

BETWEEN VIRTUE AND WICKEDNESS

ABSTRACTS

From the Editors – The Condition We Do Not Experience (P. M.)

The reflection on virtue is inseparably connected with that on pleasure. “For moral excellence is concerned with pleasures and pains” – writes Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.<sup>1</sup> He begins to discuss the topic already in the first three books, returns to it at the end of Book Seven, and in a large part of Book Ten, before finally addressing the essence and sources of happiness: theoretical contemplation and virtuous life. Those texts, which could form a treatise on the relationship of virtue and pleasure, begin with the statement that pleasure and pain that ensue on acts should be considered as a sign of states of character, that is, of virtues or vices. A temperate man, for example, experiences the abstinence from bodily pleasures not as burdensome, but as pleasant.<sup>2</sup> Speaking about the pleasure of abstinence, Aristotle does not mean the satisfaction one may find having overcome a temptation or the gratification one may feel evaluating his or her own actions as morally good. The pleasure he has in mind neither is the goal of action, nor should it be considered as a reward. Aristotle speaks of the pleasure that concurs with an action, originating from a skilful and unimpeded exercise of the faculties of the soul according to their nature. In Book Ten, he writes that although different people evidently have different pleasures, “virtue and the good man as such are the measure of each thing, those also will be pleasures which appear so to him, and those things pleasant which he enjoys.”<sup>3</sup>

Those two statements on pleasure and virtue reveal two characteristics of the approach manifested by the philosophers who believe virtue to play a prominent, as opposed to secondary, role; those characteristics are the focus on the acting subject, on his or her individual experience and, in consequence, the emphasis on personal models of the morally good life. Various forms of this approach have always emerged throughout the long history of philosophy. On the other hand, one can also identify the times of the «dusk» of this concept, of its being marginalized both in philosophy and in broadly understood culture, as well as the periods of its «dawn,» marked by a recognition of the importance of virtue both for philosophy and for day-to-day life.

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1104 b, trans. W. D. Ross.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, 1176 a.

Whether we live in the phase of virtue «dusk» or in that of virtue «dawn,» can be a matter of argument; how the argument could be settled would probably depend on the field of cultural and social life where one would look for the presence of virtue. It seems, however, that some unquestionable facts can be established.

Firstly, the doctrine of virtues has been preserved in the Church tradition. To testify to this, the current issue of *Ethos* opens with John Paul II's catecheses on the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance; these addresses were given at the very beginning of his pontificate as a continuation of the pastoral programme of the previous Pope.

Secondly, in the twentieth century the renaissance of the concept of virtue in the reflection on morality, both in philosophical ethics and in moral theology, can be observed. It originated from the criticism of moral philosophy developed in the Enlightenment. In the continental thought, the re-emergence of virtue-oriented approach was induced by thinkers related to the phenomenological movement. In the Anglophone philosophy the turning point was the publication of Elisabeth Anscombe's paper *Modern Moral Philosophy*. In the current volume of *Ethos*, we have included the Polish translation of the text in question, whose author was deeply critical of the then condition of ethics and which caused an animated discussion, thus initiating one of the major currents in contemporary ethics, namely, virtue ethics.

The paper by Fr. Livio Melina on the role of the concept of virtue in moral theology can be read as a commentary on the papal catechesis. Melina claims that the current understanding and use of this concept results from a radical paradigm change in moral theology.

Both papers, although clearly different, refer to the classical tradition of moral philosophy with its concept of virtue and the virtues. The spiritual climate in which the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue was born is described in the article preceding the ones on the contemporary situation. Its author, Giovanni Reale, investigates the ancient Greek understanding of virtue as the well-being of the soul, expressed in its harmonious action – which is also a sign of the harmony and health of the body.

Natasza Szutta, in her attempt at a solution of the problem of the unity of virtue, interprets the tradition from a contemporary perspective; a similar approach has been adopted by Ottfried Höffe, Anna Szudra-Barszcz and Sergio Belardinelli, who consider the practice of a virtuous life, its relationship to self-fulfilment, the formation of virtue by education, including self-education, and the virtue of prudence in the life of a family.

Traditionally, virtues are presented against the background of their opposites. Aristotle established a model of such presentation and taught us to think of virtue as opposed to two vices, being the «middle» between the extremes. Regardless of whether the much criticized doctrine of virtue as the middle can be defended, the essence of virtue, when contrasted with that of vice, stands out more clearly; it also facilitates the recognition of mere appearances of virtue. However, the authors of this issue of *Ethos* have not followed that way, and their descriptions of the forms of human wickedness do not provide the background for a discussion of virtue. As virtue is related to the recognition of truth, Robert Piłat's paper on self-deception seems to reach to the very roots of moral corrup-

tion. Marcin Zdrenka in turn explores the contemporary forms of idleness, sometimes considered as «lesser» vices, and shows their actual moral weight.

