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Immanuel Kant's philosophy and the reconstruction of Polish philosophy at the turn of the 20th century

Abstract: The revival of Polish philosophy, after more than a century of partitions, took place at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. At that time, thanks to Wincenty Lutosławski, a correspondent at *Kant-Studien*, a stimulus was given to the fossilised and dispersed Polish philosophical community. The necessary reforms were spearheaded by Henryk Struve, Władysław Weryho, and Kazimierz Twardowski. They became animators of philosophical life, establishing *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, the Polish Philosophical Society in Lviv and prompting the first Polish translations of Kant's works. Through them, the reforms initiated deepened throughout the period up to the restoration of independence and later in free Poland. Kant's philosophy became one of the pillars of these reforms. Thanks to them, a new kind of philosophical thinking took shape in Poland, marked by Kantian criticism.

Keywords: Reform of philosophy, Kant, Twardowski, Struve, Weryho, *Kant-Studien*

Introduction

Wincenty Lutosławski's success in being designated as the first correspondent of the *Kant-Studien* and in the publication of his work there, *Kant in Spanien*, greatly contributed to the first attempts to revive Polish philosophy after more than a century of servitude. This was a positive impulse that gave enthusiasts new strength to work on building the position of Polish philosophy in world philosophy at the turn of the 20th century. The choice of the right method of action was a matter of great controversy. In the beginning, an idea was proposed, which was later perfectly realised, to establish one or two philosophical periodicals. *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, published since 1897, was founded in the same year as the *Kant-Studien*. Strenuous efforts were made to establish further scientific societies. Władysław Weryho founded the Polish Psychological Society in Warsaw in 1903, while Kazimierz Twardowski was preparing for the grand opening of the Polish Philosophical Society in Lviv. Most crucial to the revival of Polish philosophical life was the influence of Kantian criticism. Of course, the reception of Kant's philosophy that was taking place was only one of the impulses supporting this process. The thriving experimental psychology also played a significant role. Phenomenology, developed by Edmund Husserl, or the Marburg neo-Kantianism of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp, made an impact as well. However, all these currents, as Henry Struve wrote, absorbed and adopted the philosophy of Kant. Poles, however, initially approached Kant and his philosophy very cautiously, and sometimes with marked reluctance and resistance. In fact, Polish philosophical thought after the Second World War very quickly forgot what Twardowski, Struve, and Weryho had accomplished. Ideological disputes with Twardowski's students commenced. Today, few of us know and remember with what tremendous effort Twardowski fought for the recognition of his lectures on Kant in Lviv and with what passion he shaped the thinking of academic youth and intellectual elites on the basis of Kantian criticism.

The reforms based on Kantian criticism are hardly remembered today. And it is a pity because this episode seems to be crucial for understanding the process of the emergence of Polish philosophical thought after 123 years of partitions. Let us try to recall those events.

In the second half of the 19th century, in all three partitions, any attempts to revive philosophical life took place under clandestine conditions. Restrictive administrative and press laws were in place in the territories under the partitions. Civil liberties were restricted. All initiatives by Polish scholars and people of culture, philosophers in particular, were treated with reluctance. The situation was most difficult in the Russian partition, owing to ruthless censorship. Secondary schools and universities were in short supply, and after the student protests of 1905, when the Tsarist University of Warsaw was closed down, each new initiative on the part of Polish creative and scientific circles was blocked and suppressed in the bud. The situation was slightly better in Galicia which was under Austro-Hungarian rule. In Galicia, however, there was a long-standing rivalry between the two scientific centres of Kraków and Lviv. Kraków had been in a state of complete stagnation for many years, which was difficult to overcome. Wincenty Lutosławski, after unsuccessful attempts to obtain a position at the University of Kraków, wrote about the Kraków philosophers that they were a peculiar group of ossified, unreformed "farmers."¹ A group of elderly professors who cared about their positions reigned supreme in this city. They were unwilling to introduce any reforms in the teaching of philosophy. They did not allow a voice to the young philosophers eager to implement them. There was no question of creating philosophical journals. The situation was similar in Lviv. Philosophy at Lviv University developed slowly, in isolation from world trends. Philosophy was taught in the old style, disregarding outside innovations. This state of affairs was aptly described a dozen years later by Roman Witold Ingarden in his memoirs. He wrote:

