

*phenomena*

**APPROACHMENTS  
—  
PRISTOPANJA**

# PHAINOMENA

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Journal of Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

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## PHAINOMENA

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# TRANSFORMATIONS AND THEIR DOMINANTS

## BETWEEN DYNAMICS AND PROCESSUAL STRUCTURE

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### *Abstract*

The paper discusses meta-pedagogical transformational contexts in the space of human activities and fate, making use of hermeneutics, critical reflection, psychoanalysis, anthropology, and the “applied humanities” project. The basic approach is the hermeneutic practice *per se*. Problems at stake are: (1) moving of the dominant factors in professional processes and practices, such as: dialogue, rationality of actions, understanding of tradition, freedom, change, the ideal of the space of action; (2)

transversal, structural duality and oscillations around action dilemmas and dominants in psychosocial development; (3) traps, limitations, and gaps of traditional approaches to the relationship between the factors in the transformation of a person's identity, misleading discontinuities and internal tensions; (4) an anti-positivist breakthrough in understanding the explanation of processes and the threefold "explosive effect" in the transformations of the emotional-cognitive representation of actors, including their self-transformation and interactive alliance in action; (5) other approaches to the indicated conceptualization.

*Keywords:* dominant duality, dynamics, the *versus* operator, structures, meta-pedagogical processes, transformations.

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### **Transformacije in njihove dominante. Med dinamiko in procesno strukturo**

#### *Povzetek*

70 Prispevek obravnava meta-pedagoške transformacijske kontekste znotraj prostora človeške dejavnosti in usode, pri čemer se poslužuje hermenevtike, kritične refleksije, psihoanalize, antropologije in projekta »uporabne humanistike«. Temeljni pristop članka je hermenevtična praksa *per se*. Razpravljamo o naslednjih problemih: (1) gibanje dominantnih faktorjev v profesionalnih procesih in praksah, kakršne so: dialog, racionalnost dejanj, razumevanje tradicije, svoboda, sprememba, ideal prostora delovanja; (2) transverzalna, strukturna dvojnost in oscilacije glede dilem delovanja in dominant v psihosocialnem razvoju; (3) pasti, omejitve in vrzeli tradicionalnih pristopov k razmerju med faktorji v transformaciji identitete osebe, zavajajoče diskontinuitete in notranje tenzije; (4) antipozitivistični preboj v razumevanju pojasnjevanja procesov in trojni »eksplozivni učinek« v transformacijah emocionalno-kognitivne reprezentacije akterjev, ki vključuje njihovo samo-transformacijo in interaktivno zaveznitvo v delovanju; (5) drugi pristopi k naznačeni konceptualizaciji.

*Ključne besede:* dominantna dvojnost, dinamika, operator *versus*, strukture, meta-pedagoški procesi, transformacije.

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## Introduction

There have been many attempts to “think transformation” in many ways for a long time, noticing its different manifestations in nature, history, social life, and the individual development of man. New manifestations of these change processes, such as globalization and probably the most dramatic phenomena in the sphere of the “Anthropocene” epoch, bringing about the threat of the destruction of civilization and even the planet, have started to dominate. Many of them significantly affect social practices in many areas, including the management of macro processes, institutions, and procedures in professional activities. The Enlightenment myth of a linearity of progress has fallen, and the principles of “growth zero” or “nuclear moratorium,” and “sustainability” of processes, have long since been formulated. All this becomes necessary in terms of the chances of survival in the face of the multiplied threats resulting from the scale of the potential for self-destruction and self-degradation. We know that we can transform the world into a ruined civilization or planetary rubbish dump with excesses in some spheres and deficits in others. However, this has not led to effective care for sustainable development, and many activities turn out to be counterproductive. Thus, they serve radical changes, often contrary to the intended or declared ones, having their own life in the “hidden program” mode at various levels and at various scales of harmful effects. In addition, the reflective valorization of processes is sometimes delayed, devoid of any insight into the real “logic” of the changes taking place. It has been common for a long time to disregard their importance or manifest excessive attachment to the assumption of their safe automatism, self-regulatory ability to self-correct. Meanwhile, transformation is sometimes entangled in the dynamics of a “snowball” beyond control and the possibility of stopping without radically changing the imagination, habits, and procedures. Social activities are too often dominated by the lack of awareness of impending crises, generated catastrophes, and even the most painful deficits or mistakes. Impacts are not subject to the necessary reflection or self-correction in time. Unrecognized complexities take their revenge by surprisingly destroying assumptions about the rationality of actions. More and more in the daily ritual of

