

INTRODUCTION: THEOLOGY AS A CRITIQUE

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Abstract: This is an introduction to the issue of “Theoretical Practice” (“Praktyka Teoretyczna”), entitled “Economic Theologies” (no. 3, 2015), edited by Mikołaj Ratajczak and Rafał Zawisza. It contains contextual explanation of the theoretical field projected by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, namely a critique of the economic theology elaborated on the basis of early Christian theological debates concerning the concept of divine “oikonomia”. The introduction also includes short summaries of the articles, translations and reviews collected in the issue.

Keywords: Giorgio Agamben, economic theology, *oikonomia*, theology, secularization, Karl Marx, Marxism, biopolitics

In his book published in 2007, Merio Scattola deemed the 20th century to embody the “truth” of the whole field of political theology (Scattola 2007). If we accept this thesis, then it may come as less of a surprise that at the beginning of the 21st century it was no other discourse than, precisely, political theology that was used by many intellectuals on the left to revive the philosophical glossary of political theory – from the postsecularism of late deconstruction and some strains of the Lacanian left, through a sudden rise of interest in Paul’s messianic letters at the threshold of the centuries, through the coining of the uncanny notion of “psychotheology”, and finally to a direct use of the actual term “political theology” in an endeavour to project a new ethics and politics (see e.g. Reinhard, Santner and Žižek 2013). The status of Giorgio Agamben’s work within this renaissance of political theology is a complicated issue. Perceived initially as one of the figures in a “theological turn in contemporary continental thought” (Kaufman 2008, 37), since the publication of the last volumes of his *Homo sacer* series Agamben can no longer be seen as someone who reaches out to the fields of theology or religion to try to find some sort of existential, political or even plain intellectual salvation. Neither can his work be used as a “theory” of theological or political problems. The initial idea of this issue of *Praktyka Teoretyczna* came to us in the form of a simple, but in our view profound hypothesis: that Agamben’s work shows how to use theology not as a theory, but as a critique.

It shouldn’t therefore be considered a demotion if we have tried to summarize the whole philosophy of Giorgio Agamben in one gesture, namely by evoking the magnificent moment in Hans Christian Andersen’s tale *The Emperor’s New Clothes* when a child cries out: “But he isn’t wearing anything at all!” Such a move is perfectly in tune with an apologia for the imaginative and linguistic potentialities of infancy (Agamben 1993), as well as with his reflections on nudity (2010) and even poverty (2006; 2013). Agamben preserved this widely known, sometimes obtrusive and importunate way of posing questions which characterizes children, with their relentless obstinacy that leads to the question: “But why?” After all, would any critique be possible if it weren’t for this infantile speech? And yet, although one may think this a naïve stance and believe in the *potenza* of genealogical, archaeological and critical investigations, the remnants of his philosophical excavations are doubtlessly impressive.

Although the *Homo sacer* series is still not complete – we lack volume II.4, and the latest publication of *Stasis* (Agamben 2015b) has shown that some volumes may appear in

more than one book (*Stasis* bears the same number as *The Kingdom and the Glory*, namely II.2) – the stakes of Agamben’s project are already clearly visible. A genealogical critique should assume the form of a *destituent power* that liberates the capacity of human beings to contemplate their own potentiality to act and to live (Agamben 2014, 351). However vague and impractical this ideal may seem, it constitutes a sort of regulatory idea that guides Agamben’s genealogical investigation into theological scriptures and gives it not only a political, but also a metaphysical significance. The publication of *The Kingdom and the Glory* in 2007, a seminal moment in the development of Agamben’s work, reinforced a direction marked already by a study from 2000 on Paulinian messianism, but traceable to his early writing on language and death (Agamben 2006). It became clear that Agamben intends to confront himself with the theological legacy of the West in order to continue Martin Heidegger’s attempt to rethink “ontotheology”, a reflection about the being of God, humans, and the world – which can be traced back to ancient Greece through Christian medieval times (and via the Arabic reception¹).

