

### Philosophy as Inquiry and Way of Life XXIII World Congress in Philosophy

On August 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy took place in Athens (Greece). William L. McBride, president of Federation of International Society of Philosophy (FISP), stated that it was the first world congress of philosophy to take place in Greece – the cradle of Western philosophy, education and civilisation in general. In his opinion the importance of the world congress of philosophy lies in philosophical reflection and culturally diversified approaches investigating a new fact of life. According to the President of the organisational committee, Konstantin Boudouris, the congress was a significant cultural institution functioning as an international forum for philosophical research, a place where associates in the field of science, philosophy and education met and where new research teams were created, existing ones renewed and ideas reflected upon. In his view, the congress contributed to strengthening universal values aimed at common problems of man of the present era. It was a place of searching for answers to Socrates' question "How shall a man live?"

Congress discussions were divided into 75 sections and about 3,000 participants devoted to such areas of philosophy, such as the various periods of the history of philosophy, philosophy of religion, epistemology, ontology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, philosophy and literature, philosophy of science, philosophy of education, philosophy of teaching, ethics, bioethics, environmental ethics, aesthetics, Indian philosophy, Chinese philosophy, Russian philosophy, etc. In addition, part of the discussions was 112 round tables dealing with many current philosophical issues of history and the present. This event also included 35 international and national philosophical societies, such as the George Santayana Society, the International Association of Greek Philosophy, the International Association of Jaspers Societies, the International Society for Environmental Ethics, etc.

Given the number of congress participants and the number of the parallel discussions, one can remember very little of what was said at the congress. I will therefore introduce only some of the most interesting sections and presentations. Within the political philosophy section Pavo Barišić (Croatia) dealt with the topic *Democracy as a way of life – Philosophical credo of John Dewey*. According to him John Dewey considered democracy not only procedural and po-

litically technical as a mere form of government under other institutional forms, but as a specific form and way of life of a political community. The substance of democracy as a way of life is firstly its ethical, cultural and spiritual ideal, and then its procedural state and proper technology of political power. Democratic order thus contributes very significantly to human happiness. Democracy always keeps some kind of a moral ideal in the thoughts and deeds of citizens. In a political context, freedom without real opportunities for participation is empty and purely formal. Real and active participation of citizens in politics is, therefore, very important.

Relatively richly represented by congress participants was the section concerning the philosophy of science. Within this section Luz Chapa (Mexico) presented his paper *Science and ethical values in the thoughts of Karl Popper*. The author claimed Karl Popper believed that his critical rationalism was both a theory of knowledge and attitude to human life, morality and democracy. He was concerned with the Popperian proposal of a new professional ethics for intellectuals, who conceived of a non-authoritative manner, the ideals of truth, rationality, intellectual honesty and responsibility, based on twelve epistemological-ethical principles. Popper maintained throughout his life the conviction that scientific knowledge is one of the greatest achievements of human rationality, which allows you to understand something about the world and improve it. A similar paper was also presented by In-Rae Cho (Korea) *Toward a co-evolutionary model of scientific change*. First of all, he identified explanatory power and empirical adequacy as primary goals of science and explored the possibility of evaluating scientific goals. Then he tried to bring out the major features of how the main components of science are related to each other. In his opinion all these features together suggested that scientific change is evolutionary (rather than revolutionary), as well as co-evolutionary. Tatiana Leshkevich (Russia) in her paper *Transformation of modern methodology* stated that philosophy in the contemporary world is closely connected with modern technoscientific civilisation. The focus of attention is directed to “situational” methodology. Methodology is realized in the meaning of technology of activity which is projected onto the innovation sphere in the context of its genesis, adaptability, spread and consumption. However, it has become clear that scientific forecast is to enable us to avoid large-scale negative consequences of global technological development.