Aristotle presents a virtuous man as one for whom morally good action is easy: acts that flow from virtue are unimpeded, performed without an inner conflict and skilfully – thence the pleasure that accompanies them. The Philosopher, however, does not deny that virtue can be attained by considerable, sustained effort, but writes about it with restraint; his presentation of virtues and vices as standing in opposition to each other pertains to the realm of theoretical reflection. The early-Christian literary vision of the battle between Virtues and Sins, extracted from the writings of Prudentius by fr. Marek Satorwieyski, is radically different: it depicts a violent struggle for life or death. After contemplating this image, the readers' peace of mind is restored by Małgorzata Mazurczak's paper on the sculptural representation of the personification of Hope.

The two following articles concern the attitudes that, in some respect, oppose one another. Ewelina Mika discusses metaphysical anxiety and the stance towards Mystery expressed in the poetry and essays of Zbigniew Herbert – the stance that may perhaps be called the virtue of silence. The paper by Dariusz Słapek in turn tells the story of the different uses made over the ages of the myth of Spartacus that may be considered a model of the human involvement in History.

Let us return, however, to pleasure. The authors of this volume do not give it particular attention, although the *Nicomachean Ethics* is probably the work they quote most frequently. Elisabeth Anscombe, commenting critically on Aristotle's views on pleasure, observes that for philosophers pleasure is a particularly confusing issue. Karol Wojtyła, philosopher formed in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, but also a keen reader of Kant, states in turn, as follows: "What is strictly related to this [human] fulfilment we call felicity but not «pleasure». [...] Felicity points to the *personal structure* while pleasure can be related to what may be viewed as the simply *natural structure* of the individual."<sup>4</sup>

The above remark, presupposing a vision of man different from the one advanced by Aristotle, may be read as a commentary that goes beyond the ideas of the Philosopher: the solution to the question of pleasure requires categories unknown to him. It also indicates that pleasure is marginal for the good life. Connecting pleasure to the truly human fulfilment is, according to Wojtyła, a misconception, rather, the feelings related to the awareness of a good conscience should be called satisfaction or joy: "The fact that the satisfaction may also be pleasurable is only secondary."<sup>5</sup>

It seems that Aristotle – had he been familiar with Wojtyła's view – might have agreed with it. However, in the final book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* he returns to the question of the relationship between pleasure, virtue and happiness, and states clearly: "We think happiness has pleasure mingled with it," adding: "The activity of philosophic wisdom is admittedly the pleasantest of virtuous activities; at all events the pursuit of it is thought to offer pleasures marvellous for their purity and their enduringness."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, trans. A. Potocki, Reidel, Dordrecht–Boston–London 1979, p. 177.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *op. cit.*, 1177 a.

How should we understand this controversy over the interpretation of the human experience? To approach it as a question of terminology, of giving the name of pleasure to some positive feelings, and the name of joy to others, does not seem adequate, as the difference lies in the respective metaphysical theories of man. The two standpoints in this argument, however, have something in common: they both point that the goal of a virtuous life is human fulfilment. And although Aristotle's ethics remains the philosophy of our earthly concerns, his vision of fulfilment brings to mind the condition of perfect happiness as a harmonious and complete realisation of humanity – the condition that we do not experience. Yet we are capable of thinking about this condition rationally, and of desiring it. It is in the thought of Karol Wojtyła–John Paul II, who crosses the threshold of philosophy towards theology, in his integral anthropology, that we can find a counterpart of this vision: it springs from his interpretation of the Evangelical «beginning,» the condition of man conforming to God's primordial design. It was precisely that condition that Christ indicated as the norm for human love. In the catecheses *Man and Woman He Created Them* John Paul II made an amazing attempt to describe the condition in which the human person with all his or her being, as an integral moral subject, responds to the recognized good. The distinction between joy and pleasure seems to disappear then. And if the concept of virtue were not so deeply embedded in the life as we know it, with the difficult experience of growth, one could say that this condition describes a completely virtuous person.

P. M.

JOHN PAUL II – The Four Cardinal Virtues (Extracts from the addresses delivered during General Audiences on 25 Oct. 1979, 8 Nov. 1978, 15 Nov. 1978, 22 Nov. 1978)

During the four consecutive Wednesday Audiences from 25 October 1978 till 22 November 1978 Pope John Paul II continued the teaching on virtues started by his predecessor, John Paul I. From the notes of the late Pontiff, John Paul II learnt that the late Pope's intention was to speak not only of the three theological virtues: faith, hope and charity, but also of the four so-called cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

Thus, firstly, John Paul II developed the theme of prudence. He stressed that the ancients in a way taught us that the value of man must be measured with the yardstick of the moral good which he accomplishes in his life. It is just this that ensures the virtue of prudence first place. The prudent man, who strives for everything that is really good, endeavors to measure every thing, every situation and his whole activity according to the yardstick of moral good. So a prudent man is not one who is able to wangle things in life and draw the greatest profit from it; but one who is able to construct his whole life according to the voice of upright conscience and according to the requirements of sound morality.

So prudence is the key for the accomplishment of the fundamental task that each of us has received from God. This task is the perfection of man himself. God has given our humanity to each of us. We must meet this task by planning it accordingly.

