

Prof. Dr. Andrzej Przylebski

AMU Poznan/Poland

On the Search of the Hermeneutic Philosophy of Politics.

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At the outset, I would like to thank you for the invitation. Very unexpected and very honorable. I feel honored being able to present before you the results of my philosophical considerations. I have published them in a relatively short book, which in the meantime went through several reviews and overviews. Because I care about your comments, in the discussion, and I can not assume that all of you read this book, my lecture will be a presentation of its basic ideas. I do hope that it will bring clarity, not only as to the theses of the book, but also as to the motives that guided me while writing it.

My study can be considered as a part of my over 10-year research in the area of systematically spread out paradigm of hermeneutic philosophy. Briefly about that as I understand this philosophy. First of all, I do not equate it simply with hermeneutics. Because the latter is often understood either as a theory / methodology, containing rules that direct the art of interpretation (e.g., biblical or legal hermeneutics), or simply as a particular interpretation (e.g. hermeneutics Shakespeare's "Hamlet"). Even Martin Heidegger, the founding father of hermeneutical philosophy, when he talks about the hermeneutics of facticity or on hermeneutics of Dasein (human being), he refers to a particular interpretation – his own interpretations of the human being, recognized as an existence. That is why I, while speaking of hermeneutical philosophy, am not referring to this particular idea of Heidegger. When I am speaking of hermeneutical philosophy I do not mean simply a theory of interpretation, because every self-respecting direction or philosophical school has such a theory, due to the career that category of interpretations made in the second half of twenty century. From neo-Kantianism, though pragmatism, the philosophy of life till structuralism, the analytic philosophy or deconstruction. Interpreting is such a widespread act that every serious philosophical trend must have some idea of it.

So when I talk about the hermeneutical philosophy - and sometimes briefly on hermeneutics - I mean a philosophical stream that was born thanks to W. Diltheyowi, its basis is also due to Heidegger, and which was developed into a quasi-paradigmatic form by Gadamer and Ricoeur. Today it is developed further by such philosophers as Jean Grondin, Gunter Figal and Ferdinand Fellmann. And in Poland by me. All Polish representatives of the hermeneutical philosophy, however, take at face value the statement of Richard Rorty, who is sympathizing with hermeneutics, that it is impossible to cultivate hermeneutical philosophy in a systematic manner. The reason of such a claim is his abandonment of any faith in philosophical theory and of the idea of philosophical research, and the limitation of philosophical activity to a criticism of any theoretical construction in philosophy, for the sake of essayistic contributions to the ethical forming of a critical individuals. I reject these suggestions. I think that hermeneutics has no less potential for systematic research than, say, the transcendental phenomenology or the analytic philosophy. Its point of departure is the characterization of human

existence as a being-in -the-world, as “thrown” (formulated by Heidegger), but at the same time as indeterminate, as projecting its life by the acts/procedure of understanding (of the reality outside it, of other people, of itself). The essence of such understanding is the projecting of the being of what is understood. It means: such an understanding, and interpretation, is here the supreme category , the interpretation is a derivative thereof. We can find in Heidegger’s “ Being and Time ” an elaborated and a subtle description of the whole structure of existentials – i.e. the special categories used only to describe the human being.

After having finished my habilitation about neo-Kantianism of Baden School, written in Heidelberg, where he regularly met with Gadamer, and this was the year 1991-1992, I began research in the framework of the so-understood hermeneutical philosophy, its history at first, and then, somewhere in 2003 – in systematical respect. The resulting book, “The Hermeneutic Turn of Philosophy”, was followed by a monograph on Gadamer. And in 2010 Oficyna Naukowa in Warsaw published my “Ethics in the light of hermeneutics”, my first study in the practical consequences of the theory. Its development is the “Introduction to the hermeneutic philosophy of politics.” I gave him a somewhat provocative title “ Why Poland is a value .” Without the question mark, and so with the intention which is clearly signaled: “This book answers the question why Poland is an important value.”

