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Theory and Practice as Concepts Existing Between Everyday Language and Specialized Languages. On Some Sources of the Crisis in the Humanities from the Perspective of the Hermeneutics of Multilinguisticity

Abstract: The specific status of concepts in the field of sciences of social reality (i.e. the humanities in the broad sense, or more narrowly: social sciences and humanities) is determined by difficulties in attempting to capture the precise meaning of concepts, among which the fundamental ones for this field deserve particular attention: “theory,” “practice,” and “hermeneutics.” A deeper reflection on the specificity of this research activity leads to the question: Shouldn’t the lack of a deeper awareness of the specificity of this type of scientific activity be considered one of the main causes of the crisis present there? In turn, attempting to confront this challenge thus conceptualized demonstrates the importance of carefully redefining the assumptions regarding the relationship between form and content in the communicative layer of this field. In the light of certain similarities and differences between the communicative dimensions of (1) the field of everyday language and (2) the field of the language of natural sciences and (3) the field of sciences of social reality – and therefore (ad 1) one area of the language of the lifeworld, and (ad 2 and ad 3) two different lingual fields of a specialized nature – the aim of this text is to present possible challenges in attempts to unambiguously understand the terms “theory” and “practice,” which will be proceeded from the perspective of the hermeneutics of multilinguisticity.

Key words: theory, practice, form and content, problematization, interpretation, translation, understanding, art, education, everyday language, specialized languages, methodology, crisis, crisis of the humanities, critique, interdisciplinarity, rhetoric, rhetoric of multiple translation, hermeneutics, philosophical hermeneutics, hermeneutics of multilinguisticity

POLUS: Then doubtless you will say, Socrates, that you do not know that even the Great King is happy.

SOCRATES: Yes, and I shall be speaking the truth; for I do not know how he stands in point of education and justice.

Plato, *Gorgias*, 470e, (transl.) W.R.M. Lamb

POLUS: Then it’s plain, Socrates, that you will say that you don’t know that the great king is happy either.

SOCRATES: And if I do I shall say the truth: for I don’t know what is his condition in respect of his mental cultivation and moral character.

Plato, *Gorgias*, 470e, (transl.) E.M. Cope

ΠΩΛΟΣ: Δῆλον δὴ, ὃ Σώκρατες, ὅτι οὐδὲ τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα γινώσκειν φήσεις εὐδαίμονα ὄντα.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ: Καὶ ἀληθῆ γε ἔρω: οὐ γὰρ οἶδα παιδείας ὅπως ἔχει καὶ δικαιοσύνης.

Πλάτων, Γοργίας 470ε

PÓLOS: Dílon dí, ó Sókrates, óti oudé tón mégan vasiléa gignóskein
físeis evdaímōna ónta.

SOKRÁTIS: Kaí alithí ge eró: ou gár oída paideías ópos échei kaí
dikaiosýnis.

Pláton, *Gorgias* 470e

Hermeneutics is the art of understanding. This is how the concept ought to be understood in its most preliminary meaning. It remains rather surprising that this word consistently fails to find a broader presence in the field of everyday communication, although even here the matter is not as unequivocal as it might seem at first glance, as the issue takes on different nuances in individual cultural linguistic areas. Nevertheless, it is certainly worth noting that contemporary everyday language does not generate much demand for a term that would serve as a handy label for the set of competencies required in the area of understanding (Gadamer 2004; Grondin 1994).

Simultaneously, even the initial attempts to organize the relationship between this term and its subsequent, more detailed, possible definitional applications is a significant challenge. An important factor here is that it appears in the context of attempts to grasp the meaning of other concepts as well, among which understanding, interpretation, art, as well as theory and practice, to name just a few of the closest connotations from a much longer list. It is worth emphasizing once again here that this challenge becomes present every time we try to specify the meanings of terms that to a significant extent determine the specificity of sciences devoted to social reality (i.e. the humanities in the broad sense, or in a slightly narrower sense: social sciences and humanities), and of which the concept of hermeneutics and its different interpretations can serve as an adequate example in the context of challenges from which none of the terms constituting the core of this type of sciences is free (Bronk, 1982; Woroniecka, 2005; Szymczyński, 2020).

At this point, it may be helpful to recall a certain framework familiar from the field of initial assumptions within research methodology. When commencing any research task, there are essentially three options available. The first is to apply an existing methodological lens. The second is to rely on an existing research perspective, but with the addition of certain innovations that, for specific reasons, we believe are essential to the implementation of our task. The third option assumes a novel methodological formula, and its application is permissible only after a thorough demonstration of the reasons why no existing methodological approach is suitable.

However, with the specificity of sciences devoted to social reality taken into account, this framework materialize, or ought to materialize, in a slightly different form. As part of their daily research practice, representatives of this domain of academic activity are not only obligated to place great importance on testing subsequent possible meanings of successive terms, but also to communicate their decisions regarding the adopted meanings of the concepts used, which should be done in a manner similar to the framework of three possible methodological approaches outlined above. Therefore, attention is paid not only to the choice of methodological approach, but also to continuous work on increasing the level of awareness and consciousness of possible meanings of terms used in the linguistic field (Szymczyński, 2024, p. 25 et seq.).

Moreover, as a result of this type of reflection, or self-reflection, which, as we can see, is clearly methodological in nature, a specific duplication often occurs within the humanities, which perhaps, especially initially, may even arouse considerable distrust. This duplication may evolve into talking about talking, listening about listening, writing about writing, reading about reading, thinking about thinking, or interpreting about interpreting and understanding about understanding. The key reason for this state of affairs is the original status and positioning of these disciplines, and consequently, both the concepts within them and, more broadly, the communicative dimension, along with the specificity of the relationship between form and content, crucial for these considerations (Szymczyński, 2020, p. 7 ff.).

This positioning is closely linked to our expectations, which are present in this context, which, after all, belongs to the field of social reality itself. These expectations stem largely from our habits, from our habits of heart, which, in turn, are formed through continuous interactions with subsequent manifestations of the social reality surrounding us. The triad of “beliefs – habits – expectations,” in its endless flux, significantly influences our beliefs, both individually and collectively. This triad manifests itself within a wide variety of contexts, and this is one of the reasons why an attempt to outline the specificity of the field of sciences devoted to the social reality (i.e., the humanities broadly understood, or, more narrowly, the social sciences and humanities) should be presented from the perspective of the broadest possible comparative approach, thus in relation to two further areas of social reality: the field of exact sciences (*science*) and the field of everyday reality (*common sense*). Communication-based legitimizing practices play a particular role here. Crucially, these practices will often take on significantly different forms depending on the perspective one has on such issues. These can be more or less confrontational, more or less cooperative; more or less conscious; or more or less immovable or unstable. Perhaps it should be considered symptomatic that it was Edmund Husserl (1954 [1936], 2024) who introduced the philosophical-phenomenological concept of the everyday world as the *life-world* (German: *Lebenswelt*) in his work on the crisis of European sciences.

