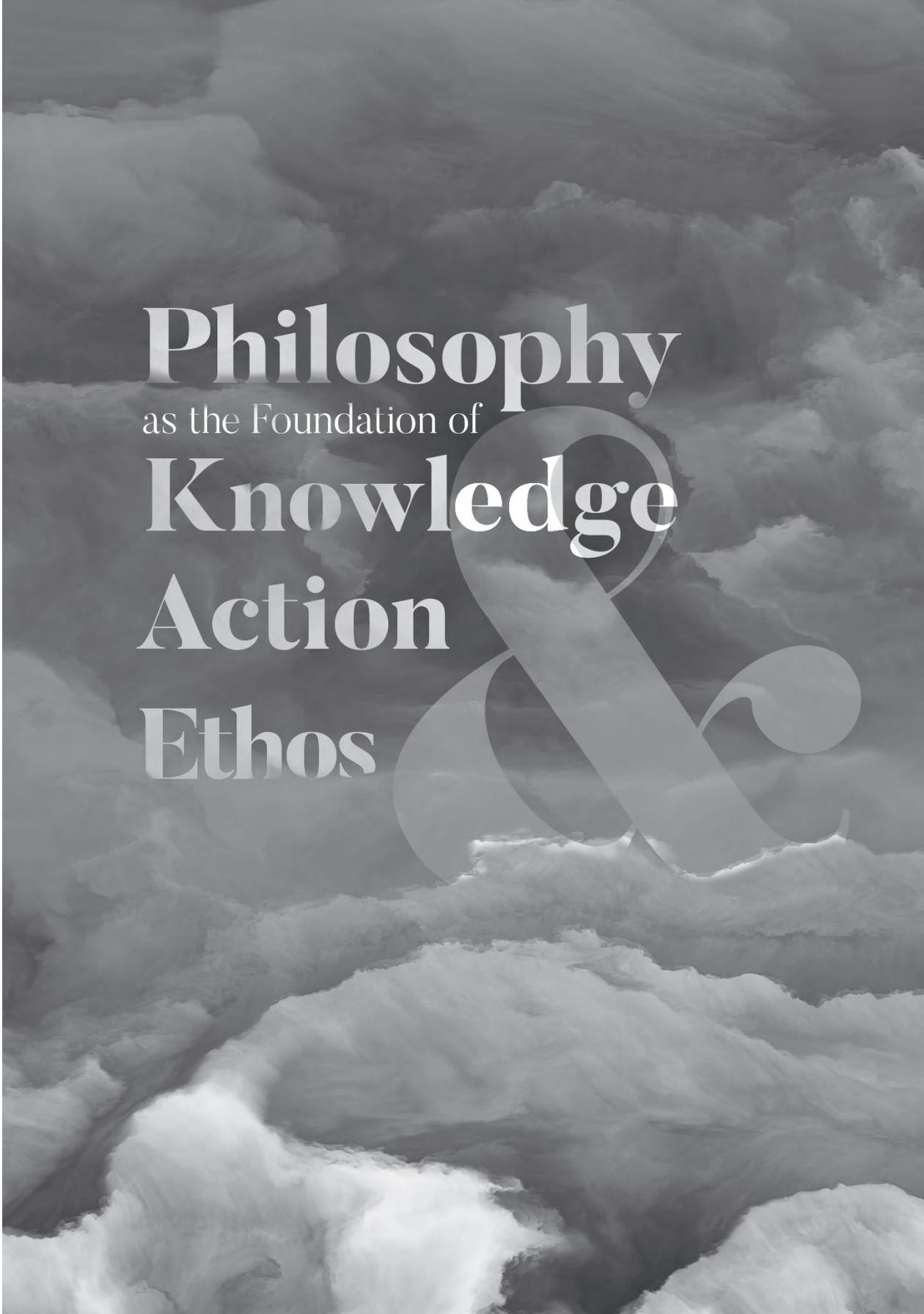


Philosophy
as the Foundation of
Knowledge
Action
Ethos

editors

Janusz Kaczmarek, Ryszard Kleszcz



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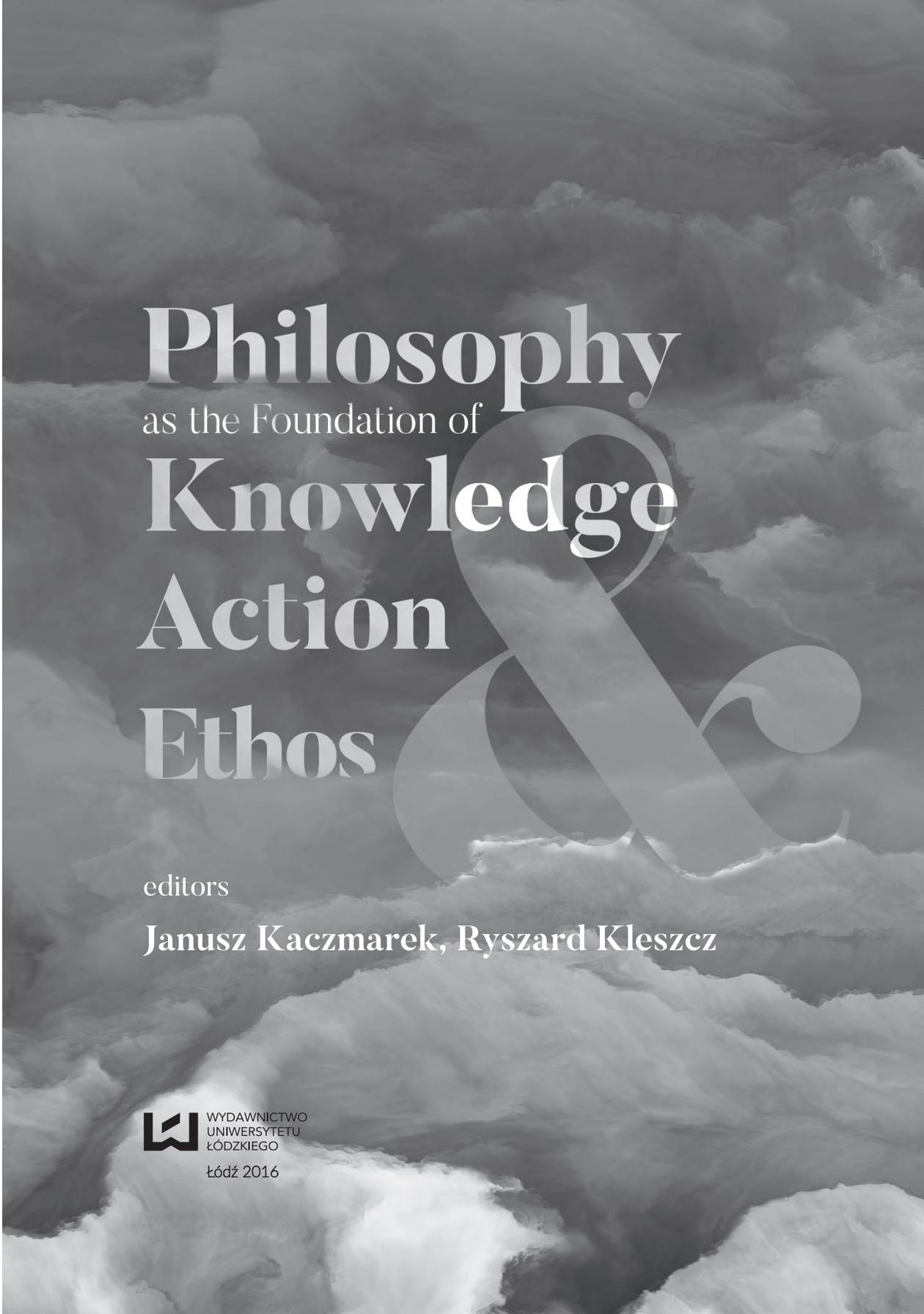
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Łódź 2016

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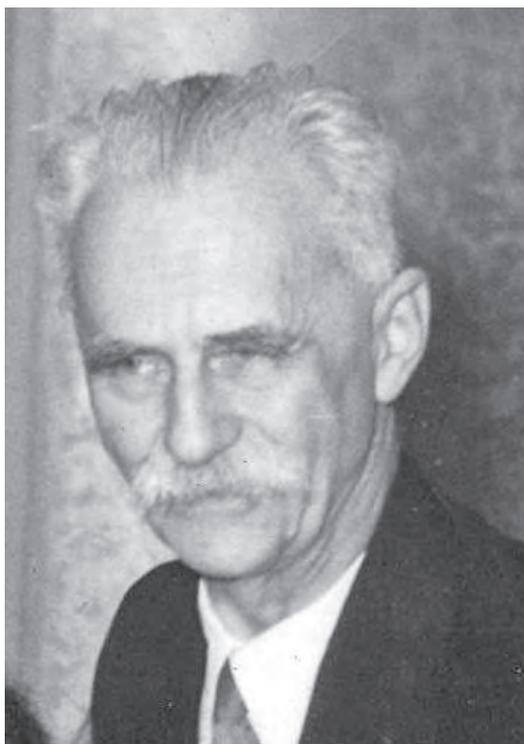
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Tadeusz Kotarbiński

(March 31, 1886 – October 3, 1981)



Tadeusz Kotarbiński was born in Warsaw on March 31, 1886 into an artist family. He studied mathematics and physics in Cracow, and architecture in Darmstadt and Lvov (1907–1912). At Lvov University, Kotarbiński studied philosophy and classical philology under the guidance of Kazimierz Twardowski. He received his PhD in 1912 with his thesis titled “Utilitarianism in the ethics of Mill and Spencer”. After his university studies, Kotarbiński taught classics at a Warsaw high school. In 1919 he was appointed Temporary Professor of Philosophy (Full Professor in 1929) at the University of Warsaw. During World War II, he took part in underground teaching. After the war, he became the founder and first rector of the University of Łódź (1945–1949). In 1951, he returned to Warsaw where he lectured at the University. Kotarbiński was the president of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1957–1961). He also served as the president of the Polish Philosophical Society (1948–1978), and as vice president and president of Institut International de Philosophie (1957–1968).

