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REVIEWS | RECENZIJE

Marijan Krivak: FILOZOFIJA OTPORA.

Osijek: Filozofski fakultet, 2019.

ISBN: 978-953-314-047-6.

UDC: 130.2

From the title of the book onwards, the author of *Philosophy of Resistance* clearly and precisely articulates what philosophy represents for him: among other definitions (love for wisdom and the art of producing concepts), it is primarily *resistance*, because one of the fundamental problems of philosophy—freedom—takes its form only through resistance, which ontologically precedes every (definition of) power. In that sense, relying heavily on Deleuze’s philosophy which states that the only thing left to us in the world of entropic orders by societies of control, Krivak’s book is a peculiar philosophy of resistance that is at the same time a diagnosis of the age we live in. It represents at the same time resistance to the meaninglessness and inconceivability of the world, resistance to the ecstasy of futile communication, resistance to the metastases of historical carcinogenicity, resistance to the dominant biopolitical paradigm, the economic and political logic of neoliberalism and the fascistogenic society we live in, resistance to “homogeneous empty time” (as articulated by Benjamin), postmodern fascism as well as ideology of the “knowledge society,” and ultimately resistance to the common-spread idea that philosophy is unnecessary in today’s world.

Through the nine texts that comprise the book, Krivak brings forth a variety of analyzes, ranging from thematizing emancipatory potentials of Rancière's philosophy, through the inevitable Foucault's contribution, and theses on specific mechanisms of power and resistance as a series of localized strategies, to Nancy and his seminal understanding of the community. The main authors and philosophers he discusses are, besides the already mentioned, Deleuze, Agamben, Esposito, and Badiou, thus making the whole circle in providing the overview of contemporary philosophy. The first chapter of the book is, therefore, theoretically the most coherent and philosophically most inventive, and it begins with the elaboration of the very concept of philosophy, prompted by Alain Badiou's book *Metaphysics of Real Happiness*. Namely, if philosophy is the way to reflect on the truth of life, which has become a technological purpose, a scientific norm, and a mere calculation, then philosophy, as a "speech" about the meaning of truth, is at the same time a philosophy of resistance to such calculative world.

320 In order to understand today's socio-political constellation, it is primarily important to understand the techno-scientific set of information and communication technologies, and the circumstance that they largely determine the postulates of contemporary politics, which is covered in the chapters on biopolitical theory as well as the paraesthetic speech as addressed by Foucault, and in the "interlude" "About Language" where Krivak asks to what extent language is the dispositive or generic essence of man, i.e., how to maintain the link between language and thinking. Namely, the process of releasing language as a generic being of man and of reaching with language into true world is also a resistance to the ruling paradigm of language, which has undergone "viral pathology," that is, which is being infected by the virus of ecstatic communication (Baudrillard)—the cosmos of meaning has turned into a "chaos of expression." Language, therefore, is a dispositive contaminated by the logic of a self-created web of chatter, murmur, semblance of communication, and the struggle against this is an attempt to return to the original sense of *logos*.

The specific emphasis of the philosophical part of the book lies on the technical nature of human existence, starting from the problem of freedom and the model of emancipation, whereby we come to a paradoxical situation

of acting without a subject or to political revolutions that in the era of entropy of the global order became essentially national-religious counter-revolutions. The author questions how is it possible resist this social maze in an entropy state ruled by the network as a fluid term for a world, in which the fundamental philosophical question concerns how to think the difference between the political and politics, if action today is controlled by post-human networks of rhizomatic capitalism, and in which politics has given rise to the pseudo-event media spectacle.

