

MONIKA WALCZAK

CONCEPTUALIZING PHILOSOPHY AS A DISCIPLINE AND AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELD

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this paper is on the conceptualization of philosophy as a discipline and an interdisciplinary field. Before discussing the status of philosophy a few trivial but important boundary limitations must be made. First, philosophy is an enormously diverse field due to many factors: the subject of investigation, its goals, the problems addressed and the ways of solving them, the character and structure of the texts, the language, as well as the history, the classics, the circles or schools, the traditions, the forms of institutionalization, etc.¹ Second, the very concept of philosophy is subject to historical and geographical variation. Philosophy can mean various things: from asking how to live well, to knowledge of the structure of reality, to philosophy as the analytical unmasking of pseudo-problems generated by language. Third, the question of philosophy's status arises today not only in the context of metatheoretical discussions on the nature of philosophy, but at a time when it is being marginalized and even eradicated from universities amidst a declining awareness of its social and cultural significance. Possibly, conceptualizing philosophy as an interdisciplinary (transdisciplinary) field will help to see a slightly different aspect of its nature instead of seeing it as a specialized discipline. Hopefully, it will also contribute to a fresh appreciation of some aspects of its epistemic potential.

Dr hab. MONIKA WALCZAK, Associate Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Methodology of Science; correspondence address: Instytut Filozofii KUL, Al. Racławickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Poland; e-mail: monika.walczak@kul.pl; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1405-8855>.

¹ If one looks for factors unifying philosophy as a certain whole, the best seems to be performed by history (I limit myself here to philosophy that originated in ancient Greece and continued as so-called Western philosophy), the constancy of central philosophical problems, and contemporary forms of institutionalization (e.g., faculties).

In discussing the status of philosophy² one can distinguish several intertwined threads such as the metatheoretical-methodological, the institutional-social, the descriptive-empirical, and the value-normative. As part of the metatheoretical-methodological issue of the identity (status) of philosophy addressed in these discussions, there emerges the question of whether and in what sense philosophy is or should be a discipline or interdisciplinary field. One may seek an answer to that by analyzing the metatheoretical determinants (criteria) characterizing philosophy as a type of knowledge. In discussions, however, not all such criteria are present explicitly. The social-institutional theme of these discussions revolves around understanding philosophy as a social practice embedded in the broad context of the socio-cultural world and its institutions. We shall discuss how the status of philosophy is realized today and in the history of philosophy (the descriptive-empirical thread), as well as the problem of how it should be realized owing to selected values (the value-normative thread). Discussions concerning the status of philosophy are dominated by the institutional-social theme, considered both descriptively and normatively. I stress the metatheoretical-methodological theme more strongly in this text in an attempt to complement the institutional-social one. I consider the status of philosophy in two ways: 1) with the understanding of philosophy as just one of many disciplines (implying “normal interdisciplinarity”, as understood by Steve Fuller) and 2) without considering philosophy a single discipline, but treating it as a field of cognition that is inherently interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary (“deviant interdisciplinarity” in the sense proposed by Fuller or Robert Frodeman’s “dedisciplined philosophy”).

1. PHILOSOPHY AS A (MONO)DISCIPLINE

To see philosophy as a (mono)discipline is to consider it as one of many disciplines. The related view of interdisciplinarity also accepts the division of knowledge (science) into disciplines, thus presupposing the concept of academic discipline since interdisciplinarity is treated as founded on disciplinarity. Despite the significance of the concept of (mono)discipline for the contemporary system of knowledge (science), reflection on what a (mono)discipline is from the metatheoretical and methodological perspectives is not often addressed, and the terms ‘discipline’ and ‘research field’ are used differently and inconsistently.

² I refer here especially to the discussions in *Synthese* 190, no. 11 (2013).

1.1. METATHEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL-SOCIAL STATUS OF A DISCIPLINE

The characteristics of philosophy conceived as a discipline are adequately described by the following characterization of the nature of (mono)discipline:

The essence of discipline formation and evolution is self-referential communication. Self-referentiality is given when the communication is “closed” towards the environment and the evaluation of relevance and quality of research is limited to the members of the respective disciplinary community. As self-referential communication communities, disciplines have a dual identity. Their social identity is constituted by the rules of membership, i.e. teaching, examinations, certificates, careers, the attribution of reputation, and, thus, the formation of a hierarchical social structure. Their factual identity is constituted by the contents of communication. It concerns the delineation of a subject matter, a common set of problems and theories, concepts and specific methods to study it, the criteria of quality of achievement which are the basis for the evaluation and attribution of reputation by peer review. The procedure of peer review, where the members of the particular disciplinary community are judged competent to make an evaluation, also constitutes the borderline between experts and laymen with reference to the communicated knowledge. (WEINGART 2010, 8)

