being inferior you are not responsible for your actions. A woman is taken care of, the economic stress and the metaphysical stress of freedom are ignored. It might be pleasant to lack responsibility, but in the same time you are not free.

Reciprocal need does not mean reciprocal advantage:

Some might argue that women can subjugate men by using their sexual desires. However, this is not the case since co-dependence does not mean equality. The master is also dependent on the slave, but the master can gain everything he wants from the slave. Meanwhile, the slave is always dependent on the master.

Existentialist Ethics and Transcendence (+embodiment)

The idea that women are forced by ‘them’ to become immanent, to become passive, instead of being transcendent, to be active. An immanent object is inside the world, controlled by it. A transcendent object is beyond the world, has the power to create it. A free man is able to create his own world through his actions. The conflict: each ego wants to be transcendent, but given the common condition, women are in the situation of always being passive. It is natural for each ego to want to impose oneself on other egos.

This idea of transcendence comes from Sartre. The term for an immanent ego is en-soi (in itself). The term for transcendence is pour soi (for itself). An agent with free will is not like any object, in itself, but it also exists for itself. In class the idea of embodiment and intentionality have been related to Simon.

Intentionality and embodiment are important because they offer a mind-body theory for which women are not defined by their body, but by what they do.

**Form “W’s Situation and Character”:**

Women and Passivity:

Women are passive and thus better at withstanding pain. This is a virtue, but at the same time women are not creating and destroying, they are passive. Women do not believe in liberation because they do not consider themselves as subjects, as free agents. Since women are not autonomous, they are afraid the new. “When women are called upon on concrete action, when they recognize their interest in the designated goals, they are bold and courageous as men” (603).

Women is so identified with her position as an object which men take care of that they like it. Women consider what man does as the product of a god. Women would go anywhere were a man go, they learned that they need to obey for survival. Women are afraid of change because they consider themselves totally passive. Simon states that women wanted the most to maintain slavery in south America, that women accept all that man do based on faith. Simon states that when the Pompey ashes were dig up, men were rebellious while women were ‘bowing down’, resignation. “Women are the first to throw themselves at the feet of the conquerer” (601).

Since women considers herself passive, she is blaming ‘evil’ for what happens against planned. A free person blames only himself, for Simone (and Sartre).

Women and the prejudice of inferiority:

Women is ‘not so rational as man’ since man put her in that position. She is put to be a housewife and thus she does not have a true contact with reality. She needs to do all the repetitive stuff (labor for Arendt) +lack of contact with reality->in being superstitious, in believing in magic. Logic does not help a woman, since logic is not used in cooking and (changing diapers).

Women are so ‘physical’ section because they are deprived of sexual contact (men have sex with them only when men want). Women are ‘sensual’ because they need to kill time and an important part of their value in life is given by their beauty.

Women are frivolous, lazy because all they are given to do is house-keeping stuff. Women are considered to be utilitarian, to think only of immediate goals. This is so because of her house-keeping activities. Women are considered selfish, but again, she is being isolated from solidarity nothing else can be expected from her.

**Albert Camus, Myth of Sisyphus-Philosophical Suicide—Optional Text**

**Camus question:**

‘Is life worth living the most important philosophical question?’

Camus states that such questions are more important than simple contemplative questions. It is a matter of life and death.

Camus question is if the feeling of the absurd should make one commit suicide or not. Is the meaninglessness of life affecting man to such a degree? Men desire meaning very much; without meaning, there is no reason for doing any action.

**‘What is the feeling of the absurd?’:**

—He states that the feeling of the absurd appears suddenly and it creates a state of discomfort. This state might disappear, maintaining the illusion, or might result in the final decision.

—This absurd appear when one realizes the contrast between the irrational of the universe and the human desire for logic and clarity.

—The world is not absurd; it is just irrational. Absurdity means a contradiction. In this case, absurdity appears between the human desire for rationality and meaning and the irrationality of the universe.

**Camus argument for sustaining that the world is irrational:**

—Camus reviews the history of philosophy for making his claim. A priori arguments do not work to explain reality. Parmenides, Aristotle etc. failed. (All statements are true means that the opposite statement is also true. Etc.) (Parmenides’s argument for unity, in fact, sustains the plurality he was against). One cannot truly know himself; one can know aspects about himself but cannot truly himself as a whole or as a unite. Scientific knowledge seems to be the solution, but it is uncertain. Empirical data is certain—I see the tree. Hypothesis are uncertain—how electrons orbit around the atom. Thus, in the end, the world is irrational. Many intellectuals tried to give an explanation to it, but it simply is a mystery.