This is the theoretical framework for the last chapters of the book dealing with art in the most applicable sense of the word—with film, painting, and literature—, where Krivak historically re-contextualizes Julije Knifer's anti-painting and Mihovil Pansini's anti-film, but perhaps the most important chapter in the book is dedicated to Branko Schmidt's film *Metastases*, an adaptation of Allen Bovic's novel. It is precisely in *Metastases* that *hic et nunc*, here and now, we witness the fascistoidness of the social space in which we live in its utter nakedness, as well as the innumerable nationalist-ideological appeals. Although it is the only non-philosophical text in the book, it seems to embody all those theoretical constructs on issues of power, community-building, metaphysics of happiness, and social emancipation that we have respectively seen with Rancière, Agamben, Foucault, Deleuze, and Nancy. In fact, what is politically an ongoing risk of freedom, is the risk of taking responsibility for changing the situation and, in general, of making sense in the time of the collapse of the global order. In short, when it comes to a philosophy of resistance, "it is time for a politics of events of absolute freedom." The author clearly shows that the logic of the world-historical progress of the cyber-governance system and the new ways of legitimizing capitalism in the 21st century leads to all forms of suspension of the basic ideas of modern politics such as freedom, equality, justice, and solidarity. And this is not just a formal defense of human and civil liberties, because it politically no longer provides the condition of possibility for a new theory of action—it basically concerns the possibility of thinking itself, not at the end of history, but at the end of historically prevalent patterns of social changes.

Therefore, it is justified to keep repeating the question of Rastko Močnik *How much fascism?* from his eponymous book, which Krivak often cites in his

texts, and not without reason. The process of a deconstruction of politics is, on the one hand, the only thing left of the great history of Western metaphysics if we are to preserve the classical idea of the common good, the idea of a society in which freedom, equality, and justice have power, and at the same time, on the other hand, it is necessary to constantly question the historical epistemological paradigm of “postmodern fascism,” which may have been militarily defeated but not defeated as a historical practice, as a political method, and a thought-pattern. The clero-fascism of the sacralization of war and the necro-fascism of cultural and financial clientelism continue to be cornerstones of Croatian statehood. *Philosophy of resistance?* Yes, if it is a genuine impulse to conquer the enclaves of righteousness in an impotent and euthanized society trapped in the figures of oblivion and ideological discourses of the enchantment of the real state of affairs.

Tonči Valentić

**Žarko Paić: NEOLIBERALISM, OLIGARCHY AND POLITICS OF THE
EVENT: AT THE EDGE OF CHAOS.**

Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020.

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If the task of philosophy has traditionally been defined as the task of thinking the time in which it takes place, then attempting to rethink the essence and modernity of the epoch in which we live today is a very challenging task. The question of human essence as a necessary pre-condition of any philosophy concerns, in fact, how one relates to oneself. In this sense, one of the most prominent Croatian philosophers, Vanja Sutlić, in his book *Essence and Contemporaneity* (originally published half a century ago), lapidary concludes that the basic task of contemporary philosophy is the thought of reaching into the historical composition of being human and being itself. To reach the essence of the modern world philosophically—that is the task of true thinking. Precisely in the wake of such a predicament arises the new book by Žarko Paić *Neoliberalism, Oligarchy and Politics of the Event*, symbolically subtitled: *At the Edge of Chaos*. In the wake of the abovementioned uneasiness regarding the determination of the contemporary world, Paić gives a very precise and unambiguous formulation: the title itself indicates that in order to understand today's socio-political constellation, it is necessary primarily to understand the

techno-scientific set of information and communication technologies, and to grasp that they largely determine the postulates of modern politics.

In the effort to respond to this aporia, Paić critically refers to numerous contemporary theories of sovereignty, the spiritual crisis of Europe, the metapolitics of identity, and the post-history biopolitics, leading a dialogue with fundamental thinkers in comprehensive, studious, brilliantly argued, and multifaceted chapters, as well as reflecting on the 21st century “philosophical classics”—from Kojève to Carl Schmitt, from Rancière to Badiou. As the author himself points out, this book deals with “an analysis of the effects of a global order that governs the environment through the logic of a self-generated network. The system is, however, formally based on a framework of liberal democracy. But in reality, ideas of freedom are transformed into their opposite. Instead of establishing the power of a sovereign people, the rule of the corporative constituted elites is at work.” This is precisely the main aspect of Paić’s reflections: if in many previous books the emphasis was on the technical character of human existence, the starting point here is the problem of freedom and the so-called political deficit, according to the model of a (Derridean-like articulated) “dehumanized desert:” “the uniformity of the technically shaped space necessitates the uniqueness of abstract time.”

