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THE LEGACY OF

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THOUGHT

Book of Abstracts

The Legacy of Nenad's Philosophical Thought

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Marina Bakalova (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

Curiosity and Aesthetic Bootstrapping

Some works of art are both highly valued and intellectually challenging in our cultures. While we may wish to enjoy them, appreciation does not always come naturally; instead, it often develops through time and persistent effort. In Western culture, examples may include Ulysses by James Joyce, Schoenberg's String Quartet No. 4, and Alain Resnais's film Last Year in Marienbad. A similar phenomenon occurs in the realm of taste: foods like durian fruit and casu marzu cheese may seem unappealing at first but can become delicacies for those who persevere.

In his 2011 article "The Ethics of Aesthetic Bootstrapping", Peter Goldie introduces the term aesthetic bootstrapping to describe "our strategy of cultivating our emotional responses to artworks by feigning those emotions, to ourselves and to others, in the hope and expectation that they will, in due course, become genuine" (p. 106). The core philosophical challenge of aesthetic bootstrapping derives from the fact that it is blind and involves self-deception. Because of that, Goldie highlights, we can never be certain about the purity of our motivations: do we engage in it out of snobbery, merely performing a "theater of self-love," or are we genuinely interested in understanding aesthetic value?

I will argue that Nenad's (2020) defense of curiosity as a fundamental epistemic virtue provides valuable new insights into this dilemma.

Hanoch Ben-Yami (Central European University)

The Knowledge Argument as a Petitio Principii

Part of what we learn when we learn physics is learnt through observation. Mary, limited to her black-and-white room, learns only some of the things we learn in this way. Accordingly, the claim that she can know everything physics teaches presupposes that the knowledge one necessarily acquires through the observation she lacks is not part of the knowledge of the physical world. This position is something the Knowledge Argument presupposes without argument, despite the need for one. Moreover, if an argument were provided, it would make the Knowledge Argument redundant. The Knowledge Argument cannot therefore be taken as sound, and any attempt to save it would make it redundant.

Boran Berčić (University of Rijeka)

Matija Rajter (University of Rijeka)

Nenad, Amoebas, and Conceptual Engineering

In the discussion about conceptual analysis and *a priori* knowledge, Nenad often used the example of amoebas. There was a cartoon about an amoeba family: amoeba dad, amoeba mom, and amoeba kids. People, mostly kids I guess, were watching this cartoon, following the plot, relationships between members of the family, etc. However, in reality amoebas are single cell organisms. They do not have sexes, and they do not have children, they reproduce by simple cell division. Is there anything in the concept of amoeba that prevents us from vividly imagining such a family of amoebas? Not really. Nenad was using this example to show how misleading our intuitions can be, and how wrong we can be in our conceptual analysis and *a priori* knowledge. His morals was that the analysis of the concept *X* simply amounts to the analysis of *X* itself. For this reason philosophy cannot be seen as *a priori* analysis of our concepts.

This insight can applied to the nowadays discussion about the conceptual engineering. What we want to improve in our analysis is not the concept of *X*. It is rather the *X* itself. Philosophers, lawyers, and social activists do not want to improve the concept of marriage, what they want to improve is marriage itself. For this reason we have to abandon the idea that philosophy is and should be conceptual engineering. If we believe that conceptual engineering is what we do, then we simply have wrong beliefs about what we do.

Keywords: Nenad Miščević; amoebas; conceptual analysis; conceptual engineering; nature of philosophy.

Boran Berić (The City University of New York)

Thought Experiments and Humor

Nenad thought that cognitive processes underlying thought experiments rely on the manipulation of mental models. I will try to show that such a strategy helps not only in understanding how thought experiments work, but also how important aspects of humor work.

Mia Biturajac (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb)

Nenad Mišćević and Thought Experiments: Ideal Health

In his paper "Constructing a Happy City-State. In memoriam Heda Festini", Nenad Mišćević explores Frane Petrić's utopistic work The Happy City-State. Mišćević considers The Happy City-State, and similar utopistic works, as cases of "ideal theories" pertaining to the political philosophy discourse. However, in this work he situates the construction of ideal theories within the framework of thought experiments, classifying ideal theorizing as a subset of thought experimenting. He builds a framework that explores both the epistemic and motivational value of ideal theorizing. Although his work is applied to political philosophy, I believe his ideas have wider application and can be applied to ideal theorizing more generally. In this vein, especially interesting in Mišćević's commentary and analysis of Petrić's The Happy City-State is the ideal of health. In this work I apply Mišćević's framework of ideal theorizing to the concept of ideal health. I explore examples of ideal health theories together with their purpose and role in our thinking about health. Using Mišćević's framework I explore the potential motivational and epistemic functions of ideal health theorizing.

