

Relevance of Hermeneutical Judgment

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The primary intention of the research project is to show that hermeneutical judgment (judgment based on interpretative approaches to a body of information, a text, a work of art or culture, social and life forms) forms an integral part of the theory of understanding and interpretation. The traditional strict methodological distinction between the natural sciences and the humanities is no longer acceptable. Understanding is not only a feature of the humanities, but also a crucial segment of the natural sciences and engineering. In recent years, methodological relativism of the representatives from hermeneutical philosophy (H.-G. Gadamer, G. Vattimo) has been criticized rightfully from the standpoint of possibility of hermeneutic optimization which should result with more precisely understanding. But in our opinion the question of judgment was in this case not sufficiently elaborated. The purpose of this research is to show that the main danger to interpretation in contemporary human and social sciences is hermeneutical and epistemic relativism, i.e. interpretation without normative standards of interpretation. Reliable interpretation assumes reconstruction of the intentions of the author, establishment of a reliable basis for interpretation – i.e. reliable facts, a reliable text – contextualization of the object of interpretation (historical, physical, cultural context), agreement on criteria, standards, and models of interpretation, applicability of interpretation to further contexts (practical and theoretical), which implies the proper application of the correspondence theory of truth.

Our aim is to examine hermeneutical methodology in the context of changing paradigms and the pragmatic turn, in particular with regard to philosophy. Primarily, we will focus on the relevance of judgment in the process of understanding, interpretation and explanation. In this context, we will show that the process of understanding presupposes not only a reconstruction of the products of

human intelligence and creativity, but also their judgment, evaluation, systematic analysis, as well as their creative implementation in related contexts.

Since Kant, there has been only limited attention to the philosophical problem of judgment; judgment and philosophical cultivation of judgment through the humanities, culture and the arts is, however, of central importance today. Defining the problem of judgment, and the challenges associated with cultivation of judgment, clearly demonstrates the indispensability of the humanities and a humanistic education for effective problem-solving and innovative thinking, for the fostering of an enterprising spirit, participatory and democratic behaviour, critical thought and civic activism, a sense of accountability, self-esteem, mutual respect, for improvement of quality of life and social cohesion – in other words, for education of the whole personality of individuals as responsible members of the human community.

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