72 social appearances, rush, and instrumentalization, the process of spiritual atrophy grows (as a cause and effect), accelerating the “disappearance of space for reflection” (Baudrillard 1998, Sloterdijk 2014). This is done with the participation of institutions that were supposed to serve this reflection, such as schools, churches, and the institutions of democratic life, including parliaments, which often provide mainly an *ad hoc* spectacle of electoral arithmetic. The COVID-19 pandemic runs in a long chain of epidemics of increasing degradation, self-degradation, frustration, anxiety, and phobias on the one hand, and blindness, fanaticisms, violence, and narcissism on the other. Not only do the processes of change and their pathologies get out of hand, as with populism, but they are not engulfed in time in self-critical reflection and correction by those who unconsciously and egoistically escalate them, deepening contradictions and inequalities, and hate speech. We are not sufficiently sensitive to the complexity of the processes, to their often-paradoxical course and effects, requiring changes in their perception, still too superficial, immediate, and local. Additionally, it is only slowly and not without hesitation that we learn to assign new meanings to various terms and their practical implementations, and to associate them with the newly postulated normativity, requiring fundamental corrections in the practices of professional influence. Transformation may require resistance, it may face resistance on its own, even a blockade of susceptibility to change, or a refusal to cooperate. Sometimes it comes to the fore by activating course-altering pressures that have their own direction, even inertia, which one tries to break in the interests of some other process that cannot break through. These are the dramatic contexts that must not be forgotten when wanting to “think transformation” for social theory and practice.

### **The field of meta-pedagogical professionalism**

From the mosaic of this drama, it is worth considering one field in particular, although with more valid applications. The article aims to indicate the need to integrate a number of categories that form the basis for the analysis of transformation processes in the contexts of professional practice of a quasi-pedagogical nature. Here, action always stands directly against (*versus*) the

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other, defining this relation not only in objective categories (impacts “on”), but also subjective (impacts “for”) and interactive (impacts “together”) ones, constructing situations or process states, for which the attitude of who/ what is being acted upon is crucial. Sometimes the condition of a successful transformation is getting its participants not only to accept it, but also to strengthen and actively cooperate in its course. Institutional pressures or simply “bringing awareness” are not enough when it comes to the necessity of a new level of reflection and responsibility in action. Similarly, it may be all the more necessary to attract participants of the transformation that is being launched to maintain its duration, persistently and independently, in their own subjective attitude in the future. It is about a new identity as a “style of experience synthesis” (Erikson, cf. Witkowski 2015), where various aspects and sides involved in being a professional subject as a socio-cultural “hybrid” collide. And they are conditioned in particular by: (a) perception and valorization of one’s own subjective *condition*; (b) building the *conception* of oneself and its symbolic base; (c) expanding the *competence* to act and the potential of its technical and communicative means; and (d) strategically deciding about its further fate as a trajectory of existence and functioning in the world, in which one is dynamically involved (Witkowski 2010). All this is related to the concern for the scope of emancipatory self-defense in the reality of one’s own entanglement, or even subordination in the structure of social relations (e.g., a teacher disciplining students and having a mission to develop their autonomy is himself subject to entanglement in official subordination and pressures that institutionally deprive him of his freedom of action).

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Therefore, I am mainly interested in the psychosocial view of transformation related to the practice and mechanisms of influence, the resistance, with which they meet, where the dynamics are entangled in the hallmarks of an internal knot, structural tensions, and harmful reactions to them in process management. The sets of categories form “cognitive screens” (Balcerzan 2013), allowing for a modelling of understanding of the representation (conceptual screening) of invariants of experience. These invariants are always temporary, constitutive for a given process and its subjects at a given stage of identity formation or shaping (coordinating) the relationship of cooperation and evolution of development potential. Invariants in action are practically and

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structurally grounded as long as there is no fracture, internal destruction, or a scale of crisis generated that cannot be treated with available means and previously dominant rationality.

The basic assumption of these considerations is the belief that the resulting binary systems of opposing poles cannot be treated as consisting of independent parts. Entangled in a process of change, they often have a structure that connects their relations into tangles or knots, into connections with variable dynamics, of the nature of bipolar oscillations or fluctuations. This dynamic takes into account the dialectics of sustainability within the ongoing transformation as a condition for controlling and directing the process. It is also a condition for avoiding a functional catastrophe of the system, chaos, or systemic disintegration into a unipolar mechanism, eliminating from the system the opposite pole, but complementarily, paradoxically—together with this conflict and not despite its presence—necessary to maintain the complexity of operation or system integrity.

