



**The Graduate School for Social Research  
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology  
Polish Academy of Sciences**

**A conference inaugurating the new academic year**

# **The Return of Philosophy of Hegel. History, Universality and the dimensions of Weakness**

**October 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>, 2020**



A conference inaugurating the new academic year

**The Return of Philosophy of Hegel.  
History, Universality and the dimensions of Weakness**

October 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Staszic Palace, Sala Lustrzana, Warsaw (October 14<sup>th</sup>)

Zoom online (October 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>)

organized by the Graduate Graduate School for Social Research, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Science, and the Goethe-Institut Warsaw, Poland.

We would like to kindly invite you to the conference:

**The Conference's Organizing Committee:**

dr Christoph Bartmann (Director of the Goethe-Institut, Warsaw); prof. Andrzej Leder (Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw); dr Ewa Majewska (Gender Studies UW).

**The Keynote Speakers:**

- Prof. Achille Mbembe, Wits University, Johannesburg, RSA
- Prof. Oxana Timofeeva, St. Petersburg, Russia.

**The Conference will be held online:** via Zoom meetings and streamed, for passwords and further information, write to: [publicrelations@ifispan.edu.pl](mailto:publicrelations@ifispan.edu.pl).

## A brief description of the Conference:

Hegel's thought and heritage have usually been understood as an attempt to build a system, a theory, but also a practice of philosophy at once developing and proving the intellectual ability to conceptualize the historical process and explaining its course, not as its mere description, but as a conceptual framework of notions. It was thus condemned as totalitarian and accused of failure in captivating the freedom and contingency supposedly constitutive for human life and history. The turn of XX and XXI centuries was dominated by a deep critique of 'grand narratives', major historiographic projects and theories, connected with this Hegelian inspiration. Paradoxically, the idea of 'end of history' – often attributed to Hegel – was also announced in this postmodern time of doubt and deconstruction.

However, at the beginning of the XXI century, the macro-history reappeared again, and in its global dimension. In various streams of theory the need for a systematic and indeed systemic analysis is emphasized, and the demands to rethink reason, history and dialectics – abound. Hegelian approach, with its multidimensional, general, contextual and dynamic perspective on the historical process is

again in the center of researchers' attention. Its contemporary rearticulations – in the context of the subject (see the work of Catherine Malabou, Judith Butler and 'Slovenian School'); colonial history (see: Achille Mbembe and Susan Buck-Morss), capitalism (see the work of Slavoj Žižek) and society (all of the above mentioned and Marek Siemek) are abounding, both as continuation and renegotiation of the Hegelian paradigm.

The main readings of Hegel's philosophy until now followed the heroic perception of history, currently undermined by feminist, psychoanalytical, postcolonial and queer scholarship, which influences the main philosophical currents in their need to follow the everyday, non-heroic experience, including that of weakness, failure and persistence. We would also like to invite the less heroic reading of the Hegelian theory, one which perceives the weak and enslaved, the oppressed and the unhappy as those, whose persistence, resistance and even willfulness constitute effective steps towards emancipation. We would like to embrace these important transitions in our revisiting. Nevertheless we assume, that if there exists an ability to build philosophy, sociology, cultural theory or psychology, not to speak of far more specific theories, such as that of the *habitus*, performativity, language or gender, to only give some examples, it is because of the audacity, and perhaps also failures and insufficiencies of Hegel's theoretical effort.

Understanding the perplexity of Hegel's own contradictions and embracing the vital interest in theories of history, universality, political ecology, decolonization and social justice, just to name a few key problems highlighted in contemporary philosophy and social theory, we would like to discuss Hegel with a clear intention of critical historical practice, which combines the particular needs and context with an interest in the past as effort to build the future. In the context of the return of philosophy of history the need to revisit universality seems crucial. The concept of 'common future' seems to be unavailable without a universalist claim. But also in other theoretical fields – be it the postcolonial studies or feminism, where the limitations of solely particular perspective have been criticized as leaning towards neoliberal atomization; legal and heritage studies, such claim to universality seems central today. Egalitarian practice and critical theory, which currently struggle in the impasse between the perfect adjustment to the European *status quo* of late modern capitalism and the minoritarian disagreement, perhaps need to at least confront the Hegelian notions once again. Such a search for universality needs to embrace the dialectics of experience, without the conformist focus on the logic of (neoliberal) success.

If there is one thing we might all have in common in our intention to revisit Hegel's thought and heritage on this round anniversary of his 250 birthday, it is the need for the audacity of his theoretical work, its much needed public and critical dimension, its courage to undermine or break the safe patterns of intellectual practice. This is why we would like to invite very different thinkers and various, sometimes even contradicting styles of approaching Hegel and the contemporary. Please, join us to think and discuss Hegel's philosophy and its impacts on today's theory, society and understanding of history.

