

## TROUBLES WITH THE HUMANITIES

In the contemporary humanities – as those who know the issue observe – there is not even a shade of any order. No one knows what disciplines belong to the humanities, what methods are used, what is their purpose. Simply, no one knows a thing. The humanities seem to be like an island to which people escape with the hope of finding solutions to their own problems. Yet, no one knows where to find it. “The humanities – writes Bloom - are like the great old Paris Flea Market where, amidst masses of junk, people with a good eye found castaway treasures that made them rich”<sup>1</sup>

## MEANDERS OF THE HUMANITIES

The humanities have begun to serve as a depositor of the whole classical heritage. Yet, they do not consider themselves to be the depositor of truth. Nowadays over the gate of the humanities there seems to be an inscription: “There is no truth, at least not here”. The humanities do not want to be a full and integral description of reality and to show the place of human person in this reality. They rather pretend to be a range of specializations. In order to avoid a confrontation with natural sciences the humanities believe that the escape into specialization is a scientific solution.

When the humanities use the great books of philosophers it is only to find views of the ancient thinkers on morality. They do not want to find out - even on the basis of Aristotle's ethics - what it means to be good. Yet, people are more interested in what it means to be a good human person, then in views on morality held by ancient Greeks. And the humanities are not able to take up that to this challenge.

Bloom notices: "Here one sees the traces of the Enlightenment's political project, which wanted precisely to render (...) old books, not dangerous. This project is one of the underlying causes, of the importance of the humanities (...). Professors of the humanities have long been desperate to make their subjects accord with modernity instead of a challenge to it (...). The effort to read books as their authors intended them to be read has been made into a crime, ever since "the intentional fallacy" was instituted. There are endless debates about methods - among Freudian criticism, Marxist criticism, New Criticism, Structuralism and Deconstructionism, and many others, all of which have in common the premise that what Plato or Dante had to say about reality is unimportant. These schools of criticism make the authors plants in a garden planned by a modern scholar, while their own garden-planning vocation is denied them. The writers ought to plant, or even bury, the scholar"<sup>2</sup>

For the humanities developed in this way it is indifferent what they investigate: Plato – a philosopher or Eurypides – a poet, Greek or Turk – it does not matter. Among the humanities –Bloom observes – only archeology and linguistics acquired a good reputation, as for them the content of great books does not matter. Archeology and linguistics function almost like natural sciences. Philologies and literary studies constitute similar cases. Literature is only a supplement to literary studies. In this case studies do not concern the content of books and truths they contain, but it concerns the language - its structure and specificity. This is why philologists rise to the position of “authority” with regard to the content of great books, although they do not understand the message or truths contained in those books. And they do not understand them, because they do not take analyzed books seriously. Books are just excuses to perform verification of some proposed hypotheses or theories.

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<sup>1</sup> Allan Bloom "The Closing of the American Mind", New York 1987, s. 371.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, s. 374-375.

## MEANDERS OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy has also been included into the humanities. In the name of democracy among disciplines philosophy has been deprived the priority and character of being scientific which was proper to it. It has been forgotten that philosophy comprehends the entire reality in its considerations and discloses final causes of all things; that philosophy accompanied the process of emerging of various sciences and of establishing their proper order.

Nowadays science does not need philosophy, and therefore it is left with ideology and myth. Yet philosophy has always possessed a plan of the whole edifice. It provided us with an understanding of the world of people and things. It disclosed the foundations of truth, good and beauty on which other sciences could be based. However, modern philosophy is anymore neither a way of living nor a sovereign science among others. In universities philosophy is almost dead and even if it disappeared from universities' curriculum, this fact would probably go unnoticed. **This is because nowadays philosophy - which has become reduced to logic - has more in common with natural sciences** than with philosophy understood as attempts to answer the everlasting human questions.

Contemporary philosophy is **dominated mostly by positivism and the philosophy of language. Those two – as Bloom rightly points out– effectively deter students from philosophy, for they do not take up any essential problems, such** problems which were considered in great books of Plato, Aristotle or St. Tomas Aquinas.

In its present form philosophy is at most one of the disciplines of the humanities. It is not the *scientia prima*. With the domination of positivistic and analytic philosophy there has disappeared a great philosophical tradition, i.e. classical philosophy. The language of philosophy has become a jargon; not much has been left of philosophy. As an effect of this unification project comparative literature has began to appear. "Philosophology" is the only thing that remained of philosophy as such. As Bloom correctly notices - Comparative literature of our time "has now fallen largely into the hands of a group of professors who are influenced by the post- Sartrean generation of Parisian Heideggerians, in particular Derrida, Foucault and Barthes. The school is called Deconstructionism, and it is the last, predictable, stage in the suppression of reason and the denial of the possibility of truth in the name of philosophy" (ibidem p. 379). Creativity of an interpreter is more important than a text itself. Thus, there is no text - just an interpretation. Any knowledge concerning what those texts say has become an unimportant second-rate issue. An impressive jargon invented by contemporary philosophers is fascinating for many and in effect most really important issues are set aside.

