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CHANGES IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF TRUTH:
HISTORICALLY COMMUNICATIVE MODEL

Summary of Doctoral Thesis

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This thesis is accepted for the commencement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the 30th of January, 2015 by the Doctoral Committee of Philosophy, University of Latvia.

Chairman of the Doctoral Committee _____ / *Igors Šuvajevs* /

Secretary of the Doctoral Committee _____ / *Raivis Bičevskis* /

Annotation

Changes in the Understanding of Truth: Historically Communicative Model

The doctoral thesis looks at the changes in the concept of truth and shows the historical background of situation where the concept of truth has become confronted by two sides of the understanding of truth – the eternal truth and the historical truth. The aim of the doctoral thesis is to link the concept of truth with the concept of historicity and to show the dependence of truth from *sensus communis* or common sense. The investigation of changes in the concept of experience from modernity to nowadays and opposition between ambitions of sciences of modernity and the concept of *sensus communis* as a foundation of knowledge shows that truth, which for long has been interpreted from positions of epistemology as a result of subject's active cognition, is now contrasted with socially communicative processes, experience of intersubjectivity and truth within linguisticity.

Keywords: truth, experience, historicity, communicativity, knowledge

Contents

Annotation	3
1. General Characterization of the Thesis.....	5
1.1. Significance of the Research Subject and Scientific Novelty of the Research.....	5
1.1.1. Significance of the Research Subject.....	7
1.1.2. Scientific Novelty of the Research.....	8
1.2. Aim, Tasks and Structure of the Thesis	9
1.2.1. Aim of the Thesis	9
1.2.2. Tasks of the Thesis.....	10
1.2.3. Volume and Structure of the Thesis	10
1.3. Brief Characterization of Methods.....	11
2. Approbation of the Results of the Thesis.....	13
2.1. Scientific Projects	13
2.2. Publications.....	13
2.2.1. Periodicals.....	13
2.2.2. Parts of Books	14
2.2.3. Proceedings	14
2.2.4. Other publications	15
2.3. Scientific Seminars and Conferences.....	15
2.3.1. International Conferences and Congresses.....	15
2.3.2. Seminars.....	16
2.3.3. Local Congresses and Conferences	16
3. Brief summary of the Thesis.....	18
3.1. Overview of the Thesis	18
3.2. Principal Conclusions	23
Bibliography	26
Acknowledgements.....	28

1. General Characterization of the Thesis

1.1. Significance of the Research Subject and Scientific Novelty of the Research

The significance of the research subject is marked by Wilhelm Windelband's speech "History and Natural Science" (*Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft*)¹ which highlighted the need to distinguish between natural sciences and humanities. He pointed out that in science there are things that do not comply with the same conditions. Neo-Kantians considered: "Errors resulted from the tendency toward universality which, through misjudgement of the autonomy of the isolated scientific disciplines, sought to submit all subjects to the force of one and the same method." (Windelband 1998, 9) To solve this Windelband distinguished between 'ideographic' and 'nomothetic' sciences. Both deal with the collection of facts but the difference lies in the usage. The former describes the general properties of reality while the latter – concrete and unique properties. History in his view belongs to the ideographic domain but natural sciences to nomothetic sciences.

It could be just a problem of classification. However, this distinction creates more far-reaching consequences. Namely, it is a question about the nature, application and effectiveness of truth. The inner logic of this question leads to the reshaping of the concept of truth. Windelband's ideas are bringing into light a necessity to reconsider legitimacy of philosophy and humanities on the whole.² However, in social sciences in the 20th century and today these ideas promote the revision of the understanding of truth. Therefore it is a philosophical problem.

Science searches for truth. If it is successful in finding a law, then it has any value only if it is true. If not – then it is disqualified and replaced with another one. In such a way science moves on by gathering facts and theories until it reaches the final destination – truth. But here arises a question: what one should do with facts which do not qualify under criteria of natural sciences? There are two ways. First, to discard the given fact. Second, to revise the concept of "truth". All these sciences which respect unique and inimitable and describe ideas, thoughts and events should choose the second way.

The second way brings with it some consequences. The concept of truth is not isolated. The issue of truth, i.e. the question whether truth is universal or

¹ His rectoral address presented on May 1, 1894 at the Kaiser-Wilhelms-Universität Strassbur.

² It has to be added that in the end of 19th century especially in German universities discussions about differences in sciences and methods were notably widespread. Similar ideas were presented by Heinrich Ricker, Wilhelm Dilthey etc.

historical and does it describe eternal laws or rather just separate cases is of extensive importance not only to the humanities but instead creates a foundation for all in general. The significance of it is there that non-absolute truth compels to reconsider a whole set of principal values of Western civilization which for centuries have been immersed in pursuit for truth and have praised truth as one of the main characters of its intellectual profile.

The significance of the issue is also acknowledged by almost endless repetitive efforts to reach any conclusion in the history of truth-seeking. In spite of plenty of good endeavours by most prominent philosophers there is no one solution. In retrospective overlook of near and far history, there is barely anyone who would without consideration stand for one-sided and absolute truth.³

The diffusion of truths in the dynamic middle of discourses creates a new challenging situation. If one accepts the opinion that Modernity has not only found a clear and mathematically expressed project of science but also that this project keeps its influence in contemporary world, then the collision of truths should not be surprising.

Circumstances wherein at the same time exist findings of traditional sciences and mystical superstitions create a situation which leads to think about the state of being which accepts simultaneous existence of independent and contradicting, locally authoritarian and *kind of* absolute truths. People do not lose the desire to know and to study and keep on believing that in principle it is possible to acquire some trustworthy truths. However, there are serious reasons to think that all these people could be wrong and that they do not have any true knowledge. Still in this case that is not the most important issue. The *usage* (in the hermeneutical sense of *subtilitas explicandi*) of truth is even more significant. (See: Gadamer, 1999: 291) It is something entirely different from epistemological drive to find logical consistency and correspondence to some reality.