74 In this text, a further approach is presented—by necessity only briefly—highlighting the structural complexity of the processes, often misunderstood during professional practices (interventions). The dynamics of changing the situation (phases) of a given process is shown through the prism of the question about the dominants (dominant factors, such as needs, interests, tasks, components) and their interrelationships. The following tropes (only signals) are used, inscribed in the trends of research and reflection: the hermeneutic, critical, psychoanalytical, anthropological, those present in the project known as “applied humanities.” For such an approach in pedagogical activities of all types, the key is to take care of virtuosity in action, passion for commitment, and the depth of initiatory rooting in symbolic spaces that can constitute a “cultural soil,” life-giving development (after Radlińska: Witkowski 2014). Its processing and inclusion in interactions in a process involving at least a dyad of entities may significantly affect the course of the triggered processes.

The thesis of the article is to suggest that the transition in the sequence of understanding the ontology of social activities: functions—structure—process, should be completed with an analogous epistemological transition in the sequence: alternative—continuum—structural duality in the dynamics of the process. This requires considering “double binds” as complex relationships

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and references (Bachelard 1980; French: *les liaisons doubles*) to the risk of becoming entangled in traps on the verge of schizophrenia (Bateson 1987; *double bind*). This requires, in particular, a deep reflection and a re-evaluation of the circulating uses of the operator *versus* as sensitizing to an understanding of the complexity of the operation of a given system, facing a task entangled in reference to at least pairs of dimensions or factors—sometimes in conflict, excesses or deficits for repeated balancing. This applies to systems with only temporary sustainability, in the face of constantly new states of processes affecting them, including new states of internal factors. This operator is often mistakenly used in the theory and practice of action (also in academic textbooks) as only an expression of opposition, negation, or an alternative to an unambiguous decision in the face of the allegedly necessary choice with the elimination of the second term. It seems important to look at the challenges related to the mature problematization of transformations inherent in the professionalism of meta-pedagogical professions, as capable of correcting the premises of their own actions and their balanced interconnection. This requires that the practice combining knowledge and action as well as their structural statuses (relations) be included in both the anti-positivist breakthrough and the breakthrough of duality, which I discuss and describe separately. Detailed theses are developed in the author's works, indicated in the bibliography and published in recent years (cf. Witkowski 2018, 2020). Here, they are treated as an outline of a certain problem map or as showing what within it can be displayed on the transformation screen and its stake in the game, which should be taken into account more seriously than this is usually the case.

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### **Feedback and displacement of the dominator: examples**

The theoretical background of contemporary humanities (Erikson, Gadamer, Habermas, Merton, cf. Witkowski 2015, 2018) is increasingly used to indicate the phenomenon of translocation (translation) of factors dominating in the structure of various processes, as the basis for transformation in their course. Other profiles and structures of the dominant factors, i.e., those perceived as the most important in the periodic trajectory of processes, may come to the fore.

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I. Changing the relationship between the dimensions of what is right, what is different and what is one's own generates differences in the direction of dialogue processes—with the transition from the dominance of the power of persuasion, reducing the difference, through understanding someone else's voice, to giving oneself food for thought thanks to meeting with a point of view from outside the repertoire of previously available means of self-understanding. In this case, revealing unconscious prejudice, understood as pre-judgement by Gadamer (1993), becomes especially important for the transformation. The “hidden curriculum” of such strategies allows, in the first case, the indication of something as bad as a refusal of agreement. In the second option, praising tolerance can be reduced to hidden indifference and refusal to take it seriously. In the third variant, the affirmation of the value of meeting another may be relegated to an interest-related usefulness from a short-term perspective. Meanwhile, openness to a transformation of a long duration requires “creative adaptation” (Obuchowski 1985), in the form of work for a “long distance task” with no guarantee of success.

76 II. Similarly, it is possible—using Habermas's theory of communicative action and the “cognitive interests” present in it—to show the difference in the types of rationality present in professional activities and the changes in impact they generate (Habermas 1971). This takes place depending on the relationship between: (a) the technical nature of the activity (the ability to control it efficiently); (b) the quality of communication practice (the quality of building relationships in cooperation); and (c) the scale of the scopes of releasing the situation and relations from constraints (emancipation from barriers, deficiencies, and obstacles to opening an alternative that also recognizes unconscious content). Then the following can be indicated: (1) the domination of instrumentality in professional action, establishing the relationship of power and subordination; (2) consensuality, oriented towards a bond and community of understanding; and (3) launching a new quality thanks to the “decentration effect” (including a new point of view in process understanding) (Witkowski 2009a). The issue of “rationality of the education process” receives new impulses here (Milerski and Karwowski 2016).

