

TIME AND ETERNITY

ABSTRACTS

FROM THE EDITORS – Talking about Time and Eternity: A Reconnaissance (A.M.W.)

Time is a paradoxical reality, one that is both obvious and non-obvious. In talking about time we fall into the difficulty expressed already by St. Augustine: “But what in discourse do we mention more familiarly and knowingly than time? And, we understand, when we speak of it; we understand also, when we hear it spoken of by another. What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not.”¹

The difficulty in talking about time results from the fact that time is a relational reality. It has a beginning and an end. Variability is its mark, and it flows the way a river does. While it remains outside us, it nevertheless creates our inner identities. It is finite, but it opens us onto the infinite. Physics understands time as relative to space; while studying the phenomenon of time, religious thinkers discover that to God time must be different from what it is to human beings. “A thousand years in your eyes / are merely a day gone by, / Before a watch passes in the night, / you wash them away [...]” (Ps 90: 4-5). “[...] with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day” (2 P 3: 8).

One cannot speak about time using one language only, yet the various languages one uses for this purpose must not be mixed. Therefore, a precondition of the discourse on time is to determine with which language the phenomenon in question will be addressed. Subsequently, it must be explained why a single, chosen language does not suffice to deal with time. While one may well compare the languages that attempt to grasp it, one needs to remain cautious so that they are not translated into one another in too hasty a way.

The problem of time is of epistemological nature, but it remains an existential issue as well. Therefore it is the poets who are able to express, better than others, the most important things concerning time.

Time past and time future
Allow but a little consciousness.
To be conscious is not to be in time

¹ *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Book XI, trans. E. Bouverie Pusey, <http://sparks.eserver.org/books/augustineconfess.pdf>, p. 123.

But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
 The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
 The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
 Be remembered; involved with past and future.
 Only through time time is conquered.²

In time, the drama of our human condition unfolds: one becomes oneself through one's perceptions and actions, all of which take place in time. Time determines the contingency of human existence. As contingent beings, humans are born and they pass. Moreover, throughout their existence they experience the vulnerability of the human condition: while living in time they may accomplish truth, the good, beauty and holiness, but they may well fail to do so since the flow of their lives is determined by time. However, owing to their spiritual acts, human beings may transcend time. Accomplishing a value – notes Roman Ingarden – introduces the extra-temporal axiological dimension into the temporal existence of a human being.³ A similar insight was apparently shared by William Shakespeare, who considered the work of an artist as a struggle against time:

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
 Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?
 And fortify yourself in your decay
 With means more blessed than my barren rime?⁴

After the passing of Wojciech Chudy, one of the founders of *Ethos*, an exhibition of his drawings was held. He had made them occasionally, usually on his memorandum cards on which he listed his monthly duties and plans. The heading of each of those cards was the word "Memo" accompanied by the month and the year. Chudy used to call that practice memo-art: the art of keeping memoranda. The idea behind it was certainly practising the art of managing time, but also, in a way, that of «raising time to a higher power.» Wojciech Chudy's accomplishments during his relatively short life were admirable. His memo-art demonstrates the strict self-imposed discipline of a disabled person who succeeded in being an inspiring and seminal philosopher as well as a hard working and deeply respected professor and master. His memo-art shows him as a person of deep concentration and having a charming sense of humor. From behind the many cards with his drawings, a hidden smile shows.

² T.S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*, in: by the same autor, "Wybór poezji ["Selected Poems"]", ed. by K. Boczowski, W. Rulewicz, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź 1990, p. 218.

³ See: R. Ingarden, *Człowiek i czas* ["The Human Being and Time"], in: by the same autor, *Książeczka o człowieku* ["A Little Book About Man"], Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1987, p. 39-69.

⁴ W. Shakespeare, *Sonnet XVI*, in: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. by W.J. Craig, M.A., Henry Pordes, London 1984, p. 1201.