It is then not surprising that philosophy, deprived its core and place as philosophy, in its search for an imagined emporium will bend toward common ordinary "democratic" tastes and likings. The humanities - in consequence of the deformation of philosophy - suffer the same fate. Thus, good philosophy remains the only defense of both human reason and the humanities. Good philosophy is a philosophy which draws on the tradition and methods of classical philosophy. This cannot however be done without the thorough study of works of great thinkers belonging to classical philosophy – Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas and others. And we need to study them in order find in their works the method which would allow us to grasp the entirety of being, and especially of human being. This should prevent us from giving our thinking for nothing and from losing any understanding of the world of persons and things.

## THE HUMANITIES – WHAT THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DEPEND ON

The humanities (lat. *Humanus* – human) is a group of disciplines whose subject is historical human beings investigated under the aspect of reasons and conditions of their decisions as well as of actions, and results of those actions (states of affairs and objects) because of their cultural significance (finality).

The humanities are inseparably coupled with philosophy - both with its cognitive achievements and its deformations. Any erroneous philosophy (pseudo-philosophy) – as much as a proper one - conditions culture and influences its idea-thought dimension. Yet, any erroneous philosophy creates pseudo-culture, condemning people who live in it to a permanent crisis, i.e. such a state of mind in which people stop to understand the world, themselves and their own actions. This consequence touches also the humanities. So, one of the key conditions of developing the humanities, a guarantee of its versatility and cognitive impartiality, is the thorough knowledge of philosophy: its history and its competing conceptions with their own visions of the universe and human being. The knowledge of philosophical achievements is a guarantee of noticing and identifying ideological backgrounds conditioning of human actions by ideas, as well as inevitable consequences of those actions. The human being by nature aims at good but - deluded by mistakes or falsehoods - acts against their own intentions and realizes the evil. Moreover, thanks to the knowledge and understanding of philosophy, a humanist will rightly choose such a philosophy which avoids mistakes of apriorism and reductionism in the cognition of the world, of human being, and of the goal of human culture. This will help to cognize a universal and objective criterion for assessing human actions, what in turn will prevent the thinker from adopting subjectivism and relativism in explanations.

Some historical and subject-matter research into the problem of the humanities and philosophy showed that there is no such thing as philosophy or the humanities "in general". There exist three main philosophical trends and three conceptions of the humanities conditioned by those trends. Thus, this shows that the truth about the humanities depends on the truth about philosophy, and so the humanist must know and understand philosophy. Knowing philosophy will allow her or him to avoid philosophizing "gropingly" and uncritical drawing on philosophical fashions and their ideologies. This will also allow one to observe competences of a particular theory of humanistic cognition as well as competences of philosophy within the theory of the humanities. One of the tasks of philosophy is to determine the subject, method and goal of the humanities as well as to develop a universal criterion for evaluating human cultural activity. The humanistic cognition is a type of scientific cognition, and the humanities belong (together with natural and social sciences) to the group of so called particular sciences. The pantheon of sciences is completed by formal sciences, philosophy and theology.

The material subject-matter of the humanities are cultural facts, results of purposeful human activities. Its formal subject-matter (aspect) is a culture-creative character of those facts. The method of the humanities consists of three strictly connected cognitive activities: 1) describing a fact 2) grasping of that fact's causes – formal, material, efficient and final – which at the same time are the reasons of its cognizability; 3) evaluating that fact by indicating its place in the edifice of human culture. The objective goal of the humanities is a theoretical explanation of cultural facts, whereas its subjective goal is to understand historical human beings and their cultural activities.

It is hard to develop the humanities in a reliable way. This needs not only wide and deep knowledge, but also personal maturity. Thus, for a long time the humanities were said to be "a ripen fruit of late age". The humanities are necessary in culture, because their final purpose is *humanitas* – the humanness of a human, that is all what is included in the human potentialized, rational and free nature, and all towards which the human transcends oneself,

struggling cognitively and morally with the world one finds. Thanks to the humanities experience of one human being becomes the experience of all human being and acquires a paradigmatic dimension in human culture. This is why the humanities received the name of the *Magistra vitae*.

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## ENCYCLOPEDIAS IN THE FACE OF IDEOLOGIES

One of the greatest dangers for encyclopedia is its ideologization. Ideologization appears in different forms. Before the French Revolution ideologization was occurring indirectly in the name of science understood in a peculiar way. This method was employed by the Great French Encyclopedia in the struggle with the Church and Christianity having the goal of overcoming “the Christian world view” in mind.

After the Bolshevik Revolution not only religion but the whole western tradition was attacked as capitalistic and bourgeois. The language of communist encyclopedias was straightforwardly ideological, for it directly appealed to categories developed by Marks, Engels or Lenin. This procedure was quite efficient in the Soviet Union because of general illiteracy and ignorance. Yet, the translations of those encyclopedias done in the countries belonging to the communist bloc which - like Poland - have rich cultural traditions just raised laugh and embarrassment.

Has today - after the collapse of communism, in the age of computers, of the Internet and marketing – the influence of ideologies on encyclopedias come to an end? One can doubt it. Still entries are written by people who have certain competences; an encyclopedia is published by a certain publishing house which establishes a certain ideological profile. There is no way of eliminating the presence of a human factor. However, an average reader is not any more capable of recognizing the scope of manipulation - only a specialist can. An average reader receives the final product.

