



POLSKIE
TOWARZYSTWO
FENOMENOLOGICZNE



INSTYTUT
FILOZOFII
I SOCJOLOGII
POLSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK



Faculty of Education, University of Warsaw

Polish Phenomenological Association

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

and Ignatianum University in Cracow

invite you to submit papers for

**24th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
THE POLISH PHENOMENOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION**

The Phenomenon of Evil

Warsaw, Staszic Palace, November 27-29, 2025

The concept of evil has always been present in philosophical discourse as a counterpart to good. It is understood as either its opposite, its absence, or its underlying condition. The concept of radical evil, rooted in human nature, was introduced to modern philosophy by Immanuel Kant. This enabled the traditional question 'Unde malum?' to be transformed into a question about what constitutes radical evil. Alongside the problem of evil in ontology, ethics, politics and aesthetics, contemporary philosophy has revisited the Socratic question of the relationship between evil and knowledge. This has raised concerns, as Zygmunt Bauman puts it, that 'the diabolical is intelligent', and has led to the recognition of the inherent dialectic in the concept of 'Enlightenment'.

At the same time, it could be argued that, unlike contemporary literature, modern philosophy was primarily influenced by the philosophers of suspicion: Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. Until the second half of the 20th century, the concept of evil was replaced by ideas that were less associated with traditional religious connotations. Philosophy shifted its focus to violence and predicted the collapse of the modern world, replacing the concept of evil with new notions. The concept of evil seemed redundant until the tragedies of Auschwitz and Hiroshima. In the 1960s, it became apparent that a philosophy devoid of the concept of evil was powerless to address these atrocities. The problem of evil returned to philosophy, in part thanks to Hannah Arendt and her term 'the banality of evil', which she coined to demonstrate the shallow basis of extreme and unprecedented evil.

Like Arendt in the 1960s, the conference organizers believe that the problem of evil in the third decade of the 21st century is of urgent relevance and cannot be confined to religious reflection. However, it can be approached and described in various ways, depending on the context. For example, evil can be conceptualized not only in the way Arendt captures it, but also as the absence of good. The latter can be interpreted as being entangled in ontology as conceived by Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas and Józef Tischner. Alternatively, it can be considered as 'epiphanic evil', as described by Cezary Wodziński. Evil can also be seen as a blind spot in language: a gap between words into which individual words fall, losing their ability to come together and create meaning. This approach can be contrasted with Susan Neiman's concept of evil. Neiman assumes that evil cannot be defined; however, she believes that the responsibility of the humanities remains to describe its various manifestations. Contrary to Wodziński's view, these cannot be reduced to a single denominator.

From Augustine to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, philosophers sought to defend the idea of a creator of the world. However, since the

Enlightenment, the concepts of natural and moral good have become separated, as demonstrated by Marquis de Sade and Nietzsche. Neiman, who was mentioned above, concludes that the present day is dominated by two philosophical attitudes. The first, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Arendt, emphasizes that morality requires us to try to make evil intelligible by grasping its manifestations in concepts. The second, from Voltaire to Theodor Adorno, insists that this is not only impossible, but also that it should not be done precisely because of morality.

The complexities of the contemporary world give rise to questions about evil. We would therefore like to consider it within various humanistic contexts, such as philosophy, culture and pedagogy, in order to address both its essence and its manifestations. The phenomenon of evil is indelibly linked to philosophical discourse and constantly manifests itself in changing historical and social contexts, resulting in various phenomenological descriptions. Our primary interest lies in the broadly understood phenomenological perspective and the perspective of cultural philosophy. Nevertheless, we are also interested in the perspectives of other social sciences and humanities, particularly the pedagogical and cultural studies, especially in relation to the philosophy of education (education in the face of evil and evil in education).

We want to ask questions about how we can think about evil today, how we can deal with it, survive it and perhaps even overcome it, even though, as Paul Celan writes in his most famous poem, “black milk of morning we drink you evenings ...”.

We accept submissions of papers in English, French or German.

Those interested in actively participating in the conference are kindly requested to send their application, including the title of their presentation and an abstract of no more than 500 words, to ptfen@ifispan.edu.pl by **September 30, 2025**,

Please note that papers will be presented in situ only, but the conference will be broadcast online.

Conference fee:

First deadline: 15 October 2025. Fees: PLN 500 for Polish participants and EUR 130 for foreign guests.

For members of the Polish Phenomenological Association: PLN 400 (EUR 100)

PhD students: PLN 350 (EUR 80)

Second deadline: 1 November 2025. Fees: PLN 600 for Polish participants and EUR 150 for foreign guests.

Members of the Polish Phenomenological Association: PLN 500 (EUR 130)

PhD students: PLN 400 (EUR 100)

POLSKIE TOWARZYSTWO FENOMENOLOGICZNE | KRS: 0000116874 | NIP: 5252636579

00-330 Warszawa, ul. Nowy Świat 72 p. 233 REGON: 01559606000000

e-mail: ptfen@ifispan.edu.pl | <https://ptfen.org.pl> Nr konta: 80 2530 0008 2090 1040 4548 0001
(Nest Bank)