István Bodnár (Eötvös University, Budapest – Central European University, Vienna)

Aristotle: Some beginnings

In this talk I will concentrate on Aristotle's considerations about predication, which are important for his natural philosophy and metaphysics. In my talk I will address two sets of issues. First, I will dwell on the connections between the Topics and the Categories. Through this we will be able to put in sharper relief the quite different ways the considerations undergirding the argumentative goals of the Topics are put to use in the Categories. After this, I will also address some of the ways the account of predication in the Categories is adjusted in Aristotle's natural philosophy.

Important and illuminating all this may be, but it is still not the occasion of the talk. What I would like to get across with this case study is how a formative teacher and the activity of an intellectual community impinges on the beginnings of a philosophy.

Petar Bojanić (University of Belgrade & University of Rijeka)

The First Texts by Nenad Miščević

My intention is to evoke the first texts and the first theoretical constructions by Nenad Miščević. These are texts published in the Croatian-Serbian language in various Serbian and Croatian journals in the late 1970s and early 1980s. I will present these texts as the product of several stages… the first texts on French philosophy, the departure to Paris, the discovery of analytic philosophy, and "being" between analytic and continental philosophy. I will try to explain the reasons behind what Miščević, in the late 1980s, called the "Analytic Awakening (Sobriety, Disillusionment; Otreznjenje).

James Robert Brown (University of Toronto)

Pandemics, Climate Change, Democracy

This talk will be based on a book in progress with the same tentative title: "Pandemics, Climate Change, Democracy." Nenad Miščević and I had overlapping interests. Thought experiments was the main one, but we also were both concerned with political issues. We even had overlapping views. I will begin with an account of the eradication of smallpox, one of the world's greatest achievements. There are surprising morals to be drawn: (1) The world could do it, (2) educating people to accept vaccines played almost no role, (3) force was sometimes necessary. Consequently, a careful analysis of rights is required. Depending on the situation, we might, as individuals, have fewer rights than we imagine. I will skip over parts of the book that I can take for granted on epidemiology, climate science, etc. The final part of the talk will be devoted to democracy. I will explore the question: "Can democracies handle serious pandemics and climate change?" I take a pessimistic view and will outline what we might do about it.

Mirela Fuš-Holmedal (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

Pejoratives as Social Kind Terms and Miščević's Dimensions of Offensiveness

In this talk, I revisit Miščević's (2014) idea of pejoratives as negative hybrid social kind terms that refer directly and pick out social kinds as their referents. While criticizing his account, I highlight this insightful and original idea, which I believe he neither emphasizes nor utilizes adequately. First, I argue that introducing pluralistic commitments about propositions is not helpful for his account. On the contrary, I show that it leads to the falsity of meaning and the failure of reference. Furthermore, I point out that Miščević is mistaken in trying to avoid the problem of co-reference between terms such as "Boche" and "German." I argue that there is no co-reference present because the referents of these two terms belong to different social kinds. Finally, I raise a more general objection related to the reference of social kind terms and, consequently, to pejorative terms as well. I express concern that certain referential theories about pejorative terms, including Miščević's account, might lack an explanation of what ties a social kind token to a particular social kind type.

Eugen Golubić (University of Rijeka)

Theistic and Non-Theistic Meta-Ethics

Theism is the belief that there is a god or divine being, while non-theism is its negation in some form. Many theists, including Christian philosophers such as William Lane Craig, believe that the existence of objective morality serves as evidence for the existence of the (Christian) God. The belief that morality is objective is classified in a metaethical theory called moral realism. Craig and many proponents of the moral argument can draw on two popular moral approaches based on God, the so-called Divine Command Theory (DCT), which I will focus on in more detail in the work and in Natural Law. But in this article, I am trying to show that objective morality is not proof of God. If we accept moral realism, it will be harder for us to accept Divine Command Theory and vice versa, while Natural Law may be compatible with non-theism in some version. While the author doesn't conclude that God does not exists or that Divine Command Theory is contradictory, it allows us to focus on metaethical theories which don't include God as moral lawgiver, but rely on scientific discoveries and compatibility with other fields of philosophy.