What Weingart calls “factual identity” I refer to as the “metatheoretical-methodological status (identity) of science”, and what he calls “social identity” I label the “institutional-social status (identity) of science” (WALCZAK 2020). The contemporary concept of discipline can be analyzed and developed within the framework of the general philosophy of science (WOLEŃSKI 2009). By the point of view inherent in the general philosophy of science (called “methodology of science” in the Polish tradition) I mean an approach to science (knowledge) where the specific aspect of its conceptualization is the epistemic aspect, i.e. science understood as an epistemic activity and characterised not in terms of content but in terms of form. The formal, metatheoretical description of a discipline includes structural (formal) elements of its determination as research and knowledge, applied to categorize the “inside” of science so understood. These determinants include the object of study, the problems addressed, the goals of philosophical research, the research methods, the structure (form) of the results obtained, the language, the history (epistemic genesis and dynamics), and the self-consciousness/meta-consciousness of the discipline, i.e. philosophy.

The concept of discipline is also analyzed and constructed according to institutional and social criteria, which co-create the sociological definition of an academic/

scientific discipline and determine its institutional and social identity (status). The socio-institutional identity (status) of a discipline (in this case philosophy) is determined by factors such as its institutional forms/institutions, nomenclature/terminology, legislation, social place, meaning and public perception, rules of membership, careers, researchers/scholars/developers, research communities, effective social communication and evaluation of results, and, again, the external history of the discipline (TURNER 2017). Such institutional-social view of discipline is related to the concept of science used in the sociology of knowledge/science, social epistemology and science studies. In this view, disciplines are primarily a way of organizing, producing and ordering knowledge (WEINGART 2010, 10).

1.2. THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHY AS A DISCIPLINE IN MODERN CLASSIFICATIONS OF SCIENCES

Taking into account contemporary classifications of knowledge and sciences, philosophy today is quite systematically (mainly institutionally) classified as a discipline within the humanities, although from the metatheoretical and methodological point of view it is also proposed that philosophy be seen as a field of knowledge or science.³ A way of qualifying it as a distinct discipline within the humanities is revealed by juxtaposing a few classifications of knowledge (sciences) that I view as representative of contemporary approaches to philosophy. Given such classifications, it can be noticed that the division of knowledge (science) into disciplines currently in place for many disciplines is neither consistent nor constant, and that this also applies to philosophy.

The OECD (2007) categorization, representing the socio-economic-developmental viewpoint, places philosophy in Group 6 of the humanities under the heading “6.3 Philosophy, Ethics and Religion”, where the following subdisciplines are distinguished: 6.3a Philosophy, History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, 6.3b Ethics (except ethics related to specific subfields), 6.3c Theology, and 6.3d Religious Studies.⁴ The classification of the popular scientometric database SCOPUS (2023),⁵ prepared for a research-evaluative-methodological use, places philosophy within the Arts and Humanities group, but also sets apart History

³ In Polish classifications of sciences, the term “science” (*nauka*) is used broadly and includes philosophy.

⁴ The OECD classification is noteworthy because this institution co-organized and co-sponsored a conference that initiated the three main understandings of interdisciplinarity in use today: interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinarity (APOSTEL et al. 1972).

⁵ See the Scopus discipline search engine at <https://www.scopus.com/sources.uri?zone=TopNavBar&origin=searchauthorfreelookup> (accessed May 23, 2023).

and Philosophy of Science . The entire group includes Archaeology (arts and humanities), Arts and Humanities (miscellaneous), Classics, Conservation, General Arts and Humanities, History, History and Philosophy of Science, Language and Linguistics, Literature and Literary Theory, Museology, Music, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Visual Arts and Performing Arts.

The current Polish classification of the Ministry of Education and Science (2022)⁶ – which is a reference point for the organization and management of science and the determination of researchers' scopes of competence to confer scientific degrees and titles, representing an institutional-legal point of view – places philosophy within the humanities (for comparison, theology/theological sciences are recognized as a separate field of knowledge). In contrast, offering the meta-theoretical-methodological point of view, the classification of sciences that Polish science theorist Stanisław Kamiński proposed to characterize the metatheoretical status of philosophy (1992),⁷ considers philosophy a separate field of knowledge (science) distinguished from the specialized sciences by its degree of generality and its manner of explaining the world (theorizing). The disciplines grouped within a field are linked by metatheoretical-methodological (methodological status) and institutional (institutional-social status) similarities. A parallel intuition that philosophy is not one of many disciplines but a separate field of knowledge is assumed when companions to the philosophy of science are written. Such guides do not usually include metatheoretical problems concerning philosophy. They are instead discussed in separate companions to philosophical methodology and metaphilosophy.