So for instance Straszewski, an old bluffer and trivialist, who had no idea at all about philosophical issues. You should have seen him babbling about "quicksand in which no one is able to find anything" – after my reading on Husserl! Or Grabowski, who never knew how to finish a sentence properly – such confidence and graciousness in dealing with the "young man." Lubecki, the papal chamber-

¹ See Wincenty Lutosławski's postcard to Kazimierz Twardowski from Drozdowo, 29 July 1895, "Połączone Biblioteki IFiS UW, PAN i PTE, Archiwum Kazimierza Twardowskiego", Rsp. PTE, 02.1, Vol. XX, c. 3r.

lain, or something like that – a bloated puffball, and all. Later, in Warsaw, people only a few years older than me – but employed here on independent chairs – Leśniewski, Kotarbiński, when you listened to them, you had the impression that they must have been sitting on chairs for decades, that they had a whole library of their own volumes behind them – so much ruthlessness in judgement, so much self-confidence. Meanwhile, e.g. Leśniewski at the time contributed two small articles to the “Review” of rather dubious academic value. It was still possible to talk to Witwicki – but he too sometimes had periods of unheard-of bluntness. Indeed, when I saw how little these people knew about philosophy, how narrow their circle of subjects was, how difficult it was for them to understand things that abroad have long since been studied inside out – this pompous self-confidence harmonised quite well with this ignorance – but nevertheless I found it hard to bear, to live in this atmosphere. Because if I wished to collect material for psychological dissertations – I would have been entertained at times, but I had to live, cooperate with these people. It was quite difficult. At the same time, I could see that valuable minds – Rosenblum, Znamierowski – were systematically disregarded, cast into the shadow.²

These ossified and unreformed circles, for years competing with each other for recognition, often narcissistic and exalted, needed rapid and effective reform. Thinkers of a new type, resourceful and active in many areas of philosophy, needed to emerge. After more than a century of partition, the time had come for people, perhaps no longer young, but pursuing their own vision of change. And what had long been awaited finally happened.

Time of reform

For many years, the indefatigable and immensely meritorious Henryk Struve worked in Warsaw for Polish philosophy. However, owing to his advanced age, his time was slowly elapsing. Struve was active in various fields. Of particular importance was his activity in the “Philosophical Library.” The idea for this series and its realisation originated back in the 1880s. At

² See Roman W. Ingarden, “Dzieje mojej kariery uniwersyteckiej”, ed. Ryszard Jadczyk, *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* 27(2) (1999): 185–186.

that time, Struve took up the task of publishing translations of the works of the classics of philosophy. He sought financial support, mainly from the Mianowski Fund. Among the works published in the Philosophical Library were Polish translations of the works of Xenophon, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Berkeley, and Condillac. A little later, the first Polish translation of Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* was issued in this new series as well.

Struve, as a publisher, contributed greatly to the preservation of Polish philosophy in the partition era. He had, however, at least twenty years of struggle with censorship and officials behind him. He needed support, new staff with whom he could expand his activity. And indeed he found it: shortly before retiring, he found a worthy successor and continuator of the reforms he had begun. In 1883, the capable and resourceful Władysław Weryho had appeared in Warsaw just after completing his studies in Bern. The *Gazeta Warszawska* newspaper in the "Literary Notes" section on 2 January 1893 noted:

A student of philosophy at the University of Bern, Mr Władysław Weryho, brother of the well-known author of pedagogical works, Mrs Maria Weryho, has these days been awarded his doctoral degree, magna cum laude, on the basis of an examination and dissertation entitled *Karl Marx als Philosoph*. His thesis: *Die Geschichtstheorien des deutschen Socialismus*, which he wrote as recently as last semester, received a special award from the University of Berne.³

With such a recommendation, Weryho was instantly to the liking of the aged professor. Long conversations cemented Struve to Weryho's value. He saw him as his successor and encouraged him to continue his work. Less than two years later, Weryho was joined by Twardowski, who was given employment in Lviv. Among other things, Twardowski wrote the following about Struve:

He is something of a link between this new period and the previous one. Between the generation of the Cieszkowski, Gołuchowski, Kremer, Libelt, and Trentowski families and the generation of his contemporaries there is now a figure of a thinker, teacher, and writer who saved from the past what was of lasting value in it, and

³ See "Literary Notes", in: *Gazeta Warszawska* 120 (1893): 18.

who today in the field of Polish philosophy showed the way to the workers with a prudent judgement, far removed from any prejudice.⁴

Struve decided to persuade Weryho and Twardowski to continue the undertakings they had begun, seeing in them the future organisers of philosophical life in Poland. Thus Struve's plans about the possibility of unifying Polish philosophy were coming true.

Unification of forces

While the University of Cracow was in utter stagnation, and philosophy was decided by fossilised 'farmers,' changes finally began to take place in Warsaw and Lviv with the appearance of Weryho and Twardowski. The decisive meeting between them took place in Zakopane. Once again, this resort became the centre of important events. Zakopane had already been a meeting place for important artists of Polish cultural life on many occasions in the past. The most famous of these were connected with the person of Tytus Chałbiński, known as the "King of the Tatra Mountains."⁵ This time an important agreement on the reform of Polish philosophy was to be reached.

Twardowski's conversations with Weryho in July 1986 took place in the villa of Dr. Wanenty Piasecki.⁶ This was the well-known "Klemensówka" resort in Zakopane, where Piasecki's hydropathic facility was located. Conversations were held during walks. Also, Weryho visited Twardowski several times at his summer home in Poronin. On these occasions, he also made a good impression on the philosopher's daughters. The important conversations, however, mainly concerned the improvement of Polish philosophy. The first idea was the founding of *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, a journal that func-

⁴ See Kazimierz Twardowski, "Henryk Struve, 27.VI.1840-16.V.1912", *Ruch Filozoficzny* 6 (1912): 102.

⁵ More broadly about Chałbiński and social life in Zakopane at the time in: Barbara Petrozolin-Skowrońska, *Król Tatr z Mokotowskiej 8. Portret doktor Tytusa Chałbińskiego* (Warszawa: Iskry, 2005).

⁶ Cf. Maciej Krupa, Piotr Mazik, Kuba Szpilka, *Nieobecne miasto. Przewodnik po nieznanym Zakopanem* (Wołowiec-Zakopane: Czarne, 2016), 72-74.

tioned perfectly over the ensuing years, serving to unite our philosophical movement.⁷ The mere founding of this journal would not have been so important, however, if it had not conveyed certain guiding ideas. Weryho's and Twardowski's first thought was to create a journal in which all Polish philosophers could publish. They both knew that this would not suffice to realise their other ideas. Initially, Weryho adhered to the idea of making the journal dependent on experimental psychology. He combined the publication of the works of Józefa Fabiana Krzyżanowska-Kodisowa, Władysław Heinrich, and Kazimierz Twardowski into a single issue.⁸ They belonged to one area and were written by Poland's most gifted philosophers. Weryho's desire was to transplant the thinking represented by these authors to the periodical he was running. Twardowski, however, from the very beginning warned him against succumbing to any world trends. The choice was therefore a difficult one. As Weryho began to publish his journal, Struve once again came to his aid.

At the end of his own academic career, Struve came to the conviction that the renewal of Polish philosophy should take place independently of any foreign influence. While valuing the achievements of the Germans, the French, and the English, Struve absolutely refused to let himself be completely influenced by them. In his view, any foreign influence on the young and still unformed Polish thought in philosophy, emerging after more than a century of partitions, was inadvisable and should even be prohibited. However, it is one thing to strive for quick success, another to work from the grass roots. Struve saw support for the latter objective in Kant's philosophy. For years he had observed the Kantian reception taking place in Marburg. He appreciated the activities of its school there. However, he did not understand why efforts were made there to lock Kant and his philosophy in the "Marburg Fortress." He found this approach completely incomprehensible. Being an excellent ob-

⁷ The history of the founding of *Przegląd Filozoficzny* and *Ruch Filozoficzny* is described in more detail by Radosław Kuliniak et al. in "Wstęp", in: *Korespondencja Władysława Weryho z Kazimierzem Twardowskim* (Kęty: Wydawnictwo Derewiecki, 2017).