A fundamental challenge for the communicative dimension of the social sciences and humanities emerges here. Assuming a different relationship between the form and content of a message than is commonly accepted, as well as a similarly differently understood interconnection between the field of social sciences, the field of exact sciences, and the field of everyday colloquial language, this fundamental challenge can be articulated as a question that guides these considerations. In light of the frequent failure to consider the far-reaching specificity of social sciences in their hermeneutical-rhetorical, and therefore comprehensible-articulatory, dimensions, we ask to what extent does this state of affairs contribute to the intensification of the contemporarily observable crisis in the humanities?

The aim of this text is therefore to show possible similarities and differences in the understanding of the terms theory and practice, and, using this example, to present selected issues whose disregard contributes to the deepening crisis of the humanities. In this light, specific challenges of a cognitive and methodological nature will be presented, which too often remain hidden under the surface of a formula dividing the discussed issues solely into the domains of everyday language on the one hand and specialized

languages on the other, which will be realized in reference to the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer along with its unsurpassed interpretation by Jean Grondin, as well as in accordance with the assumptions presented within the hermeneutics of multilinguisticity (Gadamer, 1986 [1960], 1989, 2000, 2007; Grondin, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1995, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2019, 2021; Szymczyński, 2020, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2024).

Once again, the main concern here is the status of the entire set of initial assumptions, the acceptance of which always leaves it impossible to avoid, regardless of the level of awareness and consciousness of this sometimes uncomfortable fact. In contrast to the essentially unproblematic status of the relationship between material things and their names, in the field of the humanities, the often extremely complex relationships of this kind play a fundamental role, as these involve attempts to further specify individual facets of immaterial entities, and thus procedures for both encoding and decoding mental constructs. As a result, we are faced with an unexpectedly high degree of difficulty in specifying initial assumptions about the specific shapes of the understanding-articulation dimension. This requires meticulous work of explanatory and legitimizing nature, which can be considered a fundamental aspect of the specificity of the field of the humanities in its academic version (Bronk, 1982; Gadamer, 1986 [1960], 1989, 2000, 2004, 2007; Grondin, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1995; Szymczyński, 2016, 2020, 2023a, 2023b, 2024).

At the same time, it is here that the requirements regarding the adequate precision of argumentation too often clash with assessments constituted from the perspective of a vague amalgam of insufficiently deepened expectations referring towards what eventually ought to be considered scientific. Let us emphasize concisely here that this very requirement of precision in the field of social sciences differs significantly both from what happens in this area in the exact sciences and from the notions and expectations that prevail in this context in the everyday domain of social reality. Let us therefore clearly emphasize here that as a result of the differently constituted conditions of possibility of individual domains of social reality, our expectations should be different in relation to their individual aspects, among which the concept of precision plays a fundamental role.

Such outline of the context of the issues under discussion further reinforces the necessity to confront each time the challenges of making binding decisions regarding the lingual forms of our reflections, the subject of which truly appears more like a rhizome (French: *rhizome*) than any geometric figure or line (Deleuze, Guattari 1980). This final form and content will present itself differently from the perspective of certain more or less directly articulated expectations within the space of a more narrowly defined research craft, and differently from the perspective of a more broadly understood potential recipients (viewers, listeners, readers). It is here that divergent perspectives intersect, strongly influencing the dynamically evolving notions of the role and place of representatives of social sciences, both within and outside this field, and thus in relation to the field of exact sciences on the one hand, and the field of everyday reality on the other. It is also here that the question about the current status of the entire educational system at its subsequent levels becomes fully present, as well as the concern for this kind of status first of pupils, then of students, and finally of teachers.

In order to capture such concerns related to the responsibility of the authors for the shape of the messages they formulate as precisely as possible, it is perhaps worth using

an example here. On the one hand, references to concepts such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *rhizome*, or Edmund Husserl's *Lebenswelt*, provoke us to devote much more space to these very ideas. Consequently, the question may arise: to what extent should we refer to the vast – as fascinating as it is complex – area of interconnectedness between the still underappreciated Wilhelm Dilthey's concept of *Lebenszusammenhang*, which served as the primary inspiration for Husserl's *Lebenswelt*, or to Heidegger's *In-der-Welt-Sein*, as well as to the countless insights that follow from these approaches, among which one cannot fail to mention the works of thinkers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Alfred Schütz, Roman Ingarden, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Jean Grondin?

On the other hand, it may turn out that although the aforementioned term used by the founder of transcendental phenomenology was primarily intended to clarify the argument, for many readers it may have the opposite effect. Here one can easily see the eternal tension emerging between such intentions or desires and effects or results, together with the resulting far-reaching consequences in the form of *aporiae* (Greek: ἀπορίαι – *aporiai*), the tracing of which could serve as an independent guide to the history of ideas in general.

Perhaps, then, it is worthwhile to introduce the concept of the model reader, popularized by Umberto Eco (1979a, 1979b, 1994). The admirable achievements of this Italian thinker in many diverse fields of humanities activity constitute a strong argument for taking his proposals for interpreting social reality seriously, especially where we expect far-reaching differentiation in the field of recipients of a given message. In this sense, his division into the model reader and the empirical reader is an important clue in the context of more efficiently decoding the challenges related to the ongoing conceptual connections between expectations stemming from our notions of the shape of science and its place in the world of life. Therefore, this idea can play at least equally important role within the field of considerations of the challenges associated with attempts to apply the idea of interdisciplinarity in its broadest sense.¹

At the same time, the very idea of a model reader – that is, a specific set of preconceived notions about who the author of a text intends to address their message to, along with all the consequences of such an estimation – while constituting an interesting articulatory and comprehension-oriented, or rhetorical-hermeneutical, tool, naturally does not resolve all the dilemmas that arise here. Therefore, it does not free authors constructing any specific message – which, in its final form, will consist of an inextricable synthesis of its form and content – from the need of making a series of serious decisions regarding its final outcome in constant reference to in that way articulated interests and values that after all constitute human cognition.

In other words, estimating the identity of a specific collective model recipient does not absolve the authors of the continuing responsibility for whether, through their articulations, they will motivate their model recipients to pay close attention and put in specific work to best grasp the proposed message, or whether they will strive to ensure that such recipients remain blissfully convinced of their omnipotence. Otherwise, such an author

¹ The formula articulating the broadly understood phenomenon of interdisciplinarity was used here to clarify that due to the lack of conviction as to the actual significance of the division into inter- and intra-disciplinarity, the version “inter-“ is applied here to name all situations in which occurs any form of activity that assumes going beyond the narrowly defined disciplines of social sciences and humanities.

