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Introduction

The year 2021 has come exactly 700 years after the death of Dante Alighieri, one of the greatest authors of world literature. The Polish Classical, Romantic and Catholic traditions had been drawing from his works by the handful, and especially from the *Divine Comedy*. Dante was near and dear to many generations of our ancestors, accompanying them on the various levels of education, throughout middle school, high school and university. For the learning youth, he was a mentor and teacher who presented human nature in its all dimensions, from atrocity to heroism and holiness. In times of confusion that we are living through, when not only as individuals and communities, but as the entire Western civilization we have found ourselves in the “dark woods” (*una selva oscura*) to be preyed upon by the three beasts (*le tre fiere*): pride, greed and lust, Dante remains a beacon and inspiration for all those who believe that there is an objective truth and universal values that apply to all people regardless of race, nationality or social status.

Dante belongs to a small group of the greatest makers of Western civilization who have created works of everlasting value. Let us indicate only three contemporary cultural phenomena, so characteristic of our time, which are: negating objective truth, keeping good appearances,

and worshipping political correctness, to which *Divine Comedy* relates to with greater insight than many modern research centers do. The first phenomenon has shifted the emphasis from the rational perception of objective reality to the subjective absoluteness of one's own mental states; the second has replaced respect for authorities with the craze over celebrities; while the third one has introduced draconian censorship which condemns people who think differently. Meanwhile, striking a slightly lighter tone, there is no doubt that Dante used both manipulation techniques characteristic of modern "public relations", as well as invalidated the vast majority of souls, which means that he can be considered both as the father of PR and "cancel culture". In order to get the unfortunates in hell to speak out, Dante resorts to the promise to present them in a good light on earth. For no one is more concerned with their own reputation than condemned sinners. For Dante, there was a group even more deplorable than those doomed to hell, which, unfortunately, in his opinion, constituted the vast majority: the indifferent people whom he did not even let into hell.

Dante is also a poet of our time as he is a poet of optimism. The *Divine Comedy* radiates faith in reason, solidarity and justice. One way to get out of the trap in which modern man finds himself, is therefore to return to an in-depth reading of this masterpiece, which is first and foremost a praise of rational life in this world, guided by thinking and loving individuals.

This issue contains four articles about Dante. The first one, by Rodney Lokaj, examines Dante's *Lord's Prayer* from the eleventh canto of *Purgatory* which is an explanatory gloss, paraphrase and exegesis of the most important prayer of Christianity. Using the methodology of vertical and horizontal analysis, Lokaj proves that Dante was inspired by two great texts: *The Sermon on the Mount* from the Gospel and *The Canticle of Creation* by St. Francis of Assisi. The second article, by Jacek Grzybowski, addresses the disturbing issue of the contemporary intellectual elites' hostility towards *Divine Comedy*. The author sees the reasons for this aversion in the rejection of the dogma of the eternity of hell, which is inextricably linked with human reason and free will. In other words, hell is the result of our choice. Bogdan Lisiak in his text starts his analysis of Dante's work with the Greek word *crisis*, which signifies the ability to make a decision capable of changing one's way of thinking and lifestyle. Dante's poetry can be interpreted from the perspective of the sublimation of suffering caused by the tragedy of his personal life and the political turmoil in Florence. His doomed love for a woman and the failure of his political activity were transformed into a philosophical and poetic

material. The fourth Dantean article, by Anna Hajduk, points out that the twentieth century constituted one great commentary on Dante's *Inferno*, as evidenced by the works of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, but also, as the author shows, the poetry and literature devoted to the extermination of Jews during the Second World War.

When we consider the relationship between poetry and philosophy in contemporary literature, Dante Alighieri is the best patron of such an undertaking. Not because he was the first poet who decided to present a comprehensive vision of the world in a poetic form – after all, the competition between the activities of the human spirit has been known at least since the time of Plato, to recall the philosopher's postulate to “banish” poets from the perfect state. The history of competition, however, is intertwined with the history of support and cooperation, and philosophers did not disdain literary forms of expression, which has also been observed since antiquity.

