

HOSPITABLE DWELLING (A REPORT)

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In May 2017, I attended the International Summer School in Philosophy and Education *Difficult Memory, Forgiving and Forgetting: Education toward Hospitality, Acknowledging, and Respecting*, and participated in the International Conference *Hermeneutics of Hospitality in a Destitute Time* as a representative of – as well as a research fellow at – the Institute Nova revija for the Humanities (Ljubljana, Slovenia). The International Institute for Hermeneutics – presided by Prof. Dr. Dr. Andrzej Wierciński – organized the – mutually (thematically and administratively) inter-linked– events in Kraków (Poland), and – in cooperation with several distinguished (trans-local) academic institutions – brought together scholars from Canada, France, Germany, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, and USA, representing various disciplines and diverse fields of humanistic knowledge, (but) predominantly hermeneutic/phenomenological philosophy and philosophy of education.¹

In accordance with the programmatic outline, the Summer School – hosted by the Jesuit University Ignatianum between 15th and 19th May – offered the participants a possibility to engage in a collective conversational discussion

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regarding different, often also discordant aspects of – the proposed topic of a – hermeneutics of hospitality. Although one cannot dis-close the multitude of presented papers – and, indeed, a (mere) report could never possess such an intention –, certain conceptual junctures can, nevertheless, be – retro-spec(ula)tively – elaborated.

With regard to (the/a) hermeneutics of hospitality the issues addressed at the Summer School encompass(ed) a broad horizon ranging from fundamental deliberations upon the phenomenon of understanding as one of the essential traits of human(e) being, not only in the individual embodiment of existence, but also in the interpersonal co-existence within the communicatively shared world – through sidelong views into realms in-directly related to the matter at hand –, to questions concerning contemporary developments in a society increasingly determined solely by technological and scientific accomplishments at the same time enabling and disabling the challenge of responding to a confrontation at the crossroads of thought and action, of (at)testing – in art, in education, in politics – theory in practice, and vice versa. Whereas the contributions by Ramsey Eric Ramsey, Ronny Miron, Francesco Forlin, and Amir Winer – as well as myself – dealt, taking reference to manifold relevant philosophical authors, with principal, primordial problems – as well as the pre-supposed pre-conditions – of an understanding interpretation of the surrounding world, which we dwell in, and the – (inter-subjective) recognition of the foreignness of the – other(s), which we encounter within it, considering the unresolved dilemmas of post-modernity, Markus Lipowicz and Sarah Seitz, on the one hand, drew attention to trials and tasks that the transhumanist reductionism of experience or the ecological reevaluation of earth pose, whilst, on the other hand, Yessica del Rincon and Preston Adcock admonished against the engrained patriarchal and colonial structures of capitalism threatening – through the underlying xenophobic sentiments or the overlaying sense of superiority – to thoroughly disrupt the precarity of life. Debating education in democracy as an act of freedom that takes place in the in-between of person's selfhood and communal cohabitation Wierciński emphasized the ethical responsibility necessarily denoting all pedagogical processes: idea in detail – in dis-similar dimensions – further expounded upon by Mirosław Woźnica and Paulina Sosnowska, who both emphasized the invaluable importance of

acculturation and edification in the attempts to avert and thwart the compulsion of existence on the way towards solidarity. On the way towards personal exchange Dariusz Wiśniewski (also) accentuated the use of – at first glance uselessly repetitive – spiritual exercises. Taking into account the movement of un-veiling transformation, with which works of art and imagination, of profound beauty confront us, Hovav Rashelbach and Adam J. Goldsmith delved into the abysses of the aesthetic phenomenon not only in its stylistic expression, but also in its revolutionary potential. In a measure complementing these insights, lectures delivered by Raelynn Gosse and Yael Canetti-Yaffe proffered appurtenant “case studies” of an artistic reply to persisting enigmas of worldly subsistence by illuminating – the former – the oeuvre of Filipino painter Juan Luna and – the latter – the architecture of Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. In juxtaposition with the (mainly) “Western” outlook – at once counterbalancing it and divulging its deficiency –, Ali Tariq Al-Omari, on the basis of system theory uniquely endeavoring to reconcile the humanities and natural sciences, introduced the notion of Islam as a form of hospitality, whilst Ali Sanana, on the basis of her own activist involvement, revealed the adversities Iraqi refugees and asylum seekers in Germany have to overcome. Szczepan Urbaniak’s essay examined the requisite exertions of absolute love in the face of evil, such as homicide or suicide, whereas Adam C. Haaga and Tyler Tritten, (albeit) both departing from Jacques Derrida’s concept of the (un-conditional) forgiving of the (im)possible, from a common ground derived diametrically contrary (political) consequences. Paul Ricoeur’s theory of positive forgiveness as the unfolding of a dialectic of remembering and forgetting, of forgetting and learning anew in the presence, in the re-presentation of a wounded past for a healing restoration of future was conferred upon the audience by Małgorzata Hołda. In conclusion, on the last day, a round table discussion of all the participants concisely summarized not only the rewarding grains of gained knowledge to be nurtured forth in philosophical solitude, but also the personally experienced amicable – newly forged as well as reinforced preceding – interactions during time spent together in and around the (wonderful) city of Kraków.

