

Philosophy as Bodily Transformation: Old Tradition and New Challenges

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Course offered in the framework of the
International Summer School (1-7. 09. 2014):

Beyond secular faith
The Body

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I. DESCRIPTION

This seminar intends to elaborate one relevant aspect of the body in the philosophical praxis. The process of conversion that is so central for the philosophy of both Plato and the Christian tradition is well understood when considered together with its bodily implications. In post-Christian times any conversion is difficult, and the claim that conversion is any sense necessary for philosophy calls for explanation. Thus we proceed with cautious steps from the Platonic understanding of philosophy through the Christian account of philosophy as an activity essentially linked to a bodily transformation.

I argue that only a deep understanding of the Christian proposal in this respect can help to safeguard us and to take up the fight against the horrific perspective of the radical contraposition of bodily transformation today: transhumanism.

The options are clear: either real transformation through the reception of the Logos by the person (soul and the body) or the world of hybrids made of machines and human body.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To grasp how and why the bodily transformation is an essential part of philosophical praxis.
2. To understand the implications of postmodern philosophical theories considering the subject of philosophy a bodiless and abstract mind.
3. To develop a critical account of the most dangerous idea of our times, transhumanism that intends to replace bodily transformation with the technical enhancement of the body.

III. CONTENTS

- 1) Introduction: The Relevance of the Question
 - a. Modern and Post-modern Idea of Philosophy as Activity of the Mind
 - b. The Current Need of the Bodily Transformation
 - c. Christian Philosophy Opening New Perspectives
Text to Interpret: Alain Badiou: *Being and Event*

- 2) The Forgotten Greek Heritage: The idea of Philosophy as Conversion in Plato
 - a. Conversion of the Soul
 - b. Philosophy as a Form of Life
 - c. The Role of the Body in the Greek Cosmo-vision
Text to Interpret: Plato, *Republic*, Book VII

- 3) Christian Accounts of Conversion
 - a. A Down-to-Earth Account of The Notion of the Fundamental Attitude
 - b. Following the Incarnated Logos – Incarnating the Logos – Bodily Lived Wisdom
 - c. Appeal and Response as Call of the Body and Bodily Self-giving
Text to Interpret: Theophan the Recluse, *The Path to Salvation – A Manual to Spiritual Transformation*

- 4) Post-Christian Idea of the Bodily Transformation
 - a. Some Philosophical Fundaments of Transhumanism
 - b. Extropy and the Age of Spiritual Machines
 - c. Bodily Transformations Through and By Negation of the Body
Text to Interpret: Ronald Cole Turner, *Transhumanism and Transcendence. Christian Hope in an Age of Technological Enhancement*

IV. METHODOLOGY

Seminar discussions

Commentary of texts

V. EVALUATION

Participation in the discussion