2. CRITIQUE OF THE CLAIM THAT PHILOSOPHY IS A DISCIPLINE

In discussions about the status of philosophy and its possible interdisciplinarity, the thesis that philosophy is a (mono)discipline like any other with the essential feature of specialization is called into question. This critique also takes place on two levels: philosophy's metatheoretical-methodological identity (such critique I call metatheoretical and methodological arguments) and its socio-institutional identity (such critique I call arguments that modern philosophy has lost social and institutional significance).

⁶ Available at <https://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/DU/rok/2022/pozycja/2202> (accessed May 23, 2023).

⁷ Kamiński already in the first edition of his monograph *The Concept of Science and the Classification of Sciences* (which appeared in 1961 alongside *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* by Thomas S. Kuhn) pointed out that the concept of science and models (paradigms) of practicing science are historically variable.

2.1. METATHEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS

If one looks at philosophy from the perspective of the metatheoretical and methodological criteria for being a (mono)discipline (even if we limit the characteristics of philosophy to so-called Western philosophy), it does not meet most of them. It is difficult to point to a common object of study for philosophy as a whole, or to uniform research objectives and methods. The structure (form) of the results obtained (i.e. the variety of types of philosophical texts) varies. There is no common language or criteria for evaluating the results. The most reliable candidates for the metatheoretical and methodological determinants of the unity of philosophy are considered to be its history (genetic continuity) or so-called perennial problems. However, within philosophy a deep process of differentiation and specialization is taking place: philosophy as a whole is no longer the scope of competence of individual philosophers, but is fragmented into various sub-disciplines and sometimes far-flung specializations and scopes of competence. The large scope of philosophical knowledge and the diversity of philosophy means that philosophy has long lost its function as a self-referential communicative community in the sense proposed by Weingart (2010, 8, 11) – a community of specialists within which meaningful “communication of scientific content” takes place.⁸ These roles have been taken on by the various sub-disciplines of philosophy and the traditions of its practice.

A valuable critical argument against the specialized-disciplinary way of doing philosophy is to question the metatheoretical assumption that “connections within a field of knowledge are more important than connections between fields of knowledge or between knowledge creators and the wider society” (FRODEMAN 2013, 1923). From a metatheoretical point of view, due to the essential multi-threaded, multi-object and multi-problem nature of philosophy, the links between its sub-disciplines and specializations and the sub-disciplines and specializations of other disciplines may be tighter than within philosophy itself. The specialization of philosophy and the formation of increasingly narrow objects of study promote disintegration of philosophy as a whole and bring together sub-disciplines that belong to different disciplines but have similar objects of study – they pose similar problems or use similar languages or methods. For example, the links between philosophy of mind and the psychology of cognition or neuroscience seem

⁸ “Depending on the specific function, either disciplines or subdisciplines or even so-called ‘specialties’ become the relevant reference, be it for the organization of research institutes, the structuring of university departments, the labeling of a journal, or the demarcation of a funding program. But the essential criterion on which such demarcations are based is still the same: the boundary of a network of meaningful communication of scientific substance” (WEINGART 2010, 11).

closer today than between philosophy of mind and philosophy of art or ethics. Also, working within the same tradition, for example poststructuralist, brings the philosopher closer, for example, to a literary scholar than to a colleague who is an analytical philosopher. This creates a certain platform for interdisciplinary cooperation, mutual understanding and collaborative problem solving.

2.2. ARGUMENTS CONCERNING MODERN PHILOSOPHY'S LOSS OF SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RELEVANCE

The critique of the institutional-social version of modern philosophy is linked to its metatheoretical critique as knowledge and as an institution oriented toward specialized knowledge. In this view, philosophy is understood as a discipline, a closed self-referential community of communication and evaluation. Philosophy as a discipline has become specialized and hermetic in the sense that it has been closed to other researchers and to society, i.e. there has been a division into experts and laypeople (WEINGART 2010, 6). Consequently,

communication with non-professionals became a sign of a lack of seriousness. The translation of philosophical concepts to different contexts was considered the “dumbing down” of material for the unlettered.... Serious philosophizing meant weaving recondite arguments within scholastic debates (FRODEMAN 2013, 1921).⁹