– in the light of the findings made in the field of moderate social constructivism, or if one prefers, within the framework of sociological institutionalism – will reinforce the tendencies that gave rise to justified pessimism, which José Ortega y Gasset (1929, 1982) expressed clearly enough almost a century ago in his *The Revolt of the Masses* (Spanish: *La rebellion de las masas*).

Narrowing this world of life for a moment solely to the educational domain, let us note that the three fields identified earlier: (1) the field of social sciences; (2) the field of exact sciences; and (3) the field of everyday action and thought remain in a state of persistent mutual tension, constantly responding to challenges of a political, economic, cultural, and social nature. This, in turn, has far-reaching consequences in the form of a dynamic transformation within the fundamental assumptions of the “beliefs – habits – expectations” triad, resulting in ever-deepening intergenerational differences, with all their increasingly difficult-to-grasp consequences.

The dominant role in the outlined context is, of course, played by the spectacular transformations of our world of life as a result of the technological revolution, which has enabled the emergence of the digital revolution. The unprecedented improvements brought by these processes are usually admirable, as they are most often assessed through the prism of narrowly defined changes in the field of previously existing realities. These phenomena are so utterly unprecedented that they essentially preclude even moderate estimations of their consequences for most of dimensions of our existence. But even here, we still must demand due consideration for the conceptual decisions that co-construct our social reality.

Just like the vast majority of other aspects of our existence, the digital revolution itself is an incredibly multidimensional phenomenon, and one of its greatest threats is the time we still have to properly assess its far-reaching consequences. The later we break into contemporary transmitters of social communication with a narrative that problematizes our insights, which by their long habituations demand so-called concreteness, the less room there will be for such considerations. In this context, there emerges a strong need to develop an attitude that juxtaposes the almost completely unquestionable belief in the validity and obviousness of our own beliefs, characteristic of today’s everyday world, with a conscious problematization of such insights. Let us only add here that this process is too rarely treated as a *sine qua non* formula for even beginning to consider the pursuit of reliable sciences of social reality, and from this perspective, this issue remains perhaps one of the most hidden aspects of the sciences under discussion.

Within a space that has been just outlined, the foundations of our initial assumptions are not only becoming visible, but also strongly related to the perspective presented in an unparalleled way by Hans-Georg Gadamer, when he articulated the necessity of complementing the beliefs of scientific reason with the findings of hermeneutical reason as a starting point for a conversation between representatives of the field of exact sciences and sciences of social reality (Gadamer, 1989, 1998; Bronk, 1982; Szymczyński, 2013, pp. 52–69, 2023a, 2023b). As well as through Gadamerian figure justifying a specific form of rehabilitation of everyday speech, which in turn opens the way of rethinking the role and place of interconnections between the fields of the humanities and social sciences, and the field of everyday life. In addition, it seems that it is precisely the specific inertia of Bourdieudian fields of habits (Latin: *habitus*) between the subfields of human

and social sciences that has contributed to the surprising lack of due attention in this demanding contextual area (Bourdieu, 1980, 2008; Bourdieu, Wacquant, 1992a, 1992b, 2001; Kłoskowska, 1998; Szymczyński, 2013, p. 171 ff.).

The primary role here is played as well by the consequences of decisions related to the area where there is constant intersection between translation and interpretation. Many specific for the field of sciences devoted to social reality constructs, which are crucial for proper understanding, are often diluted during these unavoidable undertakings. This is not about pointing out any specific culpability, but rather about the specific nature of translatory-interpretational activities. In the two English-language versions of the fragment of the dialogue *Gorgias*, quoted at the beginning of this text as a *motto*, the ancient Greek term «*paideia*» (Greek: παιδεία – *paideía*) here used by Plato's Socrates in the plural form, W. R. M. Lamb decided to render it as “education” and E. M. Cope as “mental cultivation,” and these kinds of decisions certainly resulted from a number of specific reasons that extend between the theory and practice of translation and interpretation. However, without suggested within the framework of the hermeneutics of multilinguisticity and applied here form of quoting specific fragments of source texts as quotations, both in their original version – along with the Latinized form of writing when the source text is written in a different writing system – as well as different translation proposals existing in the target language field, many other fascinating tropes would most likely be missed, which in this case signifies the strong bonds between upbringing, education, mental cultivation and culture on the one hand, and happiness, power and justice on the other (Plato, 1864, p. 470e, 1967, p. 470e).

As another example in this context can serve the situation where suggesting a different translation formula in a given case does not in any way imply a lack of enormous respect and appreciation for the translator's overall translation work. This is the case with Gadamer's concept of the principle of resulting history (German: *das Prinzip der Wirkungsgeschichte*) and the idea of prejudgments (German: *die Vorurteile*), both of which, as a result of translation efforts, in both cultural spheres of the Polish and English languages, they have lost some of their high articulatory and explanatory quality clearly present inside German lingual field of culture (Gadamer, 1986 [1960], 1989, 2007; Piecuchna, 2019; Szymczyński, 2016, 2020). Just as the German *die Vorurteile* in English may mean as well ‘prejudices’ (Polish: *uprzedzenia* or *przesądy*) and ‘prejudgements’ (Polish: *wstępne osądy* or *przedsądy*), and the German *das Prinzip der Wirkungsgeschichte* may mean as well ‘the principle of effective history’ (Polish: *zasada dziejów efektywnych*) as ‘the principle of consequential history,’ or ‘the principle of resulting history’ (Polish: *zasada dziejów skutkujących*).

Not all such lost in translation deserve our absolute indulgence, nor, conversely, do they merit unconditional demonstration of even the most minor shortcomings. This is where one of the most challenging aspects of the specific nature of inquiry in the field of sciences devoted to the social reality emerges, where its foundation is constituted by its specific form of critique. But here again, the game is about accurate clarifications of the precise form and content in which such critique should be articulated, as well as ensuring that, to the extent possible, these essential critical insights do not slip unnoticed from the field of pursuits of knowledge into the field of pursuits of power in its various embodiments.

Observing all of this from the perspective of everyday life world, a kind of assumption, which would prohibit any form of pointing to possible alternative perspectives in a critical manner, could, for example, emerge under the banner of a dictatorship of so-called tolerance at all costs, which would contribute to reinforcing a kind of impersonal acceptance of lack of scrupulousness and, as a result, could be a factor co-constructing a state that deserves to be called a crisis. The issue of the necessary presence of a critical perspective, while simultaneously recognizing how easily overly radical results can be achieved in such a context, is closely linked to the difficulties of a strong expectation of unambiguous findings, such as those encountered in the field of mathematics, as well as to the entire range of challenges related to the perspectivism inherent in human functioning, a concept deftly captured by the figure of a map without a cartographer.

To what extent, then, does the hidden necessity of this kind of conscious problematization of forms of linguistic labeling of everything we communicate – which looks completely different in the field of exact sciences and also differs significantly from the situation present in the field of everyday life – connect with the often-cited state of crisis of these kinds of sciences? To what extent does the dominance of certain linguistic forms over others strengthen or weaken the specific beliefs and expectations in this area, ingrained in the habits of the hearts of representatives of successive generations of specific cultural linguistic areas?