Truth moves away from field of epistemology. What one should do with the concept of truth which comes close to border of eternal and historical polycentrism? Acceptance of it would mean that *truth* is subjected to interpretations, created in experience, has communicative character, and – most important – is a social phenomenon.

Windelband's questions lead to the reinvestigation of the nature of truth. The problem of truth could be shifted from purely scientific to meta- and pre-scientific investigation. Such a move was given a methodological foundation in the writings of Edmund Husserl: "Truth and falsity, criticism and critical comparison with evident data are an everyday theme playing their incessant part even in pre-scientific life. For this everyday life, with its changing and relative purposes, relative evidence and truths suffice." (Husserl 1982: 12) He respects the simple fact that truth has enormous role also outside the modern scientific

³ In the field of philosophy. This is different in natural sciences where the concept of one truth is dominant. For more see Chapter 2.1.6. – „The Age of the World View: How to Understand Modernity?“

paradigm. He reasserts his opinion and draws a philosophical outline of the problem: “Though de facto as science itself must ultimately see, it does not attain actualization of a system of absolute truths, but rather is obliged to modify its “truths” again and again, it nevertheless follows the idea of absolute or scientifically genuine truth; and accordingly it reconciles itself to an infinite horizon of approximations, tending toward that idea. By them, science believes, it can surpass *in infinitum* not only everyday knowing but also itself; likewise however by its aim at systematic universality of knowledge, whether that aim concern a particular closed scientific province or a presupposed all-embracing unity of whatever exists – as it does if a “philosophy” is possible and in question.” (Husserl 1982: 12)

Consequently, the thesis with support of noticeable philosophers of 20th century defend position that the concept of “truth” and theories of truth cannot be investigated solely within epistemology and with the modern scientific approach.⁴ The field of view should be broadened. Then one of the main questions is whether there is truth and how it can be historical and should the principle of universality be revised? These questions lead to some more: is “truth” a social phenomenon and does it have a communicative and linguistic (*Sprachlichkeit*) nature? Should one look for truth or rather for the conditions of truth?

1.1.1. Significance of the Research Subject

The significance of the thesis can be described on three levels: universal, local and subjective (private).

There are various significance aspects of the thesis on the universal level. The thesis shows that the concept of “truth” is an issue of two fundamentally opposite traditions of philosophy. On the one hand there is universality, eternity, objectivity, absolute etc. However, on the other hand – particularity, temporality, subjectivity etc. In the symbolic terms of ancient philosophy it is a clash between Parmenides and Heraclitus.

In the field of philosophy the decision to part with one or the other side has serious consequences. In a sense it is a question whether the natural sciences in principle can make universal and general laws and can humanities legitimise the analysis of concrete and unique events?

The thesis has additional but less important causes of universal significance. First, history of philosophy shows that the concept of “truth” is of great importance in almost all philosophical theories. Second, it has a broad influence on both everyday life and scientific work.

The local level of significance means that the given topic is important to a specific group in a set time and space, e.g. Latvians, biologists, horses etc.

⁴ For more see: Husserl, Edmund. 1970. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

On the local level with regards to Latvia the significance of the thesis corresponds with the concerns about the veracity of the interpretation of history as well as discussions on conflicts among various cultural and ethnic groups in the sphere of social and political problems. Relentless debate on efforts to “occupy” the truth and make decisive resolutions to find one-sided solutions to issues that are important to various social groups with largely diametrically opposite values often comes to a dead end. The obvious need for a solution is brought to a halt by the inability to divide something that in essence is indivisible only if the pursuit of truth is carried out in the epistemological way. Historically communicative model would yield better results.

Revision of the concept of “truth” could serve as tool for finding a way out and solving both philosophical and social problems. Of course someone could reckon that the dispersion of truth might seem rather like a surrender than a solution of the problem. However, the fact – decline to respect pluralism and the stubborn craving for one objective scientific truth – serves as the main obstacle to the realisation that both social groups and individuals are not so much rational and socially competent, but rather are involved in the tradition which gave them an ‘objective truth’ already before they even searched for it.

Third level of significance is the private or the subjective level. The role of subjective motives and interests in any academic research is considered to be a vice and therefore they will not be disclosed.

1.1.2. Scientific Novelty of the Research

The thesis is innovative on multiple levels. First, in the field of philosophy in Latvia so far there have not been any studies on the transformation of the concept of truth. There are some minor articles and a monograph by I. Vedins “Science and the truth”. However, they in almost no way address the issue of transformations of truth reflected in this thesis.

Secondly, the thesis also is scientifically innovative on the international level. Despite the many excellent researches on Modernity and writings by I. Kant, E. Husserl, G. Vico, H.-G. Gadamer etc., the thesis shows in new light the relationships among *sensus communis*, the issue of intersubjectivity, the role of coexistence in understanding of truth, as well as the link between experience and truth. The author is not aware of any international work in which the transformation process of truth is structured and shown exactly the same way as it is done in this work. The term ‘historically communicative model of truth’ is the author’s conceptual innovation.

The thesis presents various innovative terms and concepts as well as arguments (on the scientific ‘unspoken truth’, on the roots of historically communicative model of truth, etc.).

1.2. Aim, Tasks and Structure of the Thesis

1.2.1. Aim of the Thesis

The aim of the thesis is to research the transformations of concept of ‘truth’ that appear in the history of European philosophy starting from the time of Modernity and its influence that reaches nowadays, to understand historical and communicative nature of truth and to change the understanding of ‘truth’.

