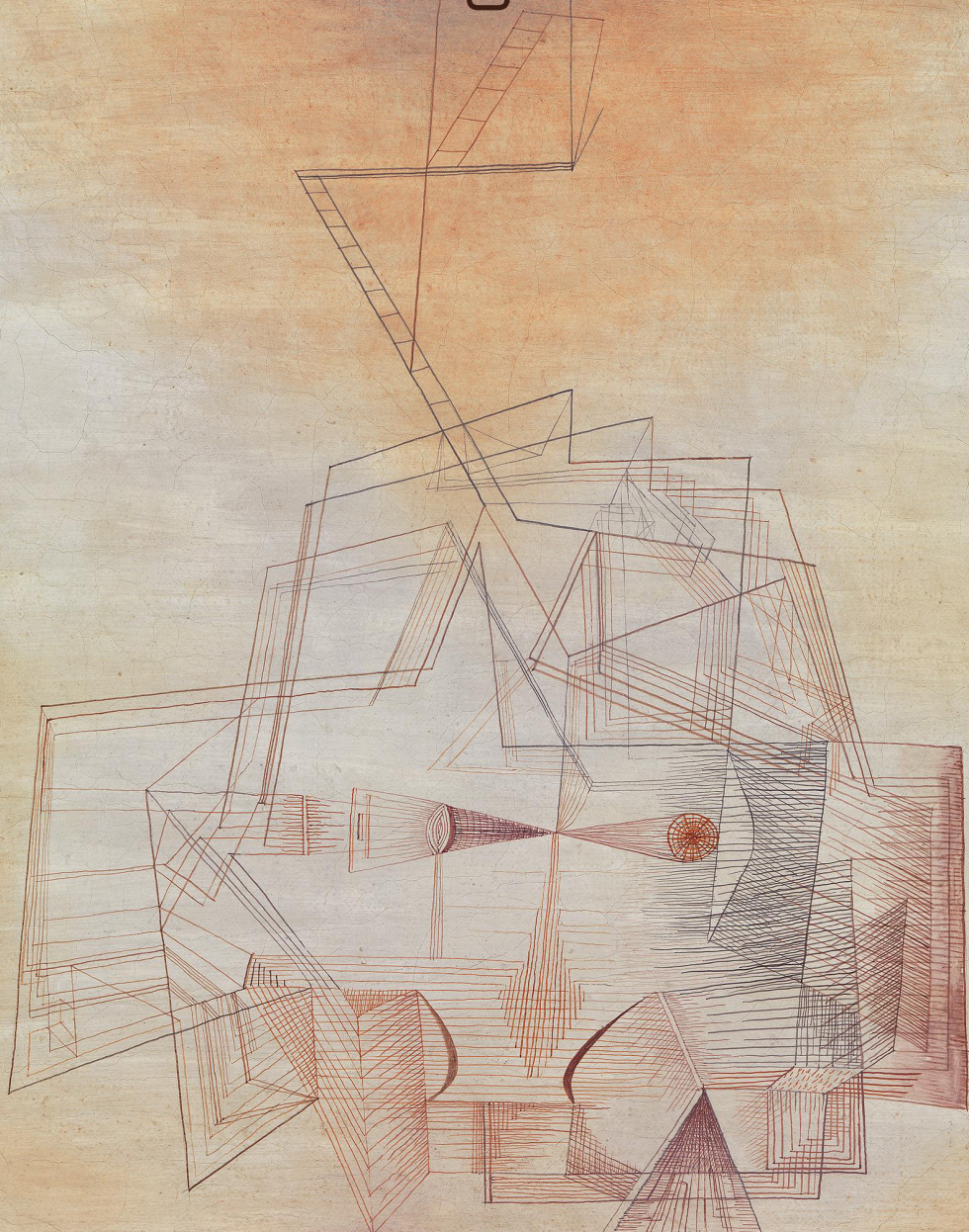


Edited by Povilas Aleksandravičius

Thinking in Crisis



Thinking in Crisis

Edited by Povilas Aleksandravičius

Thinking in crisis

Edited by prof. Povilas Aleksandravičius

Reviewers:

Assoc. Prof. dr. Victor Martinovich
(European Humanities University)

Prof. dr. Marija Rūta Vabalaitė
(Mykolas Romeris University)

Dr. Dalius Viliūnas
(Lithuanian culture research institute)

Recommended for publication:

Academic Department of Humanities and Arts of European Humanities university,

Protocol No 37H-06, April 14, 2023

Thinking in Crisis

Edited by Povilas Aleksandravičius

Today everyone is talking about a crisis: from ecology, international relations and liberal democracy to the economy and crisis of values and education. All crises stem from something more fundamental than what they explicitly demonstrate. They arise from a crisis of the mind or thinking. In the 20th century, many authors thought about the crisis of thinking in Europe and the world. Their reflections constitute an invaluable trove of ideas. Have we anything new to say?

Do we need it? Could it be that we need not more thoughts about life, but rather the life force itself?

Where do we find it, and how does it manifest and communicate itself?

ISBN: 978-9955-791-05-8

(C) EHU, 2023

CONTENT

Povilas Aleksandravičius.

Introduction. To think in crisis or thinking in crisis? 7

Anatoli Mikhailov.

Thinking in Crisis: On the (Ir)Responsibility of the Philosopher..... 11

Francesco Alfieri.

What is the role of the intellectual today?

How to overcome the *Machenschaft* we find ourselves in?..... 27

Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann.

Die Metaphysic. Auf den zwei Wegen der Seinsfrage Heideggers

(with an introductory note by prof. Anatoli Mikhailov) 41

Chantal Delsol.

Save the Enlightenment 55

Eugenio Parati, Mario Picozzi, Davide Sattin, Marta Vassallo.

Thinking outside the box for a new epistemology in neurosciences 65

Povilas Aleksandravičius.

Words need a force. Where will the saving power come from? 71

About the authors..... 83

To think in crisis or thinking in crisis?

On 28-30 June 2022, an international conference was held at the European Humanities University in Vilnius, devoted to reflections on the state of humanity. Its participants, eminent philosophers, agreed that the word “crisis” adequately describes this state. However, what determines it?

The crisis that has struck humanity is discussed in various aspects: the ecological crisis, the crisis of international relations, the crisis of liberal democracy and the liberal economic model, the crisis of values, the crisis of education... The recent world sanitary crisis can perhaps be regarded as a symbolic expression of the common state of humanity. But the war taking place in Europe, a self-deeming homeland and a bastion of rational thinking, is more than a symbol. Is it a preamble to the future of humanity?