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INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the community of the University of Łódź celebrated the 70th anniversary of its founding. The Institute of Philosophy took advantage of this opportunity, and organized an international philosophical conference titled “University – Philosophy as the Foundation of Knowledge, Action and Ethos” on June 11–13. Numerous philosophers took part in the conference, philosophers from different universities and research institutes (inter alia Bergen, Dublin, Cracow, Lublin, Łódź, Nancy, Opole, Pittsburgh, Poznań and Warsaw). Conference participants discussed many fundamental problems concerning the life of the university and its research work. In particular, philosophical, ethical and praxeological questions of knowledge, action and ethos were often investigated. Of course, a notable part of the discussion was related to Tadeusz Kotarbiński’s theory of action, ontology and reism, methodology, and the ethics of the reliable guardian. Tadeusz Kotarbiński was Kazimierz Twardowski’s pupil, and one of the leading members of the Lvov–Warsaw School. After the Second World War, Kotarbiński taught at the University of Łódź and was the first rector of our university (1945–1949).

The present monograph, we hope, is a valuable outcome of the combined lectures and disputations. For our monograph, the editors chose 16 papers from the ones prepared for this work. The whole is divided into four parts: 1) Chapter I, dedicated to Kotarbiński the person, philosopher and teacher, 2) Chapter II, devoted to the theoretical problems of knowledge, 3) Chapter III, containing various questions about certain problems in ethics, religion and the theory of action and 4) Chapter IV, problems concerning the condition of contemporary humanities and social sciences.

CHAPTER I

Kotarbiński as a Rector, Teacher and Person

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THE UNIVERSITY'S 70th ANNIVERSARY

The University's 70th anniversary is the second 70th anniversary celebrated by the City of Łódź. The first celebration took place in 1936, when Kazimierz Twardowski, founder of the Lvov–Warsaw School, turned 70 on 2 October. It was then that Tadeusz Kotarbiński – who later became the rector of the University of Łódź – published an article about his mentor in issue 21(138) of the *Pion* journal. The article was connected with Kazimierz Twardowski receiving the City of Łódź Prize for his scientific work.¹ The coincidence of these two anniversaries provokes reflection.

In his laudation of the man who wrote *On the Dignity of the University*, Tadeusz Kotarbiński wrote about Twardowski's research and about how he organized the work of the philosopher community – in other words he wrote about what he had learnt from his mentor. After all, it was precisely that heritage which he had built on when he taught what he called “small” philosophy at the University of Warsaw before World War II and when he headed the University of Łódź in the first years after the war.

What, then, was the “core of Prof. Twardowski's academic production” [*op. cit.*, 89]? In terms of research method, it was a theory of representation (i.e. ideas and notions). Twardowski's pioneering role was based on indicating that “the professional role of philosophers involves, as an important part, giving the meaning of words ... a definite and distinct shape” [*op. cit.*, 893]. This is especially important when studying the correctness of theorems and justifications. It was also a critique of a “dilettante epistemology” related to the relativism of regarding a sentence as true or false depending on who utters it (“subjective fantasizing”). Another of his achievements was formulating rational and refined opinions on the subject, method and tasks of psychology, or, more precisely, the philosophy of psychology, especially of thinking. The fourth part of Twardowski's output was concerned with ethics. Twardowski found

¹ KOTARBIŃSKI T. [1958], “Kazimierz Twardowski”, [in:] *Wybór pism*, vol. II, *Myśli o myśleniu*, PWN, Warszawa, pp. 891–899.

– Kotarbiński writes – “our domestic philosophy to be in a suspicious condition” and made it so “that among the intelligentsia of Lvov ... philosophy at the university gained the reputation of something like daily bread” [*op. cit.*, 896]. “Above all, this was an excellent introductory course for anyone who was to teach anyone anything in future” [*op. cit.*, 897]. It was philosophizing without “any kind of ‘-ism’, no prophesying, no extravagance of inspired individuality ..., nor any pretending to be a genius” [*ibid.*].

To the question of what inclined Twardowski, a graduate of the University of Vienna, a student of Franz Brentano, to adopt such a programme of activity, Tadeusz Kotarbiński offers this reply:

Finding fallow land in Poland, overgrown with weeds, he rolled up his sleeves and began tearing out the weeds and planting nourishing vegetables. This great, wise and incredibly hard-working teacher made it his mission to teach ne'er-do-well Poles how to work just like Germans can work. In the area, of course, which was available to him. It was mainly a question of character. Twardowski was deeply hurt by the Poles' reputation: Die Polen sind ja so unzuverlässig! Unreliable! It's hard to depend on us! What's worse, the criticism hit the nail on the head ... So this Man, devoted to Poland but brought up in German solidity, undertook a certain, so to speak, Kulturkampf at home... And began eradicating short-lived zeal, tardiness, unreliability in deals, disorderliness, the pursuit of what is currently the most engrossing thing; he made people get down to hard work, respect organizational relations, practise various skills, write detailed papers, offer objective summaries... Oh how grateful they are today, his students of old, to their beloved Mentor for all this! With what great faith they pass those elements that he instilled in them on to their own students! [*op. cit.*, 897].

Nine years passed after these words were written, difficult years dominated by the tragedy of war and the hecatomb of Warsaw, until in 1945 Twardowski's student arrived to create such a university in Łódź that would have the proper dignity. How did he do it? He made good use of Twardowski's programme and his own experience supported by the framework of his consistently developing philosophy of practicality.² Allow me to remind you what I have written about this.³

Tadeusz Kotarbiński treated action as a skill of which the analysis and the critique of its notions and methods required studying the language reflecting that skill. One could say with certain emphasis that Kotarbiński raised *action* to the rank of how philosophy analyses and critiques scientific notions and methods. Focusing on action, Kotarbiński brought science – exact science, to be precise – down from Olympus and into workshops and laboratories where scientific

² GASPARI W. [1993], *A Philosophy of Practicality: A Treatise on the Philosophy of Tadeusz Kotarbiński*, Societas Philosophica Fennica, Helsinki.

³ GASPARI W. [2006], “Wielkość małej filozofii”, [in:] R. Banajski, W. Gasparski and A. Lewicka-Strzałecka, [eds], *Mysł Tadeusza Kotarbińskiego i jej współczesna recepcja*, Polska Akademia Nauk i Towarzystwo Naukowe Prakseologii, Warszawa, pp. 13–19.

research, *ergo* actions, are performed. This consideration, first and foremost, forms the foundation of Tadeusz Kotarbiński's philosophical system. In order to answer the question of what system we are speaking of, we need to consider the following. Firstly, the works of Tadeusz Kotarbiński should be treated as a whole, i.e. as a philosophical system. Secondly, Kotarbiński's method of building this system consisted in analysing the language of the disciplines whose methodological criticism he performed. Thirdly, Kotarbiński's philosophy should be understood in the same way that he understood philosophy and demanded it should be understood, i.e. as the science of science. Fourthly and finally, science, or scientific disciplines to be more precise, should be understood in the way adopted by Kotarbiński, i.e. as a separate field deserving to be the subject of intellectual university teaching. The atomic level of Tadeusz Kotarbiński's philosophical system is a universe of behaviours of a subject creatively changing the encountered reality, this subject being "a body living, awake and aware" and the reality being "a tangle of interdependent and changing things", as Kotarbiński put it.⁴ This universe is the world of the practical activity of humans as acting subjects. Tadeusz Kotarbiński's philosophical system is the effect of reflecting on this world, so it is exactly a *philosophy of practicality*.⁵

Kotarbiński ended his article about Kazimierz Twardowski with the words: "And we can guess how touched the Professor will be that the thanks come from Łódź itself! The city from the very heart of the Congress Kingdom thanks a citizen of Lvov, a city of practical people thanks a coryphaeus of philosophical culture. In this is contained a symbolism of extensive and deep relations so dear to our Mentor's heart..." [*op. cit.*, 899].

The obvious thing to do today, on the 70th anniversary of the University of Łódź, is to offer similar words about Tadeusz Kotarbiński, its first rector:

We can guess that Łódź of all places is certainly grateful to him! A city from the very heart of Poland thanks a native of Warsaw from the Lvov–Warsaw school, a city of practical people thanks a philosopher of practicality, a coryphaeus of philosophical culture and courage in action, i.e. efficacy in achieving worthy goals. In this is contained a symbolism of extensive and deep relations so dear to our Mentor's heart.

Please accept my respect and wishes for a rewarding debate.

⁴ KOTARBIŃSKI T. [1993], *Ontologia, teoria poznania i metodologia nauk, Dzieła wszystkie*, Ossolineum, Wrocław, pp. 175–176.

⁵ GASPARSKI W. [1991], "Filozofia Tadeusza Kotarbińskiego filozofią praktyczności", [in:] W. Gasparski, A. Strzałecki, [eds], *Logika, praktyka, etyka: Przesłania filozofii Tadeusza Kotarbińskiego*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Prakseologii, Warszawa, p. 31.

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**PROFESSOR TADEUSZ KOTARBIŃSKI AND PHILOSOPHY
AT THE TIME OF HIS TERM OFFICE AS RECTOR
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ
IN A FORMER STUDENT'S REMINISCENCES**

Youth is the best time in every human's life. At the same time, it is a period of certain inferiority and a search for personal patterns as well as authorities of moral conduct and social behaviour; it is a period of searching for wise life-guides who can stir our dormant talents and direct them to the right scientific interests.

The period of World War II and the time of the German or Soviet occupation prevented young Poles from regular personal and educational development. At that time, they either fought in the guerrillas or were forced to work for the Nazis.

In June 1945, I received the so-called small secondary school diploma or certificate of completion of the 4th form (in accordance with the prewar rules) in Nicolaus Copernicus high school in Łódź (there I had the good fortune to start my secondary school education in 1939). I passed the regular secondary school-leaving exams at the science-oriented adult secondary school that was located in the same building. Adult secondary school was an absolute necessity for me then. Both in junior high school and in secondary school I had excellent teachers, partly later university lecturers, such as Lucjan Cieślík – physicist (Łódź University of Technology), and Władysław Terlikowski – mathematician (Łódź University of Technology). When I recollect that school period, even today I am amazed at their ability to convey in a very short time the immensity of knowledge to educationally late young people. It is simply hard to believe, but we were really good and comprehensively prepared for higher education. Admission to some colleges and universities depended on successfully passed entrance examinations, and often – on political support. I got to Łódź University of Technology with no problem at all, but I decided to study the humanities at the University of Łódź for two vital reasons. Firstly, my mother was seriously

ailing, so I had to help her with her daily problems (studying the humanities would make it easier for me) and secondly, general knowledge and especially the study of the structure of thinking seemed more attractive to me, and it was philosophy that – to a large extent – could meet my expectations.