The statement of the thesis is that epistemological model of truth with its roots in Modernity has been replaced by historically communicative model of truth.

Truth that for a long time has been interpreted from the position of epistemology as the outcome of active cognition, has moved to a different field characterized by socially communicative and intersubjective experience. Thus truth becomes a communicative phenomenon or more specifically it discusses how a change in the concept of ‘experience’ changes the concept of ‘truth’.

The aim of the thesis has significant nuances: not to do detailed analysis of particular philosophical ideas but to look into transformations and mutual influences of various ideas to clarify philosophical trends. One of the tasks of the thesis is to look at the ‘paradigmatic trends’ and their consequences. Although one could agree to Thomas Kuhn’s ideas in “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions” on historicity of science it should be noted that criticism alone will not cancel the effects of paradigmatic trends. The thesis supports the view that the ideas expressed in Modernity have retained their influence on the daily life values today. Historical overview is principally necessary to explain the nature of historically communicative model of truth and it can be achieved only by exposing its roots.

The doctoral thesis is carried out as a research in social philosophy. It has twofold reasons.

First, it is a research in social philosophy because of the main aim, i.e. to look into ‘truth’ from a contemporary perspective. Such concepts as ‘truth’, ‘experience’, ‘tradition’, *sensus communis*⁵, historicity etc. are instruments of social philosophy. The intention to disconnect ‘truth’ from epistemology consequently moves it towards the field of social philosophy.

Second, the thesis has dimensions of history of social philosophy. However, the study of historical dimension is not motivated by archivist’s interest but instead by the necessity to perform a genealogical analysis of the concepts significant to the thesis.

⁵ For more see: Holthoon, F. v., Olson, D. R. (eds.). 1987. *Common Sense. The Foundations for Social Sciences*. Lanham; New York; London: University Press of America.

1.2.2. Tasks of the Thesis

First task. To explicitly highlight the main outlines of the most important theories of truth and to draw borders of the relevant and the irrelevant with the intention of pointing out causes for and circumstances of transformations of truth.

Second task. While reverting to the philosophical ideas of Modernity and marking out the cultural context, to disclose specific interpretation of truth which in general describes science in the given age. Namely, to show epistemological tendencies of science and orientation towards the absolute in the age of Modernity.

Third task. To show opposition to the philosophical position of Modernity on the basis of the history of the concept *sensus communis* which by defining social aspects of knowledge states a concern that the epistemological view of Modernity is limited. That shows the role of *sensus communis* in the subjective and intersubjective nature of truth.

Fourth task. To display concept ‘experience’ and transformations of it from Modernity to phenomenology and hermeneutics for the purpose of showing a fundamental connection between experience and truth which leads to the revision of truth from a purely scientific to a socially dependent concept. Namely, not to focus on experience of acquisition of truth but rather on the situation in which changes in the understanding of experience also change the interpretation of truth.

Fifth task. With support of hermeneutics demonstrate historicity and linguisticity of truth. To ground polycentrism and inconsistency of truth and to justify the effort of humanities to comprehend the changeability of truth in social and communicative processes.

1.2.3. Volume and Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is 212 pages long. The thesis contains the introduction, 5 chapters, conclusion and reference list.

The structure of the thesis is done as parallel narratives of A and B. First, (A), ‘truth’ as eternal and universal. Second, (B), ‘truth’ as historical and communicative. One (A) changes into the other (B) until a solution is found.

The first chapter of thesis “*Bazaar*: main outlines in the understanding of truth” researches the most important theories of truth for the purpose of demonstrating fundamental differences in them – distinction between those that accept narrative (A) or (B).

The second chapter “*Jealous science*: orientation to scientific truth in Modernity” (A) deals with aspirations and claims of Modernity to establish grounds for a universal method and endeavours to treat ‘truth’ as universal.

The third chapter “*Oracle or Mechanism*: ‘Sensus Communis’ and Temporality of Truth” (B) reviews history and evolution of the concept ‘sensus communis’ with the intention of displaying truth’s communicative nature and dependency on historicity.

The fourth chapter of the thesis “Reconstruction of Experience: on the Way Towards Historically Communicative Model. Kant–Hegel–Husserl” covers transformation of ‘experience’ (from A to B) with the intention of indicating changes in the ‘mechanism’ of formation of experience. The objectivity of experience is replaced with the involvement in historical subjectivity.

The fifth and final chapter “Difusion of Truth in Historicity of Possibilities” returns to the narrative B, namely, by following the evolution of ‘sensus communis’ it reveals philosophical foundation for the idea of historically communicative model of truth.

The final part sets out conclusions and lists the references.

1.3. Brief Characterization of Methods

Methods for the studies of texts include interpretation of texts, critical analysis and logical argumentation. Each of the methods is necessary for adequate reading and provides the minimum necessary for proper interpretation. The guidelines of critical analysis are not only the basis for studies of textual corpus but also the main approach for examination of philosophical ideas and arguments.

The thesis includes an intention to describe the interaction and changes of philosophical ideas and, by showing trends, to research historical effects of these ideas. Consequently the thesis makes use of such methods as hermeneutics, history of ideas, history of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*) and methods of the Annales School.

Development of the method ‘history of ideas’ is often credited to Arthur Lovejoy who considered that it is possible to recognize and do ‘biographies’ of ideas. His theory was later developed by Isiah Berlin, Michel Foucault etc. The intention to rehabilitate the role of humanities in the pursuit of truth can gain more credibility if it acknowledges history of ideas and the notion that it is possible to recognize general ideas in the processes of history.