For the most part, today's philosophical work consists of specialized, sophisticated analyses geared toward supplementing the literature within particular philosophical sub-disciplines, written in a language understood only by peers in the discipline. This has resulted in the unhealthy isolation of philosophy (FRODEMAN 2013, 1918–20), intensified by the modes of organization and institutional forms of doing philosophy in the academy clustered in the form of faculty.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the role of philosophy should be to answer questions that bother not only professional philosophers but also other researchers and, in fact, all people. The institutional status of philosophy as a discipline is interpreted as the great blind spot of 20th and 21st century philosophy, and as one of the factors that led

⁹ Although the papers by Frodeman (2013) and Weingart (2010) cited in the text are essentially about the American context, similar phenomena and trends are also taking place with regard to philosophy in Poland.

¹⁰ “Departments have been treated as a natural kind, with no thought being given to how departmental life shaped research priorities or how other institutional arrangements might spur other types of philosophical inquiry. Writing philosophy papers for other philosophers, and living in departments was (somehow) the natural order of things” (FRODEMAN 2013, 1923).

to “philosophy, potentially the most relevant of subjects, [becoming] a synonym for irrelevance” (FRODEMAN 2013, 1918). Modern disciplinary philosophy represents an aberration compared to the main tradition of two thousand years of Western philosophy, which is why it plays such a negligible role in the academy and society today (FRODEMAN 2013, 1927).

Therefore, the need for reflection and “practical experiments” on the status of philosophy, both metatheoretical and institutional-social, is recognized. The conscious, metatheoretical linking of the theoretical and institutional aspects of a philosopher’s work is to result in a revision and change in the view of what philosophical expertise, rigor and excellence is and should be today. It is about rethinking what philosophers are supposed to do, what results they are expected to achieve, what standards of evaluation they are supposed to be subject to and what audiences they are intended to reach. For example, an understanding of philosophical rigor might correspond to such parameters as the need for timelessness, sensitivity to context and rhetorical skill in communicating with various different audiences, among other things. One is also looking for potential institutional forms of cooperation and the positioning of philosophers (and humanists) in various departments (not just their own), companies and agencies, in the public and private sectors, so the thinking is also about where and with what resources/ at what cost they are to work (FRODEMAN 2013, 1924–25).

3. PHILOSOPHY AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY OR TRANSDISCIPLINARY FIELD

3.1. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTERDISCIPLINARITY, MULTIDISCIPLINARITY, AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

In the literature there are different ways of understanding “interdisciplinarity” (KLEIN 2010, 2017). In its broadest sense, the term can be used to denote all types of research and its products that transcend a single academic discipline. More widely adopted is the basic distinction made in 1972 for the use of the OECD conference on “multidisciplinarity,” “interdisciplinarity” and “transdisciplinarity” (KLEIN 2010, 15; 2017, 21). Multidisciplinarity refers to research that involves a number of scientific disciplines forming a loose coalition of disciplines (called a “multidiscipline”) centered on a not-so-precisely defined problem complex (POCZOBUT 2012, 41–42; REPKO and SZOSTAK 2021, 24–26).

Multidisciplinarity was defined as an approach that juxtaposes disciplines. Juxtaposition fosters wider knowledge, information, and methods. Yet, disciplines remain separate, disciplinary elements retain their original identity, and the existing structure of knowledge is not questioned. (KLEIN 2010, 17)

The term “interdisciplinarity” in its narrow sense has a slightly different connotation and indicates the interdependence and cooperation of research conducted at the interface of various disciplines, assigned to the solution of a well-defined research problem (classified as an interdisciplinary problem). Interdisciplinary research is undertaken when solving such a problem (e.g. theoretical or engineering) requires cooperation between representatives of various disciplines and, at the same time, integration of their approaches, insights or results (POCZOBUT 2012, 42; KLEIN 2010, 18–19; 2017, 24).

Interdisciplinary studies is a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline, and draws on the disciplines with the goal of integrating their insights to construct a more comprehensive understanding. (REPKO and SZOSTAK 2021, 9)

Finally, the category of transdisciplinarity is sometimes used in two different senses. In the first, the term is associated with a new way of producing knowledge, referred to as “Mode 2” (GIBBONS et al. 1994). The transdisciplinarity of research is based on the fact that not only the researchers themselves, but also external stakeholders (according to Mode 1) are included in its practice. Transdisciplinary problems and their solutions appear in application contexts and results are to be evaluated not only by academics and communicated not only in specialized journals. The criteria for quality and evaluation are no longer determined solely by discipline: social, political and economic criteria are also used (WEINGART 2010, 11–12).