In the academic year of 1946/47, just when I started my university education, Professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński, a known and recognized philosopher, was the first rector of the University of Lodz. In that year I did not have an opportunity to come into contact with him, but I clearly felt the effects of his managing of the new (founded after the war) University. Professor Kotarbiński was a supporter of a liberal university, that is, one where people with different views – either idealistic or quite opposite ones – were free to conduct scientific activities. It was important that the suggested theories were clearly presented and properly substantiated. During the first year of my studies, thanks to such a policy of managing the University, I had the good fortune to listen to lectures by such celebrities as Janina Kamińska (previously named Dina Szeinbarg, and a year later – Kotarbińska as Tadeusz Kotarbiński's wife), who would deliver lectures in logic in an exceptionally interesting way. In the academic year 1947/48, I was able to participate in the introductory seminar in logic held by Professor Janina Kotarbińska and listen to her talk on *Methodology of Humanities*.

In a lecture titled *The Architectonics of Being*, Professor Benedict Bornstein presented his original ontological idea. He also had a lecture – with reference to Immanuel Kant – on *A priori Synthetic Judgements*. In the academic year 1947/48, Professor Bornstein gave a lecture titled *Introduction to Philosophy* and a seminar *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Kant). I clearly remember his tall, noble figure. Unfortunately, he died soon afterwards, in 1948.

It was impossible to forget exciting lectures in psychology delivered by Professor Albert Dryjski. The Professor always quoted interesting psychological problems and then strived to solve them employing different kinds of methods. In the academic year 1947/48, during his four-hour lectures, Professor Dryjski discussed and visually presented endless topics. His textbook was read like a novel. In addition to the lecture we had the opportunity to participate in two-hour psychology classes or in a seminar.

Professor Wiktor Wąsik also conducted his lectures in a very vivid way. I admired his erudition. He often changed the subject of his discourses. He discussed medieval and positivist philosophy (1947/48), Old Polish views on education as well as idealism of the 19th century (1948/49), and philosophy of the Enlightenment (1949/50). Professor Wąsik also held a seminar in the history of philosophy and he was the examiner during my exam in the history of philosophy. Dr. Stanisław Czajkowski (1904–1961) was an assistant professor in the Department of the History of Philosophy run by Professor Wąsik.

Dr. Czajkowski – educated at French universities – was an expert on Descartes’s philosophy. He had a very cheerful disposition which could be observed in his lectures. He always delivered them with great passion, commitment and a nice smile on his face.

Professor Mieczysław Wallis had his lectures on the 1st floor of the building in Lindley’a Street. I remember that figure very well. He was a “walking,” and, one can say, a “talking aesthete”. He had a two-hour lecture on *The science of art* and a one-hour lecture on *The history of aesthetics*. I have to point out that all the lecturers of that time, and Professor Mieczysław Wallis in particular, knew how to take good care of the beauty of Polish language. It was important to the post-war students who were for more than 5 years of occupation deprived of a native speech pattern.

The lectures delivered by Professor Sergiusz Hessen were also of a great interest to students, as he presented pedagogical theories in a very stylish way. I remember his three-hour lecture titled *The History of Ancient Philosophy with Emphasis on Pedagogical Doctrines*. Professor Hessen was a versatile scholar, a specialist in the theory of education, but also in the philosophy of culture and law. Professor Hessen’s activity at the University of Łódź was a continuation of the classes at the branch of the Free Polish University in Łódź. The same can be said about Professor Wąsik and Professor Bornstein as well.

The University authorities suggested that philosophy students, and especially logic and methodology of science students, should hear a lecture in science. I chose mathematics and Professor Stanisław Mazur’s lecture on *Differential and Integral Calculus* and *Higher Algebra*. Professor Mazur did not work at the University of Lodz for a long time. He was a great mathematician but of the Lvov School, yet it was politics that attracted him more. He came to participate in high-level authorities of the state.

Ethical thought was represented at that time by Professor Maria Ossowska. In the academic year 1948/49, she had a lecture titled *Personal Patterns in European Antiquity*. Klemens Szaniawski, later professor of the University of Warsaw and its rector, was one of her collaborators.

I got to know Professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński’s teaching and scientific activity only in the later period of my studies. In the academic year 1949/50, the Professor had a monographic lecture entitled *Science Classification* and a philosophical seminar. I attended that seminar also in the following year, before my graduation. I was fascinated by the way he conducted the meetings. Among other things, we discussed texts from the textbook by Tadeusz Czeżowski, professor of the University of Torun, who had been a philosopher at the University of Vilnius (Czeżowski and Kotarbiński met by chance in 1912 at a philosophical introductory seminar in Lvov. They sat next to each other and

so it started.). After reading a passage we made a thorough linguistic, semantic and factual analysis of it. It was a great school of searching the meaning hidden in words, a school of thinking analysis and of learning how to define concepts properly and express yourself precisely. A nice thing about the seminar was also its enchanting, almost family atmosphere. The Professor treated his students very seriously. He always encouraged them to participate in discussions.

The Professor could appreciate his students and many of them won a large dose of his trust. Let me give an example. Tadeusz and Janina Kotarbinski (the Professor got married to Janina Kamińska) lived near the rector's office, in a building at 3 Uniwersytecka Street, on the second floor. Their flat was on the south side. The offices on the west side were for a seminar room and a library. There was also the Professor and his wife's small study. During one summer vacation it came about that there was no one to give the seminar, though there were close associates such as Marian Przełęcki and Leszek Kołakowski who were outstanding scholars a little bit later. I offered to perform the duty and my offer was accepted. I got the key to the seminar room, access to the library and to the professor's personal desk.

The way of managing the University did not match the then Communist authorities' politics, which was ideologically based on Marxism-Leninism. It inevitably led to an ideological attack on the Professor – performed largely by a then popular sociologist, Professor Józef Chałasiński – in extensive articles published in the journal “Myśl Filozoficzna”. Up until 1949 (when Kotarbiński's term of office as rector was about to end), ideologically awkward professors were dismissed. Professor Dryjski was offered a Russian language course. He died shortly after that (1956), probably from worry. Professor Wąsik retired on 1st November 1950. Born in 1883 he found his place first at the Catholic University of Lublin (1952/53–1955/56), and then, until his death in 1963, he was head of the Department of the History of Philosophy at the Theological Academy in Warsaw, which was founded after the Theological Faculty at the University of Warsaw had been liquidated. Professor Bornstein died in 1948.

I wrote my master's thesis (*The Principle of the Economy of Thinking According to Ernst Mach*) under Professor Janina Kotarbińska's supervision. The subject was suggested by Professor Kotarbińska. The principle of the economy of thinking belonged to the philosophical movement of the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries. It was formulated by an Austrian philosopher, Ernst Mach, and, independently of him, by a German-Swiss philosopher, Richard Avenarius, and was known as empirical criticism or empirio-criticism. Ernst Mach (1838–1916) was an Austrian physicist. From 1864 he was professor of physics in Graz, and from 1867 in Prague. He was also keenly interested in philosophy, and from 1895 to 1901 he worked as professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna. Empirical criticism was also known as machism.

Interestingly enough, he, as a physicist, was involved in the study of phenomena accompanying the supersonic movement of bodies. Richard Avenarius (1843–97) was a German philosopher working in Switzerland, and from 1876 onwards he was professor at the University of Zurich. He formulated empirical criticism independently of Ernst Mach. He called for the acknowledgement of philosophy as a science. He also advanced the thesis that the existence of the external world depends on the learning subject (mind). Empirio-criticism reduced the whole of reality to human sensations (*Empfindungen*). With the help of the so-called “pure experience theory”, empirio-criticism attempted to remove the opposition between idealism and materialism, which led to an attempt at combining empirio-criticism with Marxism. Avenarius’s views were contained in his *Der menschliche Weltbegriff* (1891; Eng.: *The Human Concept of the World*; Polish: *Ludzkie pojęcie świata*, 1969) and were fiercely criticized by Lenin in his philosophical work *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (1909).

Ernst Mach’s philosophical works (originally published in German) are as follows: *Die Analyse der Empfindungen* (1886; Eng. *The Analysis of Sensations*) and *Erkenntnis und Irrtum* (1905; Eng. *Knowledge and Error*). Polish translations of the works do not exist. Lenin’s views on empirio-criticism have been available in Polish language for a long time.

The time in which I wrote my master’s thesis was a period of sharp ideological struggle and the subject of the thesis showed that *status quo* appropriately. The work was reviewed by Professor Kotarbiński. I had my final exam in the philosophical seminar room at 3 Uniwersytecka Street at the end of academic year 1950/1951. During the written exam, it was necessary to comment extensively on one of the three given topics.

Obtaining a diploma in philosophy that was written under Professor Kotarbińska’s supervision and reviewed by Professor Kotarbiński was a matter of prestige. Still in the same academic year, I started lecturing in logic at the Pedagogical Academy in Łódź, located then at 21 Aleja Kościuszki. Dr. Hanna Szmuszkowicz, Professor Mazur’s wife, was the rector of the Academy. Unfortunately, I had lectures for only one year. In 1952, the then authorities introduced regulations (following the Soviet example) that logic and psychology, as an influence of Western imperialism, could not be taught in Poland. That state of affairs lasted for several years. Changes came after 1956.

After many years, looking from the perspective of the time, you can ask yourself: was it worth studying philosophy?

For centuries, part of human society – aware of the need of knowledge – has been looking for answers to the most asked questions about man and his being in the world, about morality and behaviour in the community. To reflect on life and its problems is a natural need for a thinking creature. We often call such

a reflection philosophy, and if it is supported by valid, logical thinking, it is usually reflected in the scientific dissertations that are propagated in discussions or publications. Sometimes it has a considerable impact on the views, actions, deeds and lives of many communities. The history of mankind confirms that **Philosophy is the love of wisdom.** It would be great if everyone could say so.