This question is probably for most of you so obvious that you wonder why one even respond to such a simple question. And here I must explain to you , in the first place, to whom this publication was directed. Beside the fact that it was a relation of my research and reflection, not only on a theoretical and practical questions, also explaining my views on society, the state and politics. The views that have evolved, crucially influenced by my life experiences. Maybe you know that I had the opportunity to watch politicians in action, to join the political life of two neighbor nations: Polish and German, as attaché for science and culture of the Polish Embassy in Germany. And these were invaluable experiences, without which my thinking would not have such empirical support as is has.

Well, this book was written in defense of hermeneutical philosophy before placing it among the postmodern concepts, and addressed to researchers and students, who rashly and unfairly take such identification. I consider that in the European philosophy of the twentieth century took place the phenomenon of fundamental importance, a phenomenon which I refer - not just me anyway - as a hermeneutical turn of philosophy. A development which comes from the inner change of a transcendental phenomenology on one side and analytic philosophy on the other. And it is a consequence of the so-called linguistic turn (turn toward language as the basic philosophical issue), which was initiated by L. Wittgenstein. Postmodernism also seeks to enter into this trend, but the consequences of this turn - or in other words: the attitude that is typical for the hermeneutical philosophy - are not coincident with the proposals of postmodern thought, with its attack on tradition, rejection of the ideal of truth, the cult of emancipation, its contestation of the social order shaped by the history of Europe (including the state, the family, the morality). Already the first deeper insight into the thought of the classics of hermeneutical philosophy: Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur (I qualify the four to the classics of this stream) reminds us that none of them was left-wing , “revolutionary” inclined, quite the opposite - they were all more or less conservative. Therefore, the annexation of their achievements by the mostly leftist postmodernism (I mean, for example, Gianni Vattimo and John Caputo , but also Derrida and Foucault) is an abuse. Abuse that I wanted to oppose. I spent a long time to brighten these misconceptions or false affiliation, to save the good name of hermeneutic philosophy as a modern concept on the one hand, but on the other

as a realistic one. And therefore also devoid of radicalism that characterizes the postmodernism and the absurdities that it involves.

Briefly about what the modernity of the hermeneutical philosophy means for me. Hermeneutic philosophy is a post-metaphysical philosophy, but not in the sense that it discredits any attempt to build a metaphysics, but in the fact that it draws conclusions from the indeterminacy of disputes between the great metaphysicians of the past centuries and treats metaphysics rather as a need of the human spirit (Kant), and not as a reliable knowledge, a well justified knowledge that claims to give a quasi-scientific exploration of the "deep structure of reality". According to the philosophy concept of the hermeneutic way of thinking the philosophy as metaphysics unnecessarily competes with the positive sciences. As a result of the discovery of the fact of a mediation of human knowledge through cognitive structures that were formed in the philosophical and social past, the task of philosophy is not a study of naked reality, but of our ways of understanding it. And it is essentially related to interpreting. Human beings are interpreting animals, as Ch. Taylor rightly puts it. Referring to Kant, whose transcendentalism unconsciously designed the main profile of the hermeneutical philosophy, we can say that human contacts with reality are mediated by forms of reason. The difference in relation to Kant is merely in the fact that these forms are not some a-historical a priori, but the knowledge accumulated by past generations, contained in what hermeneutic philosophy describes as "tradition", in the broad sense of the word. Also the cognition in the natural sciences is formed in this way, which was showed by the great Polish amateur philosopher Ludwik Fleck. Hermeneutic philosophy comes from the belief, therefore, that although it is natural to speak of being, reality, truth or reason, that is all to be understood as the effects of our praxis of interpretation. Hence the claim of a hermeneutical reason, of a historical a priori and of truth in at least two senses : as unconcealedness of Being (Heidegger's *Aletheia*) and as the compliance between a proposition and a piece of reality it refers to: "veritas" as the "adaequatio intellectus ad rem". The interpretational theory of Gunter Abel, a contemporary philosopher from Berlin, introduces here some very important conceptual clarification that are quite close to the intention of the hermeneutic philosophy (maybe it even expresses its original intention in a precise form).

