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| **Meeting title:** Workshop: On Categories  |
| **Date:** 11.1.2024.  |
| **Time:** 18.00 |
| **Place:** Zoom |
| **Zoom link:** Odsjek za filozofiju Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.Join Zoom Meeting<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89658057350?pwd=YlRPa1A3UzhEY2ZPN3RZVXp4cWtqUT09>Meeting ID: 896 5805 7350Passcode: 460394 |
| **Duration:** 1 hour and 40 minutes |
| **Participants:** Boran Berčić, Filip Čeč, Ljudevit Hanžek, Filip Grgić, Andrej Jandrić, Mia Biturajac, Matija Rajter, Aleksandar Božić, Justin Weinberg, Timothy Williamson, Mark Balaguer, Marin Biondić, Danica Radoš |
| **Absentees:** - |
| **Agenda:** 1. Boran Berčić delivering the talk “On Categories”
2. Discussion, questions and comments
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| **Meeting summary:** During the course of the meeting the principal researcher of the project Boran Berčić delivered a talk titled “On Categories”. After the talk had been delivered we have entered the discussion portion of the workshop in which the participants have asked some clarificatory questions and gave comments regarding the content of the presentation. |
| **Talk summary:**The title of today’s talk was “On Categories”. Human beings in general and philosophers in particular exhibit a tendency to categorize or classify things according to some principle. This tendency to categorize various entities is present in various human endeavors, but as paradigmatic examples of a taxonomy Berčić mentioned the Tree of Porphyry, the Periodic system of elements as formulated by Mendeleev, the Linnaeus Classification, the Encyclopedia of Diderot and d’Alambert, the Universal Decimal Classification of Otlet etc. Some authors have been motivated by the totalitarian idea that we should formulate a complete inventory that exists in the universe, where everything that exists (or mere possibilities) would have its place in it.Two paradigmatic proposals of categories come in the form of Aristotle’s ten categories and Immanuel Kant’s twelve categories. Berčić then criticised the Kantian view of categories.The rest of the talk was dedicated to the formulation and analysis of the questions that a good theory of categories has to answer:1. Are categories about the language or about the world?
2. What is the difference between the physical and the ontological analysis?
3. How many categories are there?
4. Reducibility
5. Is there a single highest division?
6. Are categories abstractions from something more fundamental?
7. Are there possible categories?
8. Existential/phenomenological critique
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| **Questions and comments:** Balaguer* It seems to him that there is a tension between the idea of realism about categories and the idea that there exists a unique taxonomy
* If someone is a realist about categories it seems like you would have to accept the existence of multiple categories that cut across each other
* He notes that having a hierarchical structure of categories seems compatible with a flat metaphysics because one can think that the hierarchy and the tree structure (as exemplified by the tree of Porphyry) can be generated by entailment structures

Berčić* He asks the audience on their opinion regarding the relationship between the Tree of Porphyry and the Mendeleev Periodic table

Božić* Clarificatory question: regarding categories in the living world – it seems to him that the category of a nutrient is a fundamental category in the living world, but he notes that what constitutes as a nutrient varies from species to species – analysis of the claim and it’s consequences

Čeč* When we talk about categories and the entities that are contained within it is obvious that those entities exist. However, do the categories themselves exist?

Weinberg* Clarificatory question: what would count as a category for the purposes of the speaker?
* Clarificatory question: on the differentiation between natural and non-natural categories
* Clarificatory question: realism about categories – why should we presuppose a hierarchy?

Williamson* Analysis of the idea of realism about categories: there is some kind of unique taxonomic tree which represents the right system of categories?
* The claim that we can’t think without categories – it is not clear why this should presuppose a unique taxonomic tree
* A unique taxonomy does not necessarily have to form a tree structure
* Comment on the Tree of Porphyry and the fact that it does not serve us well in contemporary research
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