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## The early Polish attempts at translating Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

**Abstract:** This article presents the history of the first Polish translation of the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. An active role in its creation was played by: Henryk Struve, Romuald Grzymała-Piątkowski, and Kazimierz Twardowski. The study reveals the problems of the organisers of this initiative related to the appointment of a translator and the preparation of the translation's publication. The key role was played by Struve. Twardowski limited himself to criticism, both of the editors of the "Biblioteka Filozoficzna" and of the translator himself. The translation was eventually published in 1901. Despite its flaws and numerous shortcomings, it was the first work by Kant representing a mature critical philosophy to be published in Polish.

**Keywords:** Kant, Struve, Chmielowski, Grzymała-Piątkowski, metaphysics

### Introduction

The first attempts to prepare Polish translations of Immanuel Kant's major works at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began with the translation of the

*Prolegomena* by Romuald Grzymała-Piątkowski.<sup>1</sup> The contract made with Piątkowski also envisaged the preparation of the first Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>2</sup> In the course of the work of translation undertaken for both works, it became apparent that the translator had not handled it very well. He was not philosophically prepared. He was unable to bring matters concerning Kant's difficult terminology into agreement. In fact, this was demonstrated by a later polemic that took place in the pages of the *Przegląd Filozoficzny*.<sup>3</sup> However, Henryk Struve, the initiator of the entire project, supported the translator and insisted that Piątkowski was the best choice. Even in his preface to the translation of the *Prolegomena*, he wrote:

He who wishes to judge this translation, not in order to demonstrate his alleged wisdom, but conscientiously, with a sound knowledge of the matter, should be advised, before voicing his criticism, to attempt to translate at least one major passage from Kant himself. Then he will see what difficulties the Polish translator of the *Prolegomena* has to battle with. No translator can fully remove the intricacies of Kant's style without obliterating the exact flow of the author's thought, or even without commenting on it in his own way, which naturally already breaches the most elementary requirements of a good translation, i.e. its accuracy.<sup>4</sup>

As early as the time of Piątkowski's appointment as translator, numerous objections were raised. A dispute ensued at the time that could have divided Twardowski and Struve for many years. Fortunately, common sense prevailed. Twardowski agreed to entrust the translation of the *Prolegomena* to Piątkowski. However, he did not agree that he should also be assigned for

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<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena do wszelkiej przyszłej metafizyki, która będzie mogła wystąpić jako nauka, Z dodaniem Słownika terminów filozoficznych, użytych w tym przekładzie*, transl. Romuald Piątkowski, ed. Henryk Struve (Warszawa: zapomoga Kasy Pomocy dla Osób, Pracujących na Polu Naukowym im. J. Mianowskiego, 1901).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Encyklopedia polskiej emigracji i Polonii*, ed. Kazimierz Dopierała, vol. 4 (Toruń: Oficyna Wydawnicza Kucharski, 2005), 57.

<sup>3</sup> See the polemic between Bad and Struve: *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 10 (1907): 74–94 (Hersz Bad's review) and *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 10 (1907): 218–227 (Henryk Struve's reply). Further polemic: *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 11 (1908): 35–46.

<sup>4</sup> Henryk Struve, "Od Redaktora «Biblioteki filozoficznej»" [*From the Editor of the «Philosophical Library»*], in: Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena do wszelkiej przyszłej metafizyki, która będzie mogła wystąpić jako nauka*, transl. R. Piątkowski, ed. H. Struve, III.

the translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Struve broke the initial understanding made with Twardowski. He began to collaborate with Piątkowski in conspiracy. It even appeared that Piątkowski, who was working in parallel on the *Prolegomena* and the *Critique of Pure Reason*, was doing a much better job at translating Kant's main work. However, it was all far from perfect and highly inept. Years later, Twardowski wrote in one of his articles:

How often, however, our philosophical translations are not only far from such an ideal, but even from such an effort! How many germanisms, gallicisms, anglicisms are in them! How much evidence in them that the translator did not understand the original either linguistically or factually! And accusations of this kind cannot sometimes be avoided even in such translations as appear under very serious names! Suffice it to recall the Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* or the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. And it is after all probably self-evident that someone who has not indulged in a special study of Kantian philosophy cannot translate Kant's works into another language, even if the language of Kant itself does not cause him difficulties. After all, how can one be accurate without first knowing and thoroughly studying Kant's philosophy, and handling his terminology? How can one be aware of the possibility of various ways of interpreting certain sentences and paragraphs? How is it possible to make a reasoned choice between these different interpretations, or to translate the original in a way that allows for this possibility of a different way of interpreting beyond that, as well as in the translation? And what is an unquestionable and right postulate when it comes to the translation of Kant's works remains right when it comes to an "easier" author. Professional competence in addition to linguistic qualifications is always indispensable; otherwise the result is translations that are sometimes more difficult to understand than the original, oftentimes outright distorting its ideas.<sup>5</sup>

It took years for Struve to realise his mistake and acknowledge the rationale of his adversaries. Twardowski, despite his knowledge of Piątkowski's failures, which Weryho had informed him of, chose not to interfere with the interpreter's efforts. Twardowski stayed aside and watched the developments. He did not, however, leave the matter of translation entirely to the free course

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<sup>5</sup> Kazimierz Twardowski, "W sprawie polskich przekładów dzieł filozoficznych", *Ruch Filozoficzny* 3(5) (1913): 105–107.

of events. In fact, he oversaw the subsequent translations. He did not take offence at Struve for collaborating behind his back with Piątkowski. Neither did he ever reproach the senior professor for his ambiguous behaviour. Instead, he began his search for a translator of *Critique of Pure Reason*. And he found one. That man was Piotr Chmielowski (1848–1904), who undertook to prepare the first full Polish translation of Kant’s main work.

### Polish translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason*

Before Twardowski reached out to Chmielowski and persuaded him to begin work on a translation of Kant’s major work, he decided to explore previous attempts at the task himself. The hope was that he might discover something sensational. His dream was to find a translation of Kant that could be promptly revised and published. Unfortunately, things did not look good. The first searches revealed serious deficiencies. Twardowski found nothing that would indicate that any work had been conducted in this area.

The first endeavour at a Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was the work of Leon Grabowski (1807–1865). Twardowski discovered that Grabowski had undertaken an analysis of the exceptions from the *Critique of Pure Reason* in his 1864 *Ekonomia polityczna [Political Economy]*, namely the preface to the second edition, the introduction, and the aesthetics of transcendental analytics.<sup>6</sup> The translation, however, strayed significantly from the original. It was a free translation, detached from the letter of the text. Besides, Grabowski incorporated his own comments directly into the text of the translation. The work was supplemented by footnotes, with references not directly to Kant’s philosophy. Grabowski did not attempt to assimilate the original work, but only to use some of Kant’s ideas in his own conception. The translation of the indicated fragments itself, although hardly available and poorly known in our country, nevertheless merited a mention in Twardowski’s eyes. Grabowski treated Kant’s philosophy as the basis for his own political theory.

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<sup>6</sup> Leon Grabowski, *Ekonomia polityczna* (Warszawa: drukarnia Karola Kowalewskiego, 1864).

Another Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is linked to the publication of Friedrich Paulsen's work titled *Immanuel Kant. Sein Leben und seine Lehre*. Its Polish translation was published in 1902. Paulsen's work was translated by Jan Władysław Dawid, supplementing it with excerpts from the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*.<sup>7</sup>

For the first time, a complete Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, was to appear thanks to Struve's initiative and efforts. He was looking for the most suitable translator of Kant's work. His first choice was Piątkowski, who, however, was ultimately ill-equipped for the task.<sup>8</sup> Struve also approached Professor Kreczmar from Warsaw about this task.<sup>9</sup> However, his project fell through owing to illness.<sup>10</sup>