**Living authentically vs philosophical suicide:**

Once one is aware of the irrational in the universe. Once one is aware of the possibility of death, a sincere person cannot run away. The idea is that life is barrable for man only as long as he runs away, only as long as he pretends to have the answer (to the meaning of life).

 **Examples of other philosophers recognizing the absurd:**

In the past, many men (states Camus) have recognized the problem he exposes. Many philosophers have opposed the rational, seeing the illusion of rationalism, the illusion of knowing the truth. Camus gives as examples: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Jaspers. Camus states that Heidegger, through his concept of anxiety, understands the dimension of the absurd, the problem that one cannot care about ‘categories’ and abstract contemplation when the fear of death dooms at every doorstep. Jasper knows that men cannot know beyond appearances.

Camus states that Kierkegaard not only discovered the absurd, “but is living in it” (Camus 25). Husserl and phenomenology deny the certainty of transcendent reasoning. All the philosophers above try to understand the world but find that hope is gone, that the dreamed ‘objectivity’ is no longer their. The minds which understand the problem, which understand that the world is absurd, need to make the decision—suicide or not?

“At this point of his effort man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for rationality. The absurd is born out of this confrontation between the human need for reasonable silence of the world. This must not be for­ gotten. This must be clung to because the whole conse­quence of a life can depend on it. The irrational, the human nostalgia, and the absurd that is born of their encounter-these are the three characters in the drama that must necessarily end with all the logic of which an existence is capable” (28).

“The irrational, the human nostalgia, and the absurd that is born of their encounter-these are the three characters in the drama that must necessarily end with all the logic of which an existence is capable” (28).

**Philosophical suicide:**

The feeling of the absurd is not the notion of it. The feeling creates the notion, and then the feeling becomes alive or dies. Camus is not interested in analyzing what other philosophers have to say, but to extract what is common in what they have to say. These philosophers have different ways of thinking, yet they walk a common spiritual landscape.

**Absurd is a comparison, is birthed out of the contradiction between two objects**

Any type of absurd is the result of the conflict between x and y, between ‘intention’ and ‘reality’, between ‘accusation’ and ‘one’s virtuous character’. Everyday experience confirms this definition of the absurd. Thus, the absurd is not in man, but in the relation between man and the world.

HOMO BARBARUS—Franz Fanon

**PPT Info:**

Questions

1. What are the main problems of the reality of the Negro?
2. How should the black man speak for himself?
3. What is Epistemicide? And What does the word ‘knowledge’ refer to?

Content

1. The Black Man’: Racism, Romanization, Self-Loathing, Emancipation.
* The man who adores the Negro is as ‘sick’ as the man who abominates him.
* Liberation begins by recognizing these constructions for what they are. The first impulse at the arrival of awareness is self-loathing: as I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. (‘neurotic situation’)
* Emancipation means to rise above the absurd drama that others have staged around me, to reject the two terms that are equally unacceptable, and, through one human being, to reach out for the universal.
1. The black man speaks with a European language. He becomes proportionately whiter in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language.
* He is changed also because it is from France that he received because France gave him his physicians, his department head, his innumerable functionaries.
* In all areas there is a constellation of postulates, a series of propositions that slowly and subtly…work their way into one’s mind and shape one’s view of the world.
1. Higher education institutions today are working with a very small part of the extensive and diverse knowledge systems in the world. “Epistemicide” = the killing of other knowledge systems

Answers

1. The Black Man’: Racism, Romanization, Self-Loathing, Emancipation
2. The black man speaks with a European language. He becomes proportionately whiter in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language.
3. “Epistemicide” = the killing of other knowledge systems. Higher education institutions today are working with a very small part of the extensive and diverse knowledge systems in the world.

Questions:

1. Which is Fanon’s type of approach?
2. Which is Fanon’s position regarding human nature?
3. Which is Fanon’s position on reduction?
4. Which is Fanon’s meta-philosophical position?

