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PETRYCY OF PILZNO VERSUS FRANCIS BACON: BREAKING THROUGH TOWARDS HARMONY AND COMPREHENSIBLE PHILOSOPHY

The aim of this paper is to present and compare the views of two prominent thinkers of the seventeenth century – Petrycy of Pilzno and Francis Bacon. Although they belonged to the same century, they were facing different geopolitical and cultural circumstances. A comparison of their views will help to shed some light on the philosophical tendencies around the turn of the seventeenth century as present in Poland, where Petrycy of Pilzno (1554–1626) remained a central figure in the field of philosophy occupied with the issue of language development, and in England, where Francis Bacon (1561–1626), a politician, scientist and philosopher, saw clarification of language as a primary condition on the way towards true philosophy and harmonious political state.

In the book entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Thomas Kuhn argues that social and cultural conditions may and do affect the direction of every scientific development. Therefore, scientific knowledge is relative, for it depends on a certain paradigm dominating a given field at any given time. The domination of such paradigms leads towards their uncritical acceptance as being true. They are to remain until a “scientific revolution” creates a new orthodoxy.¹ The new orthodoxy, in turn, requires “a paradigm shift” from “one set of domain assumptions to another” and the new paradigm explains why the particular anomalies led to the deficiency of the old paradigm while simultaneously reinterpreting it.² Similarly, though to

¹ See T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996, pp. 92–98 and pp. 101–102.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 182–191.

a different degree, both Petrycy of Pilzno and Francis Bacon saw a necessity to initiate a shift of paradigm seeing the inadequacy of the scholastic thought prevailing so far.

Philosophy, being one of the major components of each country's cultural and national identity, must and does preserve individual features. A distinct character of different nations became obvious with the beginnings of the Renaissance when Western Europe, dominated by the Greco-Latin world, started creating autonomous cultures with a clear reference to their national features. The Middle Ages philosophy, characterised by the language uniformity as well as social, political and religious circumstances, was doomed to remain rather problematically and methodologically congeneric. Starting with the sixteenth century there appeared a new, specific way of making philosophy among thinkers with respect to their cultural and national identity, which presupposed not only the issues to be tackled but also the methodology to be used.

Although to a different degree and from different perspectives, both Petrycy of Pilzno and Francis Bacon were preoccupied with the issue of modernisation of the language of philosophy. Those reparation tendencies appeared in Petrycy's practical philosophy where he aimed at making a complicated language of philosophy simple enough to popularize it among the middle-class people. Bacon, on the other hand, approached the issue of language at a global scale being preoccupied with the idea of creating a perfect language, clear of any ambiguities and able to solve the problem of faulty communication, which, according to him, was responsible for the poor political state of the country.

Needless to say, the views and philosophical programs of both thinkers were deeply rooted in the social and political situations in Poland and England. In Poland at the turn of the sixteenth century a rich publicistic activity could be observed. After a long period of religious quarrels the main issue of Polish literary output became preoccupied with the issues of home affairs. Polish nobility opposed the program of Royalists and resisted the King by forms of arms which marked a clear division into the advocates and opposers of King Zygmunt III. Strong reformation tendencies towards the influence in the state appeared. The views of the people were created both by writers as well as philosophers engaged in the trend of reorganising the law and customs of the country.

A political situation in England during the first half of the seventeenth century was in sharp contrast to the political situations of other European countries of the same period. While European continental states were developing absolute and centralized monarchies, England, in a chaotic and

violent way, aimed at a radical reduction of the monarchical power and the development of an alternative state in which the powers of the monarch were to become subsidiary to the power of governmental branches.³ Although the seventeenth-century England managed to stay away from European military problems from the thirties to the fifties, the situation of England was generally framed in what has come to be called “the crisis of the seventeenth century.”⁴ Just as its European neighbours, England was going through a severe economic and political crisis.