Twardowski's searches initially did not yield the expected results. He could not find a single complete Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Nor was he able to identify a competent translator. However, he did not give up on his search. He hesitated whether it should be a Germanist with no knowledge of philosophy or a philosopher with knowledge of German. Eventually, he found a Germanist with a good grasp of philosophy. That person was Chmielowski, a well-known figure in both philosophical and literary circles.<sup>11</sup> Chmielowski had studied philology and philosophy at the Main

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<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Paulsen's titled *I. Kant i jego nauka*, transl. Jan Władysław Dawid (Warsaw: Editorial Office of "Głos", 1902). Translations of excerpts from the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* can be found in its pages.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Andrzej Brożek, "Piątkowski Romuald Grzymała", in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (Kraków, 1981), vol. 26, journal 1, 18–19. From there we know that around 1900, R. Piątkowski Grzymała made a translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which probably still remains in manuscript somewhere (most likely in the Central Archives of the Polish community in Orchard Lake, Michigan, USA).

<sup>9</sup> It is likely Michał Kreczmar (1881–1939). However, the information given by Henryk Struve has not been verified to date. Cf. Marian Henryk Serejski, "Śp. Michał Kreczmar (20.09.1881–14.09.1939)", *Przegląd Historyczny* 36 (1946): 13–14.

<sup>10</sup> A list of Polish translations of Kant's works from 1795 to 1918 can be found, *inter alia*, in *Polska Bibliografia Kantowska*, ed. Radosław Kuliniak, Dorota Leszczyna (Kraków: Aureus, 2010), 21–26.

<sup>11</sup> More about Piotr Chmielowski and his activities in the field of the development of Polish literature and philosophy can be found, *inter alia*, in: *Biogramy uczonych polskich: materiały o życiu i działalności członków AU w Krakowie, TNW, PAU, PAN. Cz. 1, Nauki społeczne*, journal 1, A–J, ed. Andrzej Śródka, Paweł Szczawiński (Wrocław etc.: Zakład Naro-

School in Warsaw and the Imperial University of Warsaw. He later continued his studies in Leipzig, where he defended his doctorate *Die organischen Bedingungen der Entstehung des Willens*. After returning from Leipzig, he taught Polish at the Pankiewicz Gymnasium in Warsaw. He collaborated with many periodicals, notably with *Przegląd Tygodniowy* (1867–1872), *Biblioteka Warszawska* (1870–1874), *Opiekun Domowy* (1872–1876), *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Literackiego im. A. Mickiewicza*, *Niwa*, *Przegląd Pedagogiczny*, *Rodzina i Szkoła*, *Poradnik dla Dorosłych* and with the publishing series *Biblioteka Arcydzieł Literatury Polskiej i Obcej*. He also taught at the Flying University. At the same time, he held the position of editor at the *Ateneum*. Twardowski met Chmielowski in Zakopane, during a summer holiday. Chmielowski lived there permanently. He was treated at the Piasecki sanatorium, which he regularly visited for inhalations, as for years he had been suffering from progressive tuberculosis. Chmielowski was an excellent scholar. After a few meetings it became apparent that he had an excellent knowledge of German literature and philosophy, and was fluent in German. It turned out that Twardowski had finally found a translator corresponding to his vision. He later brought Chmielowski to Lviv. However, this took several years, as it was only at the end of 1903 that Chmielowski took over the Chair of Polish Literature. However, this did not prevent them from establishing and maintaining closer contacts. Twardowski visited Chmielowski in Zakopane, and persistently urged him to prepare a comprehensive Polish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

### The genesis of the first full translation of *Critique of Pure Reason*

In late 1901, Twardowski communicated to Struve and Weryho that he had found an excellent translator for Kant's major work. This news caused some consternation. Struve and Weryho both knew very well who Piotr

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dowy im. Ossolińskich. Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1983); Krystyna Ostrowska, "Chmielowski Piotr" in: *Słownik psychologów polskich*, ed. Elwira Kosnarewicz, Teresa Rzepa, Ryszard Stachowski (Poznań: Zakład Historii Myśli Psychologicznej. Instytut Psychologii UAM, 1992), 45.