So conceived, hermeneutic philosophy is anti-metaphysical (i.e. anti-essentialist and anti-substantialistic): the truth of knowledge here is always relative to a discourse - a set of language games and forms of life, as Wittgenstein would say it – to a discourse, which is a social and dialogical one (it means – it refers to a community communication and to a certain social praxis). There is no question of the final interpretation of something, and so the knowledge that lay claim the right to have the last word - to discover the truth with a large T or sense with a S. Even though the meaning and truth are not challenged in this concept, as opposed to many postmodern conceptions.

For hermeneutical philosophy an important point of reference is the thought of the Enlightenment, but not in its French or English but in German form. I have already mentioned here Immanuel Kant. It is worth recalling here his definition of enlightenment that does not mean for him a fight against religion or the church, but "human output of immaturity culpable by itself". But this enlightenment is not enough, because - as already indicated - it postulates some deep structures of intellectual uniformity (within the so-called transcendental logic) in all people, nations and epochs. It seems to me that the rich comparative material, which was provided to us with by cultural anthropology (and that was not known to Kant), proves that such an a-historical position can no longer be defended. Hence the inclusion in hermeneutical philosophy of a "second enlightenment" – the hermeneutical

and historical enlightenment, as it has been determined by the well-known German philosopher Herbert Schnadelbach. This historically gathered a priori (form of life, forms of knowledge etc.) recognizes our experience as conditioned by the history of the cultural-historical community, by collecting its struggles with being, written in language, in religion, in art, customs, everyday opinion, etc. . Man may be born as a tabula rasa, unwritten array, but when he/she achieves awareness of their existence, of their individual autonomy as a human being, he is not a blank slate any. Learning of their mother tongue equips him/her already in the first ontology of reality that surrounds him/her – ontology of natural, cultural and existential environment. The meanings contained in language, checked in their identity by the community, teach him the names of animals, plants, show what it means to be friend and what the enemy. He/she can enlarge this knowledge then, change it through new experiences and critical reflection. But its primordial existence guarantees him/her the most important thing: a comprehending, an intelligent, functioning in the reality. It is something that one of sociologists (Anthony Giddens, if I'm not wrong) described as the "ontological security." Because our understanding bases on presuppositions: without the existence of a prior knowledge (Heidegger speaks here of a "fore-structure of understanding", Gadamer of "prejudices" in a special meaning of this word), our acts of understanding could not function. It is tacit knowledge, knowledge that we most often are not aware of. At the same time – and it should be stressed - that preliminary knowledge does not close us in any cage from which there is no exit. Nor does it mean relativism: the claim to truth, goodness, beauty can be fed. But they work together with the awareness of their being conditioned by the experience of the cultural community, and - sometimes – of the previous experience of all mankind. Something is always true, beautiful and good in the measure that is cut according to human possibilities.

So much, in brief, about how to understand the hermeneutic philosophy. Although such interpretation bias - i.e. the awareness of mediation of our cognition and action through the form of cultural practices in which we participate - becomes quite common, it has not created yet a work regarding what concept of the political is associated with it (ethics is slightly better in this respect – we have a relatively large consideration written by Ricoeur and some single essays by Gadamer and Heidegger, analyzed by me in the aforementioned book). As regards the politics, we have rather to deal with some biographical instructions that are not always glorious, to mention Heidegger's involvement on the side of National Socialism, thankfully quite a short one (10 months). Therefore, taking them into account as far as I could I had to go beyond them. I appealed to the authors and the concept of who/which - as you can see from reading the work involved - were the main inspiration of the classics of the hermeneutical philosophy. Beginning with Kant, with his conception of the world republic and the idea of perpetual peace, continuing with Fichte, with his "Speeches to the German people ", calling for national spiritual rebirth , the only - in his opinion - which is capable to break the Germans these years of stagnation and free themselves from the French occupation, and ending with Hegel, who for many years is also my inspiration. And who plays the decisive role in hermeneutic philosophy of the political.

