



## *At the Beginning of a New Mandate*

### *Synthesis philosophica* – a Journal for Integrative Thought

#### **In retrospect**

The journal *Filozofska istraživanja* (Philosophical Investigations) was founded in 1980 by the Croatian Philosophical Society. It managed to reach publication regularity and publish all the planned yearly volumes only four years later. Once the members of its Editorial Board were stabilised and its organisational operation was initially strengthened, in the following four year period the journal underwent a developmental expansion – in 1986 the international publication of the journal bearing the title *Synthesis philosophica* was set in motion, and two years later the *Filozofska istraživanja* Book Series was begun. When at the end of 1988 12 titles by Croatian authors were simultaneously published in the first set of the book series, the general cultural public in Croatia was greatly astounded. A reviewer did not seem to hide his astonishment in his review published in the daily *Vjesnik* under the impressive title “An Explosion of Philosophical Reflection”:

“We neither remember nor have we ever read that here in Zagreb or elsewhere in Croatia twelve philosophical books were published all at the same time.”<sup>1</sup>

That event institutionally rounded off and publicly presented a unique philosophical, publishing and cultural project.

However, the aforesaid phase of expansive growth was not only a period of the institutional and cultural establishment of the *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project, but was also a time of sharpening its spiritual profile.

In the journal’s rare programmatic statements one could follow the line of conceptual thought, which helped both build the principle of integrativity and pave the way for the latter’s growth into a fundamental programmatic position of the *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project as a whole. Thus, the foreword of the first double issue of the international publication of *Synthesis philosophica* formulates the “idea of the integrated spiritual horizon”. However, this idea “doesn’t aim to achieve the eclectic absorption of theoretical differences”. The very foothold of this programmatic idea is the attitude that differences in both approach and ways of solving the main philosophical problems are “a sign of spiritual richness and an expression of irreducible individuality in human creativity”. In this respect, the journal’s programmatic conception aims to “preserve and purify through dialogue” and not to eliminate theoretical differences.<sup>2</sup> After all, the chosen title for the journal’s international publication – i.e. *Synthesis philosophica* – helped

<sup>1</sup> Inoslav Bešker, “Eksplozija filozofskih promišljanja”, *Vjesnik*, 24th December 1988

<sup>2</sup> “Foreword”, *Synthesis philosophica* 1–2 (1–2/1986), p. 3

the programmatic idea of integrating the spiritual horizon achieve fullness of expression on the symbolic level too.

Indeed, integrativity as a conceptual feature also appears in the programmatic description of the later initiated *Filozofska istraživanja* Book Series. Yet, it was only in a document that emerged as a programmatic recapitulation of its kind of the journal's foregoing developmental cycle that integrativity was elaborated and accepted as the first and fundamental programmatic principle of the entire *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project. Being internal, the aforementioned document bearing the title "Programmatic orientation" was never published but could be read between the lines, i.e. read from all that has been achieved. We bring you a part of this "Programmatic orientation", which – amongst other things – shows that the *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project and its programmatic orientation have anchored precisely in the crevice which first announced the crisis of our times and in which the process of breaking the world-historical epochs continued in increasingly suggestive forms:

"Advancing to an increasingly greater specialisation of life forms is an irreversible constant of our times – it has yielded technological progress, but has also begun manifesting its lethal effects on humanity in an increasingly expressive fashion. The historical process of disintegration eats equally away at the existence of contemporary man both in the material and spiritual spheres. In the spiritual-cultural field it produces a peculiar form of 'intra-alienation' – the so-called 'cultural sectors' are becoming mutually distant and isolated. From the need to – at least in the spiritual-cultural realm – initiate an opposite and integrative trend, the idea to 'integrate the spiritual horizon' has entered the programmatic orientation of *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica*."<sup>3</sup>

During the institutional and programmatic constitution of the wider *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project the editorial practice has been confirming the programmatic principle of integrativity exceptionally fruitfully. Namely, what became truly characteristic of that period are thematic units, which were being prepared on explicitly integrative grounds (Philosophy and Language, Philosophy and Psychoanalysis, Space and Time between Philosophy and Science, Philosophy and Education, Philosophy and Literature, Philosophy and the Theory of Relativity, Philosophy and Religion). This meant that no issue was analysed exclusively as the subject matter of its respective philosophical discipline, but rather that it was placed into an open problem field. That way any issue could comprehensively be examined, i.e. not only through the perspectives of the different philosophical orientations, but also from the points of view of various scientific disciplines. In engaging contributors from outside the arena of philosophy, the editor's office demonstrated exceptional diligence, which resulted in gathering an interdisciplinary circle of associates as well as in establishing an interactive network between diverse scientific and cultural fields.