In one of the newest philosophical encyclopedias – ten-volume *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, one can easily trace the influence of the newest ideology - the “political correctness”. The political correctness shapes a lot of entries, like “abortion”, “sex” and “marriage”. With its specific charm it quite often disregards or even omits the middle-age philosophical tradition (Dr A. Lekka-Kowalik indicated this point in her paper: *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy: between the methodological rigor and political correctness*, “Człowiek w kulturze” 15/2003).

Thus, the question arises: is it possible to avoid ideologization? Yes, it is possible. It takes place when presenting a view or a problem reveals the reasons of its acceptance or rejection and those reasons take into account real states of affairs. In philosophy, it is easy to get tangled or even become enchanted by cherished convictions or by the coherence of a system. However, for philosophy there are two most sensitive points: reality and historicism. The principal category for research must be truth, for without truth there is no reference to reality. Also each philosophical problem has its own history which is an inner part of that problem. Thus, it is so important to respect the entire philosophical tradition which cannot be arbitrarily started from Hume or Kant.

Ideologization means the primacy of ideology over reality – a certain *a priori*. An error or mistake can happen in any human work. However, the ideology in a planned way cuts off cognition from reality and thereby does not allow a reader to verify studied texts. In the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy, published by the Polish Society of Thomas Aquinas the danger of ideologization is avoided, because it is written in the spirit of “theoria”, where the main purpose of cognition is truth. This is why it is possible to expose ideologization present in many philosophical problems and views while referring to this work.

Encyclopedias are not an invention of modern thinkers, all the more contemporary ones. They appeared in antiquity as well as in the middle ages. As a matter of fact the name itself – even if it is a neologism created in 1959 – refers to the Greek tradition. In distinction to dictionaries the encyclopedia presents not only the meaning of words but also some basic knowledge about a certain issue. Today this image of encyclopedia is mostly created by big advertising campaigns of many contemporary publishing houses in order to generate a great sale and profit connected with it. Yet, if we analyze the process of encyclopedia's creation

into primal stages, we may notice that during this process there may be a lot of interferences of an ideological character which later can be deftly covered up. It concerns both what is included into an encyclopedia as well as what is missing but should be included.

Specialist works have small editions and therefore do not form mass consciousness, not even the consciousness of an intellectual elites. Encyclopedias usually have much bigger editions, and therefore they create an opportunity to manipulate in many ways in the name of objectivity.

There were encyclopedias universal and specialist (among them also encyclopedias of philosophy). So what would be their most characteristic feature in the eyes of an average contemporary reader? Objectivity and impartiality. For literature and scientific writings bear a mark of their authors, e.g. *Trilogy* of Sienkiewicz, or *Metaphysics* of Aristotle and one can weaken the presented view by saying that this is a view of a certain person, whereas an encyclopedia makes an impression to be an impersonal work in which knowledge speaks for itself. This is how many contemporary encyclopedias should be developed and published. A ordinarily educated reader from time to time needs to find a piece of information – even when solving crosswords; a student wants to broaden his or her knowledge acquired from textbooks; a journalist or writer needs to complete some specialist knowledge. This is why customers have enormous confidence in encyclopedias.

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## THE ENCYCLOPEDIA – HOW DOES IT COME INTO BEING?

**Editors' effort to prepare this type of collective work like an encyclopedia is especially important and responsible. These are editors who partially give a coherent shape to the whole. Each of the entries went through multiple corrections. About their work and the content of The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy there express their opinions the managing editors responsible for the sections of Polish philosophy, ethics, philosophy of nature, contemporary philosophy and methodology, and Eastern Philosophy.**

**One of the goals of the Universal Encyclopaedia of Philosophy is – as the editors inform – was to bring to light and promote Polish philosophical thought, and to present its contribution into philosophical and scientific culture in general. Which names would you especially bring to readers' attention?**

**Dr Kazimierz Wójcik**

(the managing editor of the section: Polish philosophy)

It is obvious that encyclopedias of various types are a source of information about the world and human being, and that they play an important role in bringing up and educating. Here a special role is played by encyclopedias of philosophy. This is due to the fact that philosophy is the foundation of culture - both universal culture and a culture of particular nations. In Poland the Encyclopaedia becomes a very significant work. This is the reason why it is a special concern of its Editors to bring to light and to promote Polish philosophical thought as well as to present its contribution to general philosophical and scientific culture. Promoting this contribution is an obligation of the editors and co-workers of the Encyclopedia towards the Polish nation.