However, dramatic experiments exercised in the English politics starting from absolutist tendencies at the beginning of the century to the overthrow of the monarch in the middle of the century and the development of the English Republic did not correspond directly to any other European cases. Being rooted in the growing conflict between the crown and the House of Commons, they consequently led to significant limitations of monarchical powers in the second half of the seventeenth century.⁵

Needless to say, both Petrycy of Pilzno and Bacon were affected by the political and economic situations of their countries. Being engaged in home affairs, Petrycy was one of the most prominent Polish intellectualists. Both aristotelic and horacian, he took his inspiration from the Renaissance ideas to enter the spheres of new solutions in the fields of aesthetics and philosophy. He was also a true Catholic, sharing the spirit of the Post-Tridentine ideology, as well as a philosopher, doctor, poet and translator. Petrycy of Pilzno is known as the first translator of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*⁶ and *Politics*⁷ as well as Pseudo Aristotle’s *Economics*⁸. He enriched those works with numerous comments presenting his own views in the field of practical philosophy, which was the biggest enterprise in the Polish phi-

³ T. Munck, *Seventeenth-Century Europe: State, Conflict, and the Social Order in Europe, 1598–1700*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, New York and London 1990, pp. 80–84.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Historians highlight the unprecedented character of the background of the English Revolution pointing out that no European revolution before had the same causes and effects. It was the English Revolution that would become the model to study during the revolutions in France and Russia. See P. Johnson, *A History of the English People*, Perennial Library, USA 1985, pp. 198–202.

⁶ *Etyki Arystotelesowej, to jest jako się każdy ma na świecie rządzić, z dokładem ksiąg dziesięciorga*, Publisher M. Jędrzejowczyk, Kraków 1618. Only the first part including five books and comments was printed.

⁷ *Polityki Arystotelesowej, to jest rządu rzeczypoşpolitej z dokładem ksiąg ośmiorgo*, Publisher Sz. Kępini, Kraków 1605.

⁸ Edition I: *Ekonomika Arystotelesowa albo raczej nauka domowego gospodarstwa, printed by Łazarzowa, Kraków 1601*; Edition II: *Ekonomiki Arystotelesowej, to jest rządu domowego z dokładem księgi duoje*, Kraków, Publisher M. Jędrzejowczyk, 1618.

losophical literature.⁹ Petrycy of Pilzno is also known as the designer of the first, almost complete, translation of Horace's *Odes and Epodes* entitled *Horatius Flaccus w trudach więzienia moskiewskiego na utulenie żalów [...] w lirycznych pieśniach zawarty*. What is more, Petrycy of Pilzno was a practising doctor and a scientist. He also wrote two scientific works *De natura, causis, symptomatis morbi gallici eiusque curatione quaestio*¹⁰ and *Instructia abo nauka, jak się sprawować czasu moru*,¹¹ which were thought to have influenced the development of the Renaissance science. He is also referred to as the father of the Polish philosophical and medical school.¹²

As it was mentioned earlier, Petrycy of Pilzno represents the so-called Renaissance or popular aristotelism.¹³ This is revealed by his choice of the topics concerned with ethical and political interests ignoring inquiry in logic and metaphysics. Moreover, his aim was to popularize philosophy among his Polish contemporaries, which also corresponds with the Renaissance aristotelism. He is rightly called a Renaissance scholar which implies a combination of the Middle Ages methodology with a modern way of thinking regarding human beings and values.

Francis Bacon, in turn, is often referred to as the father of natural philosophy and new sciences, who marked a definite department from the era of the Renaissance.¹⁴ Indeed, the name of Francis Bacon has always been associated with the beginnings of the new science and much has been said and written about his contributions to its development. Accordingly, the persona of Bacon has largely been presented as a reformer and innovator who "freed science from the misty land of dialectics and led it to the enlightened

⁹ It is necessary to highlight here that Petrycy was one of the first Europeans to translate the above mentioned works. It was not until 1791 that Spanish and English people first translated Aristotle into their languages. Frenchmen, on the other hand, had translated all the three works long before other nations: *Ethics* (1488), *Politics* (1489) and *Economics* (1544). Italians translated *Ethics* in 1550, and *Politics* in 1547. On the other hand, it was not until 1774 that Germans translated *Economics* as the first work of the trilogy. See W. Wąsik, *Literatura polskich przekładów Arystotelesa jako przyczynek do historii filozofii w Polsce*, "Przegląd Filozoficzny" Chapter 15, 1912, p. 321.