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Here, Paić extensively discusses the idea and crisis of Europe, its political future during the reorganization of empires, the civil war, and total mobilization at a planetary level, political theology, and attempts to think events beyond the metaphysical “big story” regarding philosophy of politics for the new age, and oligarchic rule in the age of today’s networked societies. In this sense, contextualization, i.e., an analysis of the rule of corporate elites as a contemporary form of oligarchy, becomes crucial. Namely, if neoliberal capitalism is the result of techno-scientific advancement and dispensation of a liberated desire, it means that “the desire for wealth and power destroys all the spiritual virtues that modern humanity has set as the goal of its own meaningful action.” The context of a re-humanizing of the humanity has become archaic, rather than introducing us to the intricate social labyrinth of entropy that governs the network as a fluid term for a world, in which the fundamental philosophical question concerns how to think the difference between the political and politics, if action today is controlled by post-human

networks of rhizomatic capitalism, and in which politics has given rise to the pseudo-event media spectacle.

Starting primarily from Foucault's insights on biopolitics, but also by deepening his analysis of the psycho-techniques of controlling desire and deconstructing criticism of political economy, Paić formulates the thesis that the oligarchic model of political and cultural governance today is the result of the ups and downs of mass political movements, which means that, *in ultima linea*, he rightly believes that in the age of transnational corporations and the cybernetic model of market management in today's neo-liberal 21st century there is no basis for a "revolution" or subversive upheaval, because the disappearance of the notion of society also disintegrates the solidarity of class and social actors. This is also the main backbone of this book, with many erudite chapters meandering through. For the issue of freedom, it is crucial to reflect on "political theology," that is, to transform all metaphysical categories of sovereignty into concepts of the political work of autonomous human freedom, while it is self-evident that the author's primary interlocutors are Foucault and Carl Schmitt, to whom he devotes a whole chapter on the logic of the state of emergency and catechetic of history within political theology. Certainly, the more careful reader will quickly notice that many of the constituent themes and theses are present in Paić's earlier books—e.g., the problem of culture as ideology and multiculturalism, art in the age of digital anti-humanism, the dominance of spectacle in the time of the collapse of the metaphysical structure of the world—, but this also deepens with a whole new set of topics: the re-articulation of the political and the general thinking of politics in the entropy network.

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As in the previous books, from the *Posthuman Condition*, through *Freedom Without Power*, all the way to the *Third Country*, *Totalitarianism*, and, finally, the grand project of the *Technosphere* in five volumes, one of the most important achievements of this book is the consciousness about the creation of a new categorical apparatus, because the essence of man can no longer be determined upon the classical humanist tradition of philosophy, and here we necessarily return to some of the congenial insights from the already mentioned Sutlić's book. Paić is aware that without transcending the classical interpretive framework, not only can we not describe the world we live in, but

we cannot even philosophically articulate it. That is why this book is also a sort of a “manual” for how to navigate through the distribution of technological-political power, where the source of power comes into play with the question of the limits of human freedom. And precisely this freedom is “powerless:” by losing its ontological meaning to politics, it also loses the foundation of that universally political one. The only remaining solution is to establish a theory of an upcoming event beyond all metaphysical differences in contemporary history, a “futurological opinion” beyond the desubstantialized utopia.