Memo-art may be seen as a «diary in a nutshell.» The philosopher's research plans, the books on which he was working, the articles, feuilletons and lectures he was in the process of preparing were usually listed vertically with a categorical annotation: "To be written" or "Write!" Right beside the memos, one can see the telephone numbers of persons and institutions to be contacted. Sometimes there appears a shopping list. In September 2000, for instance, the philosopher was pre-occupied with such trivia as: tea, mugs, beer, flowers and cards. In June 1994, the entry called "Balance" appears with an arrow pointing at the two summer months, July and August. Interestingly, he was planning to spend more in August than in July. One may expect he was planning a holiday trip. The drawing on this card shows a worried man. The characteristic beard suggests it was a self-portrait. An essential element of this new art is lettering. The Latin letters are majuscule styled. The first letter of the word "memo" (Polish *dyspo*) is always the Greek Delta. Thus one might say that the cards relate the philosopher's secret exchange with the Greek masters and founders of philosophy. Their presence, symbolized by the Delta, shows a possibility or even the necessity of intergenerational dialogue: of the dialogue between epochs. Chudy held that philosophizing at the close of the 20th century was still a continuation of ancient Greek philosophy.

There is also the symbolism of the Latin letters. In the memo card for January and February 2003, there appears the word FIAT which is underlined. It may have referred to the car make. But maybe it was the shortest possible prayer invoking the Annunciation and the Incarnation of the Son of God. The religious sense of the drawing on this memo card is suggested by the fact that the face of the lucid human shape it shows is obscured.

The experience of time leads one towards the encounter with eternity. Liturgy and prayer combine the temporal order with the eternal one, they invoke and unveil the ultimate horizon of time. The combination of work and prayer in the rule of St. Benedict was the foundation of Western civilization, which will abandon its vital point of reference whenever it sets time against eternity, whether advocating radical spiritualism or promoting hedonistic culture.

The contemplative attitude enables a momentary discovery of the eternal within the temporal. The root of the Latin word *contemplatio* comes from the Latin *templum* (temple), which is related to the word *tempus* (time). However, time and temple, which in Latin were considered as related, have become, in the modern mentality, separated or even set against each other. Secularization is tantamount to the closing of the history of mankind within the temporal, within the horizon of a particular age (*saeculum*), while the originality of Christianity as a historical event consists in its proclamation of the presence of God in the history of mankind: of the presence made concrete in the Incarnation. It will be proper at this point to quote some more verses from Eliot's *Four Quartets*, again ones vibrating with music:

But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint –
No occupation either, but something given

And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
 Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
 For most of us, there is only the unattended
 Moment, the moment in and out of time,
 The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
 The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
 Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
 That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
 While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
 Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
 Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
 The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.⁵

In the midst between God and man, between eternity and time, stands Christ. The grace of faith makes it possible for the human being to discover the meaning of time. "The Limitless takes limit," says a verse from a Polish Christmas carol. God becomes man so that man might participate in Divine eternity. The Gospel is good news for man, because it proclaims the presence of the eschatological within the temporal.

The current volume of *Ethos* offers a discourse on time and eternity referring to the philosophical, theological, cultural and scientific aspects of the issues in question. They were chosen as the leading theme of the volume, which, however, by no means exhausts the problems they inspire. Rather, it is intended as a tentative attempt to approach these most essential, in a way perennial, questions from the perspective of modern discourse.

The editors of *Ethos* wish to dedicate the articles collected in the present volume to the memory of the late Most Reverend Józef Życiński, Archbishop of Lublin and Grand Chancellor of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. In his extremely rich output, Abp. Józef Życiński explored both the mystery of the Universe and that of human culture within the paradigm of the evolution of the Universe and the cultural odyssey of the human being, in which the pursuit of meaning is accompanied by building a human community. Abp. Józef Życiński held that neither the Promethean myth nor the Dionysian one, both of which have reappeared in the humanities in modern times, explains the essence of the human condition, in which suffering and the need for salvation are inscribed. Thus Abp. Józef Życiński made continuous efforts to guide the modern Odysseus, disillusioned by the Promethean revolution and nevertheless tempted by the fragile Dionysian happiness, onto the path of faith which demonstrates that the history of humanity from Abraham to Jesus confirms God's infinite and eternal love for human beings.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

⁵ T.S. Eliot, *The Dry Salvages*, in: by the same author, *Wybór poezji*, p. 277f.