Although our habits of the heart – as Robert N. Bellah and his colleagues (1985) used to call them – located somewhere between our consciousness and unconsciousness, greatly influence both our aesthetic and ethical beliefs and choices, it must be strongly emphasized that – unlike the rules of operation that apply in the realm of social reality in its everyday dimension – in the field of sciences devoted to the social reality, we are unconditionally obligated to reflect deeply on the possible understandings of the concepts we apply to describe specific mental constructs. And these, even not always articulated outside our thought processes, necessarily exist within the language or languages we apply to guide us toward what we call understanding.

On the background outlined in this way, let us initiate our search for the possible meanings existing behind the concepts of theory and practice by attempting some preliminary etymological findings. For this purpose, let us turn our attention to the fundamental source of European culture: ancient Greece. Here, as in any self-respecting academic lecture, a certain tension comes to the fore between the desire for the most complete ordering of the message and the idea of pursuing insights that approximate specific meanings, perspectives that cannot always be easily packed into an uncontroversial structure.

It seems that here, too, an unnecessarily significant role is played by the belief we have instilled in us, which, it seems, draws its sources from realities created by the peculiarly abstracted truth of propositional sentences of formal logic. It is therefore worth reconsidering in what context it is legitimate to base our view on the principle of non-contradiction and its conceptual continuations, and when, on the other hand, the point of reference should be the principle of moderation, or proper measure, which among the Greeks played an equally central role. On the one hand, we are talking here about the principle of the excluded mean, and on the other, the golden mean (Kotarbiński, 2003 [1966], pp. 18–19). This principle of non-contradiction can already be found in Aristotle

(Greek: Ἀριστοτέλης – Aristotélēs, or: Aristotélis) in his *Hermeneutics* (Greek: Περὶ ἑρμηνείας – Peri hermeneias, or: Perí ermineías), which by the way – as Tadeusz Kotarbiński (2003 [1966], p. 18) rightly pointed out with a certain amount of irony – is also called the principle of contradiction, and which can be treated as a formula serving in the field of formal logic as a basis for deriving the law of the excluded middle, which in Latin is called *principium tertii exclusi*, or *tertium non datur*.

On the other hand, the belief emphasizing the absolutely primary position of the right measure, and therefore specific proportions, which can be found in various forms among many representatives of ancient Greek thought, is placed by Plato above the entrance to his Academy in the form of an ambiguous message: “Whoever does not know geometry should not enter here,” “Let no one untrained in geometry enter” or perhaps even: “Non-geometers are not allowed to enter” (Greek: ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσὶτω – ageōmétrētos mēdeis eisitō, or: ageoméritos mideís eisító), which in the French version are rendered, among others, as: “Nul ne doit entrer ici, s’il n’est géomètre,” and in German as: “Wer von Geometrie nichts versteht, hat hier keinen Zutritt,” which, for reasons not fully understood, in the cultural area of the Polish language was often translated in a version in which the original “geometry” was imperceptibly replaced by “mathematics,” and thus changing the fundamental double meaning of this formula (more on this topic: Saffrey, 1968, pp. 67–87; Szymczyński, 2022, pp. 395–396).

In turn, Aristotle (B6, 1106 b) expresses this perspective as the idea of the mean (Greek: μεσότης – mesótis, or: mesotes) in a famous fragment of his *Nicomachean Ethics* (Greek: Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια, *Ēthiká Nikomácheia*, or: Ithiká Nikomácheia):

“In the same way then an expert in any art avoids excess and deficiency, and seeks and adopts the mean – the mean that is not of the thing but relative to us” (Aristotle 1934 (B6, 1106 b)).

“Thus every knower of the excess and the deficiency avoids them, but seeks out the middle term and chooses this – yet not a middle belonging to the thing in question but rather the one relative to us” (Aristotle 2011, p. 34).

„Οὕτω δὴ πᾶς ἐπιστήμων τὴν ὑπερβολὴν μὲν καὶ τὴν ἑλλειψιν φεύγει, τὸ δὲ μέσον ζητεῖ καὶ τοῦθ’ αἰρεῖται, μέσον δὲ οὐ τὸ τοῦ πράγματος ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὸς ἡμᾶς.”

„Οὗτο δὲ πᾶς ἐπιστήμων τὴν ὑπερβολὴν μὲν καὶ τὴν ἑλλειψιν φέγει, τὸ δὲ μέσον ζητεῖ καὶ τοῦθ’ αἰρεῖται, μέσον δὲ οὐ τὸ τοῦ πράγματος ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὸς ἡμᾶς.”

Together with noticing that in contrast to the translation of H. Rackham (Aristotle, 1934), Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins in their translation (Aristotle, 2011) are replacing ‘the mean’ by ‘the middle’ and ‘the middle term’ as well, let us move on by accompanying this statement of Aristotle with an interpretative clarification by the distinguished promoter of knowledge about antiquity, Giovanni Reale:

“[...] ethical virtue is precisely mediated by two vices, one of which is reached through defect and the other through excess. It is obvious, for anyone who understood this doctrine of Aristotle, that the mediation is not only not mediocrity but it is its antithesis; the «correct proportion», in fact, is clearly beyond the extremes representing so to speak their overcoming, and hence as Aristotle puts it nicely it is a «culmination», viz., the most

elevated point of view of value, insofar as it marks the affirmation of reason over the nonrational” (Reale 1990: II 324).

„[...] la virtù etica è precisamente medietà tra due vizi, di cui l'uno è per difetto, l'altro per eccesso. È ovvio, per chi ha ben compreso questa dottrina di Aristotele, che la medietà non solo non è la mediocrità, ma ne è l'antitesi: il «giusto mezzo», infatti, è nettamente al di sopra degli estremi, rappresentando, così per dire, il loro superamento, e quindi, come ben dice Aristotele, un «culmine», cioè il punto più elevato dal punto di vista del valore, in quanto segna l'affermazione della ragione sull'irrazionale” (Reale, 1988, II 501).

Although, in this respect, this correct proportion (Italian: *la medietà*) should not only not be confused with mediocrity (Italian: *la mediocrità*), but should even be treated as its opposite, at the same time this fragment of the *Nicomachean Ethics* clearly proves that Aristotle, as it turns out, was fully aware of how much the games of contexts, which *de facto* constitute the essence of serious attempts at articulation and understanding within the boundaries of the world of life, could turn out to be complicated for the desired here unambiguousness of the image showing the relations between mental constructs and the words naming them. His words (Aristotle, B6 1107a) leave no doubt here when he states that the same thought-conceptual formation can be perceived from one perspective as the essence of what is in the middle (Greek μεσότης – mesótis), and from another perspective be an exemplification of what is radical:

“Hence while in respect of its substance and the definition that states what it really is in essence virtue is the observance of the mean, in point of excellence and rightness it is an extreme.” (Aristotle, 1934 (B6 1107a)).