*Please, feel invited to contribute to our post-conference publication – Praktyka Teoretyczna Journal invites articles in English and in Polish: <https://www.praktykateoretyczna.pl/call-for-papers/return-hegel-history-dialectics-and-weak/>*

*Deadline for the abstracts: 30 October 2020.*

A conference inaugurating the new academic year  
**The Return of Philosophy of Hegel.**  
**History, Universality and the dimensions of Weakness**  
 October 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Staszic Palace, Sala Lustrzana, Warsaw/ Zoom

PROGRAMME	
<b>Wednesday, October 14h, 2020</b>	
14.00–15:00 Registration and Coffee	
15.00–15.10	Musical prolog: Mateusz Rettner (piano), F. Schubert - Impromptu f-moll, D. 935 nr 1
15:10	Opening of the GSSR Inauguration by the Director of the GSSR: Professor Michał Federowicz
15:15	Welcome by IFIS Director Professor Andrzej Rychard
<b>Award ceremony: doctoral and habilitation diplomas</b> Chairman of the IFIS PAN Scientific Council Professor Józef Niżnik	
<b>The Return of Philosophy of Hegel.</b> <b>History, Universality and the dimensions of Weakness</b>	
16:00	Opening conference: prof. Andrzej Leder and dr. Christoph Bartmann (director of the Goethe-Institut in Warsaw)
16:10	Introduction of the inauguration lecture speaker: dr. Ewa Majewska
16:15	<b>Inauguration lecture by prof. Achille Mbembe</b> (University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg): <i>Hegel, Critique of Terror and the Memory of Humanity</i>
Discussion	

<b>Day 2. Thursday, 15 October 2020. Online</b>	
<b>PANEL 1. The Dialectics of the Weak</b>	
Moderation: Bartosz Wójcik (INP PAN, Warsaw)	
10.00–12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dr. Ewa Majewska (Gender Studies, University of Warsaw): <i>Slave, Antigone and the Housewife. Hegel's Dialectics of the Weak</i></li> <li>■ Dr. Joanna Bednarek (Gender Studies, University of Warsaw): <i>Dialectics, becoming-animal and abolitionism</i></li> </ul>
12.00–12.30	Short Break
<b>PANEL 2: The Return of the Philosophy of History</b>	
Moderation: dr Mikołaj Ratajczak (IFiS PAN)	
12.30 – 14.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prof. Andrzej Leder (IFiS PAN, Warszawa): <i>Summa contra Hegel</i></li> <li>■ Prof. Tomasz Kitliński (UMCS, Lublin): <i>Summa contra Hegel</i></li> <li>■ Dr. Joe Grim Feinberg (Czech Academy of Sciences, Praha): <i>The Dialectics of the Outside of History</i></li> </ul>
14.30–15.00	Short Break
<b>Dialectics and the Rabble. Hegel and Siemek revisited. Followed by a Discussion.</b>	
Moderation: dr Ewa Majewska	
15.00–16.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bartosz Wójcik (INP PAN, Warsaw) and Dr. Maciej Sosnowski (IFiS PAN): <i>Reconciliation with sublation. Marek Siemek's Hegel revisited</i></li> </ul>
<b>Day 3. Friday, 16 October 2020. Online</b>	
<b>Keynote Lecture</b>	
10.00–11.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Keynote Lecture by prof. Oxana Timofeeva</b>, introduced by dr Ewa Majewska, followed by a Q&amp;A session: <i>The Spirit of Today: Phenomenology Revised and Resubmitted</i></li> </ul>
11.30–12.00	Short Break
<b>PANEL 3: Hegel and Modernity</b>	
Moderation: prof. Andrzej Leder (IFiS PAN)	

12.00–13.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ prof. Agata Bielik-Robson (University of Nottingham/ IFiS PAN): <i>A Harnessed Lightning: Hegel and Derrida on the Apocalypse</i></li> <li>■ prof. Andrzej Nowak (UAM, Poznań): <i>Hegel on Rehab. 12 Steps Program for Modernity</i></li> </ul>
13.30–14.30	Long Break
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PANEL 4. Hegel and Contemporary Philosophy</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Moderation: Bartosz Wójcik (INP PAN, Warsaw)</p>	
14.30–16.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ dr Ankica Čakardic (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia): <i>Notes on Hegel's critique of political economy</i></li> <li>■ dr Mikołaj Ratajczak (IFiS PAN): <i>Negativity and Crisis – dialectics and its critique in contemporary Italian political philosophy</i></li> </ul>
16.30–17.00	Short Break
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PANEL 5. Hegel and the notion of Universality</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Moderation: dr Mikołaj Ratajczak (IFiS PAN)</p>	
17.00–18.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ dr Marcin Pańków (University of Białystok, Poland): <i>Two metaphysics of freedom. Kant and Hegel on violence and law in the era of the fall of liberal democracy</i></li> <li>■ dr Marta Olesik (ISP PAN, Warszawa): <i>Universal Element: Hegel, Frank Bowling and material world of ideal structures</i></li> </ul>

## Award ceremony: doctoral and habilitation diplomas

### Doktoraty:

#### ■ Michał Krzysztof Montowski

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Trauma społeczna w długim doświadczeniu historycznym. Przypadek rabacji chłopskiej 1846*. Promotor: prof. dr hab. Zbigniew Mikołejko. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Andrzej Mencwel, prof. dr hab. Wojciech Burszta, dr hab. Rafał Smoczyński. Nadanie stopnia naukowego doktora nauk humanistycznych w dyscyplinie filozofia: 18.12.2019.

#### ■ Anastas Vangeli

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Symbolic Power and Principle-Diffusion through China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Sociological Analysis*. Promotor: prof. dr hab. Kazimierz M. Słomczyński. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Bogdan Góralczyk, dr hab. Dominik Mierzejewski. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 29.01.2020.

