



FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
Univerzita Karlova

Zápis o obhajobě disertační práce, kterou organizovaly společně Univerzita Karlova a Université Catholique de Louvain

Akademický rok: 2022/2023

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Mgr. Daniil Koloskov
Identifikační číslo studenta: 48090559

Typ studijního programu: doktorský
Studijní program: Filozofie
Studijní obor: Filozofie
ID studia: 626279

Název práce: Living without a Ground: Praxis of Being-in-the-World
Pracoviště práce: Ústav filosofie a religionistiky (21-UFAR)
Jazyk práce: angličtina
Jazyk obhajoby: čeština
Školitel UNIVERZITA KARLOVA: Mgr. Ondřej Švec, Ph.D.
Školitel (Université Catholique de Louvain): Sylvain Camilleri, Ph.D.

Oponent(i): prof. Bruno Leclercq
doc. Mgr. Martin Nitsche, Ph.D.

Datum obhajoby: 08.09.2023 **Místo obhajoby:** Praha
Termín: řádný

Průběh obhajoby: Start: 13:00
The committee chairman, Danielle de Santis (henceforth “the chairman”), introduces the defense of the thesis “Living without a ground: a praxis of Being-in-the world” by Daniil Koloskov (henceforth DK) and reveals its schedule (first, DK will present the thesis; then, both supervisors will comment on it, as well as on the DKs other credentials; subsequently, the opponents will present their critical remarks and DK will answer all the objections). After this, the chairman gives the floor to DK.
Before the presentation of the thesis and the structure of the dissertation, DK thanks his supervisors and opponents for their critical remarks.
The main goal of the dissertation is to formulate a pragmatic phenomenology relying on the notion of primacy of praxis. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to reconcile the apparent incompatibility between phenomenology and pragmatism. DK’s strategy is to systematically criticize relevant figures (Rorty, Brandom, Habermas, Heidegger) from both traditions and to show shortcomings of their positions in order to develop his own position. This treatment shows that pragmatism and phenomenology are not incompatible with each other and there is possibility to formulate a

phenomenological pragmatism. The central notion is that of praxis. DK's main proposition is that practices are meaningful on their own merits. DK draws heavily on the work of Heidegger, mainly on the notion of Dasein, to demonstrate this.

Comments and objections: 13:28

After DK's presentation, the chairman asks the first supervisor, Sylvain Camilleri (S1), to comment on the dissertation. S1 first congratulates the author for finishing dissertation, which he regards as an original and solid piece of work, albeit not completely flawless. S1 characterizes the author as a skillful and promising young researcher, who participated in many scientific activities in addition to his work on the dissertation. S1 praises DK's publication activities noting that DK published many great articles in respectable journals. When it comes to the peculiarity of DK's philosophical approach, S1 mentions his ability to skillfully work within different traditions. Finally, S1 comments on the history of his working relationship with DK, saying that they differ in approach (S1 being more traditional and DK more progressive) and have widely different readings of Heidegger. Nevertheless, despite this difference and maybe because of it, they had many fruitful debates.

S1 thinks that the dissertation is well thought out and balanced. It has a clear structure in terms of the way the individual chapters are outlined and every step of the argumentation makes sense. One shortcoming is a certain indifference to the historical context of the individual thinkers. Nevertheless, S1 hails DK's approach to phenomenology.

S1 question is, "Do you see Heidegger more as an existentialist or an ontologist?"

The next in line with his comments and questions is Ondřej Švec (S2). He evaluates DK as great student and applauds the broad scope of his research interests, which include the works of authors such as Arendt, Dostoyevsky, Patočka and Heidegger). S2 mentions also DK's involvement in teaching and stresses his talent to explain difficult matters in very understandable way to students. DK also tutored several younger students and frequently attended international conferences. S2 characterizes DK as an exemplary Ph.D. student.

Next, S2 summarizes the dissertation. In his understanding, it deals mainly with the question of possibility of phenomenological pragmatism. The aim of dissertation in S2's view is to overcome the limits of both phenomenology and pragmatism by convincingly showing and remedying the shortcomings of both. Further, the dissertation redefines the notion of primacy of practice from a pragmatic point of view, which consists in a human approach to the world. S2 evaluates the dissertation as very coherent and as displaying good knowledge of primary as well as of secondary sources. DK tries to develop a criticism of existing interpretations, which is philosophically a good thing to do. S2 mentions some shortcomings as well. The dissertation is sometimes a bit imprecise and conceals the chain of reasoning by making very assertive and general comments ("brush strokes") without attention to the many nuances of the thought of the individual authors. S2 believes that many of them would not fully agree with DK's interpretation of their work. Despite this S2 appreciates the way DK's argument proceeds. After the summary, S2 asks for clearer articulation of DK's idea of maximizing disclosive potential, which is supposed to better account for the evolution, interconnectedness, and unity of human practices. The idea does not appear to have been well illustrated in dissertation. S2 considers the soccer examples, which DK uses, as too narrow to illustrate it.

In conclusion, S2 evaluates the dissertation as excellent and recommends its revised version for publication.