But I don't mean here Hegel's the metaphysics of the absolute spirit, proclaiming the end of history and the possibility of absolute knowledge. The question is rather, what parts of his huge heritage has retained its relevance. And it is, (not only) in my opinion, the theory of Modern Society, most fully developed in the "Principles of Philosophy of Law" from 1820. Hegel describes it from the perspective of the concept of ethics, which consists of three pillars. The first is the family. Of course, a heterosexual and a monogamous one. This is the basis of biological succession of generations - the

condition of continuity and development of the society. It is a place of a double birth of man: a biological and a cultural one. Because the task of marriage, signed with love (a novelty introduced by Hegel) , is to have offspring. And to prepare it for life in civil society. This latter, however, is understood by Hegel differently than it is conceived today. It is for him before all a system of regulation of increasingly complex social needs : the system of work and social exchange - the existence of the individual market mutual benefits, which lead to the dynamic development of both individuals and whole societies or civilizations. But the principle that society is self-centeredness , selfishness, is to win the struggle on the market, while the principle ruling the life of a normal family is love and altruism. Therefore, civil society is continually threatened by self-destruction. However, it is generally something positive, something that can't be lost, because it guarantees the rational use of resources. Therefore, it must be kept in existence and at the same time under control, regulated in order not to explode. And it is the role that falls to the state, which is an expression of the spirit and history of a nation and the representative of its present interests. Hegel did not really believe in the power of international institutions, that should guarantee justice and respect for all cultures. He is skeptical about the power of international law, ruling the Kantian World Republic. For him the historical progress is being made by nations. And he recognizes historical nations as the highest type of a real – and not only imagined - social community. It is their competition that determines the development of forms of coexistence of the whole mankind.

But we should not forget Hegel's starting point: The basis of modern society is for him the awareness of individual freedom - the individuals' right to dispose of them: for unrestricted movement, for entering into contracts, for working and receiving appropriate remuneration for it, in a word: the right of human individuals to seek happiness according to their own ideas about it. In the eastern despotisms - says this great thinker - only the ruler is free; in ancient Greece or Rome the slaves there are next to the free people; and in the Middle Ages people are embarrassed by the circumstances of their birth, social condition in which they were born. But the freedom of the individual is gradually growing, because of the growing awareness of freedom, and a fight for making this awareness present in the social life. It is mainly due to the assumptions of Christianity, which in its very essence is opposed to something such as slavery or attachment to the land. And in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century it reaches a character that requires not so much radical change as subtle correction and improvement. That is why Hegel is not a theorist of revolution, in a clear opposition to Marx, who, although appointed Hegelianism not have much in common with it. Because Hegelianism means liberalism combined with communitarianism: free market and care about the society as a whole.

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It is time now to ask the question how all this can be translated into a hermeneutic philosophy of politics and of the political.

Although we can find by both, Gadamer and Ricoeur, some embryos of political thought, especially in the works on ethics, our search for the basics of such a general concept needs to rely more on the general thesis or on the general attitude of the fathers of hermeneutical philosophy, sooner than on their explicit political statements. The latter can at most be a confirmation that we're going the right way .

According to Gadamer our understanding of the world, other people and ourselves is mediated by language. It has a linguistic character. Heidegger speaks, in this context, his famous statement: "Sprache ist das Haus des Seins" - that language is the house of being, and therefore of human existence. Language is not understood here as a communication tool, the individual can freely dispose of. No single human being is the master of his language - it is rather the debtor. Because it can never overwhelm him with its mind. It is rather his intellect/mind that is determined by the semantics of the language. Language transcends subjectivity, defies its power, because it is the expression of the history of the struggle with the reality of the community culture that "uses" it, and not the result of convention or agreement. It is a product of a long cultural experience, what Gadamer recognized by the thesis of the authority of tradition. It contained therein are preliminary conviction ("prejudices" as he calls them) that enable us an understanding orientation in the environment, in our world.

Gadamer writes: "Language is not one of the means by which awareness is communicating with the world. It is not the third (next to the sign and instrument) instrument for this. Language in general is not an instrument, not a tool. The tool is in fact - of its essence - something the usage of what can be mastered: we can pick up and put down a tool, once it has fulfilled its task. It would seem that the same is true of the language: we take ready words of a language in our mouth and let them disappear after being used, back in the general store of words, which stays to our disposal. But it's not the same. This analogy is false because consciousness never faces the world, reaching - in a non-linguistic state - for the tool of the communication. In all our knowledge, about ourselves and about the world, we are rather embraced by language, by our own language. Educating ourselves we get to know the world, get to know the people and finally we get to know ourselves by learning to speak. Learning to speak is not to simply getting familiar with a tool ready to use for the purpose of determination of the world that is already familiar and known to us. Learning to speak means to tame and learn a world, the world as we find it."ⁱ