⁸ It was about a work by Kodisowa, written at Avenarius, entitled: *Zur Analyse des Apperzeptionsbegriffes. Eine historisch Untersuchung*, as well as Heinrich's work, also written at Avenarius, *Die moderne physiologische Psychologie in Deutschland*, and Twardowski's written at Franz Brentano, *Zur Lehre von Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen. Eine psychologische Untersuchung*.

server of the development of particular dominant trends in world philosophical thought, he was able to draw the appropriate conclusions. One of these was the “Polish return to Kant.” In this, Struve referred to the famous slogan “Zurück zu Kant,” which was in effect at the German Marburg School. However, he reworked this slogan and translated it into Polish. His suggestion was to build up our philosophical thought by restoring its value through building on Kant’s criticism. He wrote:

The first who, grasping the full significance of criticism, called on thinkers in more recent times to return to Kant (Zurück zu Kant!) was Eduard Zeller. He did so in the treatise: *Die Bedeutung und Aufgabe der Erkenntnisstheorie* 1862 (also in his: *Vorträge u. Abhandlungen*, 2-te Sammlung 1877). Also already thirty-plus years ago, others worked in this spirit: Otto Liebmann (*Kant u. die Epigonen* 1865) and Albert Lange (*Geschichte des Materialismus* 1866). Since then, neo-Kantianism, the most prominent feature of the contemporary movement in the area of philosophy, has been developing ever more widely and profoundly.⁹

The guiding slogan for Polish philosophers turned out to be Struve’s “return to Polish philosophy with Kant.” He was the first of our philosophers to write about this, in the final section of his work entitled *Immanuel Kant a dziejowa doniosłość jego krytycyzmu* [*Immanuel Kant and the historical significance of his criticism*]. In it he modified the original neo-Kantian slogan, explicitly stating the following:

These are the farsighted prospects for the future, connected directly to Kant’s name one hundred years after his death. In place of the previous exhortations to return to Kant, it is time to proclaim a new slogan: “Onwards with Kant.” Let this not be forgotten by the younger generation of maturing thinkers, for here a new field for diligent work is revealed, for sowing and reaping, instead of the idle ruminations on the achievements of the past!¹⁰

⁹ See Henryk Struve, *Wstęp krytyczny do filozofii*, 2nd rev. ed. (Warszawa: Księgarnia E. Wende i S-ka, 1898), 96.

¹⁰ See Henryk Struve, “Immanuel Kant oraz dziejowa doniosłość jego krytycyzmu”, *Biblioteka Warszawska* 3 (1904): 36–37.

And one must admit that Struve did this brilliantly. It was nearly immediately that he was able to convince Weryho, who tried to run his *Przegląd Filozoficzny* in this spirit, of the validity of his arguments, as well as Twardowski, who had long been thinking of founding a philosophical society in Lviv.

Immanuel Kant's philosophy in the Polish philosophy at the turn of the 20th century

The founding of *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, despite the difficulties in defining its profile and the ambivalent reactions of the Polish philosophical community, in time proved to be a perfectly sensible move. Together with Twardowski, Weryho stood firm on the position of Kantian criticism, while adhering to the principle of philosophical pluralism. Efforts were made to ensure that Kant himself and his philosophy did not become dominant but had an inspiring effect. Of course, they were supported in these efforts by Struve. He knew, however, that his proposal to rebuild Polish philosophy through Kantian criticism, without taking concrete action, could be nothing more than an empty slogan.

In 1898, after the publication of his book *Wstęp krytyczny do filozofii* [*Critical Introduction to Philosophy*], Weryho was to open *Przegląd Filozoficzny* to the dissemination in Polish circles of information on the world's reception of Kant's philosophy. From its first issue, the journal published a variety of information on current research into Kant's philosophy. These were mainly reports from world conferences and congresses where Kantian themes dominated or brief discussions of dissertations and books. The reporting section in *Przegląd Filozoficzny* was then under the authority of Twardowski. He, in turn, ensured that proportions were maintained, as well as the high substantive level of the reports published.

