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Introduction

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to introduce the next volume of *Society. Education. Language* – a journal designed and launched by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at The State University of Applied Sciences in Płock.

The following volume has a slightly different construction for Part One, entitled “Dimensions of Violence”, contains articles that are the results of a project that The State University of Applied Sciences in Płock has been involved in since 2013. It is then that our University joined for the first time The Themersons’ Festival whose main organizer is Płock Art and Culture Centre and we have remained its partner ever since. Through a wide range of artistic and scholarly ventures, the Festival commemorates and celebrates the creativity of Franciszka Themerson and her husband - Stefan Themerson, who was born and grew up in Płock. Thanks to their endless and tireless seeking, Franciszka and Stefan Themerson made an essential contribution to the development of 20th century avant-garde art in areas such as visual arts, literature, film, theatre, music, and philosophy.

The articles contained in this volume are dedicated to violence and aggression in two complementary worlds: the sacred and the profane. The former refers to the terrain of artistic expression, whereas the latter is the realm of our commonplace and material existence. For Stefan Themerson aggression was also an important topic, but he was first and foremost interested in the moral and ethical dimension of violence. In his philosophical essays he claimed rather provocatively that gentleness is an inborn human quality, whereas aggression is a cultural overgrowth. “*Gentleness is biological and aggression is cultural. In other words, in general, people don’t like to be murderers, unless it is for the sake of an idea.*” - Stefan Themerson wrote in *The Chair of Decency*. Not only political systems (the profane), but also culture and religious systems (the sacred) create mechanisms that condone and justify violence. Themerson frequently pointed out a tragic flaw in the human condition, which he called *factor T*, for we are torn between our Needs and our Dislikes. We have to kill, for example, to eat, but we are appalled by the very act at the same time. Our civilization has made us forget, as Themerson argued, what our moral priority should be – the decency of means, which is more often than not sacrificed in the name of decency of aims. Can our mean actions be redeemed by the righteousness of our aims? Such niggling questions dominate Themerson’s literary *oeuvre*, where a catastrophic vision of the world is underpinned with an apprehensiveness of ideological, technological and cultural violence.

Drawing our inspiration from Themerson’s philosophical and moral reflections, we invited researchers representing different disciplines to contribute to the discussion on aggression in the contemporary world in order to fathom the role violence plays in our everyday, spiritual and creative lives. Alongside articles that deal with violence in the sphere of social and political life written by Arkadiusz Lewandowski, Augustina Varela Manograsso and Izabella Penier, the volume contains articles devoted to art and culture. For example, Jakub Ligor and Marcin Sroczyński write about film, Tomasz Wiśniewski analyzes images of violence of the British theatre group Complicite, Andrzej Dorobek

pays his attention to music, Papatya Alkan-Genca discusses violence as it is inscribed in the fictional world created by Angela Carter, and Lawrence Buttigieg introduces his assemblages as vehicles for counteracting the violence of the male gaze.

Further articles are presented in two thematic groups: education and social life. Part Two, entitled: “Education and Up-bringing” contains articles by Jarosław Michalski, Zbigniew Kulesz, Agnieszka Głowala and Beata Cieśleńska, Małgorzata Pietrzak, Olga Puzia-Sobieska and Yuri Pavlow. They address issues broadly connected with education and they might be of interest to academic teachers and students of humanities and social sciences. In Part Three of the volume Ivan Monolati, Magdalena Rudnicka, Edyta Mierzejewska and Daniel Urbański describe challenges that different social institutions have to respond to as a consequence of dynamic changes that have occurred recently.

We also invite our readers to read essays by Tomasz Kosiński, Paulina Chmielecka and the review of *Igrzyska demokracji. Amerykańska kultura wyborcza* by Zbigniew Lewicki presented by Krzysztof Gorlewski.

We hope that the forthcoming issue of *Society. Education. Language* will foster interdisciplinary academic discussion on the presented problems.

On behalf of the Editorial Team
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