Conceptual history as a branch of historical and cultural studies deals with the historical semantics of terms. As the main developers should be mentioned Otto Brunner, Reinhart Koselleck etc. Conceptual history focuses on the transformations of concepts and emphasizes their role in the development of paradigmatic ideas. This method defends the idea that in the basis of understanding history is the analysis of historically inconsistent concepts. The method of conceptual history is necessary to perform studies of not only historical interpretations of ‘sensus communis’ but also to distantly inspect the concept of ‘truth’. Conceptual history prescribes that ‘truth’ should be seen as a concept with mutable nature.

The methods of the Annales School are required for outlining the historical context. Even though this method has gone through noticeable changes, the main ideas are still relevant. The representatives of the Annales School considered the almost immeasurable amount of historical material not as a drawback but rather as an advantage. In the second half of the 20th century a representative of the

Annales School, Jacques Le Goff, defined the main directions of research: history of intellectual life, history of world-views (*mentalités*) and history of value-orientation. Here the connection to the intended studies of 'sensus communis' shows up. It is of utmost importance if the thesis intends to explore the cultural context and trends of intellectual life.

The critical analysis in the thesis is supported by a peculiar approach, namely, uncritical reading. It is a way of text reading when some arguments and ideas are intentionally not criticised but rather approached as such that have some influence on the development of philosophical trends. E.g., Descartes's ideas on anatomy are falsified today. But they can tell important things on the evolution of particular theories.

The thesis uses the hermeneutical method extensively. Hermeneutical approach invites to ask: to what extent can we understand any text? To what extent a text can be subjected to interpretation and at which point we have become arbitrary? Philosophical hermeneutics points out that any kind of reading is based on certain cultural and scientific trends. This issue – 'knowledge' and 'truth' as well as models of the acquisition of truth – is at the heart of the thesis. So it can be said that the study of methods is continued and expanded throughout the thesis. In a sense the whole thesis is a study on methods. As one of the central topics in the thesis is the problem of the possibility of truth (i.e., methods of obtaining the truth) then it must be assumed that methods should also be viewed critically. So the question on method in a circular manner recurs throughout the thesis. In other words, the methods necessary to perform the research are always at the same time critically evaluated.

The method of exposition is subjected to its particular purpose, that is to say, the first half of the thesis is shaped as a historically chronological examination to deconstruct the object being studied. Whereas the other half is problem-logical, i.e. the deconstructed is synthesized in a new form.

The methodological framework of the thesis also includes the analysis and comparison of philosophical positions with respect to both hermeneutical distance and diversity of contemporary breadth of analytical methods.

2. Approbation of the Results of the Thesis

2.1. Scientific Projects

1. 2014–2017; Latvia state research programme “Letonika – Latvijas vēsture, valodas, kultūra, vērtības” [Letonika – History of Latvia, Languages, Culture, Values], project No. 6 – “Vērtību aspekti Letonikā”.
2. 2014–2017. “Latvija: kultūru migrācijas” [Latvia: Migration of Cultures] – research project financed by Latvian Council of Science. Realised in cooperation with the Institute of History of Latvia, the Institute of Latvian Language, the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Arts, the University of Latvia. Project Nr. 660/2014.
3. 2010–2014. “Humanitāro zinātņu virtuālā enciklopēdija” [Virtual Encyclopaedia of Humanities] – research project financed by Latvian Council of Science. Realised in cooperation with the Institute of History of Latvia, the Institute of Latvian Language, the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Arts, the University of Latvia.
4. 2010–2014. Latvia state research programme “National Identity (language, Latvian history, culture and human security)”.
5. 2011. International creative workshop “Sociālo un humanitāro zinātņu pētījumu rezultātu popularizēšana jauniešu vidē” [Promotion of Research Results of Social Sciences and Humanities among Youth] – activity in ERDF project 2010/0195/2DP/2.1.1.2.0/10APIA/VIAA/08.
6. 2007–2009. “Latvijas filozofs (-e) – virtuālais modelis” [Latvian Philosopher – Virtual Model]. – Research project financed by Ministry of Education and Science in Latvia state research programme “Letonika”.

2.2. Publications

2.2.1. Periodicals

1. Māris Kūlis. 2014. Ist die Wahrheit absolut oder optimal? *Fromm Forum*, 2014, No. 18: S. 56.–57.
2. Марис Кулис. 2014. “Общность, разговор и поиски истины” // *Дни философии в Санкт-Петербурге 2013. Истина и заблуждение в жизни и творчестве*. Санкт-Петербург: Издательство Санкт-

Петербургского государственного экономического университета: С. 95–107.

3. Māris Kūlis. 2014. Greizsirdīgā zinātne jeb Jaunie laiki un to konsekvences [Jealous Science or Modernity and Its Consequences]. *LU Raksti. Filosofija*, No. 794: 99–110.
4. Māris Kūlis. 2011. “Mamardašvili – patiesība un aizspoguļija” in digital book *Mamardašvili lasījumi*. Rīga: LU FSI.

2.2.2. Parts of Books

1. Māris Kūlis. 2015. “Kas ir patiesība? Ēriha Fromma modelis” [What is Truth? Erich Fromm’s Model] in. *Bēgsana no brīvības? Ērihs Fromms un Latvija* [Escape from Freedom? Erich Fromm and Latvia], by Šuvajevs, I. (ed.), 199–130. Rīga: FSI.
2. Māris Kūlis. 2014. “Sensus communis: orākuls vai mehānisms (no retorikas līdz Kantam)” [Sensus Communis: oracle or mechanism (from rhetoric to Kant)] in *Ziemeļu mags. Johans Georgs Hāmanis* [Magus of the North: Johann Georg Hamann], by Bičevskis, R. (ed.), 283–306. Rīga: FSI.
3. Māris Kūlis. 2012. “Patiesības izpratne latviešu pirmskara kultūras filosofijā” in *Modernitātes veidošanās Latvijā filosofiskajā un ideju vēstures skatījumā: Personības*, by Kūle, M. (ed.), 134–144. Rīga: FSI.
4. Māris Kūlis. 2011. “Patiesības izpratne Latvijas filosofijā 20. gadsimta divdesmitajos un trīsdesmitajos gados: Teodors Celms un Jūlijs Aleksandrs Students” in *Kultūras identitātes dimensijas*, by Krūmiņa-Koņkova, S. (ed.), 43–58. Rīga: LU FSI.