III. Establishing a dominant element in the structure of the strategy to the attitude that shapes the social subject works in a similar way—e.g., with regard

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to understanding tradition, designing a vision of freedom, determining the type of desired change and defining the “ideal place” for the emerging cultural formation. This generates other types of transformation: conservative, liberal, socially radical, or dialogical (“decentrative”), where the same dimensions acquire new meanings by changing their location. For example, the model “liberated” man will once act as the priest of a binding truth that requires transmission and exegesis; and, at another time, as an artist who gives himself the right of transgression in original interpretations. Separately, the formation serves a revolutionary commitment to change the structure of the social environment for the emancipation of others. Finally, it is about access to the use of the reservoir of cultural texts as a symbolic heritage, thanks to which the reader obtains educational impulses translocating him beyond the scope locally available in the mode of necessary “desocialization,” going beyond the “whirlwind reduction of the cultural complexity of the world” of his own place of roots (Kundera 2004, Heidegger 1994; cf. Witkowski 2007a).

IV. The paradigmatic reference pattern of complexity that can be seen here in the structure of social roles (e.g., doctor, politician, scientist, any type of pedagogue) is a game in the mode of sociological ambivalence between the poles of proximity and detached concern, between giving direction and following pressure, or between criticism of external reference and self-critical control of one’s own actions (Merton, cf. Witkowski 2007b).

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### **Transversality, oscillation, duality**

Likewise, it is fundamental for thinking about the quality of professional impact processes to emphasize the importance of the transversal approach and revealing structural duality in feedback. We already have some considerations for the scopes of activity in pedagogical professions in social pedagogy (Marynowicz-Hetka 2019, 2020). The transverse building of rational coping with the complexity of challenges requires an alternate use of various strategies and techniques, taking into account the oscillations in the field of the “aesthetics of educational situations” (Witkowski 2007b), between activating power relations (being “the First,” reigning), using the force of the seductive personality (being “the Second,” significant), mediating, invoking someone

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else's perspective as an interpreter (being "the Third," catalyst of the meeting), and finally creating a situation of acquiring competence to cooperate without interference (being "the Fourth," withdrawn animator). For professional competence, this set of aesthetics (models of forms of action and interaction) requires not so much the choice of one of them, but the ability to alternate their use with the displaced dominant factor of the situational style. This is possible in the integrated approach of oscillatory aesthetics, for which each of the aesthetics is double-edged, carrying positives, but also the threat of ethical and strategic errors, giving and taking away, as it happens with the structures organizing our action and social relations (Giddens, cf. Witkowski 2018). In the background, it is also possible to use the hermeneutical circle model as a necessary description of the situation of understanding the complexity of the bipolar relations between the part and the whole, between dynamizing the process and maintaining the ability to balance its course, where it is necessary to practice reflectivity and correct the situation of operation in the "eternal return" mode, reacting to the new conditions. Taking into account such dual systems in the processes of starting professional intervention seems to be the basis for understanding their complexity in every social activity and the evolution of the participating subjects.

### **About dual dominants in the process of psychosocial development**

The basis of the adopted approach is to read the logic of the development process inscribed in Erikson's model of the life cycle, which allows us, contrary to frequent textbook reductions, to see a complex (dual) structure of phases in the process of psychosocial development with displaced dominants (Witkowski 2015, 2020). They determine the fundamental tension between the pole that dynamizes the process and the pole that stabilizes the stage of the process—which requires seeing their bonded coupling, oscillation, and interaction, along with a different orientation. This requires producing connections against the convenient but reductive attempts to establish illusory unambiguity (like one-sidedness), disconnectability, and alternation. Depending on the structure of connections between psychosocial factors and the degree of intensity (distrust, shame, guilt, distraction, withdrawal, stagnation, despair), their function and

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value in the development process differ. Neither one-sided negativity nor one-sided positivity make it possible to dynamize the process of development and development support interventions. Orientation to an attitude devoid of coordination with functional opposition (trust, autonomy of action, initiative, adequacy, identity, caring, creativity and integrity) generates excesses of some factors and deficits of others. The lack of connections between them disturbs the processes of balancing factors in the tensions between them and in their necessary displacements, conditioning development. The paradigmatic pattern for the described situations is the quality of the sailing of a yacht. The tension between the sail (exposed to gusts of wind, but also giving the opportunity to use them) and the keel or the quality of *ad hoc* stabilizers created by the crew is a challenge in the process of navigating at sea. It determines the necessary functional changes (oscillations, fluctuations, alternations) in fusing a complex whole between dynamizing movement and caring for its stabilization in an effort to balance opportunities and threats, risk and potential success (Witkowski 2020).