¹⁰ Publisher Łazarzowa, 1591.

¹¹ Publisher M. Loba, 1613.

¹² L. Zembrzusi, *Pionierzy medycyny w Polsce XVI wieku*, "Wiadomości Lekarskie" 1953/1, p. 48.

¹³ See W. Wąsik, *Historia filozofii polskiej*, Vol. 1, Warszawa 1958, p. 150. Compare K. Grzybowski, Introduction to: Sebastian Petrycy z Pilzna, *Pisma wybrane*, Vol. 1, *Przydatki do Etyki Arystotelesowej*, Warszawa 1956; *Zarys dziejów filozofii w Polsce. Wieki XIII–XVII*, ed. Z. Ogonowski, Warszawa 1989, pp. 414–418.

¹⁴ See K. Leśniak, *Franciszek Bacon*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa, 1961, p. 7.

fields of experiment.”¹⁵ Naturally, the idea of progress forwarded by Bacon became the trademark of his thought: “Like Columbus sailing for India, Bacon had a definite idea of how to venture into the Renaissance open world, namely by means of progress in science and technology, and he also conceived where this progress should leave.”¹⁶

Being a convicted royalist and politician in the first place, Bacon arrived at the principles of his natural philosophy and new science to a great extent as a response to the contemporaneous political inadequacies threatening the Jacobean order. Being tightly connected with the Parliamentary scene of the Jacobean court, Bacon’s philosophical mind developed in the political framework of his time and in the first place it must be seen as a natural consequence of his political convictions. To paraphrase Liebig’s words, Bacon’s philosophical methods cease to be incomprehensible when looked at with the eyes of the royal advisor and Lord Chancellor.¹⁷

While analysing a political stand of Petrycy in the historical background of his times, it is possible to call him a spokesperson of the program conducted by the royalists surrounding Zygmunt III. On the other hand, from a middle-class perspective, Petrycy modified that program significantly. He supported the form of government which allowed for a union between the nobility with the middle-class elite under a strongly positioned monarch. Such a form would successfully cater for the middle-class people’s interests. In Petrycy’s opinion, the middle class was represented by many Polish citizens who, nonetheless, had been deprived of basic rights.¹⁸

Petrycy often expressed his intention of reforming the language of philosophy in his comments which were attached to Aristotle’s works. He was convicted that his primary aim was not ornamentation of speech but the easiness of expression of the Aristotelian ethical and political thought so that “plain people could get the taste of dialectic” to be able to tackle more difficult philosophical issues later.¹⁹ He often highlighted his attempts to preserve a dialectic precision of a statement. In moral philosophy, to his mind, a misused word could result in more harm than if it had been

¹⁵ Translation – mine; M. Wiszniewski, *Bacona metoda tłumaczenia natury i inne pisma filozoficzne*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa, 1976, pp. 25–26.

¹⁶ K. M. Meyer-Abich, *Technological Trajectories and the Human Environment*, National Academy of Engineering, The USA, p. 177.

¹⁷ Liebig in G. Bachelard, *La formation de l’esprit scientifique*, J. Vrin, Paris, 1938, p. 84.

¹⁸ *Zarys dziejów filozofii w Polsce. Wieki XIII–XVII*, ed. Z. Ogonowski, Warszawa 1989, p. 418.