On the prewar syllabus for the second form of high school there was a subject named *Introduction to philosophy*. There was an excellent textbook that was of a great help to teachers. Along with the new political system, the obligation to think logically and to drill the principles of logical thinking into the young generation vanished. The effects of the lack of proper thinking and inability to draw conclusions are very unpleasant for society. One can see and feel that. It has been suggested recently that junior academics or even senior researchers of the philosophy departments give lectures on philosophical subjects in secondary schools.

Maybe it would bring a chance to change something?

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TADEUSZ KOTARBIŃSKI – A PHILOSOPHER AND A TEACHER

The 70th anniversary of our university is an excellent occasion to reminisce about Tadeusz Kotarbiński, who – and few can still remember that – was the first rector of this institution. He performed this function in the difficult post-war years of 1945–1949. He organised, together with a group of his associates, a higher education facility in a city that had never had this kind of scientific research and didactic institution. They acted in a period when the traumas of occupation and war were still alive, in a time difficult not only due to political and social issues, but also because people suffered from the lack of basic elements necessary for everyday existence.

Despite all this, the University functioned more and more efficiently and among the many newly created study courses you could find philosophy, resurrected, you could say, after the war hiatus. Professor Kotarbiński assembled around him a rather numerous group of scholars, survivors from the ravages of war, and started to present the ideas which were formulated and developed – to a great extent thanks to him – at Polish universities, especially the University of Warsaw, where he taught in the years 1919–1939. He proved himself to be an outstanding lecturer. He gathered a big circle of students, among whom you can find names known not only in Poland.

Professor Kotarbiński not only belonged to a community of scholars but he also cofounded it. It was a community which took place in the books on the history of philosophy as the Lvov–Warsaw School. In that school – started by Kazimierz Twardowski in Lvov and famous for names like Stanisław Leśniewski, Jan Łukasiewicz, Alfred Tarski or Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz – Tadeusz Kotarbiński played a distinctive role. While those mentioned concentrated in their research mostly on formal logic, he put special emphasis on teaching logic together with the theory of language (semantics) and methodology of science – due to the character and scope of his interest as a philosopher.

What did Kotarbiński have in mind when he thought philosophy? “Philosophy is to be understood”, we can read in one of his most important works, “as investigation of things about which science has not – so far or fundamentally – expressed its opinion, and things about which a sapient man wants to have some reasonable ideas that could be tied together into a uniform opinion about the world”.¹ It is then, generally speaking, a system of convictions characterised by a global approach to reality, complemented by the still discussed issue of recommendations regarding moral acts.

What we are dealing with here is a general declaration showing the basis of a system of ideas and convictions which are of fundamental importance to a person willing to live their lives in accordance with reason and dignity. In their contents, those ideas and convictions clearly go beyond what was considered to be the procedures and results of actions that were supposed to show the way to science, understood in the way that became so popular when the author of the mentioned piece developed his views as a philosopher.

As a result, the question of the mutual relationship between philosophy and science deserves a special highlight because of the idea that was more and more widespread in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, an idea which claimed that with the advancement of science, especially the natural sciences, matters which were traditionally considered to be philosophical were being reduced or, in a more extreme case, eliminated completely. Such ideas were presented by supporters of the school of thought commonly called positivism, popular in Western Europe. The strongest formulations of that opinion came from the representatives of the Vienna Circle.

Tadeusz Kotarbiński was of a different opinion. The longevity of ideas historically proposed by philosophers suggests that a person cannot give up looking for answers to which science provides no answers. They are also aware that the historical record that a modern person has access to is characterised by a multitude of viewpoints and ideas bearing witness to how limited their knowledge is about the world and about themselves. That record includes some beliefs about reality which today raise doubts, beliefs which were considered true by thinkers of the past but which today are plainly false yet are still presented as true to the public in the language of philosophical discourse. A good example of such attempts is the spread of religious ideas in the form of philosophical discourse.

A task presented to a representative for philosophy, which did go beyond the scientific horizon, but tried to be completely consistent with it – and such was the programme of the school that Kotarbiński was a member of – was all about conducting a critical analysis of those philosophical formulas. That critical

¹ KOTARBIŃSKI [1961].

analysis was to be a procedure which could realise the call for an analytical deconstruction of the language of such philosophical discourse and which could result in uncovering the meaning hidden under “heaps of rubble” which had piled up throughout centuries of philosophical investigations.²

In contrast to natural scientists, philosophers do not have at their disposal the instruments that allow them to penetrate the subject of their investigation through, e.g. experimental procedures. They can only observe reality and express the results of those observations in language. Language constitutes the only instrument through which a philosopher can mediate the results of that analysis of reality. That is why it is so important to see how it functions in philosophical discourse.

Thus far, however, language as an isolated area of research had not been of special interest to many – which one can easily see when having a closer look at the history of philosophy. In modern philosophical thought that situation has changed drastically. There were two reasons for that shift of focus towards language among scholars in modern times, it seems: first of all, it was due to the dissatisfaction with its previous forms of expression in philosophy as shown by its lack of precision in formulating claims, its ambiguities and even formulating ideas which, on closer inspection, were nonsensical. The second reason was connected with the increasing scepticism created by the advancement of applied methods in natural sciences regarding the possibility of ever reaching in a cognitive act any extrasensory reality, reaching an ontological system existing independently in a form beyond an act of sensory perception.

Tadeusz Kotarbiński did not share the views of those radical sceptics. He was of the opinion that a cognitive act should not be limited to perception of phenomena, and that the claim suggesting that nothing exists beyond them is unwarranted. He was convinced that a cognitive act refers to real entities, actually existing beyond human awareness. Moreover, he believed that those entities are indeed individual corporeal objects which included human existences.

For that reason, he declared an ontological position he called reism, concretism or somatism.³ By rejecting the existence of individual immaterial entities – as often happened in the case of earlier thinkers – he presented himself as a materialist. That radically concretistic and materialistic ontology was – as he himself admits – a result of his reflection on language as a tool for describing experiences. It turned out that, when closely scrutinised, not only common ways of talking but the whole of language is a deceptive tool for describing reality. For example, general expressions used in sentences suggest that their meaning refers to entities characterised by that generality.

² See KOTARBIŃSKI [1958], paper: “Kultura filozoficzna”.

³ See KOTARBIŃSKI [1958], paper: “O postawie reistycznej, czyli konkrety stycznej”.

Such a position was, as we know, presented by Plato. Hence, the idea that apart from individual objects there exist general entities (universals) is called Platonism. What's more, a common way of talking may suggest that states of things, changes and relations exist independently of individual objects. For example, the phrase "extensibility characterises all bodies" suggests that this extensibility can exist as an entity independent of those bodies.

It may be worth mentioning that this radical "concretistic" approach of Kotarbiński came under attack especially from mathematicians. With time, he decided not to defend it to the letter claiming the he would keep it just as a programme.⁴ When it comes to the semantic sphere of his idea, regarding the way we should speak about the results of cognitive acts with any sense, he remained true to his beliefs.

Another area of philosophical investigation of Professor Kotarbiński was ethics. His considerations about such an important – and still present in his biography – reflection about good and evil started very early in his life and he considered them to be the most important part of the system of beliefs he was developing.⁵ We say that because we are dealing here with a sketch of a system and those who treat reism, the ethics of a reliable guardian, and praxeology as not connected in any way are simply wrong.

The core of Kotarbiński's system is the human being. Human beings are thinking and active, which means that they learn about the world and, at the same time, through their rational actions shape the area they inhabit as social beings. These are the forms of socialisation historically shaped by them and forms of spiritual culture associated with them. To act in such a way, you need not only the knowledge about the object of such actions but also a system of values which will not only guide them but also create a special kind of relationship between agents.

That action, taken consciously on the basis of the known state of things and intended goals, has two basic forms. The first form is a system of values which a human being acquires in the process of historic self-education, while the other is connected with purely practical actions in a technical sense. It's about actions whose result is to form the surroundings in such a way that they take the best shape for meeting people's basic needs. This area of human activity is a separate subject of interest for the Philosopher and takes the form of a theoretical concept about human actions which he called praxeology.

When it comes to ethics, Tadeusz Kotarbiński opposes both the traditionalists, who refer to transcendental ideas for moral guidance, and the proponents of

⁴ See KOTARBIŃSKI [1961], and his "Fazy rozwojowe konkretyzmu".

⁵ See MAŁACHOWSKI [1972], p. 4.

more modern ideas, who support radical naturalism rooted in Darwinism. Since the very beginning of his creative career, Kotarbiński critically deconstructed the ethical ideas of Spencer and Mill. He also thought that eudemonism suggested by some ancient philosophers was unacceptable. The professor preferred the ethics of the Gospel, with its idea of goodness and sacrifice.⁶ The main goal there is to help a fellow creature in need and not to seek your own individual happiness. A person willing to live with dignity should be characterised by prudence, intellectual maturity, which makes it possible to learn the true state of things in relationships between people. They should be characterised by courage in situations when it is necessary to defend anyone in danger of suffering or being harmed; they are obliged to keep their word and be able to act in critical situations against their interest. It is a kind of ethics, then, which demands that one's beliefs are followed by their corresponding actions.

The author of that moral programme believed that humans, as rational beings, are able to distinguish between good and evil without needing to refer to any commands or suggestions allegedly coming from outside the domain of experience. In that sense, we are dealing here with a system of ethics independent of those commands or suggestions, one in which a human is their own lawmaker. The moral system thusly understood cannot be threatened by any loss of faith in the transcendental.

The rational approach to the question of morality brings to mind a sort of minimalism, best presented in the famous formula of reliable guardianship.⁷ The superior virtue here is not the happiness of an individual but helping any fellow being threatened by suffering or harm. Kotarbiński – a realist and a proponent of prudence and moderation – considered the maximalistic programmes of universal happiness of humankind as utopian phantasies.

Another early interest of Professor Kotarbiński was the question of practical actions of a person trying to achieve a desired result. He published a comprehensive treatise *Szkice praktyczne (Practical drafts)* as early as in 1913. He came back to this topic many times, but it wasn't until after World War II that he made the effort to present in detail the issues of the so-called praxeology. It is worth noting that *Traktat o dobrej robocie (A Treatise on Good Work)*, the work devoted to the topic, published in 1955 under the aegis of Łódzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, was created for the most part during the time its author was the rector of our University.

It is difficult to present here in much detail the ideas described in the treatise. Broadly speaking, the author wanted to develop a general theory of action because he believed that the practical activity of a thinking being is an important

⁶ See KOTARBIŃSKI [1957] and the paper “O tak zwanej miłości bliźniego”.