Content:

1. Interdisciplinary approach: philosophy, psychoanalyst, psychiatry. Fanon combines approach and expertise and he believe that there is not only one explanation or approach to something.
2. For Fanon, there is no (universal) human nature. Each person is subjective in a particular manner, each person having a different type of subjectivity and relations, dynamics. Relations and dynamics mean relations between the subject and the world. In other words, relations mean how the subject reacts to different factors (psychological, social, economic etc.). For one2 being able to understand humans, one needs to look at how they relate to the world, to have some empirical evidence before talking about what ‘human agency is’.
3. Fanon is against reduction, against considering that a problem can be solved only from one angle. He is against psychological reduction; reducing the complexes he is talking about to merely a psychological problem. Fanon analyses the psychology and pathologies of the colonized subject but does not consider that these alone explain the condition of the colonized subject. (Sometimes it is not only one’s fault for what happens since it is not only about the psychology of the subject but about economic and social situations).
4. Fanon’s meta-philosophical position is that philosophy should aid in problems such as that of liberation. The opposite positions are that philosophy should be interested just in truth, with no agenda in mind

Answer:

1. It is an interdisciplinary approach between philosophy, psychoanalyst, psychiatry.
2. For Fanon, there is no (universal) human nature. Each person is subjective in a particular manner, each person having a different type of subjectivity and relations, dynamics.
3. Fanon is against reduction, against considering that a problem can be solved only from one angle. He is against psychological reduction; reducing the complexes he is talking about to merely a psychological problem.
4. Fanon’s meta-philosophical position is that philosophy should aid in problems such as that of liberation.

Questions

1. Which is the main criticism of Fanon’s type of approach?
2. Which is Fanon’s position on romanization?
3. Which is the relation between ‘the subjects’ and racism?
4. Which is Fanon’s position on emancipation?

Content

1. The main criticism of Fanon’s approach is that Fanon is not explicit, he does not give explicit solutions. This is so since claiming the plurality of approaches and that a problem has many sides leads to not taking a precise solution. Fanon was often skeptical even of solutions proposed to colonization due to his pluralistic approach.
2. Fanon is against romanization, both of the white colonizer and of the colonized. Some white man had good intentions in helping the Negro but idealizing the Negro’s situation is as bad for Fanon. The adoration of the Negro, for Fanon, is not a cure of racism but an element which is part of the mechanism of racism.
3. There are no subjects, which secondarily come into contact with racism. Which only relate with racism in specific ways. The idea is that the subjects themselves are constructed, reconstructed under racists regime.
4. The emancipation of the Negro is not simple, is not just about the Negro which becomes free. From a psychiatric and psychological perspective, Fanon describes the first contact with racism as a neurotic situation. This is so since firstly the Negro does not feel the joy of freedom but self-loathing. The self-loathing that the Negro considers himself a symbol of sin.

Answers

1. The main criticism of Fanon’s approach is that Fanon is not explicit, he does not give explicit solutions.
2. Fanon is against romanization, both of the white colonizer and of the colonized.
3. There are no subjects, which secondarily come into contact with racism. The idea is that the subjects themselves are constructed, reconstructed under racists regime.
4. The emancipation of the Negro is not simple, is not just about the Negro which becomes free.

Questions

1. Which is Fanon’s position on Humanism?

Content

1. Since Fanon is skeptical of universal, he is skeptical of Humanism. At the same time, Fanon is not a reductionist, so he also considers the elimination of Humanism problematic. This is so since without Humanism there cannot claims to a universal understanding of humanity. (The conflict between particular/universal). Fanon is against both reductions, to the particular or to the universal. Rejecting this reduction is an important element in *Black Skin White Masks*. Fanon considers that only by looking at a situation from all perspectives, paying attention to particular aspects, one is able to find a solution. By putting together particular information, about each subject, Humanism could be rebuilt (Fanon’s position in *White Masks*). In *The Wretched of The Earth*, Fanon rejects Humanism.

Answer

1. Since Fanon is skeptical of universal, he is skeptical of Humanism. At the same time, Fanon is not a reductionist, so he also considers the elimination of Humanism problematic.