Next, the chairman asks the opponents to present their objections

starting with Bruno Leclercq (O1).

O1 is happy for having been invited to oppose the thesis. In his view, the thesis is clear, assertive and smart. It has a good structure, strong arguments and is original. However, maybe due to its originality, it overlooks some historical details at the expense of the bigger picture. O1 asks a question concerning the author's apparent rejection of naturalism in favor of cultural and social approach to the grounding of practices. Even though the meaningfulness of practices is not to be reduced to wholly naturalistic explanations, nevertheless, natural constrains seem to be part and parcel of any meaningful practice. As example, O1 presents the human perceptive abilities, which are limited by the natural constrains proper to our cognitive apparatus. How can DK articulate cultural constrains within this natural context?

Next, the chairman asks Martin Nitsche (O2) to present his objections. He joins others in applauding the thesis, however he consciously takes the role of advocatus diaboli. He thinks that the presentation of the thesis during the defense could have been clearer. He noticed the lack of conclusion on the part of the candidate.

O2 wants to know what the difference between phenomenological pragmatism and pragmatic phenomenology is. If DK aims and defining some phenomenological versions of pragmatism, what is it that makes it phenomenological? When it comes to the interpretation of Heidegger, DK seemingly chose the existential rather than the phenomenological Heidegger. DK's interpretation of Dasein is strange, since he often uses formulations such as "Dasein acts", which Heidegger never uses. Moreover, DK interprets Dasein as disclosure. Does it make sense to speak, for example, of "disclosure or disclosing acts"? The last question concerns the concept of mutuality. In what way can one speak of mutuality between humans and world pragmatic?

DK starts answering at 14:05:

First, he tackles the questions regarding his peculiar terminology and explains the motivation behind expressions such as "existential phenomenology" and "phenomenological pragmatism". He is aware that the former term is rather vague. In the dissertation, he tried to remedy this vagueness through interpreting the way some relevant figures (Heidegger, Patočka, Merleau-Ponty and others) worked with the concept of Dasein. DK answers O2's objection regarding the use of a more existential Heidegger. DK's view is that H is phenomenologist through and through. As to the latter concept, DK answers the confusion between the two expressions phenomenological pragmatism and pragmatic phenomenology by invoking Merleau-Ponty's notion of intertwining.

Next, DK answers the objection pertaining to his apparent rejection of naturalism raised by O1. In his answer, he references John Rawls and his demonstration of the way natural and cultural aspects work. The organism as a natural entity learns to live in specific situations but is able to change them as well. DK thinks that this can show that there is no such thing as the great divide between natural and cultural phenomena. They both are meaningful. They complement each other in the sense that certain natural brain structures are necessary to bring about certain experiences (e.g., perceiving colors), but cannot be successfully invoked in explaining their cultural significance. A short discussion followed up on this point. O1 noticed that the experience seems to be already organized and meaningful independently of culture. DK insisted that the evolutionary process of selection has primacy over the natural background.

DK explained what makes his approach phenomenological, answering one of O2's questions. It is phenomenological because it deals with appearances and tries to establish that phenomena are self-evidently meaningful.

Regarding the objection about DK's strange interpretation of the

concept of Dasein, DK claims that Heidegger uses it also in the sense of human being and hence it is perfectly fine to say that “Dasein acts”.

Lastly, DK clarifies that the notion of mutuality can be traced back to Heidegger and makes sense in the context of the project of phenomenological pragmatism.

The last remark brought DK’s reaction to the objections to conclusion and the chairman asks the public to comment. There is one question from the audience concerning Patočka’s notion of movement as disclosure. This notion seems to be very close to what DK wants to say. Why does DK not work with Patočka in this regard? DK agrees that Patočka is close to his own approach, but Heidegger suited his goals better. Moreover, in DK’s view, it is better to focus on one main figure.

The chairman has some questions as well. He wants to know why DK does not want to characterize his approach as transcendental philosophy, since he makes claims such as: “Practice is the source of all meaning in the world”. Claims like these seem to be transcendental in nature. DK rejects that he makes claims like that. He makes recourse to the meaningfulness of natural conditions, which are intertwined with the practices. Thus, it is not correct to say that practice is the sole source of meaning.

At the very end, S1 noticed a small grammatical mistake in the text of dissertation. DK write “Gesamtaufgabe” instead of “Gesamtausgabe” when he refers to the complete works of Heidegger.

At 14:45 the chairman closes the discussion and asks everybody that is not a member of the committee to leave the room.

After the candidate is asked to come back, the chairman congratulates him announcing the committee’s unanimous decision to consider his defense as fully successful.

The candidate thanks the members of the committee. The defense is then officially closed.

Klasifikace obhajoby:	prospěl/a (P)	
Předseda komise:	Daniele De Santis, Dott. Ric.
Členové komise:	Sylvain Camilleri, Ph.D.
	prof. Nathalie Frogneux
	prof. Bruno Leclercq
	doc. Mgr. Martin Nitsche, Ph.D.
	Mgr. Ondřej Švec, Ph.D.