But the Christian has the right and the duty to look at the virtue of prudence also in another perspective. It is, as it were, the image and likeness of the Providence of God himself in the dimensions of concrete man. For man was created in the image and likeness of God. And God carries out his plan in the history of creation, and above all in the history of mankind. The purpose of this plan is the ultimate good of the universe. The same plan in the history of mankind becomes simply the plan of salvation, the plan that embraces us all. At the central point of its realization is Jesus Christ, in whom was expressed the eternal love and solicitude of God himself, the Father, for the salvation of man. This is at the same time the full expression of Divine Providence.

Man, who is the image of God, must in some way be providence: but within the proportions of his life. He can take part in this great march of all creatures towards the purpose, which is the good of creation. He must take part in the divine plan of salvation. He must march towards salvation, and help others to save themselves. By helping others, he saves himself.

The second cardinal virtue on which John Paul II spoke was justice. Justice – said the Holy Father – is in a certain way greater than man, than the dimensions of his earthly life, than the possibilities of establishing in this life fully just relations among men, environments, societies and social groups, nations, and so on. Every man lives and dies with a certain sense of an insatiable hunger for justice, since the world is not able to satisfy fully a being created in the image of God, either in the depths of his person or in the various aspects of his human life. And thus, by means of this hunger for justice, man turns to God who “is justice itself”. Jesus expressed this very clearly and concisely in the Sermon on the Mount, when he said: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” (Mt 5:6)

Having this evangelical sense of justice before our eyes, we must consider it at the same time a fundamental dimension of man’s life on earth: the life of man, of society, of humanity. This is the ethical dimension. Justice is the fundamental principle of the existence and the coexistence of men, as well as of human communities, societies and peoples. Furthermore, justice is the principle of the existence of the Church, as the People of God, and the principle of coexistence of the Church and the various social structures; in particular of the state, as well as of international organizations. In this wide and differentiated area, man and mankind are continually seeking justice: this is a perennial process and it is a task of supreme importance.

According to the different relationships and different aspects, justice has obtained more appropriate definitions throughout the centuries. Hence the concept of justice: communicative, distributive, legal and social. All this testifies what a fundamental significance justice has for the moral order among men, in social and international relations. It can be said that the very meaning of man’s existence on earth is bound up with justice. To define correctly “how much is due” to each one from all and at the same time to all from each one, “what is due” (*debitum*) to man from man in different systems and relationships, is a great thing, through which every man lives, and thanks to which his life has a meaning. Therefore there remains, during the centuries of human existence on earth, a continual effort and a continuous struggle to organize in accordance with justice

the whole of social life in its various aspects. It is necessary to view with respect the multiple programmes and the activity, sometimes reformative, of various trends and systems. It is necessary, at the same time, to be aware that here it is not a question in the first place of systems, but of justice and of man. The system must be for man, not man for the system.

Therefore defence is necessary against the hardening of the system. Any system, social, economic, political and cultural systems, must be sensitive to man, to his complete good. They must be able to reform themselves, their own structures, according to what the full truth about man requires. The great effort of our times, which aims at defining and consolidating "human rights" in the life of present-day mankind, peoples, and states, must be evaluated from this point of view. Each of us, then, must be able to live in a context of justice and, even more, each of us must be just and act justly with regard to those near us and those who are far away, with regard to the community, to the society of which one is a member... and with regard to God.

Justice has many references and many forms. There is also a form of justice which regards what man "owes" God.

Christ left us the commandment to love our neighbour. In this commandment, everything that concerns justice is also contained. There can be no love without justice. Love "surpasses" justice, but at the same time it finds its verification in justice. If justice is uncertain, love, too, runs a risk.

To be just means giving each one what is due to him. This concerns temporal goods, of a material nature. The best example here can be remuneration for work or the so-called right to the fruits of one's own work or of one's own land. But to man is due also his good name, respect, consideration, the reputation he has deserved. The more we know a man, the more his personality, his character, his intellect and his heart are revealed to us. And the more we realize with what criterion to "measure him" and what it means to be just towards him.

It is necessary, therefore, to deepen our knowledge of justice continually. It is not a theoretical science. It is virtue, it is capacity of the human spirit, of the human will and also of the heart.

Next, the Holy Father developed the theme of fortitude and pointed that we need it not only in wartime, but also in peacetime, in the form of so-called "civil courage." A testimony of fortitude is offered to us by anyone who risks his own life to save someone by one who provides help in natural calamities. The manifestations of the virtue of fortitude are numerous.

Certain examples of it, however, are generally not well known, but bear witness in themselves to great, sometimes even heroic, virtue. The Pope mentioned in this context the example of a woman, already mother of a large family, who is "advised" by many to suppress a new life conceived in her womb, by undergoing "the operation" of interruption of pregnancy; and she replies firmly: "no." He stressed that there are a great many manifestations of fortitude, often heroic, of which little is known. Only human conscience and God know them. According to the teaching of St. Thomas, the virtue of fortitude is found in the man who is ready to face danger and to put up with adversities for a just cause.

The virtue of fortitude always calls for a certain overcoming of human weakness and particularly of fear. Man, indeed, by nature, spontaneously fears dan-



ger, affliction and suffering. Therefore courageous men must be sought not only on battlefields, but also in hospital wards or on a bed of pain. Such men could often be found in concentration camps or in places of deportation. They were real heroes.