JOHN PAUL II – Time – History – Eternity

In Christianity time has a fundamental importance. Within the dimension of time the world was created; within it the history of salvation unfolds, finding its culmination in the “fullness of time” of the Incarnation, and its goal in the glorious return of the Son of God at the end of time. In Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, time becomes a dimension of God, who is himself eternal. With the coming of Christ there begin “the last days” (cf. Heb 1:2), the “last hour” (cf. 1 Jn 2:18), and the time of the Church, which will last until the Parousia.

From this relationship of God with time there arises the duty to sanctify time. This is done, for example, when individual times, days or weeks, are dedicated to God, as once happened in the religion of the Old Covenant, and as happens still, though in a new way, in Christianity. In the liturgy of the Easter Vigil the celebrant, as he blesses the candle which symbolizes the Risen Christ, proclaims: “Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him, and all the ages, to him be glory and power through every age for ever.” He says these words as he inscribes on the candle the numerals of the current year. The meaning of this rite is clear: it emphasizes the fact that Christ is the Lord of time; he is its beginning and its end; every year, every day and every moment are embraced by his Incarnation and Resurrection, and thus become part of the “fullness of time.” For this reason, the Church too lives and celebrates the liturgy in the span of a year. The solar year is thus permeated by the liturgical year, which in a certain way reproduces the whole mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, beginning from the First Sunday of Advent and ending on the Solemnity of Christ the King, Lord of the Universe and Lord of History. Every Sunday commemorates the day of the Lord’s Resurrection.

Against this background, we can understand the custom of Jubilees, which began in the Old Testament and continues in the history of the Church. Jesus of Nazareth, going back one day to the synagogue of his home town, stood up to read (cf. Lk 4:16-30). Taking the book of the Prophet Isaiah, he read this passage: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (61:1-2).

The Prophet was speaking of the Messiah. “Today,” Jesus added, “this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21), thus indicating that he himself was the Messiah foretold by the Prophet, and that the long-expected “time” was beginning in him. The day of salvation had come, the “fullness of time.” All Jubilees point to this time and refer to the Messianic mission of Christ, who came as the one anointed by the Holy Spirit, the one sent by the Father. It is he who proclaims the good news to the poor. It is he who brings liberty to those deprived of it, who frees the oppressed and gives back sight to the blind (cf. Mt 11:4-5; Lk 7:22). In this way he ushers in a year of the Lord’s favour, which he proclaims not only with his words but above all by his actions. The Jubilee, a year of the Lord’s favour, characterizes all the activity of Jesus; it is not merely the recurrence of an anniversary in time.

God's Revelation is therefore immersed in time and history. Jesus Christ took flesh in the "fullness of time" (Gal 4:4); and two thousand years later, I feel bound to restate forcefully that "in Christianity time has a fundamental importance" (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Section 10). It is within time that the whole work of creation and salvation comes to light; and it emerges clearly above all that, with the Incarnation of the Son of God, our life is even now a foretaste of the fulfilment of time which is to come (cf. Heb 1:2).

The truth about himself and his life which God has entrusted to humanity is immersed therefore in time and history; and it was declared once and for all in the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth. The Constitution *Dei Verbum* puts it eloquently: "After speaking in many places and varied ways through the prophets, God «last of all in these days has spoken to us by his Son» (Heb 1:1-2). For he sent his Son, the eternal Word who enlightens all people, so that he might dwell among them and tell them the innermost realities about God (cf. Jn 1:1-18). Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, sent as «a human being to human beings [...] speaks the words of God» (Jn 3:34), and completes the work of salvation which his Father gave him to do (cf. Jn 5:36; 17:4). To see Jesus is to see his Father (Jn 14:9). For this reason, Jesus perfected Revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making himself present and manifesting himself: through his words and deeds, his signs and wonders, but especially through his death and glorious Resurrection from the dead and finally his sending of the Spirit of truth" (Section 4).

For the People of God, therefore, history becomes a path to be followed to the end, so that by the unceasing action of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 16:13) the contents of revealed truth may find their full expression. This is the teaching of the Constitution *Dei Verbum* when it states that "as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly progresses towards the fullness of divine truth, until the words of God reach their complete fulfilment in her" (Section 8).

History therefore becomes the arena where we see what God does for humanity. God comes to us in the things we know best and can verify most easily, the things of our everyday life, apart from which we cannot understand ourselves.