#### ■ Nika Palaguta

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Political Representation, Populism and Inequality in Ukraine, 2002-2017*. Promotor: dr hab. Joshua Dubrow. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Renata Siemieńska-Żochowska, dr hab. Mikołaj Cześniak. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 29.01.2020.

#### ■ Andrzej Piotr Grzybowski

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Zoon politikon. Polityczne wytwarzanie zwierzęcości*. Promotor: prof. dr hab. Szymon Wróbel. Recenzenci: dr hab. Paweł Pieniążek, dr hab. Michał Herer. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk humanistycznych w dyscyplinie filozofia: 26.02.2020 r.

#### ■ Kinga Zawadzka

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Styl życia i system wartości nowej polskiej inteligencji*. Promotor: prof. dr hab. Henryk Domański. Recenzenci: dr hab. Paweł Śpiewak, prof. dr hab. Tomasz Szlendak. Nadanie stopnia naukowego w dziedzinie nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 29.04.2020.

#### ■ Olga Lavrinenko

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Towards Integrated Models of Collective Action Participation: Exploration of Contextual and Socio-Psychological Predictors of Collective Action Participation in Post-Communist Context*. Promotor: dr hab. Dariusz Gawin. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab.



Natalia Garner, dr hab. Joshua Dubrow. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 29.04.2020.

■ **Marta Szczepanik**

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *„Kultury nieoliberalne” w epoce super-różnorodności*. Odpowiedzi na zderzenia systemów normatywnych w europejskich społeczeństwach wielokulturowych. Promotor: dr hab. Urszula Jarecka. Recenzenci: dr hab. Grzegorz Pyszczek, prof. dr hab. Irena Rzeplińska. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 29.04.2020 r.

■ **Weronika Grzebalska**

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Citizen-Soldiers in a Post-Security State: Militarism, Memory Politics, and Masculinity in 21st Century Poland*. Promotor: prof. Andrea Pető. Recenzenci: dr hab. Joanna Wawrzyniak, prof. Cas Mudde. Nadanie stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 27.05.2020 r.

■ **Inna Bell**

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Survival Across Regime Changes in Central and Eastern Europe: Case Studies of Czech Civil Society Organizations, 1918-2018*. Promotor: dr hab. Joshua Dubrow. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Antoni Z. Kamiński, dr hab. Jarosław Kiliński. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 27.05.2020.

■ **Renata Putkowska-Smoter**

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Wycinka drzew w Warszawie Konflikt – środowisko – ruch społeczny*. Promotor: prof. dr hab. Bohdan Jałowiecki. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Iwona Sagan, dr hab. Paweł Starosta. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 24.06.2020.

■ **Olha Zelinska**

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Contentious Politics of Local Maidans across Ukraine: Emergence, Institutional Contexts, and Aims of a Nationwide Social Movement*. Promotor: prof. dr hab. Andrzej Rychard. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Juliusz Gardawski, dr hab. Igor Lyubashenko. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 24.05.2020.

■ **Kateryna Gryniuk**

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *The Mechanisms of Bridging the Skills Gap in Post-Communist Countries. Case study of Ukraine, Poland, and Estonia*. Promotor: dr hab. Michał Federowicz. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Juliusz Gardawski, prof. dr hab. Krzysztof Jasiński. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 24.06.2020.



#### ■ Karina Diłanian-Pinkowicz

Na podstawie przyjętej obrony rozprawy doktorskiej pt. *Recovering the Silenced Past: The Post-1960s Revival of Memory of the Armenian Genocide in the Armenian Diaspora in the United States*. Promotor: dr hab. Sławomir Kaprański. Recenzenci: dr hab. Małgorzata Głowacka-Grajper, dr hab. Jacek Nowak. Nadanie stopnia doktora nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki socjologiczne: 30.09.2020.

## Habilitacje

#### ■ Marcina Urbaniak

Biologiczne wymiary rozumienia: od ewolucji do hermeneutyki ludzkiego myślenia. Recenzenci: prof. dr hab. Szymon Wróbel, prof. dr hab. Marek Maciejczak, dr hab. Zbigniew Wróblewski. Nadanie stopnia naukowego doktora habilitowanego w dziedzinie nauk humanistycznych w dyscyplinie filozofia: 29.01.2020 r.

#### ■ Marcin Koszowy

Na podstawie monografii pt. *Autorytet w argumentacji i w dialogu. Teorie – modele – aplikacje*. Recenzenci: dr hab. Joanna Golińska-Pilarek, dr hab. Janusz Maciaszek, prof. dr hab. Jacek Malinowski. Data nadania stopnia naukowego doktora habilitowanego w dziedzinie nauk humanistycznych w dyscyplinie filozofia: 30 września 2020 r.

## ABSTRACTS

### Keynotes:

- Prof. Achille Mbembe, University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.

#### **Hegel, Critique of Terror and the Memory of Humanity**

I will begin with some historical examples of the racialized governmentality, which will lead to a new reading of some important passages, which Hegel dedicated to the concept of power, or – more precisely – the “power game” in the Phenomenology of Spirit. We will focus specifically on the connections between this concept of power and the notions of “master and slave”, as well as on Hegel's more general discussion of serfdom and domination. The discussion of the Life and Death struggle will give us the base for the critique of Hegel's concept of terror and the possibility of (its) auto-abolition.