In a critical situation, it is necessary to think. It is necessary to diagnose, describe the situation, anticipate the consequences, raise questions and seek solutions. However, many participants of the conference agreed that the crises that have stricken humanity appear to stem from a common source, from something more fundamental than what they directly demonstrate. Thinking itself is in crisis today.

What does the critical condition of thinking presuppose? Two things. First of all, we are deprived of the instrument to solve the problems that we have caused ourselves. We are victims of our own madness. Are not war, environmental destruction, and physical and spiritual illness the consequences of this process? Thinking in crisis means that the vital roots of humanity are damaged. It also means that the question of humanity’s existence, survival is already apparent. Finally, we don’t have a roadmap to get out of the thinking crisis. We badly need a great external force that will cast radically new light on it.

On the other hand, thinking in crisis can be a fresh start. A radical crisis destroys the roots, so that the process takes root anew. A radical crisis can be part of shaping the world. If we survive it, what seemed impossible, will become possible. The conference participants were invited to give meaning to this line of Hölderlin, most eminently commented on by Heidegger: “But where the danger is, grows the saving power also”. Also to reflect on the yet mysterious, hitherto increasingly suppressed but full of promise layer of human energy, which the poetic word holds within itself and whose existence was pointed out by an unknown poet under the most dramatic circumstances on 23 August 1939 (quoted in Elias Canetti’s book *Crowds and Power*): “It’s too late now. If I were a true poet, I should have been able to prevent war”.

Some participants of the conference wrote articles a compilation of which you are holding in your hands. The first article is written by Prof. **Anatoli Mikhailov**, a founder and remarkable figure of the European Humanities University. His article provides a sharp and profound analysis of thinking in crisis, whose fiercest form – the loss of authenticity – is characteristic of today’s philosophy. Philosophy has formed a specific civilization, in which it was learned to raise questions of life itself. Today philosophy has lost its skill to ask real questions. Why did this happen and what can we do in this situation? Through a thorough interpretation of the historical development of European thinking, identifying critical philosophers and apogean points of their thinking, Anatoli Mikhailov grasps the foundational dynamics leading from peak to crisis and ultimately to destruction. Quoting Hölderlin, the author traces the moment of death of the authenticity of philosophy: thinking has lost its capacity of “organic unity of man’s experience as an original unity of subject and object in Being that underpins their separation in judgment”. The author pays special attention to the connection between thinking and language especially deeply: the inability to establish the connection and maintain it in authentic tension is the aspect of thinking in crisis that bears the most brutal consequences. Philosophy has lost itself: something else functions under the guise of its name. In this context, it is necessary to raise the question of a philosopher’s responsibility. Anatoli Mikhailov does this without gratifying any external conjuncture, but exposing the moral and fatal wound of many intellectuals, and philosophy itself.

The issue of the philosopher’s responsibility is continued by **Francesco Alfieri**, professor at the Vita-Salute San Raffaele University of Milan. Connecting it with an analysis of the crisis of thinking, he reveals the brutal and sometimes comical face of the “system” that we created and that became a replica of *Machenschaft*. The situation at universities expresses it best, and Francesco Alfieri formulates an existentially important problem: what should be an intellectual’s role when thinking is in crisis? It is the question of re-rooting thinking and its “reconstruction”, the challenge of surpassing *Machenschaft*. With his text, Francesco Alfieri introduces our reflections into the Heideggerian horizon.

The apogee of the collection is the third article written by Prof. **Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann**, a disciple of Heidegger. It unfolds two forms of metaphysics, two ways of raising the question of Being. One of them leads to a crisis, as in the second way, which reveals a gleam of light. This is the deepest path of thinking that determines the historical destiny of humanity. This article is written in German, and Prof. Anatoli Mikhailov explains in the introduction why it was not translated: “The present article is published in the language of its original – German. Knowing better than anybody else that the nuances of this language are hardly transferable in any other language, Professor von Herrmann helps us in his interlingual interpretation to grasp the spirit of Heidegger’s untraditional way of thinking”. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann left us on 2 August 2022, several weeks after the conference in Vilnius. The article in this compilation is most likely the last text of the great specialist on Heideggerian thought.

In interpreting the contemporary crisis of thinking, a prominent French philosopher, founder of the Hannah Arendt Institute in France, Prof. **Chantal Delsol** proposes to rethink the legacy and meaning of the Enlightenment Epoch. The progress of science and technology, which inspired and often blinded the 18th-century man, ended with the fall of illusions in our century: bouncing into the human nature as solid as rock, the abolition of war and suffering, the eternal existential rebuses that cannot be resolved and various forms of emancipation have already caused a disgusting disappointment. Solving single problems posed new problems, and our thinking gradually began to plunge into crisis. Chantal Delsol believes that its main features are the return of vision of a cyclical historical time which destroys faith in the feasibility of progress and encourages waiting for the inevitable chaos; the withdrawal of the idea of truth, which distracts our thinking from reality, closes it into a chamber of particularism and pushes to mythological pathways, perpetuates cultural and moral relativism that frees from responsibility for the state of humanity; the popularization of irrational trans-post-humanistic myths that makes us rely on utopian projects of transformation of human nature and distracts from the real questions. Asking at the end of the article what we should do, Chantal Delsol points out that “deeper than cultural anthropologies, there is a human anthropology, difficult to describe, but carrying limits imposed on us. It is a question of being lucid and humble so as not to fall into unbridled utopias which, as we know today, only bring disillusion and despair [...] we can be simple witnesses of a world that believes own improvement is possible”. Is this testimony and belief not an opening to a force greater than humanity which, in the depths of the nature of humanity, guards its being and its meaningfulness?

A team of neuroscientists from Milan: professors **Eugenio Parati**, **Mario Picozzi**, **Davide Sattin** and **Marta Vassallo** has made a very special contribution to this collection of articles. Reflecting on the most relevant data from the neuro-

sciences, these scientific practitioners and theorists raise the problem of thinking in crisis through the prism of human brain research. It turns out that this most mysterious organ of the body functions so polyvalently that it leads the neurosciences themselves into crisis. Italian thinkers claim the necessity of philosophy for these sciences, as well as the necessity of mastering biological data in order to understand human reality philosophically. They identify and analyze what they called a gap in identity. The philosophical and scientific relativism has nowadays brought the question of truth to the dead end. The authors of this article propose to reopen this question based on Emanuele Severino's ideas verified in neurosciences. The idea that an innovative conjunction between philosophy and sciences could give a new impetus to the problem of thinking in crisis deserves most careful consideration.

Many authors of the 20th century thought about the crisis of thinking that struck Europe and the world. Their reflections form an invaluable depository of thoughts. Can we add anything new to it? Is it necessary? We have enough thoughts about life but do we really have the force to live? Where will we find it and how does it spread? Prof. **Povilas Aleksandravičius** raises such questions in the last article, identifying the reserves from which humanity and its thinking could draw vital energy.