In the current issue of *The Ignatianum Philosophical Yearbook*, we start the discussion of contemporary relations between poetry and philosophy with two articles. Michał Januszkiewicz, in *Filozofia i literatura. Komplikacje i transakcje* [*Philosophy and Literature. Complications and Transactions*], discusses certain positions: the view proclaiming the separateness of these two discourses; the attitude that blurs the boundaries between them; and the case of existential philosophy as a special example of the coincidence of literature and philosophy; and finally, contemporary ambitions to establish a philosophy of literature. A similar tactic of the “modest review of research positions” was used by Maciej Michalski in his article *Współczesne użycia dyskursu filozoficznego i literatury* [*Contemporary Uses of Philosophical Discourse and Literature*]. It talks about non-philosophical use of philosophy and non-literary methods of using literature: philosophical ideas can be the backbone of literary texts, but also literary theories. On the basis of thus formulated theoretical considerations, we present discussions of specific applications of philosophy by outstanding contemporary, mainly Polish, poets.

Józef Maria Ruszar, in a larger sketch *Podziw i spór. Herbert a rzymski stoicyzm* [*Admiration and Dispute. Herbert and Roman Stoicism*] is of the opinion that there is another kind of relationship between philosophy and poetry, which is possible if the poet has a solid philosophical education. According to Ruszar, the author *To Marcus Aurelius* is an example of the poet asking philosophical questions, rather than using existing answers. He discusses such a case using the example of Herbert's attitude towards stoicism as an existential one, and the possibility of its application in the contemporary world. *Wrażliwość na świat*

przedmiotów – Zbigniew Herbert i Francois Ponge [*Sensitivity to the World of Objects – Zbigniew Herbert and Francois Ponge*] by Agnieszka Zwarycz-Łazicka is an analysis of a specific philosophical attitude towards the material world, externalized in poetry.

In the article *W stronę neotomizmu. Czesław Miłosz jako czytelnik „Art et scolastique” Jacques’a Maritaina* [*Towards Scholasticism. Czesław Miłosz Reading „Art et scolastique” by Jacques Maritain*], Marzena Woźniak-Łabieniec presents the reception of the French Christian personalist Jacques Maritain’s views in Czesław Miłosz’s journalistic writings, with particular emphasis on the elements of the worldview that Miłosz “borrowed” from Maritain. Ewa Goczał (*Na kształt krzyża. Wybrane wiersze doloryczne Aleksandra Wata w świetle „De imitatione Christi* [*In the Shape of a Cross. The Dolorism of Aleksander Wat in the Light of De imitatione Christi*]) discusses “dolorous” poems by Aleksander Wat, related to the experience of suffering, and read in the context of the writing of Thomas à Kempis.

The series of essays on the relationship between literature and philosophy, *Topika „księgi natury” w późnej liryce Pära Lagerkvista* [*The “Book of Nature” Topos in the Late Lyrics by Pär Lagerkvist*] is discussed by Katarzyna Szewczyk-Haake who claims that the theme, as very often exploited in the romantic era, in contemporary literature is often associated with the image of the world left to itself, after “God has left” (in Poland, a typical example is Tadeusz Różewicz). The conclusion speaks of a longing for the lost certainty of the presence of the Other, who has left a trace and disappeared irretrievably. This image fits perfectly into the existential issues of literature in the second half of the 20th century.

The next batch of articles begins with a text by Karolina Janeczko, which presents some hypotheses about the genesis of the tradition of the parade of *Konik Zwierzyniecki*, also known as the *Lajkonik*. The author also analyzed the relationship between this Krakow custom and the similar traditions and rituals in other cultural areas. Jan Szczepaniak presents an attempt to subordinate teaching and religious education in schools in Poland to the educational authorities which took place after the May Coup in 1926. This was intended to contribute to the education of citizens as attached to state ideas. According to the author, these activities, taken against the will of the Catholic Church, strongly fell within the scope and shape of religious education of school youth. The last two articles are devoted to issues related to digital humanities. Danuta Smołucha makes an attempt to evaluate the phenomenon of crowdsourcing in contemporary humanistic projects. Citing many interesting examples, she analyzes this method, pointing to many new opportunities and benefits

that bring voluntary involvement in research projects. And last but not least, Agnieszka Smaga deals with the problem of concept analysis of digital graphics, assuming that humanists do not have one definition that is common and accepted by everyone. According to the author, there is an urgent need to conduct research in this field. Contemporary integration of digital graphics with computer science signals the need to analyze the relations between the two from the perspective of theoretical and practical research.