In these three volumes of the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy published so far there are more than 100 entries on Polish thinkers working in science and culture, who were active in different epochs and in different scientific environments in Poland and abroad. Limiting myself just to the last – third - volume of the Encyclopedia I can show as examples several outstanding people from different epochs: Franciszek of Brzeg (1370 – 1432) – a leading figure in the first 30 years of the University of Cracow activity after its restoration and one of the founding fathers of Cracow Theological School, a person who educated many outstanding professors of theology in the first half of the XV century. Another thinker is Michał Falkener of Wrocław (1460 – 1534) – almost a century younger than Franciszek of Brzeg, a person broadly educated (philosophy, theology, astronomy), one of the most active professors of the University of Cracow at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, extremely popular among students. Michał Falkener was the only person who commented on “Quaestiones quodlibetales” of Thomas Aquinas; Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski (1503 – 1572) – a political writer, moralist and theologian, concerned to reform Poland (a very contemporary issue!) who derived so much from the works of his great ancestors such as Stanisław of Skarbimierz and Paweł Włodkowic; Jerzy Gengel [(1657 – 1727) - a Jesuit, philosopher and theologian, publicist and famous polemicist, a critic of atheism and of philosophy developed by Descartes whose certain claims are considered to be a source of atheism, a defender of Aristotle and peripatetic philosophy.

In the third volume of the Encyclopedia there were also entries on a few significant scholars belonging to the contemporary epoch such as: Gabryl Franciszek, Garaniewicz Jan, Gansiniec Ryszard, Gawecki Bolesław.

So one should hope that when the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy is translated into English, the contribution of Polish scholars into our scientific and cultural heritage will be noticed and appreciated.

**You are one of the managing editors of a particular section of The Encyclopedia. What duties do those editors have? How does the editor find authors from foreign countries?**

**Dr Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik**

(the section: methodology of sciences, contemporary philosophy)

There are a number of duties assigned to the section managing editors: (1) making substantive correction, i.e. editing a text according to particular subject sections. This encompasses evaluating of accuracy and a synthetic character of outlining an issue, controlling dates, places and quotations made in an entry, correcting possible factual errors and completing a bibliography; (2) preparing of an entry in accordance with the structure accepted by the Editorial Committee and introducing subtitles where necessary; (3) controlling the list of proposed entries, completing it if needed, and suggesting authors for entries. And when the entry is delivered to be corrected, the editor also has a duty to keep in touch with its author in order to discuss corrections and changes.

I am the managing editor of the section entitled: methodology of sciences and contemporary philosophy. Both, the methodology of sciences and contemporary philosophy give rise to two kinds of difficulties. One has its source in the fact that in the XX century there was a sort of “explosion of philosophies”. So one needs to make a reasonable selection – which of trends, issues and names have an authentic and long-lasting influence on the growth of philosophy, and which are just temporary fashions. In this point another difficulty arises – while elaborating entries belonging to the contemporary philosophy (and this encompasses most of the entries from the area of methodology) the editor has no time distance. This makes it very difficult to point unambiguously to the most important aspects, and quite often there are completely opposite interpretations of contemporary views which has to be taken into consideration in an entry. Moreover, in the case of those philosophers who are still alive (we have accepted that only philosophers over 80 will be included) there is an additional difficulty: sometimes their own interpretation of their own legacy is different than that of commentators and followers. Here one needs to remember about the specific methodological status of philosophy: philosophy examines its own foundations, and this is not done by any other science. The conception of physics does not belong to physics but to the history of science. In contrast, a conception of philosophy and the history of philosophy already constitute the domain of philosophy. In other words – it is impossible to write a philosophical entry aphilosophically. The editor of a section must be aware of this peculiarity, and the “standpoint” of an entry's author must be clear, what in the case of writing about contemporary trends is sometimes very complicated indeed.

My section cooperates with many foreign authors, mostly from the Anglo-Saxon world. Editors should have good knowledge on what is going on in the philosophical disciplines belonging to their sections. She or he is supposed to know the most important concepts, problems and names. Contemporary means of communication – especially the Internet – allow to “fish out” authors who are considered as main figures in a certain area and to send a proposal to write an entry. But I ask only those thinkers, who share the conviction that philosophy has cognitive goals and is subjected to the logico-methodological rigor. Usually even if philosophers I have asked cannot write an entry themselves, they indicate another philosopher who is worthy to be asked, and sometimes they even forward my request themselves. This is how I enlisted the cooperation of Barry Smith (the entry on J. Daubert), Christine Tappolet (the entry on moral dilemmas) or Harry Reader (the entry on F.



Kaufmann). The entries are translated into Polish but – as the philosophy of language states – each translation is to a certain degree an interpretation. This is still another difficulty that the editor needs to realize. In case of any doubts the editor starts to correspond with the author of an entry until the proper version is elaborated. It is so, because this is the author who takes a responsibility for the content of an entry even if the editor gives a final shape to it. In the case of foreign language entries I also complete a bibliography by indicating translations of its items into Polish – if exist – and adding works of Polish thinkers.