Aleksandra Golubović (University of Rijeka)

Laura Angelovski (University of Zadar)

Nenad Miščević in the Light of Nel Noddings' Ethics of Care

This presentation will connect the prominent role of Nenad Miščević in mentoring students and colleagues, with his approach to education, through the lens of the ethics of care, which we will illustrate through the work of one of its founders, Nel Noddings. The ethics of care is relational, primarily focused on empathy, relationship building, and moral development through interaction. Although schools are, first and foremost, places where the focus is put on the transfer of knowledge, Noddings emphasizes their additional dimension—their role in developing a well-rounded personality, one that fosters caring and responsible individuals, by cultivating relationships of trust and care between teachers and students. There are three key components of the ethics of care: commitment, motivation shifting, and recognizing the importance of care. Care is a process that involves both the giver and the receiver, and requires reciprocity and authenticity as bases for the relationship. In her work, Noddings highlights the importance of dialogue, practice, and affirmation in the teaching process, to strengthen students' moral education and encourage their authentic motivation for learning. This is precisely what Professor Miščević intuitively and devotedly embodied and applied throughout his career.

David Grčki (University of Rijeka)

Miščević's Defense of Quine's Empiricism

In this talk, I will (a) present the main arguments from Nenad Miščević's paper "Quining the Apriori" and (b) explain the relevance of this paper for understanding Miščević's philosophical oeuvre.

"Quining the Apriori" is a paper published in Alex Orenstein and Petr Kotatko's Knowledge, Language, and Logic: Questions for Quine (2000). As the title suggests, the collection is structured so that authors present questions and critiques of Quine's arguments and positions, and Quine responds to them within the same volume. Although this type of structure is common and unremarkable, what is interesting is that Miščević does not offer a question or critique of Quine. Instead, he provides a defense of Quine's position.

As an analytic philosopher, Miščević presents his defense of Quine with clarity and rigor. At the beginning of the paper, he writes: "…some prominent empiricists (…) have come to question the fundamental tenets of Quine's view. In these [sic] paper, I wish to defend the tenability of empiricism…" (Miščević 2000, 95). He argues that we ought to demand empirical tests (or warrants) for logical and mathematical beliefs and proceeds to defend this claim throughout the paper.

Near the end of the paper, Miščević constructs a thought experiment. The thought experiment concerns "the Emperor of a distant kingdom" who suffers from "acalculia—the defect that selectively impairs the capacity to perform particular mathematical operations" and "the court mathematician," whom the Emperor accuses of fraud. Aside from being a vivid and humorous way to defend a philosophical position, the Emperor and the "fraudulent" court mathematician illustrate how Miščević approached thought experiments—an essential aspect of his philosophical oeuvre.

Quine, in his response, is quite critical of Miščević's arguments. He asserts that Miščević's view—that mathematics and the natural sciences share the same fallibility—is "misguided" and that he (Quine) never intended to go that far. In essence, Quine accuses Miščević of being too Quinean.

In my view, this simply means that Miščević did not follow Quine blindly. He used Quine's insights to develop his own philosophical position on the nature of our understanding of the natural sciences, mathematics, and logic. This is just one of the many reasons why I consider Miščević to be one of the great philosophers of our time.

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Pavel Gregorić (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb)

On the Most Ancient Thought Experiment

Archytas of Tarentum (5/4th c. BCE), a Neopythagorean philosopher and Plato's acquaintance, is the author of the earliest known thought experiment in Western philosophy. The experiment was later appropriated by the Epicureans and the Stoics in Hellenistic times, discussed extensively by Aristotle's commentators in late antiquity, disputed by Scholastic philosophers, and examined by early modern philosophers such as Gassendi, Locke and Newton. The thought experiment is designed to show that the universe is infinite by inviting us to imagine a man standing on the edge of the universe, trying to stretch his hand (or stick) outside. In this talk, I will present and briefly analyze the two main ancient versions of this thought experiment and discuss its limitations. I will argue that Alexander of Aphrodisias (2/3 c. CE), the most illustrious of Aristotle's commentators, correctly identified a crucial problem with this thought experiment. I will reformulate Alexander's criticism in terms of a general cautionary remark about thought experiments and propose how to incorporate it into Nenad's mental modelling theory.

