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DEBATES OVER THE ENLIGHTENMENT

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The articles presented to the Reader constitute an enlarged version of selected papers delivered at a national scholarly conference *The Significance of the Philosophy of the Enlightenment to European Culture* (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, 9–10 October 2014). Undoubtedly, the debates over the Enlightenment, taking into account the period's aspects of a process, continuity and non-continuity, many-sidedness and antinomic character, might never be recognized as definitively closed. All reductionist attempts, expressing themselves in looking for the common nominator of this age and the absolutising of one tendency over other qualifications, do not make the understanding any easier; moreover, they can lead to ideological distortions. A remedy may be brought by an unprejudiced study of the sources and unpublished manuscripts, reconstructing the "journey of ideas" with regard to intellectual history (history of education, publishing houses, libraries) and to social workings in which the ideas of the Enlightenment materialised themselves and were subject to special verification.

This issue opens with an unusually erudite text by Stanisław Janeczek *The Role of the Christian Enlightenment in the Culture of the Eighteenth Century.* It examines the plurality of the variants of the Enlightenment (national; regional; denominational, including Protestant, Catholic and Jewish) and about the crucial function of the – eclectic in its character – "Christian Enlightenment" in disseminating culture on the European and Polish scale, to which the reformist activity of the Committee of National Education testifies. The author puts forward the thesis that in spite of the interpretations which underline the predominant character of

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secularisation process of European culture, Christianity remained the integral element of this age. He notes that current sociologists of religion perceive as inheritors of the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment both the motif of secularisation and its contrast: the acceptance of the religious attitude, enabling a retrieval of the sense of the world.

The next article by Marta Szymańska-Lewoszewska *George Berkeley's Irish Patriotism between 1734 and 1753* corresponds with the previous thesis as it presents the example of a coexistence of Enlightenment empiricism with Christianity. According to the author, Berkeley refers to the Aristotelian concept of the human being as social creature and links this thesis with the inspiration of Christian (revealed) religion as centre of good principles, which favour social order. The human being belongs to the community of humanity striving for eternal life, but also for worldly state and church community; therefore, the human being owes obedience to political and religious laws, enjoining (in spite of hedonism and utilitarianism) to work for the common good. The rationale behind this article is to prove the relationship between Berkeley's notes on patriotism in his works of 1734–1753 with his commitment to the improvement of religious, economic and social/political condition in Ireland of his time. This confirms a more general thesis, characteristic to the Enlightenment reformist passion, leading to a change of the social world.

British deism exemplifies the critical (negative) relationship to Christian (revealed) religion. In his article *Natural Religion and the Critique of Revelation in the Thought of Matthew Tindal*, Tomasz Stefaniuk – following the close reading analysis of source texts of this well-known deist -- draws a conclusion that the project of the creation of the religion of reason which would be based on internal revelation (the Book of Nature), contrasted with external revelation, referring to the books recognised as revealed, is a dead project. According to the author, the contemporary human being situates him/herself either in traditional religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc.) or in indifferentism, atheism or agnosticism. Therefore, it may be doubted if deism was a religion (called natural or rational) or rather a practical philosophy, which from the relations read in the Book of Nature drew a conclusion about the human duties towards the Creator and towards other creatures, in particular rational creatures.

Of related interest is the article by Adam Grzeliński *Pierre Bayle's Historical and Critical and Its British Readers.* The work of Bayle is situated in the context of other eighteenth-century encyclopaedias by N. Lloyd, J.J. Hoffmann, C. Estienne or L. Morérie, which makes the identification of its methodological specificity possible. The author argues that two prin-

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cipal directions of the impact of the *Dictionary* developed: British deism (J. Toland, A. Collins, A. Shaftesbury) and British empiricism (J. Locke, G. Berkeley, D. Hume). The anti-systemic character of Bayle' oeuvre might contribute to a variety of its interpretations, and even to its disinterpretation by thinkers who considered themselves continuators of this philosophical stance (criticism or scepticism). The English editions of the *Dictionary* and the lively contacts of Royal Society members helped in disseminating Bayle's thought in Britain (in particular, the critique of cognition, the programme of religious toleration and the attempt of separating religion from morality).

Methodological issues are also the subject matter of Zbigniew Pietrzak's article *On the Possibilities and Limitations of the Mathematisation of Biological Studies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.* The author demonstrates that the-then knowledge about nature was co-shaped by philosophical ideas (Aristotelianism, mechanicism, vitalism) which could favour or frustrate the possibility of the mathematisation of biological studies. The successful endeavour of the mathematisation of physics, exemplified by I. Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687), did not influence significantly the scientific explanation of the world of living organisms. The Enlightenment, dubbed the "Age of Reason", constituted the period of an unusually complex process of the change of the model of knowledge: a turn from the qualitative and aim-centred description of natural phenomena to the quantitative one. In the worldview of this age, empirical research mixed with the ideas of theological origin. Those questions may be seen differently from the perspective of the theory of evolution, formulated a century later.

Two articles are concerned with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who is situated in the formula of the Enlightenment, but also goes beyond it, demonstrating new vistas of philosophical thinking. In his article *Between the Enlightenment and Scholasticism: Selected Problems of the Reception of Kant's Philosophy in the Polish Philosophy of the Early Nineteenth Century and the Perspectives of New Research*, Tomasz Kupś examines the non-substantive reasons of the polarization of positions towards the philosophy of Kant in the first decades of the nineteenth century; representatives of this phenomenon in Polish philosophical culture are Szaniawski, Wigura and Śniadecki. According to the author, Polish thinkers, drawing mainly on the inspiration of the British and French Enlightenment (particularly empiricism and sensualism, identified then with scientific attitude) – similarly as the Committee of National Education – put aside scholastic metaphysics, whose revival they attributed incorrectly to Kant.

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In his text *Kant's Transcendentalism and the Problem of Conceptualism in the Contemporary Philosophy of Perception*, Paweł Sikora indicates both the realist and idealist (phenomenological) possibility of the interpretation of Kant's thought. The author demonstrates the presence of Kant's inspiration in the contemporary philosophy of perception (in particular, conceptualism), which explores the question of the reality of the objects of experience and the reality of things in themselves as well as the issue of the object of perception.

Translated by Tomasz Kitliński

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