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STRANGERS

ABSTRACTS

From the Editors – Estrangement, or Solitude (D.Ch.)

The experience of estrangement paradigmatic to Judeo-Christian culture can be found in the Biblical account of the creation of man included in the Book of Genesis. The feeling of being alienated from the world, the realization of the world's radical 'otherness' which cannot be overcome, is actually the first human experience the Bible describes. Even surrounded by living beings which bear the names he has given to them (see Gen 2:19), man does not find a suitable 'helper' for himself as long as—by the will of the Creator—another human person appears by his side.¹ And although it might seem that the relation with another human being will make it possible for him to overcome his original solitude and begin to feel 'at home' in the world, the succeeding verses of the Book of Genesis soon dispel the illusion. The story of creation is immediately followed by the account of the fall of man: the fall that brings another experience of acute alienation. This time, however, it is not only man's feeling of being estranged from the world, but also, on the one hand, his realization of having broken the bond with the Creator, and, on the other, a sudden insight into the irremovable distance that has appeared between himself and the other human person whose presence was supposed to bring comfort and guarantee that the feelings of void and solitude will never return. Discord has supplanted the mutual understanding and unity. From now on, despite their physical closeness, the first human beings will become forever distant to each other in the

¹ On the experience of desolation and the original solitude of man, who despite the abundance of the surrounding world does not feel 'at home' or 'among his own,' see J o h n P a u l I I, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, transl. by Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 135f, 146-150. "Man can neither be understood nor explained in his full depth with the categories taken from the 'world,' that is, from the visible totality of bodies," *ibidem*, 135. The Pope's theological insight seems to resonate with the findings of modern psychology. Having analyzed cases of children reared outside the human social community researchers have concluded that deprived of the presence of other human beings, a human child will not actualize his or her potentialities. While the external world may provide for the child's physical development, it is incapable of triggering the child's intellectual and emotional growth. See S.C. D o m b r o w s k i et. al., *Assessing and Treating Low Incidence/High Severity Psychological Disorders of Childhood* (New York–Dordrecht–London: Springer, 2011), 81-93 (Chapter 5, "Feral Children").

deepest possible sense. The ominous words of the Creator are addressed to each of them separately, as if to confirm their new condition: the fact that from now on, even sharing in each other's lives they will remain strangers to each other (see Gen 3:16-19). The further history of humanity, portrayed in a moving account in the succeeding chapters of the Book of Genesis, provides numerous proofs that the foreboding was true.

Whether we interpret the experience of the first Biblical figures in the perspective of a religious account or rather discern in it a certain literary *topos*, surprisingly recurring in various cultures, their lot may be read as a universal, *par excellence* human experience which marks both individual and social relations on all levels. Moreover, it is possible to consider the history of man, as well as the history of culture, precisely from this perspective, interpreting them as the history of struggle against estrangement, isolation, and alienation, against the 'otherness' of other people and the indifference of the world. The history of culture also reveals how deeply all human activity and creativity are rooted in the desire to overcome the feelings of estrangement and solitude. Notwithstanding such attempts the experience of alienation proves so strong that it is hardly possible to remove it even from theory. Even the philosophers who constructed their systems of thought precisely with the intention to deal with the experience of alienation were unable to 'hammer' it, however appealing their views turned out and however deeply they transformed the history of individuals as well as whole nations.²

Human beings frequently respond to the vulnerability that accompanies their experience of the indifference of the world by demonstrating affirmative attitudes, usually those inherent in the relations of friendship and love, which to some extent alleviate the feeling of solitude and dispel the anxiety, or even fear, it might involve. Yet neither friendship nor love is a simple and effective response to the existential condition of the human being. "For really to think about someone means thinking about that person every minute of the day, without letting one's thoughts be diverted by anything, by meals, by a fly that settles on one's cheek, by household duties, or by a sudden itch somewhere. But there are always flies and itches. That's why life is difficult to live,"³ says Albert Camus. Good illustrations of the writer's observation may be found in Harold Pinter's plays which stem from the human experience and probe into the difficult ways of love, friendship and attachment.⁴

However, the feeling of estrangement may also cause attitudes which are exactly opposite to the relations of love and friendship, and convey extreme pessimism, or even hatred or intention to bring destruction. Such attitudes do not express the intention to 'come to terms' with the condition of estrangement, to make oneself nevertheless feel 'at home' in the world; rather, they aim to

² See Robert Heiss, *Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx: The Great Philosophers Whose Ideas Changed the Course of Civilization*, transl. by Edward B. Garside (New York: Dell Publishing, 1975).

³ Albert Camus, *The Plague*, transl. by Stuart Gilbert (London–New York: Penguin Books, 1960), 197.

⁴ See Harold Pinter, *Complete Works*, vol. 1-4 (New York: Grove Press 1976-1981). See also Plays by Harold Pinter, <http://www.haroldpinter.org/plays/index.shtml>.