Povilas Aleksandravičius,

Professor at the European Humanities University

Thinking in Crisis: On the (Ir) Responsibility of the Philosopher

Anatoli Mikhailov

“How can I be a good philosopher when I can't manage to be a good man?”

L. Wittgenstein

Since philosophy has always been playing a decisive role in the development of European intellectual tradition, it became inevitable that in the time of the crisis of this tradition the question of responsibility of philosophy was raised: “An entire book might be written under the title: On the Responsibility and Irresponsibility of Philosophy”. (Ortega y Gasset 1963: 106). This statement, no doubt, belongs to the tradition of questioning by philosophy itself and demonstrates the critical attitude toward the very nature of philosophical experience since its very beginning in the time of differentiating from the mythical thought. But there is also something very special about this statement. We need to note that it is written in 1942, amidst World War II, and does not belong to somebody who makes it in the traditional manner of an abstract contemplation akin to those whom Hannah Arendt, echoing Immanuel Kant, ironically called “the thinkers by profession”. The author of this statement is José Ortega y Gasset whose remarkable book “The Revolt of the Masses” was issued in 1929. This book has not been properly appreciated at that time, but in our days of globalization it has acquired a new value as we face the challenges of active involvement of people of different continents and nations.

up in three points that can help us overcome this status of general crisis in neurosciences that we have just seen:

- (A) Similarly to Einstein, time is closer to eternity than to infinity.
- (B) There is a new interpretation of the Aristotelian law of non-contradiction.
- (C) Similarly to Sartre, the brain is the place where the world appears.

Given these premises, our brain and, consequently, our minds are places where human experience appears and manifests itself, where we are able to compute the external world, its crisis, and its changes. Therefore, the neurosciences seem to be the perfect ground to consider, if we want to verify the truthfulness of our perception, that is given to us by the external world manifesting itself in our sensory-motor system. It seems to us that this can be perfectly inscribed into a new Severinian paradigm, that has as its ultimate goal a profound sense of understanding, rather than discovering.

Bibliography

- Bremner, A. J., Holmes, N. P., Spence, Ch., 2008. Infants lost in (peripersonal) space? *Trends in Cognitive Science* 12 (8): 298-305.
- Brugger, P., et al., 2000. Beyond re-memembering: Phantom sensations of congenitally absent limbs. *Pnas* 97 (11): 6167-6172.
- Feng, Y., et al., 2015. A new case of complete primary cerebellar agenesis: clinical and imaging findings in a living patient. *Brain: a journal of Neurology* 138 (6): 1-5.
- Feullet, L., Dufour H., Pelletier, J., 2007. Brain of a white-collar worker. *Lancet* 370 (9583): 262.
- Genon, S., Eickhoff, S., Kharabian, S., 2022. Linking interindividual variability in brain structure to behaviour. *Nature Reviews* 23 (5): 307-318.
- Gómez-Isla, T., Frosch M. P., 2022. Lesions without symptoms: understanding resilience to Alzheimer disease neuropathological changes. *Nature Reviews* 18(6): 323-332.
- Kant, I., 2019. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kazumichi, M., 2022. Multiple representations of the body schema for the same body part. *Pnas* 119 (4): 1-9.
- Kuhn, T., 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Luppi, A., et al., 2022. Whole-brain modelling identifies distinct but convergent paths to unconsciousness in anaesthesia and disorders of consciousness. *Nature-Communications Biology* 5: 1-15.
- Nietzsche, F. W., 2006. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra : a Book for All and None*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Popper, K., 1959. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. New York: Basic Books.
- Severino, E., 1980. *Destino della necessità- Katà to Chreon*. Milano: Adelphi Biblioteca Filosofica.
- Severino, E., 2014. *La Struttura Originaria*. Brescia: La Scuola Editrice-Brescia, 2014.
- Severino, E., 2016. *The Essence of Nihilism*. London: Verso Books.

Words need a force. Where will the saving power come from?

Povilas Aleksandravičius

The current condition of the world makes us raise the radical question: are we on the brink of extinction? Where do the humanity's life resources lie? What should be done?

Suggestions regarding the world saving solutions are abound. Almost every intellectual will gladly share his or her viewpoint concerning the problem, at least by sighing complacently: "It would simply suffice to implement this idea...". However, the idea, thousands of marvellous ideas!, remain immaterialised.

I believe what we lack is not ideas, but the force of life that accompanies ideas. We are tormented not by the lack of theoretical thinking, but rather by the shortage of spiritual energy.

I must right away clarify what I mean by referring to the force of life. I am convinced that the humanity will never face the lack of energy to prolong its existence. It will always find a way to survive, maybe even after a nuclear war, when little of it remains. Afterall, the force of life can be a killing force. One can survive by killing the other one, when the other starts causing difficulties; one can even reinforce one's life and identity, to clean the dirty conscience, by pointing towards the enemies and by exterminating them. René Girard thoroughly researched these grim mechanisms of our human nature and described the process of search for the

scapegoat and its ritual sacrifice (Girard 1977). Another French anthropologist, Henri Bergson, highlighted the “war instinct” intrinsic to the biological human nature (Bergson 1935). Bergson maintained in his work that the energy of the flux of life (*élan vital*) can be a creating energy, but it also tends to enclose itself inside its own creature and as if starts rolling inside trying to feed only its own life (Bergson 1911; Aleksandravičius 2019). Once it is locked up in one of its creatures, e.g., in one of the species of life, the energy of the flux of life can only fight for the survival of this creature, only for the survival of this species, at the expense of the other creatures, other species, i.e., by killing other species. The energy of life naturally turns into the other-killing energy, and one’s survival implies killing another one. The history of the humanity testifies that the antagonistic distribution of the energy of life is its law: groups (peoples) wage wars against other groups and view the destruction of the other group as one’s survival. This was the case in primitive times, and it is still happening today in front of our eyes.⁸ The warring energy of life will never cease; not even if, as Bergson writes, occurs the following: “At the pace at which science is moving, that day is not far off when one of the two adversaries, through some secret process which he was holding in reserve, will have the means of annihilating his opponent. The vanquished may vanish off the face of the earth” (Bergson 1935: 247-248).

However, the energy of life may not necessarily enclose itself in what has already been created, but rather it may continue to create. The energy of life may be not warring but giving birth.

In his book *Crowds and Power*, Elias Canetti quotes an unknown poet who is believed to have said the following words on 23 August 1939: “It’s too late now. If I were a true poet, I should have been able to prevent war” (Canetti 1984: 273).