- Prof. Oxana Timofeeva, European University, Petersburg, Russia.

#### **The Spirit of Today: Phenomenology Revised and Resubmitted**

The talk engages with Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit as read by a contemporary reader – critical, feminist, or posthumanist in a broad sense of going beyond anthropocentric perspective. One would expect a series of critical statements generally applicable to all classical philosophy, and especially things like Phenomenology that, through the XX century, was revealed as a great totalizing machine seemingly incompatible with contemporary ways of perception and articulation. However, I will do something different. Taking into consideration the sum of these critical approaches and distrusts, I will try to apply another method of reading – not a critical one, but rather a naïve reading, that, through shifting the contexts, raise the main characters of Phenomenology, i.e. various form of consciousness, before the new historical challenges. Such a naïve, but also dialectical reading will both betray Hegel's own thought but remain faithful to it, making its crucial elements pass through the rigid filters of contemporaneity. I will try to show, what seems alive from this revolutionary work, and what can be the old names for the new things.

### Presentations:

- dr. Joanna Bednarek, Gender Studies, University of Warsaw.

#### **Dialectics, becoming-animal and abolitionism**

Nature, according to Hegel, is at the same time truly external to the idea and (as such) is a moment in the movement of spirit becoming itself. It may seem that to grant nature a true independence would force us to adopt naturalism or pre-Kantian materialism. On the other hand, if we accept it, we will be forced to accept anthropocentrism as the default stand of both philosophy and politics – and with it, idealism, consisting in Hegel's philosophy not in granting primacy to one of the two substances, spirit

rather than matter, but in directing the movement of the concept towards the pre-established return and completion. This solution was so powerful that many attempts to break with it (Kierkegaard, Adorno) took the form of flight into subjectivity or negativity, which resulted in versions of monotheist theology much more ascetic than the Hegelian one. What is more, those, who developed them did not question the default horizon of the social/historical/human.

Going back to pre-Kantian ontology without abandoning the transcendental level of analysis – a movement undertaken by Deleuze – enables both bestowing upon nature real externality and (after Marx and Benjamin) reversing the direction of dialectical movement, transforming it into a mechanism of opening to the inexhaustible outside, not merely of confirmation. Thus, the concept does not return to itself, but creates new forms by coming in contact with powers of chaos – which is a process without an end.

The case of becoming-animal demonstrates political implications of this ontological choice. The human is both the starting point and the subject of this process, not necessarily because Deleuze and Guattari do not care about real non-human animals, but because, as Patricia MacCormack points out in *The Ahuman Manifesto*, anthropocentrism is a fact that determines current power structures. Becoming-animal can thus be understood as a way of putting an end to the human, an enterprise compatible with abolitionist postulates. Its realization may be not the end of history (which is rather impossible), but the end of Man – thus offering space for other forms of life.

- Prof. Agata Bielik-Robson, University of Nottingham, UK and Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland.

### **A Harnessed Lightning: Hegel and Derrida on the Apocalypse**

In my presentation I want to focus on the philosophical sublation of the eschatological motif of the apocalypse – the redemptive/ annihilating ‘end of the world’ – which plays significant role in Hegel’s philosophy of history, particularly in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In Hegel, the apocalyptic *Furie der Zerstörung*, pressing towards the end of all things (and to be witnessed in its full terrifying glory during the French Revolution), becomes an engine of the dialectical transformation of the worldly reality: while it undergoes a philosophical sublation, it gets tamed and disciplined to serve the process of historical work as a ‘delayed destruction.’

The Hegelian idea of the work is thus a compromise between the passive affirmation of the worldly status quo and the violent negation of the world as such, which leads to the apocalyptic annihilation of all being. I would also like to show that this is also a mechanism of the Derridean deconstruction which, *prima facie* anti-Hegelian, continues Hegel’s strategy of ‘harnessing the lightning’ and thus utilizing the ‘tremendous power of the negative.’ His notion of the ‘apocalypse without apocalypse,’ which appears in the essay “On the Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy,” chimes perfectly well with Hegel’s dialectical neutralization of the energy of the negative, which now can be directed not towards the end/ destruction of the world but towards its gradual historical working-through. Both, Hegel and Derrida, agree that without the apocalyptic genre, there would be no concept of history: no sense of a grand narrative which heads towards a grand finale. But they also insist on

modifying it in a philosophical manner, through either dialectics or deconstruction: while the former applies the forces of destruction to change the given shape of the world, the latter criticizes the status quo from the perspective of the 'end without end,' i.e. the always deferred 'standpoint of redemption.