In the second sense, transdisciplinarity refers to research that transcends or exceeds standard disciplines, providing abstract concepts, models and categories that are applicable to their discourse universes (MINATI 2006, 670–72; POCZOBUT 2012, 41). Transdisciplinary concepts, theories or methods are not borrowed from one discipline and applied to other disciplines, but transcend disciplines and hence are applicable to many fields (REPKO 2008, 15).

The transdisciplinary research characterized in the above way has much in common with ontological analysis. All the basic categories of ontology (object, property, existence, identity, relation, determination, dependence, etc.), as well as the research concerning them, are clearly transdisciplinary in nature. In particular, this applies

to the categories by means of which the so-called interlevel relations are modeled (emergence, supervenience, physical realization). (POCZOBUT 2012, 59)

A similar situation exists in abstract mathematical categories (pure mathematics) and their applications in empirical sciences (applied mathematics). Both mathematical categories and their related research are transdisciplinary in this sense (POCZOBUT 2012, 59).

3.2. FRODEMAN'S "DEDISCIPLINED PHILOSOPHY" AND FULLER'S "DEVIAN INTERDISCIPLINARITY" OF PHILOSOPHY

In the various concepts of philosophy that recognize its interdisciplinary character, the notion of transdisciplinarity (in both of its cited meanings) seems most apt to describe and project its nature and potential. Frodeman's concept of "de-disciplined philosophy" (2013), the concept of "philosophy as interdisciplinarity," and the "deviant interdisciplinarity" of philosophy, both proposed by Fuller (2013), suggest some version of the transdisciplinarity of philosophy.

Frodeman's ideas concern transdisciplinarity in the first sense: so-called "field philosophy" (HOFFMANN ET AL. 2013, 1858–59), practiced in collaboration with and for the needs of society ("the world outside" the academy).¹¹ Fuller's ideas concern transdisciplinarity partly in the sense of the first and partly in the sense of the second: as a field that generates a holistic, most general framework for interpreting the world and its meaning. Frodeman's and Fuller's concepts focus attention on the organizational-institutional-social rather than on the metatheoretical and methodological. However, I am more interested in the latter, i.e., the account of the transdisciplinary nature and potential of philosophy as a particular kind of epistemic activity (aimed at producing a specific kind of knowing and knowledge).

3.3. PHILOSOPHY AS TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

If we consider philosophy as a transdisciplinary field, we can ask about its nature and characteristics in the relations and functions it has with the various fields of contemporary knowledge. The possibility of defining the professional status

¹¹ "Philosophy 'as' interdisciplinarity calls for intensive and explicit philosophical engagement with 'the world out there'; an engagement, as Robert Frodeman emphasizes in his contribution, that questions and overcomes the boundaries that have constituted philosophy as a discipline in the twentieth century. According to this understanding of the relevance of 'interdisciplinarity,' philosophers should leave their office from time to time and enter 'the field' in order to integrate their work with scientists, engineers, and policy makers" (HOFFMANN ET AL. 2013, 1858–59).

of philosophers in different ways, and thus the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of philosophy, is evoked by Frodeman in the context of the founding of the American Philosophical Association in 1901:

Philosophers could be synthesizers of academic knowledge, offering a global perspective on knowledge. They could be formalists, providing the logical undergirding for researchers across the academy. They could become disciplinary specialists who focused on distinctively philosophical problems in ethics, epistemology, aesthetics, and the like. They could be interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary generalists who sought to translate insights to other branches of the academy and to the world at large. Or they could be a non-positivistic version of the social sciences, addressing the ethics and values dimensions of societal problems. All of these positions were in play at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.... In the event, the specialists and the formalists triumphed. (FRODEMAN 2013, 1923–24)

The quotation lists the then untapped possibilities, according to Frodeman, of framing philosophy and its social and cultural functions. It would be possible to pursue the discussion in the direction set by Frodeman, but I focus on those properties of philosophy that (so far not emphasized in the text) seem the most relevant to the transdisciplinary nature and potential of philosophy.