‘bridle’ the situation by actually obliterating anything that might be considered its direct cause. While the former as well as the latter attitudes may at best ‘soften’ existential solitude, their correlates may be found in the ways of the development of culture. Thus the ‘otherness’ of the world—despite its indifference to the human fate—may inspire us to see its beauty and depth, to make it familiar to us and to some extent ‘our own,’ or it may cause reluctance, a desire to reject, or in a way punish it, a state Jean-Paul Sartre might call ‘nausea.’ An exemplification of the former attitude might be the wonderfully vivid paintings of Pierre Bonnard, exhibiting utmost subtlety, full of color and light despite the fact that the artist’s life was marked by sadness and anxiety.⁵ A similar attitude may be traced in contemporary movies, also in those less known, for instance, in Urszula Antoniak’s *Nothing Personal*⁶, which tells a story about an experience of solitude and estrangement leading to the emergence of value, however distant from happiness such value might be. As an example of the opposite attitude, rooted, so to speak, in the despair of the human condition ever being changed, one might perhaps point to the chilling, low-key paintings of Edward Hopper: his static compositions, grasping single frames from life and showing no motion, only mannequin-like figures as if frozen performing their gestures. Similar chilling colors and toned-down light characterize Michael Haneke’s disturbing movie *The Seventh Continent*⁷, documenting the ultimate consequence of estrangement from the world, namely: a voluntary physical departure from it—in this particular case the suicide committed by a family who earlier destroy everything that made up their everyday lives.

Culture is indeed a field where estrangement from the world surfaces in a special way, even though its manifestations of alienation are not necessarily tragic. Having traveled to New York at the peak of his fame, Albert Camus experiences solitude and estrangement which he himself finds astonishing. In his journal, he writes: “Deep down, I feel calm and indifferent, as I generally do in front of spectacles that don’t move me.”⁸ In the subsequent entries in his travel diary he nevertheless strives to give justice to everything he encounters. On the one hand, he provides a personal commentary: “The heart trembles in front of so much admirable inhumanity.”⁹ On the other, he assumes a journalistic approach: “At first glance, a hideous, inhuman city ... As for the stores selling ties, you have to see it to believe it. So much bad taste hardly seems imaginable ... At the corner of East 1st Street, little bar where a loud juke box smothers all the conversations. To have five minutes of silence, you have to put in five cents ... I point out ... the «funeral homes» ... Here, everything is anticipated. «You die and we do the rest,» say the advertisements. The cemeteries are pri-

⁵ See Timothy Hyman, “One Does Not Always Sing Out of Happiness,” in Timothy Hyman, *Bonnard* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 7-12. See also *ibidem*, 129-158 (Chapter 5, “The Life with Marthe”).

⁶ *Nothing Personal*, Poland, 2009, directed by Urszula Antoniak.

⁷ *The Seventh Continent*, Austria, 1989, directed by Michael Haneke.

⁸ Albert Camus, *American Journals*, transl. by Hugh Levick (London: Abacus-Sphere Books, 1990), 31.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

vate property; «Hurry up and reserve the place» ... A dead man is a finished man ... In Central Park, a lady grazes a gazelle. In court the lady explains that the gazelle is a person. «However, it doesn't speak,» says the judge. «Yes, the language of goodness.»¹⁰ Yet as a philosopher Camus cannot help reflecting: “In this country where *everything* is done to prove that life isn't tragic, they feel something is missing. This great effort is pathetic, but one must reject the tragic *after* having looked at it, not before.”¹¹ The feeling of estrangement which assumes the shape of astonishment does not leave Camus also during his succeeding journey to Brazil: “I don't really know why, but ... I am taken to the city penitentiary, «the most beautiful one in Brazil.» In fact, it is beautiful, like a penitentiary in an American film. Except for the odor, the hideous odor of man that lingers in every prison ... I feel ashamed in front of one or two of the prisoners—and these are ones with special privileges—who have service jobs in the prison ... And as I leave, someone repeats the ritualistic, «Make yourself at home here.»”¹²

While certainly absurd in the context described by Camus, the phrase ‘at home’ seems to denote the condition in which one is ready to consider one's place in the world as one's own, and one's contact with this place as unmediated. This was exactly what Dietrich Bonhoeffer was seeking trying twice—each time in radically different circumstances—to make himself ‘at home’ in America. Bonhoeffer's experience points that feeling ‘at home’ signifies a much deeper identification than the initial insight might suggest and that the crucial layer of this identification comprises the value hierarchy which gives meaning to human life, thus breaking the ‘otherness’ of the world. Bonhoeffer's first stay in New York, resulting from his youthful curiosity of the world and from his interest in American theology, brings a disappointment which is of predominantly intellectual nature: “There is no theology here ... They talk a blue streak without the slightest substantive foundation and with no evidence of any criteria. The students ... are completely clueless with respect to what dogmatics is really about. They are unfamiliar with even the most basic questions. They become intoxicated with liberal and humanistic phrases, laugh at the fundamentalists, and yet basically are not even up to their level.”¹³ “In the conflict between determination for truth with all of its consequences and the will for community, the latter prevails. This is characteristic of all American thought, particularly as I have observed it in theology and the church; they do not see the radical claim of truth on the shaping of their lives. Community is therefore founded less on truth than on the spirit of ‘fairness’ ... A seminary in which it can come about that a large number of students laugh out loud in a public lecture at the quoting of a passage from Luther's *De servo arbitrio* on sin and forgiveness because it seems to them to be comic has evidently completely forgotten what

¹⁰ Ibidem, 32-37.

¹¹ Ibidem, 42f.

¹² Ibidem, 115f.

¹³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letter to Max Diestel, 19-26 Dec. 1930, quoted after Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy. A Righteous Gentile vs. The Third Reich* (Nashville–Dallas–Mexico City–Rio de Janeiro: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 101.