- Dr Ankica Čakardić, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

### **Notes on Hegel's critique of political economy**

In his earliest writings on religion, politics and economics Hegel expresses his concern for one important topic which was to play a vital role in his later works: the phenomenon of property. While describing his attitude towards the debilitating effects of self-interest and private property in Early Theological Writings Hegel notes: "The fate of property has become too powerful for us to tolerate reflections on it, to find its abolition thinkable." From the very beginning of his social philosophy, Hegel demonstrated time and again his interest in the questions of political economy, especially the relationship between sphere of production, on the one hand, and political sphere, on the other. Hegel's reference to political economy is due to his reading of Locke and his understanding of the Lockean concept of property as the embodiment of the personality of the labourer, as we shall demonstrate by referring to several vitally important sections of the Philosophy of Right. As we shall see, one of the topics analysed in the Philosophy of Right is the antagonism of wealth and poverty in modern society where Hegel, long before Marx, emphasises the problem of transition from feudalism to capitalism and dehumanizing effects of industrialisation. We shall conclude this presentation by demonstrating Hegel's effort in pointing out that extreme and increasing poverty is not accidental phenomena, but is endemic to modern commodity-producing society. By doing so, we will have to go back to Hegel's British sources that he had studied – the political economy of Ferguson, Steuart and Adam Smith, but also English newspapers and journals which he regularly read.

- Dr Joseph Grim Feinberg, Czech Academy of Sciences, Praha, Czech Republic.

### **The Dialectics of the Outside of History**

In my presentation I develop a notion of dialectics that mediates between "grand narratives" and "small narratives," reconceptualizing the role of the protagonist of historical-dialectical movement. Whereas dialectics have sometimes been understood as a grand historical epic that takes its hero to be a singular and seemingly self-affirming subject (whether this hero is Spirit, the working class, or— as for Fukuyama—liberal democracy), I will explore aspects of dialectics that emphasize the contingent positionality of dialectical subjects and the way dialectical subjects not only negate what they confront, but also negate themselves. After looking at Susan Buck-Morss's rereading of the Master-Slave Dialectic, I will reflect on how the position of the "slave" suggests a need to revise the Kojévian interpretation of the confrontation of master and slave as a kernel of grand history unfolding. I will, then, look back to the young Marx's attempt to revise the Hegelian dialectic by introducing the notion of the proletariat. I argue that Marx made his crucial contribution not by simply following Feuerbach in substituting Hegel's idealism with materialism and Hegel's Spirit with humanity, but by placing at

the center of dialectics a specific part of humanity: that part of humanity that, in a given historical configuration, is excluded from privileges and by this fact can lay claim to the project of universal emancipation. As Marx showed in 1844, it is historically contingent what social entity or entities may occupy this position at each moment. This position, which Marx called “the proletariat,” remains open to shifting forms of protagonists that confront their exclusion from established schemes of history. But as multiple protagonists occupy this position, their multiple historical narratives interact and potentially merge, tending toward something that might be worthy of the universalist claims that Hegel once put forward.

- Prof. Tomasz Kitliński, University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska, Lublin, Poland.

### **Summa contra Hegel**

This paper presents my interpretation of the writings of G.W.F. Hegel; his philosophy is the most powerful explosion of thought and of the unconscious in planetary cultures. I include here the *Publizistik* of Hegel with the notion of civil society, analyzed by Schlomo Avineri.

I explore the Kristevan modes of the “signifying process” in Hegel: the “semiotic” and the “symbolic.” But I go beyond the Hegelian Julia Kristeva to approximate a “tidalectics, a rhythm of the tide,” as the Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite has it. I extrapolate— that which I call an unconcept—of the African-Caribbean poet in order to endeavor to depict the waves of the thinking-cum-the-unconscious of the German philosopher.

My intercultural investigation between drives (*Triebe*) and discourse provides yet another criticism of Hegel—d’après Georges Bataille, Jacques Derrida, and Hélène Cixous. It attempts to capture Hegel in his organic-cum-mental speech.

- Prof. Andrzej Leder, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, PAN, Warszawa.

### **What is the linguistic meaning of the Return of the (Philosophy of) History?**

In his lecture delivered in the Polish Academy of Sciences in 2005, Zygmunt Bauman maintained, that the Hegelian ‘spirit of history’ has reached a new level on the spiral of time, which means that no human language, no human system of representations forged during last 200 years - in the time of modernity - is sufficient to express what is going on. This perspective will also be mine in this commentary. To stay closer to the language of psychoanalysis, I will use some terms rooted in Lacanian teaching; mainly the concept of the ontological triad real/symbolic/imaginary. We can translate these terms as the real - what is really going on, but is not directly represented, the symbolic – the rules of representation or the field of language, and the imaginary – what appears as the representation, our image of the world. Baumans’ thesis— indubitably a moment of the return of the Hegelian philosophy of History – but read in the Lacanian way, can put the light on multiple, apparently regressive phenomena of our time. We can say that the real changed so much, that the symbolic field doesn’t cover it coherently and produces fake images, sterile narratives and empty rationales – misrepresentation - on the imaginary level.

- Dr Ewa Majewska, Gender Studies, University of Warsaw.

### **Slave, Antigone and the Housewife. Hegel's Dialectics of the Weak.**

In Phenomenology of the Spirit Hegel established the central image of dialectics, and one of the core visions of emancipation. Inserting labour, but also – liberation, understood as the struggle for recognition. This vision of struggle influences the philosophical vision of emancipation, positioning it mainly in struggle, due to Hegel's own vocabulary, but also – because of its Marxist interpretations.

