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Jürgen Habermas Awarded Inaugural Dialectic Medal

SEATTLE, Washington — The Institute for Advanced Dialectical Research has awarded its inaugural Dialectic Medal to one of the world's most influential thinkers, Jürgen Habermas, who, for more than 60 years, has been a leading figure in the fields of philosophy, sociology and political theory.

The award was created to recognize and foster dialectical thinking in diverse fields of theory and practice worldwide, while the medal itself was inspired by another famous German philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831), whose profile appears on the front and whose studies in logic and phenomenology established the foundation of modern dialectics in the 19th century. The portrait is based on a commemorative medallion that Hegel received from his students at the University of Berlin in celebration of his election as Rector in 1830. He proudly sent a copy to his friend the poet and polymath J.W. Goethe, who wrote: "The praiseworthy profile of the medal has turned out very well in every respect." This specimen remains in the collection of the National Goethe Museum in Weimar and served as the model for the Institute's award.

Regarding its first recipient, the Institute's Director, Dr. Justin Burke says: "There was no doubt that the first Dialectic Medal should go to Prof. Habermas, since he is not only acknowledged to be one of the greatest living philosophers in the world today, but is also someone whose work has always embodied a strong dialectical element—from his first major critical essay, 'The Dialectics of Rationalization' (1954) to his most recent philosophical writings."

The recipient of countless honorary degrees and prestigious awards, Habermas himself, 93, claims he is now "too old" for such distinctions—but one should not be fooled by his longevity, as Dr. Burke said in his presentation remarks, since his most recent book is also by far his longest, totaling more than 1,700 pages in the original German, and is eagerly-awaited in English later this year under the title: *Also a History of Philosophy* (POLITY BOOKS).

Dialectic itself features prominently in that philosophical history, says Dr. Burke. "Hegel's conception of dialectic is that thought entails its own unfolding and development through what Habermas calls 'the power of negation'. In fact, Hegel once explained to Goethe that dialectic is 'nothing more than the regulated, methodically cultivated spirit of contradiction inherent in every human being, which proves itself to be a great gift for distinguishing the true from the false.'"

Commenting on the award, philosopher Martin Jay, author of *The Dialectical Imagination*, cites the word *dialectic's* Greek origin, saying it suggests that thought develops through moving back and forth between opposing arguments that never achieve the status of settled truth. "There is perhaps no more consistent dialectician in this sense", he says, "than Jürgen Habermas, who in his long and distinguished career has both advocated the fundamental importance of persuasion through the better argument, and performatively sought to realize it in his frequent and courageous interventions in the public sphere."

More information about Jürgen Habermas and the Dialectic Medal, including photos and videos, can be found on the Institute's website: www.dialecticinstitute.org

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