Christian theology by its very nature stands for In the place of the church as the congregation of believers in Christ there stands the church as a social corporation. Anyone who has seen the weekly program of one of the large New York churches, with their daily, indeed almost hourly events, teas, lectures, concerts, charity events, opportunities for sports, games, bowling, dancing for every age group, anyone who has heard how they try to persuade a new resident to join the church, insisting that you'll get into society quite differently by doing so, anyone who has become acquainted with the embarrassing nervousness with which the pastor lobbies for membership—that person can well assess the character of such a church."¹⁴ Nine years later, after his seminary in Finkenwalde was declared illegal, threatened by being either drafted to the Nazi army or put in a concentration camp, Bonhoeffer makes another journey to America, and this time the absolute axiological 'otherness' of this country makes him discover his own deepest identity and take the decision that will mark his fate. In his journal, he confesses: "It is almost unbearable ... There is no time to lose, and here I am wasting days, perhaps weeks ... Will I ever be able to do any really significant work here? ... I cannot stay outside [Germany] by myself. That is quite clear. My whole life is still over there."¹⁵ He does not feel 'at home' even during a church service: "The whole thing was a respectable, self-indulgent, self-satisfied religious celebration. This sort of idolatrous religion stirs up the flesh which is accustomed to being kept in check by the Word of God. Such sermons make for libertinism, egotism, indifference. Do people not know that one can get on as well, even better, without «religion»? ... Perhaps the Anglo-Saxons are really more religious than we are, but they are certainly not more Christian, at least, if they still have sermons like that. I have no doubt at all that one day the storm will blow with full force on this religious hand-out, if God himself is still anywhere on the scene ... The tasks for a real theologian over here are immeasurable. But only an American himself can shift all this rubbish, and up till now there do not seem to be any about."¹⁶ Alone in his estrangement, he realizes that "we cannot part ourselves from our destiny, much less here, outside; here everything lies solely on one's own shoulders"¹⁷ and writes a letter to Reinhold Niebuhr, saying: "I have come to the conclusion that I have made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I shall have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people. My brothers in the Confessing Synod wanted me to go. They may have been right in urging me to do so; but I was wrong in going. Such a decision each man

¹⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Report on His Year of Study Prepared for the Church Federation Office*, quoted after: Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer*, 118-121.

¹⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The American Diary," 16th June 1939, in *The Way to Freedom: Letters, Lectures and Notes 1935-1939. From the Collected Works by Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, vol. 2, transl. by Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden, ed. by Edwin H. Robertson (New York–Evanston: Harper & Row), 230.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 18th June 1939, 230f.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 22 June 1939, 235.

must make for himself. Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization. I know which of these alternatives I must choose; but I cannot make that choice in security.”¹⁸

It is worthwhile recalling Bonhoeffer’s experience also in the context of today, when the notion of ‘aliens’ or ‘others’ is continuously being stretched so that its scope may embrace the strangers from non-European civilizations, driven to our world by the pursuit of security and easier life, the world of animals whose minds reveal still more of their secrets to humans, and even virtual beings effectively competing with us in various fields. One must not forget that openness to otherness is necessarily accomplished in the context of ones’ own identity and the values that provide its root. In certain instances it is precisely our identity that commands us to reject ‘otherness,’ while in others it prompts us that ‘otherness’ must be accepted unless we contradict who we are.

JOHN PAUL II – Concern for Refugees

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each year the approach of Lent affords me the opportunity to invite you to make good use of this favorable moment, this “day of salvation” (cf. 2 Cor 6:2), so that it may be lived intensely both as a time of conversion to God and of love for our brothers and sisters. Lent calls us to a complete change of mind and heart in order that we may hear the Lord’s voice inviting us to turn to him in newness of life and to make ourselves ever more sensitive to the sufferings of those around us.

This year, I wish to emphasize the problem of refugees and make it the subject of our common reflection. The enormous and increasing flow of refugees is a painful reality which no longer touches only certain regions of the world, but extends to every continent.

As people without a homeland, refugees seek a welcome in other countries of the world, which is our common home. Only a few of them are allowed to re-enter their countries of origin because of changed circumstances within those countries. For the rest, the very painful experience of flight, insecurity and anxious search for an appropriate place to settle continues. Among them are children, women—some of them widows—families that often are split apart, young people whose hopes have been frustrated, and adults uprooted from their work and deprived of all their material possessions, their homes and their homeland.

Considering the extent and the seriousness of the problem, all the Church’s members must be sensitive to this appeal, inasmuch as they are followers of Jesus—who himself experienced the condition of a refugee—and bearers of the Good News. Christ himself, in the moving Gospel passage read in the

¹⁸ Ibidem, “Correspondence,” July 1939, Bonhoeffer to Niebuhr [Lakeville, Connecticut], 246.

Latin Church on Monday of the First Week of Lent, wishes to be identified and recognized in every refugee: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me... I was a stranger and you did *not* welcome me" (Mt 25:35,43).

These words of Christ must lead us to a careful examination of conscience with regard to our attitude toward exiles and refugees. We find them every day in so many of our parishes. In fact, for many of us, they have become next-door neighbors who are in need of charity, justice and solidarity from all Christians. For this reason, I address to you, the individual members and communities of the Catholic Church, this urgent Lenten exhortation: seek to help our brother and sister refugees in every possible way by providing a welcome that will lead to their full participation in the everyday life of society. Show them an open mind and a warm heart.