326 The logical question that arises primarily here is: what are the real alternatives to de-politicization and re-politicization? Politics is, as Paić rightly points out, the constant risk of freedom, the risk of taking responsibility for changing the situation and, in general, of making sense in the time of the collapse of the global order. But without the illusions of human power, the reach of democracy, sovereignty—“all that remains is to think political and politics beyond the small stories of micro-utopias and the macropolitics of identity.” In earlier argumentation, the author put it determinedly: “It is time for the politics of events of absolute freedom.” It is precisely this event that “neither happens fatefully nor is owned by the subject of radical change in the world.” Namely, the logic of the world-historical progress of the cybernetic system of governance and the new way of legitimizing capitalism in the 21st century unequivocally leads to the suspension of fundamental ideas. Modernity policies include freedom, equality, justice, and solidarity. Paić is also quite right in insisting that this is not merely a formal defense of human and civil liberties, because it politically no longer allows the condition for a new theory of action—it is essentially a matter of choice itself; not at the end of history, but at the end of historically ubiquitous patterns of social change.

In this context, the concept of events as defined by the author has nothing to do with the attempts to open up the space of opportunity in the aesthetic, political, and ethical realms (starting from Deleuze to Badiou) or to think the “second beginning,” as was the case in Heidegger’s thought. Therefore, the event must be thought beyond all mysticism of coming in terms of hope and expectation of a salvage return to the sources. Paić is aware that in his theoretical attempts it is not easy to build a new matrix or a new platform of power to counter the technosphere, which is not a defeatist move at all, but

a very clearly articulated awareness that the thinking of the political “today” should be freed from false belief in the Messianic deliverance and from the autonomous action of the monstrous power of the technosphere “which reduces everything” human “to the applications, functions and structures of the inhuman.” The oligarchic power of the elites in modern times is almost evenly distributed across the global order, regardless of political differences and cultural values. That is why we are talking about the network of power, in which the fundamental problem is that “the politics of oligarchy and meritocracy as a post-democratic struggle to preserve privileges in the frozen state of elite rule over social classes is happening as an ethical-legal consensus on the permanent reforms of the same.”

In conclusion, this book is a true philosophical reflection upon the proper meaning of politics and freedom, upon the classic idea of the common good, the idea of a society in which freedom, equality, and justice have power. In the wake of Derrida’s writings, Paić accurately observes that this process of the deconstruction of politics is all that remains of the great history of Western metaphysics. The aforementioned philosopher Sutlić allegedly said on one occasion: “If a man can no longer be a Casanova or a Don Juan, he can become a good engineer and sleep with his machine,” which is not only a witty and humorous, but also a gloomy summary of the state of affairs in today’s world, the world as technosphere that is both our “essence” and “contemporaneity.” Paić’s significant book, with a highly articulated philosophical categorical apparatus, addresses this problem with crystal clearness and precision.

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Tonči Valentić

**Paulina Sosnowska: HANNAH ARENDT AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER.
PHILOSOPHY, MODERNITY, AND EDUCATION.**

Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: Lexington Books.

ISBN: 978-1-4985-8241-4.

UDC: 165.62Arendt H. Heidegger

The book *Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger*, authored by the Polish philosopher Paulina Sosnowska, assistant professor at the Faculty of Education of the University of Warsaw, is a meticulously researched and engagingly written discussion of the relationship between two of the most intriguing thinkers of the turbulent 20th century, whose works to this date endure as a substantial source of philosophical inspiration, despite—and, indeed, because of—the circumstance of evoking sometimes diametrically opposed, mutually irreconcilable responses. Although the personal pathways of Arendt and Heidegger bear witness to a lifelong intimate bond, which was able to withstand—after the end of the love affair—the hiatus of the holocaust, their intellectual relation continually (r)evolved under the sign of the initial nonreciprocity: whereas the writings of Arendt reveal the careful, if (not) rather concealed efforts of a—paradoxically articulated—(n)ever un-faithful student, Heidegger as one of the formative university teachers scarcely, if (not) only covertly took notice of her coming-to-prominence, of her accomplishments. Instead of attempting to elaborate—upon the re-presented, pre-supposed background of the teacher's