The poetic word is unique in that it awakens the rhythm that pulsates with force. What is this rhythm and its force that we feel when the poetic word vibrates? It is the creative energy that manifests itself in all artistic fields. Subtly felt, the creative energy and emotion are the driving force of the creation and perception of a poem, a painting, a symphony, an architectural masterpiece. But the creative energy, which manifests itself through the rhythm and force, is also necessary in

⁸ C. Lévi-Strauss points out that the “primitive peoples” tend to perceive only their members as deserving life and as “the men”: for them, “Humanity is confined to the borders of the tribe, the linguistic group, or even, in some instances, to the village, so that many so-called primitive peoples describe themselves as “the men” (or sometimes - though hardly more discreetly - as “the good”, “the excellent”, “the well-achieved”), thus implying that the other tribes, groups or villages have no part in the human virtues or even in human nature, but that their members are, at best, “bad”, “wicked”, “ground-monkeys”, or “lousy eggs”. They often go further and rob the outsider of even this modicum of actuality, by referring to him as a “ghost” or an “apparition” (Lévi-Strauss 1992: 14-15). In *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson shows that this anthropological mechanism has not changed during the entire course of the evolution of civilisation.

all other areas of human life. It is only by capturing the rhythm and force, the creative emotion, it becomes possible to renew a profession, work, science and the cognitive process, to solve social problems, to maintain personal relationships and to build communities.

Now let us ask a question. When we look at the works of art (music, literature, architecture...) that are being created in the world, at the evolution of professional life, at scientific achievements and technologies, at thousands of communities of all kinds, at philosophy and religions, at social evolution from a global perspective, we ask: is the creative energy at work in all of this sufficient to stop the war today (and instead of the war, I could mention some other fundamental global problem, like, say, climate change)? No. That is why we speak of the “crisis of thinking”.

“If I were a true poet, I should have been able to prevent war”.

What we need today is creative energy, a rhythm and a force that can stop the war (or, if you prefer, climate change). This statement is equal to the question: How should thinking change so that the foundations of the world order change? How should thinking change so that people – many people – are able to resist the common and strongest tendency of their nature, and so that our nature begins to evolve, as it were, in a new way, creating a different order?

Is it realistic to expect this? In this paper, I will point out some of the channels through which new energy, a new rhythm, a new thinking, and a new order usually emerge in the world. But before I name these channels, I have to say that I have no reason to insist that anything at all will come through them. On the contrary, from my point of view, a new and global energy that will change people’s thinking and the world order seems to me to be impossible for the time being, and my paper is simply void, just words without force.

The problem is that: if we do not change our thinking and the world order, we are doomed. The current evolution of the world leads it to the elementary destruction of the humanity – through war, climate change, technological transhumanism, or all of these at once. In other words, to avoid destruction, i.e., to reverse conventional thinking, to reverse the direction of the natural tendency, and, thus, to create a new order for the humanity, something impossible must happen. Can the seemingly impossible become possible? Can something, which has never existed before, emerge in the world and change everything? Is radical novelty possible? It seems to me that a positive answer to these questions is our only hope. The impossible is indispensable if we want to stay alive.⁹

⁹ More on this – impossible becoming possible – see Camille Riquier and Povilas Aleksandravičius articles (Aleksandravičius 2021a; 2022).

Our ideas and our talks are fascinating. Especially those of philosophers. But they need force. The same word can be spoken in vain, or with great force capable of changing the world. Where does this force come from? I see the following channels: silence, great personalities, catastrophe, the course of history, narrative rationality. Through these channels, a radical novelty can enter the thinking of the humanity, and the world order can be remade.

1. Silence. We should always start everything with silence, everything should be accompanied by silence, and everything should return to silence. The various forms and content of silence have been analysed by Max Picard in his classic work *The World of Silence* (1948); they have been reflected on by the French historian Alain Corbin (2018). I would like to single out just one fundamental meaning of the phenomenon of silence.

Silence is not the absence of words, but a different kind of presence that is the source of the force of all words, representations, and actions. “Silence gives to things inside it something of the force of its own autonomous being. The autonomous being in things is strengthened in silence” (Picard 1948: 3-4). Silence is the absence of everything, filled with another level of presence. This special presence is the instance of beginning of any living being or phenomenon. When we ask where the force that should accompany all our representations comes from, we seek to grasp the original energy that gives rise to the impulse to be, i.e., to create. A human act of consciousness can only be strong when it is consciously rooted in its originating instance. We can interpret this instance from the perspectives of different schools, we can call it being (Heidegger) or the flux of life (*élan vital*, Bergson), perhaps Buddha or Christ, but only silence is the condition for its experience *sine qua non*. When we lose contact with this original instance, our words lose their effective meaning and our actions become routine automatisms. Having lost a conscious relationship with the original energy, consciousness becomes the instrument of instinctive action. At this point, it is worth remembering the saying by Pascal: “Tout le malheur des hommes vient d’une seule chose, qui est de ne savoir pas demeurer en repos, dans une chambre”, “All of a man’s unhappiness comes from his inability to stay peacefully in his room” (Pascal 2012: thought 139).

We ask the following: how to change the nature of thinking or the nature of the vital tendency, how to transform instincts and automatisms through contact with the energy of life? We can do this through a change in the inner rhythm, which is possible only in silence. This rhythm is best felt and transmitted by artists and mystics. We cannot but remember Wittgenstein, who showed silence as the essence of language in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

Many discussions today revolve around the innovative ascribing of meaning to the Humanities, especially philosophy, in the world and their place at university. This goal is especially cherished by Professor Anatoli Mikhailov without whose inspiration this paper would not have been written. I am convinced that the Humanities and philosophy will regain their meaning and power when they are combined with thinking as a spiritual practice, a theme that Pierre Hadot masterfully explored in France. And the practice of silence is the key to the paradigm of thinking as a spiritual practice. Perhaps our ideas will gain some world-transforming force when they are accompanied by a thinker’s inner transformation whose condition *sine qua non* is silence.

There is a reservoir of energy in human consciousness and, dare we say, in the whole consciousness of the humanity. It is not the result of a representation but, rather, the source of representations. If we do not know how to establish a contact with it, it is because we do not know how to be appropriately silent. I think we need to develop a philosophy of silence that would evolve as a spiritual practice.

2. Great personalities. In introducing this source of force, I shall again refer to Bergson’s philosophy. In my view, it reveals the essence of thinking as a spiritual practice and even leads to a spiritual practice best. Bergson’s philosophy describes the inner transformation of the human being during which the creative energy is released. This transformation takes place when the human being penetrates the duration (*durée*) that flows within him and that coincides with the duration of the universal flux of life (*élan vital*), and, hence, with the act of the creation of the world. We talk about the humanity’s crisis, and we fear its end. We are proposing many ideas for getting out of the crisis. Perhaps we even know what should be done. But only through the merging with the personality-transforming and world-creating flux of life can we gain the force to implement our ideas.

