

SCIENTIFIC LIFE

Contemporary Philosophy – problems, trends and perspectives, 28 August – 02 September, Varna, Bulgaria

Between 28 and 31 August, the international philosophical conference entitled “Contemporary Philosophy – Problems, Trends and Perspectives” took place in the Creative House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Varna (Bulgaria). This congress was organized by the Institute for the Study of Societies and Knowledge (BAS) in collaboration with several foreign partners: the Czech, Slovak and Polish Academies of Sciences, the Romanian Academy, the Universities of Liege (Belgium), Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš (Serbia), as well as of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The International Organizing Committee, chaired by Assoc. Prof. Bogdana Todorova, included scientists from each of the listed institutions.

Contemporary philosophy is called to remind people of their deeper self, of their humanity and finitude and this is the reason why the conference was gathered under the Socratic idea regarding the modesty of knowledge, expressed in Latin: „Quantum scimus gutta est, ignoramus mare”.

The conference was attended by over 40 scientists from 10 European countries. The talks were distributed in six thematic panels: *Contemporary Logical Problems – Solutions and Interpretations*; *Value Conflicts and Radicalism*; *Religion and Politics*; *Contemporary problems of analytic philosophy*; *Contemporary philosophical frameworks of the theory of education*; *Rationality and non-rationality in philosophy and science*. The purpose of each panel was to outline the specific challenges that today’s world poses to each of the major philosophical disciplines – from logic, ontology and philosophy of science, through political philosophy and philosophy of religion, to aesthetics, philosophy of education, and comparative philosophy.

In the papers presented and during the lively discussions following them, the role of the philosophical reflection and argumentation in today’s public debate was treated from various points of view. However, the main perspective of the discussions was constituted by the reality of the world which we live in: a world made small by the globalization but also painfully divided by economic, religious, civilizational and other conflicts. The three working days of the Varna conference clearly showed that in spite of the dynamic changes during the last decades and

despite the leading role of technology in our century, philosophy still has something to say about the topical problems of mankind. It is up to the international philosophical community to address these problems and focus their efforts on giving their specific contribution to solving them.

Among the papers presented, in the first section entitled, *Contemporary Logical Problems – Solutions and Interpretations* and chaired by Assoc. Prof. Kristyan Enchev, having as technical secretary Lubka Ilieva, the first speaker Dr. Vít Punčochář (Czech Academy of Sciences) presented the paper entitled *A Failure of Some Basic Logical Laws*; Assoc. Prof. Doroteya Angelova (ISSK-BAS), the communication *Logical Consequence in Relevant and Connexive Logics and Its Roots in Antiquity*, Prof. Bruno Leclerc (University of Liege, Belgium) spoke about *Giving an account of fictional discourse. Meinongian logics versus modal Logics*, and Corresponding member Prof. Angel Stefanov (ISSK-BAS), presented the paper *Dogmas in Science and Philosophy*. In the second part of the first day which was chaired by Assoc. Prof. Doroteya Angelova with the technical secretary Lubka Ilieva, Prof. Martin Tabakov (ISSK-BAS) presented the paper *A Hitherto Unnoticed Paradox in the Hare-Niemeyer System*, Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Obreshkov (ISSK-BAS), approached the topic *On a normative consequence relation as a tool in discussion about some modal logical systems*, Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Enchev (ISSK-BAS) took under consideration the *Bulgarian Routes of Critical Metaphysics* and Lubomir Sirkov, PhD student (ISSK-BAS) communicated the paper entitled *Reconsidering the Paradox-Fallacy Nexus: on some issues with the Sorites and the Slippery Slope (and Other Fallacies)*. The next part, with the topic *Contemporary philosophical frameworks of the theory of education* was chaired by Prof. Vesselin Petrov and the technical secretary was Diana Petrova. Prof. François Beets (University of Liège, Belgium), the first speaker, addressed the following question: *Is teaching possible? Historical perspectives toward Whitehead's theory of education*. As following, Assoc. Prof. Engelsina Tasseva (ISSK-BAS) addressed the topic *Mathematics education: some philosophical aspects*, Assoc. Prof. Rosen Lutskanov (ISSK-BAS) approached the topic *Learning Space Theory: Introducing Problem Hardness*. The next part was chaired by François Beets and technical secretary was Diana Petrova, including the presentations *Principles of the Metaphysical Basis of Whiteheadian Education*, by Prof. D.Sc Vesselin Petrov (ISSK-BAS), *Why Barney knows* by Assoc. Prof. Marina Bakalova (ISSK-BAS) and *Humanistic Communicative Approach in Modern Education* by Prof Dragan Kolev & Assist. Prof Katarina Držajić (Pan-European University Apeiron, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