¹⁹ Translation – mine, *Polityka I, Przedmowa do czytelnika*.

used in theoretical sciences. Ethics, in turn, could not reach the precision of argumentation characteristic for metaphysics and mathematics. According to him, the primary aim of ethics was to be an effective science where “one does not have to sharpen his mind, but to moderate one’s will from the evil.”²⁰

Based on the Aristotelian aretology, Petrycy’s own aretology fits perfectly in the trend of the contemporary spirit of moralization. Intellectual and moral formation of the young as well as formation of the citizens useful for Poland were a major aim of the intellectual environment around the turn of the seventeenth century.²¹ Although the philosophical works of the time did not reveal such forms of persuasion as found in Orzechowski or Skarga, rhetoric as a “verbal equivalent of dialectic”²² was to define the frames for those works. In accordance with Aristotle’s intention, it focused both on the sphere of analytical knowledge as well as practical philosophy or, in other words, politics in its broad sense.²³ Petrycy was concerned with the formation of a good human being – the aim of moral philosophy – which presupposed the promotion of a virtues life and the ignorance of the devil. A philosophical discourse was to unite dialectic argumentation and persuasive elements making a statement successful.

Petrycy’s reflection on virtues was of a systematic character. He did not only give recommendations and reprimands regarding a virtuous life present in the works of many popularizers of ethics. Petrycy did not limit his concept to the reconstruction of the model of the Master. The model was to be modernised to meet the expectations of Petrycy’s contemporaries. Therefore, he was participating in what MacIntyre has called the tradition of virtue.²⁴

Bacon was also concerned with a clear need to depart from the scholastic mode of thinking dominating thus far. According to Watts, three systems of thought prevailed in the late 16th-century England, namely: Aristotelian

²⁰ Translation – mine, *Etyka*, p. 54.

²¹ See I. Dąbska, *Filozofia w Akademii Zamojskiej w dobie renesansu*, in *Nauczanie filozofii w Polsce w XV–XVIII wieku*, (ed.) L. Szczucki, Wrocław 1978, pp. 87–110. The intellectual environment was mainly represented by Adam Burski, Szymon Birkowski, Tomasz Drezner, Andrzej Abrek. See J. Czerkawski, *Arystotelizm renesansowy i scholastyczny*, in his *Humanizm i scholastyka*, p. 157.

²² K. Burke, *Tradycyjne zasady retoryki*, (trans.). K. Biskupski, “Pamiętnik Literacki” 1977, Chapter 48, p. 224.

²³ See. Arystoteles: *Retoryka* 1356a 25, 1359b 8.

²⁴ A. MacIntyre, *Dziedzictwo cnoty. Studium z teorii moralności*, translated and edited by A. Chmielewski, Warszawa 1996.

Scholasticism, scholarly and aesthetic humanism, and occultism.²⁵ Learning remained highly Aristotelian, even though some criticism of Aristotle's logic had reached Cambridge at the time Bacon was its student. The Christian humanists such as Petrarch, Lorenzo Valla, and Erasmus glorified the world and appealed to the beauty of art, language, and nature – the features which soon became the trademark of the humanists all over Europe. The third important current of thought Bacon's contemporaries were inclined to was that of occultism, or esoterism – “the pursuit of mystical analogies between man and the cosmos, or the search for magical powers over natural processes, as in alchemy.”²⁶

While discussing Bacon's shaping of intellectual mind, it is necessary to mention that there was one more mode of Renaissance thought outside England which Bacon was highly impressed by, namely the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa, Thomas Campanella and Giordano Bruno who praised knowledge of nature as a “matter of extrapolating from the findings of the senses.”²⁷ It was their thought that Bacon followed wholeheartedly. It was already during his studies in Cambridge that Bacon realized the erroneous position of the scholastic thought remaining in teaching. It was also there that he set his mind upon discovering a new focus upon nature and its laws. Consequently, Bacon, with his empirical thought, succumbed to the mode of the new science, whereas experiment, seen in the light of nature, had become a trademark of his philosophy.