Chmielowski was. Struve remembered that already in the 1880s Chmielowski had distinguished himself when, as a professor at the Imperial University of Warsaw, he had refused to accept the Chair of Polish Literature and to lecture in Russian. He was a staunch opponent of Russification and was even imprisoned several times in the Warsaw Citadel for demonstrating his nationalist sympathies. Accordingly, he did not make a good impression. Struve and Weryho initially had concerns that the tsarist authorities and their censors would not allow publication of anything that was Chmielowski's work. The concerns were so great that Weryho wanted the translator to appear in his work anonymously. Struve even recommended this to Twardowski to convince Chmielowski that he should publish anonymously. This had no effect. The future translator of the *Critique of Pure Reason* remained adamant. Twardowski himself, in turn, had to convince Struve at length of his choice to allow the original project to proceed. Struve knew Chmielowski from his time in Warsaw. He remembered Chmielowski as a young, ardent patriot, fighting against the tsarist regime. His opinion of him was not good. He saw Chmielowski as a troublemaker and subversive. Still, he appreciated his academic competence. Twardowski agreed on condition that Chmielowski would consult his translation with Struve. This was made all the easier by the fact that the two philosophers had already corresponded with each other before. Struve had been writing letters to Chmielowski since 1889, when he served as editor of the *Ateneum*. At that time, matters concerning Lutosławski's publications, the development of the *Ateneum* and the "Biblioteka Filozoficzna" were discussed. It was important to Struve that Chmielowski join the work of the editorial board. He was to support his efforts on the "Biblioteka Filozoficzna". Chmielowski, however, could not fully fulfil these obligations. By this time he was already seriously ill with tuberculosis. He spent most of his time in Zakopane, hindering contact with him.

Chmielowski began work on the translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* when it became apparent that Piątkowski had not succeeded in translating the *Prolegomena*. Formally, however, this only occurred when he received a grant for the translation and its publication. Struve wrote to Chmielowski about it:

I hasten to announce that the Mianowski Fund Committee yesterday granted in principle an allowance of up to 2,500 roubles for the translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Formally, these matters will be settled at the meeting next Saturday – as there were so many matters yesterday that this one of ours could be brought up in principle only. In any case, the thing is secured and you may confidently begin work on the translation. Admittedly, it took some effort – it was necessary to convince the opposition of the relevance of the translation and of the necessity to benefit from the circumstances in the midst of which this work can now be accomplished – but in the end the cause of reason and necessity prevailed, despite the amount of money needed for it. I therefore only wish you good health, so that you can undertake and complete this difficult work without hindrance!<sup>12</sup>

By this point, Struve had already abandoned his plans involving Piątkowski and was fully committed to Twardowski's project. He actually pressed for Chmielowski to translate the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He was immensely pleased that he had obtained funds to publish a translation of Kant's work from the Mianowski Fund.

Chmielowski proceeded with the task according to the plan carefully laid down by Twardowski. Firstly, he concentrated on analyses of the original text. He was well aware, although not everyone took the matter seriously, that the *Critique of Pure Reason* already had several editions during Kant's lifetime. The first edition, published incrementally, fragment by fragment, came from the editor Johann Georg Hamann and was released in Riga, at the publishing house of Johann Heinrich Harknoch, with whom Kant remained a cordial friend. It was dated the first half of 1781. It is customary in philosophical literature to refer to it as the first and to designate it with a capital letter: "A" with the addition of the number of each subsequent verse: "1, 2, 3..." etc. Seven years later, prompted by various opinions, and following the publication of a popular commentary on his *Critique of Pure Reason*, (i.e. the *Prolegomena*),

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<sup>12</sup> See Letter from Henryk Struve to Piotr Chmielowski of 21 January 1903, in the "Archive of the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław", ref. 4812/1 (microfilm in the National Library in Warsaw). Chmielowski's letters to Struve are in the "Archive of the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow", ref. Przyb. 1–11/60; see also Stanisław Borzym, *Przeszłość dla przyszłości: z dziejów myśli polskiej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS – Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2003). Letters to Piotr Chmielowski are published in pages 76–77, 88–100.