Therefore, we have to assume that the "linguistic interpretation of world" precedes all thought and all knowledge. While learning it we at the same time educate ourselves to live in the world. Language "has us always behind him", says Gadamer, that is, it is ahead of us, and it is not present in any individual consciousness. Of course, we are rarely aware of it. Great philosopher from Heidelberg says that thinking about language is never able to overtake it. We can only think in some language. A man becomes really a human being in the moment when he begins to speak, in two respects: the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic, as a species and as an individual. That is why linguistics is a pre-history of the human spirit. Gadamer claims: In the mirror of the language you can see the views of the various peoples of the world, indeed - even the structure of their culture, down to the smallest detail.

It is a thinking that roots the single human being in a community, not only of the living but also of the dead. Such a starting point - or more accurately: such foundation - raises certain consequences, of ethical and political nature. Before all: Concern for the common good, caring reference to cultural heritage as what constitutes us as spiritual beings. The hermeneutic philosophy emphasizes, in this context, the fundamental role of education, understood as the formation of man, as his spiritual formation.

"What is sanctified by tradition and origin - Gadamer states - has already a certain nameless authority, and our historical being is characterized by the fact that the authority of the heritage transmitted to us - and not only that, which is understandable on the basis of specific reasons - powerfully affects our performance and behavior. All education is based on that. "

Paul Ricoeur's perfect expression of these trends of the hermeneutical philosophy is the formula which concludes his "small ethic": true moral is to strive for a good/happy life , with and for others, in a good society. And so: the quest for self-realization with a full awareness of the importance of coexistence and interaction with others and of the importance of creating with them institutions that support such an existence. The most important of these is its own state. That's why I call the hermeneutical philosophy in terms of good political life the "hermeneutic republicanism". In this framework democracy is not a god, but it is subordinated to the spiritual development of society. It is therefore a "deliberative democracy", simply because of the role that dialogue (conversation) plays in the common search for what is right: the good and the truth. In such republicanism the welfare of the individual must be correlated with the welfare of its society. Hence the rejection of extremes such as collectivism (communism) or neo-liberalism, with its primate of the ego. Hence the featured role of these values that the dominant political philosophy of today unjustly puts aside. I mean patriotism, solidarity and social justice.

Modern man is aware of his freedom and of his individual uniqueness. It also has some historically developed rights that help him to defend it. This promotes undoubtedly atomization of modern society , but does not enforce it. Because also a modern and reflexively adjusted human being easily perceives and realizes that even without his/her will it is also a member of a certain community. Or even of many communities. And that they (co-) constitute his identity. Such a man is not only a citizen (in full , I would say: substantially filled sense, and not merely in formal one), but also a proto-hermeneutician. He simply understands his being-in-the world better.

Hermeneutic philosophy, applied to political reflection, restores the status of community; because of it is on the level of the theory of social being it is closer to communitarianism, and on the level of the exercise of power - republicanism. But it does not negate the importance of the contribution that the modern liberal or democratic thought brought to human our self-understanding. After all , according to Hegel, the consciousness of freedom determines the direction of the development of our civilization, is its driving force. The strength of the species homo sapiens, however, is determined by being >zoon politicon< , a social (ergo: political) animal. And it is such an animal that gathers his life experience, and transmits it, as a culture, to future generations. The resulting >tradition< ontically makes a man being highlighted, exceptional, the only one who - as it is written by Heidegger - is able to understand the difference between a being and its being (Sein und Seiendes). And this in turn makes him able to take control over the rest of being, both in the positive and in the destructive dimension this possibility. Hermeneutic philosophy policy can not disregard those determinants.