Concern for refugees must lead us to reaffirm and highlight universally recognized human rights, and to ask that the effective recognition of these rights be guaranteed to refugees. For the presentation, on 3 June 1986, of the John XXIII International Peace Prize to Thailand's Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), I recalled that already in the Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* Pope John had emphasized the urgent need to recognize the rights of refugees precisely because they are persons. I stated that "it is our obligation always to guarantee these inalienable rights, which are inherent in every human being and do not depend on prevailing conditions or socio-political situations."¹⁹ Thus it is a matter of guaranteeing to refugees the right to establish a family or to be reunited with their families: to have a stable, dignified occupation and a just wage; to live in dwellings fit for human beings; to receive adequate health care—in a word, all those rights solemnly sanctioned since 1951 in the Convention of the United Nations on the Statute for Refugees, and confirmed in the 1967 Protocol on the same Statute.

I am well aware that in the face of this grave problem, international organizations, Catholic organizations, and movements of various types have worked intensely, with the support and collaboration of many people, to provide adequate social programs. I thank them and encourage them to show even greater concern, since it is clear that although much has been done, it is still not enough. The number of refugees is growing, and the resources for receiving and assisting them often prove to be inadequate.

Our first commitment should be to take part in charitable initiatives, to animate and support them through our testimony of love, so that in every country they may have an impact on the processes of educating children and young people in particular, in mutual respect, tolerance and a spirit of service at every level, both in private and public life. In this way many problems will be more easily overcome.

I also address myself to you, my dear brothers and sisters who are refugees: live united in your faith in God, in mutual charity and in undaunted hope. All the world knows your problems, and the Church is near to you with the help that her members are working to provide, even though they realize that it is insufficient. In order to alleviate your sufferings, good will and understanding on your part are also necessary. You are rich in your own civilization, culture,

¹⁹ *Insegnamenti*, 9, p. 1 (1986), 1751.

traditions and human and spiritual values. From these you can draw the ability and the strength to begin a new life. As much as possible, you too must help and assist one another in the places where you are temporarily being hosted.

We who are Catholics will accompany you and support you on your way, as we recognize in each one of you the face of Christ, the Exile and Refugee, who said: "Insofar as you did it to one of the least of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

At the beginning of Lent, I invoke the fullness of grace and light that flow from the redeeming mystery of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, so that every individual and all ecclesial groups and religious communities within the Church may find the inspiration and energy needed for practical works of solidarity on behalf of our brothers and sisters who are exiles and refugees. In this way, comforted by the loving support and interest of others, refugees may recover joy and hope in order to continue along their difficult path.

May my blessing bring forth an abundance of the Lord's gifts upon those who will respond to this pressing appeal.

Keywords: refugees, exiles, human rights, tolerance, respect, solidarity, charity, education, just wage, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol

Message of his Holiness John Paul II for Lent 1990.

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Fr. Dariusz DZIADOSZ – "You too were once aliens..." (Lev 19:34): 'Aliens,' as seen in the Religious, Social and Cultural Contexts depicted in the Hebrew Bible

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Regardless of their origin, cultural and social identity, as well as their social status, strangers have always epitomized the alien and puzzling reality of the unknown and the impenetrable. The 'otherness' of strangers and their difference contribute to twofold attitudes on the part of members of their host communities. On the one hand, the presence of strangers among us is often perceived as a threat to what we have so far believed to be certain and imponderable, which may release our defense mechanisms, deepen the distance between strangers and us, and provoke mutual aggression. On the other hand, it also happens that strangers awaken in us the feeling of superiority, which in turn makes us want to divest them of their identities and incorporate them into the structures of our society, culture and religion. The present article reconstructs both kinds of attitudes on the examples drawn from the Hebrew Bible.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: stranger, alien, refugee, Deuteronomic Code, Old Testament literature

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Fr. Marek SKIERKOWSKI – A Stranger among His Own: Jesus in Jerusalem

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In Jerusalem, Jesus, earlier followed by crowds of people in Galilea, experiences the feeling of radical estrangement. After the prophetic and messianic act (of overturning the tables of the money changers and the benches of sellers) which he performed in the temple he is approached by the Jewish authorities with hostility, and the plot to kill him is begun. In Jerusalem, Jesus is perceived as a heretic who has allegedly violated the integrity of Judaism, thus having alienated himself from that religion. The Jewish authorities are incapable of accepting the divine nature of Jesus and ignore the fact that the Revelation has been fully accomplished in him. Therefore they render themselves unable to witness the transformation of biblical Judaism into Christianity.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: Jesus, fundamental Christology, the trial of Jesus, the Sanhedrin, Caiaphas, Pilatus

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Dobrosław KOT – A Stranger

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In his complex philosophical output, the late Cezary Wodziński (died in 2016) repeatedly reflected on the figures of ‘stranger,’ or ‘foreigner,’ emphasizing their fundamental importance to the understanding of the problem of man.

Among the figures of ‘stranger’ discussed by Wodziński was the Russian fool for Christ (*yurodivy*). To the *yurodivy*, the world with all its worldliness was not his homeland. His unsettling, unworldly behaviour was often perceived

as blasphemous, offensive or foolish. At the same time, the fool for Christ provoked others to change their mentalities and transform their lives. He challenged their complacency and their sense of being at home, forcing them out of their worldliness.

Wodziński reflected also on the figure of Odysseus who, on his return to Ithaca after a years long peregrination, played the role of a stranger, appearing secretly, disguised as an old man. Thus the king of Ithaca (the host) pretended to be a stranger (a guest) in order to identify those who were capable of showing hospitality.