### **About the dangers in overly traditional approaches to the relationship between factors**

Traditional approaches (see criticism in: Witkowski 2015, 2018, 2020) in the sphere of conceptualizing the processes of transformation and professional intervention are excessively—and, therefore, harmfully—focused on the categories of emerging crossroads, crossings, alternatives, opposing, eliminating poles within choices (fixed either/or, binary relations). It is worth exposing the weaknesses of this view—and building a complementary position to it—, in order to overcome the resulting frame that restricts access to complexities based on couplings, complementarities, and combinations of seemingly conflicting functions. This is possible thanks to a more advanced lexicon, more maturely screening the contexts of anthropology, ontology, and epistemology in the practice of professional transformations (Barbier 2016a, 2016b). Meanwhile, these traditional approaches are dominated by the affirmation of dichotomies as bifurcations or polarizations, supplemented at best by pointing to the spectrum of possibilities in a distribution described on a continuum of gradations or in a sequential hierarchy. All this usually loses the necessity, and

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does not recognize the value (significance) of seeing here feedback, structural dilemmas, tangles, bundles, and other types of connections; entangled in tensions, conflicts, and contradictions, but complementing each other and functionally balancing each other as necessary. The vision of an illusory choice loses the view that understands the structural dilemma as entanglement in the coupling expressed by the *versus* operator sensitizing to the difficult, but necessary, fusion of members facing each other and not triggering an easy and natural split, antagonism and breakdown, eliminating one of them. In the structure of processes, the operator *versus* does not generate alternatives, separations, or extreme opposites, but a tension that creates conditions and even requires cooperation as part of a functional strategy to be guided only through the emerging new whole with a higher level of complexity.

80 This makes it possible to counteract extremes, excesses, and deficits, separateness, and eliminate the misunderstanding of interconnections. Among the harmful dichotomies that affect the quality of pedagogical interactions and difficulties in starting the processes of personal and identity transformation (which is often a condition for developmental change in the addressee), there is also, due to psychological flattening, the juxtaposition of cognitive (intellectual) processes and phenomena inscribed in the sphere of emotions, experiences, and commitment. In professional reports about the mechanism of action weakened in this way, the “ritualization of appearances” (Bourdieu, cf. Witkowski 2018) is present, indifference and emotional distancing, blocking the processes of identifying and recognizing the meaning of the impulses obtained for oneself with indifference.

At the same time, this dominant traditional approach is not able to include in its understanding of transformation processes the necessity of enabling a jump, discontinuity, break with the previous order, to pave the way to a new quality. In terms of the anthropology of professional practices (Barbier 2016a, 2016b), this requires the inclusion in the understanding of transformation processes of the necessary minimum of references to such phenomena as rites of passage and initiation thresholds. These are the structural aspects of the processes enabling a new type of experience, overcoming previous practice invariants and requiring the finding of new invariants taking into account the new stage of identity, understood as the “experience synthesis

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style” (Erikson, cf. Witkowski 2015). This requires taking into account also the understanding of barriers, obstacles, and blockades embedded in the unconscious “defense mechanisms,” the scale of resistance of the previously dominant structure of competences and the concept of self (identity definitions). So, it is not just about reconstructing the process. In fact, the work of “deconstructing” the process is often necessary here, as an opening of a new base for conceptualization and attempts at its structural reorganization, in search of new dynamics and other qualities of functioning. In educational contexts (education as transformation), this means the necessity of allowing “desocialization” as giving—by leaving the previous local “whirlwind of reducing the cultural complexity of the world” (Kundera 2004)—the possibility of triggering the developmental “decentration effect” (Habermas). This contributes to transformation, opening a broader horizon of interpretation, in which the variety of available points of view becomes a reservoir of innovation and the source of a new repertoire of social roles and the ability to creatively “play with roles” (postconventional in Habermas after Kohlberg’s approach, cf. Witkowski 2010), and not only to fulfill previous role scenarios. Obviously, post-conventional activities, the demand for them, as well as the scale of the available “innovative structures” that enable them to exist, may in various ways facilitate or hinder the transformation of the space of activity and the acquisition of professional competences (Przyborowska 2003). In particular, in the processes of transformation and their stimulation, “mediation competences” become very important in professional practices, e.g., in the area of social work (Grudziewska and Lewicka-Zelent 2015).