The Kingdom and the Glory provoked divergent reactions. We will mention some of them in order to point out how deep confusion Agamben caused by seriously stepping onto the ground reserved up to now for theologians alone – not because of any interdict, but because of the ignorance of other scholars. While Paul Colilli stated that the Italian philosopher “theorizes [...] in a para-theological manner” (Colilli 2008, 470), some reviewers, like Vincent Lloyd, even dared to write about “the redemptive power of the theological” (Lloyd 2013, 61). Does this suggest that Giorgio Agamben has recently become a Church Father²? Or is it rather a parodist performance? According to Michael Fagenblat, the whole

1 Which is the least elaborated part in the whole genealogy, despite Agamben’s rare attempts to speculate with reference to the Arabic sources (for a notable exception, see his introduction to Emanuele Coccia’s book *La trasparenza delle immagini*, Agamben 2005). Their inclusion would not only broaden philosophical self-understanding, but also destabilise the conceptualisation of the borders defining “the West”. Quoting Marlène Zarader, one could say that Western philosophy persistently keeps *la dette impensée* (Zarader 1990). See also Roberto Esposito’s chapter on Averroes in his *Due* (Esposito 2013, 157–165) and the bibliographical references therein, as well as Ewa Łukaszyk’s commentary about a reciprocal, currently emerging tendency seen in, on the one hand, the attempts of some European humanists, among them Giorgio Agamben, to enter into deep intellectual dialogue with Arabic-Muslim traditions, and on the other hand a reappearance of the figure of the Muslim intellectual within the European horizon (Łukaszyk 2015).

2 Paul Colilli places Agamben in a vaster post-secular paradigm, for which Colilli invented the term “late patrology”, and which he describes as follows: “Patristic literature functions as witness to the teachings of the Church, while late patrology refers to those thinkers who, as a result of the annihilation of ideologies, find it necessary to not only name God, but to speak around God’s name, albeit with a sense of ‘lateness.’ In other words, late patrology refers to contemporary and near-contemporary thinkers who are ‘late’ in their reading and

Agambenian project focusing on theology is nothing but a “nihilistic eschatology” (Fagenblat 2014, 274). He seems to refuse the Italian philosopher the right to study theology legitimately. A similar accusation from an apologetic angle was formulated by Daniel M. Bell Jr., who blamed not only Agamben’s, but also other immanent visions of community, as insufficiently democratic, because they lacked the horizon that promises a unity of the redeemed (Bell Jr. 2010).

However, those critiques do not touch the place which Agamben occupies.

The place of theology as a critique is beyond the civil wars between clericalism and anticlericalism, between liberal and traditionalist theologies, between the sacred and the profane. Seen from his perspective,

[...] theology is stripped of spiritual faith and transformed into a “dispositivo” that mediates between our bodies and the sum of human material practices. [...] Agamben is not intrigued by the presence or absence of God; rather, what interests him are the discursive structures that theologians have formulated in order to speak about God (Colilli 2008, 470).

There is no agreement among scholars as to how and where Agamben posits himself while he quotes and comments on the theological texts. On the one hand, the religious edifice, legitimised thanks to theological discourse, is perceived as being in a state of collapse: “Agamben sifts through the textual ruins of theology with the view of re-assembling them in order to construct a new understanding of the present” (Colilli 2008, 467). On the other hand, theology – encapsulated in its cocoon of self-referentiality – appears to be merely at risk of ruination. As Colby Dickinson puts it,

[...] another risk is constantly being run: that Agamben’s philosophy suggestively “undoes” theology, at least as we historically have known it, or that it perhaps threatens to remove its content while preserving its empty shell alone (Dickinson 2011, 8).

We need not decide between those two versions – fragile and stable discourse – because both exist simultaneously. What is at stake in Agamben’s philosophy is the ability to explain how something initially contingent can gain a validity that turns it into fate: in other words,

uses the material covered in the patrological tradition”. And then: “[...] late patrology is the mutilated memory of patrology that haunts the traumatized present” (Colilli 2013, 5, 9).