During the next days the conference proposed various interesting papers among which we are mentioning: *On Rationality of Legal Decisions*, by Prof. D.Sc Vihren Buzov (St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo,

Bulgaria); *Philosophical Analysis of Rationality of Economic and Political Decisions*, by Pepa Petkova, PhD student (University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria); *The Genesis of the Historiographical Notion of 'Second Scholasticism': The Dark Past of an Esteemed Concept*, by Assoc. Prof. Marco Forlivesi (Università degli Studi di Chieti-Pescara, Italy); *Inadvertent Authorial Creation Revisited*, by Dr. Zsófia Zvolenszky (Institute of Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Sciences); *Orthodoxy and politics: public, political and electoral stands*, by Assoc. Prof. Henrieta Serban (The Institute of Political Science and International Relations, "Ion I.C. Brătianu", Romanian Academy, Correspondent Member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists); *Mahdism According to Ibn Haldun as a Means of Recuperating Power in the Context of Uncertainties and Domination in the Islamic Geography*, by Prof. Mehmed Dalkilic (University of Istanbul, Turkey); *Religious and Political determinants of war in Syria*, by Prof. Slobodan Neshkovic (SKAIN Academy, University Business Academy, Novi Sad); *Syria – the battle for the Paradise* by Assoc. Prof. Bogdana Todorova (ISSK-BAS); *The Radicalization of Religious Movements via Repertoire Identities*, by Prof. Ismail Demirzeen (University of Istanbul, Turkey); *The rediscovery of religious identity in post-communist Romania*, by Lorena-Valeria Stuparu, Scientific Researcher III (The Institute of Political Science and International Relations, "Ion I.C. Brătianu", Romanian Academy); *The Eastern European political values: A perspective on their identity*, by Gabriela Tănăsescu, (The Institute of Political Science and International Relations, "Ion I.C. Brătianu", Romanian Academy); *Radical Short-Circuits: Postmodern Theology / Radical Orthodoxy Values*, by Viorella Manolache, Scientific Researcher III (The Institute of Political Science and International Relations, "Ion I.C. Brătianu", Romanian Academy); *Pluralism of Values*, by Academician Alexandru Boboc (Romanian Academy); *Between the Secular and the Post-secular: The shadow of the Dwarf (Leszek Kolakowski)*, by Prof. Nina Dimitrova (ISSK-BAS); *Political and Artistic Radicalism in the 20th century: A Situationist Solution for an International Value Conflict*, by Oana Serban, PhDc (University of Bucharest, Romania); *Contemporary art and the conflict of Aesthetic values (Beauty /vs/ Daily experience)*, by Prof. Mihaela Pop (University of Bucharest, Romania); *Aesthetics of Silence in a World of Noise*, by Assist. Prof. Sylvia Borrisova (ISSK-BAS); *Understanding Paradoxes in Modern Philosophy of Psychiatry – On the Example of Factitious Disorder (F68.1)* by Dr. Mira Marcinow (Polish Academy of Sciences) and Dr. Krystyna Bielecka (Polish Academy of Sciences) on a topic regarding philosophy of psychiatry.

The lesson of the conference was the educative role and value of contemporary philosophy for these times as Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, the Romanian philosopher and psychologist enounced at the beginning of the 20th century.

Education and self-education is the key to a life well lived a life of quality that asks from the human beings to overcome themselves and to require the best first and foremost from oneself, as Epictetus said it, almost a couple of millenia ago: “How long are you going to wait before you demand the best for yourself and in no instance bypass the discriminations of reason? You have been given the principles that you ought to endorse, and you have endorsed them. What kind of teacher, then, are you still waiting for in order to refer your self-improvement to him? You are no longer a boy, but a full-grown man. If you are careless and lazy now and keep putting things off and always deferring the day after which you will attend to yourself, you will not notice that you are making no progress, but you will live and die as someone quite ordinary. From now on, then, resolve to live as a grown-up who is making progress, and make whatever you think best a law that you never set aside. And whenever you encounter anything that is difficult or pleasurable, or highly or lowly regarded, remember that the contest is now: you are at the Olympic Games, you cannot wait any longer, and that your progress is wrecked or preserved by a single day and a single event. That is how Socrates fulfilled himself by attending to nothing except reason in everything he encountered. And you, although you are not yet a Socrates, should live as someone who at least wants to be a Socrates”.