The second area of activity, developing and promoting Kantian thought in our philosophical literature, was to consist in the translations of Kant's works. Naturally, selected translations had already appeared in print before that time. Polish translations of Kant's works began to be published, still during the philosopher's lifetime. The first work by Kant translated into Polish was

the essay *Zum ewigen Frieden* from 1795. A translation by Józef Władysław Bychowiec (1778–1845) under the title *Do pokoju wiecznego* [*To the perpetual peace*] is believed to have been published in Königsberg at the turn of 1795/1796, but no copy has survived to our times. Only a year later, another Polish translation of the same work by Kant was published, translated by Szymon Bielski (1745–1826), but based on the French edition, with additions that Kant had made in the second edition of the essay. This translation is entitled *Projekt wieczystego pokoju. Rozwaga filozoficzna* [*The Project of Perpetual Peace. Philosophical deliberations*] (Königsberg 1796/Warsaw 1797). More than a century later Struve wrote of such our achievements: “It is only natural that these occasional writings did not exert a wider influence in acquainting the Polish public with Kant’s criticism; but they testify emphatically to the new direction of thought which had also taken hold of the more independent minds in our country.”¹¹

Years later Struve revisited the idea of publishing Kant’s works. With Weryho’s and Twardowski’s consent, he undertook activities aiming at a translation of the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. The three of them came to the conclusion that it was Kant’s treatise that should be translated first. The rationale behind choosing this particular work stemmed from the difficulty of understanding the *Critique of Pure Reason* (the philosopher’s main work). Kant’s *Prolegomena* seemed the ideal popular commentary on the *Critique*. In fact, Kant wrote his *Prolegomena* with just such an intention. Asked by Mendelssohn and Sulzer to comment on his work, in just two years he produced a digest presenting the most important ideas of his great work. He thus gave the philosophical community a tool to make the reform of metaphysics he was proposing intelligible. Struve, with Weryho and Twardowski, thought along similar lines.

Another consideration was the choice of the right translator of Kant’s work. A dispute arose between Struve and Twardowski over this issue. In the first instance, a gymnasium teacher Romuald Grzymała-Piątkowski was suggested. He was a candidate supported by Struve. Initially, he appeared to

¹¹ Henryk Struve, *Historia logiki jako teorii poznania w Polsce: poprzedzona zarysem jej rozwoju u obcych*, 2nd ed. (Warszawa: s.n., 1911), 218–220.

be a well-prepared translator. He could rely on the original text as well as on French and English translations. However, his philosophical skills were not entirely adequate. Besides, for some time Grzymała-Piątkowski had been in the USA, where he taught in Jesuit gymnasiums and secondary schools. He had no direct contact with his country. This was noticed by Twardowski and met with his objection. Struve stood by his preference. Although Twardowski gave up further resistance on the matter, he intended to return to it in the future. This was because Hersz Bad, one of Twardowski's earliest students, very interested in Kant's philosophy and especially in providing good translations, was working in Lviv. A few years later, Twardowski and Hersz Bad returned to the dispute with the wrongly appointed translator Grzymała-Piątkowski and the publisher of Kant's work Struve.

The second matter that Struve agreed with Twardowski and Weryho was that the first complete translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* should be prepared at the earliest opportunity. Struve proposed to entrust this task once again to Grzymała-Piątkowski. This time Twardowski strongly protested. His main issue was with the competence of the translator. He believed that the matter should be handled by an excellent Germanist with philosophical training. There could only be one candidate, namely Piotr Chmielowski, whom Twardowski supported. And this is what happened. Besides, Twardowski was anxious to retain unlimited control over the translator's work. Chmielowski additionally consulted Struve. The translation was to be produced meticulously, though not literally, with an acceptable amount of the translator's own interpretation. Besides, Twardowski hoped that Chmielowski's translation would add splendour to another important event in the rebirth of Polish philosophy, namely, the establishment of the Polish Philosophical Society in Lviv. The year 1904 marked the 100th anniversary of Kant's death. The importance of this celebration could be elevated by the presentation of the first complete Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Thereby, a material connection would have been made between the anniversary of Kant's death and the establishment of a new philosophical society. Twardowski, however, had a greater problem at this point. He felt obliged to Vaihinger, who had issued a relevant proclamation on the establishment of a "Kant-Gesellschaft" and a "Kant Foundation." This request conflicted with Twardowski's inten-