how the arbitrary acquires and legitimizes its normative status³. Agamben's aim – and his constantly repeated first step which he nonetheless declares indispensable – is to describe a mechanism with the help of which every symbolic order (and theology seems to be only one of its cantilevers) hides its own foundations. Indeed the very problem of “foundation” (even if understood in a negative manner, like the metaphysical Voice or bare life, as the effects of specific dispositives rather than “positive” entities) seems to constitute the main difference between Agamben's and Foucault's notions of genealogical investigations. But it is precisely for this reason that Agamben claims that both theology and religion must not only be studied, but first of all profanated. Colby Dickinson acknowledges the necessity of this profanation – which, he agrees, could be called “blasphemous” from the traditionalist point of view – since “religion does express a profound truth about our reality, but it also serves to mask this truth at the same time” (Dickinson 2011, 22). If religion doesn't explore a possibility of blasphemy, it becomes a prison. Agamben's work, analysing Judeo-Christian tradition in a way practised earlier by Gershom Scholem and Jacob Taubes, seeks this blasphemous – parodic – tendency at the very core of religious practice, namely in mysteries, rituals, and liturgical performance. The proper goal is not a parodied liturgy (transgression⁴), but the revelation of the parodic nature of liturgy as such (profanation). If liturgy is parodic, then only parody can preserve what so-called “tradition”⁵ cannot (Dickinson 2011, 30), because tradition repeats itself without a sense of humour; it considers itself to be serious, but in reality isn't serious enough, being too serious as it pretends to be unsmiling⁶. At this point profanations and study seem to enter a zone of indistinctness, but this may be precisely what Agamben is aiming for – to practise only the form of theological studies that reveal the parodic nature of theological reality, thus profanating it.

3 Dickinson also believes that the social structures rest on a duplex construction principle: “the significations themselves may be arbitrary or empty, but they do indeed reflect the coordinates of established power relations” (Dickinson 2011, 16).

4 In this way Agamben tries to distance himself from Georges Bataille. In *L'uso dei corpi* the name of Bataille is mentioned only once, in a commentary placed in brackets in the original, and, significantly, as a negative point of reference: “To supersede this bare life separated from its form, from its abjection, by the superior principle – the sovereignty or the sacred – is a limit of Bataille's thought which renders it unusable for us” (Agamben 2014, 267). This is nothing other than a later critique of Bataille's thought and his use of negativity that we initially find elaborated in the first volume of *Homo sacer*.

5 The very notion of tradition was elaborated in the book published in 2013, *Pilato e Gesù* (Agamben 2015a).

6 Translated into the political realm, this hard-hitting message of Agamben would sound like this: why should we treat any practice imposed on us so seriously, if it was constructed as something banal and silly? Labour dressed as ultimate vocation looks like jobbery.

But, all in all, what does Agamben intend to achieve by using theology? What is at stake in his use of theology as a critique? – if it is neither an attempt to politicise religion, nor a confession of faith, nor an intention to reinforce any church, nor to demolish it. Among the multiplicity of possible resonances, we would like to mention three that are related to the texts collected in this issue of *Praktyka Teoretyczna*. *Primo*, analysis of the theological language and the construction of Trinitarian theology in particular leads to an understanding of women and men as speaking beings and constitutes a contribution to a critical political anthropology. *Secundo*, Agamben's engagement with theology implies the creation of a new perspective on secularization and a critique of overestimation of the concept of political theology. *Tertio*, the elaboration of the discourse on *oikonomia* enables the Italian philosopher to explain and critique contemporary power relations, including those between economy and politics.

Agamben's philosophical meditations on speaking operate on the very edge of language, where we find the unspeakable. That approach connects him to theology. In a manner elaborated also by, among others, Sloterdijk and Virno we can say that, for Agamben, Christian theologians, through theopoetic reflection on the incarnated Word, struggled with the rudiments of human existence and how it is conditioned by language. Agamben formulates the problem as follows:

The dimension of meaning of the word “being,” whose eternal quest and eternal loss (*aei zetoumenon kai aei aporoumenon*, *Metaphysics* 1028b, 3) constitute the history of metaphysics, coincides with the taking place of language; metaphysics is that experience of language that, in every speech act, grasps the disclosure of that dimension, and in all speech, experiences above all the “marvel” that language exists (Agamben 2006, 25).

But this dimension is exactly the one that language itself is unable to grasp and to name properly. Hence the intimate relation between theology and metaphysics, and – beyond that – political theology that strives to name the unsayable source and origin of power held by some over others. But this practice, truly ascetic in its form, of dwelling on the edge of the sayable – a proper dwelling place for an animal that has language, as Agamben seems to tell us – inspires the search for a language that coincides with “the essence of what makes us human” and with “an attempt to pronounce the unpronounceable name of God” (Dickinson 2011, 10). It means that theology, philosophy and linguistics can find their common root in

anthropology⁷, which itself is “grounded” in uprootedness “guaranteed” by the fact that we, as humans, are derived from and depend on the event of language (Virno 2015). Unlike mystics, who entered into the *via negativa* and dissolved in the face of the unpronounceable, Giorgio Agamben remains faithful to worldly matters and breaks a pious silence that can only deepen mystification. The sublime aura of mystery encourages speaking beings to surrender to the negative power of language, law and death; however, the same discovery – that the king is nude, that the throne is empty – could empower her or him to trust in the creative potentialities of language to contradict despair.