Ana Grgić (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb)

Dušan Dožudić (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb)

Miščević's Engagements with the Croatian Philosophical Heritage

Nenad Miščević's philosophical work spans an impressive range of topics, making it difficult to identify a subject he has not engaged with at some point in his career. His contributions to numerous philosophical disciplines are well-documented through extensive publications. However, one area of his work has remained relatively overlooked compared to his other contributions—his engagement with the Croatian philosophical tradition. This talk seeks to address this lesser-known aspect of Miščević's philosophical work, focusing in particular on his reflections on the philosophy of Pavao Vuk-Pavlović (1894–1976), a central figure in modern Croatian philosophy, especially before World War II. Vuk-Pavlović contributed significantly to various philosophical fields, most notably aesthetics, the philosophy of values, metaphysics, and the philosophy of education. Miščević, in his writings, explored the latter two. Accordingly, this talk will first provide a brief overview of Miščević's engagements with Croatian philosophy and then turn to an examination of Vuk-Pavlović's philosophy of education. The talk will conclude with a discussion of Vuk-Pavlović's metaphysics, a subject that remained a major focus of Miščević's engagement with his work.

Filip Grgić (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb)

Practical Truth

In his 1988 book *Radnja i objašnjenje* (*Action and Explanation*), Nenad Miščević presents a robust realist theory of action in which key concepts are grounded in a firmly naturalistic framework. In doing so, he aligns perfectly with the dominant mode of discussion at the time, which was characterized by a Davidsonian or post-Davidsonian approach enriched by empirical research and insights from other disciplines. However, over the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in an approach that Nenad, in *Radnja i objašnjenje*, considered outdated, one whose central figure was Elizabeth Anscombe. In this talk, I will pay tribute to Nenad's work by contrasting his perspective with the Anscombean one and examining a key concept in her action theory—the concept of practical truth. I will argue that this concept is coherent and that it can serve as a bridge between action theory and ethics.

Boris Grozdanoff (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

Epistemology of modern Large Language Models

I explore the epistemological foundations underlying modern Large Language Models (LLMs), as I focus specifically on their ability—and inability—to handle semantic distinctions critical to human language comprehension. By drawing parallels with Frege's classical distinction between Sense and Reference, I analyze why current transformer-based LLMs succeed probabilistically yet fail logically in nuanced linguistic scenarios. Through classical philosophical challenges such as negative existentials and substitutivity in belief contexts, I illustrate that while multi-head transformers effectively train context-sensitive embeddings and probabilistic semantic associations, they fundamentally differ from the explicit logical-semantic clarity of Fregean sense and reference. I propose integrating "Artificial Sense" and "Artificial Reference" into LLM architectures, and I argue that such distinctions could bridge the gap between probabilistic approximations of meaning and genuine semantic understanding and thus enhance LLMs' reliability in semantic reasoning and factual grounding.

Lilia Gurova (New Bulgarian University)

Nenad and the Balkan Journal of Philosophy

Nenad Miščević was a member of the editorial board of Balkan Journal of Philosophy from the journal's inception in 2009 until his untimely passing in 2024. His was the idea for a Balkan journal – one that would address issues relevant to philosophers from the region and that would build bridges: among philosophers in the Balkans, between the diverse traditions that have shaped the philosophy in this part of Europe, and between regional philosophy and philosophy around the world. At the same time, Nenad was keenly aware of the challenges involved in building such bridges. In one of his early papers published in Balkan Journal of Philosophy ("The continental-analytic rift: A guide for travelers and bridge-builders", 2011), he highlighted some of the key obstacles that efforts to overcome 'the continental-analytic rift' would encounter. In my presentation, I will explore some of these challenges and discuss possible solutions.

Viktor Ivanković (Institute of Philosophy, Zagreb)

The Distance Principle, Nationalism, and Miščević's Hated Neighbor Truism

In his book, *Nationalism and Beyond: Introducing Moral Debate about Values*, Miščević proposes the so-called Hated Neighbor Truism (HNT), according to which ethno-nationalist claims are typically directed not at the international community, but at neighboring ethno-national units, with whom the claimants interact and share close ties. HNT, Miščević believes, is a thorn in the side of both the garden-variety nationalist and the more moderate philosophical nationalist (e.g., liberal nationalists like Tamir and Kymlicka), in two ways. First, Miščević believes that if the nationalist is to acknowledge the HNT, that may run afoul of the Distance Principle, according to which proximity is morally relevant in justifying stronger obligations to those closer at hand as opposed to distant strangers. In other words, nationalists might owe a second-grade partiality to those they might often resent. Second, Miščević thinks that if nationalists want to maintain that partiality does not include close neighbors, then they are primarily philosophically opposed not to cosmopolitan, but to regionalist views. In other words, nationalist will need to face the regionalist in having to elaborate why co-national partiality applies to the national community, but not in any way to neighboring communities that share traits with them.