Kant resolved once again to produce a new edition, commonly designated with a capital letter "B." The two editions differ from each other. Chmielowski was perfectly aware of this. In the introduction he wrote:

As I cannot enter into a detailed dissection of the opposing proofs here, I will confine myself to indicating which of the more important changes Kant made to the second edition of the *Critique*. These are to be found, namely, in the Introduction, in several places in the "Transcendental Aesthetic", in the "concepts of pure reason," in the "analytic of principles," in the treatise "the ground of the distinction of all objects in general into phenomena and noumena" and in the "paralogisms of pure reason." They consist in extensions or abridgements of the lecture, in additions or omissions, in a total or partial reworking. The Introduction and some details of the Aesthetic were further elaborated; the category argument was completely rewritten; the distinction between noumena and phenomena was partly reworked; the "refutation of idealism" and the "general comment on the system of principles" were added in the "Analytic of Principles"; the paralogisms of pure reason were reformulated and, as a result of numerous omissions, abridged. The most important of all the changes are the different presentation of pure reason concepts (categories) and the teaching of the difference between phenomena and things in themselves (noumena), further the "refutation of idealism" and finally the omissions in the lecture of the paralogisms of pure reason.<sup>13</sup>

More than twenty years later, Roman Witold Ingarden further clarified the whole matter in his lectures on *Kant's Criticism*. It is worth quoting his assessment of the differences of the two editions. The philosopher wrote:

There are similar shifting points in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

- (a) a stronger emphasis on the realistic moment and at the same time on agnosticism about things in themselves;
- (b) a special argument demonstrating the falsity of Berkeley's idealism and, in part, of Descartes's;

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<sup>13</sup> Piotr Chmielowski, "Kilka słów o *Krytyce czystego rozumu*", in: Immanuel Kant, *Krytyka czystego rozumu*, transl. Piotr Chmielowski, ed. Henryk Struve (Warszawa: Księgarnia E. Wende i Sp., Wydanie z zapomogi Kasy Pomocy dla osób pracujących na polu naukowym imienia Dra Józefa Mianowskiego, 1904), XXVI.

- (c) the abandonment of the argument about the object of cognition;
- (d) in tandem with this, an emphasis on the purely epistemological character of category deduction – the exclusion of psychological considerations;
- e) in the *Prolegomena*, the issue of mathematics and pure natural science is presented differently from in the first edition of the *Critique*. In the *Prolegomena* it is assumed that the cognition of mathematics and pure natural science is real. Hence, the question is only asked about the conditions of this cognition. In the first edition of the *Critique*, there was no assumption that we are allowed to accept the truth of the judgements of mathematics and pure natural science in advance. Admittedly, we do have such judgements, but whether they are true is yet to be demonstrated by the theory of cognition. In the *Prolegomena*, on the other hand, their veracity is assumed, and traces of this are to be found in the second edition of the *Critique*. As a result, the role of the transcendental deduction of categories is reduced, as we no longer ask whether they are true, but how they are true. But it is not explicitly posed this way;
- f) more pointedly emphasized than in the 1st edition is the matter of the applicability of categories: they are applicable only within the limits of experience, and it even so appears that only within the limits of our human experience, with its particular sensuality.
- g) in the second edition an extensive argument is also presented about the difference between empirical realism and transcendental idealism.<sup>14</sup>

However, let us return to Chmielowski's translation. The differences in the "A" and "B" editions compelled him to reach an important decision. He decided, and rightly so, for such were the world trends at the time, that he would translate edition "B." Roman Ingarden did likewise later after the Second World War when he prepared a new edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Unlike Ingarden, Chmielowski did not mark pagination in the text itself, but made other changes for edition "A." In his work he used a copy of the second edition (1787). Of course, he had the original of the first edition at his disposal (1781). He also reviewed and analysed other editions in terms of content layout. His plan was to introduce a division into edition "A" and

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<sup>14</sup> See Roman W. Ingarden, *Lwowskie wykłady o Krytycyzmie Kanta z roku akademickiego 1935/1936*, ed. Radosław Kuliniak, Mariusz Pandura (Kęty: Wydawnictwo Derewiecki, 2021), 281.