**The Encyclopedia is exceptional with regard to the fact that – what was not the case with any other encyclopedia – it presents achievements of Eastern philosophies (oriental philosophies) including that of India, China, Korea, Japan and Africa. What is the main purpose of this venture? Is that problematic not foreign to the mentality of the person educated on Greek philosophy?**

**Dr Maciej Zięba**  
(Eastern philosophy)

Oriental philosophies – Indian, Chinese, Japanese and also Tibetan, Korean, Vietnamese and Indonesian – appear ever more often in various philosophical encyclopedias all over the world. However, the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy is the first one where those philosophies appear all together and are represented on such a large scale. We use works of other encyclopedia's publishers when choosing entries, but our set of entries is the richest in each of the domains listed above. Thereby we wanted to fulfill the postulate of “universality” in the presentation of achievements of human philosophical thought - the universal human effort to understand reality. Two civilizational circles of Asia have philosophical traditions comparable to the Mediterranean tradition – equally old and very rich in solutions. These are the Indian civilization (from Indochina to Indonesia, from Tibet to Mongolia) and the far-East civilization (spreading from China to all other countries of this region where it has been creatively developed. The trend of thought joining those two cultural circles was and is Buddhism.

Whoever wants to get acquainted reliably and deeply with this thought will find in The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy (volume I-III: A-Gn) about 150 relevant entries. There are multicolumn survey entries as well as shorter entries presenting philosophical schools, trends and currents, thinkers who are significant but often unknown in our tradition, and the most important concepts elaborated in those circles.

In The Encyclopedia one finds also philosophies of ancient Egypt, as well as Arabic-Persian (islamic) and Jewish philosophies but we include them into the Mediterranean tradition.

In our Encyclopedia African philosophy was included into the entry “ethnophilosophy”, because it is the most common form in which it appears. Ethnophilosophy is a kind of research which from legends, folk beliefs, poetry, proverbs, rituals etc., and even from the structure of African tribe languages tries to extract their vision of the world – and after working it out to present it as e.g. “Rwandans’ metaphysics”, “Akans’ epistemology”, “Yourbons’ anthropology” or “Dogons’ cosmology”. In this way there were obtained very interesting visions of a dynamic world which can be grasped only holistically, the world where various, - unknown in Europe - types of causality are working (e.g. magic, symbolic, asynchronic and in-future) – so the world which sometimes can be better cognized in a symbolic way rather than in a real one. It is the world where humans are part of nature (being in harmony or disharmony with it) and first of all they are social beings, depending not only on other actual members of their society but also e.g. on spirits of their ancestors or far-in-future descendants with whom they are connected by a specific kind of “participation” (ubuntu).

There was an objection formulated that philosophy understood in this way is in fact a philosophy of an anthropologist or ethnologist who investigates a particular tribe rather than that of a “philosopher” from that tribe and that it tries to unify what is different (various tribes have different visions of reality and there is no one pan-African vision). The attempt to overcome this situation was a stream of “wisdom philosophy” – searching for individual wise people, who - like Socrates - could give answers to questions asked by life (and the researcher). As a positive aspect of ethnophilosophy one considers the return to human everyday experience. One even suggests that it is a remedy for the stagnation of Euro-American philosophy: “field research” should replace “theoretical experiments” which are so preferred by philosophers of the analytical orientation.

African philosophy was quite often considered to be an ideology of fight with white man for the African identity (quite often under an influence of ideals of American or Bolshevik revolutions). Despite such aims this philosophy developed only in the languages of ex-colonizers – French and English. An instrumental approach to philosophy by politicians many times made a lot of African thinkers disappointed with it.

**You are responsible for the section of the philosophy of nature. Which contemporary discussions from that area are presented in the III volume of the Encyclopedia?**

**Dr Zenon Roskal**  
(philosophy of nature)

The structure of any encyclopedia is characterized by the fact that the sequence of issues is established by the sequence of letters in the alphabet. However, it turns out that the third volume of The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy - which encompasses the entries starting from the letter E to Gn - contains entries on issues which are particularly significant for the problematics of the philosophy of nature. I mean here the problematics *stricto* cosmological as well as a group of issues discussed in the area of the so-called philosophy of living nature. In this volume we can find not only issues - recently vividly discussed - belonging the history of cosmology (elaborated in the entries such as “geocentrism”, “heliocentrism”, “theory of epicycles”, “ether”) but also issues which are in the very heart of world-view discussions ( such as “evolutionism”, or “theory of evolution”).

In this volume one can also find very interesting biographies of thinkers working in the domain of the philosophy of nature in a broad sense of this term. It is enough to list philosophers such as: Filolaos, Epicurus, Gassendi, Galileo, Gawecki. It is also worthwhile to note that the entry “philosophy of nature” itself is included in the third volume of the Encyclopedia.

**The problematics of morality is one of the most important issues which contemporary people are confronted with. In volume III of the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy, beside individual entries on moral issues, there is also the entry “ethics”. How is this entry built and what is its peculiarity? What can reader find inside it?**

**Dr Marek Czachorowski**  
(ethics)

The third volume of the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy encompasses, *inter alia*, the most important entry in the area of philosophico-moral problematics – the entry presenting the subject-matter of ethics. This entry on the one hand introduces the reader to the subject, method and various conceptions of ethics, and on the other - to the essence and

peculiarity of human moral actions which acquire their evaluation in the context of the final goal.

Finally, the reader may get acquainted with the variety of understandings of morality and ethics in different cultural traditions. The third volume also includes the presentation how ethics (and moral norms accepted on its base) is understood in Indian, Chinese and Japanese philosophy.

