EDITORIAL

The special issue of *Analiza i Egzystencja* entitled *The Intersections of Theology, Language, and Cognition in Medieval Tradition* features a diversity of approaches to debating theological and philosophical dilemmas in the late Middle Ages and offers a forum for cross-disciplinary research on medieval philosophy and theology. While scholars tended to cross disciplinary boundaries throughout the Middle Ages, interdisciplinary practices reached an apex of sophistication in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, promoting thematic and methodological entwinements. Admittedly, by combining analytical tools and terminology from disparate disciplines, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century authors crafted a methodological perspective that enabled them to describe and explore numerous issues from different angles, offering novel solutions to old problems. This approach was adopted in various fields of knowledge and proved most fruitful in theology, where it prompted a veritable cross-pollination of ideas. Especially inspiring were the intersections of theological, linguistic, and epistemological realms, as studied by several contributors to this issue.

This tactic is put under scrutiny in the paper by Matteo Maserati, who investigates how the terminology of negation influenced the theological and epistemological concepts of John Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308). As Maserati rightly notes following Laurence Horn, philosophy tends to distinguish two approaches to negation—asymmetrical and symmetrical—with a preference for the asymmetricalist paradigm, which stresses the dependence of a negative element on its positive counterpart and has to a certain extent dominated the history of philosophy. Maserati cites four asymmetrical arguments adopted by Scotus, namely: "(i) negative expressions are not syntactically

independent, since they are the result of the application of a negative particle to other linguistic elements from which they remove something; (ii) negative assertions are not semantically independent, since their truth-value depends on the truth-values of other positive assertions; (iii) negative assertions are epistemically weaker than positive ones […] (iv) negations are ontologically weak, since any negative property fails in bestowing any ontological perfection upon its subject." Focusing on the issue of the possibility of knowing God, Maserati shows the effect of these arguments on Scotus's epistemological and theological theories and their contribution to the two main strategies for proving the primacy of the positive element over the negative one.

Giacomo Fornasieri's paper is accompanied by a semi-critical edition of Peter Auriol's commentary on Book II of the *Sentences*, distinction 9, question 2, article 1. Fornasieri explores the conceptualism of Peter Auriol (ca. 1280–1322), whom he portrays as a moderate conceptualist, and argues that Auriol's theological commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* warrants granting universals "some ground in the extra-mental reality" and perceiving concepts as "fixed […] in and by the extra-mental reality." This ontological assumption has consequences for Auriol's epistemological framework, and especially for the formation of concepts and the process of cognizing. By skillfully maneuvering among various elements of Auriol's sometimes poorly reconcilable ontology and epistemology, Fornasieri identifies the common ground between Auriol's theory of essential predication and his theory of connotation as involved in intellectual cognition. This leads him to conclude that "Auriol's use of connotation is deeply intertwined with both his ontology and his epistemology. It is the meeting point between them."

Another attempt undertaken by a medieval commentator to reconcile various theological issues is investigated by Łukasz Tomanek, who tackles interpretative puzzles concerning the possibility of knowing God and limits to human perception and cognition. Tomanek focuses on late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century commentaries on Averroes's *De substantia orbis* to study their positions on divine attributes, such as infinite power, efficient and final causality, and the ability to create *ex nihilo*. By contrasting two interpretative lines developed in three commentaries, Tomanek probes the arguments and tactics employed to analyze the aforementioned theological issues, wherein he identifies two major modes which rely on: a) either referring to cognition acquired by the natural reason; b) or merging natural

philosophy with Catholic faith. The latter, as he concludes, promoted a more critical approach.

Limits to human cognition are also addressed by Riccardo Fedriga and Roberto Limonta, who convincingly show that any theory aiming to give an account of human cognitive faculties must take into consideration an array of crucial issues, including the imperfection of our epistemic apparatus, the (more or less defined) boundaries between the subject and the object of knowledge, and the tools for grouping and classifying entities of the known reality into classes or subcategories of thought. The paper by Fedriga and Limonta takes a closer look at the approaches adopted by William of Ockham (ca. 1287–1347) and Walter Chatton (ca. 1290–1343) in their studies on the causal treatment of human cognitive tools and their fallibility. Fedriga and Limonta test a pragmatical-social approach to fictional objects of thought, such as future contingents and prophecies.

Apart from theological works, late medieval commentaries on Aristotle's writings on physiology and psychology were a site where disciplines intersected, issues intertwined, and methods interlaced with each other. This framework is investigated by Claudia Appolloni, who analyzes the pragmatic theory of imposition and signification of words as formulated in an anonymous thirteenth-century commentary on *De anima*, accompanied by an edition of three questions from this commentary (contained in the codex of Prague, Metropolitan Chapter, M. 80, ff. 54vA–55vB). Appolloni delves into the realm where physiology (sound production and reception) crosses paths with pragmatics (theory of language, signs, and their usage) to show how medieval authors addressed the signification of words as related to vocal sounds production, auditory perception, institution of meanings, and language formation. She studies the outlooks of the anonymous author against the background of thirteenth-century pragmatic theories, including Roger Bacon's position (1214/1220–1292). By building a conceptual framework for the theory of "everyday imposition" as gleaned from the analyzed and edited anonymous questions, she provides persuasive evidence that the doctrinal content of the questions cannot be attributed to Bacon and its attribution still remains to be established.

Devoted to visual perception in general and to the concept of "middle color" in particular, the paper by Monika Mansfeld also testifies to late medieval authors' mastery in entwining issues from various disciplines. Mansfeld focuses on the definition and epistemological problems inherent in

the perception of the middle color as formulated in thirteenth-century commentaries on Aristotle's *De sensu et sensato*. She shows the impact of philological choices made by the medieval commentators (resulting from Aristotle's obscurity, as well as semantic and syntactic mistakes in Latin translations of the text) on philosophical methods for tackling physiological, epistemological, and semantic problems. She concludes that philological preferences of authors prompted a proliferation of solutions. Mansfeld points out a rich swathe of time when the debate on the middle color thrived just to pass into oblivion after William of Moerbeke's revision of the first translation of *De sensu et sensato*, which "marked the shift in the focus of research into some other problems and the interpretative tradition of the middle colour in the 13th century reached its end."

This issue evolved from the papers read at the international online conference *The Intersections of Theology, Language, and Cognition in Medieval Tradition and Beyond*, which was collaboratively organized by the University of Bologna and the Medical University of Łódź and held at the Department of Philosophy and Communication Studies, University of Bologna, on 12–13 May, 2020.

The idea of publishing this issue sprouted during a very distressing period, when the COVID-19 pandemic was proclaimed. Against all odds, the production of the issue was successfully concluded thanks to Renata Ziemińska (Chief Editor of A&E), who accepted our proposal and kindly agreed to host this issue. Our heartfelt thank-you goes to our contributors for the determination and dedication they exhibited throughout this venture. We owe a debt of gratitude to our families who encouraged us during this time, and especially to Chiara, Micol, and Wojtek for their affection and invariable support.

Monika Michałowska, Riccardo Fedriga & Costantino Marmo