Both figures of 'stranger' reveal the paradox of hospitality, as well as the unbearable tension between being and not being 'at home.' According to Wodziński, these are not two different modes of existence, but two faces of the same condition: while being at home, one is simultaneously a stranger, one's land is in fact a foreign land, and one's rights to it may be questioned.

The reflections put forward in the article attempt to follow the paths of Cezary Wodziński's thought expressed in his project of apophatic anthropology spanning both ancient Greece and Russia.

Translated by *Patrycja Mikulska*

Keywords: Cezary Wodziński, *yurodivy*, fool for Christ, Odysseus, apophatic anthropology

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Krzysztof T. WIECZOREK – To Leave the Safe Shelter: The Problem of 'Otherness,' as seen in the Light of the Philosophy of Dialogue

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Whether it be desired or not, Europe must face today the problem of her relation to 'others.' Temporary solutions will not suffice, neither will tightening the borders or founding refugee camps. A thorough and profound reconsideration of the issue is necessary, which calls for seeking inspiration in philosophy. The inspiration in question is found by the author in a critical reading of Martin Buber, Ferdinand Ebner, Franz Rosenzweig, Emmanuel Lévinas, Józef Tischner, and Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback. As a result, the author proposes to conceive of the category of 'otherness' as relativized to the conditions of a given community of culture, and points to the necessity of taking a clear position on issues such as: (1) whether 'otherness' is irreducible and irremovable a trait, or rather a temporary condition that may be overcome; (2) which elements of

European culture tradition need to be overcome so that the problem in question may be effectively addressed; (3) whether European philosophy has come to the right conclusions about the tragic events, such as the wars, totalitarianisms and genocide, it has experienced; (4) whether Lévinas is right in pointing to the need for a new 'grounding' of ethical relations by means of thinking 'outside philosophy,' which presupposes an 'ontological rupture' for the sake of a specific *désintéressement*. The author seeks his own answers to the above questions so that the present status of the phenomenon of 'otherness' may be understood better.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: otherness, dialogue, agathological experience, topography of being, *des-inter-esse-ment*

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Maciej KAŁUŻA – The Strange, Absurd World and the Stranger Glancing from the Mirror: On the Motifs of Estrangement in Albert Camus's Writings

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The article discusses the sources and the specificity, as well as the evolution, of the category of 'estrangement' in Albert Camus's writings. In Camus's early essays the feeling of estrangement is the starting point of philosophical reflections which manifest the ultimate need to confront the condition in question, in particular in the sphere of human relations. While Camus's early reflections are inspired by philosophy of existence as well as by the problem of the absurd, he remains faithful to the idea which he articulated already in 1938, in his review of Sartre's *Nausea*, that both the experience of the absurd and the accompanying experience of estrangement must be considered as the point of departure for further philosophical reflection rather than its conclusion.

The body of the article comprises a discussion of the most significant turns in Camus's intellectual confrontation with the category of estrangement in the course of the development of his conception of value-creating revolt. Camus's intellectual progression shows his conviction that estrangement, at least in the sphere of human relations, may be overcome by way of dialogue.

Keywords: estrangement, the absurd, Albert Camus

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Marzena ADAMIĄK – A Confusing Reality: The Problem with the Notion of Femininity in the Context of the Appeal to the Experience

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The objective of my paper is to consider the notion of experience and the ways in which this term is used within the philosophical discourse of the contemporary concepts of femininity. There is a strong critique of ‘experience’ in contemporary philosophy, in particular in postmodern theories, but I consider ‘experience’ to be a term still strongly entangled with the categories of subjectivity. Reflecting on how the category of experience interacts with other categories important in the philosophy of the subject, such as otherness and difference, I refer to the discussion on feminine subjectivity which takes place in the field of phenomenology, and to phenomenological feminist criticism. I address selected ideas developed by Emmanuel Lévinas, Simone de Beauvoir, Iris Marion Young, and Rosi Braidotti. The concept of a nomadic subject proposed by Braidotti seems particularly interesting in this context despite the fact that its nature is not obviously phenomenological.

In her work *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, Rosi Braidotti constructs the notion of feminine subjectivity based on a threefold model of sexual difference and accomplished on both the historical and the individual levels. In my analysis, a special consideration is given to the reflection on how Braidotti identifies femininity at each level of the model of the feminine nomadic subject she has constructed. The discursive approach used by Braidotti is that of entanglement and repetition, so it is by no means easy to find a clear explanation of the process she scrutinizes. However, there is an element re-emerging in her descriptions of feminine identification, namely that of ‘experience.’

Keywords: feminism, strategic essentialism, nomadic subject, femininity, experience

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Alicja ŻYWCZOK – On the Co-Feeling of the Mental States of Others: Some Thoughts inspired by Edith Steins’s Phenomenological Research and by the Results of the Sciences

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Inspired by the philosophical output of Edith Stein, the author raises the following problems: Is it possible to have reliable knowledge of another person’s mental states (especially of his or her emotions, feelings, or moods)? Can a given person gain access to the experiences of another psycho-physical *individuum*? The author discusses the ways in which other people’s mental states present themselves to an individual, the essence of *Einfühlung* (thus distinguishing it from other acts, such as perception, simultaneous collective experience, ideation, remembering or anticipating another person’s mental states, imagining one’s own or another person’s experiences), its origin (the genetic-psychological background), and types.