In the Incarnation of the Son of God we see forged the enduring and definitive synthesis which the human mind of itself could not even have imagined: the Eternal enters time, the Whole lies hidden in the part, God takes on a human face. The truth communicated in Christ's Revelation is therefore no longer confined to a particular place or culture, but is offered to every man and woman who would welcome it as the word which is the absolutely valid source of meaning for human life. Now, in Christ, all have access to the Father, since by his Death and Resurrection Christ has bestowed the divine life which the first Adam had refused (cf. Rom 5:12-15). Through this Revelation, men and women are offered the ultimate truth about their own life and about the goal of history. As the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* puts it, "only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light" (Section 22). Seen in any other terms, the mystery of personal existence remains an insoluble riddle. Where might the human being seek the answer to dramatic questions such as pain, the suffering of the innocent and death, if not in the light streaming from the mystery of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection?

Extracts from the Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (Sections 10-11) of 10 November 1994 and encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Sections 11-12) of 14 September 1998.

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http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_10111994_tertio-millennio-adveniente_en.html
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_15101998_fides-et-ratio_en.html

Bogusław NADOLSKI, TChr – *Christus heri, hodie et in saecula saeculorum*: On the *Anamnesis* in the Paschal Mystery

Liturgy binds time and eternity together. In Jesus Christ, the Eternal God entered the human time and space. The thing of fundamental importance to understand time and eternity in the liturgy is *anamnesis*. It consists of such basic elements as recalling an event of the history of salvation (the remembering-rememorative dimension) and making present, through the Holy Spirit's might, that event in liturgical acts (the demonstrative dimension). That making present is at the same time the beginning of eschatic fullness, *id est* the reality of Heavenly Jerusalem (the prognostic, eschatological dimension). The making present in the Holy Spirit of the Paschal mystery requires the acting of the participants in the liturgy in their concrete existential situations (the obligatory dimension). A connection between time and eternity is shown by the author on the basis of the liturgy of the Easter Triduum, which, being a commemoration of Christ's death and resurrection and an announcement of His second coming, was laid as foundations of shaping the Church liturgical year.

Keywords: *anamnesis*, the Easter Triduum, *epiclesis*, eternity, *kairos*, liturgical year

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Fr. Henryk PAPROCKI – On the Presence of the Eschatological Dimension in Temporality: The Orthodox Point of View

For the Orthodox Church, eschatology is not a separate treatise, rather, it gives direction to the entire theology, as well as points to the sense of the existence of a human being, whose end purpose is resurrection. Thus one can learn more about eschatology from liturgy, in particular from the Lenten and Paschal litur-

gies. There are two dimensions to eschatology: the personal one, concerning the death (destiny) of an individual human being and the universal one, namely, the second coming of Christ (the destiny of the world and of humanity at large). Since the Orthodox Church has not defined eschatology dogmatically, a range of its diverse interpretations is possible, from the extremely pessimistic ones (e.g. St. Augustine's idea of *massa damnata*) to those announcing universal salvation and apocastasis (e.g. the thought of St. Gregory of Nyssa, or a certain current of Russian theology). The Christian East entrusts the fate of the dead to God's mercy and to human prayer (as recommended by St. Isaac the Syrian among others), thus stressing that the last word belongs to hope.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: the Orthodox Church, eschatology, death, the Last Judgment, the fate of a human being after death, apocastasis, liturgy

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Ewa ZAJĄC – Judaism: A Religion that Sanctifies Time

Judaism is a religion of history, a religion of time, and one which actually aims at the sanctification of time. Judaism constantly reminds human beings that while living in the natural world, subjected to space and time, as well as to nature's laws, they simultaneously live in the holy dimension and that one is incapable of abandoning this dimension much as one is incapable of overcoming nature's laws. Abraham Joshua Heschel used to say that one can break with the holy dimension neither through sin, nor through stupidity, dissent or ignorance. Life inevitably continues in the proximity of the sacred, endowing existence with the highest meaning. Thus the entire life of a Jew is placed within a net of rites and rituals whose purpose is to sanctify human existence. The only exception is the Sabbath, which is God's gift to the human beings. Unlike the spatial world, which provides merely the sense of temporality, the Sabbath offers a taste of eternity.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: time, sanctity, the Sabbath, the Jewish Calendar

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Janusz JUSIAK – Can We Have a Concept of Time?