In his late texts, especially in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1935) and *The Creative Mind* (2019), Bergson describes the experience of the intuition of duration in everyday practical life: it is expressed as an emotion of joy that motivates action. This action is always an act of creation. One of the leitmotifs of Bergson’s late philosophy is the emergence of radical novelty in the world or the creation of reality. It takes place alongside duration when it is caught up by intuition. Intuition transforms the mind and stimulates the will. Bergson contrasts this act of the transformed mind with the ordinary activity of the mind. The ordinary activity of the mind is a different re-arrangement of an already existing reality, its repetition. The act of intuition is a creative act. From my point of view, we can describe the humanity’s crisis as a deadlock in the ordinary activity of the mind, i.e., as a process of a repetitive rearrangement of the same reality that no longer

meets the vital needs of the humanity, and even begins to damage them. To bring thinking out of crisis and the humanity out of danger, a strong creative act of radical novelty is necessary, which can only happen when a human being establishes a contact with the flux of life.¹⁰

In *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson describes in detail the functioning of the creative emotion. Unlike other emotions, this emotion is not infra-intellectual, i.e., arising out of the already existing ideas, but supra-intellectual, i.e., it itself is the idea-creating source. And not only ideas, but also acts of will. Not just ideas and acts of will, but everything: “An emotion is an affective stirring of the soul, but a surface agitation is one thing, an upheaval of the depths another <...> [when] the whole is driven forward” (Bergson 1935: 31; Aleksandravičius 2021b). If one experiences the creative emotion within oneself, new possibilities are not realised, but new possibilities are created and “the gates of the future open wide; freedom is offered an unlimited field” (Bergson 2019: 85).¹¹ The creative emotion is an instance of a possibility of possibilities unforeseen in advance.

The problem is that it is extremely difficult for us, ordinary people, to consciously engage with duration and experience the creative emotion. Almost impossible. This is where the role of the “great personalities”, or as Bergson calls them, “the great people of the good”, comes into play. These people, above all mystics, and geniuses in various fields, can maintain the contact with *élan vital* due to their grace or inborn talents. They can experience the creative emotion in a more constant manner than us; therefore, they create something radically new in a particular sphere (arts, science, politics, religion or even the entire human existence) and, thus, make an impact on society or history. A characteristic of great personalities is that they can make the seemingly impossible things possible on a societal scale and in the course of history: “[Their] method consisted in supposing possible what is actually impossible in a given society, in imagining¹² what would be its effect on the soul of society, and then inducing some such psychic condition by [words] and example” (Bergson 1935: 78). The word of great personalities has force.

The word and action of great personalities “intensify” the “state of mind” and “action” of other members of a society, thus transforming not only their per-

10 At this point, it would be appropriate to reflect on Hannah Arendt’s notion of *natality*: every human being brings something radically new into the world at his/her birth and, before being corrupted by conventional thinking, he/she is close to the source of life. Our question raised in this paper could be formulated as follows: how can we safeguard our new-borns from damage? That is, what should our education be, so that children and young people lose as little as possible of the contact with the flux of life within them?

11 In Part III of *The Creative Mind*, “The Possible and the Real”, Bergson shows the possibilities of how radically new, and not the already-existing ideas, are created.

12 To my mind, Bergson’s conception of the creating emotion can be significantly complimented by Paul Ricoeur’s conception of the creating imagination, the source of narrative rationality that will be discussed further.

sonal lives but also the life of the society as a whole: “The creator par excellence is the one whose action, by its very intensity, is capable of intensifying the actions of others” (Bergson 2009: 25). In other words, the creative emotion of great personalities is transmitted to other personalities. The creative emotion transfer process, initiated by the great personalities, remains an extremely important phenomenon despite of the fact that the process gets weaker as the spatial and temporal distance grows. Through it, the deep bonds among people, called the “deep” or “supra-social” (Bergson 1935: 52) bonds by Bergson, are activated. The most characteristic examples of such great personalities, according to Bergson, are the mystics and Socrates. Christ is the greatest one, his status is just exceptional, and he could be called an archi-mystic (Waterlot 2008: 266) or an archi-great personality. Thus, we need new mystics and a new Socrates – those who make the impossible possible and engage a sufficient part of the humanity in the process.

But will we face the day of new mystics and a new Socrates? Perhaps we will overcome the crisis in the opposite way – through a catastrophe?

3. Catastrophe. An important philosophy of catastrophe has been formulated in recent years by Professor Jean-Pierre Dupuy of Stanford University. Reflecting on the situation in which the humanity has found itself, he draws a radical conclusion: “From now on, we are faced not with the mere possibility of catastrophe, but with the inevitability of catastrophe” (Dupuy 2002: cover IV). However, it is precisely this conclusion that becomes the starting point for thinking that opens the prospect of salvation or, in other words, transforms the situation of the inevitability of catastrophe into its opposite, that is, of the possibility of avoiding it. Jean-Pierre Dupuy himself sums up his philosophy of catastrophe through the words of Borges: “The future is inevitable, but it may not come true. God supervises the intervals” (Dupuy 2002: 149). What is this interval in which the inevitable future, the inevitable apocalypse, is suspended?

Jean-Pierre Dupuy’s “enlightened catastrophism” builds on the work of two thinkers. He draws on Hans Jonas’s “ethics of the future” and its driving force, the “fear heuristic” set out in *The Imperative of Responsibility* (1979). “The prophecy of disaster is proclaimed in order to avoid its fulfilment”; “What can be our compass? Anticipation of the threat itself! The ethical principles from which to derive new commitments of new power can only be discovered in the first glimpses of the threat to come, at the dawn of a planet-wide threat and in the depths of a disastrous fate that affects the whole of humanity”; “In other words, what can save us is what threatens us” (Cited in Dupuy 2002: 149, 158, 215). The inevitability or anticipation of a catastrophe arouses a fear, which produces a new power that will enable us to effectively avoid the catastrophe. Jean-Pierre Dupuy uses Bergson’s

philosophy of novelty, which we have already quoted, to interpret Jonas's ethics of the future, which arises out of the phenomenon of fear. The "fear" aroused by the inevitability of a catastrophe (Jonas) is transformed into an act of radical novelty (Bergson).

The inevitability of a catastrophe awakens the avoidance of this inevitability: this is the interval called human freedom, or the creation of absolute novelty ("Our freedom is to be found in this very interval", Dupuy 2002: 165). Jean-Pierre Dupuy refers to the biologist Jean-Claude Ameisen's discovery to illustrate this reflection. The indispensable condition for the survival of life is the "suicide programmed in the cells". Life can survive only because it is certain of the reality of its auto-destruction, and it is only this certainty that gives it the capacity to successfully resist this auto-destruction. "The positive event – life – comes from the negation of the negative event – the auto-destruction" (Dupuy 2002: 216). The reality of death awakens creation.