“Thus, with respect to its being and the definition that states what it is, virtue is a mean; but with respect to what is best and the doing of something well, it is an extreme” (Aristotle, 2011, p. 35).

„Διὸ κατὰ μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι λέγοντα μεσότης ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετὴ, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ εὖ ἀκρότης.”

„Διὸ κατὰ μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι λέγοντα μεσότης ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετὴ, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ εὖ ἀκρότης.”

Not only does the Stagirite's positioning, let us say, from the outside reveal itself as potentially escaping from too easy classifications. He also notes (Aristotle, (B6 1107a)) the lack of a specific universality of the idea of the middle in the less relational, as above, and this time more substantial, dimension of the analyzed matter:

“Not every action or emotion however admits of the observance of a due mean. Indeed the very names of some directly imply evil, for instance malice, 3 shamelessness, envy, and, of actions, adultery, theft, murder. All these and similar actions and feelings are blamed as being bad in themselves; it is not the excess or deficiency of them that we blame.” (Aristotle, 1934 (B6 1107a)).

“But not every action or every passion admits of the mean, for some have names that are immediately associated with baseness—for example, spitefulness, shamelessness, envy, and, when it comes to actions, adultery, theft, and murder. For all these things, and those like them, are spoken of as being themselves base, rather than just their excesses or deficiencies” (Aristotle, 2011, p. 35).

„Οὐ πᾶσα δ' ἐπιδέχεται πράξεις οὐδὲ πᾶν πάθος τὴν μεσότητα· ἓνια γὰρ εὐθὺς ὠνόμασται συνευλημμένα μετὰ τῆς φανυλότητος, οἷον ἐπιχαιρεκακία ἀναισχυντία φθόνος, καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πράξεων μοιχεία κλοπὴ ἀνδροφονία· πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγεται τῷ αὐτῷ φαῦλα εἶναι, ἀλλ' οὐχ αἱ ὑπερβολαὶ αὐτῶν οὐδ' αἱ ἐλλείψεις.”

„Ou pása d' epidéchetai práxis oudé pán páthos tín mesótita: énia gár efthýs onómastai syneuilimména metá tís favlótitos, oíon epichairekakía anaischyntía fthónos, kaí epí tón práxeon moicheía klopí androfonía: pánta gár tafta kaí tá toiafta légetai tó aftá favla éinai, all' ouch ai ypervolai aftón oud' ai elleípseis.”

Let the above words of this great representative of ancient thought help us strengthen our conviction that it was rather a wishful thinking that led some of us to the view that, in the field of scientific inquiries devoted to social reality, that for each mental construct there will be an availability of one and only, single meaning, and therefore one and only, single name. Unfortunately, this is not the case, although such a belief can often be encountered in everyday language, where the various manifestations of influences, forces, power, and violence, both material and symbolic, can take on a variety of forms, from those depicted by Orwell to those depicted by Huxley, to name a few very prominent in this respect.

Such a complete unity of the signified (or indicated (French: *signifié*)), i.e. the conceptual mental-linguistic construct which would – in the opinion of the creator of this distinction created within the framework of structural linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure – reflect “what we think about” and the signifier (or indicating (French: *signifiant*)) within the framework of the sign (French: *signe*) can also occur in particular versions of the linguistic dimension of the field of exact sciences, where a name can actually play the role of pure designates, because, for example, it refers to an unambiguously definable aspect of material reality, or within the framework of fully abstract considerations.

Therefore François Jullien (1995, 2004, 2006) is right when, in the margins of his investigations devoted to attempts at a comparative approach to Greek and Chinese culture – in the spirit of the findings of another great hermeneut, Wilhelm Dilthey – he emphasizes both the presence of an optics examining the signified in its historical dimension (French: *le signifié historique*), and suggests that this division is too often understood as the conclusion of considerations, when in fact it should be their beginning (Szymczyński, 2020, 2022b). Having gained some useful knowledge from the above example about the various consequences – possible, perhaps unexpectedly, as a result of the highly contextual nature of the lingual dimension of the field of social reality sciences – we are somewhat better prepared to attempt an overview of the fundamental meanings of the concepts of theory and practice, starting from their etymological dimension.

Thus, when we discover that the word ‘theory’ is related to the words θεωρός – theorós ‘spectator, ‘watcher’; θέα – théa ‘view’; or ὁρᾶν – órān ‘to see,’ or even ‘to watch or to observe a spectacle,’ we are still far from finding even initially satisfactory knowledge, as the meaning of a single concept is not isolated from the entire cultural vocabulary. Bertrand Russell concisely presents this issue when, in his *History of Western Philosophy*, referring directly to the work of Francis M. Cornford (1912), he writes:

„Cornford [...] says that, in his opinion, The School of Pythagoras represents the main current of that mystical tradition which we have set in contrast with the scientific tendency.

[...] Pythagoreanism, he says, was a movement of reform in Orphism, and Orphism was a movement of reform in the worship of Dionysus. The opposition of the rational and the mystical, which runs all through history, first appears, among the Greeks, as an opposition between the Olympic gods and those other less civilized gods who had more affinity with the primitive beliefs dealt by anthropologists. In this division Pythagoras was on the side of mysticism, though his mysticism was of a peculiarly intellectual sort" (Russell, 1979, p. 52).

Russell reveals a strong connection between what is currently considered 'rational' and what is 'mystical,' surprisingly contrasting with contemporary expectations, along with assumptions about the status of mathematics that contradict our usual preconceptions. At the same time, this also reveals similarly surprising connections between the meaning of the concepts we are interested in here and specific social statuses. Desiring to present the specificity of the ancient Greek approach, which assumed the superiority of the contemplative life over the active one, the British intellectual this time cites the words of John Burnet:

„In this life, there are three kinds of men, just as there are three sorts of people who come to the Olympic Games. The lowest class is made up of those who come to buy and sell, the next above them are those who compete. Best of all, however, are those who come simply to look on" (Burnet, 1908, p. 108).

So such perceiver, or observer (Greek θεωρός – theorós, English spectator) are leading us to the word theory (Greek θεωρία – theoría, or θεωρία), which comes from the Ancient Greek θεωρέειν – theoréein, also appears in a shortened form as θεωρεῖν – theoreîn, and in everyday speech means "to observe, to consider, to look at," while in the language that was moving towards a specialist approach, already in the times of natural philosophers it referred to a contemplative-speculative approach to natural things. This perspective, which is generally accepted as constituting the origins of Western thought, can pose challenges when attempting to interpret it correctly, for, broadly speaking, its specificity lies in the strong interconnection of dimensions we would today define as physical and metaphysical. In other words, this contemplative-speculative engagement with the natural world was unequivocally linked to issues that would be labeled supernatural in our modern vocabulary. Theory for the Greeks, therefore, was primarily contemplation of the causes of existence, and in this sense, it addressed questions that, seen from today's perspective, would most often belong to two separate orders of inquiry.