When it comes to the debate about secularization, *The Kingdom and the Glory* introduces a new phase, or level, of discussion. Once again, Agamben tries to avoid a civil war of twin conceptions: while Carl Schmitt pushed forward a thesis that modern political vocabulary derives from theology, Erik Peterson, on the contrary, insisted that theological concepts of Christendom were drawn out of and built upon the political terms which remained in daily use in antiquity. Agamben assesses this quarrel as futile because of its irresolvable character, and for that reason he decided to develop a framework that helps to neutralize the above-mentioned contradictory statements. Moreover, by neutralizing them, Agamben detects the point that is missed in the debate between Schmitt and Peterson, namely the economic paradigm contained in the theological discourses on the inner life of God in Trinity, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and – of the greatest importance here – the reconciliation of God’s transcendence (otherworldliness, timelessness, unchangeable essence, etc.) with his immanent manifestations (incarnation and actions of the Son as the Highest Priest and influences of the Holy Spirit as the prerequisites that could legitimize the very existence of the Church and its pretensions to political power and properties).

Agamben’s proposal has already ignited some concrete discussions⁸. But there has also been a general critique. An example of such criticism, based on the secularization debate, was written by Alberto Toscano (Toscano 2011; republished in this issue in Polish translation), who accused Agamben of historical substantialism (caused by negligence in regard to Hans Blumenberg’s refutation of Schmitt’s political theology) and insufficient

7 Lorenzo Chiesa and Frank Ruda therefore mislead the reader when they speak about the “primacy of theology” in Agamben (Chiesa and Ruda 2011, 170–171).

8 See Karsenti 2009, Bielik-Robson 2010, Colilli 2013, Adler 2014, Dickinson and Kotsko 2015. As for the Petersonian field, we observe a favourable reception (McLoughlin 2015) as well as a fierce criticism (Schmidt 2014).

analysis of contemporary capitalism. Toscano dismissed Agamben as a successor of Michel Foucault and aimed to discredit his adherence to Marxism. Toscano warned that Agamben stands too close to Schmitt through underlining the dependence of modernity and secular politics on theology. Scholars diverge on that matter. For instance, Paul Colilli argues that

Agamben is interested in the paradigmatic value that these ancient theological writings might have, rather than their possibility as an ethical and moral source or matrix which continuous⁹ to animate the contemporary idea of politics (Colilli 2008, 474).

However, other commentators state that according to Agamben “modernity is not, therefore, some epoch other than the Middle Ages, but its continuation, and with the rise of the administrative state, its completion” (McAlear 2014, 109)¹⁰. The stake in these issues is not insignificant; it concerns a question of historical dimension, namely: “Whose guilt? Whose responsibility?” Since Agamben detected the managerial paradigm of contemporary economy and bureaucracy in the theological discussions of Trinity and angels dating from the second century onwards, it implies important methodological questions about the nature of epochal change, ways of historical inheritance and scope of causality. Even if those questions do not seem crucial at first glance, they could determine possible lines of interpreting and understanding economic theology in terms of what or whom Giorgio Agamben criticizes, what form-of-life he opts for, and whether that would be a reinvention inspired by past accomplishments or something unprecedented.

But there is, in addition, a more political question concerning Agamben’s genealogy of the economic paradigm in theology, one that also concerns Toscano’s relegation of Agamben from a Marxist perspective: does economic theology constitute a field of research that can be of any significance for a critique of political economy? There’s probably no simple answer to this question, which might even be deemed a wrong question in itself (why should one field of inquiry be important only from the standpoint of another, substantially different field?). And yet, more and more is being written on Agamben’s input into the debates on contemporary capitalism and neoliberalism, with some new contributions included in this issue. If indeed theology can be used as a critique, we should test the limits of its critical

⁹ It should rather be “continues”.