*collected by Katarzyna Stepień*

## HUMAN PERSON AS A RELIGIOUS BEING

Religion as a conscious and free relation of human being with the Transcendence (God) is the most important human fact, for it reveals the transcendental dimension of human being and the highest fulfillment of human person. As human history shows religion is a universal fact (from the beginning of human existence) and is irremovable. All attempts at eliminating religion from human life and culture – including those made since the Enlightenment (Marx and his followers, Nietzsche, Freud, Sartre) were not able to destroy it entirely. Moreover, experience shows that the elimination of God and religion – the so-called “death of God” – leads to extremely dangerous turbulences in human life and culture and it leads to the “death of human being”.

One cannot understand the human without God and - how since the first day of His pontificate John Paul II contentiously repeats – human being cannot be understood without Christ. He also points at the irreplaceable place of religion in culture: “An axis of each culture is a stance of a human in the face of the biggest mystery, the Mystery of God” ( *Centessimus Annus*, 23).

The indestructibility of the notion of God in human thought of all times as well as the durability of religion in its various manifestations disclose the “religious structure of the human being”. Human as a person is “religious being”. Nowadays in the circle of our culture religiousness as an essential element of humanity – the religious structure of a human – is presented in two ways. In the phenomenology of religion (M. Scheler, M. Eliade, R. Otto) one accepts original religious experience, and considers *sacrum* as an element of human consciousness. Thus, religious acts belong to the essence of human consciousness (human thinking).

According to the realistic classical philosophy the religiousness of a human being is related to the way in which the human exists, with the experience of the contingency of human existence and at the same time the experience of human transcendence through acts of cognition and love. Human being by its nature is able to recognize that God exists and to consider Him the ultimate source of existence, The Highest Good at which the human person aims and who is able to fulfill the "potentiality" of human cognition and love.

Thus, the openness to God and the possibility of being connected to Him have their source in the structure of human being (the human being has a religious structure – one is *homo religiosus*). Any realization of this possibility has a conscious and free character – it is a personal act. The basic religious act is then a decision – the conscious and free choice of God – constantly repeated in religious acts.

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## POLISH PHILOSOPHY IN VOLUME V OF THE UNIVERSAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY

As the first original Polish philosophical encyclopedia *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is an exceptional work in Polish writings. Moreover it is dedicated to the “Polish Nation through the hands of the Holy Father John Paul II - the most eminent Son of this Nation”. The authors and editors of the Encyclopedia accepted – for these two reasons – as one of their main tasks to elaborate carefully and promote Polish philosophical thought. Especially, they wish to present the contribution of Polish thinkers to universal philosophical and scientific culture (the planned translation of the Encyclopedia into English will also further that aim). In four volumes of the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy published so far there are more than 350 entries concerning Polish thinkers working in science and culture, in different epochs and scientific environments both in Poland and abroad.

In volume V there are more than 73 biographies of Polish philosophers. Each of them includes some information about their life, activities and positions held as well as about their views and interpretations of reality. So even the most superficial review of the content of volume V allows us to perceive the richness of Polish philosophical thought and the complexity of its history (for example the tragic lack of independence during the partitions or during the rule of the Marxist ideology). Accordingly to the principle accepted by the editors in the Encyclopedia there are not only biographies of thinkers developing philosophy professionally, but also of those people of culture whose work (e.g. writing) was somehow connected to philosophy (for example by some kinds of inspiration).

In the latest - already fifth - volume of the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy we find the biographies such thinkers as: Jan of Raciborsk (1500-1553), a professor of the University of Cracow, who emphasized a high position of metaphysics among other sciences and claimed that metaphysics as the contemplation of the first and highest Being is the knowledge that brings happiness; Jan of Trzciana (1510-1567), a philosopher and professor of Cracow Academy, who in his work *Da natura ac dignitate hominis* presented the concept of reality stemming from the patristic tradition, but - first in Poland – with a strong emphasis on the unique place of human being in the universe as the being that exceeds the whole nature and is the only rightful ruler of the world and the most wonderful creation of God.; Jan Leopolita Nycz (1532-1572) - a theologian, preacher, publisher and a proof-reader of the first catholic translation of the Bible (published in Cracow in 1561 in Polish and German, called from his name Leopolita's Bible); Marek Korona (1590-1651), a philosopher, theologian, polemic writer, listed among the most significant Conventual Franciscans in Poland in the XVII century. In his work *Directorium...* he made an attempt - one of the first in Polish writings - to translate into Polish the Latin logical and philosophical terminology; Andrzej Kochanowski (1618-1667) - a preacher and philosopher, the author of one of the most significant philosophical works of the XVII century from the area of metaphysics which considered to be the most extensive modern outline of metaphysics in Poland; Adam Kochański (1631-1700) - a mathematician, physician, philologist, the only Pole who in that period worked in exact sciences in Europe. His biography presents a variety of interests and achievements: “(...) the issues he was working on: math tables for trigonometric functions, construction of arithmetic machine, universal language, logical symbols, the culture and language of China, astronomic observations” etc. Jan Kowalski (1711-1782) - a philosopher, theologian. As the first of Jesuits in Poland he employed Polish to philosophical deliberations; Ferdynand Januszowski (died 1712) - born in a polonized German family, a philosopher and moral theologian, the author of particular significance for Polish philosophical textbooks. His *Summa philosophica* was [...] in Dominican schools a base for lectures until the first half of the XVIII century; Wojciech B. Jastrzębowski (1799-1882) - a natural scientist, educator and philosopher, the inventor *inter alia* a device for drawing a compass. He was elaborating