*Bogdana Todorova
Henrieta Anișoara Șerban*

The 11th International Conference Whitehead, 25-28 July 2017, Azores University of Ponta Delgada (Azores Islands)

Azores University of Ponta Delgada (Azores Islands) has organized during the time interval 25-28 July 2017, the works of the 11th *International Conference Whitehead*.

This year, the theme of the conference was „*Nature in Process – Novel Approaches to Sciences and Metaphysics*”, and the 29 sections of the International Conference included the conferences presented by 158 researchers, experts and philosophers from different countries of the world.

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) was a British mathematician, a logician and a philosopher, who was best known for his activity in mathematical logics and the philosophy of science. He was also, in collaboration with Bertrand Russell, the co-author of the journal *Principia Mathematica*, in three volumes

(1910, 1912 and 1913). Later on, he was the first to approach metaphysics as a philosophy of the process.

Whitehead's work focuses on four main directions*: mathematics and logics, the philosophy of science, the philosophy of education and metaphysics. Among his works we should mention the following ones: *Process and reality* (1929), *The concept of nature* (1920), *Science and modern world* (1925), *The objectives of education and other essays* (1929), *An enquiry concerning the principles of natural knowledge* (1919), *The principle of relativity with applications to physical science* (1922), *Religion in the making* (1926), *Nature and life* (1934), *Symbolism, its meaning and effect* (1927), *The function of reason* (1929), *Modes of thought* (1938), *Essays in science and philosophy* (1947).

The main ideas structuring the conception of Whitehead may be identified as following:

- All the mathematical truths can be translated in logical truths, in other words, the vocabulary of mathematics constitutes a subsection of the vocabulary of logics;
- All the objects should be understood as domains that have, as well temporal and spatial extensions;
- Each object in the real life can be understood as a series of events, similarly constructed;
- Whether philosophy is successful, it is called to explain the relation among our objective, scientific and logical discourses and the present world, the world of the subjective experience;
- "One should avoid the erroneous divide"; we should avoid the division of the world in categories separated after criteria such as mind and matter or nature;
- All experience is a part of nature; "We may both not choose and choose. For us, the red sunset sunshine should be as much a part of nature as the molecules and electric waves through which scientists would explain the phenomenon";
- Whitehead's philosophy of education emphasizes the idea that a good life is best thought of as an educated and civilized life;
- „The mind of the student is a growing organism...is not a box to be ruthlessly wrapped up in extra-terrestrial ideas"...for the purpose of education is to stimulate and orient the development of each student;
- Any appropriate education should include a *literary component* (the study of language, the connexion between human thought and writing), a

* Nevertheless, his works include also studies of Phenomenology, Theology, Mind Philosophy, German Idealism, Modern Philosophy, Biology, Analytical Philosophy, Law and economy, Pragmatism, Neo-Platonism.

scientific component (the practice of the observation of natural phenomena), and a *technical component* („the art of using knowledge”);

- Education should encourage the “marriage” of thought with action („*No scientist wants solely to know. She acquires pieces of knowledge in order to quench the thirst for discovery*”);
- „*The insistence in the Platonic culture on the disinterested intellectual appreciation is a psychological error*”;
- *The “true occasion”* (a metaphysical notion introduced by Whitehead), or the real entity, is not a durable substance, but a process of becoming; “*the true final things on which the world is built are drops of experience, complex and interdependent*”;
- The recognition of the fact that the world is rather organic than materialist is essential for anyone who wants to develop a complete description of nature;
- Religion is preoccupied with permanence, on the background of change and this permanence could be found in the order present in nature (which Whitehead calls sometimes “*the primordial nature of God*”);
- The accent placed by Whitehead on change determined several theologians to conclude that rather than conceiving God as an inheritor of tradition, we should appreciate God as influenced as much by the world, as the world is influenced by God.