“B.” The layout was to be as follows: “A” on the left and “B” on the right side. In the end, he abandoned this idea. Edition “B” was more representative than edition “A.” Chmielowski had no illusions in this regard. He found the choice of the “B” edition, which differed on many points from the “A” edition, more pertinent and mature. He wrote about this:

To ensure that the reader has before him and can constantly compare the two editions, it has long been customary, when taking the first or second edition as the primary text, to include any alterations, shorter or longer, that distinguish it. Whether one takes the first or the second edition as the basis for the text makes little difference; both methods are used in collective editions of Kant's works as well as in separate reprints of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Rosenkranz, following Schopenhauer's advice, used the first edition (*I. Kants sammtliche Werke*, 1838) as the main text; at the same time Hartenstein used the second edition (*I. Kants Werke*, 1838), which he preserved also in the second edition of the philosopher's complete works (1867). Of the four separate reprints of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, K. Kehrbach (in the Reclam Common Library) based his on the first edition, and J. H. Kirchmann (1870, and later reprints), Benno Erdmann (Leipzig, 1880) and Erik Adickes (Berlin, 1889) on the second. There was a dispute between Kehrbach and Erdmann over this (see K. Kehrbach: *Replik gegen des Hrn B. Erdmanns Recension meiner Ausgabe der Kantischen Kritik der reinen Vernunft*), which, before an impartial judgement, only revealed the groundlessness of insisting on one way or the other of announcing Kant's work, since the exhaustive inclusion of textual variants fully satisfies scholarly requirements. Following the example of most publishers, in the conviction that Kant indeed wished to render the text of the second edition as the only authentic one, I thus adhered to it in my translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I had the Kirchmann, Kehrbach, and Adickes editions in front of me for comparison, and in keeping with these editions, I placed the variants from the first edition either underneath the text or at the very end of the work (specifically, the two most important and longest paragraphs: The Deduction of Categories and The Paralogisms of Pure Reason). In order to distinguish the variants of the first edition, placed at the bottom of the pages, from the footnotes to the second edition, I have enclosed them in brackets [ ], just as everything else which is an explanation added by me either in the text itself or in the notes. I did not imitate Adickes as regards the summaries and analyses (dispositions) of the individual paragraphs of the *Critique*, since these are, after all, subjective views, predicated most often on the publisher's main hypothesis

as to how the work was written. I do not deny that such summaries and analyses can sometimes make the text easier to read and understand: but whoever wishes to benefit from such assistance will need to turn to the German edition. I considered it my duty to present faithfully the text of the second edition of the *Critique* as well as all the variations from the first, without highlighting repetitions or inconsistencies. Explanations of less comprehensible Latin expressions, or those which could be put into fewer words, are given in the text itself, optionally in footnotes, while somewhat longer notes, mostly factual, which could make the text easier to understand, or which provide information on people or concepts mentioned in the text, are left at the end of the book. These are referenced by numerical references in the text. I have also added an alphabetical list of technical words and expressions, as well as proper names, mentioned in the *Critique* or in my explanatory notes, so that the reader can easily compare and cross-reference the definitions and theories found in various parts of the work. Sometimes in this index, I have given short definitions of the most difficult words, taken from the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself, in order to constantly remind the reader of the meaning in which the philosopher used them. In the list of contents at the end, I have not only given all the superscripts that Kant included in his work, but also (in brackets) added them where Kant contented himself with merely pointing out a paragraph (§). This way, each single, even small, part of the work can be easily identified and found, all the more so because the “page header,” which is present throughout the book, will guide the searcher to the main sections of the *Critique of Pure Reason* at any time when it is opened.<sup>15</sup>

