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Polish Writings on Methodology (1970-1971) : a Bibliographical Note

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Urszula Niklas (Poland)

POLISH WRITINGS ON METHODOLOGY (1970-1971)
A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

A reader interested in Polish methodology will find in this paper some information on the writings on methodology published in the years 1970 and 1971, although some omissions were necessary for the lack of space. A bibliographical note on the publications that appeared within the years 1955 and 1969 can be found in *ORGANON*, vol. 7, 1970.

The bulk of the publications presented here deals with the contemporary controversy over the methodological status of the social sciences, which can be traced back to the well known opposition between the Dilthey's interpretation of the study of society and culture and the positivistic idea of the unity of science. The question if the scientific investigation of human activities follows the same pattern as in the natural sciences is answered negatively by those who regard the social sciences as distinct from the natural ones both with respect to their subject-matter and to their method. According to Znaniecki, the remarkable representative of this tradition, a student of culture is interested in empirical facts which are produced and maintained by conscious human agents. Every empirical fact is investigated with its "humanistic coefficient" and to perform this task a social scientist adopts a specific method called understanding. Followers of the positivistic tradition emphasize logical unity of the language of science as well as testability of scientific theorems by public procedures. The methodological analyses contained in the works of Polish authors suggest, however, that the leading features of investigating human activities are the same as that followed in the natural sciences; to state that the humanities have their methodological peculiarities is not tantamount to rejecting the methodological patterns applied in natural sciences.

The works presented here are divided into three groups. The first one contains works where certain methodological peculiarities of the social sciences are scrutinized, in order to approach the solution of the

naturalistic versus antinaturalistic opposition. The problems of main interest are: the pattern of explanation in the humanities, the methodological character of theoretical concepts in the social sciences and the analysis of the concept of law of science. In the second group there are papers on methodological problems of particular social sciences, namely pedagogics, psychology, and some others. In the third one there are a few papers dealing with general problems of methodology of empirical science or with philosophy of science, as the two domains notoriously overlap.

1. T. Kmita in the book *Z metodologicznych problemów interpretacji humanistycznej* (On the Methodological Problems of the Humanistic Interpretation, Warszawa, PWN, 1971) formulates three main questions: (1) What is the methodological status of the investigations labelled the humanistic interpretation? (2) Which scientific procedures actually adopted within the humanities are relevant, from the methodological point of view, to the humanistic interpretation, and which are mistakenly identified with the discussed pattern of investigation? (3) What is the difference between the methodological analysis in terms of the humanistic interpretation and classical antinaturalistic doctrines? The humanistic interpretation is regarded as a modification of the deductive explanation by including in the premises the assumption of rational behaviour. The scheme obtains its fullest form if a cultural activity or an object of culture is submitted to interpretation. The author pays particular attention to the interpretation of sign situations. The analysis of a work of art as a sign is shown, in spite of the complicated structure of premises, to follow the methodological pattern of the humanistic interpretation. To answer the second question the author examines investigation procedures in the social sciences, which are relevant in justifying premises of the humanistic interpretation. The two following procedures are discussed: (1) the theoretical systematization of the humanistic interpretation, (2) the role of genetic explanation. The author distinguishes two varieties of genetic explanation, both applied in the social sciences as well as in the natural ones. Functional explanation is shown to be irrelevant to the humanistic interpretation, although they are sometimes mistakenly identified. The above mentioned analyses allow the author to accept the general methods of empirical investigation within the social sciences. The methodological peculiarities of the latter are capable of analysis in terms of the humanistic interpretation.

L. Nowak in the paper "Teorie racjonalnego zachowania jako teorie modelowe" (Theories of Rational Behaviour as Model Theories, *SM*, vol. 7, 1970¹) regards the methodological interpretation of rational behaviour

¹ The list of abbreviations is to be found at the end of the paper.

