THE WORDING OF THOUGHTS
Philosophy from the standpoint of its manuscripts and archives

An International Conference organised by:
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FRENCH INSTITUTE OF PRAGUE – 7th-9th JUNE 2018
Štěpánská 35, 110 00 Prague 1

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:
Bibliothèque Nationale de France
Charles University Prague, Faculty of Humanities, Czech Republic
Institut Français, Prague, Czech Republic
Institut Mémoires de l’Édition Contemporaine (IMEC), Caen, Normandie, France
Institut des Textes et Manuscrits modernes (ITEM, CNRS/ENS), France
Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of Czech Republic (FLÚ AV ČR)
The Jan Patočka Archive, Prague, Czech Republic
The Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen, Norway
The international conference “The Wording of Thoughts: Philosophy from the Standpoint of its Manuscripts and Archives” aims to establish a dialogue between experts of different archival corpuses coming from various countries and continents, so as to sketch methodological lines and to build a pioneer network focused on philosophical archives. The publication of the conference proceedings will constitute a first cornerstone of this new consortium.

In exploring the history of several philosophical archives and their rooting in specific social and cultural contexts, we wish to give visibility to these institutions and to showcase their function in producing knowledge and shaping practices. We aim to evaluate the role of such archival materials and to appreciate their importance so as to develop new approaches to philosophical studies, including the history of philosophy and the exegesis of theoretical thought.

Philosophy is written, practiced, lived through: it is the translation of the experience of a thinking subjectivity in a conceptual alphabet and a verbal fabric. The I of philosophy is a chimera whose head tickles the heights of abstract concepts and universal discourses, while its body is grounded in the lived experience. At the hinge between these two realms called for by the speculative effort, stands the verbal material. Its meaning can only be determined taking into account its relationship to its contexts, the writing and reading practices surrounding it, the horizons of significations and even the implicit polemical charge which characterizes every philosophical contention. Likewise, the specificity of each theoretical expression is both the sine qua non condition for the perpetuation of a discipline looking to evolve and transcend its own categories, and the most subjective and personal aspect of a work that traditionally aims at the “neutrality” of abstraction.

The “making of a philosophical text”, including its cultural features and societal contingencies, challenges the representation of the discipline’s history as a series of abstract findings and innovative intuitions that constitute the landmarks of our paradigms. The philosopher who writes is the first inclined to erase the complex intricacies of the negotiations between existence and theory, between conceptual inventiveness and shared vocabulary inherited from a centuries-old tradition. Yet it is obvious that the dynamics of philosophy production and reception are a complex phenomenon whose writing nature is a crucial stake.

As reminded by Derrida reading Paul Valéry, such dimension of the philosopher’s work is constantly and almost physiologically overlooked in the representations of the discipline’s aims. Strong borders seem to delimitate fields renowned to be dissimilar, if not incompatible: philosophy and literature are therefore often seen as rival siblings, and their respective horizons do not take easily into account some elements that turn out to be indispensable to understand — from a dynamic, historical-cultural point of view — the production of theoretical prose. Likewise, and opposite to the tradition of the Romantic period for instance, intellectual work rarely binds philology and philosophy.

For all these reasons, the philosophical manuscript is an odd object that has only recently started to receive proper appraisal. In Europe, nevertheless, the creation of archive centres gathering major philosophical data has sustained the memory of philosophical writing and enabled such “arches” to cross time, waiting for the moment when, partly thanks to the development of digital humanities, such materials could get a much deserved attention. Thanks to the editing of philosophical manuscripts, the information contained by such media beyond the text itself turns out to be manifold. The ontology
that vitalizes and structures the hermeneutical gesture behind the work on manuscripts is indeed different. Such perspective enables to look at the evolution of a theoretical thought as a living and specific adventure, and the history of the discipline as a dynamic, manifold and choral process. Still, not all documents, as dispersed and little known traces of the philosophical practices, can be turned into books and thus remain hidden to the public eye. But it is beyond doubt that accessing these archives often enables to better understand the appearance, the method, the approach and even the sources, along with the polemical targets and the hints that published books tend to excise or dim.

Often, only specialists working on the critical edition of the works of a thinker-writer, or archivists in charge of a fund are able to develop knowledge from such materials: working on archives requires time, and it does not match the rhythms imposed today to research and intellectual production. Therefore the creativity that researchers display as they come up with ad hoc tools in order to publish or interpret a set of manuscripts has not yet been subjected to a comparative approach aiming to set common methodological principles. While genetic criticism has developed since the 1970s an important set of tools and philological methodology suitable to the study of writers’ manuscripts, little has been done to elaborate guidelines when dealing specifically with philosophical archives.

The conference will comprise four sections:

1 – Archive (hi)stories: Thinking theory through authors’ manuscripts. This panel will hold contributions concerning the history of philosophy archives, their creation and their existence. The emphasis will be on the integration of these institutions in the context of their time, and their involvement in their cultural and social landscape. In addition, the panel will showcase the ways in which the study of philosophical archives may open new methodological perspectives for the history of philosophy, for the sociology of knowledge, and for the analysis of the publishing industry and its market.

2 – Archives in the digital age. This section will deal with questions related to the digitisation of philosophical archives, and with the interpretation and analysis of such digital archives. The panel will host representatives of European institutions currently undertaking major projects in the edition of digital archives of philosophy, as well as scholars who based their interpretation of major philosophical texts on this type of documents and interface.