I argue that Miščević's understanding of the Distance Principle is outright rejected by the moderate nationalist or only prima facie justified. While the moderate nationalist can endorse something like the Distance Principle towards close neighbors, historical contingencies from which ethno-nationalist claims arise often give rise to understandable suspension of partial treatment. Such suspension is justified, for instance, when close neighbors make it difficult for an ethno-societal group to establish just and stable autonomous institutions. It is possible, then, to endorse a version of the Distance Principle, while acknowledging the HNT. I argue that Miščević's observations actually give moderate nationalists an opportunity and an obligation to explain if resentment towards neighbors is ever permissible or justified.

Ema Luna Lalić (University of Rijeka)

Curious and Enthusiastic: Metaphilosophical Views of Nenad Miščević

The versatility of Miščević's philosophical work knows no bounds: philosophy of language, philosophy of politics, epistemology, philosophy of psychology… While these endeavors show a truly remarkable broadness of his interests, what holds them together is Miščević's outlook on the nature and value of philosophy, as well as its role in the contemporary society. They help explain his approach to specific philosophical problems, but also to his more general metaphilosophical framework, including his stance on philosophical method(s) and the relationship between philosophy and other disciplines.

In this talk I will discuss Miščević's metaphilosophical views and their application to specific philosophical discussions in which he participated, such as his influential work on thought experiments (Miščević 2016, 2022) or nationalism and national identity (Miščević 2001). Unique in the fact that his training encompassed both analytic and continental philosophy, Miščević called for a dialogue and cooperation between those philosophical traditions. Such a dialogue would, despite their deep-set differences, lead to each of them enhancing their reach and impact on the society (Miščević 2011). Analytic philosophy, which will be the focus of my talk, is for Miščević (2006) marked by a distinction between scientific (science-based) and humanistic philosophy, which differ in aims and methods, but also in recognition, with the former finding a firmer foot in the contemporary institutional framework. In discussing Miščević's metaphilosophical views, I will agree with his recommendation that philosophy should be "curious and enthusiastic about explanation" (2006, 57) and prioritize its public role, while also pointing to the more humanistic perspectives philosophy has to offer. In doing so, I will provide arguments in favor of the value of philosophy even if it is not deeply rooted in a science-based framework, but expresses ideas relevant to the humanistic project, as discussed by Williams (2006) and others.

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Maja Malec (University of Ljubljana)

The Role of Imagination and Intuition in Thought Experiments

Thought experiments are employed in many diverse areas for various purposes, which makes it impossible to provide an all-encompassing definition of a thought experiment. Philosophers are, however, especially interested in thought experiments that refute a certain philosophical or scientific thesis or theory. In this context, we can characterize a thought experiment as the consideration of a particular hypothetical scenario with the aim of exposing a problem of a targeted theory. But how can a merely hypothetical case refute a theory, and how do we know what would be the case in such a possible scenario? According to many, the main role in the consideration of a case is played by imagination, and the truth of the modal claims, which are a typical result of philosophical thought experiments, is known intuitively. Unfortunately, it is often not further explained in what specific ways imagination functions here. I will mention a couple of problems this causes and then turn to two explanations proposed in the literature. According to one, imagination is likened to perception and involves production and manipulation of mental images, while according to the other, it is more rational and serves as a means for evaluating counterfactuals. It is also very unclear what is meant by the intuitive justification of the resulting claims and whether any proposed understanding can withstand criticism coming from experimental philosophy. In the end, I will shortly present how imagination and intuition are employed and understood in Miščević's mental-modeling account.

Miomir Matulović (University of Rijeka)

Learning About Thought Experiments From Miščević and Investigating Their Use in Law

Nenad Miščević was my friend for forty years, with whom I collaborated in numerous activities and events. In my presentation, I particularly highlight the seminar in the course Theory of Law and State that we held together at the Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka, from the academic year 2009/10 to the academic year 2022/23, with an interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic when the seminar classes were suspended. Miščević talked about political thought experiments in the works of Plato, Rousseau, Kant and Rawls, which he will write about in his upcoming works. I learned a lot about thought experiments from Miščević, which helped me in my research on their use in law.

In the main part of my presentation, I give an overview of my works on thought experiments, and especially the last two that relate to their use in law: Miščević, Mental Models, and Thought Experiments in Political Philosophy, in Bojan Borstner, Smiljana Gartner (eds.), Thought Experiments between Nature and Society: A Festschrift for Nenad Miščević, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017, pp. 354-369; Thought experiments in the theory of law: Imaginary scenarios in Hart's Concept of Law, in Croatian Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 18, no. 52 (2018), pp. 101-116; and A Thought Experiment in Roman Legal Science: Alfenus' Response in the Case of Replacement of Judges, in progress.