as relevant to the general question of naturalistic versus antinaturalistic interpretation in the humanities. It is taken for granted that theories of rational behaviour are either explicitly or tacitly assumed in all branches of the social sciences. The concept of a model theory is shown to be common to natural sciences and to theories of rational behaviour. S. Nowak in the paper "Terminy oznaczające stany i przeżycia psychiczne w teoriach społecznych" (Terms Referring to Psychical States and Experiences in Social Theories, *SF*, vol. 1 (68), 1971) points at certain methodological peculiarities of social sciences resulting from the way in which concepts referring to social phenomena are defined. According to the antinaturalistic tradition it is denied that social facts are definable in terms of observables exclusively. If social phenomena are by definition constituted by conscious mental states, it follows from the methodological point of view that the method of empathy or understanding must be adopted. This is by no means equivalent to the rejection of the methods of empirical science. The theoretical concepts in social sciences which refer to phenomena not intrasubjectively observable are divided into (1) the concepts with a "humanistic coefficient" that refer to the mental states experienced by investigated persons, (2) the concepts that refer to abstract properties of these experiences, attainable within the conceptual framework of a scientist, rather than that of an experiencing person. The latter concepts fulfill a double function: a diagnostic and a theoretical one. The paper gives an analysis of the theoretical function which consists in self-evident explanation of human behaviour in terms of introspection, motivational explanation, or the principle of rational behaviour assumed in a social theory.

L. Nowak in the book *U podstaw marksowskiej metodologii nauk* (On the Foundation of Marxian Methodology of Science, PWN, Warszawa, 1971) presents a reconstruction of the methodological principles assumed by Marx in *The Capital*. The principles are compared with those accepted in the contemporary philosophy of science and evaluated. The agreement between the reconstructed principles and Marx's actual scientific procedures of investigation is the criterion of adequacy of the analysis. The concept of idealizational law and the concept of its concretization are regarded as Marx's original contribution to the methodology of science. The logical structure of the idealizational law is submitted to a detailed analysis and its concretization is interpreted as a pattern of deductive explanation. The author stresses the difference between the type of explanation by means of concretization and the commonly accepted patterns of deductive explanation. The Marxian method of testing idealizational laws and the empirical principle of applicability of theoretical terms are discussed. The results of the methodological analysis, performed in terms of formal logic, are repeatedly confronted with the methods employed by Marx in *The Capital*. S. Żurawicki in the paper

"Kwantyfikacja zjawisk społecznych" (Quantification of Social Phenomena, *SM*, vol. 7, 1970) points at the inadequacy of investigation of social phenomena when confined to their quantitative aspects alone.

2. The methodological problems of particular social sciences are dealt with by several authors whose works cover a wide range of subjects. T. Kotarbiński in the article "Perspektywy myśli pedagogicznej" (Perspectives of the Pedagogical Thought, *SF*, vol. 1(62), 1970) considers the general opposition between the humanities and the technological sciences, which can be also traced in non-scientific areas of life; the opposition manifests itself in national budget planning, social status of scientists, and the like. A special attention is paid to pedagogics which is, according to technologically oriented thinking, mistakenly supposed to deal with problems of minor importance for the further progress of social life. The suggested way out of the conflict is not to modify the subject-matter of pedagogics, but in realizing the actual importance of its aims. The author shows the perspectives of pedagogical thought, its importance and responsibility for the development of culture.

H. Muszyński in the book *Wstęp do metodologii pedagogiki* (Introduction to the Methodology of Pedagogics, Warszawa, PWN, 1970) deals with the methodological problems of a system of pedagogics founded on the philosophical premises of Marxism. Pedagogics is regarded as both an empirical and an ideological (practical and theoretical) science. The systematization of its theorems, the formulation of hypotheses and the specific research methods of pedagogics are submitted to analysis. The interpretation of pedagogics as a system of practical science, involving evaluative concepts in the formulation of its theorems, can be found in a paper of the same author "Twierdzenia pedagogiki i ich systematyzacja" (Pedagogical Theorems and Their Systematization, *SM*, vol. 7, 1970).

S. Michalski in "Miejsce historii wychowania w systemie nauk humanistycznych" (The Place of the History of Education within the Humanities, *SM*, vol. 8, 1971) determines the position of the history of education relatively to the historical sciences.

M. Nowakowska in "Nieformalne ujęcie współczesnej teorii testów" (A Non-formal Approach towards Contemporary Test Theory, *SS*, vol. 3(38), 1970) undertakes the methodological problems of contemporary problems of measurement in psychology.

