



Philosophy and Aporia of Psyche

Introductory

This selection of papers mereologically encloses the initial tripartite publication project, also consisting of a dedicated issue “Aporia of Psyche”, published in the interdisciplinary philosophy journal *Filozofska istraživanja* (*Philosophical Investigations*),¹ and the collected papers *Integrativna bioetika i aporije psihe* [*Integrative Bioethics and Aporia of Psyche*].² They are a part of a larger transdisciplinary and pluriperspective research project whose historical cornerstone was a public discussion “Psychopharmacology in the Psychotherapy Process – Violence or Necessity?”, held on 8 March 2016 in the Conference Hall of the Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb. A fragment of the text belonging to the invitation message provides an orientational insight into the motives behind the original idea and outlines the borders of its teleological formation:

“Despite its long history, medical and social significance, and the public presence of psychiatry as theory and practice, an abundance of psychiatric topics are still a taboo. One such question concerns the usage of medicines that affect mental states, more precisely, the psychopharmacological therapy which dominates the contemporary psychiatry. If we take in account the fact that the number of mentally ill and disordered persons around the globe, as well as in Croatia, is in constant growth, a permanent reconsideration of institutional psychiatry becomes a necessity. The main aim of this public discussion is to contribute to the field of critical questioning of the positive and negative aspects of psychopharmacological therapies, that is, the mental and physical effects of the application of medicines. Unavoidably, that type of therapeutic organon will also be researched historically, and so will be the wider context of its existence.”

The discussion contributed to the framework of the yearly project of public discussions *Bioethical Tuesday*, organised by the Croatian Bioethics Society, but it was envisioned by Luka Janeš and Luka Perušić as an experiment to explore the degree of necessity of such inquiries, to be followed by a more orchestrated attempt at contributing to the field to which the topic belonged. Hence, these text lines are typed anew because they contain the key methodological compound of the general project “Bioethics and Aporia of Psyche” – in a transdisciplinary environment to critically, pluriperspectively,³ and integratively approach the mental health of living persons. From the given viewpoint, their psyche is observed primarily as living energy in the circularly

¹ *Filozofska istraživanja* 39 (2019) 1. Available at: https://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=toc&id_broj=17915&lang=en.

² Luka Janeš (ed.), *Integrativna bioetika i aporije psihe* [*Integrative Bioethics and Aporia of Psyche*], Pergamena, Zagreb (forthcoming).

³ Pluriperspectivity appears to be a crucial methodological prerequisite for reaching scientific objectivity and avoid subjective, bifurcative stances of exclusive monoperspective views regarding any topic in question. On principles of pluriperspectivity, transdisciplinarity, integrative thinking and bioprotectionistic orientational knowledge, a



entangled life space,⁴ and thus, it counters standpoints described as neuro-cognitive, machine-applicable to engineering research, stripped of bioethical sensibility, both in the sense of disciplinary interaction and in the sense of understanding the *ethos* of the biosphere. This *bioethical sensibility*, therefore, offers a guiding, subject-intentionality starting point of our projects, aimed at the destigmatisation of the psychiatric patients and rethinking psychiatry and psychotherapy. It challenges existing modes of technicising both human beings⁵ and other dwellers of the biosphere, in all of its identifiable manifestations and on all graspable levels of relation.

The initial public discussion was of proportionally significant interest, which indicated a relevance of the topic on a large public scale. It spun off a new project of yearly public discussions named “Aporia of Psyche: Psychiatric, Bioethical and Philosophical Perspectives”, continuously recording a high attendance. With the participation of foreign experts, in short time the project advanced to an international level. The format became too narrow for the requirements and width of the given initiative, and so it was further extended with an international transdisciplinary symposium *Bioethics and Aporia of Psyche*. The papers included in the tripartite collection were presented throughout the first three years of the symposium. Given the profile of *Synthesis philosophica*, selected were the papers of high philosophical relevance and propulsion, indicating an inevitable demand to include critical philosophical thinking into the frame of mental health research.

