Critical Intellectuals:
from Legislators to Interpreters to Mediators?

Gregor McLennan (University of Bristol)

Přednáška proběhne
11. 5. 2016 od 17hod v místnosti 6022, areál Jinonice, U Kříže 8, Praha 5
v rámci cyklu Historicko-sociologických konfrontací. Pracovním jazykem je angličtina.

Zygmunt Bauman once characterized the shift from modernity to postmodernity in terms of the changing style of intellectuals, from the model of the 'legislator' to that of the 'interpreter'. With the blurring of any sharp contrast between modernity and postmodernity, a third figure, that of the 'mediator', has come to the fore. Working through various ways in which the rather bland connotations of mediation can be upgraded and energized, I identify the late Stuart Hall as an outstanding mediator in the last 50 years of critical social thought – though this involves questioning some received wisdom about Hall within cultural studies itself. And it turns out that one condition of being a notable intellectual mediator is the retention of a definite degree of 'legislation', in this case Hall's continued (if stretched) allegiance to Marxism. I then consider (also affirmatively) the very different case of Ernest Gellner, who is sometimes thought to have been so legislatively modernist (and thus also 'Eurocentric' and ideologically 'secularist') as to have little to offer the 'postsecular' frame of understanding that is increasingly prominent in our times.

Gregor McLennan is Professor of Sociology and Head of the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies at the University of Bristol. Building on previous writings on Marxism, pluralism, sociology and cultural studies, Prof McLennan's more recent work has examined the theoretical challenges posed by contemporary postcolonialism and postsecularism.

Filosofický ústav AV ČR
Institute of Philosophy

FAKULTA HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ
Univerzita Karlova

GAČR
GRANTOVÁ AGENTURA ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY

CEFRES
Centre français de recherche en sciences sociales