In the article, the reasons which render impossible a virtually universal concept of time are analyzed. The most important among them is that any attempt at the conceptualization of time involves a direct or indirect recourse to metaphor, which inevitably enters the descriptions of the nature of time expressed in language. Residual forms of metaphor can be traced even in the conceptions of time developed in the natural sciences. The belief in the allegedly mysterious nature of time is also subject to criticism.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajka*

Keywords: time, concepts of time, metaphor, space, the reality of time, the riddle of time

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Hartmut ROSA – Social Acceleration: Ethical and Political Consequences of a Desynchronized High-Speed Society (trans. Dorota Chabrajka)

The author examines the processes of acceleration in politics, economics, culture, and society at large, focusing on why and how the high-speed contours of crucial forms of social activity now shape so many facets of human existence.

The author's claim is that we cannot adequately understand the nature and character of modernity or the logic of its structural and cultural development unless we take the temporal perspective into account. The temporal dimension runs across the «material» dimensions of society and cannot neatly be separated from them in phenomenological terms, thus one cannot speak of «social time» independent of social structure or culture. The dominant changes in the latter, i.e., individualization, differentiation, rationalization, and domestication, are closely linked to the cardinal change in temporal patterns (acceleration), which appears both as their cause and their effect. In fact, it is argued, many instances of the former are actually driven by the logic of acceleration. In the closing section of the paper, the author demonstrates that the drive towards social acceleration in modern societies might in fact be so overriding that we might actually find phenomena of de-differentiation and de-individualization in cases where differentiation and individualization have become hindrances to social acceleration.

Summarized by *Dorota Chabrajka*

Keywords: social acceleration, modernity, differentiation, rationalization, domestication, individualization, identity, social change, contraction of the present

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Małgorzata KOWALEWSKA – *Aevum quod est angeli duratio: Aevum*, or Between Eternity and Time

Exploring the essence of *aevum* and its relation to eternity and time is among the most interesting issues undertaken by philosophers already in the ancient times. Even an introductory analysis of the literature on the subject demonstrates that the object of research in question, as well as the philosophical approaches to it, has a liminal character. *Aevum* is seen as being between time and eternity, with its delineation rather unclear and its essence difficult to grasp. It appears to be the mode of existence of certain beings which remain between the visible and subject to movement and time on the one hand, and the transcendental in the highest degree on the other. Thus the beings in question exhibit an intermediary nature: in the chain of being, they are situated between what they transcend and what transcends them.

The development of the conceptions of *aevum* and beings to which *aevum* belongs was triggered by astronomical theories in which spiritual substances were considered as responsible for the movement of stars and cosmic spheres, as well as by metaphysical speculations on the degrees of being, which had their roots in the Neoplatonic ideas of emanation, and by Biblical teaching on angels and demons.

The current article is focused on the two former sources of the philosophical concept of *aevum*.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: *aevum*, time, eternity, modes of being, angels

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Krystyna MOISAN-JABŁOŃSKA – In the Spirit of *concordia discors* or: Some Remarks on the Invariable Variability of the Seasons, as seen from the Perspective of Modern Arts

The four seasons, which determine the cycle of time in the sublunary world, have become one of the most popular subjects of painting in modern times. Its numerous manifestations, rich in meaning, have resulted in the creation of a diverse iconography, in particular paintings and wall decorations, many of which exhibit an individual and complex symbolism.

The canon of the personifications of spring, summer, autumn and winter was being shaped for centuries and ultimately defined by the Italian erudite Cesare Ripa in 1593. While figures of the personifications described and pictured in his *Iconology* dominated 17th and 18th century art, the invention of artists who followed the spirit of the Baroque profusion resulted in constant metamorphoses of the symbols thus developed and of the meanings attributed to them.

In consequence, the seasons provided the dominant motifs with which castles and palaces were decorated, as was in the case of Giuseppe Arcimboldo's well known cycle, the artist's gift to Emperor Maximilian II of the Holy Roman Empire, on the threshold of the new year 1569, in which the effort to show the apotheosis of the ruler was combined with the idea of depicting the ideal union of the micro- and macrocosm.