2.2.3. Proceedings

1. Māris Kūlis. 2013. *Community, conversation and search for truth. In: Abstracts for XXIII World Congress of Philosophy. Philosophy as Inquiry and Way of Life*. Athens: University of Athens: 373–374.
2. Māris Kūlis. 2012. “Ethical Pluralism and Sensus Communis in the Search for Unity” in *Abstracts for conference „Traditional Values and Virtues and Contemporary Society in a Global Age”*. Beijing: Renmin University of China: 329–331. (Text translated and published also in Chinese)
3. Māris Kūlis. 2012. “Giambattista Vico’s New Science of Society” in *Tēzes konferencei „Kā mēs varam būt kopā?”* Rīga: FSI: 44.–45; 93–94.

2.2.4. Other publications

1. Ģirts Jankovskis, Elvīra Šimfa, Māris Kūlis, Kārlis Vērpe. DVD “*Latvijas filozofs(e). Virtuālais modelis*”. Rīga, LU FSI, 2009. (Published in a digital form)

2.3. Scientific Seminars and Conferences

2.3.1. International Conferences and Congresses

1. 2015; Riga, Latvia; presentation of paper “Valodas loma kultūras tapšanā – Džambatistas Viko filosofiskās idejas” [The Role of Language in Formation of Culture – Philosophical Ideas of Giambattista Vico] in Latvian Academy of Sciences, international scientific conference “Migration of Cultures” organized by University of Latvia Agency „Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia”.
2. 2013; Saint Petersburg, Russia; presentation of paper “Truth as Social Phenomenon” in international conference “Days of Philosophy in Saint-Petersburg 2013. Philosophy of cognition and creative work of life” section “Truth and error in life and creative work” organized by Saint Petersburg State University (*Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет*) and Saint Petersburg State University of Economics and Finance (*Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет экономики и финансов*).
3. 2013; Athens, Greece; presentation of paper “Community, conversation and search for truth” in international congress in Athens „XXIII World Congress of Philosophy. Philosophy as Inquiry and Way of Life”, organized by FISP, University of Athens and UNESCO.
4. 2013; Riga, Latvia; presentation of paper “Patiesība: absolūta vai optimāla? / Ist die Wahrheit absolut oder optimal?” international conference „Freiheit und Freiheiten – Möglichkeiten und Gefahren / Brīvība un brīvības: iespējas un draudi”.
5. 2012; Riga, Latvia; presentation of paper “Giambatista Vico's New Science of Society” in international conference „Kā mēs varam būt kopā? Sociālā fenomenoloģija par kopību veidošanos”.
6. 2012; Presentation of paper “Ethical Pluralism and Sensus Communis in the Search for Unity” international conference *Traditional values and Virtues in Social Life Today*, in Renmin university and organized by *Center for Ethical Studies, Renmin (People's) University of China (Beijing, China)* un *Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (Beijing, China)*. Abstract of paper translated and published in Chinese language.

7. 2011; Delhi, India; presentation of paper “Truth as Phenomenon of Social Experience and Power” in *Jawaharlal Nehru University* in conference *World Philosophy Day. Philosophy of Social Sciences* organized by *Centre for Philosophy* and *School of Social Sciences*.
8. 2010; Riga, Latvia; presentation of paper “Mamardašvili – patiesība un Aizspoguļija” in international conference *Mamardashvili readings 2010* organized by University of Latvia and Goethe-Institut.

2.3.2. Seminars

1. 2014; Venice, Italy; presentation of paper “Search for Truth: Vico-Kant; Husserl-Gadamer” in Ca’ Foscari University of Venice (*Università Ca' Foscari Venezia*) in scientific seminar „Venice-Riga: Philosophical Actualities. How to Interpret Master in Philosophy?”
2. 2012; Vienna, Austria; presentation of paper „Experience of Truth and *Sensus Communis*” in scientific seminar *Vienna-Riga: Philosophical Dialogue* in Vienna University.
3. 2011; Roma, Italy; presentation of paper *Sensus Communis: Experience of Truth* in scientific seminar *Roma-Riga* in Pontifical Lateran University.

2.3.3. Local Congresses and Conferences

1. 2015: 73rd conference of University of Latvia, section *Apziņa, eksistence, kopība: aktualitāte un perspektīvas*, LU VFF: presentation of paper *Džambatistas Viko patiesības kritēriji*.
2. 2014; Conference “Pāvesta Franciska runas ES Parlamentā un Eiropas Padomē – filosofiskie secinājumi Latvijai”, University of Latvia, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology: presentation of paper *Rafaēla gleznas interpretācijas nozīme pāvesta Franciska runā: patiesības div-veidība*.
3. 2012; 71st conference of University of Latvia, section *Vienais un daudzējais*, LU VFF: presentation of paper *Patiesības kā sociāla fenomena izpratne H. Ārendtes filosofijā*.
4. 2012; 70st conference of University of Latvia, section *Pieredze, kultūra un filozofija*, LU VFF: presentation of paper *Patiesības pieredze: sensus communis*

5. 2011; The 3rd United World Congress of Latvian Scientists and the 4th Letonika (Latvian Studies) Congress *Science, society and national identity*, section „Modernitātes veidošanās Latvijā filosofiskajā un ideju vēstures skatījumā”: presentation of paper *Patiesības un melu izpratne latviešu pirmskara kultūras filosofijā*.
6. 2011; Conference „Vērojuma telpas: attēls, skaņa, performance, vārds”, LU, kim?: presentation of paper *Patiesības pieredze: skatiņa sagrozītā šķautņainība*.
7. 2011; 69th conference of University of Latvia, section „Patiesība vai metode? – pārdomas par...”, LU VFF: presentation of paper *Patiesības izpratne Latvijas filosofijā (1920-30. gados)*.
8. 2011; 69th conference of University of Latvia, section „Sociālā filozofija”, LU VFF: presentation of paper *Patiesība kā kultūras fenomēns*.

