



Introduction to the issue:

Cezary Wodziński — language between evil and hospitality

On 12 June 2016, Cezary Wodziński died. One of the most singular voices in Polish philosophy at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, an outstanding interpreter of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Russian philosophy, and the ancient Greeks, his thinking engaged with the subjects of evil, language, apophatics and hospitality, Wodziński not only left behind an original body of thought — situated on the edge of hermeneutics and attempting to storm its boundary by persisting in an unceasing trance — he also stimulated thinking among a broad milieu of philosophers. Some of them still acknowledge the debt they owe to their master and friend, others have gone their own ways, yet it can be said that Cezary Wodziński was without doubt a fascinating phenomenon of the late 1980s and 1990s, as well as of the beginning of the twenty-first century. Without taking into account his influence on Polish philosophy — not only through his texts, but also through his academic activity and, more broadly, through his practice of philosophy in conversation — it is impossible to grasp and understand the transformations in Polish philosophy after 1989. Today, we wish to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his death with an issue of *Argument* to which we have invited contributors for whom Wodziński's legacy remains inspiring or continues to provoke thought.

From the submitted articles, there emerges an image of Wodziński as a philosopher working in language, characterized by a profound awareness of his own entanglement in language and a deep sensitivity to the various, above all philosophical, registers of that language. But Wodziński is also someone who attempts to overcome this entanglement in language, to storm its borders, and to maintain our awareness of various extralinguistic phenomena. It turns out that, for the authors publishing in this volume, various subtleties of Wodziński's 'philosophy of language' proved inspiring: the failure of language

in its attempt to narrate evil, through a somewhat analogous failure of language in its encounter with war; the tension generated by writing, a tension which influences the shape of Western subjectivity but at the same time allows one to preserve closeness to the departed master; the kairotic nature of conversation — the use or non-use of the appropriate moment for understanding; the figure of atypicality, a place around which *topoi* concentrate and interpretations accumulate, yet do not name that ‘place’; and finally reflections on the peculiar hospitality of translation. Language continues to lend itself to thinking, and Wodziński’s writings mark out singular points of orientation for a thinking that would wish to give heed to language.

As the first contribution, we include Monika Murawska’s text *Evil in the loop of time. The philosophy of Cezary Wodziński*. It is one of two texts in this volume that set themselves the task of providing a synthetic account of Wodziński’s philosophy. The author has taken the theme of evil as her guiding thread, bringing to the fore Wodziński’s struggle with Heidegger’s biography.

Questions concerning language are merely outlined here, in the context of the book *Kairos. The conference in Todtnauberg. Celan — Heidegger*, whereas they take centre stage in the next text, by Anton Marczyński, and entitled *War as a ‘linguistic loss’ and philosophy. Studium ex malo*. The author attempts to look at the question of war — also from the perspective of the present war in Ukraine — through the prism of Wodziński’s reflection on evil, which shows that, for essential reasons, evil brings every discourse on evil into aporia. Marczyński asks whether war shares with evil this property of destroying all discourses about itself. War is not the same as evil — they are distinct phenomena — but, just as with evil, the experience of war allows one neither to remain silent about it nor to speak of it meaningfully. The question of war here becomes a question about philosophy itself: about its limits, its competences, and the possibility of maintaining seriousness where language experiences its own insufficiency.

Whereas in Marczyński’s article war turns out to be a ‘linguistic loss,’ something that cannot be contained within language and that shatters language, Mateusz Falkowski’s article *Logology and logologic* sets itself the aim of reconstructing Wodziński’s theory of language. According to Falkowski, while this theory has never been expounded anywhere in a synthetic manner, and perhaps could not even assume the clear form of a theory, at the same time it is present in most of Wodziński’s texts, operating, as it were, in the background. With the reservation he mentions a few times — that this is merely a contributory undertaking — Falkowski formulates several bold and insightful remarks indicating that language is Wodziński’s fundamental problem.

On the one hand, Wodziński observes the (world's) becoming language, which at the same time represents the openness of language to what is extralinguistic as well as the closing off of language and its becoming a repeatable model. Human beings are hopelessly entangled in language although, according to the author, linguistic idealism is very far removed from Wodziński's thought. Paradigmatic here, and perhaps in a peculiar sense the only language, is the language of technology. On the other hand, Wodziński traces various ways of eluding language: apophatics, evil, silence, babbling, etc. These ways are unceasing practices of eluding language rather than recipes for elusion, for these practices also "become language." In conclusion, Falkowski draws attention to the specific character of Cezary Wodziński's approach to language which, from the entire richness of language, singles out words and treats them as "the fundamental boundary of language and of becoming language" and as "the least metaphysical elements of language."