Following the ideas of Stein, who understood *Einfühlung* as a mode of experiencing another human being (his or her psycho-physical constitution: corporeality and spirituality), the author describes *Einfühlung* as a form of co-presence that enables the experience of similarities and differences between one’s own and another person’s psyche, shaping in this way the attitude of benevolence towards the universal community: humankind. The author attempts to compare the present knowledge on *Einfühlung* with the results of sciences concerning empathy, discussing the ways in which the latter is perceived in psychology and pedagogics, its various concepts, kinds and significance.

The importance of co-feeling can hardly be overestimated. As a spiritual, emotional, moral and social experience conducive to the development of emotional relationships, it facilitates the process of emotional attachment and social communication (especially constructive solving of intrapersonal or interpersonal problems and conflicts), as well as adaptation to a new environment. Co-feeling may also generate other favorable changes in the phylogenetic and ontogenetic development of the human being by promoting such psychological dispositions as allocentrism, altruism, forbearance, tact, authenticity, as well as emotional and moral sensitivity. Openness to others, tolerance, affirmation of life and love also emerge as a result of perfecting, among others, the capacity for co-feeling.

In the final part of the article the author emphasizes that scholarly reflection on the concepts of *Einfühlung* (as it is used in philosophy) and ‘empathy’ (as a psychological and pedagogical notion) must not becloud the priority tasks: to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of co-feeling and to shape, in human communities, the valuable skill that makes it possible to perceive strangers as friendly members of the human race.

Translation by *Dariusz Kijewski*

Keywords: *Einfühlung*, co-feeling, empathy, an individual, emotion, feeling, altruism

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Szymon WRÓBEL – Historicity or Alienation: From Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel to Marek Siemek

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The fundamental question the author puts in this text is that of the relation between the philosophy of Marek Siemek and Hegel's theory of historicity and socialization. The concept of modern forms of socialization taken from Hegel's thought makes it possible for Siemek to understand the phenomenon of the modern world and to confront the forms in question with modern ones. The central transformation in philosophy is that of the abstract figures of the Spirit found in Hegel into the material conditions of existence found in Marx. Marx, in Siemek's opinion, in transforming Hegel's project of social philosophy has brought to light, from the very process of work, the original reality of all socialization, within which historically defined forms of individual existence are only secondarily articulated. For Marx, 'socialization' is a primary category and it implies an intersubjective reality of relations established in the processes of work, in speech, and in reproduction. This 'socialization' is primary to the material reality of the effects of this process on the one hand and subjective existence and self-knowledge of the personal subject on the other. The commodity form of capitalist society is merely a symptom of the fact that the economy assumes a certain degree of socialization. For Siemek, the modern form of socialization is its single, ultimate and irreversible social and political reality. 'Modernity' is thought here as a collection of modern forms of empowerment. These, however, turn out to be functions of modern inventions, such as the institutions, the policies of mediation, and the negotiation and coordination techniques.

Keywords: history, intersubjectivity, modernity, reproduction, empowerment, socialization

The present article is a reedited extract from Szymon Wróbel's book *Filozof i terytorium. Polityka idei w myśli Leszka Kołakowskiego, Bronisława Baczki, Krzysztofa Pomiana i Marka Siemka* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2016, 311-322, 330-378), which is part of the research project "The Warsaw School of the History of Ideas and Its Significance to the Humanities" funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education within the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities (Contract No. 11H 11 018180).

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Dominika DZWONKOWSKA – “The ‘Otherness’ of Animals.” On the Troublesome Relationship between *Homo sapiens* and the Other Members of the Kingdom *Animalia*
DOI 10.12887/30-2017-1-117-11

The human-animal relationships are marked by ambiguity due to the anthropocentric paradigm prevailing in culture. The paper presents some chosen manifestations of this ambiguity, as well as animals as ‘others,’ or ‘strangers,’ in the human world, thus delving deeper into the meaning of the relation in question. As it turns out, the problem is multidimensional and in order to approach it one needs to scrutinize a number of specific issues. First of all, the ‘trouble’ lies in that the language applied in the debate on animal ethics, which is supposed to bridge the interspecies gap, apparently legitimizes it. Another metatheoretical difficulty emerges once we attempt to formulate an adequate research question that would enable creating an ethics that applies to human beings as well as to animals in all their variety. Thus the basic problem lies in establishing the universal criteria necessary to include all the members of the Kingdom *Animalia* in the moral universe.

The paper comprises a critical analysis of the debate on the status of animals in the human world as well on the issue of animal rights. The analysis in question opens new possibilities for further discussion of the ‘troublesome’ relationship between humans and animals. The paper also shows that the long-time efforts of the animal liberation movement have done very little to improve the conditions in which animals live. Animals are still ‘strangers’ in the human world. The task of creating an ethics that would embrace both humans and animals, in all their variety, regardless of the extent of their likeness to humans, proves extremely difficult. The author shows that under the guise of concern for the well-being of animals anthropocentric attitudes are pursued, which once again prompts the question about the nature of the relationship between humans and animals in the age of Anthropocene. The weakness of the debate on animal welfare lies in its being thoroughly anthropocentric due to the fact that it is continued on the grounds of the belief that animals ‘deserve’ care from humans insofar as they manifest ‘human’ traits. Still the debate in question is itself a proof of how ‘troublesome’ the relationship between humans and animals turns out in practice.