3 – What archives do to philosophy: methodologies in editing and interpreting. This section aims to elaborate common methodological perspectives through the study of various corpuses of philosophical manuscripts. The panel will include several interventions as well as discussions during which the contributors will share their experiences. We purport to elaborate methodological guidelines concerning the work with philosophical manuscripts, their exegesis or edition, through sharing and comparing practical expertise and empirical approaches. This aspect will be at the core of the conference proceedings.

4 – The political implications of archives and their conservation. Through a dialogue between archivists representing some of the most important institutions of France and Europe, we’ll examine various archiving policies and ways of showcasing philosophical manuscripts. We’ll also scrutinise the political implications related to the conservation of this type of archives, including questions raised by the use and interpretation of
autographic documents, so as to face issues such as ideological readings and manipulations of the texts.

On the afternoon of June 9th, after the conference, we will hold a work meeting dedicated to the organisation of future projects of international scientific cooperation. This meeting will notably gather institutional and scientific partners taking part in the creation of the application package for the International Research Network (IRN) “Archives and Interculturality”. Our goal is to plan future actions and to discuss joint initiatives to be implemented in the context of this programme.

You will find a detailed program of the conference in the annex.
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7th June 2018

MORNING SESSION – Archive (hi)stories:
Thinking philosophy and theory through authors’ manuscripts

9:30 – Benedetta Zaccarello (CEFRES, CNRS-MEAE), introductory remarks:
“What I have learned from manuscripts.”

10:00 – Frédéric Worms (ENS, Paris):
“The Archive of Philosophical Works, Problems, and Moments”

10:45 – Jean Claude Monod (ENS, Archives Husserl, Fonds Ricœur, Paris):
“Publication in Philosophy: Practices of Thinking and Writing, from Husserl to Blumenberg”

— 11:30 - Break —

11:45 – Fabrizio Desideri (University of Florence):
“The autographic dimension in philosophy. Before and after the work. Manuscripts, fragments, schemes, sketches, annotations and their relevance for the definition of philosophical textuality”

12:30 – Giuseppe Bianco (USP, Brazil/EHESS, Paris):
“The authority of the manual, the authority of the document: About the recent fashion of the archive in philosophy”

— 13:15 - LUNCH —

AFTERNOON SESSION – Jan Patočka and his archives

14:30 – Jan Frei (FLU AV CR, Patočka Archives, Prague):
“Jan Patočka: The work, the edition, and the bibliography”

15:15 – Ondrej Švec (FF Charles University, Prague):
“The false unity of the scattered work of Jan Patočka”

— 16:00 - Break —

16:15-18:00 – Roundtable on philosophical archives and practices of dissent, with:
Ivan Chvátil (Patočka Archives, Prague); Ivan Landa (FLU AV CR, Prague); Anna Nakai (CEU, Budapest); Sylva Fischerová (FF Charles University Prague, editor of J. L. Fischer’s works)
8th June 2018

**MORNING SESSION – What the archive does to philosophy:**
Methodologies in editing and interpreting philosophical archives

9:00 – **THOMAS C. MERCIER** (CEFRES, Charles University, Prague):
“Before the *Specters*: Marxism and deconstruction in Derrida’s archives”

9:45 – **ARIANNA SFORZINI** (Sciences Po, Reims, CNRS-ENS Lyon):
“The Foucault archives as a case study: Editing a ‘tool box’ ”

10:30 – **GUILLAUME FAGNIEZ** (Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels):
“Exile and Return: Karl Löwith’s papers at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach”

— 11:15 - **BREAK** —

11:30 – **RICHARD HARTZ** (Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives, Pondicherry):
“The Genesis of a Philosophical Poem: Thought, Word and Vision in the Writing of Sri Aurobindo’s *Saviri*”

12:15 – **TOMÁŠ KOBLÍŽEK** (FLU AV CR, Prague):
“From Linguistics to Phenomenology and Back: Émile Benveniste’s Notes on Baudelaire”

— 13:00 - **LUNCH** —

**AFTERNOON SESSION – Archives of philosophy in the digital age**

14:30 – **PAOLO D’IORIO** (ITEM, ENS-CNRS, Paris – editor of Nietzsche Source):
“Nietzsche Source: Digital Editions of Nietzsche’s works and manuscripts”

15:15 – **ALOIS PICHLER** (The Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen, Norway):
“Forms of textual genesis in Wittgenstein’s Nachlass”

16:00 – **ISABELLE ALFANDARY** (CIPH, Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris-3): “The Archive Project”

— 16:45 - **BREAK** —

17:00 – **DANIELA HELBIG** (University of Sidney):
“Reading the products of ‘thinking pen in hand’: The digital archive of Kant’s *Opus postumum* as a challenge to interpretative practices”

17:45 – **ANDREW PARKER** (Rutgers University, US): “Marx’s Archive Fever”

**19:30: CONFERENCE DINNER**
9th June 2018

MORNING SESSION – The political implications of archives and of their conservation

9:00 – PETER HEEHS (Former archivist at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives, Pondicherry):
“‘Eternal Truth’ and the ‘Mutations of Time’: Archival documents between historical texts and claims of timeless truth”

9:45 – JEAN KHALFA (Cambridge University, UK):
“Rereading Frantz Fanon’s work in the light of his unpublished texts”

— 10:30 BREAK —

10:45 Roundtable on the conservation of philosophical archives and their history:
LAURENCE LE BRAS (BnF, Paris); FRANÇOIS BORDES (IMEC, Caen, Normandie, France);
EMANUELE CAMINADA (Husserl Archives, Leuven)

12:30 – CLOSING REMARKS

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13:45-16:00: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK (IRN) “ARCHIVES OF INTERNATIONAL THEORY (AITIA)” PARTNERS’ MEETING