Keywords

Nenad Miščević, thought experiments, politics, law.

Edi Pavlović (University of Bayreuth & University of Bamberg)

Is-Ought: Special and General Hume Thesis

The need to justify a derivation of an 'Ought' (normative) statement from an 'Is' (descriptive) set of premises goes back at least to David Hume. We examine two versions of this claim: the Special Hume Thesis - that no purely normative conclusion (non-trivially) follows from a purely descriptive set of premises, and General Hume Thesis - that no conclusion with normative content (non-trivially) follows from purely descriptive premises. In this talk we demonstrate, using a proof-theoretic apparatus, that both of these claims hold for a whole range of logics of obligation, by providing a trivialization method for any purported Is-Ought argument.

Julija Perhat (University of Rijeka)

Miščević and Theories of Pejoratives

In his theory, The Negative Hybrid Social Kind Terms theory, Miščević (2016) presents levels or layers of slurs (he uses the terms interchangeably). According to him, there would be five levels of slurs: causal-historical, minimal descriptive, negative descriptive evaluative, prescriptive, and expressive. I am sympathetic to this layered view of slurs; however, I will suggest an augmentation of the view—I will include an identity prejudice layer. This serves as an explanation of what Miščević calls the negative descriptive evaluative layer. Namely, the negative evaluative judgment is grounded in negative identity prejudice. Moreover, this layered view of slurs helps us understand the appropriation process of slurs.

Nikola Petković (University of Rijeka)

Jolly & Jelly: Aspic with Hexameter or Nenad as an Upbringer

Nikola Petković, writer

My approach is not inherently philosophical, although it is not entirely outside of philosophy. The reason for announced 'liminality' is twofold: (1) to be and not being in philosophy is simply impossible (unless one equates being with being there., and (2) philosophy, as all other sciences, regardless of their imagined or exercised 'hierarchy', is a mode of writing.

My take on Nenad is (auto)biographical and bears witness to the moments of my formation as a curious explorer in humanities, ready to embrace the sudden but promising abyss of philosophy, sometimes driven by, sometimes followed by… literature!

I will share with you moments and times past—slivers of time in which Nenad played a crucial role in my confrontation with myself and the world as well as with myself in the world.

When I look in any car's rearview mirror—the one that sincerely calls for the caution spelling out that things in it are closer than they appear, I read my question: will I become a writer, a philosophy student, a basketball player, or a street hustler? Unfortunately, I neglected hustling to an alarming degree, and I blame Nenad for that. To balance my gratitude with a complete absence of comprehension, I could have never understood, not to mention approved his disrespect for basketball. Basketball then was my religion.

You already know where hexameters live, while the aspic remain to be explained; although, as far as the Proustian inner-memory concerning the two of us goes, Nenad's homemade aspic was so jelly-jolly that could have occasionally been mistaken for a sour sweet variant of the cream-filled puff pastry from Kont's Parfumerija, where, on its western window, I spent days and days, meandering through my Highschool nightmares, desperately trying to avoid the pedestrian, so-called "pedagogical" undertaking of philosophy, and seeking rescue in Nenad's company.

Matjaž Potrč (University of Ljubljana)

Some Memories on Nenad

My relationship with Nenad was extremely rich. So I just try to point out some of my memories of our being together, collaboration. I start with our encounter in Paris, with some background. This may be interesting for people not acquainted with the French cultural environment in which we both indulged at the time. This led to the resonance that resulted in staying together for several years. One of our common preoccupations centered upon semantic matters, say the communication-intention and referential role, the topics which I dealt with in my later work on definite descriptions controversy starting with Russell and Strawson. The wide semantic background involving all important philosophers at the time was the topics of discussions in Rijeka, Ljubljana and Zadar. We also visited the Kirchberg am Wechsel Wittgenstein symposia, where we encountered people such as Davidson and Putnam. Many of these came to Ljubljana, such as Keith Lehrer and Rudolf Haller. It is through Nenad's help that I was elected as professor in Zagreb and started teaching in Zadar, where among other people I encountered Georges Rey. Vanda Bozicevic was my assistant, and Arne Markusovic later defended his PhD with me in Ljubljana. I established Veber symposia, with Davidson and U.T. Place among participants. In Dubrovnik there was Kathy Wilkes.