Fear sometimes deprives of civil courage men who are living in a climate of threats, oppression or persecution. The men who are capable of crossing the so-called barrier of fear, to bear witness to truth and justice, have then a special value. To reach such fortitude, man must in a certain way “go beyond” his own limits and “transcend” himself, running “the risk” of an unknown situation, of being frowned upon, of laying himself open to unpleasant consequences, insults, degradations, material losses, perhaps imprisonment or persecution. To attain this fortitude, man must be sustained by a great love for truth and for good, to which he dedicates himself.

The virtue of fortitude proceeds hand in hand with the capacity of sacrificing oneself. This virtue had already a well-defined contour among the Ancients. With Christ it acquired an evangelical, Christian contour. The Gospel contains a constant appeal to fortitude. It often repeats: “Fear not” (Mt 14: 27). It teaches man that, for a just cause, for truth, for justice, one must be able to “lay down one’s life” (Jn 15:13).

To be men we need fortitude. The truly prudent man, in fact, is only he who possesses the virtue of fortitude; just as also the truly just man is only he who has the virtue of fortitude.

When we speak of virtues – stressed the Pope – we must always have in mind the real man, the actual man. Virtue is not something abstract, detached from life, but, on the contrary, it has deep “roots” in life itself, it springs from the latter and forms it. Virtue has an impact on man’s life, on his actions and behaviour. It follows that, in all these reflections of ours, we are speaking not so much of the virtue as of man living and acting “virtuously”; we are speaking of the prudent, just and courageous man, and finally, precisely, we are speaking of the “temperate” (or “sober”) man.

However, all these attributes, or rather attitudes of man, coming from the single cardinal virtues, are connected with one another. So it is not possible to be a really prudent man, or an authentically just one, or a truly strong one, unless one also has the virtue of temperance. It can be said that this virtue indirectly conditions all other virtues, but it must also be said that all the other virtues are indispensable for man to be “temperate” (or “sober”).

The term “temperance” itself seems in a certain way to refer to what is “outside man.” This reference to elements external to man has its basis, however, within man. It is as if there existed in each of us a “higher self” and a “lower self. In our «lower self,» our «body» and everything that belongs to it is expressed: its needs, its desires, its passions of a sensual nature particularly. The virtue of temperance guarantees every man mastery of the «lower self» by the «higher self.» Paradoxically, this mastery gives higher value to the body. As a result of the virtue of temperance, the body and our senses find the right place which pertains to them in our human condition.

A temperate man is one who is master of himself. One in whom passions do not prevail over reason, will, and even the «heart.» The virtue of temperance has a fun-

damental and radical value. It is even indispensable, in order that man may be fully a man.

This virtue demands from each of us a specific humility with regard to the gifts that God has put in our human nature. This humility is simultaneously a necessary condition for man's interior «harmony.»

Summarized by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: cardinal virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, John Paul II's moral teaching

For the full script of the catecheses see: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/audiences/1978/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19781025\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781025_en.html)  
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Giovanni REALE – Care for the Well-Being of the Soul (trans. P. Mikulska)

The author analyzes the development of the concept of virtue in ancient Greek culture. He starts with the Homeric idea of virtue understood as strength and skill: so conceived of, the concept of virtue was seldom used to describe spiritual properties, and was applied both to human beings and to objects. The author proceeds to discuss Plato's concept of virtue as order and harmony of every entity in conformity to their nature. According to this vision, human virtue consists in the harmony of the soul. Plato's approach to the problem of the unity of virtue manifested in the multiplicity of the virtues is presented as an exemplary application of the dialectic method. The author also shows how the concept of virtue in Plato is related to that of the health of the soul and its diseases. The latter may origin from madness or ignorance, yet there are also diseases generated by some excess or deficiency related to the body. The right measure, identified by Plato with the Good and the One, is the source of order and unity at every level of being, and thus the principle of virtue, as well as the guideline on the care for the well-being of man seen as the unity of the soul and the body.

Summarized by *Patrycja Mikulska*

Keywords: virtue, Homer, Plato, well-being of the soul, right measure, the Good

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Gertrude E. M. ANSCOMBE – Modern Moral Philosophy (trans. M. Roszyk)

In this paper, the Author presents three theses. According to the first one, doing moral philosophy is impossible until we have adequate philosophy of psychology, i.e. we possess thoroughgoing analyses of concepts such as action, pleasure, intention, motive, wanting, etc. According to the second one, concepts such as moral duty, moral obligation and moral rightness should be abandoned: they are survivals of law conception of ethics, which is essential to Christianity, but – since in the modern world the impact of religion on moral and intellectual life is weak – plays no significant role today; since these concepts are unintelligible without their general framework, they generate some needless problems and should be abandoned in moral philosophy. According to the third one, differences between all of the best known English moral philosophers from Sidgwick till late 1950's are of minor importance, since they agree on some theses that were impossible to accept for earlier authors: they think that there are no absolutely wrong actions, which must not be done under any circumstances, regardless of their positive or negative consequences.

Summarized by *Maksymilian Roszyk*

Keywords: moral philosophy, philosophy of psychology, moral duty, law conception of ethics.