But we must admit: the inevitability of a catastrophe will act as its negation just when the humanity becomes aware of it. Jean-Pierre Dupuy speaks of an "enlightened catastrophism". Can this "enlightenment" or awareness be awakened by the catastrophe *before* it happens? It happens if the announcement of this catastrophe is occurring with *force*. But perhaps the force comes, and the consciousness is only awakened during the catastrophe that is already unfolding? But doesn't it mean that it is already too late?

4. The evolution of the humanity's history. Is it possible that some history-transforming power, a Force-Creator, is acting in the evolution of the humanity's consciousness, and is it possible that it will save us at the vital moment by creating something that has not existed before? Here, we could analyse Heidegger's conception of the historicity of being and its stages, a dramatic statement by the German thinker that "only a God can save us" (Heidegger 1976), and a disturbed question asked in his dialogue with Jean Beaufret, "will being once more be capable for God?" (Beaufret 1974: 103). However, I will return once again to Bergson. His "laws" (*lois*) of the evolution of the humanity's history seem to me more tangible in the practical perspective of the psychological-spiritual life.

This history-transforming power, a Force-Creator, is an instance of absolute novelty. The humanity creates itself; it is capable of radical novelty; it has established a contact in its mind with Life that surpasses it. However, the emergence of novelty in history does not contradict the formation of historical laws, at least from a Bergsonian perspective. In this Bergsonian perspective, the central axis is the category of duration, which means that the past is taken into the unforeseea-

ble in advance moment of the present: novelty is pregnant with the past. The past naturally forms the evolution of consciousness and each creative act penetrates the historically formed human substance, it enlarges namely the substance's, not something else's, borders, and it renders new possibilities namely to this being, not something else. History has its own laws, though this does not impede human creative acts, which arise from the contact with the flux of life, to breath into it some radically new content.

In *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Bergson formulates such a law of history, which he called, maybe in some sense too metaphorically, the "law of two-fold frenzy" (Bergson 1935: 255-257). Perhaps we will be more precise by calling this law the "law of double extreme". When a certain way of life reaches an extreme and threatens the survival of the humanity, new generations resort to the opposite form of living, which they will develop to the end. For example, the medieval asceticism has been replaced by the modern quest to seek satisfaction from all pleasures and luxuries: the contemporary technologies are used to achieve them. However, as the humanity gets intoxicated by the extreme pursuit of pleasure and luxury enabled by technologies (a some part of the humanity actually enjoying them, while a larger part desiring them as if they were their only source of happiness), a new phase of human life may be dawning, the one characterized by certain "simplicity", when "it will no longer be a pleasure to simply enjoy pleasures" (Bergson 1935: 262), but where the pursuit of pleasure and luxury will be replaced by the simple joy of life. It is true that the Middle Ages will never return, just like the desire to live pleasurably will never be lost; this is because, as Bergson points out, all generations integrate the experience of those who preceded them into their memories: human history is a "spiral". The next stage of the historical spiral would be characterised by a new condition of the human spirit; namely this condition means the salvation from the catastrophe that we are discussing: "Our pleasures would still remain, but drab and jejune, because their intensity was merely the attention that we centred upon them. They would pale like our electric lamps before the morning sun. Pleasure would be eclipsed by joy" (Bergson 1935: 274).

Laws of history, as Bergson describes them, express a consciousness common to all humanity, which connects in a special way with the "consciousness of the universe", fed by the flux of life. These laws represent a historical dynamic towards a stronger intuition, a broadening of human perception. Of course, our words will gain force when the mind is fed by the expanded perception of intuition. Unfortunately, we will not find in Bergson's philosophy the assertion that laws of history are decisive or unstoppable. On the contrary, history can stop, alongside with the humanity.

The question is, do we identify the signs of the historical transformation that Bergson's "law of two-fold frenzy [extreme]" refers to in the world today? We can argue about this. In any case, the transcendental factor at work in history could be a factor in our faith in future. Better this faith not become a sedative drug that would calm down our responsibility and cool down our determination to create together!

5. Narrative rationality. We know these words from the Gospel of John: "The truth will set you free" (John 8, 32); "I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" (John 14, 6). These words mean that truth is a spiritually practical reality of every person ("will set you free", it is your "way and life") and it coincides not only with the Divine Person ("I am the Way..."), but also with every individual's person (your "way and life"). The Christian theology equals God and the human being in the sense of the historical becoming: God is embodied, becomes a human being so that a human being becomes divine, becomes God. This announcement of St. John, St. Paul and Fathers of the Church is (or must be) the leitmotif of the evangelical Church teaching. To discover one's inner truth is to discover God. Of course, while we are living on the earth, this discovery is mere crumbs and sparks of Truth. But they suffice to satisfy our hunger (Cf. Mark 7, 28), to kindle a fire. For a person, the discovery of the inner truth is the source of force, and this force is healing, knowing, acting, and loving. "He taught them as one who had authority" (Mark 1, 22). The word of great personalities gains its force from the inner truth, which is their person arising out of the Person as if from a source.

We must also ask how an "ordinary person", not necessarily a great personality, could discover his/her inner truth. In the beginning, we talked about silence that creates preconditions for that. However, it can also occur through the word, during the process of talking and listening.

During the crystallisation of the modern epoch, the concept of truth as a theoretical system started dominating in the European world view. The word of truth in this perspective is the outcome of a discussion based on rational arguments whose ideal is the scientific theory. Using argumentative rationality, modern philosophers, theologians, representatives of other social sciences and Humanities created many abstract systems that were used to explain the human and world truth. The shortage of such access to truth is the adaptation of reality to the forms constructed by the mind, disregarding the concreteness, process, and thousands of other nuances. Argumentative rationality results in a scheme of the reality, that is, its abstract understanding, but not its experience. Thus, the truth that it disseminates does not disseminate force, unless it is expressed by a great personality who embodies each pronounced word in the lived truth of the reality.

However, truth can be disseminated through other shapes of rationality. One of these is the narrative rationality whose conception has been substantiated by Jean-Marc Ferry (1996) building on Paul Ricoeur's conception of narrative identity described in *Time and Narrative* (1983-1985) and *Oneself as Another* (1990). From this perspective, a person's truth starts emerging during a sensitive dialogue, talking and listening. Many people are not ready to engage in a discussion guided by the rules of argumentative rationality because they are incompetent in a certain sphere, not educated enough, because they are shy, tired or mentally incapable. However, all are ready to engage in a conversation guided by the rules of narrative rationality in which everyone talks about his/her life – worries, tasks, hopes, failures, traumas, tortures, ... – following the emotion or imagination invoked for that purpose. During such a conversation, the truth emerging for the speaker and the listener is always accompanied by the fundamental emotion which, if it is nourished, becomes the personality's force.