In Polish art, a particular example of this trend can be seen in the plafonds in King John III Sobieski's Wilanów Palace, located in the area of Warsaw. The ceiling paintings in question are work of Jerzy Eleuter Szymonowicz-Siemiginowski, who studied in St. Luke Academy in Rome. The program of these paintings, which above all stress the political significance of the rule of the Polish king whose army defeated the Turks in the Battle of Vienna in 1683, has also got a strictly personal aspect: the depiction of *Autumn* in Queen Maria Kazimiera d'Arquien's anticamera includes hidden symbols referring to the passion between the royal couple (which, by the way, was a rare occurrence in the case of a royal marriage).

Mannerist and Baroque paintings frequently expressed a philosophical message about human life. The tenor of numerous works embraces two opposite poles: the Horatian idea of *carpe diem* and that of the everpresent *vanitas*.

The four seasons, while traditionally associated with lay themes, escape superficial definitions which radically divide the arts into the sacred and the profane. Already the Church Fathers, but also medieval theologians, developed a complex symbolic interpretation of the seasons. In the modern period, their symbolism was a particular inspiration for Nicolas Poussin, who between 1660 and 1664 created a set of paintings entitled *The Four Seasons*. They depicted various landscapes which were the setting of particular events from the Old Testament (*Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden*, *Ruth Gleaning Corn in the Fields of Boaz*; *Israelite Spies Returning from the Promised Land of Canaan*, and *The Flood*). The landscapes thus presented exhibit multilayered meanings, allowing various and not infrequently contradictory interpretations.

In Poland, the seasons were painted by Walenty Żebrowski, between 1762 and 1764, on the vault of the Bernardine Fathers' Church in Ostrołęka. The

personifications of the particular seasons were provided with subtitles including extracts from the Latin Bible praising the Divine Providence. The Creator is thus described as the One who “warmed up the spring,” “prepared food in summer,” “harvested in the autumn” and “commanded winter.”

The present article can by no means exhaust all the aspects of the modern symbolism of the seasons. The examples which have been discussed can merely indicate the extremely rich «poliphony» of meanings attributed in the past centuries to *Ver*, *Aestas*, *Autumnus* and *Hiems*.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: the seasons, allegories, iconography, modern art, time, *vanitas*, *carpe diem*, Divine Providence

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Marcin T. ZDRENKA – On Certain Benefits from the Boringness of Ethics

The focus of the article is the question of boredom in the context of ethics. Starting with Josef Brodsky’s classical essay on the praise of boredom, considered as a positive attitude of human life, and having adopted this affirmative perspective, the author develops some motifs already present within moral reflection. Thus the article offers a certain answer to Kierkegaard’s provocative claim that “the ethical is as boring in life as it is in learning.”⁶ The first motif the author elaborates concerns the problem of the boringness of ethics in the perspectives of its history and of being melancholically overwhelmed with the scope of tradition (which results in melancholy). The problem in question is studied in keeping with the contrast between the melancholy of history and the ecstasis of postmodernity drawn by Agata Bielik-Robson. The second motif on which the author focuses is the role of boredom in understanding the origin of the category of melancholy as applied to the description of the human condition in contrast to the modern, reductive types of narration about the human being, for instance medically oriented psychoanalysis. The third motif developed in the article concerns the boringness of the normative detail and the contrasting trend to make general claims in ethics, as well as the difficulties the latter tendency entails. Then come the fundamental issues: firstly, the relation between conformity to ethics and unhurriedness, and, secondly, the reversal of the value traditionally attached to the categories of labour and idleness, which marks a difference between contemporaneity and antiquity. The Greek concept

⁶ S. K i e r k e g a a r d, *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*, trans. A. Hannay, Penguin Classics, London 1992, p. 263.

of *scholē* and the weak and yet graspable link between the Greek term *ethos* and the Latin *desidiabulum* make it possible to restore the perspective in which unhurriedness, idleness and in a sense also boredom become the starting point of all reflectiveness, including normative reflection.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: ethics, melancholy, depression, idleness, *scholē*

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Zofia ZARĘBIANKA – The Emblems of Infinity in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz: A Reconnaissance

The first part of the paper offers an insight into the meanings attributed to infinity in the poems by Czesław Miłosz, and into the conceptual and figurative equivalents of infinity in his poetic output. It appears that, to Miłosz, infinity marks the creative act as such, as well as it marks poetry or, broadly speaking, art, which he sees as a reality in a way immortalizing the perishable earthly existence and attributing eternal permanence to it.