In the section devoted to the issue of philosophy of mind Silvia Gáliková (Slovakia) presented her paper *Life and death of conscious experience*. She intended to point out a profound asymmetry between inner experience and a theoretical explanation of the nature of felt inner states. The aim of her presentation was to argue against the claim according to which physicalist ap-

proaches consider conscious experience as a non-existent phenomenon – an illusion. The author outlined in what sense conscious experience is and is not an illusion. Geeta Ramana (India) in her contribution *Perception and the mind-body problem* discussed some of the significant parameters of the framework that separates the inner and the outer world on the epistemological basis of access and certainty. According to her perception is our direct mode of access to the world around us, but redirecting the paradigm of perception to understand the mind reinforces the false analogy of treating minds as inner objects and has played a significant part in the continuation of the mind-body problem. Gender bias debates in feminist epistemology were examined by Mariana Szapuová (Slovakia). She argued that empiricism naturalized feminism provides us with a tool for dissolving the bias paradox in the sense that it gives us grounds for rejecting the ideal of pure neutrality as well as for rejecting androcentric biases in science.

David Svoboda and Prokop Sousedík (Czech Republic) in the section *philosophy of mathematics* contemplated about the dilemma of number. Their paper dealt with the ontological status of number. From the logical point of view number is an object but from the ontological point of view it is an entity that depends on linguistic structure. Josef Šmajš (Czech Republic) in his presentation *Evolutionary ontology as a spiritual paradigm of the 21st century* emphasized that evolutionary ontology is distinguished from traditional ontology by object, the method of interpretation and social role. He concluded that while traditional ontology was academically abstracted, evolutionary ontology reveals the essence of the global ecological crisis and can fulfil a cultural and paradigmatic function. Using this ontology based on scientific reasoning we strive to break the spiritual exploitative paradigm. The Slovak participants of the Congress, for example, Matúš Porubjak addressed the issue of why Socrates quotes Theognis, Vasil Gluchman dealt with issues concerning the theories of professional ethics, Emil Višňovský's contribution was devoted to the way of life in the context of pragmatic philosophy, Marta Gluchmanová stressed the role of the teacher in the educational process at present.

In conclusion, the Congress was a really interesting and productive place for discussions, polemics, exchange of views, but also renewal or personal meetings of philosophers from around the world. Certainly, it enriched the participants, and among other things, gave them the opportunity to meet current forms of Western civilization, including its philosophy. The FISP decided to place the next World Congress of Philosophy in Beijing (2018), the cradle of one of the Eastern civilizations. The Asian continent will con-

tinue the dialogue of cultures, philosophical, social, political, ideological and religious ideas.<sup>1</sup>

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### Modal Metaphysics: Issues on the (Im)Possible Conference

In September 19–20, 2013 the Institute of Philosophy of Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava and Slovak Metaphysical Society organized a conference called *Modal Metaphysics: Issues on the (Im)possible*. The conference took place in Bratislava (Slovakia) and its main goal was to put together researchers working primarily on the metaphysics of modality, including topics such as possible worlds, counterfactual conditionals, essence, reference, conceivability or fiction.

After the official opening by the director of the institute, prof. Tibor Pichler, the conference started with the first keynote lecture given by John Divers (University of Leeds). His ‘*Transcending Quine?*’ pointed out limitations of Wright’s and McFetridge’s ‘quasi transcendental’ arguments to the extent that those argument do not move the Quinean sceptic in believing necessity.

In the following talks Dan Marshall (University of Hong Kong) raised another ‘[A] *Puzzle for Modal Realism*’, Emily Caddick Bourne (University of Cambridge) and Craig Bourne (University of Hertfordshire) dealt with ‘*Impossible Fictions with Possible Worlds*’ and Ceth Lightfield (University of California, Davis) considered ‘*Ficta as mere Possibilia*’. The first day continued with Myroslav Hryshko’s (Ljubljana) ‘*Metaphysical Nihilism and Meontological Realism*’ and Ryan Christensen’s (Brigham Young University) ‘*Essentially Contingent*’. Nathan Wildman (Universität Hamburg) wondered into the question ‘*What’s Wrong with Weak Necessity?*’ and the first day of the conference ended with Alexander Kaiserman’s (Oxford University) ‘*Impossible Worlds and Macrophysical Zombies*’.

The second day commenced with the second keynote lecture ‘*On Conceiving the Impossible*’ given by Francesco Berto (University of Aberdeen). In it, he presented another application of impossible worlds, that is, an approach to absolute impossibilities based on intentional operators.

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