

Institute of Philosophy at Ignatianum University in Cracow
Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies at University of Zagreb
invite to symposium

What philosophy for today?

On the idea and practice of philosophising

Wednesday, June 19th, 11.00-17.00.

On Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81622251421?pwd=LJrjbd7uChf8dzzmSCsS0tFrh53yQD.>

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Today's world is described as VUCA - a world characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity. Can philosophy help contemporary people live and creatively navigate in such a world? Can philosophy, drawing on its heritage, help contemporary people in their search for existential meaning and wisdom, while also helping them find their way in the labour market? Which philosophy would be helpful in building a responsible ethical stance and at the same time in dealing with existential crises? What kind of philosophy do we need? How should we practise it? How should philosophy be taught? Should philosophy cooperate with other sciences, and if so, to what extent?

Opening: Ivan Šestak (Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies),

Jacek Poznański (Director of the Institute of Philosophy)

11.00-13.00 Session I – presides Ines Skelac (4 x 20 min + 10 min discussion)

Luka Janež: *Philosophical Practice as an “Orientation Cure” for Today's Existential Crisis*

Piotr Sikora: *Skillful Life - Life Worth Living. DBT as a Philosophical Way of Life for Today*

Marijana Kolednjak: *Philosophy for a Better World: Martha Nussbaum's Advocacy for Human Flourishing*

Anna Bugajska: *The Utility of Things Useless: On the Uses of Philosophy for the Contemporary World*

Lunch Break

15.00-17.00 Session II – presides Jarosław Mikuczewski (4 x 20 min + 10 min discussion)

Piotr Duchliński: *How to Develop Christian Ethics in the 21st Century?*

Dan Đaković: *Overproduction of Wisdom?*

Jacek Poznański: *Philosophy Generated and Driven by Theological Eros*

Petar Tomev Mitrikeski: *Reason vs Faith - Enmity or Consorship*

Closing

Abstracts

Luka Janež: *Philosophical Practice as an “Orientation Cure” for Today's Existential Crisis*

(University of Zagreb, Assistant Professor)

The modern world is full of challenges related to the existential development of persons, often times lost in the fields of social frontiers and possibilities. Exactly as it was the case throughout the human history – the history of constant threats and crises. Nevertheless, the crisis calls us to progress, to discern – as the ancient Greek thinkers – the roots of contemporary philosophy – would semantically understand it. In this presentation, as a response to the contemporary issues, we will call for a return to the foundations of the Greek grasp of philosophy as a way of life. Which has been taking shape in the movement of philosophical practice since 80-s of the last century. Starting with Gert Achenbach, through Lou Marinoff, Lydia Amir, Anders Lindseth, and up to Aleksandar Fatić and many others – philosophical practice provides solid foundations for the return of philosophy to where it belongs – namely in various spheres of social space.

In this presentation, the focus will be on the following elements of philosophical practice that methodically respond to the challenges of contemporary times: a) interdisciplinarity and eclecticism at the core of the paradigm, b) orientation knowledge and action as a cure for alienation and existential lostness, and c) promotion of critical thinking in pedagogical work with children, and promotion of moral virtues through philosophical counselling. Based on the presented argumentation, we will try to offer guidelines for the implementation of philosophical practice in the domain of academic philosophy and the general scientific and social occurrence in the future.

Piotr Sikora: *Skillful Life - Life Worth Living. DBT as a Philosophical Way of Life for Today*

(Ignatianum University in Cracow, Associate Professor)

My presentation will have two parts. In the first part I'll sketch the essential characteristics of philosophy as a way of life as it was understood in ancient Greece (in that part I'll draw mainly on Pierre Hadot's research). In the second part of my presentation I'll try to show that one of the contemporary significant kind of philosophy as a way of life can be read off from Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). DBT has some principles which are heavily „philosophically-laden”. One of the essential part of DBT consist in skill training which include four „modules”: mindfulness skills, distress tolerance skills, emotion regulation skills, and interpersonal effectiveness skills. Mastering those skills should enable a person to create a life worth living. This is why a complete DBT treatment has four stages, third and fourth of which are not confined to psychopathological problems, but deal with ordinary issues of living, and feeling of incompleteness and search for the meaning of life. On that basis I'll sketch DBT as philosophy as a way of life.

Marijana Kolednjak: *Philosophy for a Better World: Martha Nussbaum's Advocacy for Human Flourishing*

(University of Zagreb, Research Assistant)

Martha Nussbaum is a well-known and respected philosopher and activist whose contributions range from practical feminist theory and human rights to law and ethics. On the one hand, she describes philosophy as "practical and compassionate" while on the other hand she says that "the job of teachers and philosophers is to make human life better". Martha Nussbaum believes that philosophical principles are applied in the real world through the active participation of philosophers in public debates, political processes and social change. Her approach to public philosophy includes the following key elements: Analysis of social problems, Development of normative principles, Education and awareness, Participation in political processes, Standing up for human rights, Education, Justice and equality, Political theory, Ethics of care, Philosophy and emotions, Through these areas of application, Nussbaum promotes the idea that philosophy. These elements can be a useful tool for solving complex social problems and achieving positive social changes, that is, how philosophers can (and should!) have a real impact on society and contribute to building a better and fairer world.