⁷ See WOLEŃSKI [1990], p. 137.

element of human existence. In this regard, praxeology must be recognised as an important element of the construct of the systemic philosophy of man that Kotarbiński created.

Thus, a separate scientific discipline was founded, one that laid the foundations for any analyses of human practical activities. The publication of the mentioned *Treatise* inspired the work of scholars who found the ideas presented there appealing. Scientific research facilities were created together with a scientific society, bringing together scholars interested in praxeology. It also gave a theoretical basis to the thriving research on the organisation of work, collaboration and the cooperation of multidisciplinary production groups.

That is the shortest possible summary of the philosophical ideas of Tadeusz Kotarbiński. His image, however, would be incomplete if we said nothing about his educational work.

Kotarbiński began teaching in 1912 in the Mikołaj Rej High School in Warsaw, where he taught Latin and Greek. From 1919 until the beginning of the World War II he taught logic and methodology of science to students of University of Warsaw. He continued his educational work throughout the time of occupation and after the war until he retired. His almost 25-year-long educational career bore fruit in the form of numerous groups of students, many of whom were later recognised as excellent philosophers. His educational excellence is proven by the fact that his students published out of gratitude no fewer than three commemorative books devoted to his work.

An important complement of Professor Kotarbiński's educational work was numerous publications on teaching philosophy, didactics and course books. Undoubtedly the most important among them was a comprehensive study on the theory of cognition, logic and methodology of science called *Elements*. This work was treated by its author as an instrument of didactics, just a course book, but the ideas and concepts presented there, as well as its public reception and the number of languages it has been translated into, suggest that it's more than that. *Elements of the Theory of Cognition, Formal Logic and Methodology of Science* is undoubtedly Kotarbiński's *opus magnum*, a treatise presenting the important contents of his philosophical ideas.

This work, published for the first time in 1927, is complemented by, among lesser treatises on didactics, *Lectures from the history of Logic*. That book, published in 1957, comprised lectures for philosophy students at the University of Warsaw that Kotarbiński gave in the years 1952–1957. Anyone who studied law at the University of Łódź in the post-war years, as well as later philosophy students, should remember *A course of logic for lawyers*. It goes without saying that those didactic publications are characterised by accessibility, clarity and richness of information about the subject they refer to.

At the end, let us try and answer the question of who Tadeusz Kotarbiński was as a teacher and a person whom not many of those still alive had the chance to meet. He treated his educational work as his civic duty, consisting in not only educational competence, reliability and clarity of thought, but also in developing in his students the characteristics and virtues he encapsulated in his idea of a man – honest, open to others, righteous and helpful in difficult situations. In his life he realised the ethos of the reliable guardian. I say that with deep conviction because I myself experienced not only his kindness, but also his help in situations that were difficult for me.

When it comes to social issues, he was a moderate realist. He distanced himself from the utopian visions and phantasies of the supporters of radical social revolution. He believed that through honest and just work, cooperation between people able to put a common good over their individual interests, one could build a social order in which the previous aches and pains of everyday life could be significantly reduced.

In the pre-war times he was critical of the social and political relations. He especially actively opposed the process of limiting freedom in the system of education, the clericalisation of the public sphere and the nationalist group running rampant in higher education facilities. After the war he actively joined the process of rebuilding the country by defending the freedom of expression and the freedom of discussion about social and political issues, which he voiced in articles printed in the press.

Kotarbiński was worried about the ongoing process of imposing the official doctrine on society, which was, as a result becoming trivialised and intellectually degraded. He was treated rather agreeably by the political powers, especially in the period of relative liberalism of the first years after the war. It might be the reason why he was given the opportunity to take the position of the rector of University of Łódź.

The situation worsened after 1948. From that time he was treated stiffly; critical remarks about his philosophical views were raised and his educational work was limited to just teaching logic.

The relative liberalisation of the social and political life that took place after the events of 1956 gave hope for a relaxation of civic liberties. It could be the reason why Kotarbiński was allowed to take the position of the president of the Polish Academy of Sciences which he held in the years 1957–1963.

The illusions did not last long, however. The ongoing curtailment of intellectual liberties encouraged active defiance against the policy of the party. And so Tadeusz Kotarbiński soon joined protestive actions undertaken by the intellectual opposition. He took part in discussions organised by a group of activists of Krzywe Koło, signed the famous “Letter of the 34”, and participated in political

processes as a protester against tendentious accusations. He strongly condemned the government for suppressing intellectual liberty in 1968 and especially the anti-Semitic background tone of its aggressive propaganda. He resigned from presiding over the committee of the editorial staff of the Classics of Philosophy in protest against the firing of Irena Krońska, an honoured editor of that publishing house. During one of the sessions of the Philosophy Committee he strongly condemned the expellment of scholars and students due to political and ethnic reasons.

Professor Kotarbiński as a thinker and a propagator of his views, especially those regarding social issues, world view and politics, had many friends and supporters. But he also had enemies. It was true for the time between the wars, the time of occupation as well as the post-war era. It was during the occupation that his life was threatened, not only by the occupiers. It is not a coincidence that his long educational work did not grant him a commemorative place on the columns of the new library of University of Warsaw.

Despite attempts to depreciate Tadeusz Kotarbiński's scientific and educational legacy – some of which are made even nowadays – we can be truly proud of our first Rector. Let us not allow such an exquisite scientific legacy and such a high moral authority to be ever forgotten.

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CHAPTER II

Knowing

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ABSTRACT OBJECTS: SPECIES, KINDS, CONCEPTS

Abstract. In the paper I present Kotarbiński's approach to abstract objects and show some mistakes in his investigations. By formal ontology I try to explain Kotarbiński's view and proffer a new solution, a formal solution that is – I hope – in the spirit of Lvov–Warsaw (Lwów–Warsaw) School.

Keywords. Abstract objects, general objects, universals, existence, properties, Kotarbiński's ontology, formal ontology.

1. Philosophical characteristics of general objects

In ontology we study real things as well as ideal, abstract, or general ones. Ingarden distinguished in his existential ontology the following types of objects: 1) ideal (or Platonic ideal entities), 2) absolute being (God), 3) purely intentional objects (like works of art), and 4) objects of the real world like substances (Socrates), processes (100-metre sprint), or events (birthday of Plato). Here, we are only interested – according to Ingarden's terms – in ideal (general) objects. In this case we think usually about mathematical objects (triangle, number), about ideal entities (beauty, justice), and also about species and/or genera (a man, an animal), or concepts (like the concept of man, the concept of the ether, the concept of natural sciences). In turn, Meinong distinguished so-called complete and incomplete objects.¹ The first are objects, such that for every property P they either have P or non- P (where non- P is a property called the complement of P ; for example: if P is whiteness, then non-whiteness (non- P) is the complement of whiteness). Incomplete objects, by contrast, are objects such that for some P they neither have P nor non- P . Incomplete objects are counterparts of Platonic forms, ideal objects, or general ones, and these we are interested in. On the whole, these kinds of objects are characterized as existing (or subsisting – according to Russell) out of time and space. They are called eternal objects by Whitehead and interpreted as Platonic beings, which are unchangeable, and independent of our cognition.

¹ See MEINONG [1915], § 25.

As we know, Kotarbiński rejected the Platonic approach to ideal (or general) objects. The class of objects rejected by him was rather wide and rich. He threw off such objects as species, genera, properties, state of affairs, or sets (in the mathematical sense). He was, simply, a nominalist. In his *The problem of the existence of ideal objects* (comp. KOTARBIŃSKI [1920]) he criticized the existence of universals. Kotarbiński started from the following definition of universal: An object *Go* will be a general object on the ground of object *O*, that possesses only collective (or common) properties for objects *O*.² Based on this definition, Kotarbiński proved that the definition leads to contradiction. Namely, let *p* be a peculiar property of an object *O'*; that means that for any other object *O''*, such that $O'' \neq O'$, *p* is not a property of *O''*; this kind of *p* has to exist, because otherwise two or more objects *O* would be identical; but on the ground of the principle of excluded middle, *Go* has *p* or the negation of *p* (i.e. $\neg p$); next, if *Go* has *p* then *Go* has a property peculiar to *O'* and not to *O''*, so *Go* does not possess common properties to *O*; in the same way, if *Go* has $\neg p$, then *Go* has a property that is not a property of *O'* and *Go* does not possess common properties of *O*. Thus, it is a contradiction.

This means – according to Kotarbiński's dictum – that the concept of a general object cited by him is a contradictory one.

2. Criticism of Kotarbiński's approach from Ingarden and Ajdukiewicz

Kotarbiński's paper was a continuation of the controversy on the existence of universals, begun by Łukasiewicz in 1906 when the latter published his *Analysis*.³ Kotarbiński's standpoint was then criticised, for example, by Ajdukiewicz and Ingarden. As far as the details of this criticism are concerned, we propose referring to the original papers.⁴

Let us remark, however, that both Ingarden and Ajdukiewicz did not accept – and what's more, they rejected – Kotarbiński's reistic attitude. Ajdukiewicz, in his review of *Elements*, criticised reism in its ontological version and the concept of the reduction of different ontological categories to the category of things.⁵ He accepted only the so called reism in its semantic version as a method of eliminating utterances with onomatoids, i.e. with apparent names.⁶ In turn,

² See KOTARBIŃSKI [1920], reprint [in:] Wybór pism, t. II; Selection of Papers, vol. II, p. 13.

³ Comp. ŁUKASIEWICZ [1906].

⁴ Comp. INGARDEN [1923] and AJDUKIEWICZ [1930].

⁵ Comp. AJDUKIEWICZ [1930].

⁶ For example, the sentence: Wisdom is a property of some human beings (with two apparent names *wisdom* and *property*) can be replaced by: Some human beings are wise.

Ingarden (in reply to KOTARBIŃSKI [1920]⁷) reprimanded Kotarbiński for using ambiguous terms and, in consequence, ambiguous definitions and theorems to explain the reistic approach. For example, Ingarden rejected the definition of an ideal object as only an “object of our mind”, as well as the reistic understanding of mathematical abstract objects or the definition of general objects as in point 1 above.