Keywords: animal ethics, animal liberation, anthropocentrism, Anthropocene, responsibility towards the other

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Maciej TROJAN, Julia SIKORSKA – The Sin of Anthropocentrism

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The tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life might be a genetic predisposition of humans. Fields of study such as comparative psychology and ethology are dedicated to identifying and describing the evolutionary processes responsible for the emergence of the human mind and its complex cognitive functions. However, adherence to the anthropocentric worldview turns out an obstacle to this research. The belief that *Homo sapiens* is a ‘better’ species than others and unique in its kind frequently distorts the scientists’ perception. Indeed, the research data gathered for the last 150 years seems to point to the contrary. Thus, having discovered that our ‘unique’ traits are frequently evolutionary-older and more common in nature than we originally assumed, we need to redefine the human.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: biophilia hypothesis, philosophy of nature, the Neanderthal genome, the definition of the human species, evolutionism, Wallace’s problem, the human mind, anthropocentrism, anthropomorphism, mental time travels, language acquisition, comparative psychology, ethology

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Paweł BEM – Philology: The Continuous Will to Understand the Other

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The article addresses the scholarly aim of philological investigations and their social function. The author considers the critical evaluation of worldwide philological practice, questioning some paradigms of thinking about philology and promoting its definition as an effort to understand the other by accepting and respecting the uniqueness of text.

Keywords: philology, scholarly editing, textual criticism, new philology

The article is part of the research project entitled “Redefining Philology” (Contract No. 0031/NPRH2/H11/81/2012).

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Katarzyna BALBUZA – ‘Outlanders’ Saved in the Roman Triumphs: The Fate of Prominent Captives in Rome at the Close of the Republic and in the Principate
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One of the forms of expression of the Roman ideology of victory in the Principate was a triumph (*triumphus curulis*), during which barbaric captives, often of a high political status, were exposed. According to the tradition, they should have been put to death during the triumph, which was of ritual and symbolic significance. The analyzed examples of the most prominent foreign captives from the late Republic and Principate show that sentencing the captives to death was much less frequent in the Principate. Thanks to mercy (*clementia*) shown by the emperors, captives frequently saved their lives. They did not reject an offered chance for further life in the Roman Empire, and they often asked for it. Such an attitude did not have to mean giving up personal dignity. Romans allowed them to function normally in the Roman Empire, to educate, obtain Roman citizenship, further develop according to individual characteristics, and be promoted socially and politically.

Keywords: captives, Roman triumph, Roman emperor’s clemency (*clementia caesaris*)

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Jakub SADOWSKI – Young, or Less Soviet: On the Figure of Alienation in the Russian Cinema of the Period of *Perestroika*
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The Soviet cinematographic culture of perestroika reflected the social and political processes of the time, as well as the Russian culture of 1986-1990 period. The movies of the time showed journalistic qualities, in particular in the selection of themes they addressed. Among them were, on the one hand, various pathologies, for instance those affecting top Party officials, but also pathologies of the economy, of the social life, and, on the other hand, various manifestations of the revolt of the youth and the rise of subcultures. The burning issues were

institutionalized violence (e.g. in the army), as well as the multifarious problem of settling accounts with communism by bringing up the question of the Stalinist terror and the subject of the individual and social identities in the totalitarian context. The cinematographic culture of the period of *perestroika* provided a platform for new aesthetic approaches. In particular it enabled the pursuit of a language capable of describing the phenomena so far absent from the public discourse due to censorship. The new cinematographic culture also unmasked the close ties between the earlier aesthetics and the ideology. The new themes and the new aesthetics became intertwined in the figure of alienation. The paper discusses the cinematographic descriptions of the intergenerational aspect of the phenomenon of estrangement.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: Soviet cinema, totalitarianism, *perestroika*, censorship, ideology, estrangement, alienation, individual identity, social identity

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Jerzy W. GAŁKOWSKI – The Human Being: The Being Capable of ‘Lived Experience’

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The author aims to develop Karol Wojtyła’s conception of ‘lived experience’ expounded in his book *The Acting Person*. The author holds that an experience that is ‘lived through’ engages the entire psychological structure of the person and is triggered by external circumstances.

‘Living through’ one’s experiences is a mark of the human being, it points to the ontological status of the human person, and to the fact that, in her actions, she necessarily refers to the sphere of values. It also enables the human person to comprehend the world, to comprehend herself as well as the other human beings, thus making their lives her own. The sphere of ‘lived experience’ also provides the ‘space’ for the manifestations of conscience.

As a theoretical insight, the category of ‘lived experience’ is significant in that it makes it possible to show the non-contradiction between the subjective and the objective faculties of the person, as well as between the person’s adherence to truth and her freedom.

Summarized by *Mirosława Chuda*

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: lived experience, person, conscience, truth, freedom, Karol Wojtyła

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Fr. Alfred M. WIERZBICKI – The Boundaries of Law: A Response to “A Compromise—or a Lie? A Voice in the Controversy over the Scope of Legislation on Human Life Protection in Poland,” a Polemics of Piotr Ślęczka, SDS

DOI 10.12887/30-2017-1-117-17

The present considerations regarding the boundaries of law are a response to Fr. Piotr Ślęczka’s criticism of the author’s standpoint (see Piotr Ślęczka, SDS, “A Compromise—or a Lie? A Voice in the Controversy over the Scope of Legislation on Human Life Protection in Poland,” *Ethos* 29:4(116) (2016): 297-305). The context of the considerations is the public initiative to toughen the prenatal life protection law and the mass protests the initiative in question encountered in Poland in 2016.