3. Brief summary of the Thesis

3.1. Overview of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis is subordinated to a particular purpose. The intention is to show models of truth which to a large extent are consequences of philosophical concepts and, in turn, create the conditions for further interpretations of truth. Consequently, it was necessary to take several steps, which, on one hand, would show the model of truth (A) which emphasizes absolute and universal nature, but – on the other hand – would disclose the model (B) which accepts relativity and dependence on context. These steps direct towards a broad inquiry of (A) philosophical ideas of Modernity and (B) the concept ‘sensus communis’ or ‘common sense’. This in turn leads to the investigation of the transformations of the concept ‘experience’ (change from A to B).

The content of the thesis is opened with an overview of main theories⁶ of truth (Chapter “*Bazaar: Main Outlines in Understanding of Truth*”). It provides both insight into the main outlines of each theory and demonstrates a fundamental conflict between these different⁷ theories. It was found that the ‘dispute’ cannot be solved by resolution of every theory but there is a need for much more contrast of two models which acknowledges either a universal or a historical nature of truth. Consequently it becomes possible to discuss the relationship between models of truth.

The content of the two following chapters (The second chapter “*Jealous Science: Orientation towards Scientific Truth in Modernity*” and the third chapter “*Oracle or Mechanism: ‘Sensus Communis’ and Temporality of Truth*”) marks two different essential theoretical and philosophical elements (A and B) which are of great importance to interpretation of the concept of ‘truth’.

One of the elements described in the second chapter is the so called ‘fetishism of method’ and orientation of modern sciences towards objectivity and a materialistic view of reality.

An opposite element described in the third chapter is the antique and inconsistent concept of ‘sensus communis’ or ‘sense of community’. This concept is in opposition to Modernity as expressed by Francis Bacon⁸ and Rene Descartes⁹, and is related to the idea of authority and historicity.

⁶ See also: Celms T. 1939. *Patiesība un šķitums*. Rīga: Valtera un Rapas akc. sab. apgāds.

⁷ Variety of theories is well showed in: Lynch, M. P. (ed.). 2001. *The Nature of Truth*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

⁸ See: Bēkons, F. 1989. *Jaunais Organons*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.

⁹ See: Dekarts, R. 1978. *Pārruna par metodi*. Rīga: Zvaigzne; Dekarts, R. 2008. *Meditācijas par pirmo filosofiju*. Rīga: Liepnieks un Rītups.

The analysis of Modernity by Martin Heidegger¹⁰, Edmund Husserl as well as Martin Jay shows a tendency that philosophy of Modernity was oriented towards universal and objective knowledge. Such approach had consequences on concepts of ‘truth’ and ‘experience’. To achieve the expected modern philosophy had to decline the subjectivity of a subject and the individuality of a historical individual. Objectivity required that a subject could acquire position “view from nowhere” (Jay 2005, 35). Consequently Modernity created division between psychological and epistemological subjects. It abolished the significance of memory and bodily learning was replaced by instruments (Jay 2005, 36). It meant that it is also necessary to reconsider the model of reality and the objective of science is to find ‘outer’ (in contrast to ‘inner’) or ‘objective’ reality.

The task of reaching ‘objective truth’ was possible only through the use of a method. However that was possible solely within a particular interpretation of reality. Reality could be considered objective only and only if it was subjected to the interpretation model which was called ‘mathematization’ by Husserl. Namely, Modernity recognized as objective only what was measurable. (Heidegger 1977: 263–264; Husserl 1970: 32–33) Heidegger named it as spatio-temporal mass-point. That means that Modernity created its criteria of objectivity and then recognized as objective only those entities that corresponded to the given set of rules. Consequently everything outside of its domain was rejected and reduced to a mere opinion.

What was lost by Modernity? It lost the idea of authority and tradition. It placed the human mind on the throne of god. It means that modern philosophy gave up the model of truth which respects ‘sensus communis’ ‘sense of community’.

The question “what is a ‘sense of community’?” is the central point of the third chapter “*Oracle or Mechanism: ‘Sensus Communis’ and Temporality of Truth*”. This concept directs towards the idea of some *kind of invisible vault* where knowledge known to everyone is stored. Namely, it is the idea of ‘unquestionable collective knowledge’.

Even though the concept of ‘sensus communis’ has gone through various phases of metamorphoses¹¹ it still has two main branches. Namely, first, ‘sensus communis’ as a subject’s totality of senses and, second, a totality of subjects. However both kinds are a post-sentient and a pre-reflective faculty.

It has to be admitted that philosophical schools which recognize ‘sensus communis’ simultaneously show understanding of truth distinct from the model within Modernity.¹² When Giambattista Vico turned to the ‘geometrical method’

¹⁰ For more see: Heidegger, M. 1998. “Pasaules ainas laiks” in *Malkasceji*. Rīga: Intelekt.