meteorological observations in Warsaw, was an expert of botanic and one of the first authors of the XIX century who performed a systematic reflection on human work, making a foundation for the so-called ergonomics (with the claim that what it is work that can educate people properly), the father of rational philosophy of nature. Alfred Kozbrzycki (1879-1950) - a philosopher and methodologist, the founder of the general semantics movement and of the Institute Of General Semantics in Chicago. Władysław M. Kozłowski (1858-1935) - a philosopher and sociologist, the editor of the botanic section in the Great Illustrated Encyclopedia, and researcher examining the relation between natural sciences and philosophy (metaphysics). He was the only Polish philosopher who in years 1901-1934 took part in all international philosophical congresses, the author of more than 600 works of different character in many fields; Eugeniusz Jarra (1881-1973) - a lawyer and historian of the philosophy of law and political thought. After the Second World War he was a lecturer on the philosophy of law at the University of Oxford, one of the greatest historians of the philosophy of law and expert on Polish philosophy of law.

The group of thinkers associated with Lublin School of Philosophy and the Catholic University of Lublin is opened with the biography of Rev. Józef Iwanicki (1902-1955) - a philosopher, logician, and methodologist, the Rector of the Catholic University in the years 1951-1956 and the Head of the Department of Methodology of Science (he was then the Rector of the Academy of Catholic Theology in the years 1965-1972). Another important figure was Jerzy D. M. Kalinowski (1916-2000) - a philosopher, logician, and historian of philosophy and logics, philosopher of law, the author of a system modern logic of norms, one of two in the world. Kalinowski was in the years 1952-1957 the Dean of the Department of philosophy. He reorganized the whole Department, solving the problem of personnel shortage, enriching the curriculum with new subjects, and educating young scientific staff. His organizational and scientific works helped the Lublin School of Philosophy to come into existence. After he had moved to France in 1958 Kalinowski was creatively working on the philosophy of law and on logic, leaving more than 270 scientific publications. His works contributed to the promotion of Polish semiotic and logic in the West. The next significant person in the Lublin philosophy was Rev. Stanisław Kamiński (1919-1986) - a methodologist of sciences, philosopher, theoretician and historian of science, co-founder of Lublin School of Philosophy, and author of more than 300 works. Rev. Kamiński was the Head of the Department of Logics, Methodology and Theory of Cognition (the Department included these three chairs), the Director of the Section of Theoretical Philosophy, the Dean of the Faculty of Christian Philosophy (in the years 1970-1975, 1977-1979, 1981-1986). Rev. Kamiński - as a wonderful teacher endowed with a great sense of humor, and as a demanding examiner - became a living legend. One should also mention Rev. Kazimierz Kłósak (1911-1982), a neo-scholastic philosopher. Rev. Kłósak was a co-founder of the semi-annual journal of the Academy of Catholic Theology "*Studia Philosophiae Christianae*" and the annual of the Polish Theological Association "*Analecta Cracoviensia*".

In volume V of *the Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy* there are biographies of the representatives of another - well known in Poland and abroad - Polish school of philosophy: Lvov-Warsaw School. Among them are the biographies of: Janina Kotarbińska (1901-1977), Maria Kokoszyńska-Lutman (1905-1980), Stanisław Kaczorowski (1888-1971) who worked in mathematical logic, and was an editor of the series "Highschool Philosophical Library" within which more than ten volumes of philosophical writings were published.

Apart from philosophers in V volume of Encyclopedia - like in all previous volumes - there are biographies of Polish writers, poets, activists, teachers and educationalists, as well as representatives of scientific disciplines other than philosophy, because of the philosophical inspiration of their works. In those entries we can find some basic biographical information, bibliographical hints, and attempts at reconstructing the views of those people on philosophical issues..

V volume of the Encyclopedia includes, among others, the biographies of: Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584), whose poetical vision of the world was shaped under the influence of Christian thought, Greek philosophy and Roman culture; Stanisław Konarski (1700-1773) - a reformer of education, and writer, the editor of the edition of Polish legislation *Volumina legum*, the founder of the Collegium Nobilium, the author of *O skutecznym rad sposobie*; Hugo Kołłątaj (1750-1812) - an education and political-social activist, publicist, writer and philosopher, who participated in work on the Constitution of the Third May; Feliks Koneczny (1862-1949) - a historian (the author - among other things - of the study on the history of Russia and of Silesia, pioneering in Polish language), philosopher of history, theoretician of civilization and the father of original science of civilization (among other things he stressed the meaning and importance of civilizational bases of Polish culture developed on the base of Latin civilization), a drama critic and publicist; Juliusz Kleiner (1886-1957) - a historian and theoretician of literature who considered philosophy to be the most important element in literary research, one of the most outstanding editors of scientific writings and textology in Poland. In volume V there is also the biography of Antoni Kępiński (1918-1972) - a psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and humanist, the author of the theory of information and energy metabolism, the pioneer of group and individual psychotherapy in Poland whose main purpose was to remove pathologies in the patient's system of values, the founder of the club for ill people (the first in Poland) which prepared a patient to take up again a social role.

collected by Katarzyna Stępień.