The transdisciplinary nature of philosophy is founded, in particular, on the combination of such properties typical of the great part of what is called philosophy, such as maximal and radical generality, theoreticality, and the pursuit of comprehensive synthesis, i.e. its synthesizing, unifying or integrating character. These features are especially evident in ontology and epistemology, the traditional and core areas of philosophy (today considered its sub-disciplines). Criticism of philosophy as a (mono)discipline sometimes questions its narrow and specialized character, since the fact that it is supposed to consist of specialization in generality (the most general views of the world) seems a *contradictio in adiecto* (HARTMAN 2023, 24). However, the specialized and at the same time general character of philosophy can be defended by distinguishing between fragment and aspect of the reality (also known as fragmentary vs. aspectual knowledge). Fragments of the world, understood as parts of the whole called the world (i.e., reality) are dealt with by particular disciplines (sciences), such as biology, psychology or linguistics. As for physics, some will consider it to be of the most general nature in scope, because it encompasses everything that exists (naturalism, materialism; with such naturalism being only one possible view of reality). In this sense, the objects of interest of physics and philosophy can be extensively the same. Aspectivity, on the other hand, concerns selected properties of

the world or a fragment of it, e.g. language as a fragment of reality can be studied in terms of its genesis, structure, function, etc., additionally based on some theoretical and methodological assumptions, etc.

The basic property of philosophy that makes it transdisciplinary is the radically broad generality of philosophical concepts, theses and questions. This can be useful for interdisciplinary research in at least two ways. First, general, transdisciplinary (in Minati's sense) concepts, theses and questions (problems) can serve as tools for integrating research (and researchers) from different disciplines by virtue of the fact that they have particularizations and applications in research (e.g., notions of object, property, emergence, supersubjectivity, etc.) and thus also serve as a basis for communication between researchers.¹² Secondly, philosophy, by generalizing knowledge from the various disciplines, can create a synthesis, integrating knowledge into a more complete, comprehensive and multi-faceted picture of the world or some part of it, e.g., inductively creating bottom-up generalizations.

An important question in this context is: how does the content of general concepts determine the content of specific concepts? Must the content of general concepts include features that are components of the content of general concepts of which the particular ones are applications? And is this a necessary condition for the applicability of general concepts to particular ones? A more detailed characterization of the role of general concepts (and other general linguistic structures) as transdisciplinary concepts depends on whether they are formal and extensional (quantitative) or informal and intensional (qualitative). At the same time, while in principle the role of general, formal concepts and structures (e.g., logical, mathematical) in their application in specialized contexts (disciplines) is not questioned, the application of informal concepts (e.g., concepts of nature, matter or culture) may require justification. And at this point a conflict may arise between the competence of the philosopher and the competence of representatives of other disciplines about the theoretical concepts or structures they operate with.

The theoreticality of philosophy is a property typical of it, through which it can perform its transdisciplinary functions. Both general formal concepts (and conceptual structures) and informal concepts are theoretical in philosophy. The theoreticality of philosophy as opposed to the theoreticality of science is often differentiated from each other by their relationship to the empirical: the theoretical structures of science are empirically interpretable and testable (BARTELS 2021, 47–52) and the theoretical structures of philosophy generally are not, but can be interpretable and testable if they find application and place within scientific theories. Some theoretical structures of philosophy are ultimately suitable for explaining

¹² A similar integrative role is attributed to quantitative and formal methods in the social sciences in an essay by Calhoun (2017, 122–25).

the factual, real world, but philosophy also generates other theoretical structures, including those dealing only with the possible. Perhaps we will one day learn how to relate them to the empirical world (which, of course, does not mean that everything generated in philosophy will find an empirical interpretation). If theories can perform empirical functions and be testable provided that they are actually “applied to a limited range of objects with specific relations and boundary conditions” (BARTELS 2021, 48), then perhaps the theoretical structures of philosophy can find interpretations in some limited classes of objects due to their initial generality.

In addition, since in science there is a phenomenon of “traveling” and sharing theoretical concepts between disciplines and fields of knowledge, some philosophical, theoretical structures (e.g. concepts) can inspire innovative solutions to interdisciplinary problems precisely because they do not stick only to current explanations or interpretations of the empirical world, but go beyond them and offer other, alternative interpretations. Another aspect is the role of philosophy in interdisciplinary research involving the humanities or social sciences: the theoretical structures of philosophy understood as a field of various conceptual constructions (languages) can provide a reference point for designing cultural and social reality in various ways. This construction has a value-normative dimension, which is fundamental to specific philosophical theories and characteristic of philosophy, for example, in the form of answers to the questions: “What is the sense of morality? What is the ‘logic’ behind the criteria for good scientific practice? How is good language constructed, and then why is it good? Which among the common forms of argumentation or improved versions of it are good and why?” (LUMER 2020, 8).