Keywords: Paris encounter and its resonance, semantics, teaching and discussion groups.

Ksenija Puškarić (Seton Hall University)

Signs of the Infinite in Cartesian Thought

The perplexing issue of the idea of God as infinite emerged in the context of Descartes' so called „trademark argument", in which he inquired about the source, content, and origin of such an idea. Gassendi objected that a human mind can abstract finite perfections ad infinitum, by amplifying predicates such as goodness, holiness, and power to absolute perfection. Descartes' response to his objector began with conceding that we can arrive at the idea of infinity by amplification or by negation. However, the possibility of amplification or negation necessarily presupposes a prior idea of infinity. The priority thesis is introduced in the context of the so called "argument from doubt". I will discuss one interpretation of the argument endorsed by some prominent Descartes' scholars, such as Kenny and Broughton, and then introduce Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenological interpretation.

François Recanati (Collège de France)

Remembering Nenad

In this brief online address François Recanati will evoke Nenad and the early times of the European Society of Analytic Philosophy.

Nikolina Smiljanić (University of Rijeka)

Curiosity: The Key Virtue in Approaching Truths

Professor Miščević was, above all, a wonderful person, and then an exceptional professor who had direct interaction with his students and who would call at any time of the day to ask for an opinion or advice. He, the professor, engaged with his students. His work encompassed the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and political philosophy, and the last project I collaborated with him on was the book "Curiosity as an Epistemic Virtue" (Springer International Publishing, 2021). Being inherently curious, I found it very interesting to work on it and read his writings, and even today, as I engage in the philosophy of law, I always remember how curiosity, regardless of its driver, is a virtue. Curiosity is defined by prof. Miščević, as a crucial instrument in the advancement of science and wisdom, as well as within the broader picture of meaningful human life.

How has Professor Miščević and his work influenced me? I am currently writing a paper on the epistemic responsibility of participants in the legal process, and for an individual to be epistemically responsible, they must (want to) possess knowledge. The key elements of this epistemic responsibility are acquiring knowledge to justify one's beliefs. Furthermore, there is the communication of knowledge and certainly avoiding ignorance because recognizing and addressing personal ignorance is crucial for responsibly forming beliefs and in approaching truths. The foundation of all this, and indeed the starting point for everything, is curiosity— the desire for knowledge. Therefore, it can truly be concluded that curiosity is indeed a fundamental epistemic virtue that produces and communicates knowledge and creates entire new branches and disciplines. The world is changing, maintaining an (academic) community, which is what Professor Miščević also aimed for. Though no longer here, he left a lasting legacy in every area of philosophy and in the memories of all who had the chance to hear him speak and with all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Nenad Smokrović (University of Rijeka)

Nenad On Graded Rationality

In the number of papers, Nenad formulated an idea of rationality that comes in grades. This rather intuitive idea can be upgraded with the corresponding underlying logic. Namely, since theoretical rationality is understood as beliefs revision according to the (logical) rules, the process of revision of beliefs that avoids logical omniscience needs suitable logic. I am proposing the neighborhood semantics in dynamic interpretation as a suitable logic that supports this idea.

Keywords: rationality; neighborhood semantics; dynamic logic.

Danilo Šuster (University of Maribor)

Understanding the Rift – Miščević on the Continental-Analytic Divide

It is difficult to find a clear formulation of the analytic-continental contrasts but Miščević provides an original and intriguing account. Drawing on his distinctive intellectual background, he provides insight into the divide and proposes a framework for *understanding* the "mechanisms" that fractured philosophy. According to his big picture the modern Continental side subscribes to the four "breakup" principles from the early modern and the contemporary analytic thought: (i) The anthropological and historical is deeply ontological; (ii) The central element of human mind is a-rational; (iii) The basic reality of the world is akin to the a-rational element of human mind; (iv) The cognitive style, the language-style and the method of studying a domain D should follow the language-style and the manner of D itself. He is also interested in bridge heading: prospects for a joint framework. I am more skeptical about this project but I explore the idea of using the theses to conceptualize the divide in terms of a contemporary framework of deep disagreements. The assertion that writing about a complex domain D must itself be complex (enigmatic) may reflect a deeper disagreement over fundamental epistemic principles and their underlying sub-principles.