The paper was originally read to the Voltaire Society in Oxford. Published in: *Philosophy* 33(1958) Issue 124, pp. 1-19.

Fr. Livio MELINA – The Concept of Virtue in Modern Moral Theology (trans. P. Mikulska)

After the decline of the concept of virtue in modern ethics, for the last thirty years we have witnessed an impressive comeback of the concept, especially in the Anglophone philosophical milieu. The process, however, does not consist in just adding a new theme to the usually discussed ones, but in an actual paradigm change that is proceeding not without problems.

This new perspective adopted in theology, the perspective that takes into account the vantage point of the acting subject and the dynamism of action, makes it possible to emphasize and appreciate the narrative dimension of Christian life and its inherent aspiration to excellence founded on charity, as well as its Christocentric and ecclesial, that is community-related, context.

Translated by *Patrycja Mikulska*

Keywords: modern moral theology, virtue ethics, paradigm change, St. Thomas Aquinas, christocentrism

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Natasza SZUTTA – The Unity of Virtue as a Condition of Virtue’s Normativity: Defending the Doctrine of the Unity of Virtue

Virtue Ethics is currently one of the most important approaches to ethics. Its advocates intend to formulate virtue ethics as a real alternative to utilitarian and deontological theories. However, one might say, all the three approaches, although offering different understanding of virtue, share one thing, namely they all treat virtue instrumentally, as a means to reach a variously conceived moral good (the goal of human life). Thus virtue ethics, itself resting on an instrumental conception of virtue, does not seem essentially different from either utilitarian or deontological theories, within which one can also formulate different aretologies (theories of virtue) subordinated to some more fundamental conceptions of good or the morally right.

So understood, virtue loses its normative character (as something morally positive) and might be used for various purposes, both morally good and morally evil. One can hardly be surprised then to hear such formulations as a “brave murderer,” an “honest thief,” or a “magnanimous peculator,” which nevertheless go against the ancient conception of virtue, the normative character of which was guaranteed by the unity of virtues, consisting in their mutual conditioning and in particular values being complemented by each other. Their unifying principle was *phronesis* – the virtue of practical wisdom.

The goal of the present paper is to analyze the presumptions and consequences of the doctrine of the unity of virtues for the sake of a better understanding of the nature of virtues as such, as well as of virtue ethics itself. Here I present the main assumptions of the doctrine as well as the main reasons for its critique. I also attempt a way of defending it.

Keywords: virtue, unity of virtue, Aristotle, virtue ethics

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Otfried HÖFFE – Does Virtue Make One Happy? (trans. J. Merecki, SDS)

There are two things generally considered as vitally important for human day-to-day actions: well-being, also called happiness, and morality. At the first glance they oppose each other: looking for happiness, one places oneself in the centre

of things, while morality questions this pretence. In my paper, which is an essay in the fundamentals of ethics, I cast a second glance on the problem: Is it necessary for a person who wants to be happy to act against morality? And conversely, does the recognition of moral duty necessarily jeopardize a person's happiness? Or is it possible to achieve both: to live a happy and at the same time morally good life?

I proceed by clarifying the concept of happiness, I distinguish the desired happiness from the happiness one can realistically expect, and consider the pleasure principle. Along this discussion, I argue that, for the human being, following virtue is the best possible way towards a successful life; at the same time, due to inevitable misfortunes, virtue does not guarantee complete, undisturbed happiness. Finally, through an analysis of the most important alternative to the principle of happiness, the principle of moral freedom, I show that owing to human moral sensitivity and the resulting need for self-respect, being morally good should be regarded as one of the fundamental interests of the human person.

Translated by *Patrycja Mikulska*

Keywords: virtue, well-being, happiness, morality, pleasure principle, freedom, self-respect

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#### Anna SZUDRA-BARSZCZ – Can Virtue Be Taught?

The present article is composed of two parts. The first one includes a tentative presentation of three chosen classical concepts of virtue, namely, the aristocratic, the sophistic and the moral ones. The succeeding presentation of the evolution of the concept of virtue has made it possible to sketch the development of the views on the question of whether *arete* can be actually taught.

The second part of the article is an attempt to directly address the question of whether the above discussed conceptions make virtue teaching actually possible. The considerations included in this section are based on the distinction fundamental to the ultimate answer to the title question, namely, the one between a good life and being a good person. This essential part of the article is preceded by a brief explication of the issue of virtue teaching, as it is seen in the light of the personalistic and the Aristotelian-Thomistic conceptions of education. This section includes also a discussion of some objections against the pedagogy of virtue formulated within its Kantian and sociological-psychological conceptions.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: virtue, conceptions of virtue, pedagogy of virtue, virtue teaching

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Sergio BELARDINELLI – The Virtue of Prudence in the Life of a Family (trans. P. Mikulska)

The author reflects on two concepts of prudence, the Kantian and the Aristotelian ones, in the context of the life of a contemporary family. According to the Kantian concept, this virtue consists in the ability to apply technical-practical rules in order to efficiently achieve freely chosen goals. In the Aristotelian concept in turn, prudence involves the pursuit of what is good and useful for the sake of a happy life seen as a whole.