Chmielowski recognised that in the process he had to draw on available dictionaries and commentaries on the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In an undertaking of this magnitude, he had to draw on the most important works from the world literature. However, he did not know quite which ones to choose. He consulted Struve directly on this matter. In one of Struve’s letters to Chmielowski, we read:

The most important issue raised in your letter is the commentary on the *Critique of Pure Reason*. To my knowledge, the best among the more recent editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, supplied with appropriate comments and explanations, are: Erich Adickes’s edition of 1889, Benno Erdmann’s edition of 1878,

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<sup>15</sup> Chmielowski, “Kilka słów o Krytyce czystego rozumu”, XVI–XIX.

the 5th edition of 1900, and finally Karl Vorlander's edition of 1899. The Adickes edition seems to me to be the handiest, although Erdmann's 5th edition contains a great deal of informative comments on the text itself (mainly the 2nd edition of the original, which naturally you too take as the basis for your translation). Should you not possess either of these works, I would strongly advise you to import the Adickes edition and adhere to it in your translation, taking into account his remarks on the text etc. It is an edition with explanatory notes, far better than either Kirchmann's or Kernbach's: the former succumbs too much to his individual tendencies, whereas Kernbach appears to me not quite critical enough in editing the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It would also be good to have Benno Erdmann on hand – for a comparison with Adickes and a critical review of both – but ultimately Adickes, I think, is sufficient.

All these, however, are merely editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, admittedly with numerous, instructive comments, some of them substantive – but they are not commentaries in the strict sense of the word. The sort of matter-of-fact commentary that you need and wish to have at hand, and which is indeed necessary if you wish to introduce the reader to the material understanding of Kant, is issued by Hans Vaihinger, an immense work, reckoned at 5 volumes. To my knowledge, only 2 volumes have come out to date (*Commentar zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, vol. I, 1881, vol. II, 1892), and they include some carefully worded, strictly scientific explanations of the prefaces and introductions to the 1st and 2nd original editions and to the “Transcendental Aesthetic.” This commentary will be a great aid to you, not only for the substantive explanations, but also in the translation itself. It will complement Adickes and, I believe, satisfy you completely. I have not come across a further 3rd volume so far – it seems to me that it is not yet out, although it was announced.<sup>16</sup>

Chmielowski was on the right track to produce a complete and highly factual translation. It was not a merely reproductive work. He did not simply try to analyse both editions of the *Critique*. Unlike Piątkowski, he reached for the commentaries recommended by Struve. He not only read, but simultaneously aligned, terminology. Chmielowski studied and compared individual sentences of Kant's text. He confronted his observations with the commen-

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<sup>16</sup> Letter from Henryk Struve to Piotr Chmielowski of 3 February 1903, “Archive of the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław”, ref. 4812/1.

taries and reported everything to Struve. As an example, let us quote a passage characteristic of these discussions from Struve's letter to Chmielowski. We read in it:

As far as terminology is concerned, whether foreign or native, I am also of the opinion that it is better to use a foreign term that is understandable to any educated reader, rather than, following the example of Kazimierz Twardowski, to forge terms on our own. I am therefore not sure whether it is right to write 'myślący' [thinking] instead of 'inteligentny' [intelligent]. 'Intelligence' has a broader meaning than 'thought.' Hence, the term 'myślący' [thinking] seems to me somewhat narrow, denoting only the existence of an object in thought, but not the penetration of that object by thought, which is expressed by the term 'intelligibility.' In principle, though, I am not opposed to this Polonisation, although in the first instance the original term should be added in brackets, or in a footnote, to guide the reader towards the association with this Polish term, which the original has in mind.<sup>17</sup>

As the work on the translation progressed, the remarks that Struve made and sent to Chmielowski in reply to his doubts and queries became increasingly extensive. Struve even requested that, at the level of the "Explanatory Notes" appended by the translator to the translation, his remarks and comments should be specifically identified and thus separated from Chmielowski's insights. In the end, also on this matter they came to an appropriate agreement. They both wondered about the proper rendering in Polish of the concepts of the *Critique*.