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### **The challenges of the anti-positivist breakthrough in understanding the process**

It is also necessary to develop a readiness to participate in processes, for which there is no prior (anticipatory) access to knowledge, allowing for full control of the process requiring intervention, and even less for establishing a procedure leading to success (positivist hope/illusion). There is a need for action that allows for the reflexive accumulation of partial, situational knowledge, locally generating invariants of the available field of experience—however, with readiness to “correct the premises of action” (complaint), i.e.,

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learning from errors, processed as the basis for reorganization and even basic re-conceptualization of the exit point (the need for an anti-positivist perspective on understanding professional practice). The epistemological vector of positivist methodological awareness: to know in order to foresee → to foresee in order to act, requires replacement with the paradoxical anti-positivist vector to see the relationship between action and knowledge: to act in order to know → to know in order to correct the premises of action.

82 This means—as Bachelard’s (2000) epistemological considerations could be applied—that the usually postulated cognitive “realism” in the course of action must be associated with the awareness of being entangled in sometimes only sufficient, and sometimes even harmful attitudes from different levels of understanding the situation of a given subject. These are the following types of approach: (1) naive, devoid of a sense of difficulty, assuming diagnostic clarity and ease of access; (2) instrumental, seeking support in parameterization, reducing quality to quantity; (3) conceptual solidarity, merging in a lexicon set with a varying degree of perception of its limitations to full satisfaction; (4) an attitude of conceptual openness, assuming the complexity of even what is considered elementary, devoid of internal paradoxes or tensions; (5) and finally a variant of “dispersion” realism, which dares to build (construct) a new approach from attitudes without a ready theoretical background and only gradually interconnecting and cohering into a more complete framework of complex conceptualization as a new construction strategy (Witkowski 2018). As is known, the crowning achievement of the processes of action, cognition, and transformation—within them as well as between them—requires, along with an anti-positivist maturity, the recognition that the theories produced in such situations can at best be perceived in terms of a “hypothetical conceptual representation of experience invariants” (Enriques 1906). These last, due to possible turns, cracks, clashes of pressures, and adaptive weaknesses, may be negated, or at least exposed to their scope limitations, bringing disasters (Thom 1980, 1991), or turning points, in line with the medical understanding of the phenomenon of crisis with the expected sudden turn in process flow. This forces the emergence or carrying out of a revolution, requiring a new interpretation up to the level of basic factors and their relations and modes of understanding and assigning meaning.

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Due to the original inclusion of the category of “cognitive interest” in epistemological thinking by Habermas (1971), which, depending on the connections between technicalities—communicative practice and the scope of emancipation—, determines other types of rationality, it is necessary to consider the advisability of developing the category of “transformation interest” in relation to individual phases of the ongoing process with the emphasis on the thesis that it is subject to displacements within the phase dominant, which requires seeing its structure as dual. This is what seems to be the interpretation of human “developmental interest” in Erikson’s life cycle model, which has already been reconsidered in separate analyses (Witkowski 2015).

### **Concern for the “explosive effect” in transformation**

Among the processes launched professionally in the space of (quasi-) pedagogical professions, it is important to pay attention to attracting interaction partners, including recipients of the activity. One must be able to win them over to “care for themselves” and to use “self-techniques” (Foucault) or “anthropotechnics” (Sloterdijk 2014). In making such an interaction, it is important to activate the triple complex mechanisms of “emotions—awakening—change” (Hesse, cf. Jaworska-Witkowska and Witkowski 2010), which make up the threefold range of “the explosive effect.” All this conditions the quality of the presence in the process as “readiness to be involved in the meeting” (Maritain), where the meeting means “experiencing a community of experience” (Gadamer) in the agreed type of “normative rightness”—as a validity claim according to Habermas (Witkowski 2009a). As is known, this reconciliation is sometimes impossible with the divergent ways of defining their lives by the addressees of the process of influence in terms of “being on the road” (Bauman and his types: pilgrim, vagabond, tourist, flâneur, or player). Getting them to cooperate as a condition for the successful course of the process can be difficult or even impossible (Witkowski 2018).

For the addressee of professional interactions, the condition for reaching an “existentially significant experience” (Eliade) is often an essential “initiation experience.” The basic explosive effect, which destroys the earlier stage, becomes indispensable as an expression of naivety, unpreparedness, and lack of