thought—the influence of Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology on the development of Arendt’s political theory, Sosnowska—in a certain “reversal” of the pedagogical rapport (subtly indicated in the title)—re-traces, giving preference to the perspective of the student, seeking, through(out) Arendt’s entire oeuvre, for underlying convergences and fundamental divergences, for in-commensurable in-congruences with Heidegger, but (thereby) avoiding also the potential pitfalls of a biographical “explanation” of the conceptual, the conditions (of possibility) for the philosophical dimension of the relationship between both authors, insofar as it, as already the subtitle of the study suggests, concerns the problematic of education within the modern—as well as the present-day (post-?modern?)—world.

330 Sosnowska, thus, takes the relation between Arendt and Heidegger—between their respective philosophical stances regarding the matters at hand—under consideration as a particular paradigm for a universally challenging re-questioning of the educational role of philosophy. However, should in (philosophical) thinking still exist, especially after and amid the ruins of the frightful caesura of 20th-century totalitarianisms, a glimmer of hope for a pedagogical promise, also its complex implications for the historical and contemporary context(s) of (political) action require special and specific attention.

The first part of the book is, therefore, dedicated to a deliberation upon the notion of education within the Western philosophical tradition. Sosnowska circumscribes the often in-explicitly intricate demarcation of a pedagogical component within philosophy through three comprehensive conceptualizations, which were not only of immense importance for Arendt’s thought, but have also had a profound cultural and social impact. The parallelization of Heidegger’s ontological and Arendt’s political reading of the Greek idea of *paideia*, as embodied in Plato’s illustrious allegory of the cave, opens up the gateway toward an account of the dispute on *Bildung* among the proponents of the neo-humanist ideals of liberalism, the predominant of whom was Wilhelm von Humboldt, that subsequently, at the dawn of the 19th century, lead to the foundation of the German university. Whereas various interpretations of *paideia* and *Bildung* directly address the issue of education, the analysis of (early) Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, as elucidated in

Being and Time, touches upon it, emphasizing at once the ethical relevance of authentic existence and the lack of an adequate approach to (intra)human plurality, only in an inter-mediate(d) manner. However, from Arendt's—from the Arendtian—viewpoint, the philosophical promise(s) for education, the striving for freedom, individuality, and authenticity, remained unfulfilled—or had been betrayed—, not primarily because of flawed or failed (political) concretizations—Heidegger's (albeit temporary, yet perplexing) ideological entanglement with National Socialism is a famed, an infamous “example”—, but due to the catastrophic break denoting the eventuation of tradition.

Before venturing (toward) the question of a beginning, the second part of Sosnowska's book, with constantly more consummate aspects encompassing the conflicting “conversation” between Arendt and Heidegger, deals with the crossroads, whereat philosophy and education—in their inter-relation, in their inter-relatedness with politics—have found—or lost?—themselves with regard to—the author cites Arendt—“the broken thread of tradition” (81 ff.), the confrontation with which triggered a thorough re-thinking of thinking itself. Whilst, on the one hand, Heidegger's thinking of being after the so-called “turn,” through the estrangement from the previous existential categories and therewith from philosophy as such, wholly withdraws from the political—or, at least, endeavors to do so—, Arendt's thinking of action, on the other hand, prompted by the unprecedented experience of the emergence of totalitarian movements in the 20th century demanding description beyond traditional patterns, without reservation faces the challenges posed by the plurality of the public sphere. The discussed authors' contrasting, but complementary readings of Aristotle, of *phronesis* and *sophia*, to a great degree additionally illuminate both Arendt's indebtedness to the motivation and the movement that, through the (polemically) received incentive by the teacher, guided her to work, to write “with Heidegger and against him” (126). Although Arendt's political philosophy rests upon the construction of dichotomies, such as the ones between life and world, between the private and the public, the searching for freedom, of central significance also for her comprehension of modernity, for her conception of alienation prevalent within it, above all renders homage to the multispectrality of human existence: “In Heidegger the collective subject (the they) veils the conditions of realization of human freedom; in Arendt the

plurality of the people is an ontological condition of actualization of human freedom: the faculty of beginning, potentially given to us with the new beginning of our birth.” (147)