While elaborating his program of natural philosophy, Bacon was not indifferent to another philosophical trademark of the seventeenth century, that is, a universal language movement which remained in the general agreement with the seventeenth-century European philosophical thought. It would hardly be exaggeration to say that the issue of language appears as a linking chain between Bacon's philosophical ideas.

In contrast to Bacon, Petrycy was humble enough to limit himself to a didactic mission. While translating and making comments on Aristotle's works, he wanted “from Greece and Lazio to bring philosophy to Poland and make it common”.²⁸ In the foreword to *Politics* in one of the “arguments” entitled “Intentions of the author” he wrote: “I consider it useful to translate

²⁵ See R. Watts, *Gender, Science and Modernity in Seventeenth-Century England*, in “*Paedagogica Historica*”, 2/February 2005, vol. 41, pp. 79–93.

²⁶ See A. M. Quinton, P. M. Urbrach, and K. M. Lea, *Francis Bacon*, <http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/macro/5000/52.html> (accessed June 14, 2005).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Translation – mine, *Ekonomika*, Dedicated to Mikołaj Oleśnicki.

it into the Polish language all the skills and philosophy, which is perfectly described by Aristotle's deep mind, being driven by the desire, as far as I can, I want to lead people so eager in their evil towards virtue and Christian traditions".²⁹ Petrycy presented himself as a mediator between the work of Stagiryta and his contemporaries, he felt a great desire to educate Polish middle-class people in the field of philosophy at least at the elementary level.

Petrycy's moral code includes thirteen virtues: 1) courage, 2) abstinence, 3) generosity, 4) nobility, 5) dignity, 6) magnificence, 7) briskness, 8) courtliness, playfulness, 9) honesty, 10) dexterity, humanity, 11) shame, 12) "nemesis", 13) the ability to appreciate happiness. These virtues make the ideal *vir bonus*. Petrycy, following Aristotle, claimed that the ideal was not available for every addressee of his ethical works. Therefore, he did not attempt to create a model which enveloped all the virtues, which was so characteristic for the sixteenth-century parenetics. What is more, he did not promote any particular position, what he did promote was the very idea of virtues. Each man could see one's reflection in the mirror of Petrycy's ethics. His ethical code did not mean to highlight an ideal model of a personality but focused on numerous models of behaviour and conduct present in the society.

Petrycy's rhetoric argumentation, when directed to a wide audience, takes different forms. A primary rule which unites every discourse about virtues is to unmask common opinions falsely taking some harmful habits for virtues. Separation of knowledge (*episteme*) and opinion (*doxa*) does not only take place on the surface of dialectic argumentation but also relies on the use of emotional persuasion. Irony is often a more powerful means than dialectic syllogism. Searching for moral truth, he also seeks for the right tools to be used. "Harshness", which philosophy needs, is not enough to make "wicked people" practise a virtuous life. On this basis, Petrycy enriches his program with emotional amplification.

Bacon, on the other hand, was concerned with the nature of language on a more global scale. Language, due to its conventional character, succumbs to human imperfections, which Bacon quickly realized. Throughout his philosophical program he was particularly concerned with the superficiality of distinctions in everyday language. Bacon showed that people tend to class things fundamentally different together (whales and fishes as fish) and to distinguish things fundamentally similar (ice, water, steam).³⁰ Moreover,

²⁹ Translation – mine, *Polityka*, I, *Przedmowa do czytelnika*.

³⁰ See A. M. Quinton, P. M. Urbach, and K. M. Lea, *Francis Bacon*, *op. cit.*, <http://serach.eb.com/shakespeare/macro/5000/52.html> (accessed June 14, 2005).