From Romania, university Professor Doctor Honoris Causa **Ion Craiovan** (from The Institute for Juridical Research „*Acad. Andrei Rădulescu*”) and university Professor **Mihai Bădescu** (from the Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, full member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, the Section of Philosophy, Psychology and Theology) took part in this scientific event.

Ion Craiovan presented the communication entitled *On Law’s Concept in Process within Juridical Reality*. The main ideas of this interesting communication were the following:

- juridical reality is a component of complex processes (natural, social, cosmic); according to the space, historical time, and context, these realities fall under the incidence of juridical norms;
- within the general field of knowledge (Heraclites, Whitehead, David Böhm, Basarab Nicolescu and others) brought to the fore a series of arguments for the understanding of the world as an universal process through which things happen (“*holomovement*”);
- from human perspective, certain components are uncontrollable; from this point of view, juridical reality has a “*variable geometry*”;
- within the field of knowledge, the conceptual history of law reveals numerous tentative to capture what is law and what is juridical reality, as

the ones found in the works of Celsius, Ulpian, Savigny, Puchta, Kelsen etc.;

- from the ever more complex concepts the thinkers arrived at paradigms – exemplary modes of thought –, and to expressions of maturity, of a scientific discipline guiding a social practice (Thomas Kuhn);
- juridical knowledge also admits numerous paradigms: normative, conceptual, moral, behavioural, communicational etc.;
- gradually, the thinkers came to a static and sometimes dogmatic understanding of law and juridical reality, and then overcame that vision through the above-mentioned view of juridical reality as process;
- from this perspective, law itself is understood dynamically, as a juridical system, found in a permanent becoming, as a specific fusion of processes, aiming at establishing order, power, social constraint, normativity, values – especially, such values as truth, freedom, justice – in a given historical time and society.

Mihai Bădescu presented the communication entitled *Whithead's ideas within some Romanian juridical thinkers*.

The author has underlined the fact that there were several Romanian thinkers, jurists and philosophers, who, through their works, among which the most relevant he considered to be those dedicated to law philosophy, have emphasized a series of common elements and some ideas were even overlapping with the thought of the great thinker who was Alfred North Whitehead.

Among these Romanian thinkers, two were of paramount importance:

Eugeniu Speranția and **Mircea Djuvara**.

The philosophical works of **Eugeniu Speranția** is characterised by a *powerful biological, social and metaphysical dimension*.

The most important ideas of the philosophical thought of Speranția, are to be identified in the following aspects:

- neither of the fundamental philosophical problems can be resolved unless the thinker considers both **life**, as an originary principle of existence, and **social reality** (E. Speranția, *Locul vieții psihice în construcțiunea unei biologii generale [The place of the psychical life in the construction of a general biology]*, in „Revista de Filosofie”, 1934, p. 149);
- whatever seems to stay on the path of constituting one science to approach as well the organic facts and the psychical aspects is *individuality* or the *material discontinuity of the organic beings*, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *fluid continuity of the states of the soul*;
- the characteristic traits for any living being are the *unity and the synthesised activity of the living being*, by which this being assimilates amorphous and disparate elements, thus, presenting herself as a *permanent conservative and expansive process of synthesis and*; the same

characteristics are encountered as well when studying the phenomenon called “conscience”, the tendency to preserve itself as a process of synthesis, under analogous forms: expansion conquering, construction;

- the logical laws are laws which the thinking subject is imposing herself or himself and which she or he searches for and attempts with determination to obey; these laws have an imperative character; they may be trespassed, but when this happens, the thinking subject feels the need for reprimand and reprobation, or, at least, for an apology, in order to mend things, and, or, bring a reparation of one nature or another;
- whether life represents the total of the acts of thought and movement, then, the world is but the virtual content and aspect of life; a reality that cannot be conveyed otherwise than for and by a living being (E. Speranția, *Legile și formele gândirii ca proiecțiuni ale proprietăților vieții [Laws and forms of thought as projections of the properties of life]* in „Revista de Filosofie”, 1934, p. 341).