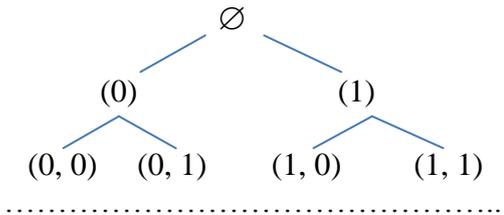
One can conclude that Kotarbiński’s ideas were misbegotten. But, on the other hand, the decided response from the Polish philosophical academic world shows that the problems touched upon were the main ones; and theses concerning general or ideal objects, properties or species were not clearly formulated at this time. For the most part, criticism from other philosophers was a consequence of a radical formulation of reism. Kotarbiński’s “Ockham razor” was later called by Janina Kotarbińska “Kotarbiński’s besom”.

In what follows, I will approach Kotarbiński’s considerations using some tools of formal ontology and the exact concepts proposed by this field of philosophy.

3. On some representation of general objects and individuals

I will present a formal approach to general or ideal objects, to their structure, and to individuals. Terms, concepts, and definitions are introduced in KACZMAREK [2008a], and KACZMAREK [2008b].

Let us recall the so called binary tree defined in mathematics. So, if X is a set and \leq is a reflexive, antisymmetric, and transitive relation, then $\langle X, \leq \rangle$ is to be called a partially ordered set. If $\langle X, \leq \rangle$ is partially ordered and for any $x \in X$ the set $O(x) = \{y: y \in X \ \& \ y \leq x\}$ is a chain, then $\langle X, \leq \rangle$ is a pseudo-tree. If, additionally, any set $O(x)$ is a well-founded set (i.e. every nonempty subset of $O(x)$ has a minimal element), then the pseudo-tree $\langle X, \leq \rangle$ is called a tree. The set of all functions a_i from $\{0, 1, \dots, n\}$ to $\{0, 1\}$, for $n \in \omega$ (the set of natural numbers), with relation of inclusion \subseteq is an example of a tree and is called a *total binary tree* (shortly: *TBT*). The set \emptyset is a minimal object referred to as a *root* of the tree. We can represent a fragment of this tree by the following picture.



⁷ See INGARDEN [1923].

Precisely, for example the object $(0, 1)$ is a function a such that $a(0) = 0$, $a(1) = 1$ i.e. the set $\{<0, 0>, <1, 1>\}$.

Now, we employ the total binary tree to define formally the set of well-known beings, namely the set of *species* and *genera* called a *Porphyrian tree*.

Let T be a countable (and infinite) set and T' its infinite subset. Let us define a set PT of all functions $e: T' \rightarrow \{0, \frac{1}{2}, 1\}$ such that $e(t) \in \{0, 1\}$ for $t \in \{t_1, \dots, t_n\}$, where $\{t_1, \dots, t_n\}$ is a subset of T' , $n = 0, 1, 2, \dots$, and $e(t) = \frac{1}{2}$ for $t \in T' - \{t_0, t_1, \dots, t_n\}$, and let \leq be a relation fulfilling a condition: $e \leq e'$ iff $e_1 \subseteq_{01} e'$, where \subseteq_{01} refers to inclusion on the sets of these pairs $\langle t, k \rangle$ of e and e' for which $k = 0$ or $k = 1$. It is a fact that $\langle PT, \leq \rangle$ is a tree. Moreover, $\langle PT, \leq \rangle$ is isomorphic with the binary tree (defined on a set of natural numbers). A counterpart of \emptyset in PT is the function $e: T' \rightarrow \{\frac{1}{2}\}$. We can call this tree, by analogy, a *total Porphyrian tree*. Why?

Example 1. The set T we interpret as a set of properties, each function e as a general object or an idea that has its content. Namely, let t_1, t_2, t_3, t_4 , represent properties “is material”, “is organic”, “is sensual”, “is rational”. If we now look into a function $e': T' \rightarrow \{0, \frac{1}{2}, 1\}$, such that $e'(\{t_1, t_2, t_3, t_4\}) = 1$ and $e'(t) = \frac{1}{2}$ for $t \in T' - \{t_1, \dots, t_4\}$, then we will interpret the function e' as the idea of a man (human being), because any human being is a material, organic, sensual and rational substance.

Now we will take some finite subset PT_{FIN} of PT . Let $\emptyset \neq PT_{FIN} \subseteq PT$ and PT_{FIN} be a set fulfilling the following conditions:

- (1) there exists $e \in PT_{FIN}$ such that for any $e' \in PT_{FIN} : e \leq e'$,
- (2) for any $e' \in PT_{FIN}$: if there exists e'' such that $e'' \neq e'$ and $e' \leq e''$, then there exists $e''' \in PT_{FIN}$ such that: (a) $e''' \neq e''$, (b) $e''' \neq e'$, (c) $\sim(e'' \leq e''' \text{ or } e''' \leq e'')$ and (d) $e' \leq e'''$. Then it is easy to prove that $\langle PT_{FIN}, \leq \rangle$ is a tree.

We have to explain that Condition (1) forces one root, and also Condition (2) that after any object e (in the sense of relation \leq) there exist $0, 2, \dots, n$ elements (but not 1), for $n \in \omega$. The structure $\langle PT_{FIN}, \leq \rangle$ is parallel with the structure of genera and species that is due to philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Porphyry and others. Thus, the relation \leq may be called *over* and its converse *under*. In this way, the concept that one species (e.g. a man) is *under* another (e.g. an animal) may be grasped.

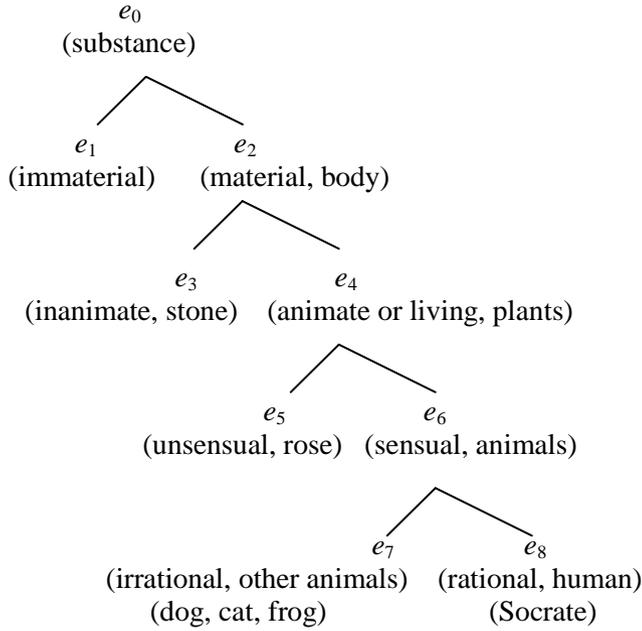


Figure. Classical Porphyrian tree. According to **Example 1** e_2 and e_8 are functions $T' \rightarrow \{0, \frac{1}{2}, 1\}$ and $e_2(t_1) = 1$, $e_2(T' - \{t_1\}) = \frac{1}{2}$, $e_8(\{t_1, t_2, t_3, t_4\}) = 1$ and $e_8(T' - \{t_1, \dots, t_4\}) = \frac{1}{2}$.

Let us now define that the structure $\langle PT_{FIN}, \leq \rangle$ is a simplified Porphyrian tree structure, shortly: *PTS*. An element e from PT_{FIN} is to be called an incomplete object (in Meinongian terms). If $e(t) = 1$ or $e(t) = 0$, feature t is an *essential positive* or *negative* feature, respectively. Next, if $e(t) = \frac{1}{2}$, then t is an *accidental or unspecified* feature. Of course, it is necessary to point out that we do not treat these properties (features) as the properties of incomplete objects (of genera or species). They are properties of complete objects (individuals) generated by the first, and following Ingarden’s ontology we accept that these properties belong to the content of an idea and are not the idea’s properties. They construct the content of the idea and are properties of what exemplifies the given idea.

If $e \in PTS$ and for any $e' \neq e$: $\neg(e' \text{ under } e)$, then we can call e *natural species* in *PTS*. If *NS* is a set of all natural species of *PTS* and $G = PTS - NS$, then elements of G are to be called *proper genera* of *PTS*. Of course, any two species of *PTS* are incomparable with regard to *under*. It means that for any two species e' and e'' : $\neg(e' \text{ under } e'')$ and $\neg(e'' \text{ under } e')$.

In the light of these definitions we can propose formal definition of complete objects. Namely, let $e \in NS$, D_e be a domain of e and U_e be a set of all functions

o from D_e into $\{0, 1\}$ such that $e \subseteq_{01} o$. Then any function $o \in U_e$ is called a complete object generated by species e . Next, a set $U_{PTS} = \bigcup_e U_e$, for any $e \in NS$, is an universe (or domain) of PTS .

Remark. It is evident that a set of complete objects generated by e can be interpreted as a set of individuals (like Socrates, Plato, Thomas) with the same essence (species). Evidently, Socrates has positive and/or negative properties fixed in the species as positive and/or negative, respectively, but additionally, all accidental properties from the content of the species (with value $\frac{1}{2}$) are positive and/or negative (i.e. with a value of 1 or 0) in the case of the individual – Socrates. For example, in the so called intended interpretation, the property “is healthy” has value $\frac{1}{2}$ in species “a man” but value 1 in individual Socrates (being healthy is a positive accidental property of Socrates at a given time).

4. Kotarbiński’s argument in formal ontology

Formal ontology, in my opinion, has an advantage over ontology that is inscribed in natural language. It allows us to construct rigorous definitions and arguments that are used in considering ontological problems. Above we gave Kotarbiński’s proof for the thesis that the notion of a general object is contradictory. The reasons for the thesis can be different.⁸ Still, I want to propose an exact (and formal) definition of a general object and recreate Kotarbiński’s line of reasoning wherein he speaks about an object possessing a property and uses the principle of excluded middle.

4.1. Let us assume that any object e is a general one if and only if e is an element of PTS (in line with what was proposed in point 3). In a part of his argument, Kotarbiński posits that any general object Go has a property p or negation $\neg p$. If so, in the proposed formalism we can say:

(i) For any object e from PTS and any property t : $e(t) = 1$ or $e(t) = 0$.