However, what if said struggle is understood in other terms, than fight, and more in the ability to resist, to show willfulness and disagreement, as well as persistence? How does that perspective, one emphasized by Walter Benjamin, in his interest in the oppressed, or by Frank Ruda, in his work on Hegel's rabble, or by Bonnie Honig, who recently liberated Antigone from her solitary confinement in the Hegelian/ Lacanian interpretations, and set her free, by rendering visible her sororal, antipatriarchal pact with Ismene? In Phenomenology of the Spirit, between the slave and Antigone, we encounter “the unhappy consciousness”, usually understood as a nihilist, depressive position of the romantic wanderer. Yet – there seems to be another way of reading that part of Hegel's masterpiece, one focusing on the mundane, repetitive activities undertaken by the subject in order to maintain the species.

The task I will try to accomplish is a transversal reading of Hegel, focusing on the Phenomenology of Spirit and Philosophy of Right, in search for a revised interpretation of the feminine, and of dialectics, that of the weak.

- Prof. Andrzej W. Nowak, University of Adam Mickiewicz, Poznań, Poland.

### **Hegel on Rehab. 12 Steps Program for Modernity**

My name is Andrew and I am modern. In self-help therapy of addiction, which has grown out of the fusion of secularized Protestantism and pragmatism of William James, the key to recovery is to become aware of one's own situatedness. In the 12-steps technique, this location of the subject is defined by the first step: We admit that we are powerless over (addiction), that our lives had become unmanageable. Modernity is in trouble today. Its forms based on industrial capitalism and nation state are exhausted. But according to Hegel the very finiteness and self-determination are the principles of Modernity and its articulation. Therefore even when facing its own decline, Modernity has to re-establish and defend itself.

Overcritical critics of modernity such as Adorno, Heidegger, or Benjamin, rightly pointed out the excesses and abuses of Modernity, but they did not offer a therapy. As we know from the 12-steps addiction therapy, mourning the spiral of sins does not cure addiction, we can neither assume that it improves the condition of the world. Therefore, I offer a self-help therapy for Modernity. Reflexive Modernity has revealed consequences of the modern hubris - the difficulty to recognize it's own situatedness: fragility and vulnerability of Modernity itself.

Arnold Gehlen coined a formula: “The premises of the Enlightenment are dead: only their consequences continue.” From this perspective, the hubris of supposedly self-sufficient Modernity



separated itself from its own origins, as Habermas pointed out. Along with the actual process of disintegration and decay of Modernity, the new Middle Ages emerge, disguised as the Dark Enlightenment, along with Modernity's old enemies: religious reaction, neo-feudalism, and irrationalism. Modernity needs a therapy, not a funeral or mourning. Self-therapy of Modernity should start with recognizing that decline, failure of realizing the promises of Enlightenment. But how should we, the modern, heal Modernity? Let us make a second step: Come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. This is the power of the self-transcendence of modernity, which was (and should become again) the ultimate modern project of communism. Such therapy of Modernity consists in having the courage of sending Hegel to rehab - so that the dialectic modernization process can be relaunched. Yes, we must admit that we as modern, we have "reached the bottom", but not to commemorate loss, but to dare to try again.

- Dr Marta Olesik, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland.

### **Universal Element: Hegel, Frank Bowling and material world of ideal structures**

“Spirit is the self of the actual consciousness which spirit confronts, or rather which confronts itself as an objective actual world (The Phenomenology of Spirit, 254-55)”. The paper will examine this definition, asking what becomes of the spirit when it manifests as an actual world. Hegel calls this manifestation objective, but it is not some thing, an entity determined by its physical boundaries. It is a movement of actualization where the separate moments of the spirit “advance and retreat into their ground and essence, and this essence just is this movement and dissolution of these moments (The Phenomenology of Spirit, 255)” This movement of advance and retreat, isolation and dissolution of dialectical sequences is how the structure of the universal is woven. It is the texture of this weave which is an actual, objective and, therefore, material dimension of the spirit. This texture is the universal element – ideal structure as it keeps actualizing, dynamically pervading reality. It is the spirit's pattern and feel: the nodes, clusters and distances of dialectical sequences processed through determinate negation. Becoming elemental, the spirit is objective but cannot be confined to and enclosed in objects. Element is force and substance – in material sense of the term - which we all live and breathe.

The paper will attempt to weave this material structure/texture, render the spirit tangible through its transmission into a different medium of expression. The universal element will be evoked in the element of paint. To that end, I will refer the pervasive movement of the Hegelian universal to the texture of Frank Bowling's “map-paintings” created between 1968 and 1972. The scope of Bowling's work from the period, the global mapping he does with paint, is a perfect match for the Hegelian universality. A Guyanese-born painter, he meditates on the colonial experience which he personalizes, stamping his family-photos onto the canvas. However, subjective experience is immersed in the processes of globalization whose abstract flows and forces are rendered in vast, texturally diverse swaths of color. Painting over continents and seas, washing them with his palette, Bowling recreates the artificial surroundings of globalized world – the Hegelian spirit in its actualization. Adopting the tools of abstract expressionism, Bowling creates complex textures, simultaneously formal and material, thus evoking universal laws and structures in their elemental dimension – their dynamic,

spatial organization and reach which the paper will explore, diving into the painterly substance of the map-paintings.

- Dr Marcin Pańków, University of Białystok, Poland.