K. Zamiara in "O pewnych psychologicznych odpowiednikach interpretacji humanistycznej" (On Certain Psychological Counterparts of the Humanistic Interpretation, *SF*, vol. 5(72), 1971) compares the three following psychological theories: behaviorism, neobehaviorism represented by E. Tolman, and realistic-functional theory in respect of the accepted methods of explaining human activities.

The book *Metodologiczne problemy teorii socjologicznych* (The Me-

thodological Problems of Sociology, Warszawa, PWN, 1971, ed. by S. Nowak) contains the following papers: "Zasady konstrukcji praw naukowych w Kapitale Marksa" (The Principles of the Construction of the Scientific Laws in Karl Marx's Capital), the paper by J. Szacki "O tzw. historyzmie w naukach społecznych" (On the so-called Historism in the Social Sciences) discusses two methodologically distinct concepts of historism: in the first case we are interested in the regularities of historical process, in the second one — in a given historical individual. J. Kmita in "Sens a racja funkcjonalna" (The Cultural and Functional Meaning) distinguishes explanation interpreted as humanistic interpretation from the functional explanation. E. Mokrzycki in "Podstawowe założenia socjologii humanistycznej" (The Basic Assumptions of the Humanistic Sociology) explains the concept of humanistic sociology by reference to metasociological theses on the subject-matter and the methodological assumptions of sociology. A. Stanowski in "Postulaty behawioralnego empiryzmu terminologicznego" (The Postulates of the Behavioral Empiricism) deals with the conditions of acceptance of terms referring to psychical experiences and dispositions of individuals. S. Nowak in "Redukcyjna systematyzacja praw i teorii społecznych" (The Reduction of Social Laws and Theories) deals with the problem of explaining scientific laws within the social sciences and with the problem of the unity of science. P. Sztompka in "Logika analizy funkcjonalnej w socjologii" (The Logic of Functional Analysis in Sociology and Social Anthropology) discusses problems which are submitted to a more detailed analysis in his book to be mentioned below. K. Szaniawski in "Modele matematyczne a rzeczywistość społeczna" (Mathematical Models and Social Reality) investigates the role of mathematical methods in sociology.

P. Sztompka in the book *Metoda funkcjonalna w socjologii i antropologii społecznej* (The Functional Method in Sociology and in Social Anthropology, Wrocław, Ossolineum, 1971) distinguishes three ways of understanding the term functionalism: it refers to a theory, or to a conceptual scheme, or to a specific method of investigation. The author's analysis is devoted to the functional method as a specific way of explaining and describing social phenomena. The twofold purpose of the study is a logical reconstruction of the method and its critical appraisal. There are two distinct aspects of the functional analysis: the semantical aspect of the particular language used to explain and describe social facts, and the syntactical aspect of the logical structure of the explanations and descriptions. The logical reconstruction of functionalistic language is done by explicating the conceptual models (sets of assumptions concerning social reality) that are logically implied by the use of functional concepts. The following system-models of society are being distinguished: the model of a simple system, the model of a teleological system, the model of a functional system, the model of a multi-system, and

the model of a double-teleological system. In the context of each system-model the concept of function acquires a distinct meaning. The functional explanations differ from Hempel's model in that the character of laws assumed in the explanans (functional laws) and the character of factual conditions postulated are different. The functional descriptions providing characteristics of social phenomena are distinguished by particular descriptive predicates. The critical appraisal of functional explanations amounts to checking their logical and empirical adequacy according to the following criteria: deductive validity, explanatory power of functional laws, their empirical meaning and degree of confirmation. The so-called functional explanation appears to be only an explanatory sketch providing some valuable hints for further investigations. The same subject was also treated by the author in his earlier article "Logika analizy funkcjonalnej w socjologii i antropologii społecznej" (Logic of Functional Analysis in Sociology and Social Anthropology, *SS*, vol. 3(38), 1970) although in a less comprehensive way.

A. Podgórecki in the paper "Pewna koncepcja normy prawnej" (A Certain Concept of a Legal Norm, *SF*, vol. 1(68), 1971) discusses two ways of introducing concepts in social sciences, namely by means of analytical and synthetical definitions. The author favours analytical definitions which do not appeal to the terminological intuitions of scientists, but which are formulated in terms of operationally introduced concepts and result from empirical investigations. A new definition of the concept of law is offered.