In an opposition to postmodernism the hermeneutic philosophy is the philosophy of continuity, not a philosophy of cracks, breaks, continuous differentiation. Therefore, the reflection on politics associated with this principal attitude must be counter-revolutionary. It is closer to the (late) Hegel , showing how an efficient and fair state can prevent internal conflicts that disintegrate the society, than to Marx, calling on the name of alienation delusions to the destruction of civil society. There is a statement in "Truth and Method", which is often cited in support a certain conservatism of the

hermeneutical philosophy but which in fact is essentially a testament to its realism and historical wisdom. "Even there where, as in the days of the revolution, life experiences turbulent transformation all things, it can survive much more of a bygone era than anyone realizes, and joining with the new it creates new meaning."

There is not the negation of change or any challenge to the need for a change; it is an awareness of us that we do not reach with our thought and deed to the land of a total illusion, an utopia, that can bring slavery, suffering, and sometimes death to thousands of people. Hermeneutic philosophy of politics rejects the worship of freedom of the abstract individual, just as the existence - in some Platonic realm of ideas ? – some universal over historical "human rights" . That does not mean that it turns against the ideals of humanism. Quite the contrary. It arises in their defense, but on entirely new foundations. It rejects along with it the post-democracy and the post- politics. It proclaims the need for formation of individuals to the community being, the need for development of "public reason" that the ancient Greeks captured in the word *phronesis*, practical wisdom. Proclaiming the need for authorities it at the same time rejects the cult of the expert, who removes our responsibility for significant socio-political settlements. The task of the humanities and social sciences is, according to the hermeneutical philosophy, not an elaboration of some "objectifying theories" under which political technocrats could play in social engineering, but empowering people in an understanding participation in what surrounds them. Therefore, the aim of the humanities is essentially different from that which is implemented by natural sciences, where it is smoothly passing in the technique, in fact subordinated to it, as it has been elaborated by Heidegger.

Hermeneutic republicanism, however, is not content with building ethical virtues in human individuals. It stresses - you can see this particularly strongly in the work of Ricoeur – the significance of "good", i.e. the righteous, institution. "That-who-is-himself" - this is his peculiar term to describe the human individual searching for its identity in a valuable form of its existence - tends to >a good life< (and thus the life full of sense), >with others and for others< (i.e. : in a community, through collaboration and care), in >the just institutions< (i.e. in the efficient state/land). These institutions, however, should not degenerate, transformed into the appearance of themselves. Smart, intelligent and comprehensive citizens are indispensable to protecting them: individuals having political virtues . Here we have the same relationship as in the case of teaching ethics: for its tips go only to those who are already pre-positive about the ethical (here: political) way of life, because they recognize its value, its deep meaning. The famous differentiation, made by Aristotle, between and "idiots" can be applied here.

To summarize what has been said above, one can tell that the message of hermeneutic philosophy of politics is this: An individual becomes someone is in a society and through a society. This social group gives her/him the first identification. This identity is gradually enriched with new ties and new commitments. But the broadest group with which the average person, who speaks freely only in his/her mother tongue, is able to identify himself, is the nation (conceived as a cultural, not as geographical entity). Society conceived as a nation - defined by common language, common culture and history - seeks to create its internal organization and external representation. It is the republic. The aim of the republic is taking care of the existence and development of its society as a whole, consisting not only of the living but also the dead (tradition), using a variety of strategies and instruments. One of these instruments is such a cultural criticism whose renaissance should be recalled, against verdicts of the relativistic postmodernism.

It should also be noted that hermeneutical philosophy of politics, despite such a highlighting of the importance of the political community, it is deeply related to the philosophy of modern society, i.e. it puts in the first place the human individual, liberated from the pre-modern forms of slavery, seeking his/her way in the context of contemporary existing capabilities. It distinguishes from postmodern ideology - and this is the fundamental difference - that it is aware that a person becomes what it is and what it would be only in a society and through a society. Gadamer puts it very beautifully:

" Each individual human being, which by its natural essence rises to the spiritual, finds in the language, in customs and organizations of his people a substance that is given in advance - like in the case of learning to speak – and that he/she has to assimilate. Thus, any single individual is always on the way of education and have always aim to eliminate its naturalness, because the world in which it grows in is – what concerns language and customs - shaped by the people. Hegel emphasizes: in its world the nation secured its existence. He worked out with each other and thus let out what it is in itself."