Argumentative rationality leads to a cold consensus, and it often turns into pragmatic negotiations whose outcomes will vary depending on the varying interests. Too frequently, the attempts to be guided by argumentative rationality turn into a sterile exchange of abstractions that, more often than not, end in the surge of hate towards the other and conflicts. Narrative rationality, by definition, creates an in-depth connection among people. From it, the empathy and sociality based on brotherhood arises. Bergson, Ricoeur, Ferry described how the fundamental emotion or narrative rationality become a social, political or juridical category. Pope Francis re-thought the classical concept of social friendship in his encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, and he renewed its theological, philosophical and political interpretation. The substantiation of this encyclical can be understood only from the perspective of narrative rationality. Brotherhood can be a source of social norms, if it is lived together with the inner human truth emerging in the public sphere by the means of narrative rationality. If it does not happen, a society will continue its consolidation driven by a much more powerful inborn force – the fear of the other person, hate for the enemy, warring instinct.

All above-mentioned five channels of the saving force – silence; creating preconditions for the experimentation with the energy of life; the great personalities, who maintain the contact with the flux of life; the enlightened catastrophism, which gives rise to the effectively functioning responsibility when we are fearing catastrophe; the laws of history, evidencing the dynamics of the humanity as a whole towards a more truthful being; and the inner truth of the person and God, emerging due to narrative rationality – are based on the idea that a transforming factor, which can be experienced as a creating emotion, is at work among the humans. All of this is substantiated by a new beginning or emerging of a radical

novelty in history. At this point, it is worthwhile to once again remember Hanna Arendt's concept of nativity: every new-born is a new perspective for the entire humanity. But how can we protect the new-born from being killed?

Bibliography

Aleksandravičius, P., 2019. Socialinio atvirumo kilmė ir prasmė Bergsono ir Popperio mąstyme [The Origin and Meaning of Social Openness in Bergson's and Popper's Thought]. *Problemos* 95: 55-66.

Aleksandravičius, P., Riquier, C., 2021a. Du bon usage de la fin du monde. Bergson ou l'humanité tenue à l'impossible. *Esprit* 480 : 83-92.

Aleksandravičius, P., 2021b. Kuriančioji emocija ir demokratijos suvokimas H. Bergsono filosofijoje [Creative Emotion and Understanding of Democracy in the Philosophy of H. Bergson]. *Problemos* 99: 8-20.

Aleksandravičius, P., Riquier C., 2022. Bergson et il buon uso della fine del mondo. *Vita e Pensiero* 4 : 73-79.

Beaufret, J., 1974. *Dialogue avec Heidegger*. Vol. 3. Paris: Minuit.

Bergson, H., 1911. *Creative Evolution*. Trans. A. Mitchell, New York: Camelot Press.

Bergson, H., 1935. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. Trans. R. Ashley Audra and C. Brereton. London: Macmillan and Co.

Bergson, H., 2009. *L'énergie spirituelle*. Paris: PUF.

Bergson, H., 2019. *The Creative Mind. An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Trans. M. L. Andison. New York: Dover Publications.

Canetti, E., 1984. *Crowds and Power*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Corbin, A., 2018. *Histoire du silence de la Renaissance à nos jours*. Paris: Flammarion.

Dupuy, J. P., 2002. *Pour un catastrophisme éclairé. Quand l'impossible est certain*. Paris: Seuil.

Ferry, J. M., 1996. *L'éthique reconstructive*. Paris: Cerf.

Girard, R., 1977. *Violence and the Sacred*. Trans. P. Gregory. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Heidegger, M., 1976. "Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten". *Der Spiegel* Interview with Martin Heidegger (1966). *Der Spiegel* 23: 193-219.

Jonas, H., 1979. *Das Prinzip Verantwortung*. Frankfurt: Insel Verlag.

Lévi-Strauss, C., 1992. *Rasė ir istorija* [Race and History]. Trans. J. Navakauskienė. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.

Pascal, B., 2012. *Thoughts*. Trans. C. Kegan Paul. Veritatis Splendor Publications.

Picard, M., 1948. *Die Welt des Schweigens*. Erlenbach-Zürich/Konstanz: Rensch.

Ricoeur, P., 1983-1985. *Temps et récit*. Vol. 1-3. Paris: Seuil.

Ricoeur, P., 1990. *Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris: Seuil.

Waterlot, G., 2008. Le mysticisme, „un auxiliaire puissant de la recherche philosophique“? In: *Bergson et la religion. Nouvelles perspectives sur Les Deux Sources de la morale et de la religion*, ed. G. Waterlot, 249-277. Paris: PUF.

About the authors

ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS Povilas is professor at the European Humanities University. In 2009 he received a doctorate in philosophy at the Catholic University of Paris and the University of Poitiers, having defended his thesis on the problem of time in the thinking of M. Heidegger and Thomas Aquinas. In his scientific research, he examines various anthropological conceptions, issues of European identity, the process of globalization, the dynamics of modern human thinking and the impact of technology on it, the philosophical aspects of various spiritual-mystical traditions, and delves into the philosophy of H. Bergson. His last monograph is "Europe as a Way of Thinking: Foundations of an Open Society" (2019). He translates philosophical and theological works from French into Lithuanian, the last translation being H. Bergson's "La pensée et le mouvant" (2021).

ALFIERI Francesco is Professor of Philosophy at the Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele (Milan). From 2008 to 2014 he held seminars on the phenomenology of Edith Stein and Hedwig Conrad-Martius at the University of Bari and from 2012 to 2019 he was Professor of Phenomenology of Religion at the Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis. In addition, since 2020 he has been appointed Archivist of the legacy of philosopher Emanuele Severino. He is member of the Editorial Board of «Analecta Husserliana: The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research», of «Heidegger Studies» and of the «Metafizika» (Azerbaijan), as well as a member of the scientific committee of the periodical «Humanitas», «La Filosofia Futura», and of the series «Filosofia – Testi e Studi» of the publishing house Morcelliana. In 2016 he was appointed personal assistant of Prof. Friedrich-Wil-