Worthy of unambiguous (re)commendation is the unique, specific and special trait in the conception of the Summer School that allows students and (their) professors – the less and the more experienced, the more and the less renowned

colleagues alike – to approach each other in the openness of a dialogical process with-in, in front of an international scholarly forum of attentive and engaged public of philosophers and philosophically interested intellectuals.

The International Conference took place on 20th May at the Institute of European Studies of the Jagiellonian University at the (picturesque) Przegorzały Castle (on the outskirts of Kraków), and – in contrast with the somewhat experimental character of the Summer School conceived, at least partially, as its “academically” structured, “ceremonially” formal continuation – enabled the participants the opportunity to present – to a closer (but not closed) circle of contributors – their observations and opinions regarding (a/the) hermeneutics of hospitality in a world, the age, the state – the times and the places – of which are becoming ever more ravaged, ever less habitable.

Following the opening addresses by the esteemed representatives of co-organizing institutions, Jacek Kołodziej (Jagiellonian University) and Anna Wilkomirska (University of Warsaw), Ramsey Eric Ramsey – through a contemplative reading of William Shakespeare’s famed play *Hamlet* – highlighted the eminence of welcoming within language that in the maintaining of an ecstatic openness to(wards) the world, its nearness and its distance, – as a mirror, as a miracle – poetically grounds dwelling imbued with the task of inheritance. By re-tracing historical foundations of the meaning and the sense of hospitality, Marie-Anne Lescourret deliberated upon the problem of un-conditional-ity and non-reciprocity of the relation between the host and the guest; Adam Graves, however, discussed the clashing stances within the current dispute on identity liberalism, by critically re-assessing the normative theory of freedom. Calling upon experience in palliative care, Markus Schlemmer discussed with reservation the – lack of the – practice of hospitality in hospitals as institutions defined – and confined – by modern trends of dehumanization, especially in respect of the acceptance of (always solely our own) mortality. Whereas Marcin Rebes asserted the necessity of constitutive reciprocity and established solidarity in inter-personal relationships, and whereas Rafał Godoń exemplified the classroom debate as hermeneutic practice in the inter-play of questions and answers, Andrzej Wierciński convincingly intertwined the motifs and the motivations of education as trans-formation – con-version: con-versation – of individual and of community ascertaining the imperative of hospitality

between commitment and receptiveness for the other in the (fabled) figure of (spiritual) friendship. Whilst, in my paper, I attempted to underscore the opacity – the equivocality – of hospitality through an interpretation of a poem by Paul Celan, Urszula Zbrzeźniak explicitly addressed the problematic of its (inner and outer) limits and limitations in encountering the unthinkable. The dimension of the political, already touched upon by numerous authors, came clearly to the fore in the essay by Ronny Miron, who spoke of Karl Jaspers' ontology of guilt rising from the depths of existence as – in its freedom, in its necessity – experienced in a boundary situation towards the transcendence of the metaphysical. Dis-entangling the thematic thread of politics, Tyler Tritten and Paulina Sosnowska, both – from differing starting points – referring to Carl Schmitt, debating philosophical theories of Chantal Mouffe (the former) and of Hannah Arendt (the latter), scrutinized sovereign power and revolutionary turmoil, their im-possibility. As the final lecturer, Adam C. Haaga, recounting Jean-Luc Nancy's narrative of the intruder as – a sort of – an infection of the self (by the other) and as – a sort of – a disinfection of the other (by the self), transposing it onto the level of sociality, reflected upon the auto-immune effects of (post-modern) democracy.

Although the International Conference, in comparison with the Summer School, ran (through) the prescribed course of comparable “scientific” meetings, it nonetheless offered an intriguing, in-valuable – “applicable” – abundance of philosophical perspectives inciting thought(s) to trail their paths, if only perhaps to an impasse.

The events organized in Kraków by the International Institute for Hermeneutics – re-covering, at least for a moment, (from) with-in the idioms and the dialects of a prolific plentitude of language(s) the in-finitely fragile space of dialogue with the noble goal to pre-serve the irreducible alterity of the encountered other – may be, as a whole, considered as a contribution towards – theoretically and practically – re-building – thinking and effectuating –, recreating – the possibility of the world as, the world as the possibility of – (a) hospitable dwelling.