T. Batóg in the paper "On the Definition of Phonemic Basis" (in English, *SL*, vol. XXVII, 1971) offers a modification of the definition of the concept of phonemic basis (contained in the author's book *The Axiomatic Method in Phonology*, London, 1967). The definition appeared inadequate to some extent, as it led to a theorem according to which all the phonemic bases of a fixed idiolect were to have the same number of elements. The objectionable consequence is due mainly to the condition of economy (*v*), herein weakened. The article assumes previous acquaintance with the book. W. Ławniczak in *O usystematyzowanej interpretacji dzieł sztuki plastycznej* (On a Systematized Interpretation of Works of Fine Arts, *SM*, vol. 8, 1971) discusses the so-called "ad hoc" methodological fallacy of the humanistic interpretation on the ground of interpretation of works of fine arts.

3. T. Czeżowski in the paper "Prawda w nauce" (*Truth in Science*, *SF*, vol. 3(64), 1970) distinguishes, from the methodological point of view, two opposite ways of constructing scientific systems according to the ultimate premises of investigation: rational sciences based on self-evident axioms and empirical sciences founded on observational sentences. The author traces the important methodological modifications of both types.

Rational sciences alter into hypothetico-deductive systems containing postulates defining primitive terms (the notion of self-evidence plays a merely heuristic role). Empirical sciences replace the absolute criterion of truth with a criterion of coherence; the new methodological import of the concepts of probability, hypothesis, and some others submitted to analysis.

H. Mortimer in "Conditions for Acceptance of Probabilistic Postulates" (in English, *SL*, vol. XXVI 1970) investigates problems connected with the so-called "partial definition", raised by the general discussion on empirical meaning of theoretical terms. Namely, the author considers whether there exists an object X which fulfills n probabilistic postulates of the form: $P(X)Q_i (=q_i) i = 1, \dots, n$. It is demonstrated that the condition (C), decidable by means of a simple method, which states a relation among classes Q_1, \dots, Q_m is a necessary condition of the existence of X . A hypothesis to the effect that (C) is a sufficient condition for the existence of X is put forward for $n=2$ and $n=3$ (the proof is offered for $n=2$).

The article by A. Grzegorzczuk "Klasyczne, relatywistyczne i konstruktywistyczne pojęcie asercji" (Classical, Relativistic, and Constructivistic Ways of Asserting Theorems, *SL*, vol. XXVII, 1971), does not fit easily into the therein accepted classification, as the author seeks for the answer to the question what it means to assert a mathematical proposition. The answer varies according to the semantics adopted. The classical semantics identifies the concept of truth with that of assertion, but it is by no means true that always either a proposition or its negation is asserted. In contradistinction to this absolute concept, intuitionistic logic gives account of asserting relatively to given situations, especially to the methodological one, and formulates inductive conditions of relativistic assertion. The third answer is given by constructivism where the concept of assertion is relativized to a given method. A proposition is asserted if there is at least one method of performing the assertion, i.e. where the assertion can be realized in a finite number of steps.

E. Mickiewicz in "Spór wokół modeli wyjaśniania" (On Models of Explanation, *SF*, vol. 3(64), 1970) discusses the applicability of deductive models of explanation.

T. Wójcik in the paper "Informatyka—jej zadania i cele w obliczu eksplozji informacyjnej" (Informatics — Its Problems and Aims in Face of Explosion of Information, *SF*, vol. 1 (62), 1970) in order to examine the foundations of a theory of scientific information (informatics) finds necessary to appeal to separate disciplines which together form an integrated complex of sciences, namely, to praxeosemiotics (the theory of optimal sign), praxeolinguistics (the theory of optimal language), theory of classification, and others. The author investigates the structure of the integrated complex.

A. Siemianowski in the paper "O dwóch rodzajach konwencjonalizmu" (On Two Kinds of Conventionalism, *SF*, vol. 1 (62), 1970) distinguishes between the methodological and the philosophical formulation of conventionalism.

THE LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- SF* — *Studia Filozoficzne*
SL — *Studia Logica*
SM — *Studia Metodologiczne*
SS — *Studia Sociologiczne*

