

Introduction

“He who wishes to be a philosopher in the true sense of the word, must indeed confront himself with Kant, and that in earnest, because all the contemporary philosophy is to an extent a commentary on him, and without him it becomes incomprehensible.”

Stefan Pawlicki, *O podstawie filozofii*

We are nearing the 300th anniversary of Immanuel Kant’s birth. Once again, commemorative conferences, solemn celebrations, and perhaps receptions with cakes bearing the philosopher’s image, from which hardly anything will remain – except fleeting memories – will be organized. Perhaps a commemorative monograph will be written, and somewhere else someone will write a short account of the celebrations held. Few of us, however, will remember that Kant’s philosophical thought, being so momentous in many areas, provided the impetus for the revival of Polish philosophy in the late 19th century. At the time, we were slowly recovering from over 100 years of oppression. Kant’s philosophy brought about significant changes in the way we thought. Based on Kant’s philosophy, a unification of the dispersed Polish philosophical community was accomplished. The first result of this was the establishment of the Polish Philosophical Society in Lviv in 1904 by Ka-

zimierz Twardowski. The formation of the Polish Philosophical Society is the result of a consistently implemented plan of creative work, one of the most important stages of which was the preparation and publication of Polish translations of Kant's major works. Back in the late 19th century, a triumvirate was set up to patronize the project. It was formed by Henryk Struve (1840–1912), Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938) and Władysław Weryho (1868–1916). The activities of these three scholars yielded tangible results over time. When the Polish Philosophical Society was established, we already had a translation of *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* and the first full translation of *Critique of Pure Reason*. We could say that we had made a promising start in philosophical research, in the spirit of Kant's criticism. We needed a renewal, a permanent philosophical work at the grassroots. Struve, a tireless promoter of such a practice of philosophy, in a treatise entitled *Immanuel Kant a dziejowa doniosłość jego krytycyzmu* [*Immanuel Kant and the Historical Significance of His Criticism*] wrote:

In orienting one's thought in the chaos of the diverse philosophical and scientific directions of our time, it is difficult to find one that has not absorbed into itself the principles of Kant's criticism or formed itself with their participation [...]. Whether we consider contemporary positivism and naturalism developing against the background of the results of natural science, or related schools of so-called scientific philosophy and empiriocriticism; reviving the metaphysics of Fichte, Hegel, or Herbart; whether, finally, we follow the contemporary forms of pessimism, scepticism, or ruthless individualism, not to mention New-Kantianism and its shades – everywhere the principles of Kant's philosophy constitute either the ultimate basis or the starting point for the independent work of thought, exerting a clear influence on the formation of views on the world and life. If, in this chaos of schools, there is not one which is absolutely superior to another; if it cannot be said that this or that philosophy is the prevalent one at the present time; yet, on the other hand, there is found a spiritual commonality linking all these trends with each other and giving them a certain unified stamp, as the result of the so-called spirit of the times, we must recognize that such a common feature is criticism, linked in one way or another with Kant's philosophy.¹

¹ Henryk Struve, *Immanuel Kant oraz dziejowa doniosłość jego krytycyzmu* [*Immanuel Kant and the Historical Significance of His Criticism*] (Warszawa: J. Sikorski, 1904), 7.

In this issue of *Studia z Historii Filozofii* [*Studies in the History of Philosophy*], we will present the influence of Kant's philosophy on the process of reconstruction of Polish philosophy, which began at the end of the 19th century. Our starting point is to show an exceptional and unprecedented event. For it is rare for a Polish philosopher to be granted the honour of writing an "Introduction" to the first issue of a philosophical journal of world stature. Such was the case with the address of Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954) in *Kant-Studien*. In this journal Lutosławski presented an account of his own research on Kant's philosophy in Spain. Following this, we demonstrate how Kazimierz Twardowski sought to unite the Polish philosophical community in Lviv around Kant. The next article discusses information about worldwide research on Kant's philosophy, which was published in the pages of the first annuals of *Przełęcz Filozoficzny* [*Philosophical Review*]. We also present the circumstances of the first edition of the Polish translation of the *Prolegomenon*, and then reveal the milestones of the first complete Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The issue closes with a study of the Lviv lectures of Roman Witold Ingarden (1893–1970) entitled *Krytycyzm Kanta* [*Kant's Criticism*]. In a sense, the lectures are the culmination of the work commenced by Struve, Twardowski, and Weryha to assimilate Kant's philosophy into Polish culture. They can be boldly contrasted with the lectures that Martin Heidegger gave earlier in Marburg. Both Ingarden and Heidegger, disciples of Edmund Husserl, examined Kant's philosophy from different perspectives. In Germany, Kant's philosophy was well known, while Heidegger's phenomenological perspective was just another attempt to interpret Kant's philosophy. In Lviv, on the other hand, Ingarden was in a completely different situation. In Poland, despite numerous attempts to translate Kant's most important works, his philosophy was continuing to be treated as an alien influence on world philosophy. Struve, Twardowski, Weryha, Ingarden, and some of our other philosophers sought to change this. They seemed undeterred by their poor knowledge of Kant's philosophy. And Ingarden gave the clearest lecture on his philosophy in Lviv. However, the path to understanding what Kant propounded was still long and riddled with obstacles.

In studying the influence of Immanuel Kant on the development of Polish philosophical thought, we primarily intend to illustrate that it was a ma-

for one. In difficult geopolitical conditions, our philosophy was revived under the influence of Kant's philosophy, and the publication of several Polish translations of his works became a rarity in the world. Today it seems unimaginable that a country that was wiped off the world map for so long managed to rebuild its own philosophy in such a short time. Poland produced translations of Kant's most important works. Articles and scientific papers were written, dedicated to his philosophy, and attendance at world congresses and conferences became the norm among Polish philosophers. Polish philosophers sat on respectable organizing committees of conferences, congresses, associations, participated in world scientific projects, and worked on the editorial boards of journals. One could say that our research on Kant and Kantian philosophy has got off to a good start. Translations of works and thoughtful and factual polemics were an excellent departure point for a resurgent Polish philosophical culture. The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries revealed the potential of well-cultivated Polish philosophy. The activities of Lutosławski, Twardowski, Struve, Weryho and others allowed hope for clear progress in this field.

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