We interpret Kotarbiński’s claim hoping that it is an appropriate interpretation. If so, it is easy to prove that Condition (i) is not true in PTS structures because we have the following true sentence:

(ii) For any e there are exist a property t such that: $e(t) = \frac{1}{2}$,

⁸ Compare criticism of Kotarbiński’s attitude given in AJDUKIEWICZ [1930] or INGARDEN [1923].

Thus the sentence:

(iii) $e(t) = 1$ or $e(t) = 0$

is not true.

Of course the following sentence is true:

(iv) For any object e and any property t : $e(t) = 1$ or $\neg(e(t) = 1)$,

because, as we fixed in PTS structures:

(v) For any e and t : $e(t) = 1$ or $e(t) = 0$ or $e(t) = \frac{1}{2}$.

But from Kotarbiński's paper⁹ we conclude that he did not think about the formulation of (iv). A problem we touch on here concerns a controversial question: how to understand a connective of negation (the so called *de dicto* and *de re*) and an application of the principle of excluded middle. I think that Kotarbiński had in mind Condition (i). This means that his argument is misguided. In the class of PTS, the principle of excluded middle does not work.

4.2. In a similar way I criticise Kotarbiński's view according to which he ascribed any property to an object. For example, in his second proof against general objects, he claims that if an universal has a property "being a general," then it is a common property for all things exemplified by the universal. Thus – according to Kotarbiński – each thing exemplified by an universal is also general and, in consequence, exemplified things and universals are identical. I am opposed to this view.

According to the formal ontology given above (point 3),¹⁰ with each class of objects there is bound some class of properties that are owned by the objects. For example, a number can be even or odd but it cannot be healthy or not. In turn, Socrates can be healthy but neither even nor odd. Similarly, ideas have properties different from individuals exemplifying those ideas. In our formal ontology we can show for example that the idea of a human being (like other species) is not "more general" than another. Formally:

(vi) If e is a species, then for any object e' from PTS: $\neg(e' \text{ under } e)$.

This kind of property (or its negation) has no other object exemplifying the general object (idea) e .

⁹ Compare KOTARBIŃSKI [1920].

¹⁰ For details see KACZMAREK [2008a], pp. 121–129.

5. Conclusions

My opinion of Kotarbiński's work in the area of ontology and semiotics is this. His work is an example of proper and multisided investigations despite different criticisms. In the present paper I pointed out some gaps in Kotarbiński's ontological proposal evident from a formal ontology point of view. This criticism, of course, would not be possible without readable definitions and argumentations that were pioneered or excerpted by Kotarbiński. One can have ontological objections to these formulations, but in any case we can appreciate the Author's attitude.

As we know, logical and formal tools were just being developed in the 1910s and 1920s. An old problem of general objects or universals was entertained by numerous logicians (e.g. Leśniewski, Łukasiewicz, Ajdukiewicz and Kotarbiński) in this new logical form with the hope of finally elaborating it. Łukasiewicz's analysis of general objects and Meinongian incomplete objects probably resulted in the construction (discovery) of many-valued logics,¹¹ Leśniewski's works on the connective "is" led us to the so called Leśniewski's Ontology,¹² and Kotarbiński's reism initiated the ontological and semiotic question: how much can we cut out with Kotarbiński's besom or Ockham's razor? Kotarbiński's ontological attitude, also by its radicalism, is therefore a trampoline for following logically oriented ontological investigations.

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¹¹ See: ŁUKASIEWICZ [1910] 2nd ed. pp. 112–123, Chapter XVIII.

¹² See: LEŚNIEWSKI [1930].

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PERCEIVING AND KNOWING AS ACTIVITIES

Abstract. According to the tradition of most empiricists, perception is the basis for all our knowledge (at least of the world). The tradition also assumes that perception by humans is a passive activity resulting in some static states pertaining perception and belief, which are then, in some versions, modified by the mind before being passed onto memory and knowledge. Following the work of J. J. Gibson, we argue that perceiving involves many activities and actions. This is true of both visual as well as olfactory-taste perception. The main moral of this paper is that perceiving and knowing are best thought of not as involving static states, but rather as ongoing temporal activities involving change. This presumably means giving up a frozen ontology of states and moving towards something like a dynamic ontology as a basis.

Keywords. Activity, action, knowing, knowledge, perceiving, perception, dynamic ontology.

Introduction

First, a note: The title uses “activities” rather than “action”, since “action” in its most usual philosophical use entails intentional behavior.

According to the tradition of most empiricists, perception is the basis for all our knowledge (at least of the external world). The tradition also assumes that perception by humans is a passive activity resulting in some static perceptual or belief states that then, on some versions, the mind modifies before passing the content onto memory and knowledge.

Following the work of J. J. Gibson, we argue that perceiving involves many activities and actions. This is true both of visual and of olfactory-taste perception.

More unusually, we also argue that knowing is an activity, again in many ways. (This follows a line of argument used by John Dewey, the American Pragmatist). Clearly, coming to know something (learning) involves many

activities. Moreover, knowing itself is not just a static state or memory engram. Knowing is being able to draw inferences, solve problems and demonstrate the knowledge. Moreover, memory recall itself is most often a constructive activity (sometimes quite fanciful as in confabulation).

So the main moral in this paper is that perceiving and knowing are best thought about not as relations involving static states, but rather as ongoing temporal activities involving changes.

This presumably means giving up an ontology of static states and moving towards something like a dynamic ontology as basic.

1. Perceiving

We discuss three broad ways in which activity is involved in perception, using examples from visual and taste perception for each. We then discuss how the involvement of activity suggests that a dynamic picture of perception is more appropriate than static one. This dynamic theory derives in large part from the work of the psychologist J. J. Gibson (1904–1979). In emphasizing this active nature we do not mean to imply that all perception is perception for action. We enjoy as much as anybody reclining on a beach at sunset, sipping dark rum and lime juice while visually basking in the beauty of the moment. What we do wish to emphasize is that before Gibson, most if not all, work in perception dealt with object recognition which implies that only objects and their properties are important. This is probably a hangover from a substantialist ontological prejudice and it is this general position we wish to combat and argue against.

1.1. Activity structures perception (telos)

One of J. J. Gibson's (and the pragmatists that preceded him) key insights was that much of perception is preparation for action. Or in a slogan: Perceiving for a purpose (goal directed perception). Now this "for action" could mean many different things, and has meant many different things for different thinkers. So before getting to our examples, we will take a brief detour to discuss some of the things philosophers have meant by it. We will briefly touch on some of the controversies, abstaining from taking a position on these debates for the time being.

The least controversial version of the claim is probably this: a perceptual system's adaptive success – the reason it was naturally selected – is linked to how successfully it guided an organism's behavior in the environment in which an organism evolved. This is compatible with many diverse theories of perception. It is an informative claim to the extent that some philosophers, and,

once upon a time, some psychologists, were inclined to treat perception in more intellectual and theoretical terms, rather than as a practical ability. That is, perception was taken to be a way of knowing (propositionally) about worldly objects and properties and their relationships to each other. The history of the philosophy of perception is tightly wound with the histories of epistemology and ontology. Both a cause and a consequence has been a sort of dualist assumption about the relationship between the mind and the world. The passive mind *receives* inputs *from* the world. The mind then transforms these inputs to greater or lesser degrees (depending on which philosopher you're asking) producing the mental representations of the world we have in perception (this position is often called "Constructivism"). The interface between the mind and the visual world is the eye, or more specifically, the retina. The world as projected onto the retina is not the world we perceive. So it's generally thought that the mind fills in the gaps, drawing a boundary between the world as we perceive it and the world as it really is, thus creating an epistemological puzzle about how perception can give us knowledge of the external world (if indeed it does). On this picture, the retina is like a camera film and the mind a sort of screen editor that interprets and adjusts shapes and colors of the film from the retina, and the resulting image constitutes the mind's access to the world.

The fairly uncontroversial insight that served to reorient our thinking about perception is that often perception is for action in that ultimately we perceive what and how we do because this helps us survive and reproduce in the environments in which our species evolved. The epistemological question: "is the world we perceive the way the world really is?" or, in other words, "what is the direct object of perception?" can come apart from the independently interesting metaphysical and empirical question: "what are the senses and perception good for – what do they do? How do they help creatures like this to survive in an environment like that?" or "the creature is surviving, so what's it doing such that the way it perceives is working so well for it?" Starting with the second question has led many psychologists and philosophers to better appreciate the importance of the organism's activity (the "enactive" component), of its body (the embodied component), and of its environment (the embedded component) to understanding perception and cognition both in human and non-human animals.¹

¹ While these questions are conceptually distinct, many philosophers (and psychologists for that matter) still take them together, and they can certainly constrain one another (the epistemology of perception should respect the best science, but the plausibility of some of the theoretical assumptions or consequences of the science of perception depends on how sound they turn out to be in the realm of epistemology), Gibson, as well as many if not most of his followers, was a direct-realist, and this was an explicit part of his program. But as we explain, it's possible to be an indirect realist or even a transcendental idealist and take on board much of the enactive, embodied, embedded program.

It should be noted that this fairly uncontroversial insight is compatible even with representationalism, which Gibson, who denied representations, and many contemporary neo-Gibsonians and similar embodied, embedded, enactive, and extended views, would consider in opposition with his program.² It's compatible insofar as biological function, which is understood essentially as we have defined the uncontroversial version of the claim that perception is for action above, plays a constitutive role in a number of representational accounts (e.g. Dretske, Papineau, Millikan, & O'Shea).³

One place controversy turns up is in the implications of perception being for action. For instance, a representationist might argue that all we perceive are properties, but the properties we represent are represented because of their biological usefulness for action. It would thus be open to one to maintain the dualism between mind and world. Perception is for action, but the information perception delivers to guide action is impoverished and requires interpolation by mental processes. Alternatively, a Gibsonian might argue that perception (perceptual content, where this need not imply representations) is much thicker. That in perception already – not just when cognition has come into play – we are presented immediately with practically relevant information, such as the functional significance of things in the environment and the opportunities for behavior that they allow, or what Gibson termed “affordances.” Perception needs to tell us what's dangerous, what's food, what's a mate, where one might hide, etc. and there may be resources in an organism's environment (including other organisms) that directly inform the organism of these facts.