In the next text, entitled *I, the subject of scripture...* *Homo literatus as a model of the European understanding of subjectivity as such*, Daniel Sobota takes as his point of departure Wodziński's reflections in *The Logo of Immortality: Plato's Footnotes to Socrates* concerning the relationship between writing and speech. He extends this problem to the entire history of Western culture and discerns in the figure of the writing human being (*homo literatus*) the basic matrix of European subjectivity. Sobota argues that "the genealogy of European subjectivity is a genealogy of writing — grammatogenesis" through several insights: by highlighting the ambiguity of the Aristotelian concept of *hypokeimenon*; by invoking Bruno Snell's book on the discovery of the mind in antiquity and interpreting this narrative as a transition from an oral to a literate culture; by recalling the discussions and controversies surrounding the concept of humanism as a technique of becoming human; and, finally, by outlining the problem, central to metaphysics, of the presencing that takes place in the text and through the text.

A counterpoint to Daniel Sobota's article, and a (certainly unintended) polemic with it, is Julia Marczyńska's meditation, which considers parting with the master — his absence and yet at the same time the possibility of preserving closeness through writing. Marczyńska's essay — *Parting with the Master. A phenomenological-hermeneutic meditation* — formally concerns the relationship between Plato and Socrates and revolves around words, Greek terms, recorded in Plato's Dialogues. (In this sense, she adopts as her own Wodziński's approach to language — the subject of Falkowski's article: it is words, the reaching into their etymological substratum, that constitute a window onto the extralinguistic.) Yet the unspoken context here is the personal

relationship with Cezary Wodziński and her own parting with the master. This meditation has its own rhythm, measured out by successive questions concerning the relationship between Plato and Socrates. This relationship, however, is not considered here from a historical perspective, but as a phenomenon to which the Marczyńska has access through words.

Radosław Strzelecki's reflections in his *Kairos and akairos. Between silence and action* also move around the edge of language. Conversation — especially such a singular conversation as the one that took place on 25 July 1967 between Celan and Heidegger — is, of course, an exchange of messages (speech); but it is also the ability to listen and to maintain silence and, moreover, the undertaking or non-undertaking of action. Drawing extensively on Wodziński's book, which problematizes the aforementioned meeting of the poet and the thinker, Strzelecki indicates that not only *kairos* — that is, the appropriate moment — becomes constitutive here, but also *akairos*. Strzelecki cites uses of this concept in Greek, pointing out that Wodziński refers to intuitions underlying this term, though he does not use the concept itself. At the same time, the negation expressed in the "alpha privativum" builds a particular tension between *kairos* and *akairos* — a tension associated with recognizing the appropriate moment and undertaking the corresponding action (speaking or remaining silent), but also with the risk of failing to recognize it or failing to undertake that action. These reflections open an ethical horizon within which Wodziński's linguistic analyses could be situated.

The next article is Paweł Sznajder's text *Between event and text. The atopy of Jesus Christ in the light of Cezary Wodziński's interpretation of Socrates*, in which the author develops the concept of atopicality. Referring to *The logo of immortality*, in which Wodziński points out the atopicality of Socrates, Sznajder indicates that this concept can be transposed onto the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. *Atopos*, or non-place, is understood here by the author not so much as a place outside language and understanding, but rather as a borderline place that notoriously eludes capture in interpretation, at the same time generating the possibility of many different interpretations. Jesus, just like Socrates, is situated on the boundary between the culture of speech and the culture of writing, between the event and the record of that event.

The set of articles focused on the main theme of the issue concludes with Tadeusz Sławek's essay *Along the path of translation*, which looks at Cezary Wodziński the translator. Not so much, however, as one who translates from Russian, German and Greek, but above all someone who understands and can serve as a guide through the difficult art of translation, someone who recognizes the multidimensionality of translation. Translation always brings

about some loss of otherness, although at the same time it invites one in as a guest — it is, therefore, a guest-other (*gość-inny*). Sławek furthermore claims that translation is primarily “a certain state of concentration,” but also, like Odysseus returning to Ithaca, a wandering through foreign lands in order ultimately to recognize foreignness in the familiar — to which one has been returning for so long.

After a series of texts — on evil, war, language, writing, the Master, *kairos*, silence and atopy — the discussion of the issue’s theme does not reach a simple conclusion, but ends with the topic of translation — an ongoing transition. We believe this to be very much in Cezary’s spirit.

Beyond the main theme of the issue, we also publish one article, one discussion and two reviews.

In the article entitled *Anthropotechnics and transcendental phenomenology. Towards the transformative dimension of subjectivity*, Damian Kałużny passes Husserl’s phenomenology through the prism of Sloterdijk’s concept of anthropotechnics, whereby phenomenology reveals itself to be a specific mode of existence that requires the practice of rigorous procedures.

Finally, Marcin Urbaniak — in the article entitled *Current challenges in animal communication research. Griffin’s The question of animal awareness half a century later* — attempts to summarize the fifty years that have passed since the publication of Donald Griffin’s groundbreaking work and formulates four methodological challenges for the science of animal communication. The issue is complemented by Andrzej Kapusta’s review of Józef Bremer’s book *Wittgenstein on Freud reexamined. Psychoanalytic treatments as language-games*, and Adriana J. Mickiewicz’s review of Bas de Boer’s book *Healthy embodiment. Philosophical reflections on the experience of health*.

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