## WHY NATURAL LANGUAGE IN PHILOSOPHY?

One of the important entries included in volume V of *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy* concerns language. This entry introduces us to the specificity of natural language – this kind of language which we use every day and which is used by realist philosophy. On the base of this entry it is worthwhile to ask the question: what role in realist philosophy does natural language play?

By natural language in the field of philosophy we understand such a system of signs (usually conventional signs) in which the semantic (meaning), syntactic (syntax), and pragmatic (use) rules are grounded in the principles of being and cognition. So, the naturalness of the language of metaphysics does not express itself simply in a vocabulary or principles that govern the grammar of a certain language. Grammatical principles are not autonomic but are based on the principles of being and the principles of cognition "read from" being

This kind of approach to language is fundamentally different from analyses of language performed within both the contemporary linguistics and contemporary philosophy of language. The problem that arises from various types of analysis of language can be expressed by the question: is the purpose of those analyses to decompose thoughts and words or to direct us to "seeing" things?

## THE MYTH OF DECOMPOSING THOUGHTS AND WORDS

The first chapter of his book *Linguistics and Philosophy*, Etienne Gilson entitled very significantly: *The myth of the decomposition of Thought*. This myth – Gilson explains– is rooted in a famous memorial of Maine de Biran on the decomposition of thought and was then consolidated by Condillac and later by Italian and French the so-called "ideologists". This myth is based on the conviction - *a priori* accepted - consisting of three ideas: first, thought is can be decomposed into its parts. As the mechanic disassembles a machine and puts its parts one against the other - Gilson writes - so the grammarian-philosopher discovers the principles of language in the decomposition of thought alone;. second - the decomposition of thought is carried to the very end by language itself and is only found by us; third - grammar is considered as "first part of the art of thinking.

The second myth present in the area of contemporary research on language is the myth of decomposition of language itself. This myth is in turn built on the conviction that if a language is decomposable (into parts of sentences or of speech) then in that decomposition the grammarian-philosopher discovers the world of thought.

By calling such an approach "mythical" Gilson wanted to say that thought by itself is not rational, and so when it is decomposed in a language it does not make language rational. Thought is rational in virtue of the rationality of a cognized thing. Yet, language is supposed to transfer and communicate that rationality thanks to its triple function: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic (more on this can be found in the entry "Categories" included in volume V of *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). If this order is reversed or abandoned then we step on a slippery path of modern mythology. Mythology belongs to the domain of art – not to the domain of philosophical cognition, i.e. not to the domain of *theoria*.

## OVERCOMING THE MYTH OF THE DECOMPOSITION OF THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE

Recalling the truth about natural language and its essential role in philosophy is an efficient way of getting out of a "magic circle" of contemporary language mythologies. If we want to bring closer the role of natural language in realistic philosophy we must stress the



triad in which natural language occurs. This is the triad of the composition of language (subject-cognition-language) in which it must be examined; then, the triad of language functions (semantic-syntactic-pragmatic) that must not be separated; and the triad of reference (object-language-object) which guarantees communication.

For natural language – as much as truths that are communicated in it – is strictly related to an object which it describes. This language is formulated in accordance to the way of the existence of an object and refers to that object. So, it is a thing-directed language. Its main task is to direct us at seeing and understanding things.

Language used in realistic philosophy is in its primary base the first-order language, ie. the object-language. It is then similar to the language of exact sciences. In those sciences we do not talk about the notion of “cell” but about cells; and we do not talk about the notion of “heart” but about a heart; we do not talk about the notion of “bread” but about bread. On the basis of those sciences we do not analyze notions of “liver”, “kidneys”, or “heart”, but we cognize and describe those organs. The case of the language of realistic philosophy (metaphysics) is similar. It is a first-order language. We talk in it about being (or beings) not about the notion of “being”, about human persons - not about the notion of “human” or of "person", about soul - and not about the notion of “soul”, about matter -and not about the notion of “matter”, etc. Moreover, the language of realistic philosophy is analogical.

This issue is not just a pure academic problem. For it leads to very concrete practical consequences. A change of the level of philosophical language results in meta-philosophizing instead of philosophizing, and practicing meta-metaphysics instead of metaphysics. In practice this results not in cognizing real things and persons, but analyzing ways by which we cognitively grasp things, decomposing language expressions in which things were described or reducing philosophy to a “language game”.

When reading the entry “language” it is worthwhile to realize that philosophy cannot resign from natural language if it wants to have the real world as the object of its research and that the main function of the language of realistic philosophy (metaphysics) is first and foremost directing us to understand things.

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