The second part of the paper is focused on an interesting mechanism one can observe in the functioning of the concept of infinity in the poetry of this Polish winner of the Noble Prize in literature: in his poems, the abstract notion of infinity finds a correspondence in particular images, evoked by the memories of landscapes, which (in particular in the poems from his later output) become an emblem of infinity conceived of as eternity. Interestingly, the temporal understanding of infinity (provided eternity can be considered a temporal category) involves spatial images present in the lyrical subject's reminiscences of the landscapes of his childhood. Thus the reader encounters a peculiar transposition of the spatial into the temporal and of the temporal into the spatial. The phenomenon in question appears significant and needs to be taken into account in a description of the determinants of Miłosz's religious imagery, as well as in a reconstruction of its deep and hidden structure.

Both conceptions of infinity (infinity as art and infinity as eternity) have their justification and common denominator in Miłosz's idea of philosophy and in his understanding of poetry.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: literary studies, the history of 20th century Polish literature, Czesław Miłosz, poetry, interpretation

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Andrzej ŁUKASIK – Time and Eternity, as seen by the Philosophy of Nature

The objective of the article is an analysis of the main approaches to the relationship between time and eternity developed within the philosophy of nature. I distinguish and consider theistic, Heraclitean (processualist), Parmenidean (permanentist), Democritic (substantialist) and Pythagorean-Platonic (mathematical) models. Then I discuss the chosen models in the light of the cosmology of the Big Bang.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajka*

Keywords: time, eternity, philosophy of nature, Big Bang

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Fr. Paweł TAMBOR – Eternity and the Universe

In the article the problem of a possible eternal Universe is presented. The conceptual framework for the discussion consists of three areas: the history of astronomy and cosmology, modern cosmology and the philosophy of science (cosmology). The historical part is to show that the problem of the Universe either having a beginning or existing forever was always one of the most basic questions in cosmology. Nowadays, there are different candidate theoretical proposals for both scenarios.

In the paper, the basic conceptual framework of General Relativity was presented so as to express the total age of the Universe in terms of Hubble's function and the deceleration parameter.

The main goal of the article is to argue that the problem of the age of the Universe (its finite or infinite evolution) has not been sufficiently established within science until the times of Einstein, Friedman and Hubble. It is also very interesting to elaborate on how cosmology and philosophy coexist with each other. The notions of time, cosmic evolution, and a possible absolute beginning of the Universe were discussed with respect to the problem of the conceptual demarcation of science from philosophy.

Keywords: cosmology, age of the Universe, philosophy of cosmology, time

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Michał TEMPCZYK – Time, as seen in Modern Physics

The article includes a discussion of the most important qualities of time investigated by physics, which considers time a fundamental quality of matter. In the beginning, the focus is the explanation of time in the classical theories, namely, mechanics and thermodynamics. In classical mechanics, time is an absolute quantity, independent of matter or the processes obtaining in it. In this theory, time and space precede physical objects; a completely empty space is conceivable, one in which time flows although there is nothing that would be subject to change. In classical mechanics time is also considered as homogenous, which means that the basic physical processes do not change with its flow. For instance, planets move around the Sun as they did millions years ago, as the laws governing their movement are invariable. Similarly, atoms always absorb and emit radiation in the same way. Another important feature of the processes of mechanics is their reversibility in time. While thermodynamics investigates irreversible processes, physicists have proved that this irreversibility is a result of the complexity of the processes in question and of our insufficient knowledge of them. In modern physics, a revolutionary change in the understanding of time was brought about by the theory of relativity. Special relativity showed that the speed of the flow of time depends on the observer and linked time to space, introducing the concept of spacetime. General relativity holds that the flow of time is determined by the amount of matter present. In the presence of a gravitational field physical processes are slower than in empty space. Quantum physics confirms special relativity. Yet it introduces a significant change in the conception of time, since it shows that not all fundamental processes are reversible in time. In the world of elementary particles, irreversible K Meson decay has been observed. Physicists are unable to explain the nature of its irreversibility.

