



Introduction to the issue

The current issue of *Argument: Biannual Philosophical Journal* (2015, vol. 5, no. 1) provides a platform for cross-cultural studies of the human body, the embodied mind, agency, intentionality, and various axiological aspects of the human psychophysical identity. Out of the twenty articles that compose this issue, thirteen original papers address the leading theme, namely *Psychophysical integrity of the human self. Comparative approach: philosophy, literature and art*. The multidisciplinary and comparative perspectives include references to Western and Eastern cultural traditions, as well as juxtaposing a variety of views on human corporeality and the mind-body relationship, discussed from the perspectives of philosophical theories (Venieri, Jakubczak, Kamińska, Kołdrzak, King, Wachowski), literary works (Kamińska, Milewska) and visual artefacts (King, Staniszevska, Wałek, Popczyk, Romanowicz, Lipowicz).

The first paper by Maria Venieri, entitled *Embodied mind and phenomenal consciousness*, presents some positions that are widely debated in the contemporary philosophy of mind. She discusses some arguments for the theory of ‘embodied cognition’, and then reconsiders the ‘argument from hallucinations’ and its related thought experiments to demonstrate that the body and its interactions with the environment have a causal, but not a constitutive or essential role, in forming a phenomenal consciousness. The next author, Marzenna Jakubczak, in her paper devoted to *The problem of psychophysical agency in the classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga*, discusses the ancient Indian philosophical conception of human agency while making some references to the contemporary Western distinctions. A threefold categorisation of doing according to its causes is followed by capturing the relationship of agency to the capacities of knowledge and perception. Finally, the efficiency of action is briefly explained, as well as the criteria of a right action accomplished through moral discipline and meditation. Sonia Kamińska, in her paper entitled *Franz Kafka’s story The metamorphosis in the light of the theory of intentional object in Franz Brentano and Anton Marty*, examines the status of the bodily and mental transformation

described by Kafka in his famous short story by using tools from Franz Brentano's and Anton Marty's philosophy of mind and language. The fourth article, by Elżbieta Kodrzak, *Plaisir and jouissance: The case of potential and textual reading of Barthes' theory*, offers an interpretation of the categories of 'pleasure' and 'delight' on the grounds of the philosophically oriented theoretical-literary considerations of Roland Barthes.

Two following papers are focused on the contemporary art of design, which is seen through the lens of phenomenological philosophy. In the paper by Ian W. King, entitled *'What to wear?': Clothing as an example of expression and intentionality*, the problem of intentionality — as it is defined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty — is interestingly employed to elucidate the meaning of the act of dressing our bodies. Meanwhile, Elżbieta Staniszevska in her article *The human body: From its instrumentality to its axiological precedence in the contemporary art of design*, illustrated with several photographs, discusses two senses of the handiness of tools: one as their optimum quality in facilitating the achievement of the aims that maintain the current cultural values; and in their second sense which links handiness with fulfilling the direct requirements of the human body. Contrary to Martin Heidegger, who combined both meanings of 'handiness', Staniszevska argues for a clear separation of them.

The next two articles deal with the image of body as depicted in the visual arts. Janusz Wałek, in his paper entitled *Between the ideal and the reality: The human body through the eyes of European artists*, reviews how the human body has been displayed in the art of different epochs and how the ways of depicting it have varied since the time of ancient Greece. The review concludes with a reference to the contemporary trend called Body-Art that involves various artistic activities, such as happenings and performances, where the human body is itself used as a significant work of art. In *The image of the body-face: The case of Franz X. Messerschmidt and Bill Viola*, Maria Popczyk focuses on the interpretations of emotional states as they are portrayed in images of the face, particularly in a series of busts by Franz Xaver Messerschmidt and in Bill Viola's video works. Her aim is to demonstrate how the act of depicting the body, regarded as a cognitive process in an artistic medium and accompanied by a special kind of aesthetic experience, becomes a means of communication which is capable of conveying a universal message.