**Two metaphysics of freedom. Kant and Hegel on violence and law in the era of the fall of liberal democracy.**

In my presentation, I will examine the difference between the classic-Enlightenment concept of freedom (Rousseau, Kant) and the strictly modern one, expressed in the Hegelian Logic. I will discuss these two concepts in the light of the issues of violence and law outlined by Walter Benjamin. While the Kantian Metaphysics of moral assumes the ideological absolutization of law, in Hegel's the Science of Logic we can find a critique of such absolutization. This allows to rethink Kant's political thought – as one of most influential foundations of contemporary *Rechtstaat* – as an ideology. Secondly, it allows to ask about the current significance of Hegel's notion of freedom as a dialectical movement of the internalization and delegitimization of the instance of law in itself.

Answers to these questions allow investigating the ideological denial of the interconnection between violence and law in liberal democracy? How will it be shaped in the future? How Hegel's critique of law transforms the dispute between liberalism and right-wing populism?

- Dr Mikołaj Ratajczak, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland.

**Negativity and Crisis – dialectics and its critique in contemporary Italian political philosophy.**

The question of negativity is crucial for every critical and dialectical analysis of power relations in society. Hegel expressed the individual and collective desire for freedom and simultaneously the power of the existing social system to transform itself and include the individual or group difference in its internal logic as negativity. As an abstract logical category, negativity's function is twofold: it appears as the logic of any established social order, and as phenomenology of negativity in history. One of the most interesting strains of contemporary theory working with the political aspect of negativity, is contemporary Italian political philosophy, of such authors, as Agamben, Esposito, Virno or Negri. Their work is usually associated with concepts of biopolitics, community or multitude, however they are deeply rooted in theoretical discussions of the 1970s, focused on the critique of dialectics, negative thought and crisis. Crisis remains one of the key problems of contemporary Italian political philosophy and the logical category used by different thinkers within this tradition to express the political problem of crisis is negativity.

My aim is to analyse, how central authors of contemporary Italian political philosophy use the concept of negativity and crisis in their critical analysis of power relations. Although all discussed authors are critical of Hegelian dialectics, their fidelity to the category of negativity led them to build their theoretical projects around a basic set of dialectically opposed notions. My aim is to reconstruct the dialectical core of these projects and discuss their importance for contemporary critical theory.

- Dr Maciej Sosnowski and dr Bartosz Wójcik, Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw, Poland.

### **Reconciliation with sublation. Marek Siemek's Hegel revisited.**

In our presentation we will discuss Marek Siemek's Hegelian reading of Marxism. For Siemek, the philosophical dimension of Marxism manifests itself in the dialectical critique of ideology, which then becomes the mature critique of the political economy. The conceptual matrix of historical materialism is in turn fully expanded in the work of György Lukács, who for Siemek was the perfect example of "Marxist philosopher", with all ambiguities of this term. In order to discuss Siemek's analysis of Marxism, we will engage with three issues: 1. Siemek's interpretation of Hegel; which focuses on the totality of mediation. We will negotiate this aspect of Siemek's approach by pointing out those moments in his writings (and in writings of Hegel), in which the immediacy - pure negativity, stubbornness of consciousness, Master, etc. - plays crucial role and cannot be ignored. 2. Siemek and Marx. Early Marx's confrontation with Hegel resulting in sublation of philosophy as such, was for Siemek the weakest point of Marx thought. Siemek argued further, that this resulted in the lack of dialectical theory of state within Marxist tradition, and, in consequence, it led to the authoritarian praxis of socialist state. We will undermine this perspective on Marx and the state. 3. Siemek and Lukács. In Siemek's interpretation, the young Lukács is a philosopher of dialectical sublation and totality of mediation – the complexity of dynamic relations, that ties modern society, without any totalitarian deviation of immediacy. The problem is that if we agree with Siemek, then the young Lukács should be understood as a paradoxical philosopher of – both – communist revolution and of bourgeois status quo, which cannot be held. We will conclude discussing Siemek's own thought: from Lukácsian/Hegelian Marxism to "transcendental social philosophy" indebted in Habermas's communicative rationality. Moderate social democratic policy or revolutionary communism?

## THE SPEAKERS

### Keynote Speakers:

**Prof. Achille Mbembe** is a philosopher, political scientist, and public intellectual. He is a Professor of History and Politics at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. He has also held appointments at Columbia University, Berkeley, Yale University, University of California, Harvard University and Duke University. Achille Mbembe is a contributing editor of the journal *Public Culture*, where he published the influential article “Necropolitics” (2003). His research interests are: the political and social sciences and African history and politics, he investigates the postcolony that comes after decolonization. He has also critically explored Johannesburg as a metropolitan city, the work of Frantz Fanon, necropolitics and most recently – brutalism, understood as the biopolitical organization of extraction and neocolonial exploitation. Mbembe’s most important works are: “On the Postcolony” (2001); *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* (2008), “Critique of Black Reason” (2013); “Out of the Dark Night. Essays on Decolonization” (2019) and “Brutalisme” (2020).

**Oxana Timofeeva** is a Professor of Philosophy at the European University in St. Petersburg, Russia. She is a member of the artistic collective “Chto Delat?” (“What is to be done?”), a deputy editor of the journal “Stasis”, and the author of books *History of Animals* (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck, 2012; Moscow, 2017; London: Bloomsbury, 2018) and *Introduction to the Erotic Philosophy of Georges Bataille* (Moscow: New Literary Observer, 2009).

