



Welcome address: Corti-Lecture, 30 October 2024 (Check against delivery.)

Dear Professor Fabre,

Dear Director of the Center for Ethics, Professor Coors,

Dear Members of the Center for Ethics and of the University of Zurich Ethics Commission,

Dear colleagues and guests,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you on behalf of the University of Zurich to this second Corti-Lecture, organized by the Center for Ethics. I would like to extend a special welcome to our distinguished guest today, Professor Cécile Fabre. Professor Fabre is Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Oxford and Senior Research Fellow at the “All Souls College”. In her lecture today, she will talk about moral and political questions of Cultural Heritage, a topic that fits in perfectly within the Corti-Lecture, created to give insights into current ethical debates and research. And it touches upon a subject of prime interest to the University of Zurich! With specific questions about the ownership of Cultural Heritage, Professor Fabre also explores very practical issues, which is ideal for this event for another reason: today, we are also celebrating the 25th anniversary of the continuing education program *Advanced Studies in Applied Ethics* – a program that addresses crucial questions of our time – and has unprecedented sympathy and participation of many students!

What is a fair wage? Are we morally obliged to get vaccinated? Should wealth be limited? Is it okay to use text generated by ChatGPT? Or more specific to the University of Zurich: to whom do we have to eventually

repatriate bronze sculptures from Benin; or how do we deal with national requests to return human remains of Torres Strait and Aborigines people? Many topics of public debate are ethical issues to which – at a first stance – there is no clear answer. Ethical questions of this kind are playing an increasingly significant role in everyday professional life. Accordingly, specific ethical expertise and qualifications have become more important in recent years, in particular for non-experts.

The Center for Ethics at the University of Zurich has recognized this need already a long time ago. Initiated in 1999, our curriculum on *Advanced Studies in Applied Ethics* is one of the oldest continuing education programs at the University of Zurich. Its mission is to expand and sharpen skills to analyse and assess ethical challenges in professional and everyday life for 25 years. By doing so, the program does not build on developing rigid doctrines. Rather, it offers a compass where established assessment procedures fail, where familiar norms no longer offer solutions or where there are no rules of conduct at all. As a result, the continuing education program in applied ethics helps professionals to grasp complex situations and to make well-founded, independent decisions with an ethical background in mind. To date, about 500 participants have successfully completed these courses. I am delighted that our curriculum on *Advanced Studies in Applied Ethics* holds a firm position within our diverse continuing education landscape, and I am very pleased that we are gathered here today to celebrate this highly successful initiative. On behalf of the Executive Board of the University of Zurich, I would like to congratulate the Center for Ethics for this outstanding achievement, and I wish the program continued success!

Before I pass the floor to Michael Coors, the Director of the Center for Ethics, I would like to raise one last question. As a biodiversity expert, I am

personally also often confronted with ethical questions, specifically when it comes to discussions about the inclusiveness of biodiversity. In this context, I often ask the question: Do you – as a human being – consider yourself part of biodiversity or is biodiversity in our valuation system considered to be without humans? For now, I will leave this question open, but it brings me back to the topics that Cécile Fabre will address: Cultural Heritage sites are often deeply intertwined with longstanding connections to nature. Nature as culture represents relational values – but there are also intrinsic and instrumental values of nature. Most interestingly, they all complement each other and are inseparable. Dear Professor Fabre, I am sure you will have much to say on the topic of moral and political questions of Cultural Heritage. I personally must apologize that I am unable to attend the lecture, as I have to give a dinner speech for university innovators and entrepreneurs. I deeply regret that I have to leave you in a moment already.

But I thank you very much for your attention and I wish you all an inspiring evening and a very happy 25th anniversary celebration!