The 1993 anti-abortion law allows legal abortion if one of three exceptions is met. The author holds that the hiatus between the moral norm and the legal norm results here from the lawmaker’s consideration of the boundaries of law as such. Firstly, the boundaries of law are a consequence of the democratic procedures of voting used in lawmaking. However, a legal compromise does not necessarily turn into an axiological one. Secondly, the boundaries of law are a consequence of the lawmaker’s consideration of the human condition, its contingency and tragic realities, in the face of which the lawmaker suspends the categorical nature of the legal norm without, however, questioning the imperative nature of the respective moral norm. In cases in question the law abstains from prescribing heroic acts or acts beyond the psychological capacity of the subject.

The author’s standpoint stems from the view that both faithfulness to values and the ability to compromise are the pillars of democracy. The wisdom of the lawmaker lies in the concern for preserving the link between the two in the situation of a grave axiological conflict.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: right to life, the norm of morality, legal norm, democracy, values, axiological compromise, political compromise

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Grażyna OSIKA – Continuing the Dialogue... In Reply to Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik's Paper "On the Consequences of the Ambiguity of the Term 'Personal Identity': Some Remarks on Grażyna Osika's Book *Tożsamość osobowa w epoce cyfrowych technologii komunikacyjnych*"

DOI 10.12887/30-2017-1-117-18

The present considerations attempt to establish a dialogue between the classical understanding of the human person, represented by Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik, and the proposal to define 'personal identity' as the communication environment. For this purpose it was important to recognize areas common to both conceptions, such as the fundamental experience of being and the awareness of one's ontological coherence and uniqueness. Additionally, in trying to address the question of who we are social references needed to be taken into account. The differences between the two approaches in question concerning the issue of 'personal identity' have been indicated and the areas demanding further analytical work in the communication model as well as in the classical approach have been identified.

Keywords: personal identity, classical theory of human person, classical philosophy, communication personal identity model, personal authenticity, rationality

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Adam FITAS – A Reader Errant and Literature: Some Remarks after Reading Mirosława Chuda's Essay "A Reader-Errant"

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The paper includes a polemic with Mirosława Chuda's essay "A Reader Errant" (see Mirosława Chuda, "A Reader Errant," *Ethos* 29:4(116) (2016): 385-388). The polemic focuses on the seeming affinities between the habit of reading and addictions of other kinds, such as e.g. Internet addiction or substance abuse, and on the significance and the basic roles of books in human life.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajka*

Keywords: literature, reading, books, habit, addiction

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Henryk DUDA – “The university is absolutely important.” On Stefan Sawicki’s Idea of the Catholic *universitas studiorum*

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The article discusses the publications by Stefan Sawicki (a scholar born in 1927) on the idea of the Catholic university. According to Sawicki, the most important issue in this field is the relation between science and faith (*ratio et fides*), and the resulting question about the university’s identity, in particular about the marks of a Catholic university. The other issues, such as procedures of giving names to Catholic universities, their research fields, the proper size of a Catholic university, and the balance between the university’s openness to ‘others’ and its guarding its identity, stem directly from this crucial issue. While Stefan Sawicki’s writings will not provide a ready-made answer to the question of how a Catholic university should be structured or how it should function at a given time in history, they may inspire a “reflection and debate on what the university of this type should (and can) be like today, in particular in modern-day Poland” (Stefan Sawicki, *On the Catholic University*, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2012, 8). Sawicki adds: “It might be commendable not to limit the debate in question to the general formulas of the Catholicity of a university, but rather to point how the Catholicity in question should be implemented in the academic practice” (*ibidem*). The questions raised by Sawicki pertain to an issue which cannot be disregarded also outside the scope of his work.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: tertiary education, university, Catholic university, research fields within a Catholic university, Stefan Sawicki, tertiary education in modern-day Poland

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Patrycja MIKULSKA – Friendship: The Root of Transformation

Review of Michał Herer’s *Pochwała przyjaźni* [“The Praise of Friendship”], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2017.

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Jakub MALIK – Cutting the Sycomore Fruits

Review of Wojciech Kaczmarek's, *Przeniknąć człowieka. Chrześcijański horyzont dramatu i teatru XX wieku* ["To Fathom the Human Being: The Christian Horizon of the 20th Century Drama and Theatre"], Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2016.

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Books recommended by *Ethos*

Angelo Scola, *Postcristianesimo? Il malessere e le speranze dell'Occidente* ["Post-Christianity? The Malaise and the Hopes of the West"], Marsilio Editori, Venezia 2017.

Małgorzata Wałęjko, *Osobno i razem. Personalistyczne wychowanie do samotności i wspólnoty* ["Alone and Together: On the Personalist Education Towards Solitude and Community"], Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2016.

Małgorzata GRZYWACZ – Seeking the Face of Modern Christianity: Remarks on the Papers Delivered at the International Scholarly Conference "The Phenomenon of Christianity in the 21st Century"

Report on the International Scholarly Conference "The Phenomenon of Christianity in the 21st Century," Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, 1-2 Dec. 2016.

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Łukasz SAROWSKI – Entrepreneurship Facing Values

Report on an International Conference "Christianity and Economy," John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin, 25 Nov. 2016.

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Patrycja MIKULSKA – Everyday Life

A feuilleton, inspired by the novel *The Time Wanderers* by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, exploring the idea of everyday life as the space for expression of the essence of being human.

Keywords: humanness, everyday life, evolution, freedom, traditional values, *The Time Wanderers*, Arkady Strugatsky, Boris Strugatsky

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Maria FILIPIAK – The Popes Speak on Aliens, Immigrants and the Marginalized

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A bibliography of addresses of John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis from 1978 to 2017.

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