¹¹ Rhetoric tradition, Aristotle, Descartes, Vico, Kant, Shaftsbury, Gadamer, Scottish School of Common Sense – these are just few of all.

¹² For more see: Schaeffer, J. D. 1990. *Sensus Communis. Vico, Rhetoric, and the Limits of Relativism*. Durham; London: Duke University Press; Schaeffer, J. D. 2004. *Commonplaces sensus communis*. In: Jost, W., Olmsted, W. (eds.). *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*. Blackwell, 2004.

of Descartes, his intention was to rehabilitate¹³ rhetoric as well as – and even more important – to create a new science of humanities which would synthesize philology (as history) with philosophy.¹⁴

Latter Kant marked two ways for ‘truth’. One – presented in “Critique of Pure Reason” – leads to objectivity. Another – presented in “Critique of Judgement” – is rooted in ‘sensus communis’. In concordance with Kant it also has to be universal. However there is a difference. Truth is dependant not on concepts but on collective ideas.

The overview of truth models leads to the point where the influence of experience on truth is even stronger. From one side it is a situation where the philosophy of Modernity reduces experience to pure senses and incorporates it in the mechanistic world-view.

From the other side there is such understanding of experience that recognizes the breadth of it. Namely, it is the concept of ‘experience’ that is subjugated to various conditions. It could be stated that in the history of philosophy from Modernity to contemporary situation grows the distance between ‘experience’ and ‘meaning’. If in the philosophy of Modernity the whole experience is constituted by senses then later it is mediated by forms of appearance, historicity, linguisticity etc. Even though the fourth chapter “Reconstruction of Experience: on the Way towards Historically Communicative Model. Kant–Hegel–Husserl” does not discuss elements A and B directly, they are present indirectly in *ideological* orientations. The philosophies of Kant, Hegel and Husserl pave the road towards the hermeneutical interpretation of truth.

Kant’s philosophical research showed forms of appearance. That had serious consequences. It meant that conditions of science are in principle rooted in subjectivity. It also meant that ‘subjectivity’ is and can be interesting to philosophical investigations.

Hegel marked out that concepts are historical.¹⁵ It means that ‘ideas’ and ‘order of things’ in principle are not eternal. Consequently it means that truth can be miscellaneous and dialectical.

Whereas Husserl refused to speak about any ‘outer’ reality. Instead phenomenology turned on the structures of experience and consciousness. Phenomenology abandoned the hopes of Modernity to find an objective truth of reality and limited its field of interest to objects in perception.

If reconstruction of experience means transition from A to B then the emergence of philosophical hermeneutics¹⁶ in the thesis stands for a historically communicative model. The fifth chapter “Diffusion of Truth in Historicity of

¹³ See e.g.: Vico, G. 1990. *On the Study Methods of Our Time*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.

¹⁴ See: Vico, G. 2001. *New Science*. Penguin Books.

¹⁵ For more see: Breiser, 2005. *Hegel*. New York, London: Routledge.

¹⁶ The sources of hermeneutics are investigated in: Grondin, J. 1995. *Sources of Hermeneutics*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Possibilities” deals with philosophy¹⁷ of Hans-Georg Gadamer (Gadamer, 1999) that challenged various important philosophical concepts. His philosophical ideas in the pursuit of a historically communicative model of truth conclude previous philosophy and set the ground for further development.

One of the keystones of hermeneutics is the hermeneutical circle. It marks a specific way of understanding¹⁸. Namely, before any act of understanding there already is a pre-opinion. It means that understanding is involved in a broad context of conditions. Gadamer showed that understanding is dependent on prejudices and performed their rehabilitation. He demonstrated the productive aspect of prejudices. (Wachterhauser, 72)

By developing the theory on prejudices Gadamer realized that every act of understanding is incorporated in the ‘horizon’. Namely, understanding exists within tradition and horizon.

Next, Gadamer showed that the medium of experience is language. Then language is the ‘sphere’ where understanding can be performed. This statement significantly expands hermeneutics. Namely, everything that is understandable is also linguistic and vice versa. In such manner Gadamer gives ontological status to language.

Consequently hermeneutics claimed to review the understanding of ‘experience’. What was made ‘pure’ by Modernity now with the support of hermeneutical concepts was made ‘un-pure’. This move led to the situation that hermeneutics had to distance itself from the ambitions of Modernity. Whereas reinterpretation of experience led to the alienation from endeavours to find truth that would be based in a united and eternal horizon. The abandonment of objectivity and the acceptance of historical character of experience set the basis for historically communicative truth.

However there is one final question. What kind of relations are there between the concept of ‘sensus communis’ and hermeneutics? What is this ‘communal sense without reflection’ described by Vico? Of course, they are different concepts. However they are very close. It could be stated that linguisticity is the content of ‘sensus communis’.

Philosophical hermeneutics turned to linguisticity and made it the home of tradition. But it is not an obstacle to the idea that conditions of understanding in language are the same as those that were used by an ancient orator when he referred to the common opinion.

One of the main properties of ‘sensus communis’ is that ‘truth’ hides in the unsaid. Namely, the criterion of truth is collective opinion but this opinion is tacit. It means that truth is known before it is even searched. This element –

¹⁷ On philosophy of Gadamer see: Grondin, J. 2003. *The Philosophy of Gadamer*. Acumen.

¹⁸ On the concept of ‘understanding’ in hermeneutics see: Grondin, J. 2002. *Gadamer's Basic Understanding of Understanding*. In: Dostal, R. J. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*.

dependence of preconditions – draws together the concept of ‘sensus communis’ and philosophical hermeneutics. Hermeneutics recognize the productive nature of prejudices. The same principle can be found in ‘sensus communis’. There is only one small step from ‘sensus communis’ to the Gadamer’s concept of ‘tradition’. It seems that right in this aspect – tradition – is the most clearly visible similarity between the two concepts.