Drawing on the analyses of works of Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Zygmunt Bauman, the author identifies excessive opportunities for choice, the focus on one's own arbitrary interests and the need for negotiating the terms of any relationship, including family ones, as prominent characteristics of contemporary society. The author claims that the Kantian concept and practice of prudence universally adopted in society is erroneous as it is limited to calculating risks and as a result separates the person from the experience of genuine relationships and true happiness. He argues that in the present time of fragmentation of the society and family, the Aristotelian concept of prudence, with its inherent ideal of a wise person who is capable of actualizing the good of those he or she is responsible for, gains a special importance. Family life based on this ideal is, according to the author, a necessary condition of preserving the main values of contemporary culture, among them freedom, pluralism and tolerance. Only then can the environment enabling the formation of autonomous and responsible citizens be provided.

Summarized by *Patrycja Mikulska*

Keywords: prudence, family relationships, Kant, Aristotle, freedom, pluralism, tolerance, responsibility

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## Robert PIŁAT – The Moral Valuation of Self-Deception

This article examines the basis of moral valuation of self-deception. The very term «self-deception» is usually uttered with intention of pinning down something blameworthy. But what kind of guilt is that? Is moral judgment involved here or it is just a statement about rationality rules being broken, in which case self-deception, albeit irrational, may be held morally acceptable? The answer depends on whether we interpret self-deception as a lie to oneself or as a kind of delusion or mistake about oneself. On the former interpretation, the act of self-deception belongs to the same category as lying to other people, so the moral charge follows naturally. On the latter interpretation, we should refrain from making moral judgment unless some other considerations are met, like stubbornness to stay in the state of delusion. Moreover, there is a body of psychological evidence to the effect that self-deception is actually a rewarding disposition as it allows one to make decisions faster and helps one in taking necessary risks; arguably self-deception is also an instrument of self-improvement and self-motivation. From a neurological perspective one may see self-deception as a function of a neural mechanism producing the feeling of certainty. As far as we know today, the mechanism attaching certainty to our perceptions and judgments is separated from the mechanisms providing those perceptions and judgments. The whole structure has probably been selected in the course of evolution for its adaptive value. However, the philosophical problem remains. How are the psychological tendencies and benefits related to the norms and ideals of human rationality and self-knowledge? Does psychological inevitability of self-deception make those norms and ideals void? In the article I am arguing that self-deception is morally objectionable to the extent to which it undermines the structure of responsibility.

Keywords: self-deception, moral responsibility, self-improvement, self-motivation

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## Marcin T. ZDRENKA – Idleness: Its Specificity and Contemporary Contexts

The main aim of the article is to articulate or rather rearticulate the term «idleness» in a way that could make it useful for ethical reflection. The history of the term, its ambiguity, overlapping on other terms such as: sloth, boredom, depression or melancholy, as well as the plurality of methodological perspectives (medical, psychological and philosophical ones) – all those factors complicate this aim. I use the classic term used in early Christian tradition – «acedia» – for describing contemporary moral phenomena. I also refer to literature figures (*Ob-lomov* by Ivan Goncharov, *La noia* by Alberto Moravia and *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street* by Herman Melville) and to the features of the bourgeois culture in its classical form, especially to the term «blasé» to trans-

late «idleness» into contemporary category. I also sketched the redefined contexts and new places occupied by idleness such as: redundancy, hypertrophy of tools and possibilities, easiness and effortless and simulacrum. Basing on these I trace the forms of acedia that can be found in contemporary life, such as intellectual idleness, axiological idleness, the idleness of the reductionist approach and the idleness resulting from the «cult» of professionalism.

Keywords: idleness, acedia, Russian literature, Italian literature, American literature, Ivan Goncharov, Alberto Moravia, Herman Melville

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Fr. Marek STAROWIEYSKI – Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, or A Catechesis on Virtues and Sins

*Psychomachia*, or *Battle for Mansoul*, by Prudentius (Christian poet of the 4th/5th centuries) is the first allegorical poem in European literature written in hexameters. Its first part includes a vivid account of a battle between Vices and Virtues, fought in seven duels, modeled on the Aeneid. The author instructs his readers on the value of the Virtues, which are invariably victorious, and about the evil of sin. Thus the poem comprises a moral and aesthetic catechesis: it offers not only an encouragement to a virtuous life, but also a poetic description of the particular virtues and vices.

In the second part of *Psychomachia*, the author presents a description of how a temple is being built for Christ by all the Virtues under the guidance of *Concordia* and *Sapientia*.

As far as the formal aspect is concerned, the poem exhibits beautiful hexameter verse (while its Prologue, about Abraham, is written in iambic verse) and is reminiscent of classical poetry, in particular of Vergil, and its structure demonstrates an utmost precision.

Despite the classical influences *Psychomachia* remains a deeply Christian poem, in which the decisive role is played by the Person of Christ and by the Holy Scripture, the latter interpreted allegorically.

