

## Seminar IV

Direction: Pedro G. Romero, Santiago Eraso

Venue: Rector's Lecture Room of the Universidad Internacional de Andalucía (UNIA), Seville

Speakers: Peter Sloterdijk, Manuel Barrios Casares, Nicolás Sánchez Durá and Joan Pipó Comorera

Date: 6th-9th May 2003

### PRESENTATION

The dehumanisation of the world is a space for reflection in relation to humanism as a model of the "civilisation" of humankind which comes to an end with the participation of Peter Sloterdijk. After contributions by Víctor Gómez Pin, Fernando Savater, Javier Echevarría, Félix Duque, Ángel González García, Massimo Cacciari, Alberto Cordero, Gerhard Vollmer and Francisco J. Ayala, we now present a journey into the essence of the argument.

The work by Peter Sloterdijk will be analysed for four days. Manuel Barrios Casares will highlight the aesthetic aspects which, like Nietzsche and the modern radical avant-garde in the past, the German philosopher has once again brought into question. Nicolás Sánchez Durá will show how war - a war defined in the same terms as the recent attack on Iraq - has influenced Sloterdijk's arguments. Joan Pipó will defend and celebrate the virtues of the dehumanisation of the world. Finally, Peter Sloterdijk himself will talk about the origins and ways forward for post-human man.

### PROGRAMME

Tuesday 6 May 2003

- 19:00 h. Manuel Barrios Casares:

Nihilism and post-humanism in contemporary culture

One of the meanings attributed by 20th century thinking to the crisis of humanism was that it was a necessary transitional stage in the process towards the utopia of new man. Inspired by the Nietzschean dream of the superman, artistic avant-garde trends developed part of their anti-humanistic strategy by cultivating this utopian argument. Technodicy, which is today part of the predominant philosophy seems to have taken on the task of facing up to the challenge of nihilism. However, contemporary art shows us other means of confronting it.

Wednesday 7 May 2003

- 19:00 h. Nicolás Sánchez Durá:

Venturing into rarefied environments: Sloterdijk and the vicissitudes of cultural pessimism

An analysis of the recent essay *Air tremors. In the sources of terror*, by Peter Sloterdijk, includes him in the tradition of cultural pessimism, especially in relation to other thinkers such as Ernst Jünger, Wittgenstein, and Günter Anders, who also took the experience of war as an essential factor to explain the nature of the characteristics which define our era. In connection with this, the seminar will address both the moral scepticism which seems to derive from his analysis, and the means of representing contemporary terror, focusing especially on photography.

Thursday 8 May 2003

- 19:00 h. Joan Pipó Comorera:

Long Live dehumanisation!

Thanks to the exercise of radical suspicion, the self-perception that the old thinkers had started at one point if not to disappear entirely, at least to fracture and to find increasing difficulties in gaining support from the most challenging minds.

In these circumstances, drawing attention to the well-known controversy about humanism and anti-humanism - with the various and continuous "acts" that go to make up its history, allows us to get an insight into the progress attained by post-modern thinkers who have been strongly committed to performing and improving all the "supreme self-gnosis" which Nietzsche so enthusiastically publicised.

Friday 9 May 2003

- 19:00 h. Peter Sloterdijk:

Post-humanism: its theological sources, its technical media

Assuming that we cannot ignore certain perimeter zones of man's deeds and thinking, simply because they go beyond the critical range of traditional humanism -biotechnology, the culture of the technological image, the new movement of the masses, the limitations of fascist politics, the domestication of the animal-man, the environmental war and eco-

terrorism, etc.- new approaches are proposed whose arguments are based on the mediation of technology and whose origins come from the tradition of philosophy itself which reduces the existence of mankind in the world to his written and read expression.

All the seminars are open to the public.

## SPEAKERS

Manuel Barrios Casares

He is a Professor at the University of Seville and Director of *Er*, the philosophy magazine. Awarded an Honorary Prize in his licentiate's degree and doctorate, he is a member of the Spanish Society of Nietzschean Studies, as well as being part of the founding committee of the Iberian/Latin American Society for Nietzschean Studies, and is on the advisory board of the magazines *Daimon*, *Anábasis* and *Perspectivas Metodológicas* (Univ. Lanús, Argentina). He is also a regular contributor to *El Cultural* and has published numerous essays on modern and contemporary thinking.

Nicolás Sánchez Durá

He is a Professor in the Department of Metaphysics and Theory of Knowledge at the University of Valencia. He is on the board of editors of the magazine *Pasajes de pensamiento contemporáneo* and director of the *Filosofías* series of the publishers Editorial Pretextos. He has written numerous articles on modern and contemporary philosophy, philosophical anthropology and contemporary art, which have been published in philosophy magazines, collective books, and catalogues. He has been the curator of a number of contemporary art exhibitions and was the director of the University of Valencia's exhibition gallery. He was the co-editor of *Mirar con cuidado. Filosofía y escepticismo* and *Ensayos de Filosofía de la Cultura*, and was responsible for the critical review *Ernst Jünger: guerra, técnica y fotografía*.

Joan Pipó Comorera

He is a specialist in contemporary philosophy and has developed a particular interest in the study of sensitive questions related to individuals and technology. His three latest works are: *La creación baconiana del cielo de la técnica y su oscurecimiento post-moderno*, *Contribución a la crítica del espectáculo cibermilenarista* and *Barthes, Baudrillard y Sloterdijk: Pasajes de la ilustración post-moderna*. This last one was a paper which he read in a seminar organised by the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB).

## Peter Sloterdijk

He studied Philosophy, Germanic Studies and History at the Universities of Munich and Hamburg. In the latter he was awarded a doctorate with a thesis on the philosophy and history of modern autobiographical literature. He is currently Professor of Philosophy and Aesthetics at the Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe. He has also been a visiting professor in Paris, Zurich, Vienna and New York. Since 1980 he has published numerous diagnostic works on modern life, the philosophy of culture and religion, the theory of art, and basic reflections on therapeutic professions, as well as others with a socio-political content. He received the Ernst Robert Curtius Essay Prize (Bonn, 1993) and the Friedrich Merker award (Munich, 2000). His *Critique of Cynical Reason*, 1983 (15. Edition 1999), is considered to be the best selling philosophy book in German since the II World War.

With his main works - *Spheres I, Bubbles*, 1998, and *Spheres II, Globes*, 1999, he has laid the foundations for the current discussion of the globalisation issues. His most important publications include: *The magical tree, the emergence of psychoanalysis in 1785*, 1985; *Thinker on stage, Nietzsche's materialism*, 1986; *Copernican mobilisation and Ptolomean disarmament*, 1987; *Eurotaoism, to a critique of political kinetics*, 1989; *World strangeness*, 1993; *In the same boat, an essay on hyper politics*, 1993; *The strong ground of being together*, 1999; *Rules for the Human Park*, 1999; *The contempt of the masses. An essay on the cultural fights of modern society*, 2000; *About the improvement of the good message. Nietzsche's fifth gospel*, 2000; *Sun and death. A dialogical study*, 2001. He is also the editor of: *In the face of the change of millennium, Report on the situation of the future*, 2 volumes, 1990; *Philosophy now! Philosophical readings*, 1995-1998, 20 volumes; and *World revolution of the soul. A study and working book on gnosis from late Antiquity to modern times*, 2 volumes, 1991, in collaboration with Thomas H. Macho.