tions. Twardowski was more interested in establishing a Polish Philosophical Society rather than a Polish Immanuel Kant Society, or, even less, in involving Poles in the work of the German Kant Society. He had long wondered how this situation could be reasonably resolved.

Kantian accents at the founding of the Polish Philosophical Society in Lviv

Twardowski had been harbouring the idea of establishing the Polish Philosophical Society since the beginning of his research and teaching career in Lviv. Even then, he was well aware that without a solid foundation he would not be able to build anything. During his classes with students, he often referred to Kant's philosophy. Even before the arrival of Twardowski, a certain tradition of lecturing on Kantian philosophy had already been established in Lviv. This was, for example, demonstrated by Aleksander Skórski, who in the academic year 1896/1897 gave lectures on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹² Also, in the summer semester of 1896/1897, he conducted a *Critical Analysis of Kant's Philosophy as an introduction to the study of philosophy*.¹³ In turn, in the winter of the academic year 1897/1898, he held classes in Kant's *Ethics*.¹⁴ Following Skórski's departure, Twardowski began to introduce elements of Kant's philosophy to the Lviv university. In the academic year 1900/1901, he began his course by reading Hume's writings¹⁵ and then, in the winter and summer semesters of 1901/1902, moved on to Kant and the reading of his *Prolegomena*.¹⁶ This was done deliberately on the principle that Kant could not be lectured on in separation from Hume. Twardowski knew this perfectly

¹² See "Skład i Program wykładów w C.K. Uniwersytecie im. Cesarza Franciszka I we Lwowie w zimowym półroczu roku 1896/1897" ["The Course Composition and Programme of Lectures at the C.K. University of Emperor Franz I in Lviv in the Winter Semester of the Year 1896/1897"], "IV. Wykłady na Wydziale filozoficznym. Filozofia" ["IV. Lectures in the Faculty of Philosophy. Philosophy"] (Lviv, 1896), 33.

¹³ Ibidem, Lviv 1897, 39.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 42.

¹⁵ Ibidem, Lviv 1901, 47.

¹⁶ Ibidem, Lviv 1900, 1901, 47 (in both volumes).

well, and so from the very beginning he arranged his classes in a systematic way, in line with world trends. Besides, he preferred to read the *Prolegomena* first, as a popular commentary on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, rather than discuss Kant's main work without preparation. Twardowski was aided in his efforts to assimilate Kant's works to his students by Mścisław Wartenberg, who had been reared and specialised in the same philosophy. In the summer of 1903/1904, he gave a lecture on *Kant's Life and Works*.¹⁷

The academic atmosphere generated by Twardowski in Lviv was conducive to the promotion of Kant's philosophy. He knew perfectly well that in order to build the Polish Philosophical Society he had to root it in Kant and his criticism. Twardowski, having taught a series of academic classes on Kant, hoped that this particular philosophy would become an excellent support for the further scholarly development of Lviv students. We should remember that his pupils were not only students. His lectures were also attended by those outside the university. Attendees came from different parts of the country, from the various partitions of Poland, forming the framework of the future Polish philosophical community. From the very beginning, Twardowski strove to unite them.

Struve watched with delight from Warsaw what Twardowski had accomplished in Lviv. He saw that it was a matter of founding not just another organisation, but a society that would operate in a systematic manner from the outset. It was finally agreed that the Polish Philosophical Society would be established in 1904, with the *Przegląd Filozoficzny* as its organ. This event coincided with the 100th anniversary of Kant's death.