While *Psychomachia* is undoubtedly a poem of artistic value, which is why Prudentius indeed deserves the name of a great poet, not infrequently is it unjustly treated by modern critics, in particular due to the naturalistic descriptions it includes, although they seem fairly common throughout the output of the Spanish poet.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: Prudentius, early Christian poetry, allegorical poem, virtues and vices

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Małgorzata U. Mazurczak – *Spes*, or Hope among the Personifications of Virtues: On Andrea Pisano's South Doors to the Florence Baptistery

Personifications of Virtues are usually interpreted in the context of a particular work and they mostly appear in depictions of the Madonna and Child, in tomb sculptures, but also in portals of Gothic cathedrals. The present article is focused on an analysis of the iconographic significance of *Spes*, the Virtue of Hope, as it can be seen on Andrea Pisano's gold plated bronze South Doors to the Florence Baptistery of 1336. The meaning of this particular figure of *Spes* is derived from its composition, which distinguishes it from the figures of the other Virtues depicted there. The plaque with the relief of *Spes* is placed below the scene showing the *Baptism of the Disciples*, and the relief itself is different from those of other Virtues, such as *Fides* or *Iustitia*.

In the article, the workshop of Andrea Pisano is described as exhibiting similarities to the tradition of the goldsmiths of Pisa, to Duccio's paintings and to Tuscan sculpture, but above all to the paintings of Giotto and to the message he conveyed in his depiction of Virtues in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. The characteristic depiction of *Spes* as a young girl shown in profile is identical with that of *Spes* in the Scrovegni Chapel.

There is a relevant connection between Pisano's personification of *Spes* and its other depictions in the paintings of artists from the workshop of Giotto. Examples of such resemblance can be found in the painting from the Wildenstein Collection in New York showing the Madonna with Child, the Saints and Virtues, as well as in the figures of Virtues in the Baroncelli Chapel frescoes in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence.

Andrea Pisano's depiction of *Spes* in the South Doors to the Florence Baptistery has been frequently imitated in marble reliefs, for instance in the ones on the Tabernacle from the Church of Orsanmichele and on the Loggia dei Lanzi façade in Florence. In the context of Virtue depiction, special attention must be paid to the monuments to commemorate the lives and martyr's deaths of Saints, examples of which can be found in Sant Eustorgio Church in Milan and in San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro Church in Pavia. In monuments of this kind, which frequently have the form of an arc, Virtues are traditionally depicted on tomb monuments and on reliquaries. A significant model for the depictions of Virtues in the context of the Last Judgment and the Parousia is provided by programs of church portals, in particular of Gothic cathedrals. The Western Portal of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is particularly mature in the sense of its theological aspect. The personifications of Virtues are depicted there in the shape of victorious figures prevailing over their opposites, Vices. Thus one can notice a breakthrough in the presentation of the personifications of Virtues, which in the early centuries of Christianity were depicted as fighting with Vices and, as a result of this



fight, looking deformed rather than embodying beautiful girlish figures. The victory of Virtues over Vices was an accomplishment of the 13th century sculpture, further developed in the art of the Italian Trecento, a mature example of which is *Spes* on the bronze Doors in Florence.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: Andrea Pisano, South Doors to the Florence Baptistery, Virtue personifications, virtue depictions

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Ewelina MIKA – To Touch the Mystery... On Epistemological and Metaphysical Issues in Zbigniew Herbert's Literary Output

The present article explores the issue of religion in the literary output of Zbigniew Herbert and it is meant as an attempt to situate Herbert's reflections within a broader context of the philosophy of religion and to confront his ideas with those advanced by Blaise Pascal, Gabriel Marcel and Lev Shestov.

Herbert's poetry, as well as his essays, exhibits the problem of the so-called metaphysical anxiety, which the poet considers an important element of the human experience of existence as such. In order to self-soothe this anxiety the human being seeks answers to the metaphysical and epistemological questions, turning first of all to philosophy and science, but these fail to provide complete or satisfactory solutions.

In his literary pursuits, Herbert invariably continues intellectual reflection, which frequently takes the form of skeptical doubt. This systematic doubt, however, does not make him adopt the Cartesian attitude, tantamount to undermining all human judgment. On the contrary, Herbert never abandons his belief in the pursuit of truth and, in both his poems and essays, continuously explores vast areas of metaphysics and epistemology.

Keywords: Zbigniew Herbert's poetry and prose, philosophy of religion, metaphysical attitudes in literature.

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Dariusz ŚLAPEK – Spartacus, or An Icon of Freedom and Revolution: The Reception of the Character, as manifested from the Enlightenment up to the Marxist Visions

Starting with the period of the Renaissance, Spartacus, the leader of ancient Rome's largest slave revolt, evoked an interest of the historians of the Roman Republic, who usually only briefly mentioned the rebellion of 73-71 BC, an important event in the history of the Roman Empire of that period.

Similarly, there were only rare remarks about the rebellion in the 16th and 17th century legal discourse.

The age of Enlightenment was a turning point in the reception of Spartacus. In accordance with the spirit of the period and its principal values, the leader of the slave revolt was now perceived as an icon of civil rights in their Voltairian, anti-tyrannical sense. Interestingly, it was not historiography, but media such as the theatre and literature, particularly responsive to the spirit of the age, that largely contributed to this transformation. One might even say that in this sense they outstripped Enlightenment historiography, which, not without being ideologically motivated, advanced the literary model of the «good Spartacus» (which, however, resulted also from its selective access to the antique sources and from its focus on the works of Caius Salustius Crispus and Plutarch, who presented Spartacus in a favorable way).