Indian and Japanese cultural contexts constitute the background for the two papers that follow. Their authors, Iwona Milewska and Beata Romanowicz, are both interested in the ways in which the image of the human body — and especially its gendered beauty — has been culturally constructed in literature and in the visual arts. The former discusses *Female and male attractiveness as depicted in Sanskrit epic literature*; while the latter takes a closer look at *Manifestation of the Kabuki actors' gender in woodblock prints of the Edo Period*. The basis for Milewska's analysis is the love stories and episodes included in the

main plot of the Vanaparvan, the third book of the *Mahābhārata*. She refers to many images of female and male characters, including princesses, queens and kings, focusing on the external beauty of such heroines as Damayantī, Sāvitrī, Sukanyā, Suśobhanā and Sitā, as well as male protagonists such as Nala, Bhīma, Aśvapati, Rāma and Daśaratha, *etc.* The author of the second paper, Beata Romanowicz, bases her research on the woodcuts from the collection of the National Museum in Kraków, Poland. She considers the connections between Kabuki theatre and the Japanese woodblock prints of the Edo period (1603–1868). When analysing perceptions of the sex of the actor, both as the hero of the drama and as the character performed on the stage, she focuses on the actors' identification with their own sex (only men appeared on the Kabuki stage) and on cases of breaking the convention between the real actor and his stage *emploi*.

The next article by Witold Wachowski, entitled *Płeć kulturowa w rozproszonych systemach poznawczych — możliwości konceptualizacji* [Gender in distributed cognitive systems: Possible conceptualizations], also involves a gender related issue. However, Wachowski uses the discourse of contemporary philosophy and neuroscience. The account of the author is based on the concept of a distributed cognitive system and a cultural ecosystem developed in cognitive science. What he suggests is that there is a kind of integration between social and biological approaches in studies on sex and gender. In his analysis, Wachowski pays special attention to a distinction between the distributed cognition theory and the extended mind theory.

Another paper, addressing the theme of *Psychophysical integrity of the human self...*, is authored by Markus Lipowicz. In his article, entitled *(Nie)święte ciało: socjologiczny i filozoficzny wymiar okrucieństwa we współczesnym filmie* [(Un)holy body: The sociological and philosophical dimensions of cruelty in contemporary film], Lipowicz offers an interpretation of cinematic cruelty from a sociological and philosophical perspective. His main point is that gore in movies poses a more or less fulfilling artistic commentary on actual social relationships and contemporary cultural conditions. The author describes the modern transition from a transcendental to a transgressive understanding of the body and of corporeality. He also explains the cultural fascination with cruelty by pointing out some of its sociological and philosophical implications.

A paper by Akiko Kasuya entitled *Art and the body: the Tatsuno Art Project*, included in the "Review Article" column, constitutes an extra contribution to the leading theme. In her exhibition report, which is supplemented with photos of the displayed artefacts, Kasuya discusses the relationship between art and the body as it is exemplified by the similarities and differences in the works of three contemporary artists: two Japanese artists, Matsui Chie (b. 1960) and Higashikage Tomohiro (b. 1978), and a Polish artist, Mirosław Bałka (b. 1958).

Also in this issue, there are five more research papers which deal with a variety of philosophical topics, starting from the ontological question of being in Buddhist thought (Krzysztof Jakubczak); through to an epistemological distinction between ‘criterion’ and ‘rule’ according to Wittgenstein (Jan Wawrzyniak); the dilemmas and paradoxes of ethical extensionalism (Janusz A. Majcherek); an ethical debate between Arendt and Voegelin over the origins of Nazi totalitarianism (Tomasz Borycki); and ending with an aesthetical interpretation of space in Florenski’s theory (Paulina Sury).

In the column reserved for an article addressing the “Philosophy of Teaching”, we publish a paper by Wendy Lee Grosskopf entitled *When win-argument pedagogy is a loss for the composition classroom*. Through references to her own pedagogical experience, she attempts to explain why undergraduate college students are often accused of churning out essays that lack creative and critical thought, despite the efforts that educators put into developing in students the critical writing and thinking skills needed to compose effective arguments. Grosskopf emphasizes that teaching which is mainly or exclusively eristic, as it is in most composition classrooms today, halts the advancement of higher-order inquiry skills.

In the present issue of the *Argument: Biannual Philosophical Journal* we are initiating a new column, “PhilosOFFer’s Lens”, that invites less formal, essayist commentaries on the current issues to be made from a critical philosopher’s point of view. The author of the first essay in this column, Piotr Bartula, in his *Dwa raporty* [Two reports], sketches in a light and humorous tone the ethical dilemma of a contemporary Polish academic teacher who is caught up in bureaucratic and economic modes. Bartula’s essay is followed by two polemical book reviews (by Jan Bigaj and Hubert Bożek) and three book notes on recently published monographs (Rafał Kupczak, Witold Wieteska and Katarzyna Guczyńska-Sady).

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