ALTER HOMO—Bret Davis (I do not have complete notes for Davis, sorry)

**Introduction**

Aim: reflect on 1) the meaning of and 2) the importance of comparative philosophy

Encountering another culture allows one to deepen ones self understanding by learning to "see oneself from the outside"; this deeper self understanding in turn allows one to listen to what the other culture has to say

Argues that an engagement with non-Western philosophy, particularly with a set of traditions as rich and radically different as those of Asian thought, can and should take place as a hermeneutic circling ( cross interpretation) between self-understanding and openness to encounter: the dialogical step back and step forward are mutually supportive endeavors

🡺 attain the concrete freedom and possibility for transformation and change, that is, the ability to critically and creatively develop old customs or modes of thought and to critically and creatively adopt new ones

learn to not only let others be, but to share insights with them, and to build together a global community which neither reifies nor abolishes cultural differences

Continental / western philosophers: no painful need to seriously engage in dialogue with non-Western traditions. Only address cross-cultural issues in terms of their ethical and political implications.

But now a multicultural nation in a globalizing world has an *ethical* and *political* duty to include non-western traditions.

And more importantly: for there is also a great *hermeneutical*, indeed, philosophical significance. If philosophy has to do with self-questioning and the dialogical pursuit of wisdom, then it would be most unphilosophical of us to inhibit our contact with other traditions.

**Question: Do non-western cultures have “philosophy”?**

Heiddiger: no. Western philosophy is a tautology. No Chinese/ Indian philosophy. But we (western philosophers?) must have cross-traditions dialogues about metaphysics. (So metaphysics is not philosophy?)

**Davis:**
the movement between stepping back to an understanding of the self, on the one hand, and stepping forward to an encounter with an Other, on the other hand, are mutually supportive and indeed mutually dependent endeavors.

Differences and distances open up the very space of recognition and critical reflection.

In order to "know thyself” we have to learn the art of seeing oneself from the perspective of the other.

"stepping forward to an encounter by way of stepping back." : by stepping back and becoming aware of the particularity of one’s own background, the strengths and weakness of the "prejudices" of one’s own tradition, one is better able to step forward and genuinely encounter another culture.

hermeneutic circling: Putting this double movement together, then, the thesis is as follows: Encountering another culture allows one to **deepen one’s self-understanding** by learning to **"see oneself from the outside"**; this deeper **self-understanding** in turn allows one to **listen to what the other culture has to say**.

HUMANISM-POSTHUMANISM—Donna Haraway

**“The Cyborg Manifesto”, Introduction**

Questions

1. Is the lecture on Post-Humanism limited to Donna Haraway’s two texts?
2. Where does Haraway Stand?
3. What are ‘anthropological’ dichotomies?
4. What does the image of the cyborg stand for?
5. How is the Cyborg manifest in present society?

Content

1. No, the lecture includes information by Paul Crutzen, Tim Luke, Nik Dyer, Bruno Latour. Besides the problem of the cyborg alone, the lecture includes the problem of Anthropocene, of how nature instead of auto-generated or god-made becomes human made (how we alter the atmosphere through pollution, the land through deforestations etc.).
* “Socialist and feminist “projects” seek to create a just society characterized by equal opportunity for all and lack of exploitation and privilege
* Both “projects” essentialize certain subjects, that is, they speak in terms of “the worker” or “women”.
* Essentializing is part of the problem. Its inclusion/exclusion dynamics and its divisive dichotomies have politically oppressive effects” (PPT Haraway)
1. “American radical feminists insist on the organic, opposing it to the technological. But there are also great riches for feminists in explicitly embracing the possibilities inherent in the breakdown of clean distinctions between organism and machine and similar distinctions structuring the Western self. It is the simultaneity of breakdowns that cracks the matrices of domination and opens geometric possibilities.” (PPT Haraway)
2. “= cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Contemporary science fiction is full of cyborgs - creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted” (PPT Haraway)
3. Medicine/administration/police/military/science/sexuality/transportation/workplace/ politics.

Answers

1. No, the lecture includes information by Paul Crutzen, Tim Luke, Nik Dyer, Bruno Latour. Besides the cyborg, the lecture puts the problem of Anthropocene and the role of anthropology in a post-human world.
2. For Haraway, searching for the ‘essence’ of being human, of being a worker, a woman leads to oppression due to its inclusion/exclusion dynamics and its divisive dichotomies.
3. The anthropological divisive dichotomy Haraway speaks is about that between organic and machine.
4. The image of the cyborg stands for a hybrid of organic and machine, creatures of both social reality and fiction.
5. Medicine/administration/police/military/science/sexuality/transportation/workplace/ politics

Questions

1. Which the new ontology Haraway proposes?
2. Which is the boundary between science fiction and social reality, for Haraway?
3. Where does this leave us?
4. Fatalism – Nihilism – Optimism?
5. What does Haraway mean by doing philosophy responsibly?