Borut Trpin (LMU Munich and University of Maribor)

Martin Justin (University of Maribor)

Coherence, Belief Updating, and Epistemic Luck: A Computational Exploration

In his work on epistemic luck, Nenad Miščević argued that traditional modal definitions of luck fail to account for the instability of cognitive functioning in a priori domains, proposing instead an agent-centered approach that emphasizes the role of cognitive virtues in minimizing luck. Following his advice that "[t]he reflective luck can be minimized by using a coherentist strategy at the reflective level" (Miščević 2007, p. 67), this paper explores how coherence considerations can mitigate the effects of epistemic luck in belief updating, particularly in the face of noisy or misleading evidence.

We present a novel computational framework that examines the role of coherence in belief formation and revision. Using Bayesian networks as a model of ground truth, we simulate agents who update their beliefs based on noisy or biased evidence, comparing the performance of "coherentist" agents (who filter evidence based on coherence measures) with "normal" agents (who update without coherence constraints). Our results show that coherence considerations can improve belief accuracy in highly noisy environments, even when agents start with relatively inaccurate priors. However, in less noisy environments, coherence can hinder inquiry by making agents overly cautious. This framework extends Miščević's concerns about agent stability and epistemic luck to computational epistemology, addressing an open issue in Bayesian epistemology: how should one determine priors, and to what extent do they predetermine the outcome of belief updating? We investigate whether coherence considerations—as a potential cognitive virtue—can guide the selection and revision of priors, and under what conditions they prove beneficial. Our findings highlight the complex interplay between individual cognitive virtues and the dynamics of belief updating, particularly in contexts where agents interact within structured social networks.

References:

Miščević, N. (2007). Armchair luck: Apriority, intellection and epistemic luck. Acta Analytica, 22, 48-73.

Elena Teofilova Tsvetkova (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

Offensive Speech Acts

Nenad Mišćević's analysis of pejoratives shows something about implicatures in general. One of the most important features of implicature is its cancellability. However, there is a valid reason to believe that some implicatures can be processed in a similar way by any person in the same language community. It is a difficult task to prove that some expressions' negative connotations are part of their truth-conditional meaning, but that is exactly the view that Mišćević has defended. The usage of pejoratives is an example of the fact that although some connotations are not a part of the conventional meaning of an expression, they are still understood by language users based on their salience – "pejoratives are typically used to offend". The question that I want to investigate is concerning all acts of offensive speech. The semantic structure of pejoratives sets a criterion for understanding the pragmatic inferences from their use in a sentence. This premise could be applied to other speech acts whose purpose is to offend the listener and to identify similar aspects. Pejoratives serve as indicative words that in a specific context reinforce the perlocutionary effect of a statement. The goal of my talk would be to indicate other similar indicative words.

Márta Ujvári (Corvinus University of Budapest)

Meaning-Constitution and its Pandan with Ontological Constitution

First, I recall Nenad's organizing activity and his central role at forming the Central European Section of ESAP, the European Society of Analytic Philosophy in the mid 90-ies. Then I focus on Nenad's paper at the borderline of epistemology and metaphysics entitled "Can We Save A Priori Knowledge?" (2009). Here I reflect on his polemic with Boghossian about the substantive meaning-constitutive character of certain contingent a priori propositions, notably, stipulations and implicit definitions, and try to assess Nenad's solution to the issue. Lastly, I briefly expound my position on the pandan case of ontological constitution of neo-Aristotelian essentialism currently debated by the modalists. To keep a fair balance, I admit that Nenad as a philosopher of language might have wanted to come up with objections to the essentialists' ignoring the linguistic implications of their metaphysical account.

Lino Veljak (University of Zagreb)

Rijeka Philosophy School

In this contribution to the conference dedicated to a very important philosopher, Nenad Miščević, the author presents his memories concerning the person and work of his colleague. The paper also valorizes Miščević's importance for the development of philosophy in the region of former Yugoslavia and in Central Europe as a whole, especially in Croatia and Slovenia. As an analytically oriented philosopher, he refuted any kind of dogmatism and advocated for unity of theoretical and practical philosophy.

Timothy Williamson (University of Oxford)

The Contingent A Priori, the Necessary A Posteriori, and Intensionalism about Content

One of Nenad Miščević's many philosophical interests was the nature of a priori knowledge. In this talk, I will discuss the motivation for a coarse-grained approach to individuating the content of intentional attitudes, its repercussions for ascriptions of a priori knowledge, and in particular for Kripke's examples of the contingent a priori and the necessary a posteriori in Naming and Necessity. I will explain how to make sense of such cases in a way that does justice to both Kripke's insights and intensional semantics. I will include some remarks about my philosophical interactions with Nenad and his contribution to the development of analytic philosophy in ex-Yugoslavia.