### Guest Speakers:

**Dr. Joanna Bednarek** – philosopher, writer and translator, member of the Editorial Board of the journal „Praktyka Teoretyczna”, she taught at the Gender Studies of the University of Warsaw, Poland. She published several books: „Politics Beyond Form. Ontological determinations of poststructuralist political philosophy”, „Lines of Femininity. How Sexual Difference Transformed Literature and Philosophy?”, „Life that Speaks. Modern Community and Animals”, and „Origin of the Family” (all in Polish). She translated texts and books of Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway and Karen Barad (among others). She collaborated with „Krytyka Polityczna” in the years 2006-2009. Her fields of interest are: poststructuralism, feminism, autonomist marxism and literature.

**Agata Bielik-Robson** is a Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Nottingham and a Professor of Philosophy at the Polish Academy of Sciences. She published articles in Polish, English, German, French and Russian on philosophical aspects of psychoanalysis, romantic subjectivity, and the philosophy of religion; especially Judaism and its crossings with modern philosophical thought. Her publications include books: *The Saving Lie. Harold Bloom and Deconstruction* (Northwestern

University Press, May 2011), *Judaism in Contemporary Thought. Traces and Influence* (coedited with Adam Lipszyc, Routledge 2014), *Philosophical Marranos. Jewish Cryptotheologies of Late Modernity* (Routledge 2014) and *Another Finitude: Messianic Vitalism and Philosophy*, Bloomsbury, 2019.

**Dr. Ankica Čakardić** is an assistant professor and the chair of Social Philosophy and Philosophy of Gender at the Faculty for Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia. Her research interests include Social Philosophy, Marxism, Luxemburgian and Marxist-feminist critiques of political economy, and history of women's struggles in Yugoslavia. She is an author of the *Specters of Transition: Social History of Capitalism* and *Like a Clap of Thunder: Three Essays on Rosa Luxemburg* and is currently finishing a book on radical social philosophy. She is a member of The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg Editorial Board (Verso, London and New York).

**Dr. Joseph Grim Feinberg** is a research fellow at the Philosophy Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. His current research involves the history of critical social thought in East-Central Europe, the problem of citizenship and non-citizens, and the notion of proletarian internationalism. His book *The Paradox of Authenticity*, on problems performance and the reconceptualization of "the people" in post-Communist Slovak folklore, was released in 2018. He is editor of *Contradictions: A Journal for Critical Thought*.

**Tomasz Kitlinski** is a Professor at the University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska, Lublin, Poland. has gained his Diplôme d'Études Approfondies at Université Paris 7, supervised by Julia Kristeva; he has been awarded his Habilitation at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences. In February 2020 he made a performance at London's Tate Britain.

**Andrzej Leder** is a Professor of philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw. He published several seminal books on modernity, the Poland's post-WWII modernization, the relations of psychoanalysis and contemporary continental philosophy of culture, including: *Prześniona rewolucja* (Warszawa, 2014; translated in French and German, "A Lost Revolution"), *L'Homme de la Democratie* (Frankfurt, 2014; co-edited volume).

**Dr. Ewa Majewska** – is a feminist philosopher and activist. She taught at the University of Warsaw and the Jagiellonian University, she was also a visiting fellow at the University of California, Berkeley; Orebro in Sweden, ICI Berlin and IWM in Vienna. She published four books and some 50 articles and essays, in journals, magazines and collected volumes, including: *e-flux*, *Third Text*, *Journal of Utopian Studies* or *Jacobin*. Her current research is in Hegel's philosophy, focusing on the dialectics and the

weak; feminist critical theory and antifascist cultures. Her next book, *Feminist Antifascism. Counterpublics of the Common*, will be published in 2021.

**Dr. Marta Olesik** works at the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, Poland, and is currently researching imaginary representations of complex socio-political structures.

**Dr Marcin Pańków** is a philosopher and translator. His research areas include: German idealism, Marxism, classical social philosophy and contemporary critical thought. He published the monograph "Hegel i pozór" (Hegel and appearance, Warsaw, 2014) and wrote the Preface to the second Polish edition of Hegel's "Science of logic". He works as assistant professor at the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Białystok, Poland.

**Dr. Mikołaj Ratajczak** – philosopher, translator and editor, assistant professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and a member of the editorial collective of the journal for critical and Marxist theory „Praktyka Teoretyczna”. He currently works on the systemic analysis of the contemporary Italian political philosophy (forthcoming, in Polish), he also translated works by Karl Marx, Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, Theodor W. Adorno and Giorgio Agamben into Polish. Member of the militant union Workers’ Initiative at the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

**Dr Maciej Sosnowski** – works at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw. interested in thought of 19th and 20th century, with particular emphasis on German Idealism and dialectical philosophy. Author of, among others, “To Fall In Love with Dialectics. On The Concept of Speculative Love with Constant Reference to S. Kierkegaard”, finalist of the Barbara Skarga Contest.

**Bartosz Wójcik** – philosopher, dialectical materialist, research assistant at the Institute of Political Studies PAS. He works on the PhD thesis on Hegel’s social philosophy. Editor of *Theoretical Practice*.



## NOTES