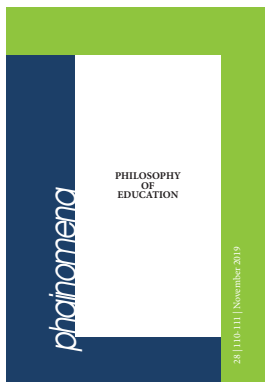
332 In the final part of the book, Sosnowska, upon the basis of preceding reflections, explores the consequences the situation, where classical tradition cannot deliver any solutions, may convey for what totalitarian cataclysms had bequeathed to posterity as the pedagogical task of philosophy. Thus, as if (almost) by necessity of the debated problematic itself, the author is compelled to quest, with—and beyond—Arendt, for (ostensibly un-likely) allies among her predecessors and her successors alike, who—in one way or another—surpass (through) the confinement of the “Heideggerian” con-text(s): on the one hand, Johann Gottfried Herder’s remarks on finiteness and historicity, on linguality and intersubjectivity, as well as, on the other hand, genealogies of (bio)political power by Michel Foucault and of state of exception by Giorgio Agamben (continue to) offer fundamental contributions to the function of philosophical critique for the preservation of essential plurality determining the human condition. However, as Arendt’s renowned elucidation of the “case” of Adolf Eichmann demonstrates, the perpetually threatening connection between non-thinking and the banality of evil, against (late) Heidegger’s recourse into contemplation, calls for a thinking as “a phenomenon of everydayness” (194) that does not—and will not—shy away from the affairs of the human(e) world.

The treatise of Paulina Sosnowska not only convincingly discloses different facets and layers of the philosophical relationship between Arendt and Heidegger, but by re-posit(ion)ing the question of education at the heart of confounding inter-communication between philosophy and politics also—in the concluding chapters—relevantly discusses the precarious circumstances, in which contemporary universities (and other academic institutions), under the immense pressure of the marketization of entire society, struggle to maintain the (former?) ideals of (scientific) autonomy. The extraordinary achievement of the book *Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger* that deserves attentive readers both among the scholars of the two authors as well as among pedagogues interested in the philosophical dimension of educational efforts exhorts, by re-awakening the promise of thinking, of its potentiality, of its potency, to

the “vigilance”—but by no means to a “vigilantism”—of thoughtfulness in a thoughtless, dark time.

Since the destiny of a review lies in submitting a mere—more or (rather) less suitable—sketch of the book’s thematic abundance, maybe the re-sounding words of a poet, of Robert Frost’s poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” nonetheless can, with regard to Sosnowska’s work, propose—how many times heard? how many times hearkened to?—a fitting end, a beginning: “The woods are lovely, dark and deep, / But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep, / And miles to go before I sleep.”

Andrej Božič

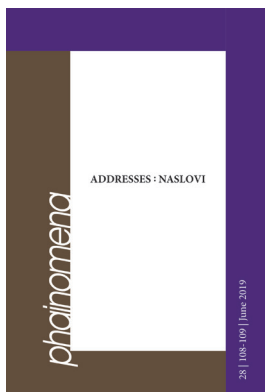


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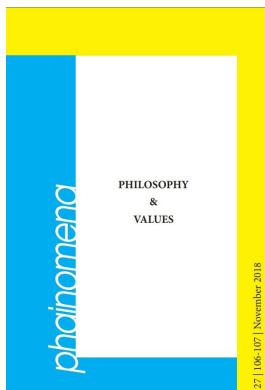
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