¹⁰ The second opinion could be extracted from a statement with which Agamben ends *Il regno e la gloria*: “Modernity, removing God from the world, has not only failed to leave theology behind, but in some ways has done nothing other than to lead the project of the providential *oikonomia* to completion” (Agamben 2011, 287).

application with no hesitation and no false humility, since there can never be enough grounds for a ruthless criticism of everything that exists.

The issue opens with Polish translations of texts that mark the first wave of reactions to Agamben's elaboration of the economic-theological paradigm. We gather a polemical essay by Alberto Toscano together with two reviews written by Antonio Negri in immediate response to the publication of *Il regno e la gloria* (2007) and *Opus Dei* (2012). Sometimes this "family quarrel" proceeds in the atmosphere of mutual recognition, e.g. when Negri seeks to persuade Agamben to intensify his relations with Spinozism and to establish leftist political theology on that basis. However, what Negri's critique in general and Toscano's text in particular point to is a gesture of exclusion: according to them, Agamben had betrayed Marx and Foucault, remaining tethered to Schmittian and Heideggerian legacies that he intended to overcome.

Three articles in the present issue go against this negative diagnosis. German Eduardo Primera and Mikołaj Ratajczak insist that Giorgio Agamben's genealogical study of divine *oikonomia* cannot be limited – when it comes to its possible scope of influence and application – to the role of explanation of past theological debates. Both authors defend the actuality of the critique of economic theology which – under the patient gaze of the Italian philosopher – turns into an adequate, paradigmatic description of the reigning mechanisms that maintain the contemporary capitalist regime, which seems to tighten around life on Earth like a noose. Primera rebuts Toscano's critique of Agamben's proclaimed inability to explain the brand new financial mechanisms of capitalism in its current, neoliberal guise. The aim of Mikołaj Ratajczak is a biopolitical reading of the paradigm of economic theology, directly combining its genealogies with the Marxian notion of subsumption of life under capital, with particular emphasis placed on the human practice: as liturgy distinguishes some "actions" and "works" (*opera*) as valuable (productive) and others as abortive, the same happens with the division between productive and unproductive labour, which is imposed from the outside onto the plurality of social relations according to the principle *divide et impera*.

Rafał Zawisza asks what meaning could be ascribed to Agamben's deepening involvement with the theological heritage – in the context of the secularization theorem. He

responds to Toscano's accusations that Agamben's approach could be equated with historical substantialism and that theology dominates critical impulses in his late writings. On the contrary, *Il regno e la gloria* is not a methodological regress, but inaugurates a new phase of the discussion on the meaning of secularization. Moreover, Zawisza underlines that in Agamben's thought religion and theology do not play the role of a hidden matrix of every discourse – these spheres are interpreted as merely providing some of the many possible responses to the problems that have arisen on a deeper level, that of anthropogenesis.

The consequences of Agamben's decision to analyze Christian theologians and, in so doing, to complete Michel Foucault's genealogical research, are presented by Colby Dickinson who shows that the critique of Western governmentality could be and should be intertwined with Agamben's scrupulous analysis. It illuminates the extent to which such concepts as divine providence, divine governance and the very justification of the existence of hierarchy have shaped Western political imaginaries by acting as a legitimizing branch of the political theologies, serving both churches and states by helping them to maintain their domination over people. Hence it functioned as a duplex paradigm, to criticize theology and its legacy, and to criticize a seemingly secular politics that in fact still depends on theological schemas. Dickinson also prepares the ground for a historiographical discussion of the place of grassroots religious movements, and particularly the crucial question of whether they were "heretical" outsiders or justified internal opponents of orthodoxies, defeated and pacified by the ruling classes. Special significance in that regard is found in the Franciscan tradition, which Agamben confronted in his *Altissima povertà. Regola e forma di vita nel monachesimo* (2011).

Mateusz Burzyk presents his hesitation over the potential of Agambenian philosophy to overcome the obstacles which it nevertheless brilliantly diagnoses. For that purpose, Burzyk engages the theoretical tools elaborated by a philosopher whose work has been developed in dialogical closeness to Agamben, namely Roberto Esposito. According to Burzyk, the more sophisticated Agamben's research becomes, the more difficult it is to distill from it a critical, emancipatory direction. For that reason, the most fruitful strategy consists of a double, simultaneous reading of both Italian thinkers. Except for highlighting points of cohesion, this text unveils the tensions within so-called "Italian theory".