It is precisely since the Enlightenment that disciplines other than historiography, as well as the media, have been shaping the myth of Spartacus as a liberator, associating his ideological background with that of the abolitionist movement or even perceiving him as a promoter of the liberation of nations.

In the second half of the 19th century, Spartacus symbolized for many the struggle for social liberation. In particular, he became a leading hero for the Marxist left wanting to see in him an ancient precursor of class struggle, this trend being strongest in the Soviet Russia of the period of civil war.

However, Marxist ideology did not succeed in appropriating for itself the freedom symbolism of Spartacus, which became an important theme also in evangelical Christianity, where the leader of the slave rebellion was frequently compared to Jesus Christ.

The culture of today also frequently draws on the lively metaphors inspired by the figure of Spartacus, which can be seen in the numerous opinion-forming screen versions of his story, usually based on the 19th century historical novels (probably the one by Howard Fast turned out the most inspirational) and rather leftist in spirit. Many of these movies include almost Gospel-like scenes informed by mysticism and they have had much greater an impact on mass imagination than the reliable research on the historical Spartacus. Sadly, the «actual face» of Spartacus, difficult to know and rather blurred against the background of the ancient sources, is interesting to a rather narrow milieu of researchers only.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajka*

Keywords: Spartacus, slavery, freedom, reception of antiquity, ancient Rome, age of Enlightenment, ideology, propaganda, Marxism, historiography

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#### Ireneusz ZIEMIŃSKI – The Dilemma of Death: A Discussion with Steven Luper

The article is a critical discussion of Steven Luper's book *Death*, which presents the basic dilemmas of the metaphysical, epistemological and ethical problem of death. Luper rightly shows the impossibility of an unequivocal definition of a person and its identity through time and the definition of death (together with establishing an unequivocal criterion of it). Despite these difficulties Luper argues that we are able to justify the rationality of suicide, killing, (at least voluntary) euthanasia and abortion. Luper's main argument is based on the proportion of the possible good a person would lose if he/she dies and evil they can avoid thanks to death. However, this argument is problematic; on one hand it leads to undesirable consequences (abortion is more harmful than killing an old man because it deprives of more good), on the other hand it assumes the possibility of foreseeing all the results of our actions and even the future states of the world (to acknowledge someone's death as evil or good we would have to know what the person's future life would have been like if they had not lost it).

Keywords: person, death, euthanasia, suicide, murder, abortion

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#### Fr. Jan Żukowski – Images of the Fatherland

The author of the essay attempts to sketch how the image of homeland has shaped in his mind for years. He notes that one's image of homeland does not remain unchanged throughout one's life. On the contrary, it evolves as years go by, together with the human being who grows into adulthood in a given social and historical situation. In the case of the author the crucial period in this respect was his childhood years, which fell on the time of the German occupation of Poland during the second world war. It was then that his parents inspired in him an interest in Polish literature, which evoked his patriotism. He then recalls the period of the communist coercion which he experienced during his youth and throughout a large period of his adult life, pointing to the absolutely indispensable role teachers played in those times. By «teachers» he means not only school teachers, but also those who were moral paragons, for

instance Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński: all those who were able to transmit the most important values to the young and who shaped their attitudes. It was the educators he met in the time of his youth that contributed greatly to his decision to serve his homeland and the Church in the priesthood.

In the second part of the essay the author refers to numerous parts of St. Faustina's *Diary*, in which visions concerning Poland and its history frequently appear. The most expressive are those parts of the *Diary* in which Mary, the Mother of God, defends our homeland from the anger of her Son. The essay exhibits a deep awareness of the necessity of zealous prayer for Poland. According to the author, this challenge is no less important now than it was in St. Faustina's times.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: homeland, patriotism, history of the Polish nation, St. Faustina's *Diary*

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Patrycja MIKULSKA – How Different Are We from Aristotle? Review of J. Jaśtał's, *Natura cnoty. Problematyka emocji w neoarystotelesowskiej etyce cnót* ["The Nature of Virtue: The Problem of Emotions in the Neoaristotelian Virtue Ethics"], Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2009

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Anna GŁĄB – Virtue Ethics in Practice. Review of *Współczesna etyka cnót: możliwości i ograniczenia* ["Contemporary Virtue Ethics"], ed. N. Szutta, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, Warszawa 2010

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Rafał WNUK – Wickedness or Compliance? Review of *Kościół i opozycja na Lubelszczyźnie w dokumentach SB: 1971-1983* ["The Church and the Anticommunist Resistance in the Region of Lubelszczyzna, as seen in the Files of the Security Service"], ed. M. Sobieraj, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Lublin 2009; *Aparat bezpieczeństwa wobec kurii biskupich w Polsce* ["The Activities of the Security Service Undertaken against the Diocesan Curias"], ed. A. Dziurok, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Warszawa 2009

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Feuilleton on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela

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