Bacon was the first to tackle a tottering status of language, the idea which was to be elaborated by later critics of language, who were concerned with the capacity of words in the discussion of meaningfulness.³¹

Before arriving at the foundation of his philosophical tool, that is, his scientific method of induction, what Bacon did was examine what he considered to have been the most important obstacles in the process of human reception of knowledge in the past. A close study of those obstacles pushed Bacon towards the development of the theory of idols, in which he pointed out certain human prejudices and predispositions as a false source having a significant influence on human perception of nature and affecting scientific advancement. In *Novum Organum* Bacon pointed out a striking difference between the real perception of the world, clear of any obstacles, and the one being governed by human errors: “how vast a difference there is (...) between the Idols of the human mind and the Ideas of the divine.”³² According to him, *Idols* are perceived as only “arbitrary abstractions” whereas *Ideas* are “the creator’s own stamp upon creation, impressed and defined in matter by true and exquisite lines.”³³

The thought concerning the source of human false assumptions resulting from thinking corrupted by different idols had been haunting Bacon since his early youth. As early as *Temporis Partus Masculus* (1597) Bacon, aware of the danger hidden in human inclination towards erroneous perception of knowledge, warned a student of empirical science not to tackle the complexities of his subject without previously cleansing the mind of its idols: “On waxen tablets you cannot write anything new until you rub out the old. With the mind it is not so; there you cannot rub out the old till you have written in the new”.³⁴

In *Redargutio Philosophiarum* written in 1608 Bacon once again tackled the same issue criticizing certain prejudices and false opinions (especially the system of speculation established by theologians) as a serious obstacle to the progress of science.³⁵ Again, he emphasized the errors governing the process

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² F. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, the html text based on the standard translation of James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath in “The Works”, Vol. VIII, Boston, Taggard and Thompson, 1863, B1:CXXIV http://www.constitution.org/bacon/nov_org.htm (accessed April 16, 2005).

³³ *Ibid.*, B1:CXXIV.

³⁴ F. Bacon, *Temporis Partus Masculus*, in B. Farrington, “The philosophy of Francis Bacon”, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 1964, p. 72.

³⁵ B. Farrington (ed.), *The philosophy of Francis Bacon*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 1964, p. 107.

of human thinking. The deficiency of human thinking was also discussed in the Second Book of *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) in the context of *Arts Intellectual* (invention, judgment, memory, tradition): "... (...) invention (...) of speech and arguments (...) I do report deficient; which seemeth to me to be such a deficiency as if, in the making of an inventory touching the state of a defunct, it should be set down that there is no ready money."³⁶

In 1620 Bacon was already ready to give an elaborated theory of idols. In his preface to *Novum Organum* he promised to introduce a new method capable of bringing senses to their former rank in order to begin the whole labour of the mind again. The method would open two sources and two distributions of learning. Basically, it was a method of cultivating the sciences and arts of discovering them.³⁷ Again, the new beginning presupposed the discovery of the natural obstacles to the efficient scientific analysis which was based on seeing through the idols, so that the mind's function as the subject of knowledge acquisition comes into focus.³⁸ He stated:

The idols and false notions which are now in possession of the human understanding, and have taken deep root therein, not only so beset men's mind that truth can hardly find entrance, but even after entrance is obtained, they will again in the very instauration of the sciences meet and trouble us, unless men being forewarned of the danger fortify themselves as far as may be against their assaults...³⁹

According to Bacon, there were four types of idols: the idols of the tribe (*idola tribus*), the idols of the cave (*idola specus*); the idols of the market place (*idola fori*), and the idols of the theatre (*idola theatri*). As R. E. Stillman points out, Bacon's first two classes of idols refer to errors deeply implanted in human nature, whereas his last two classes correspond to the errors that infect human arts.⁴⁰ In both two pairs he proceeds from general to specific information: from consideration of errors endemic to mankind (tribe) to errors ingrained in individuals (cave), from an analysis of faults inherent in language (market place) to faults described in learned discourse (theatre) – that gradation is, according to Stillman, not a coincidence for

³⁶ F. Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, B2 (XIII:1).

³⁷ See K. Leśniak, *Franciszek Bacon, op. cit.*, pp. 50–51.

³⁸ See R. Brandt, *Francis Bacon, Die Idolenlehre*, in J. Speck (ed.) "Grundprobleme der großen Philosophen. Philosophieder Neuzeit", Göttingen 1979, pp. 9–34.