In turn, practice (Greek: πράξις – práxis) in a general sense denotes conduct distinct from contemplative activity, that is, conduct devoted to theoretical considerations in the sense outlined above. In a somewhat narrower sense, however, this *práxis* indicates *doing* distinct from *making* understood as a productive activity, as reflected in Aristotle's division of the sciences. The practical (Greek: πρακτική – praktikí) is therefore work on oneself, that is, the moral dimension of our existence, and in this sense it stands in opposition to work, so to speak, not-over-oneself, that is, productive work. Here, it seems, we can find the beginnings of semantic distinctions, where the concept of theory (Greek θεωρία – theoría) finds strong connections with the concept of theoretical wisdom (Greek σοφία – sophía, or sofía), and the concept of practice (Greek πράξις – práxis) with the concept of practical wisdom (Greek φρόνησις – phrónesis), and the productive or poietic dimension of human existence with the word pragma (Greek πᾶγμα – prágma), which should be understood as an action (Reale, 2001, V 120, 192, 212–214).

Once again, many conclusions arise here at the same time, and the desire to articulate them all at once exceeds the possible conditions of interpersonal communication. It should be emphasized that in describing these conclusions, it is also easy to over-interpret, more or less consciously, which can also result from overly concise statements, which, in turn, mass culture, with its dogmas of immediacy, ease, and accessibility, tries to impose on us in various ways. For example, on the one hand, Bertrand Russell's insight presented above highlights the political and economic foundation that conditions the possibility of engaging in activities then described as theoretical. Those, then, which Aristotle, for example in his *Encouragement to Philosophy* (Greek: Προτρεπτικός – Protreptikós) defined as 'good, in the proper sense,' and to which he contrasted 'necessary' activities, leaving no room for any doubt that this 'good' possesses a much higher value than the 'necessary.' On the other hand, there is no doubt that from the Greek perspective, the realization of this ideal of contemplation was not limited solely to theoretical thought but assumed its strong impact on the practical dimension of the existence of those who were engaged in it. In this respect, Giovanni Reale emphasizes:

"One could therefore briefly say that *theorein* is a constant feature of Greek philosophy, sometimes emphasizing its speculative value, sometimes emphasizing its moral significance, *but always in such a way that both values mutually and structurally presuppose each other*. [...] The Greeks always considered a true philosopher only someone who demonstrated the ability to coherently connect thought with life, that is, someone who was able to be a teacher not only of knowledge but also of life" (Reale, 1989a, I 479; Reale, 1994, I 486 (transl.) T.R.S.).

„Potremmo, insomma, dire che la costante della filosofia greca è il *theorein*, ora accentuato nella sua valenza speculativa, ora nella sua valenza morale, *ma sempre in un modo tale che le due valenze si implicano reciprocamente in maniera strutturale*. [...] I Greci ritengono sempre vero filosofo solo colui che dimostrò di sapere realizzare una coerenza di pensiero e di vita, e, quindi, colui che seppe essere maestro non solo di pensiero ma anche di vita" (Reale, 1989a, I 479).

It is therefore visible that exegesis is often essential here at the most unexpected moments, and this is likely what the great practitioner and theorist of hermeneutics, Friedrich Schleiermacher, had in mind when he emphasized the shortcomings of defining hermeneutics as the art of interpreting only difficult passages of texts. These difficulties stem from the fact that some aspects of the beliefs we discover, both those of ancient and contemporary cultures different from our own, remain in fact close to our own, only to be completely different the next moment. For example, if we were to interpret the meaning of theoretical wisdom (Greek: σοφία – *sophía*) too clearly as referring exclusively to scientific knowledge in the modern sense of the word, we might have difficulty correctly interpreting the related Greek term 'sage' (Greek: σοφός – *sophós*).

Giovanni Reale and Roberto Radice argue in this respect that the word 'sage' (Italian: *saggio*, Polish: *mędrzec*) only partially reflects the Greek term σοφός – *sophós* and that in most cases this term emphasizes primarily the moral significance of a man's knowledge, rather than its meaning as theoretical (Reale, 1989b, p. 240). But here as well we are obliged to acknowledge a potentially far-reaching perspectivism of the relationship between this word and its individual interpretations, beginning from those with positive

content towards synonymous words, which, depending on the context, should be sometimes understood with their pejorative undertones.

One may encounter similar interpretive difficulties when considering Aristotle's understanding of the concept of 'physics' (Greek: φυσική – *physikí*), which in turn reveals a specific semantic opposition between the theoretical and the more practical ways of relating to the world of life, which were attributed to those who practiced such 'arts' (Greek: τέχνη – *téchnei*) as craftsmen or orators. Let us once again refer to the opinion of Giovanni Reale:

„The modern reader can be deceived by the word *physics*; for us, in fact, physics is identified with the science of nature understood as Galileo did, viz., *quantitatively*. Aristotle, instead, is in the opposite direction, his is not a quantitative science of nature, but a qualitative one; compared to modern physics, the physics of Aristotle is more than a *science*, it is an *ontology* or *metaphysics of the sensible*. We find, in sum, in it a *viewpoint of nature that is totally philosophical*; and this outlook, moreover, will endure up to the Galilean revolution” (Reale, 1990, II 293).

„Il lettore moderno, per la verità, può essere tratto in inganno dalla parola *fisica*; per noi, infatti, la fisica si identifica con la scienza della natura galileianamente intesa, vale a dire quantitativamente intesa. Aristotele, invece, è agli antipodi: la sua non è una scienza quantitativa della natura, ma una scienza *qualitativa*; paragonata alla fisica moderna, quella di Aristotele risulta, più che una *scienza*, una *ontologia* o *metafisica del sensibile*. Ci troviamo, insomma, di fronte a una *considerazione squisitamente filosofica della natura*: e sarà questo tipo di considerazione, del resto, che si protrarrà fino alla rivoluzione galileiana” (Reale, 1988, II 452).

The need for existence of a specific art of understanding – and perhaps at this point we can justifiably introduce some clarification by defining hermeneutics as the art of understanding of understanding – should no longer be questioned. This is especially true given that the entire legacy of the humanities, broadly defined, is packed with meanings, connections between similarities and differences, traces and trails, hidden in so many various ways. Surprisingly, many of these concepts remain viable into contemporary worlds of words and thoughts (Greek: λόγος και διάνοια – *lógos kai dianoia*), but such a long duration is actually a histories of transformations of meanings hidden under the same or similar labels, or histories of transformations of names for the same or similar conceptual constructs.

