

Call for Papers

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Philosophy as a Way of Life in a Time of Crisis

This issue of our journal will be devoted specifically to the meaning and purpose of writing works of philosophy as a way of life (PWL) in times of cultural upheaval, uncertainty, pain, and new suffering. When the world finds itself in the middle of a pandemic with its consequent confinement and social isolation, a related economic crisis, the unmasking of ongoing systematic racism, the global rise of far right politics, and the spread of violence, what role can the work of philosophers have in helping individuals and communities strive for a wise, just, and meaningful life?

From Marcus Aurelius' meditations written in the midst of war and plague, and Montaigne's *Essais* penned amidst civil strife, to Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons which incited a movement rooted in non-violence to fight systematic racism in the United States, those committed to the philosophical life have used a variety of literary genres to affect, exhort, enlighten and console their readers. Today we find ourselves in a profound crisis of civilization, as the Covid-19 pandemic unleashes a Pandora's box of suffering that was underneath the "old normal": global inequality driven by late capitalism, the unsustainable amount of waste produced by rich countries, the rapid loss of biodiversity, climate change, systematic racism and white supremacy rooted in the colonial history and the rise of today's nation-states, and anti-democratic populism driven by a digital reality that has no boundaries.

The idea of PWL is pre-eminently associated with French philosopher and philologist Pierre Hadot. According to this idea, the goal of philosophy is to transform its practitioners' lives. Ancient Western philosophy, as Hadot asked us to see it, was abidingly oriented by Socrates' question of "how is it best to live?" It included in its purview prescriptions of "spiritual exercises" or what Michel Foucault called "technologies of the self" to actively transform how people perceive the world and live their lives: exercises like the view from above, heightened attention to the present moment, the examination of conscience, or the premeditation of death and misfortunes. These older practices of philosophy were also tied to, and expressed within, different literary genres than those we recognize today, from dialogues to consolations, meditations, discourses, handbooks, aphorisms, even poems and prayers. Ancient philosophers aimed to do more, or different things with words, than perhaps we do today.

The study of PWL in historical thinkers hence invites philosophers today to reconsider the ends and means of their work, their relations to others, to the university, to the city, and to the global community. Our present situation makes such reflection more urgent than ever.

This edition of *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* calls for papers examining the role or roles of philosophy in times of crisis. Can philosophy any longer be therapeutic or consolatory, as it was for the ancients? What different genres can and should philosophers write and with what aims? Can philosophy provide new visions of human community when

community seems fraught or broken? During such times as these, what should the philosopher write and for whom? Should we write consolations for ourselves in a world we cannot control? Should we catalyze others to transform society through fiery manifestos? Do we pen dialogues, fictional works, and artistic essays to incite necessary thought and reflection? Ought philosophers, driven by the new necessities, to aim only to accumulate high end journal articles and manuscripts with leading publishers that few will read but our colleagues? Or ought we to challenge what Frodeman and Briggie calls “disciplinary capture”? Should we instead be writing for broader audiences with tabletop books that support others on the quest for the good life, or does that oversimplify and perhaps cheapen the depth of our work and PWL? What is the role for the professional philosopher today? In view of the current pandemic, should we shift our priorities toward online publications, presentations, seminars and conferences? Should this change in priorities persist even after the return to “normal”?

We welcome insightful, previously-unpublished papers which will address these and similar questions.

Papers, which will be double-blind peer-reviewed, can be submitted by **November 15th, 2020** to: idos.ed@uw.edu.pl.

Please, make sure that your paper complies with our submission standards which are posted here: <http://idos.uw.edu.pl/submissions/>

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