The plurality of languages and proposed viewpoints, which is natural to philosophy, provides a good basis for the creation of non-narrowly specialized viewpoint, since by taking into account various aspects of the world or its fragments, mutually complementary approaches give a fuller, more holistic, synthesizing view of them. In this sense, the pluralism of philosophy can provide a heuristic reservoir of concepts, theses, questions, ideas, approaches and theories for interdisciplinary research. However, the possibility of the presence of philosophy in interdisciplinary research related to the very idea of integration constitutive of interdisciplinarity seems more important. Integration is a kind of synthesis, the creation of a certain overarching whole from various elements (REPKO 2008, 122–23, 344, 351). Integration can be a kind of ordering, hence the notion of relations and structure (synthesis – order – structure). The criteria for distinguishing and ordering are also important here. The essential questions to be answered when analyzing the concept of interdisciplinary integration are: 1) what elements are subject to integration, 2) what integrating relationships are involved, 3) what acts as the element that connects the elements into a whole. and 4) what kind of

whole is formed? Depending on each of these factors, there are different types of integration and, consequently, different possibilities for applying philosophical structures at the four levels indicated.

Theoretical, general concepts, theses and philosophical questions – not only the most global, but also more local ones, such as the concept of language or culture – are potentially synthesizing or integrating. The pattern of synthesizing structures in the form of axiomatic and formalized theories (systems) is provided by the formal sciences. Different types of philosophy realize syntheses created by reduction to a single element (different concepts denoting specific wholes, such as what is physical or natural), by generalization, by ordering, (classification, typologization, taxonomy), by mapping, and by creating a system. The resulting integrative whole is expected to be characterized by a certain uniformity or homogeneity and coherence (e.g., terminology, assumptions, laws, rules for acceptance of sentences as cognitively valuable/true, etc.).

The integration of knowledge and research is supposed to generate a new, more holistic understanding of the object under study. Such understanding is constitutive of the idea of interdisciplinarity. The sense-creating, axiological aspect of philosophy can be an important point of reference for understanding syntheses within the framework of interdisciplinary research (FRODEMAN 2013, 1918; FULLER 2013, 1901). Then one returns to the existential-axiological function of philosophy, which it performed in its various historical implementations.

The transdisciplinary aspect of philosophy may manifest itself in a version other than the one founded on the radical generality of concepts, theses or problems. This version involves the development of philosophical concepts or methods with a narrower range of generality that can have significance and application in different disciplines. Examples include the method of paraphrasing, which is used in literary studies (GOMULCZAK 2022), or the concept of culture, which is applied in cultural studies or cultural sociology (WALCZAK 2015). This kind of transdisciplinarity is also shared with philosophy by other disciplines, as pointed out in a text on cognitive science by THAGARD (2017). He cites as an example Eleanor Rosch's work in cognitive psychology on concepts as prototypes, which was inspired in part by the ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein. It has been pointed out that most of the papers published in the journal *Cognitive Science* aim to be interdisciplinarily interesting, since they deal with issues inspired by or relevant to work in various fields related to the nature of the mind and intelligence. E. Rosch's work is relevant to philosophical, computational, neurological, linguistic and cross-cultural issues concerning mental representations (THAGARD 2017, 191).¹³

¹³ Perhaps philosophy's analysis of problems narrower in scope than ontological, epistemological or axiological ones, and the rise of narrowly specialized sub-disciplines of philosophy (e.g.,

CONCLUSION

The conceptualization of philosophy as a discipline is of a socio-institutional rather than a metatheoretical-methodological nature. On the one hand, it guarantees philosophy a place in the contemporary system of disciplines, but on the other hand, the approach it represents supports the deepening specialization of philosophy, its division into subdisciplines and specialities, its internal disintegration, and its socio-institutional isolation. In contrast, the conceptualization of philosophy as a transdisciplinary field makes it possible to emphasize in a new context the integrative and synthesizing character of philosophy, its concepts and theses, and to see philosophy as a field with interdisciplinary potential within the academy and more broadly in society. The transdisciplinarity of philosophy, understood as the analysis and construction by philosophy of the most general theoretical concepts and theses used to describe and explain the world, provides the basis for their use in other fields of knowledge (sciences) and for establishing cooperation with and between them.