Returning to the meaning hidden in the Greek name *physics* (Greek: φυσική – *physikí*), let us note that – as this strictly philosophical, from our contemporary perspective, study of physis, or nature (Greek: φύσις – *phýsis*) – it occupies a significant place in the division of sciences presented by Aristotle (2013, p. 118 (E1 1025b)). Perhaps this is precisely the basis for revealing the ancient sources of meaning that underlie the concepts of theory and practice that interest us. This topic is found in Book Six, or Book E (Epsilon) of the *Metaphysics*, a treatise whose very name – of course – does not free us from further question marks. In relation to this intriguing detail, let us briefly mention that there is currently a consensus on the thesis that the very name *Metaphysics* (Greek: Τὰ Μετὰ Τὰ Φυσικά – *Ta Metá Ta Physiká*), which we use to describe this work today, does not come from its author, who himself called it ‘first philosophy’ or ‘theology.’

Aristotelian classification recognizes three types of sciences: first, theoretical sciences (Greek: θεωρητικὴν – *theoritikín*), which pursue knowledge for its own sake; second, practical sciences (Greek: πρακτικὴν – *praktikín*), whose goal is to find a way to achieve moral perfection; and third, productive or poietic sciences (Greek: ποιητικὴν – *poiitikín*), whose efforts focus on the performance or production of specific things. We can clearly see, then, that none of these three fundamental definitions coincides with what we might be inclined to assume from the perspective of our contemporary connotations, which would be based on currently accepted meanings.

Moreover, within the mechanisms that we should interpret from a strictly hermeneutical perspective in light of Hans-Georg Gadamer's principle of consequential history (German: *das Prinzip der Wirkungsgeschichte*), and from an articulatory and rhetorical perspective in the context of Umberto Eco's figure of the model reader (1979a, 1979b, 1994), we are constantly faced with various decisions that, for various reasons, introduce specific unifications in the field of conceptualizations. Thus, although Giovanni Reale is fully aware that Aristotle did not use the concept of *metaphysics*, he does not hesitate to employ this kind of articulatory formula when discussing this area, when he writes:

“The highest sciences in dignity and value are the first branch, in which *metaphysics*, *physics* (which also includes *psychology*), and *mathematics* are found” (Reale, 1990, II 265).

„Le più alte per dignità e valore sono le prime, che sono costituite dalla *metafisica*, dalla *fisica* (in cui è inclusa anche la *psicologia*) e dalla *matematica*” (Reale, 1988, II 403).

The point here is not to direct a scathing criticism at the great Italian scholar of Antiquity, but rather to use this example to emphasize the constant need for our sensitivity to the interplay of senses and their labels in a field full of subtle meanings. These, though they may be considered insignificant, often constitute the framework of what we call an initial approach, characterized by a distinct specificity both in comparison to everyday language and to specialized languages outside the field of social reality sciences.

This example also instructs us that the essential danger of misinterpretation paradoxically stems from the fact that these are not concepts that we would have to learn from scratch, but quite the opposite. Whether we like it or not, in the field of sciences devoted to social reality, we do not construct a conceptual framework from scratch, as is often the case in the field of exact sciences, which is clearly separated from our everyday world of life. Nor can we remain convinced that initial intuitions about the meaning of specific words and phrases will suffice to properly grasp their meanings, as is the case in the field of everyday life.

Everything begins here with the realization that, as social beings, we are cultural beings – and therefore, as a direct consequence of this fact, multicultural – as a result, we find ourselves facing a crucial dilemma, the more or less deliberate avoidance of which can be seen as a significant cause of the frequently proclaimed crisis of the humanities. The field of everyday life constitutes the natural conditions for the initial stages of socialization for each of us. It is in this perspective that we recognize the importance of the concept developed by the French cultural anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. His *habitus* figuratively defines a relatively elusive social dimension within which “culture becomes nature.”

Every professional explorer of the social reality taking their first steps in this thankless yet incredibly important profession is well aware that any sensible methodology begins with questioning the 'I' and the 'Mine' both with the capital letters; However, it seems that (a) this statement skews our contemporary insight too strongly toward material possessions, and perhaps (b) the increasingly mathematicised patterns of everyday life seem to offer only a binary choice, like an 'either-or.' Perhaps also (c) a certain inescapable logic of the contemporary world, which was perfectly captured by the author of the *Truth and Method* as the inexorable law of progressive industrialization (German: *Schrittgesetz der Industrialisierung*) (Gadamer, 1987, p. 45, 1998, pp. 27–28).

It is therefore worth considering the boundary conditions of our being-here in the field that constructs the starting points for all our further reflective-research-didactic activities, which, after all, are not without connections with the political-economic dimensions of the educational-academic reality, in the light of Aristotelian recommendations on the importance of searching for moderation or the middle (Greek μεσότης – mesótiis). Then, as representatives of the field of sciences of social reality, we should perhaps (ad a) pay more attention to these initial methodological assumptions, which are constantly being constituted in the space of constant tensions between us (both individually and collectively in various constellations) as persons-citizens, thrown into a particular existential situation, which is worth considering here as a certain specific version of the social contract (French: *contrat social*), and therefore, what is very significant, a certain complicated network of connections between rights and obligations), and us as persons-researchers after all *de facto* researching ourselves, but this time not in a dimension that takes into account only the tribal interests and values of my-our group, but along the direction taken by Max Weber in the form of the postulate of freedom from value judgments, trying our best to take into account all the complexities and challenges occurring here.

From this perspective (ad b), a clear-cut distinction between our person-citizen stance, with its evolving expectations regarding rights and obligations, and person-researcher of social reality in all its possible guises, remains beyond the realm of possibility. Physically, we do not have the luxury of unconditional choice for one of these two options, which in this sense constitute a kind of Weberian pure type and therefore, empirically, mark the beginning of work, and not its end. The struggle between what constitutes the field of politics and what constitutes the field of political science is the first of many layers forming the specificity of the field of social sciences and humanities.

No one wishes here to claim that such a task can be considered unproblematic, which is especially noticeable within the context of (ad c) the storm and pressure that recently has been continuously upending our expectations of everyday life, which, after all, remains the foundation for both the humanities and the exact sciences. In this light, the words of the eighty-year-old founder of philosophical hermeneutics, Hans-Georg Gadamer, are exceptionally educational:

“Despite the dissimilarity of their experiences, the two great rising continents of America and Russia should have been made equally sensible of their limits by the Second World War and its consequences. The endangered self-consciousness of our epoch is no longer defined so much by the shifts in these powers’ political interrelations or the fundamental dissimilarity of their economic and social systems, as by the inexorable law of progres-

sive industrialization, which applies in the same way to both of them.” (Gadamer, 1998, pp. 27–28).