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imagination about what will happen after crossing the next threshold (not only maturity). In the first aspect of the impact, it is necessary to destroy superficial obviousness or deep beliefs entangled in appearances or unconscious sources of disasters and failure to cope in life. Hence, the importance of creating a plane for the “pedagogy of survival.” In the second aspect of starting the education process as a transformation, it is necessary to explosively pave the way to a new perspective, a new point of view, to open the way to an experience that would not occur to the addressee on its own. This type of explosion not only destroys earlier invariants, but also opens the way, paves access to previously inaccessible areas of one’s own unconscious, to the scopes of symbolic culture as an “invisible environment” (Radlińska, cf. Witkowski 2014). Thus, it is an explosion that opens the eyes to a new type of reflection, made possible, inscribed in a type of “awakening pedagogy.” Awakening becomes a paradoxical definition of an important level of quality of the impact process, often present in various types of narratives. Now, it requires the inclusion of professional practices in anthropology. And, finally, an integral link in the process of reaching education as transformation is the initiation of the process of “internal transformation” in the addressee, of “giving food for thought” so that certain stimuli (symbolic impulses) are received and processed, becoming internal components of a new scope and level of identity, influencing the condition of existential self-concept and the quality of competence to act. It is a component of the outbreak of transformation to the extent that, in the conditions of an identity crisis, it leads to a paradoxical “rebirth” (Erikson, cf. Witkowski 2015). By saturating oneself with “someone else’s speech,” gathering and processing symbolic “pearls of thought,” one gains deeper access to understanding and expressing oneself (Bakhtin, cf. Witkowski 2000).

### **On the importance of an interactive alliance**

The quality of professional impact, devoid of usurpation to the unequivocal directing of the process, may become entangled in the refusal to cooperate up to the level of generating a “negative identity” (Erikson, cf. Witkowski 2015), triggering the process of identifying with content that is opposite to that persuaded, not in spite of, but because of the inability to establish a

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“development covenant” in self-care. As is known, the “psychotherapeutic covenant” (Witkowski 2020) is an integral condition for any attempts at therapeutic help, and at the same time analogous concerns about the covenant condition in establishing transformation processes are too often overlooked in other fields of professional experience. A new vision of a professional as an intervener in the cognitive, emotional, and competence space of the addressee of interactions aimed at taking over the subjective role of the latter in “taking care of himself” becomes indispensable. It is to create a style of synthesis of professional experience from the position of a “transformative intellectual” (Giroux, cf. Giroux and Witkowski 2010), who understands that his task is to enable the potential of “empowerment” as the ability to stand up for oneself in social interactions and “emancipation” from the limitations dictated also by the unconscious of the addressee, including attachment to a professional, psychoanalytically recognized as a “transfer.” Institutional actions may lack subjectivity by “taking away civil courage” for autonomy and criticism, and, on the other hand, significantly damaging this subjectivity through the mechanisms of seduction and attachment, through the fascination with the personality of a professional and his power of influence.

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In terms of authority in the educational relationship and the process of personal transformation, this means the need to replace the interactively convenient mechanisms that make up: authoritarianism, authoritativeness, and formal authorization to move to the next phases of the process (diploma of transition to a higher class at school). It becomes necessary to gain cooperation from the position of “authority at one’s feet,” which specifies the phenomenon of “transition authority,” which I have described using anthropological inspirations, where the transformational effort (*rite de passage*) requires the independent growing of culture as “symbolic soil,” for obtaining growth in the confrontation with a professional subjective potential, as the emergence of readiness (abilities, motivation, tools) to grow autonomously into the task of facing challenges.

### **Limitations of the transformativity of interactions**

The dominant inscribed in such professional activity cannot be the practice of one-sided or one-way transmission of content without concern for its

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significance FOR the recipient, since this content is to significantly affect the quality of the addressee's identity, but on conditions acceptable to the recipient if they join the process of self-transformation. Professional action to encourage self-realization-oriented transgression is also not enough. This is especially true if the individual is in a state of identity crisis and his potential to define himself is dispersed, or has been negated after the collapse of previous experience invariants in a new field of existential collapse and a lack of motivation to stay within the existing framework of the organization of life. This is all the more so when there are difficulties with spiritual energy motivating transformation that reshapes the fate of the individual, or unlocks development and brings out their collapse (Orzelska 2014). Professional intervention may have no chance for an individual without vital energy to make new attempts, when the imagination, hope, and determination necessary for efforts to start new developmental processes are lacking. It is also not enough to dominate the entanglement of transformation with professional motivation towards an attitude of solidarity with others, where a person cannot cope with themselves. Professional action aimed at starting the processes of personal transformation requires changing the motivating dominant and organizing this action to open up the space of diversity and complexity, in which the recipient of this practice must be understood and taken into account in one's own actions. A professional cannot show anything in the transformation mode, but only help to see, providing the participant of the process with a different perspective of looking at himself, oriented towards him, which, however, will not exist if he does not see himself as a subject of cooperation in the new community of commitment, breaking with the previous damage to his condition and ability to be himself. The term "community" also requires awareness of the differentiation of its possible levels of impact: from the community of interest, instrumentalizing the relationship of cooperation, through the community of tasks, functionally entangled in strictly binding rules, imposed as an absolutized minimum, to the most difficult—the maintenance of which requires constant renewal of effort giving it value—the community as a task involving the agreed and experienced affirmation of values, which is to be served in a way that requires a subjective attitude and respects the subjectivity of each party participating in the process.