Content

1. “The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics.”
* Whereas organisms reproduce, cyborgs replicate
* “Modern production seems like a dream of cyborg colonization work, a dream that makes the nightmare of Taylorism\* seem idyllic.”
* “Modern war is a cyborg orgy, coded by C3I, command-control-communication-intelligence, an $84 billion item in 1984's US defense budget.” – [*Think would it might be now….*]
1. For Haraway, this boundary is an illusion. Leaky distinctions’: human/animal; animal-human/machine, physical/non-physical. What other limitations can technology overcome? (biological-electronic-mechanical). Class-based? Ethnic? Gender? Sexual?
2. “The transcendent authorization of interpretation is lost, and with it the ontology grounding ‘Western’ epistemology. But the alternative is not cynicism or faithlessness, that is, some version of abstract existence…”

“With the hard-won recognition of their social and historical constitution, gender, race, and class cannot provide the basis for belief in ‘essential’ unity… The recent history for much of the US left and US feminism has been a response to this kind of crisis by endless splitting and searches for a new essential unity. But there has also been a growing recognition of another response through coalition**—affinity, not identity**.”

1. “There are more grounds for hope in focusing on the contradictory effects of politics designed to produce loyal American technocrats, which also produced large numbers of dissidents, than in focusing on the present defeats. The permanent partiality of feminist points of view has consequences for our expectations of forms of political organization and participation. We do not need a totality in order to work well. The feminist dream of a common language, like all dreams for a perfectly true language, of perfectly faithful naming of experience, is a totalizing and imperialist one…Perhaps, ironically, we can learn from our fusions with animals and machines how not to be Man, the embodiment of Western logos.”
2. “This chapter is an argument for *pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries and for *responsibility* in their construction.” “Who cyborgs will be is a radical question; the answers are a matter of survival.”

Answers

1. The cyborg ontology for a new type of social reality.
2. The boundary between science fiction and social reality is illusionary, technology can overcome these distinctions.
3. This leaves us to the abandonment of the idea of essence or identity and adopt affinity instead.
4. Haraway is optimistic, according to my interpretation of the quote above. She considers that the solution is that of transcending the necessity of one solution, of an absolute (imperialist) solution. One needs to abandon the traditional definition of ‘human’.
5. That one needs to be responsible in the way one reconstructs, creates new boundaries. By creating new definitions of the boundaries, one is redefining oneself.

**Beyond Donna Haraway’s Cyborg, the topic of post-humanism**

Questions

1. What is Anthropocene and its relation to anthropology?
2. Which are some Anthropocene theories?
3. What is the relation between Anthropocene and Cyborgs?

Content

1. The bowndery between ‘nature’ and ‘human’ is becoming thinner and thinner.

What was previously considered God-created (thecentric) or self-creating (autogenic) is now ‘human created’. Our existand urban society alters the planet so much, according to Tim Luke, that we already are some king of allien civilization changing the environment. Anthropocene shows that what philosophy called the relationship between ‘humans’ and ‘environment’ is now a relationship between ‘humans’ and ‘their creation’. We are creating a new type of nature (and a new type of humanity for Haraway).



1. Nobody knows the answer yet; this is a question to think about and write your thoughts during the exam if possible.

Answers

1. What was previously considered God-created (thecentric) or self-creating (autogenic) is now ‘human created’. Our existand urban society alters the planet so much, according to Tim Luke, that we already are some king of allien civilization changing the environment. Anthropocene shows that what philosophy called the relationship between ‘humans’ and ‘environment’ is now a relationship between ‘humans’ and ‘their creation’. We are creating a new type of nature (and a new type of humanity for Haraway).
2. The distinction between ‘human’ and ‘machine’ is illusionary, for Haraway. This implicitly means that the boundary between ‘nature’ and ‘human artifact’ is blurring away. The Anthropocene means that ‘nature’ is becoming a ‘human artifact’. The cyborg coincides with the Anthropocene since by making cyborgs we transform nature (genetics etc.) into a ‘human artifact’.
3. Reflect on the philosophical anthropology course as a whole or to Haraway’s text and come with an interesting answer.