In his translation, Chmielowski also included an excellently written introduction.<sup>18</sup> It contained the genesis of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Particularly interesting were the references to Marcus Herz, who was involved prominently in its creation.<sup>19</sup> All this was supported by source literature. Additionally, Chmielowski's comments included references to Polish philosophers who participated in Kant's lectures, as well as a vast amount of information about the sources he used. In writing this text, Chmielowski was well

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<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>18</sup> Chmielowski, "Kilka słów o *Krytyce czystego rozumu*", X–XLI.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

aware of what Twardowski and Struve expected of him. He took the wishes of both philosophers as good advice, which at that time was hard to come by. The Polish community in 1904 was to receive a complete translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* for the anniversary of Kant's birth.

## Conclusion

Chmielowski completed his translation in the spring of 1903. He handed it over to Struve for printing. Naturally, the translation still required corrections and editorial elaboration. However, the text of the translation was much better than that proposed by Piątkowski. Twardowski even urged Chmielowski and Struve to publish this translation for the anniversary of Kant's birth, which fell on 12 February 1904. His intention was to link its presentation with the celebration of the founding of the Polish Philosophical Society in Lviv. However, delays that occurred in the printing of the translation of Kant's main work thwarted this plan. The inauguration of the reunion of the Polish philosophical community was bound to take place without a presentation of the greatest achievement in the hitherto history of the reception of Kant's philosophy in Poland. However, the celebration was not without Kantian accents. Twardowski's speech contained numerous references to Kant's criticism, and the inaugural lecture was delivered by Chmielowski. In this way, Twardowski wished to recognise his merits as the translator of the first complete translation of Kant's work. Chmielowski once again did not disappoint Twardowski. He presented a comprehensive and exhaustive paper *Kant w Polsce* [*Kant in Poland*].<sup>20</sup> It was later published in the *Przegląd Filozoficzny*, with considerable problems with the censorship. It is truly astonishing that the tsarist authorities consented to publish, a few months later, a Polish translation of *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Furthermore, Twardowski prearranged with Chmielowski and Struve that the translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* would be presented in Lviv on

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<sup>20</sup> Piotr Chmielowski, "Kant w Polsce" ["Kant in Poland"], *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 7(4) (1904): 379–394.

22 April, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kant's birth. This was also to be mentioned by Vaihinger at the celebrations in Halle, at the time of the establishment of the "Kant-Gesellschaft."<sup>21</sup> However, on the date of the planned presentation, Chmielowski died. It happened suddenly. The most likely cause of death was tuberculosis, from which he had been suffering for many years. A letter from Chmielowski's wife to Struve is notable. After her husband's death, she wrote:

I feel and know that this is of interest to you, Professor, so I shall describe what it was like: on that very day in the morning a card came from you, I gave it to him and it was the last thing he read by himself, as I did not give him other letters and writings so he would not get tired, and he kept asking for the card from you every day as if he was just waiting for it. [...] His last important work was related to the work of Professor, the last letter he read was from Professor, this is what emboldens me to describe how it all was.<sup>22</sup>

The Polish philosophical community at last received a translation of Kant's work that was modern and met all the conditions of scholasticism. However, its translator passed away. Chmielowski did not live to see the presentation of his work. It took place in a much more modest setting than originally planned.

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<sup>21</sup> Hans Vaihinger, "Das Kantjubiläum im Jahre 1904", *Kant-Studien* 10 (1905): 105–155.

<sup>22</sup> See Letter from Maria Chmielowska to Henryk Struve, 5/18 May 1904, manuscript, "Jagiellonian Library Archive", ref. Przyb. 2/60, c. 17r–18v.



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