³⁹ F. Bacon, *Novum Organum, op. cit.*, B2:XXXVIII.

⁴⁰ R. E. Stillman, *The New Philosophy and Universal Languages in Seventeenth-Century England Bacon, Hobbes, and Wilkins*, London: Associated University Press, London 1995, p. 94.

Bacon “clearly ascribes the origin of these most fundamental of all human errors to the perturbation of desire.”⁴¹

The idols of the market place (*idola fori*) are, according to Bacon, the most troublesome since they creep into human understanding through misalliances of words and things: “These are formed in the reciprocal intercourse. Such errors in themselves could constitute a major obstacle to the progress of knowledge, for “men believe that their reason governs words, but it is also true that words react on the understanding; and this is that has rendered philosophy and sciences sophistical and inactive.”⁴² Therefore, that frequently fallacious influence of language resulted, according to Bacon, from two principal imperfections: the admission of words for things which have no existence at all in the real world and the attribution of names to objects in a confused, distorted, and quite arbitrary manner.⁴³

To conclude, Petrycy of Pilzno and Francis Bacon were lucky to live in the turbulent and eventful century – perhaps the most important century in the making of the modern world. The foundation of modern science and beginnings of modern philosophy and political theory were the seventeenth-century reply to the old scholastic thought. In the same century many European countries faced numerous political crises highlighting a strong division into separate political groupings within and outside each country. At the same time, the biggest European countries entered into worldwide international competition for wealth and power. European intellectualists were actively participating in history. Petrycy’s philosophical program aimed at the improvement of the language of philosophy and meant to popularize practical philosophy. He also introduced theoretical concepts from the fields of ethics, political philosophy and economics into a public discourse. While translating and commenting on the Aristotelian works, he enriches them with a rhetorical argumentation. By doing so, he also reached emendational aims. Certainly, in the light of his engagement in the issue of improving the language of philosophy he was forwarding the idea of progress among the Polish middle class.

Unlike Petrycy, Bacon cannot be explicitly evaluated and located in the history of the seventeenth century. It has to be pointed out that many a time the role of Francis Bacon has been represented one-sidedly – his role was emphasized either as a reformer of science or the Lord Chancellor, the mediator between James I and the House of Commons at the Jacobean court. Paolo

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² F. Bacon, *Novum Organum*, *op. cit.*, B1:LIX.

⁴³ See K. Leśniak, *Franciszek Bacon*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

Rossi, a devoted researcher of Bacon's philosophy, appeals for the interdisciplinary analysis of the latter, otherwise there is a danger of arriving at the conclusions that "distort the historical significance of Bacon's attitude."⁴⁴ It was only lately that the complex role of Bacon had come to be analysed in the light of his political convictions, whereas his role in the universal philosophical program was revolutionary in many aspects for it replaced the scholastic mode of thinking prevailing at the end of the sixteenth century. Therefore, the names of Petrycy of Pilzno and Francis Bacon complement the seventeenth-century strive for progress in their countries whereas a comparison of their philosophical programs shows their deep engagement into the idea of improving the lives of their countrymen.

S U M M A R Y

The aim of this paper is to present and compare the views of two prominent thinkers of the seventeenth century – Petrycy of Pilzno and Francis Bacon. Living in the same century, they faced different geopolitical and cultural circumstances. A comparison of their views sheds some light on the philosophical tendencies around the turn of the seventeenth century in Poland, where Petrycy of Pilzno (1554–1626) remained a central figure in the field of philosophy occupied with the issue of language development, and in England, where Francis Bacon (1561–1626), a politician, scientist and philosopher, saw clarification of language as a primary condition on the way towards true philosophy and harmonious political state. The authors of the article analyse different approaches of Petrycy and Bacon towards the issue of purification of language: Bacon's theoretical and cognitive assumptions as opposed to the ethical direction of Petrycy's reflection aimed at the reformation of public life in Poland.

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