Already in this formative phase all those programmatic and editorial features that were either presupposed or given by the principle of integrativity (i.e. openness, pluralism, communication) and that became permanent features of its recognisability were imbued into the journal's profile. The published volumes bore witness to the interactivity of positions, intellectual liveliness and the breadth of the journal's thematic interest, which could not escape the eyes of our readers either from Croatia or abroad.<sup>4</sup> On this fundament – programmatically and organisationally well established – all the future editorial mandates issued years and volumes of both the national and international journal, as well as new book titles in self-sacrifice. Once the

one hundredth issue of *Filozofska istraživanja* and the fortieth issue of *Synthesis philosophica* were published, and once a quarter of a century of being fully devoted to the project as a whole was behind us, it became clear that these efforts and achievements established not only an institution but also a true tradition of integrative thought. Without this tradition it is impossible either to imagine the recent history of Croatian philosophy and culture or to adequately understand the contemporary currents of thought. Moreover, it can indeed be said that without it – as clairvoyantly expressed by a *Le Monde* critic in reviewing the first issues of *Synthesis philosophica* – European thought itself would remain “blind on one eye”.<sup>5</sup>

### A look to the future

The *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* journals and project will continue to tread the path already set by their programmatic tradition in the upcoming mandate. In other words, tradition necessarily implies duty, and as traditions differ so do the duties arising from them. Dead traditions seek protection, nurturance and evocation in order not to be forgotten, while living and prolific traditions bind us to re-examine them and constantly innovate as the sole way of truly continuing their paths. The “Programmatic orientation”, which the Assembly of the Croatian Philosophical Society accepted when appointing the journal’s editorial board and other offices,<sup>6</sup> is devoted, in that respect, to adhering to the heritage of integrative thought, while limiting its conceptual ambitions to the “promotion of the programmatic accent in the extended line of continuity which follows those programmatic visions that have been leading this journal in its quarter-of-a-century long productivity.” This shift in the journal’s programmatic emphasis is formulated as the principle of active openness:

“Namely, within the framework of receptive openness the journal could not adequately respond to the challenges of our times characterised by turning points in all the aspects of individual existence, in all the circles of social existence and on all the institutional levels – from the state, through the regional and continental to the global level. In other words, in the current situation of the breaking of the world-historical epochs our journal showing openness to possible answers is insufficient – it is necessary that it simultaneously both show initiative in opening questions and be stimulative in signposting and seeking answers through dialogue.”

This principle of active openness introduces the journal more boldly into the context of epochal crisis and – in addition to its “internal tasks of nur-

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This document, the full title of which is “The programmatic orientation of the *Filozofska istraživanja* journal and the entire publishing project based on it”, was accepted on the Assembly of the Croatian Philosophical Society on 14th November 1989, when the journal’s editorial board was appointed a new mandate.

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“The Croatian Philosophical Society is, without doubt, dynamic, open and ready for dialogue (in accord with the editorial views advocated in the journal). Countless things keep on confirming that the journal [...] is becoming the centre of the exchange of thoughts and mutual inspiration for diverse systems, currents, opinions, views and philosophical

trends – both in terms of worldviews and socio-political realities.” (Krystyna Górniak-Kocikowska, “Filozoficzni dialog z Zagrzebia”, *Studia Filozoficzne*, PWN, Wrocław, 3/1988)

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Roger-Pol Droit, “L’œil et la pensée” (Eye and Thought), *Le Monde*, 2nd June 1988

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The Assembly of the Croatian Philosophical Society, on which the editor-in-chief and the other offices of the journal (Advisory Board, Editorial Board and Junior Editorial Board) were appointed – the appointees are listed on the editorial page of the journal – was held on 25th November 2005.

turing philosophical pluralism and advancing philosophical thought” – on the trail of the need to create reliable signposts and orientative knowledge, it is programmatically directed “towards its external tasks” of methodologically founding integrative thought and “creating a more comprehensive horizon, in which the perspective of philosophy becomes a constituent of the multi-perspectival approach to the fundamental questions and issues of our times and survival”.

Institutionally speaking, the new *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project management mandate features – besides a number of technical novelties – two constitutional innovations: the restoration of the journal’s Advisory Board and the introduction of a novel editorial body, i.e. the Junior Editorial Board.

In the last two mandates the journal functioned without an advisory board, which was conditioned by external reasons. The members of the newly appointed Advisory Board – as well as the members of the new Editorial Board – bear witness to the strengthening of the international character of the journal.

We must view the process of *Synthesis philosophica* becoming autonomous within the aforementioned context – the journal has been gradually transforming from the international publication of *Filozofska istraživanja* to an independent international journal, which, of course, still remains within the institutional framework of the wider project and programmatic horizon of integrative thought, and, for the time being, run by the same leadership as *Filozofska istraživanja*.

The initiative to introduce a novel and, moreover, in journal publishing an unfamiliar editorial body of junior editors came from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, which introduced and created the initiative to present scientific novices – i.e. junior editors – to the system of scientific journal publishing. With respect to the fact that openness to young authors has been not only a permanent programmatic feature but also a constant of the journal’s editorial policy, it stands to reason that the Ministry’s innovative idea fell onto fertile soil in the working environment of the *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project. The idea’s implications have been steadfastly developed and consequently moulded into a special editorial body – the Junior Editorial Board.

And finally, we can express our optimism that the *Filozofska istraživanja/Synthesis philosophica* project as a whole – particularly with respect to its programmatic premises, its institutional state of development and the intellectual potentials it gathers – is prepared to successfully tackle the challenges of our times, in which the enigma of the future has been setting special tasks to thought and thinking.

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