Conclusions invite to repeat the central question: what is truth? As it is shown in the thesis, the answer is double-faced. The philosophy of Modernity would want to find and keep an objective truth. However the other way shows that the solution could be such: the answer to this question should be provided by ‘common sense’. The thesis throughout tries to understand this common sense. Solution leads to the hermeneutical idea of tradition that is defined by both ‘horizon’ and ‘prejudices’ as well as by fundamental conditions of experience. *Ergo*, truth hides within ‘sensus communis’ and is consequently both historical and communicative.

3.2. Principal Conclusions

The principal conclusions of the thesis that are presented as separate theses at the same time display the structure of the thesis. It has to be noted that even though the content of the thesis is guided by one intention, reaching of the goal depended on juxtaposition of two opposite viewpoints (A and B).

Hence the theses are grouped by chapters. Each group refers to united set of ideas.

“Bazaar”

1. Simultaneously exist numerous theories of truth but all of them have some drawbacks.
2. All the theories of truth come to the distinction between two principles. Namely, it is the question of epistemological ambitions and consequences thereto.
3. Many theories of truth can be differentiated as employing either absolute (A) or relative (B) nature of truth.

Viewpoint A

4. The philosophy of Modernity stands opposed to ‘old’ philosophy. It proposes the task of abandonment of old truths and creation of new method.
5. To accomplish the given task, Modernity engages Cartesian doubt and declines authorities, tradition and idols (Bacon).
6. The task can be achieved only if Modernity takes a step further and overhauls and limits the concept ‘experience’. It means that experience is reduced from a subjective feeling to perceptual sensitivity. To get at truth, Modernity has to develop a method that would assist in dealing with the mathematized and measurable world-view. Consequently, the philosophy of Modernity and scientific revolution begins ‘fetish of method’.
7. The ‘fetish of method’ reshapes multiple elements of experience: (1) ‘inner experience’ is replaced by the intersubjectively verifiable data, (2) creates a distinction between the psychological and epistemological subject, (3) memory is deliberately obliterated as irrelevant and (3) the bodily learning is replaced by ‘objective’ instruments.
8. The philosophy of Modernity claiming to provide universal, absolute and ‘final’ truths is *jealous* to the ideas directing to the relativity of truth. Namely, the truth of modern philosophy can be the only mode of understanding with no parallel perceptions.

Viewpoint B

9. In contrast to the philosophy of Modernity, the ancient culture uses concepts ‘sensus communis’ or ‘common sense’, namely, collective and

unwritten knowledge, “the sense of what is right and of the common good that is to be found in all men; moreover, it is sense that is acquired through living in the community and is determined by its structures and aims.”

10. The epistemological and philosophical ambitions of Modernity are opposed by the philosophical schools unwilling to abolish description of the variety of human life. One of the most prominent representatives of this movement who stated the *verum-factum* principle is Giambattista Vico. He considers that Descartes’s ‘geometrical method’ cannot be used to conduct an investigations on the history and modes of human life.
11. Philosophical branches that respects ‘sensus communis’ in contrast to Modernity claim that one should look for truth in the subject and community of subjects rather than in the ‘outer’ or objective reality.
12. In the “Critique of Judgement”, Kant focuses on ‘sensus communis’ and displays it as the condition of aesthetical taste. It means that non-objective is an important part of the cognitive processes.

From A to B

13. The *purifying* of experience by Modernity means that truth becomes conjugated with experience. (See no. 7)
14. Henceforward the philosophy of Modernity begins (without admitting it) the reconstruction of ‘experience’. It gives back to ‘experience’ what was taken away.
15. The philosophy of Kant to a large extent corresponds with the ideas of Modernity. “The Critique of Pure Reason” sets out to find ground for science and *a priori* elements that constitute subjectivity. As a result, new philosophy is made to respect conditions of subjectivity.
16. Hegel’s philosophy continues ideological direction of previous philosophy. However Hegel stands out for showing historicity of concepts. It means that ‘ideas’ and ‘order of things’ are not eternal, meaning that truth is inconsistent. Hegel returns historicity to the concept ‘experience’.
17. The phenomenology, developed by Husserl, while still desiring objective science, refuses to investigate ‘outer’ reality and instead turns to systematic reflection on the structures of consciousness. Phenomenology restores the dignity of subject and variety of ‘experience’. Husserl develops the notion of horizon and life-world which are significant to philosophical hermeneutics.

Return of B

18. The recognition of indirect nature of experience and emancipation of subjectivity shows that truth can be understood not as correspondence

between ideas and reality but as rooted in communicative, social, historical processes.

19. Philosophical hermeneutics, developed by Gadamer, exceeds the limits of modern philosophy and challenges the existing understanding of science.
20. One of the main ideas of hermeneutics is respect to authority and tradition. Namely, hermeneutics concludes that authority and tradition has a productive role in the understanding.
21. Gadamer's philosophy reaches the analysis of language and concludes that linguisticity is a fundamental ground of a being. Namely, he makes language (hermeneutically) an ontological principle. Hence language is the ground for understanding. Limits of the world correspond to the limits of the understanding and vice versa.

Conclusion

22. Hermeneutics shows that experience and understanding are fundamentally dependant on the hermeneutical principles such as hermeneutical circle, prejudices, expectations, horizon, tradition and historically effective history. These elements are close to the founding principles of the concept 'sensus communis'. Despite the fact that 'language' and 'sensus copmmunis' are not the same thing, the content of both is similar.
23. *Ergo*, philosophical hermeneutics (B), realization of the concept 'sensus communis' that is the founding principle of the historically communicative model of truth.

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