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## Transformation as self-transformation

Its requirements deeply understood (as in Maritain, Gadamer), a “real” meeting with the Other—with a readiness to engage in the experience of a meaningful community of dialogue—can become an opportunity for everyone in terms of changing perception and understanding of oneself. Moreover, this is the only way it can be activated, shared, in order not to be rejected, disregarded, or shallow as an opportunity, even if it is significantly transformed beyond the subjective horizon of the professional’s intention as the Other (e.g., in psychotherapy, education, social work, or re-socialization). The transformation process acquires a new quality (a new level of transformations of its own mechanism or program), when it is capable of self-correction, when it allows for the meta-process of self-transformation, freeing itself from the original project, from the interpretation framework and the scope of the means used. Gombrowicz, Wojtyła, and Ingarden have stressed, each in their scope of interest (creativity, actions in relation to the person, and filling in places of undefined description in literature), that a work can create ... a creator, just as an act is the creating person, and the text lives in its reception when we give it a meaning that is alive for us. The anthropology of professional practice must take into account such circumstances and include them in the postulates regarding the quality of transformation processes that fulfil many practices of involvement in the fate of another human being by placing them in a new culture and social life. This requires the effort of equipping a professional with the ability to process the achievements of an integrally understood, holistic humanities, so that the process of influence opens symbolic spaces, made available to interested parties as opportunities to use. As a rule, we cannot assume a readiness to cooperate in this direction and its creation cannot be excluded from the concerns of the professional (teacher, therapist, manager...). It was not for nothing that Antonin Wagner developed—in the context of deliberations on barriers to social work—the “homo disoeconomicus” model to denote the attitudes of the addressees of professional influence, who are deprived of the ability to behave rationally in various scopes of understanding their own interest or profit. They are neither ready to take on (or free themselves from) burdens and overloads nor able to operate under conditions without

certainty, including being hostages to past pressures; without the ability to open up to the long-term perspective of distant tasks, and finally—e.g., in the addiction mode—, they cannot evaluate the support in the community available to them, and even reject it as meaningless or hostile. In such a situation, many of the assumptions regarding professional cooperation must be thoroughly verified, because the lack of readiness to cooperate does not always ethically exempt us from the effort of transforming such an attitude that the initiation of the recovery process itself is possible at all. The educator is sometimes necessary, especially in the face of the addressee's lack of readiness to cooperate for his own development and to "care for himself" by changing his own life (Sloterdijk, Foucault, Erikson, cf. Witkowski 2018).

### Conclusion

88 Full documentation and illustrations of the theses presented above, together with their in-depth development, are to be found in the author's books mentioned (Witkowski 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2020). It is worth emphasizing that the approach suggested above can be found more and more often as present and developed—regardless of the above-mentioned references—in analyses from different perspectives and from different disciplines, such as sociology or philosophy. It is certainly significant to consider the aspects of transformation in terms of social transactions, the conceptualization of the in-between (*l'entre-deux*) in the contexts of social fluidity (Foucault 2016), and some versions of hermeneutics emphasizing, among other things, unstable balancing as a type of state that still requires transformation (Wierciński 2003, 2019). Also, in the sociology of education and the theory of social work in Poland, structural and dynamic references to the terms of the new lexicon as the theoretical basis and methodological framework—such as dilemmas, duality, weaves, tensions—constitute the axes of analyses and application attempts (Frysztański 2019). The broadest framework in sociology for this type of approach seems to be proposed in terms of the civilization process (Elias 2011).

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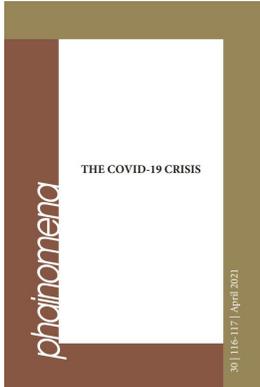
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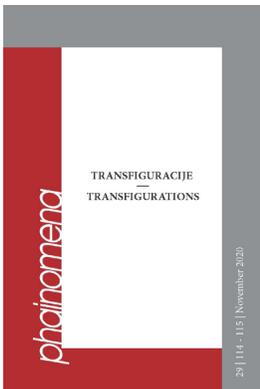


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