helm von Herrmann. He is the Scientific Director for the annotated Italian edition of the complete works (Opera Omnia) of Hedwig Conrad-Martius published by Morcelliana. His publications have focused on German phenomenology, with particular reference to the study of human beings from an anthropological perspective. His research has sought to develop the study, in historical and theoretical terms, of the three female exponents of the Phenomenological Circle of Göttingen: Edith Stein, Hedwig Conrad-Martius and Gerda Walther. Recently his interests have included Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's "phenomenology of life". He has published a monograph about the Schwarze Hefte of Martin Heidegger, together with Prof. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. His most recent publications include: *Die Rezeption Edith Steins. Internationale Edith-Stein-Bibliographie 1942-2012* (Echter, 2012); *La presenza di Duns Scoto nel pensiero di Edith Stein. La questione dell'individualità* (Morcelliana, 2014; English translation *The Presence of Duns Scotus in the Thought of Edith Stein. The Question of Individuality*, «Analecta Husserliana» CXX, Springer, 2015; Romanian translation *Problema individualității: prezența lui Duns Scotus în gândirea lui Edith Stein*, Ratio et Revelatio, 2015; Portuguese translation *A presença de Duns Escoto no pensamento de Edith Stein: a questão da individualidade*, Perspectiva, 2016; German translation *Die Präsenz des Duns Scotus im Denken Edith Steins. Die Frage der Individualität*, Duncker & Humblot GmbH, 2021); *Pessoa humana e singularidade em Edith Stein. Uma nova fundação da antropologia filosófica* (Perspectiva, 2014); with F.-W. von Herrmann: *Martin Heidegger. La verità sui Quaderni neri* (Morcelliana, 2016; German translation *Martin Heidegger. Die Wahrheit über die Schwarzen Hefte*, Duncker & Humblot GmbH, 2017; French translation *Martin Heidegger. La vérité sur ses Cahiers noirs*, Gallimard 2018; translated into Castilian *Martin Heidegger. La verdad sobre los Cuadernos negros*, Comares, 2019; Romanian translation *Martin Heidegger: Adevărul despre Caietele Negre*, Ratio et Revelatio, 2021; English translation *Martin Heidegger and the Truth About the Black Notebooks*, «Analecta Husserliana» CXXIII, Springer, 2021).

DELSOL Chantal is professor in political philosophy in the Paris-Est University 1990-2015. She created the Center of research Hannah Arendt and a program of cooperation with mid-Eastern countries (Poland, Hungary, Romania and others). Writer (works of philosophy, essays, novels, translated in fifteen languages). Regular columnist (Le Figaro and others). Director of collection at the Table Ronde Editions (1992-2003) and Le Cerf Editions (2005 -). Member of the Institute of France (Academy of moral and political Sciences) since 2007.

HERRMANN (von) Friedrich-Wilhelm is a German philosopher, known as a major figure in phenomenological and hermeneutics research and an expert on Heidegger's thought. Von Hermann's hermeneutics and reflection represents the most fundamental and critical reflection of the concept of phenomenology as it was used by Heidegger and Husserl.

MIKHAILOV Anatoli is a professor the Department of Humanities and Arts of European Humanity University in Vilnius. He defended his doctoral dissertation on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger in Jena. His recently published articles are "The Language of Art: A Savings Power" (2016), "Being and Language" (2020), "European Heritage as a Source of Crisis and as a Hope" (2022), "Human Being in the world" (2022), "Poetry of Thinking" (2022). The research fields of Anatoli Mikhailov are: German intellectual tradition, hermeneutics, philosophy of language, M. Heidegger's philosophy.

PARATI Eugenio is an Italian neurologist and researcher, appointed member Italian National Commission on Stem Cell Research Ministry of Health, 2001. Doctor of Medicine, University Milan, 1978. Specialization in neurology, University Milan, 1982. Eugenio Agostino Parati has been listed as a noteworthy neurologist, researcher by Marquis Who's Who.

PICOZZI Mario is an associate professor of Forensic Medicine at the Insubria University, Varese, Italy. He is the director of the Center for Clinical Ethics of Insubria University, since 2016. He is Member of the Scientific Board of second level specialization course in Clinical Ethics Consultation, established by UCSC in collaboration with Insubria University of Varese, University Federico II of Naples, and Fondazione Lanza of Padua. Mario Picozzi is a Professor of forensic medicine and Bioethics in several degree courses established by the School of Medicine at the University of Insubria, and he also teaches Clinical ethics at the specialization course in Clinical Ethics Consultation at the "A.Gemelli" school of Medicine of UCSC in Rome. His research interests revolve around Clinical Ethics, Ethics Consultation, Informed consent, Bioethics Education, Ethics Committee, Transplantation, Goals of medicine, and Advanced directives.

SATTIN Davide is a neuropsychologist. His research activities have been particularly focused on clinical and theoretical aspects related to consciousness. Having participated in six national research projects with a key role, he has been able to gain considerable experience in this topic and at the same time build up a wide collaborative network among stakeholders, including neurologists, physiatrists, psychologists and caregivers' associations. Moreover, as a neuropsychologist, he studied several theoretical models related to cognitive functions (Memory, Language, etc.) providing innovative contributions to the area. His current research activities include the development of an assessment protocol to increase diagnostic sensitivity, in order to improve the clinical evaluation of patients in Vegetative and Minimally Conscious States. He is also interested in the analysis of neural correlates of consciousness, in particular focusing on the definition of a minimal network needed to establish a first consciousness level. He has been working at IRCCS Istituti Clinici Scientifici Maugeri in Milan, Italy, since 2011 as Senior Neuropsychologist and researcher and at Carlo Besta Neurological Institute IRCCS Foundation in Milan (from 2008 to 2011) as a Researcher in the Neurological, Public Health, and Disability unit.

VASSALLO Marta is a PhD candidate in Clinical and Experimental Medicine and Medical Humanities at the University of Insubria in Varese, Italy. She is a member of the Research Centre for Clinical Ethics (CREC). She is also a research collaborator at IRCCS Maugeri in Milan. Previously she achieved a MA in language and Mind, linguistics and cognitive studies at the University of Siena and before that she achieved a MA in Anthropology also at the University of Siena; her BA is in Philosophy. Her research revolves around cognitive philosophy and philosophy of science: in particular, she is focusing on updating the theoretical and experimental frames of Connectionism. Moreover, she is currently teaching in a cycle of seminars in Neurolinguistics and translation and the University of Insubria, and she is carrying on her empirical research at the IRCCS Maugeri in Milan.

Thinking in crisis

Edited by prof. Povilas Aleksandravičius

Reviewers:

Assoc. Prof. dr. Victor Martinovich (European Humanities University)

Prof. dr. Marija Rūta Vabalaitė (Mykolas Romeris University)

Dr. Dalius Viliūnas (Lithuanian culture research institute)

Edition of 100 copies



**European Humanities
University**

Published by European Humanities University



Printed by UAB Igmovila



European Humanities
University

ISBN: 978-9955-791-05-8



9 789955 791058