



Introduction to the issue: *Critical inquiries into philosophy of culture*

Contemporary philosophy of culture is a diverse field combining methods and concepts from various theoretical traditions. From a transcendental perspective — drawing on reflection on language through various post-structuralist inspirations up to critical theories inspired by Marxism and psychoanalysis — philosophy of culture nowadays is both a general consideration of culture as well as a series of interventions aimed at a critical re-examination of the history and conceptual vocabulary of different theories of culture. In the academic year 2023–2024, the Research Group for Philosophy of Culture at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences organised a series of seminars with the Group's members and invited guests to explore various avenues for critical inquiries into philosophy of culture today. The speakers invited elaborated on both new and established methodologies, introduced new themes and connected contemporary theoretical discussions to historical research. Selected papers from the series of seminars have been incorporated in this issue of the *Argument: Biannual Philosophical Journal* to further facilitate the debate on the possibility of a critical philosophy of culture today.

Michael Stemerowicz's paper *Simplex verbs and conceptualisation in German language: a case study based on Heidegger's history of Being* investigates the use of language by the philosopher Martin Heidegger. Stemerowicz claims that Heidegger conceptualises the history of Being (*Seinsgeschichte*) by choosing certain simplex verbs as a springboard in the process of word formation, a process that is both enabled and conditioned by the idiosyncratic structure of the German language. This process of conceptualisation is described in the paper and elucidated with a structuralist account of linguistic morphology. Using the structuralist notion of language, the paper traces Heidegger's application of the simplex verbs *stellen*, *stehen* and *schicken* in numerous operations of word formation and treats it as a case study of the process of philosophical conceptualisation rooted in the idiosyncracities of the German language.

Barbara Barysz's *Socio-political continuity as a struggle of clinical structures. A Lacanian approach to political narratives* argues that the tools of Lacanian psychoanalysis can be used to study the socio-political field while analysing the phenomenon of socio-political continuity and Polish political identifications during the first months of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Barysz focuses on Polish political narratives about the war in Ukraine and, using them as examples, demonstrates that the socio-political field at any moment is full of competing political narratives, each structured in a way characteristic for a Lacanian clinical structure. She concludes that the socio-political field is a space where various affective interests of community members clash and where the goal is to construct political narratives advancing those interests to as large a part of society as possible. The socio-political plane emerges as a much more dynamic and open, and less continuous, space.

The article *The jargon of productivity. An inquiry into the capture of critical thought by political economy* by Filip Brzeźniak-Kujda investigates the ongoing domination of philosophical vocabulary and imagination by political economy, focusing specifically on the views of Marxism and Critical Theory. Drawing particularly on a reconsideration of Jean Baudrillard's critique of productivism within Marxism, the paper departs from Baudrillard's line of argument to explore the relationship between language, theory and its authors. Inspired by Theodor Adorno's critique of the jargon of authenticity, Brzeźniak-Kujda introduces the concept of "the jargon of productivity". By tracing the connections between the jargon of productivity and the jargon of authenticity, the article points towards the hidden obsessions and blockages that may hinder emancipatory processes.

Barabara Brzezicka's paper *Two concepts of freedom in Polish: the example of Edward Abramowski* examines how two Polish words for freedom — *wolność* and *swoboda* — can lead to two separate philosophical concepts and how these concepts differ. Following Barbara Cassin's project of philosophical "untranslatables" (*Vocabulaire européen des philosophies. Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*) as well as its philosophical context, Brzezicka analyses the linguistic differences between *wolność* and *swoboda* now and at the turn of the 20th century based on dictionaries and other examples of usage. The two words-concepts are followed through their appearances in selected philosophical writings of Edward Abramowski: *Co to jest sztuka?* [What is art?] in the case of *swoboda*; and *Zmowa powszechna przeciw rządowi* [A general conspiracy against the government] for his understanding of *wolność*. Finally, Brzezicka draws conclusions for our understanding of the concept of *swoboda* with broader philosophical implications.

In his text *What is a crisis of culture? Towards a genealogy of the philosophy of culture* Mikołaj Ratajczak engages with a recent discussion in philosophy and social sciences on the function and the history of the concept of crisis. Instead of providing a definition or a ready-made concept of crisis, he proposes a short

genealogical research into the concept of the crisis of culture. Like other uses of the notion of crisis, the crisis of culture is a term widely used in philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences — however, without being more closely defined or analysed. For this reason, the proposed critical inquiry into the function and meaning of crisis in philosophy is formulated here as a genealogy of philosophy of culture. He gives special attention to authors — like Georg Simmel and Ernesto de Martino — who went against the dominant tendency to treat crisis as a threat or problem to be overcome and instead described a crisis of culture as a defining element of culture itself — perhaps even the main problem of philosophy of culture.

Finally, the aim of the article *The four discourses of the logic of art — creating the artist's own language* by Piotr Wesołowski is to transcribe Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of four discourses into a logic of art. Wesołowski rewrites the four discourses — the master's discourse, the hysteric's discourse, the analyst's discourse and the university discourse — as four discourses of the logic of art: the recipient's discourse, the artist's discourse, the discourse of the act of creation and the discourse of the artisan/formalist. The four algebraic Lacanian signs are substituted with counterparts from the realm of art. The article poses a question about how the artist, the recipient, the work of art and the artistic process are related to one another in several situations characteristic of artistic production in modernity. An important issue in the article is the artist's enjoyment accompanying the act of creation — linked to the Lacanian concept of surplus *jouissance*. At stake is the problem of inventing the artist's own language. Moreover, the article is an attempt to conceptualize the instability of the phenomenon of the work of art and its reception.

The last two papers are not related to the main theme. The first, by Katarzyna Guzalska and Jacek Jaśtał, entitled *Metateoria feminizmu. Niklas Luhmann, Christine Weinbach i współczesna teoria systemów społecznych wobec problemu płci* [The metatheory of feminism. Niklas Luhmann, Christine Weinbach, and contemporary social systems theory on the problem of gender], is dedicated to Luhmann's critique of the women's movement and the errors he committed, errors which prevented him from adequately grasping and explaining the stability of social structures that privilege the dominant position of men. These issues are presented in the article from the perspective of Weinbach's critique and modification of Luhmann's position. The second paper by Robert Colonna, entitled *Individuality and America. The influence of Friedrich Meinecke in Antonello Gerbi's Latin American studies*, analyses the influence of Meinecke's historicism on Gerbi's work *La disputa del Nuovo Mondo. Storia di una polemica (1750–1900)* [The dispute of the New World. History of a polemic (1750–1900)].

This issue concludes with a report from the conference *Terapia filozoficzna — tradycje i współczesne wyzwania* [Philosophical therapy — traditions and

contemporary challenges] (held in Kraków, 19 November 2024), prepared by Łukasz Kołoczek and Anna Szklarska together with the reviews of two books: *Transparency and reflection. A study of self-knowledge and the nature of mind* by Matthew Boyle, reviewed by Andrii Ivanchuk, and *Roboty. Co każdy wiedzieć powinien* by Phil Husbands, reviewed by Dariusz Dąbek. The latter review concerns the Polish translation of Husbands' work: *Robots. What everyone needs to know*.

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