The term *psyche* – relatively synonymous with the notions of *soul* and *mind*, and most often understood as the totality of conscious and unconscious content or the sum of characteristics belonging to the (in)tangible self – has an important place in the historical development of humanity, and it is one of the most researched yet least understood phenomenon of life. Philosophers developed footholds for scientific research of psyche in Ancient Greece, and it was philosophers who continued to examine psyche to the contemporaneity, in personal, interpersonal and social, cultural and political contexts and aspects likewise, through a multitude of scientific and cultural perspectives and approaches to the subject. Similarly, doctors showed great interest in the problems of the psyche, and newly developed branches of psychiatric, neurological and neurosurgical research and therapy gained an important place in the social structure that opened new horizons and complex problems through globalised techno-scientific and political-economic progress.

In this issue, we present seven variously dedicated papers. Bernard Špoljarić reflected on maybe the most rudimentary psychiatric, but also philosophical motive – the complexities of the human ego, narcissism and selfhood. Jelena Seferović provided a socioanthropological study on the (un)power of men in the context of the post-war period, thematising Croatian war veterans with mental disorders from World War I, and their social reintegration into the community. Labinot Kelmendi evaluated the link between literature, madness and language in the context of Foucault’s philosophy, setting “the archaeology of psychology” (Serres), and “deconstruction of psychology” (Caputo) into a working thesis. Damir Smiljanić presented and explored a less known but very interesting practitioner, author and personality Oscar Pannizza, discussing his self-proclaimed “demons” and providing a psyche-hermeneutical reading of Panizza’s heritage. Darija Rupčić Kelam and Ivica Kelam overviewed of some of the contemporary approaches within the philosophy of happiness and discussed key issues. Demétrius Alves França presented an innovative psy-

chotherapeutic approach substantially developed in Latin America – *peripatetic psychotherapy* – that also takes into account a variation of the phenomenological approach to understanding mental health issues. Finally, Matjaž Potrč extended and further elaborated on the idea of chromatic illumination in relation to the issues of cognitive content, raising neuro-cognitive research on an entirely new height with a set of proposals and solutions to some of the ongoing debates.

As the subject of inquiry, the phenomenon of psyche consolidates philosophy and psychiatry on the bioethical plane, the reason why, precisely because of the multitude of approaches and problems, from philosophical theories, over psychoanalysis, etnopsychiatry, antipsychiatry, psychological theories, to different types of therapies and corresponding theories, the project of integrative bioethics offers a chance to develop new understandings and methodologically new types of inquiry. Considering that the project of integrative bioethics presupposes theoretical, practical and educational dimension of activity, that is, its character is transdisciplinary, and it strives towards implementation, it is only natural to make the subject of psyche public, and by dire necessity organise events and arrange publications that, by using dialogical enchainment of perspectives, open thus far the inadequately examined problems of the psyche, to open further possibilities of connecting the potential carriers of united projects that are going to have a direct influence on the situation in society. The final goal is, thus, to illuminate barriers and the “aporia of psyche” by providing orientational knowledge and concrete personal and social solutions to those problems that seem without a way out, that is, aporetic.

Luka Janeš

“scientific building” of integrative bioethics is being raised and developed for more than two decades. For a brief introduction, see: Ante Čović, Hrvoje Jurić, “Epochal Orientation, New Ethical Culture and Integrative Bioethics”, *Formosan Journal of Medical Humanities* 19 (2018) 1–2, pp. 19–30.

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Cf. Thomas Fuchs, “The Interactive Phenomenological Field and the Life Space: A Sketch

of an Ecological Concept of Psychotherapy”, *Psychopathology* 52 (2019) 2, pp. 67–74, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1159/000502098>.

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Cf. Luka Janeš, “Biopolitical Laboratory and the Genetic Modification of the Psyche”, *Jahr* 10 (2019) 2, pp. 341–360, doi: <https://doi.org/10.21860/j.10.2.4>.