In the presented part of the discussion on the metatheoretical and socio-methodological status of philosophy, it is assumed that its categorization as a discipline or as an inter- or transdisciplinary field has significant implications for the way it functions in academia and society at large, as well as for the way it is practiced. It is also assumed that the way it is conceptualized in its socio-institutional aspect determines the way it is practiced from a metatheoretical and methodological perspective. The relationship between the metatheoretical and institutional-social status of philosophy, and how they are mutually conditioned, especially under current circumstances, would require more careful consideration. Among the problems to be considered are whether and how the institutional structure of philosophy determines the methodological structure and metatheoretical properties of philosophy, and whether it might not be the other way around. How does the interdisciplinary potential of philosophy change depending on whether it is practiced in a disciplinary or interdisciplinary way and whether it is disciplinary or transdisciplinary, and vice versa?

philosophy of culture, philosophy of language or philosophy of mind) that have theoretical parts in common with non-philosophical sub-disciplines (e.g., cultural studies, linguistics, cognitive psychology) is partly the reason for philosophy's difficulties and its declining importance in the academy. After all, labeling these common elements as philosophical or merely theoretical is somehow conventional.

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CONCEPTUALIZING PHILOSOPHY AS A DISCIPLINE AND AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELD

S u m m a r y

The point of reference for my analysis is the contemporary discussion on the metatheoretical and socio-intellectual status of philosophy arguing for its interdisciplinarity. The paper examines two ways of conceptualizing philosophy: as a (mono)discipline and as an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary field. The introduction outlines the internal differentiation of philosophy and the basic approaches in the discussion of its status. Section 1 is on philosophy as a (mono)discipline and presents the main criteria characterizing the metatheoretical-methodological and socio-institutional status of an academic discipline and points out some variability of the categorization of philosophy in several contemporary typologies of sciences (knowledge). Section 2 critiques the claim that philosophy is a discipline, offered in texts that postulate its interdisciplinary practice and organization. Section 3 introduces the basic ways of understanding interdisciplinarity used in literature and, in this context, contends that philosophy can legitimately be conceptualized as a transdisciplinary field because of its three characteristics: radical generality, theoreticity, and synthesizing character. The concluding

section presents some metatheoretical and socio-institutional consequences of conceptualizing philosophy as both a discipline and a transdisciplinary field. The paper is the first text in Poland to categorize philosophy as an interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary field based on a discussion of disciplinary and interdisciplinary formations of knowledge.

Keywords: philosophy; interdisciplinarity; transdisciplinarity; (mono)discipline; metatheoretical -methodological status of philosophy; socio-institutional status of philosophy

KONCEPTUALIZACJA FILOZOFII JAKO DYSCYPLINY I DZIEDZINY INTERDYSCYPLINARNEJ

Streszczenie

Punktem odniesienia dla przedstawionej w artykule analizy jest współczesna dyskusja nad metateoretycznym i społeczno-instytucjonalnym statusem filozofii, w której argumentuje się na rzecz jej interdyscyplinarności. W artykule analizowane są dwa sposoby konceptualizacji filozofii: jako (mono)dyscypliny oraz jako dziedziny interdyscyplinarnej lub transdyscyplinarnej. Wprowadzenie zwraca uwagę na wewnętrzne zróżnicowanie filozofii i podstawowe podejścia w dyskusji nad jej statusem. Punkt 1, dotyczący filozofii jako (mono)dyscypliny, wskazuje główne kryteria charakteryzujące metateoretyczno-metodologiczny i społeczno-instytucjonalny status dyscypliny akademickiej oraz zwraca uwagę na zmienność kategoryzacji filozofii w wybranych współczesnych typologiach nauki (wiedzy). Punkt 2 prezentuje krytykę tezy, że filozofia jest dyscypliną, proponowaną w tekstach postulujących jej interdyscyplinarne uprawianie i sposób organizacji. Punkt 3 przedstawia podstawowe sposoby rozumienia interdyscyplinarności występujące w literaturze przedmiotu i w tym kontekście analizuje i rozwija tezę, że filozofię można zasadnie konceptualizować jako dziedzinę transdyscyplinarną ze względu na jej trzy cechy: radykalną ogólność, teoretyczność i syntetyzujący charakter. Konkluzja zarysowuje metateoretyczne i społeczno-instytucjonalne konsekwencje konceptualizacji filozofii jako dyscypliny i dziedziny transdyscyplinarnej. Artykuł jest pierwszym tekstem na gruncie polskim, który ujmuje filozofię jako dziedzinę interdyscyplinarną/transdyscyplinarną w odniesieniu do dyskusji na temat dyscyplinarnych i interdyscyplinarnych form wiedzy.

Słowa kluczowe: filozofia; interdyscyplinarność; transdyscyplinarność; (mono)dyscyplina; metateoretyczno-metodologiczny status filozofii; społeczno-instytucjonalny status filozofii