„Der Zweite Weltkrieg und seine Folgen sollten den aufsteigenden Großkontinenten Amerika und Rußland bei aller Verschiedenheit ihrer Erfahrungen die eigenen Grenzen fühlbar machen. Es sind nicht mehr so sehr die machtpolitischen Verschiebungen im Verhältnis dieser Mächte zueinander und die Grundverschiedenheit ihrer Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftssysteme, als das unerbittliche, für sie beide in gleicher Weise geltende Schrittgesezt der Industrialisierung, das das gefährdete Selbstbewußtsein unserer Epoche bestimmt” (Gadamer, 1987, p. 45).

Let us add here that the task outlined in this manner cannot be simply accomplished ‘once and for all.’ Our *habitués*, our habits of the heart, constantly suggest specific opinions and judgments, reinforcing our beliefs and attitudes. These, of course, remain in a dynamic state of constant development, the result of all the inducements that continuously influence us in various ways. And from here, we come close to the seemingly ever-escalating claims to recognize specific, increasingly radical points of view, which, by radicalizing public discourse, push the boundaries from which we begin to speak of so-called populism. If we add to this that it is precisely in these fundamentally presented realities that the devoid of any, even the slightest doubt or hesitation, unquestionable expectation of certain results, fostered by the accelerating technological revolution in its digital appearance, is strengthened in the field of everyday existence, we gain the certainty that the tasks discussed here, facing representatives of the field of humanities and social sciences, cannot be interpreted as simple.

It is right here, where the remaining mostly hidden lingual dimension of our world of attempts at understanding becomes visible. It demands a certain attitude from us, directing our attention to those areas within which we can still exert some influence. The negative effects on the quality of the mental-linguistic-understanding dimension, which are particularly easily observed at the intersections of everyday linguistic life and the linguistic dimension of education at subsequent stages, are at least co-generated by this mathematization and technicization of our world of words and thoughts. Yet this does not have to be necessarily the case. After all, it is precisely this aspect of modernity that simultaneously signifies unprecedented access to cultural goods of all kinds in the history of human civilization. No one forces us to repeat half-truths suggesting the necessity of black-and-white choices. The Greeks knew about that, and Gadamer reminds us:

„Yet Aristotle well knew that it is not only in the joys of knowledge, of insight, of understanding things and people, measures, numbers, the world, and the divine that human self-understanding is fulfilled; he was also concerned with the diversity of human practices, which raises man above the constraints that bind other living creatures, and lets him as a social creature fashion his own ties, customs, and orders. Man stands out – in both respects in the construction of social practice, and being given to pure knowledge, seeing and thinking. He is the creature who has the *logos*: he has language, he has distance from the things that immediately press upon him, he is free to choose what is good and to know what is true – and he can even laugh. He is «theoretical creature» to the core” (Gadamer, 1998, p. 20).

„Doch wußte Aristoteles wohl: menschliches Selbstverständnis erfüllt sich nicht nur in den Freuden der Erkenntnis, der Einsicht, des Verstehens der Dinge und der Menschen, der

Maße und der Zahlen, der Welt und des Göttlichen – sein Interesse galt auch der Besonderheit menschlicher Lebenspraxis, die den Menschen aus den naturhaften Gebundenheiten der anderen Lebewesen heraushebt und ihn als gesellschaftliches Wesen seine eigenen Bindungen, Sitten und Ordnungen schaffen läßt. In beidem, im Aufbau seiner gesellschaftlichen Praxis wie in seiner Hingabe an reines Wissen, an das Sehen, an das Denken, steht der Mensch in seiner Auszeichnung. Er ist das Wesen, das den Logos hat: er hat die Sprache, er hat den Abstand zu dem unmittelbar Andrängenden, er ist frei im Wählen des Guten und frei zum Wissen des Wahren – und er kann sogar lachen. Im tiefsten Grunde ist er ein «theoretisches Wesen» (Gadamer, 1999, p. 40).

Theory and practice do not have to and should not be considered in simplified, absolute ‘either-or’ formulas, and the reflection offered by philosophical hermeneutics, along with its assumption of universality, also addresses this concern. Correspondingly, specific interpretative attempts carried out within the framework of the hermeneutics of multilinguisticity aim, in this spirit, to restore the value of in-depth reflection also in the form of a specific juxtaposition of formulations in individual languages, in the broad sense of this notion. This refers not only to diverse natural languages, but also to the linguistic polyphony of individual disciplines and domains of social science. Sometimes lost communication between them can only be rebuilt through a creative application of Gadamerian appeal for the rehabilitation of everyday speech. Only in this way can we restore what would constitute a legitimate interdisciplinarity within the fields of social sciences and humanities, in light of its specificity. For all these reasons, hermeneutics should not be wrongly defined solely as the art of interpreting texts, but rather as both the art of understanding of understanding and the art of transcending the division between theory and practice.

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Teoria i praktyka jako pojęcia funkcjonujące między językiem potocznym a językami specjalistycznymi. Wokół niektórych źródeł kryzysu humanistyki z perspektywy hermeneutyki wielojęzyczności

Streszczenie

Specyfikę statusu pojęć w polu nauk o rzeczywistości społecznej (czyli szeroko pojętej humanistyki, bądź nieco węższej: nauk społecznych i humanistycznych) określają trudności podczas prób uchwytywania precyzyjnego znaczenia pojęć, wśród których na szczególną uwagę zasługują te fundamentalne dla tego obszaru: „teoria”, „praktyka” oraz „hermeneutyka.” Poglobiony namysł nad tak ujętą specyfiką tej aktywności badawczej prowadzi do pytania: czy właśnie brak pogłębionej świadomości specyfiki tego rodzaju aktywności naukowej nie powinien być uznany za jedno z głównych źródeł obecnego tam kryzysu? Z kolei podjęcie próby skonfrontowania się z tak ujętym wyzwaniem ukazuje wagę starannego przededefiniowania założeń w odniesieniu do relacji między formą i treścią komunikacyjnej warstwy tego pola. W świetle określonych podobieństw i różnic między komunikacyjnymi wyznaniami (1) pola języka potocznego oraz (2) pola języka nauk ścisłych i (3) pola nauk o rzeczywistości społecznej – a zatem (ad 1) jednego obszaru języka świata życia, oraz (ad 2 i ad 3) dwóch odmiennych pól językowych o charakterze specjalistycznym – celem niniejszego tekstu jest ukazanie możliwych wyzwań w ramach prób jednoznacznego rozumienia terminów „teoria” i „praktyka”, co zrealizowane zostanie z perspektywy hermeneutyki wielojęzyczności.

Słowa kluczowe: teoria, praktyka, forma i treść, problematyzacja, interpretacja, przekład, rozumienie, sztuka, edukacja, język potoczny, języki specjalistyczne, metodologia, kryzys, kryzys humanistyki, krytyka, interdyscyplinarność, retoryka, retoryka wieloprzekładu, hermeneutyka, hermeneutyka filozoficzna, hermeneutyka wielojęzyczności

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