However, the efforts of the Polish scholars were partly disrupted by Hans Vaihinger, who in the second half of 1903 sent to *Przegląd Filozoficzny* his proclamation on the establishment of a worldwide Kant society ("Kant-Gesellschaft") and support for the activities of the "Kant Foundation" and *Kant-Studien*.¹⁸ Weryho instantly shared this information with Twardowski, which concerned the philosopher. What Vaihinger was proposing inter-

¹⁷ Ibidem, Lviv 1904, 50.

¹⁸ Hans Vaihinger, "An die Freunde der kantischen Philosophie. Bericht über die Begründung einer «Kantgesellschaft» und die Errichtung einer «Kantstiftung» zum hundertjährigen Todestag des Philosophen", *Kant-Studien* 9 (1904): 344–350.

ferred with his plans. Twardowski was well aware of the position in which he found himself. He was almost certain that the Austrian authorities in Vienna would support the founding of a world philosophical society rather than a local Polish initiative to unite our philosophers into a cohesive group of scholars. He was downright convinced that his plans might not succeed. Anything that could happen away from Lviv was good for the decision-makers in Vienna. And what was planned in Lviv was clearly outside the acceptable rules. Twardowski knew that his plans could be thwarted. After consulting Struve and Weryho, he decided to pre-empt Vaihinger's plans and actions. In 1903, he managed to arrange all formal matters relating to the registration of the society and set the inaugural meeting of the Polish Philosophical Society for February 1904. He and Weryho also both agreed on holding off publishing Vaihinger's proclamation in *Przegląd Filozoficzny* until then. The paper lay for several months in the drawer of the editorial office of *Przegląd Filozoficzny*.¹⁹ Twardowski's behaviour was well thought out and clever. The Polish Philosophical Society was founded at a meeting in Lviv on 12 February 1904. In fact, this took place literally almost two months before Vahinger established the "Kant-Gesellschaft" in Halle. Twardowski triumphed in Lviv. He knew that he had managed to outwit all the decision-makers in Vienna. He solemnly affirmed that the planned Polish Philosophical Society, as soon as it was established, would support the "Kant-Gesellschaft," and that its members would be able to participate unhindered in the work of both societies. In essence, Twardowski prevented the impending catastrophe. He saved Polish philosophical thought from being dependent on and absorbed by a much stronger scientific organisation. Henceforth, in a country that remained under the partitions, the Polish Philosophical Society became the supreme organisation bringing together the hitherto dispersed philosophical circles.

It must not be forgotten that Twardowski acted, so to speak, in opposition to Vaihinger. However, he had no intention of relinquishing the potential of Kant's philosophy in setting up the Polish Philosophical Society. He

¹⁹ See the Polish translation: Hans Vaihinger, "Jubileusz Kanta (Odezwa H. Vaihingera w sprawie Towarzystwa Kantowskiego i wspierania Kantstudien)", *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 7 (1904): 108–109.

was well aware of the realities and trends of world philosophy. In fact, he had been corresponding with Vaihinger. He knew his intentions. However, he could not afford not to take advantage of the opportunity that presented itself and not to make a decision that was groundbreaking for the revival of Polish philosophical thought. To emphasise the importance of these circumstances, he even wished to go as far as to present the first full Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* at the founding of the Polish Philosophical Society. He made arrangements for this with Chmielowski. The translator of Kant's work indeed had a translation ready by 1904. However, it had not yet been published. Its presentation was to be made ceremonially, according to the author's wishes, on the 180th anniversary of Kant's birth, i.e. 22 April 1904. His intention was that this should correspond with the establishment of the "Kant-Gesellschaft." However, Chmielowski's death, on 22 April 1904 foiled these plans (coincidentally, it fell on the anniversary of Kant's birth). And although the ceremony itself for the presentation of the translation of Kant's work proceeded modestly and in a mournful atmosphere, Polish philosophy effectively succumbed to Kantian influence over the following years. Twardowski himself in his inaugural speech gave expression to the Kantian influence. He wrote:

In the development of Polish philosophy, Kant's immediate influence has so far been very feeble. On the contrary, his indirect influence has been very strong. The most brilliant moments in the development of philosophy in Poland were under the influence of German post-Kantian philosophy, which borrowed many ideas from Kant, but did not take on his critical spirit. And for this reason it grew into an unheard-of dogmatism – and collapsed. And Polish philosophy, having given off no less splendid brilliance under its influence, collapsed as well. The shallow materialism in Germany and the perhaps not so shallow, but perhaps somewhat superficially conceived positivism in Poland were responses and reactions to the previous dogmatic being out of touch with reality. A great wealth of philosophical constructions and speculations was followed by an era of stagnation in Poland; this is evidenced by the low state of general philosophical education and the disregard for philosophy that until recently prevailed in our country. Such a sad state of affairs would not have ceased if our philosophical thought had not at one time blindly placed itself at the slavish service of Ger-

man idealist philosophy; it would have been saved from this by the spirit of Kant, speaking from the writings of Jędrzej Śniadecki, Jaroński, and others. Despite this, we must not unreservedly exclaim: "let us return to Kant." After all, in this slogan also lies a great danger. It would be a dogmatism to claim that only Kant can teach us something. We should benefit from the lessons that our own philosophical past teaches us. In it, various foreign influences manifested themselves. Wolff, the French sensualists, the German idealists, positivism – these were the main directions that our philosophers were concerned with. These directions took effect partly in succession, partly side by side, absorbing our own philosophical thought to a greater or lesser extent, imprinting on it the stigma of one-sidedness. And this should not be the case. The conditions of our cultural development predestine us to a different position also in the development of philosophical work. We should not succumb to the one-sided influence of this or that trend, or even of this or that nation. Our guides should be neither the English, nor the French, nor the Germans alone, but all of them together. We are in the fortunate position that the three leading nations in philosophy are equally foreign to us, and therefore equally close. And we must not dogmatically believe that this or that of the aforementioned nations is *kat exochen* a philosophical nation; we must base our work on what each of them has done. We must not allow ourselves to be controlled by foreign influences, but instead we must work ourselves to control them, and, making use of what, after this conscientious examination, appears to be permanent, we must ourselves take part in joint work. Let no one, then, infer from the fact that we are beginning our work on the anniversary of Kant's death that we wish to follow in the footsteps of German philosophy; rather, let us remember that it was Kant who united within himself elements of German philosophy with elements of English philosophy and those of French philosophy which have perhaps not yet been properly appreciated. By independently unravelling all these influences and merging them in a great synthesis, he showed us the path that we too should follow. May our work be of benefit not only to ourselves, but also to society as a whole; may it be a significant contribution to the science of philosophy; this is the most fervent wish with which we embark on our activities.²⁰

²⁰ Kazimierz Twardowski, "Przemówienie inauguracyjne z okazji otwarcia Polskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego we Lwowie", *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 7(2) (1904): 241–243.

Conclusion

Following the establishment of the Polish Philosophical Society, Polish work on Kant's philosophy was heading in the right direction. After the publication of *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* and *Critique of Pure Reason*, further translations were undertaken. The translation work was linked from the very outset to an attempt to compile an overview of translations of Kant's works. This was to be composed of the translations of *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. These plans had been successfully pursued by Struve, Weryho, and Twardowski. They were the initiators of these activities. Kant's philosophy began to influence the way Polish philosophy was practised. The two Kantian anniversaries, i.e. the 100th anniversary of his death in 1904 and in 1924 the 200th anniversary of his birth, were decisive. During that period, alongside translations, numerous commemorative works by Polish philosophers on Kant appeared. Twardowski was the animator of all our pro-Kant activities. He contributed to the reception of his philosophy in our country like no other Polish scholar of the time. He encouraged discussion in the pages of *Przegląd Filozoficzny* and supported research and translation initiatives. As a result, Kant's philosophy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries enjoyed exceptional recognition and interest among Polish academics. However, Twardowski's open-mindedness did not allow him to stand exclusively on Kant's side. Rather, he was an advocate of philosophical pluralism. Having an interest in Kant's philosophy, he saw it as an opportunity to present it more widely. He was aware that there was a need to build Polish philosophy from the foundations. At that time, it was Kant's philosophy that furnished such foundations.

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