In a comment to this quote we could use a paraphrase of Kant's statement on morality. Mankind who left the state of immaturity ceases to behave like animals, obedient to the biological laws of their genes and instincts. Mature humanity begins to be subjected in its social being to the legislation which it itself creates. This is a deep sense of enlightenment, and with it – the moral autonomy of modern man. This thought, transferred to the world of politics, means that a certain nation can only then recognize itself as a mature one if it subordinates itself only to these laws which it establishes, and not those regulations that others - including even the most " civilized" centers of world politics - impose on him.

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My study on the hermeneutical philosophy of politics has a philosophical nature. That is we could – instead of saying "Poland as a value" say "Spain as a value". just as well be titled " Why Spain or Italy is value." Because its core - as I have already mentioned – is the relevance of the highest really experienced community. And it is - not only in my opinion – the historical nation: a community of language and history. This point of identity has the primordial significance for the spiritual existence of human beings and for their not being lost in an alienated individualism, which easily passes into the self-centeredness and then in selfishness. However, the question arises whether I would agree to such a transfer also in relation to – for instance - contemporary Russia or Islamic countries. Here the situation is more complex. Because, as I showed, freedom is an essential issue in modern society, the right of the individual to self-realization. And both, Russia and Saudi Arabia does not satisfy this criterion. Therefore they are not modern societies.

And here we come to the important post of my inquiry: the question of the end of history. Although I often referred to Hegel, I can not, as a hermeneutic philosopher, accept his thesis that modern society is the only logical consequence of human history, of the historical process, the voice of the Absolute, absolute fulfillment of reason/logic. The result of such thinking is the claim that the "substantial history" went to an end, is completed (this thesis was, as we known, some years ago, repeated F. Fukuyama). For me, the modern society is the pinnacle of a civilization whose foundations are – I am not very original here - Greek philosophy, Roman legal thought and Christian ethics, stressing so much the equality of all men/women as human beings. Modern society is an outstanding achievement, but also quite fragile. And that why it is possible to continue history, in

two principal ways: as the return to the pre-modern society and as the transition to a postmodern society .

The first possibility could happen - for example - if there occurred an islamization of Europe and North America. Such a threat is by no means a pipe dream – it is enough to watch on “you tube” what is happening in English or French cities dominated by Islam and Islamists and become familiar with the statistics of the reproductivity of these very religious societies, in comparison to the indigenous peoples. The second possibility, the construction of postmodern society, is happening before our eyes, not without a serious help of a certain style of philosophy and practice of doing humanities. I mean postmodern ideas for which so-called genderism (gender ideology) is a good example. Gender ideology should of course be distinguished from gender studies: eligible studies on the situation and the relationship of genders in different cultures. But genderism is only a part of a broader phenomenon we can call postmodernism. Its other dangerous elements are post-humanism, post-politics or the driving out religiosity ("death of God", promoted by Nietzsche and his followers). This second danger lies in the attack on the idealistic foundations of human existence: on promotion of ethical relativism, hedonism, worship of carnality (e.g., the ubiquity of eroticism, sexualization of life in every phase). It results in the justification of axiological nihilism, of selfishness and extreme individualism, that converts all social bonds into a temporary contract which can be broken without any serious consequences.

The key issue here is not just an attack on religion or church. Is, moreover, mainly an attack on an instance of defending "the old, proven rationality". The key is an attack on the family (even by blurring its concept, its definition and its functioning: homoerotic relationships, polyamoria, etc. belong here). And the attack on the state as the guardian of tradition and national spirit (spirituality). Both are controlled by corrupt forces coming out from the more and more uncontrolled third element of the Hegel's ethnicity (Sittlichkeit) - the capitalist economy, which entered a phase of transnational corporations and seeks to transform human individuals in groups of easily manipulable consumers. Individuals who are deprived of will to search for a deeper meaning of their existence and ready to reduce their "being" to their "having/possessing". It is a return of a communist attempt to breed the New Man, a trial, which we have and we can stop. Historical determinism in any form, which deprives us of the will to fight for these purposes, appeared to be a philosophical fake long time ago.

ⁱ H.-G. Gadamer, *Rozum, słowo, dzieje*, Warszawa 2000, p. 54 (translation into Engl. – A.P.).