Mateusz Piotrowski, in his (to some extent) Hegelian reading of the Marxian critique of political economy, argues that by using a theoretical framework of theology – the one which accentuates its Wholeness as well as its paradoxically anarchic structure and internal

divisions – critical thought gains indispensable tools for analysing the nature of contemporary capitalism. It remains polemical towards purely immanentist critiques, like that of Negri. Piotrowski reads theological metaphors used by Karl Marx in order to find their economic counterparts and explain the mysterious (miraculous, phantasmic) status of commodity fetishism in materialist terms. In effect, we obtain an interpretive suggestion of how materialism and theology could be elaborated together to deconstruct and deactivate the bipolar machine of divine *oikonomia*.

A review by Michał Jędrzejek offers Polish readers a brief summary of Franz Overbeck's legacy, part of which has just been translated and edited by Tadeusz Zatorski. Overbeck as an agnostic theologian designed a highly innovative critique of theology with help from its own methods. Traces of the Overbeckian ethos and many of the topics he was interested in are easily detectable in Giorgio Agamben's writings. Both thinkers operate in terms of post-religious alternatives, being aware that the theological legacy must be studied carefully, lest its most negative outcomes overshadow the secular world.

Eventually, it was Giorgio Agamben's oeuvre that moved to the centre of this issue and thus constitutes the main reference point for the analyses of economic theologies contained therein. But we do hope that the material presented here will be useful for further elaborations of the problem of economic theologies, a research field that is slowly gaining momentum. It combines not only theological genealogies of the biopolitical and managerial paradigms of power, but also investigations into the subjectivization dispositives of modernity and contemporaneity, as well as studies of the history of political theology, and, ultimately, reflection on some basic notions of political and social philosophy in itself. The publication of Roberto Esposito's *Due* [Two] (Esposito 2013) can be considered an important moment in the consolidation of this research program, since Esposito makes an important return to the origins of contemporary debates on political theology and includes in a systematic manner the famous essay by Walter Benjamin, *Capitalism as Religion*. The importance of Esposito's book lies in his attempt to combine political and economic theology, which Agamben separates to an extent, referring both of them to a single conceptual knot that he finds in the concept of the person (see Mikołaj Ratajczak's review of the book). One should also mention Elletra Stimilli's books on the problem of debt (2011;

2015), that combine the lexicon of theology with the language of political economy and Foucault's studies on forms of subjectivity. An important book by Massimo Cacciari, *Il potere che frena* [The power that restrains] (Cacciari 2013), represents another perspective on the problem of economic theology. Cacciari is concerned less with the theological origins of the economy itself and more with the relation between forms of state power (or any power that can join in itself the *potestas* and the *auctoritas*) capable of governing and managing the relations between private, individual interests in the "era of Epimetheus". The theological paradigm for this form of power is, for Cacciari, the *katechon*: the power that does not so much conserve the proper and the good, as restrain the evil and postpone the end. The notion of *katechon* became an object of interest recently not only for Cacciari (and Esposito as well), but also for Mario Tronti and Paolo Virno, who in his *E così via, all'infinito* (Virno 2011) imagines *katechon* as a form of non-sovereign power of the multitude. Italian philosophy is right now a laboratory for new modes of thinking about the political, the economic and their mutual entanglement. Hence, economic theology, in its different, still fluid forms, constitutes an element of this renaissance of political philosophy in contemporary Italy (for a short discussion of the recently published volume *Difference italiane* [Italian differences] that aims to present the current problems and perspectives of "Italian Theory", see Piotr Sadzik's review).

Our hope is that this issue of *Praktyka Teoretyczna* will serve as an experiment in testing the ways, modes and perspectives on how to *use* economic theology, first of all – as a critique. If the published material will prove useful in further analyses of the conflicts and power relations of the contemporary world, we will consider our task fulfilled. At the end of this introduction we would like to extend our thanks to persons and institutions that have made it possible to transform our initial project into actuality. We would like to thank the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences for awarding us a grant for preparing the issue; the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, where Rafał Zawisza was a junior fellow and was provided with excellent conditions for preparation of the issue; all the authors for their valuable contributions; translators (Katarzyna Burzyk, Kuba Krzeski and Anna Piekarska) for their dedication to this hard task of rendering the same thoughts in a different language; reviewers for their time, input and important notes; proof-readers (James Hartzell, Katherine Perlo and Anna Wojczyńska) for their indispensable, yet often

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