Translated by *Dorota Chabrajska*

Keywords: time, modern physics, flow of time, classical mechanics, special relativity, general relativity, quantum physics

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Rocco BUTTIGLIONE – “He wrote in the hearts of so many...” (trans. P. Mikulska)

In the essay, the author discusses the meaning of the Italian term “ambiente” and its Polish equivalent “środowisko” (social environment) understood as a circle of friends united by the common relationship to the centre of the circle – in this case Jesus Christ; ideally, its boundaries are those of the Church. The author’s reflections are illustrated by the reminiscences of the formative events of his youth, such as his participation in the Communion and Liberation movement, in particular his encounter with Fr. Francesco Ricci, of his studies of Karol Wojtyła’s philosophy and cooperation with Pope John Paul II. In this context, the author also addresses the theological meaning of the concept of event, the concept of experience, the role of saints in history, and different interpretations of liberation theology.

Summarized by *Patrycja Mikulska*

Keywords: Fr. Francesco Ricci, John Paul II, Communion and Liberation, experience, saints, liberation theology

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Zenon ROSKAL – Metareflections on the Flow of Time

Review of Jerzy Gołosz’s, *Uptyw czasu i ontologia* [“The Flow of Time and Ontology”], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2011.

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Dariusz ŁUKASIEWICZ – The Controversy over the Existence of God

Review of Jacek Wojtysiak’s *Spór o istnienie Boga. Analityczno-intuicyjny argument na rzecz teizmu* [“The Controversy over the Existence of God: Analytic-Intuitive Argument for Theism”], W Drodze–Kolegium Filozoficzno-Teologiczne OO. Dominikanów, Poznań 2012.

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Patrycja MIKULSKA – The Charm of the Anteroom

Review of P. Domeracki, M. Jaranowski and M.T. Zdrenka's *Sześć cnót mniejszych* ["The Six Lesser Virtues"], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2012.

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Dorota CHABRAJSKA – Not all art will save the world... Noël Carroll in Defence of Mass Art

Review of Noël Carrolls's *Filozofia sztuki masowej* [Polish edition of Noël Carrolls's *A Philosophy of Mass Art*, Oxford University Press, New York 1998], trans. Mirosław Przyłipiak, słowo/obraz terytoria, Gdańsk 2011.

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Books recommended by *Ethos*

Urszula M. Mazurczak, *Cieleśność człowieka w średniowiecznym malarstwie Italii* ["Human Bodiliness in Medieval Italian Painting"], vol. 1, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2012.

Roger Scruton, *Understanding Music: Philosophy and Interpretation*, Continuum; London–New York 2009.

Ian Stewart, *Dlaczego prawda jest piękna. O symetrii w matematyce i fizyce* [Polish edition of Ian Stewart's *Why Beauty Is Truth: The History of Symmetry*, Basic Books, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2007], trans. T. Krzysztoń, Prószyński i S-ka, Warszawa 2012.

Jerzy W. Gałkowski, *Człowiek – praca – wartości* ["The Human Being – Labour – Values"], Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2012.

Patrycja BURBA – "Let Us Hope!"

Report on a conference held on the 90th anniversary of the death of Fr. Idzi Radziszewski, the Founder of the Catholic University of Lublin, KUL, Lublin, 23 February 2012.

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Łukasz CIĘGOTURA – Methodologist and Humanist

Report on a conference “Fr. Prof. Stanisław Kamiński (1921-1986): Person –
Times – Ideas,” KUL, Lublin, 19 December 2011.

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Magdalena KAPELA – On the Dilemmas of the University

Report on a conference “What about the University in These Tawdry Times?
On the Identity of the University in the Situation of Civilizational Change,”
Pedagogical University of Cracow, 23-24 Feb. 2012)

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Patrycja MIKULSKA – The End Is in Sight...

Feuilleton on the phenomenon of fascination with the end of the world.

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