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THE VIRTUAL SPACE OF CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY

Professor Brzeziński's paper provokes two conclusions. The first one concerns the argumentation, which is matter-of-fact, competent, and therefore difficult to argue with. The second conclusion concerns the question of what is important in our thinking about Polish psychology. Nowadays, taking a local point of view on any scientific discipline raises considerable doubts – especially as the work of both researchers and practicing psychologists is evaluated in accordance with universal and international standards. This is a consequence of changes that we have experienced during the last decades in many fields, including the way of conducting research. As pointed out by Professor Brzeziński, those standards certainly enable objective and standardized evaluation of university teachers, but they also create a possibility of cheating and other misconduct in research work. One of the reasons is the fact that parametric criteria are suitable for evaluating manual labor rather than research work. A remedy might be the possibility of publishing research papers in open-access websites, provided that they are peer-reviewed.

Keywords: virtual space of research, time comfort, intellectual effort, multiauthor publications.

The Significance of Time in Research Work

Professor Brzeziński pointed to the global, pluralistic, intersubjective, and replicable character of science. It would be difficult to disagree with those ideas. Contemporary information technology (IT) makes possible for scientists of nearly all disciplines to move around the practically unlimited virtual space. This has created the possibility of taking part in many international projects without leaving your own country. It is also possible to learn easily about the new discoveries

published in scientific journals, which enables the replication of the studies of interest and thus the verification of results.

The above is closely connected with taking into consideration the ethical aspects of the conducted experiments. Psychological research ethics is guarded by a number of institutions, including the American Psychological Association, which serially publishes *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2010). In Poland, the publication that functions as a similar guide is "Dobre obyczaje w nauce. Zbiór zasad i wytycznych" [Good Customs in Science. A Collection of Principles and Guidelines] (2001). Those principles, obvious, as they may seem, are sometimes violated, which raises the question: What is the reason for such a state of affairs?

I would like to point out that conducting the research requires **time**. It is due not only to the necessity of gathering data but also to the fact that scientific reflection requires thinking matters over. Unfortunately, academics' annual accounting for the number of points gained results in publications that are compilations of works read in foreign languages. It also leads to the appearance of "white lies." Experiments conducted by Shalvi and collaborators (2012) have shown that people are apt to lie if they have no time to think a matter over. In other words, the lack of time forces people to lie, which is then explained as an intuitive way of solving a given problem. A good example of a while lie is the practice of authors adding one another as coauthors to their papers in order to multiply their scientific output. On the other hand, the lack of precise standards such as norms specifying the time of realization of a given project results in "laziness" and, in consequence, university teachers limit their work only to teaching duties.

The necessity of collecting points for publications raises yet another question. Is the requirement to pay for having an article published in a journal with IF in a relatively short time ethical, especially given that publication in leading journals without the obligatory payment takes a very long time? Perhaps a good solution would be to publish papers online. Certainly, it is not the place of publication but the real merit of a scholarly work that should be taken into account in its evaluation. Naturally, peer review should be taken into consideration, and the reviewed papers could be marked with special signs. At present, the cost of publishing papers is covered by authors' home institutions, so the proposed solution seems to be feasible. An additional argument for implementing it is that it would give readers free access to the papers of interest to them.

I agree with Professor Brzeziński that science should be universal and that research should be done only on a content-related basis, without being burdened

by the conditions in which it is done. Yet, a very important precondition of its efficiency is giving researchers sufficient time to do it. Otherwise, studies lose originality and become odd rather than inspiring.

The Accessibility of Publications and the Language of the Text

In order to show that writing exclusively in your native language makes your scholarly achievements marginal, I shall give a historical example.

In 1944, an Austrian pediatrician and psychiatrist, Hans Asperger, published *Die "Autistischen Psychopathen" im Kindesalter*, a work in which he described a syndrome of symptoms that correspond to a considerable degree with those described by Leo Kanner – an authority on autism. Asperger's report also included information that was not to be found in the Kanner's classic descriptions. Some of Asperger's writings were lost during the war but those that survived became known to the wider public after 1981 due to the English writings of Lorna Wing, who had come across Asperger's papers published in local German journals. It was only then that the Asperger syndrome came to be distinguished from Kanner's classic autism (F84.5 in ICD-10).

The above case justifies the need for presenting the results of one's own study to a circle of readers as wide as possible, and this is feasible only with the use of a code as universal as the English language. On the other hand, a Polish author who writes only in English loses a considerable part of his or her native audience. Here again websites might be a solution, since they give a possibility of publishing in Polish, in English, or in other congress languages.

Is the Creativity of Polish Research Psychologists Appreciated?

Professor Brzeziński posed the following question: **What indices are used (or should be used) to determine a psychologist's position in world science?** As I have pointed out earlier, papers published in JCR-listed journals open the way for their authors to the international forum. But are we to ignore the fact that publishing them is connected with the necessity of collecting points that are the basis for the evaluation of a given researcher's scientific achievements. That not quite healthy norm creates situations in which several authors (or even more than ten!) are named as the authors of one paper.

The issue of textbooks is also worth mentioning. Despite the great effort that is put in their preparation, they are not "attractive" from the point of view of

scientific achievement evaluation. Not only textbooks but also monographs **are not worth writing** since one is given a much smaller number of points for them than for a paper in a JCR journal. This is so despite the fact that the time required to write a book is much longer than that required for writing any kind of paper. Thus, the solution becomes a multiple-author article, which not only gives points to each of the authors but also lowers the cost by making it possible for the authors to share it.

It is really sad that the style of scientific research is similar to the “scientific” methods of work organization management promoted by F. Taylor at the beginning of the twentieth century:

The work of every workman is fully planned out by the management at least one day in advance, and each man receives in most cases complete written instructions, describing in detail the task which he is to accomplish, as well as the means to be used in doing the work. And the work planned in advance in this way constitutes a task which is to be solved, as explained above, not by the workman alone, but in almost all cases by the joint effort of the workman and the management. This task specifies not only what is to be done but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it. (Taylor, 1910, p. 2; underlined by K. M.).

This raises the question of whether intellectual and creative work can be evaluated in the same way as manual labor. Centrally established parameters are quite easy to apply. Contemporary secondary school-leaving examinations (Polish *matura*) are good examples of this: you can easily pass them if you know the key. If you fail to follow the key you will not pass, which is reflected in the well-known anecdote about Wisława Szymborska failing the Polish exam. In fact, the situation happened not to Szymborska but to writer and journalist Jerzy Sosnowski, who made an interpretation of his own work, “Art as an Escalator” (“Sztuka jako schody ruchome”), that was inconsistent with the key created by an “expert” (Graliński, 2009)! This clearly shows that using quantitative parameters to evaluate creativity is pointless.

How to Prevent Research Pathology?

Recently, a number of leading scientific journals have published articles that – as it turned out later – proved to include false information that was not based on real rigorous research. Thus, in 1998, a leading medical journal *Lancet* published a paper by Andrew Wakefield and collaborators in which negative after-effects of immunization against measles, mumps, and German measles were described. In 2010 the General Medical Council stated that the paper included false information and *Lancet* was ordered to withdraw the article from its

archives. That was the only case of this kind in the history of the journal. I believe that, beside the deceptive personality of a pseudo-researcher, the most frequent cause of scientific fraud is the pressure of time and the necessity of collecting points. Perhaps resignation from that obligation would be a remedy for dishonesty? It is worth reminding that many outstanding scientists, including Einstein, produced only a few publications, but undoubtedly valuable ones.

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