Anna Bugajska: *The Utility of Things Useless: On the Uses of Philosophy for the Contemporary World*

(Ignatianum University in Cracow, Associate Professor)

The statement about the decline of the humanities, especially in the Academia, and their supposed low prestige has become a truism. Nuccio Ordine in his book *The Usefulness of the Useless* (2014) has famously claimed that it is the lack of visible and monetizable impact of the humanities on the everyday life of humans that makes them seen as invalid for the contemporary world. As Luciano Floridi (2021) and many other contemporary commentators have claimed, we are experiencing a cultural, industrial, and anthropological revolution that is altering the ways we can do philosophy and the ways we can teach it. We can name, for example, the technological mediation of our experiences (Kroes, Verbeek 2014; Sisto 2022), the crisis of the fundamental concepts, such as the body, mind, affects, dignity, hope, human, etc. We can also observe the rise of the new fields like the philosophy of the city or philosophy of migration. In my contribution, I would like to share some observations on the contemporary trends in philosophical debate, stemming from the literature of the subject, but also from my experience with working with interdisciplinary and international groups of students, practitioners and scholars, mostly from the fields of law, medicine, architecture, political science and the Arts, to answer to questions about the uses of philosophy for the contemporary world.

Piotr Duchliński: *How to Develop Christian Ethics in the 21st Century?*

(Ignatianum University in Cracow, Associate Professor)

In the lecture I present two ways of advance ethics. By ethics I mean Christian ethics. The first way of practicing ethics is called autonomous ethics. Its proponents believe that in ethics normative issues are established without reference to empirical science. Ethics does not need to

appeal to various sciences. If ethics appealed to the sciences it would fall into the naturalistic fallacy. The second type of ethics I call ethics developed in the context of empirical sciences. In this approach, the achievements of empirical sciences could be taken into account in determining normative questions. Proponents of this approach argue that ethics should be constructed on the basis of modern psychology, neuroscience and other study of morality. In this paper, I will be pointing out the need for such an ethic (Christian ethic), which, in the opinion of researchers, should be realistic. A realistic ethics is one that takes into account research with such sciences psychology or neuroethics. If we consider that ethics should be developed on the basis of scientific knowledge about man, then the question arises whether scientific knowledge can modify normativity.

Dan Đaković: *Overproduction of Wisdom?*

(University of Zagreb, Research Assistant)

Philosopher should be a man in search of wisdom. And wisdom does not seem to be exceedingly widespread commodity. As Jacques Maritain said - There has never been and can never be overproduction in this field. Therefore, philosophy is never enough. The greater the scarcity of what the philosopher is supposed to be concerned with, the more we feel inclined to think that society needs the philosopher badly. Lot of history facts make manifest to us the power and importance of philosophers, for good and for evil. All ideas have consequences, bad ideas have victims. If bad philosophy is a plague for society, what a blessing good philosophy must be for it. If we look at things in a more analytical way, we can say that in actual existence society cannot do without philosophers. Even when they are wrong, philosophers are a kind of mirror of the deepest trends which are obscurely at play in the human minds at each epoch of history. Philosophy, taken in itself, is above utility. And for this very reason philosophy is of the utmost necessity for men. It reminds them of the supreme utility of those things which do not deal with means, but with ends. For men do not live only by bread or technological discoveries. They live by values and realities which are above time, and are worth being known for their own sake. The personalistic tradition in our time still provides a particularly beautiful testimony of this understanding of philosophy.

Jacek Poznański: *Philosophy Generated and Driven by Theological Eros*

(Ignatianum University in Cracow, Assistant Professor)

In my presentation, I refer to the reflections of Hans Urs von Balthasar, who argues that every truly great and alive philosophy lives and feeds on a "theological eros" - a passion for the Ultimate, a passionate search for ultimate truth. Recent popes have been tentative in their appreciation of the role of eros. John Paul II pointed out that eros can be understood as an inner force "which 'sways' man towards what is true, good and beautiful" and opens the way towards Christ. Benedict XVI, on the other hand, defined eros as "the ecstasy, the mastery of reason by a 'divine folly' which snatches man from the limitation of his existence". This reflection is worth applying to the development of a version of Christian philosophy. For this kind of theological eros can awaken a love of wisdom, a capacity for intellectual risk-taking, commitment, opens one up to the adventure of the spirit, and as a result also integrates theory (a view of reality)

with the practice of life. Continuing with this approach, I point to its roots in the origins of Christianity, which was conceived as this kind of philosophy, which is at the same time linked to the whole existence of the philosophical human being (*bios philosophicos*). The most creative contribution of believers in Jesus Christ to philosophy over centuries consisted precisely in awakening the theological eros in the philosophical systems that had been in place, which gave these systems the power to create an integrated vision of the whole of reality. This was done both by opening up finite philosophical truths to the theological dimension and by using foundational philosophical concepts and tools in explaining theological truths, whereby these concepts and tools themselves were transformed. This process, however, cannot end if it is indeed an erotic process. In my talk, I will shortly address the question of whether this kind of philosophising can be helpful in the context of secularisation and the naturalistic closing of the framework for human life and religious faith (cf. Charles Taylor). I will also refer to Pope Francis' recently published letter, *Ad theologiam promovendam* (2023), which, in my view, returns to the idea of a theology (or rather theologicity) whose role is not so much to create a system, but to awaken passion for (rooted in reality) spiritual adventure and sapiential reflection.

Petar Tomev Mitrikeski: *Reason vs Faith – Enmity or Consorship*

(University of Zagreb, Assistant Professor)

To produce epistemically justified conclusions (natural) science relies on reason (logic) and observation (controlled experiment in modern terms). Such trust makes the best results when the academy deals with the questions of what (descriptive knowledge) and how (quantitative knowledge). However, upon encountering the question of why (meaning), science usually stays idle – all offered answers necessarily extrapolate the knowledge acquired through answering the how question and, therefore, reduce the observed teleology to arguments from naturalism (that is, teleonomy as Kantian regulatory principal of our non-fully intuitive mind embedded into the space-time). Therefore, to continue with the general endeavor aiming at the why question, the academy needs philosophy and/or theology (i.e. metaphysics). This fact confronts reason to faith since science bears no metaphysical abilities. But, instead of enmity consortship is fully thinkable ...