In what concerns the philosopher **Mircea Djuvara**, we are accepting the affirmation according to which “no one until Mircea Djuvara has brought the juridical phenomenon under the eyes of the philosophers and no one has offered for the practitioner jurists a comparatively wider horizon, a large horizon which he has considered necessary: ‘law philosophy contains one of the elements which are indispensable for a genuine culture’” (B. B. Berceanu, *Universul juristului Mircea Djuvara [The universe of the jurist Mircea Djuvara]*, Ed. Academiei Române, București, 1995, p. 34 sqq).

In a synthesis:

- the thought of Mircea Djuvara could be characterised as dialectic idealism; we are not talking here about a subjective idealism, but, obviously, about an idealism with an experiential epistemological route that claims the importance of experience, related to a conception where matter and spirit mingle, forming merely two aspects of the experience, with the deontological result of reducing the investigation to objective relations;
- Mircea Djuvara is a rigorous investigator of relations; he considered that “it is dangerous to believe that our life could function as well without categories”;
- There is no human conscience and no human consciousness without a personal philosophy, a personal pragmatic attitude in front of life, an attitude which we consider inherent for each (M. Djuvara, *Câteva reflecțiuni asupra laturii filosofice a sufletului reginei Elisabeta [A few reflections on the philosophical nature of the soul of Queen Elisabeta]*, in „Convorbiri literare”, 50, 1916, p. 361);
- Reason detached from subjectivity, predominates though in every individual; law itself – as an expression of the social relations – has a

character which is predominantly rational; the attitude in front of life determines in any human conscience a certain philosophical conscience, so that the attitude in front of society determines a certain juridical conscience (M. Djuvara, *Dialectica creatoare a cunoașterii juridice [The creative dialectics of the juridical knowledge]*, lectures, 1935/1936).

Among the **fundamental dimensions of the conception of Mircea Djuvara** in the philosophy of law, we emphasize here:

- **The social character of law:** “*Law is applied directly and exclusively solely to the social facts*”; any other realities – psychical, biologic, physical etc. – are not of interest for law, unless mediated by social facts;
- **The idea of justice and juridical knowledge:** In what concerns the knowledge of the external realities and, especially, of the physical realities, the human knowledge starts from **intuitions**, passing to **concepts** and arrives at ideas. Thus, „*our entire knowledge starts with the senses, then passes to **understanding** and ends with **reason**, above which there is nothing within us capable to elaborate the matter of intuition and to bring it to the higher unity of thinking*” (M. Djuvara – *Contribution to the theory of juridical knowledge. The spirit of Kantian philosophy and juridical knowledge*, Tipografia Ziarului „Universul” – Brezoianu 23–25, Bucharest, 1942, pp. 25-66);
- **The objectivity of the juridical knowledge:**
 - „*the dialectics of active knowledge shows us that the rational objects of the consciousness are but something foreign and different from the objective conscience itself, as mere constructions realized through a dialectic (not empirical, but unfolding in time) progress of reason*” (M. Djuvara – *Contribution...*, p. 57);
 - *The hierarchy of sciences* shows that the natural realities, starting with the social ones, suffer essential transformations in order to yield, first, “the ethics”, the moral dimension and the the juridical dimension. „*Justice, similarly to the objects of natural sciences, is issued lively from the activity of objective knowledge itself*” (M. Djuvara – *Contribuție...[Contribution...]*, p. 58);
 - *juridical experience* cannot have only a social character, or solely the character of some other science of nature „*although it presupposes and closes in itself, transforming them, the experimental social data and, by this, the data of the other sciences without which a social conscience cannot exist*” (M. Djuvara, *Contribution ...*, p. 60);
- **The relation between law and morals** is based – according to the Romanian philosopher of law Mircea Djuvara – on several fundamental ideas:

- any judgment of the rational value of an activity may be of moral order or of a juridical order, accordingly to the nature of the activity taken into consideration as object of judgment;
- law has as purpose morality; in its entirety, law, is nothing else than a mode of setting morality in action;
- law is subordinated to morals in the widest sense, so that the juridical relation is founded not as much on the blind instinct of preservation present in each of us, as rather on the coordination and harmonization of the freedom of moral action of each of us (cf. M. Djuvara, *The General Theory of Law*, 1930, p. 828).

The works of the Conference ended with the elaboration of a Minute, establishing, among other things, the coordinates of the next scientific meeting.

Mihai Bădescu
Translation by Henrieta Anișoara Șerban and Elena Lazăr