Even if one does not go in for the direct perception of affordances, taking seriously the idea that perception is for action introduces some constraints on one's theory of perception. For instance, if we perceive so that we may react to a predator, then perception had better be fast enough for the organism, typically, to avoid being killed. So, inefficient, time consuming processing cannot be what's involved in initiating action to avoid a predator or other impending danger, as demonstrated by time to collision experiments where various species of animals demonstrated avoidance behavior when faced with an apparently impending impact from an approaching object.⁴ There cannot, for instance, be something like a deliberative, practical inference taking place (that's not to say there may not be something very fast and inference-like occurring, but it must be able to work very quickly), because cognitive processing would seemingly take

² For review and defense of embodied, embedded, enactive and extended views, see WARD and STAPLETON [2012].

³ See e.g. DRETSKE [1995] and [1988], PAPINEAU [1984], [1987] and [1993], MILLIKAN [1984], [1989a] and [1989 b] and O'SHEA [2013].

⁴ SCHIFF [1965].

too much time. Further, the visual systems in simple creatures are capable of using this information – of moving directly from the perception of the world to an appropriate activity with respect to it – but it is doubtful that they are performing inferences. Similarly, it cannot be that in order to perceive a predator or danger, or to perceive something as dangerous, e.g. infants and the visual cliff, and Schiff collision avoidance experiments⁵, one must first have some higher-level conceptual understanding of what a predator is, since presumably infants, sheep and bunnies, for instance, lack such concepts, but are able to dodge predators when the need arrives, presumably on the basis of their perceiving them. Where perceptual systems can quickly, reliably, and directly tell the organism how to react appropriately in its environment, there's reason to think they will do so – that in some cases they have been adapted to do so. So we think the fact that perception is for action (activity) provides a heuristic for theorizing about perception: perceptual systems and perceptual content have a very tight relationship to activity, and with respect to that relationship, evolution favors efficiency and economy. This doesn't yet provide an answer to exactly what the relationship is (e.g. causal vs. constitutive), but provides what we consider an underappreciated constraint (though not by all, arguably Millikan's pushmi-pullyu representations were inspired in part by such considerations) which may help decide some conflicts.⁶

We will now provide a few fairly straightforward examples of ways in which perception is for action, again, focusing on vision and gustation.

One of the functions of vision is to let us know how to respond appropriately, e.g. to food, predators, mates, obstacles to our movement, and other objects that we may be desiring or avoiding. This appears to be a function of foveal vision. Foveal (as opposed to peripheral) vision has high acuity and so provides information needed to identify specific objects by e.g. color, and shape. When we need to identify an object, to see what kind of object it is, we *actively* bring it into focus by foveating on it. We, usually, identify objects, of course, so that we may do (the appropriate) things with them – this is presumably the *raison d'être* of our recognitional capacities. For instance, we perceive their shapes and distances from us so that we may know if and how we may grasp them – i.e. what size to make our grip aperture and how to grip the object (if it is slippery we will grasp it one way, if it is rough or prickly, quite another. Of course, tactile perception also plays an important role here, but we shall continue to focus on vision). Alternatively, we perceive and identify objects so that we may plan actions involving them.

⁵ On visual cliff, see: GIBSON, PICK [2000] and GIBSON, WALK, TIGHE [1957]. On time to collision see: SCHIFF, DETWILER [1979] and GIBSON [1969].

⁶ MILLIKAN [1996].

Peripheral vision, in contrast, doesn't tell us much (though not nothing) about what objects are where in our environment; it is very low in acuity and achromatic. But it does detect motion and, thus, change. Peripheral vision tells us e.g. when something is approaching us, or when something small has scampered by. Peripheral vision tells us when to turn our heads so that we may foveate on and identify what is coming our way and what has dashed by. So peripheral vision directly informs activity in the form of head and body movement, movement in the direction of an object on which we will foveate, in order to identify, so that we may act on or respond to it appropriately.

Turning now to gustation: thinking of gustation (that is, the taste and flavor sensory system) in terms of its ecological (and thus social and biological) function has implications for how one takes the gustatory system to be organized. If one thinks of gustatory perception in terms of the reception of information from the environment, specifically from certain chemicals in the environment, one might be inclined to consider taste only in terms of certain receptors, that is, sites sensitive to select stimuli. In fact, this is commonly done by psychologists, who identify our sense of taste with the receptors on the tongue and the roof of the mouth.⁷

In contrast, if you think of the sense of taste in terms of the biological and social functions of selecting food that is healthy for consuming (non-poisonous and nutritious) or socially significant, and follow Gibson in considering the sense of taste as a perceptual system, there's compelling reason to move beyond the tongue and roof of the mouth. In addition to these organs, the nose (for retronasal olfaction) and the trigeminal nerve (for somatosensation) play crucial roles in flavor perception. While the tongue is in part responsible for the sensation of sweetness, saltiness, bitterness, and sourness, retronasal olfaction is responsible for most of the flavor experiences we identify, e.g. vanilla, chocolate, coffee, etc. And somatosensation (both in the nose and in the mouth) is responsible for the sensation of viscosity (as from fat – e.g. cream and butter), spiciness (jalapeño), and mint flavor. Retronasal olfaction can also influence how sweet or sour something tastes, as can temperature.⁸ And in addition to somatosensation, audition plays a role in texture sensation e.g. crunchiness – indeed, potato chip companies select noisy, crinkly materials for bags so that the chips will seem fresher.⁹ The sound carries information about whether or not it should be eaten – if something is stale, for instance, then it's probably old and may possess dangerous bacteria or fungi. Olfaction tells us a lot about whether food has passed the point at which it is safe for consumption.¹⁰

⁷ WOLF, KLUENDER, LEVI [2012], Chapter 15.

⁸ See CRUZ, GREEN [2000].

⁹ See e.g. WINTERMANN [2012].

¹⁰ WOLF, KLUENDER, LEVI [2012].

These different kinds of information work together to tell us about what foods we should eat (an activity of biological and social import). And they work together not only by pooling their findings, but by actually influencing each other – something that smells like vanilla (something with vanilla flavor) will be perceived as sweeter than something that smells like lettuce (this is the phenomenon of “sweetness enhancement?”).¹¹

1.2. Activity in information pickup

The previous section discussed the teleological or functional role of perception with respect to action (activity). The claim was that perception is often for action (activity), and that this makes a difference to how we conceive of and theorize about perception. We now move onto a different feature of the relationship between perception and activity, namely, the causal or constitutive role of activity in the very act of perceiving. To wit, we’ve just discussed ways of understanding the fact that we perceive in order to act. We now discuss ways in which we are active so that we may perceive.

As was the case with the teleological or functional role of activity in perception, there are more and less controversial ways of understanding the role of activity in perception. The less controversial or more traditional way which is compatible with the static (eye as a camera) view is to understand the role of activity instrumentally. On this view, one acts so that one may be in a position to receive stimuli from the environment, but perception really begins *after* the stimuli have been received. One can thus maintain the kind of dualistic view mentioned earlier, and give an instrumental role to activity in perception.

However, Gibson held that once one appreciates the activity that’s involved in perception, the idea that the eye is taking pictures of features in the environment that the mind then processes (strings together and interprets) to create representations of the external world loses force. This is because as one moves around, a great deal of information is revealed in the environment. According to Gibson, activity obviates the need to mentally construct a perceptual (e.g. visual) scene. One aspect of his critique of traditional psychological theories of perception dealt with their experimental designs. In order to make perception something that could be subjected to experimental testing, experimental paradigms had to use highly artificial situations (e.g. tachistoscopes), and were therefore devoid of a great deal of information that is provided in natural, ecological settings (the settings in which our perceptual systems evolved and normally function). In these experiments, subjects are typically instructed to stay still and to fixate on a single point or on several isolated points at a time, or on

¹¹ See e.g. STEVENSEN, BOAKES [2004]. For philosophical discussion, see SPENCE, AUVRAY, SMITH [2015].

a simple object. As a result, psychologists came to believe that the information we receive from the retina is insufficient to specify visual features such as multi-dimensional shape and depth. Rather, what the visual system directly receives are “clues” or “cues” (e.g. pictorial depth cues) that perceptual processing then uses to interpret and re-construct the visual scene. Gibson held that psychology designed its experiments this way in part because it assumed that perception is in the business of taking snapshots of the world. Rejecting this picture of perception, Gibson (and others including Elanor Gibson, Anne Pick, and Egon Brunswik) found ways to perform experiments in natural, ecological settings.¹² And in these settings, it seemed there was no need to mentally augment the incoming visual information.¹³

Gibson’s radical view was that there’s enough visual information available in the ambient array of reflected light for most tasks, so there is no need to construct mental representations of the world. This information is only available in a natural environment (for instance, the texture of the ground or floor is very important, as is the horizon) and the information is picked up by an organism as the organism moves about in that environment.

We will now move onto some examples:

J. J. Gibson served in WWII as a director of a unit for the U.S. Army Air Force’s Aviation Psychology program.¹⁴ One of the fruits of his research in the Air Force was the discovery of Optic Flow. Optic flow is the pattern of change in the structure of visible light caused by the relative motion between an observer and an environment. It’s these changes in the optic array that allow us to perceive invariants – structures that are resistant to the change brought about by our movement – and the invariants constitute the information about the environment that we need, e.g. when a pilot is coming in for a landing, the shape and location of the landing is specified by the invariant structures in the optic flow, and velocity with which the vessel is moving towards the landing will be specified by the rate and direction of the flow

In the next section we will discuss other ways in which activity may contribute to what is perceived.

Gustation perhaps provides more obvious examples of the crucial role activity plays in information pick-up. According to the oyster chefs interviewed by Bon Appetit’s “How to Eat (and Taste) an Oyster,” looking, smelling, and *chewing* is essential to detecting an oyster’s true flavor. Similarly, as you’ll learn at any wine tasting, a tasting ritual consists in: sip, air intake, and swish around in the mouth (especially the back of the mouth), followed by swallow or spit. Here we

¹² GIBSON [1969] and [1991] GIBSON, PICK [2000], BRUNSWIK [1934], [1943], and [1947].

¹³ GIBSON [1986], Chapter 9.

¹⁴ REED [1988].

will discuss several of the many ways in which activities are essential to extracting information in gustation.

Gordon Shepherd, a professor of neurobiology, has devised a nice procedure for demonstrating how multi-modal taste perception is. He calls it the “nose-pinch test.”¹⁵ Here it is: hold your nose tightly and take a sip of your coffee and swish it around in your mouth, or pop a mint or piece of gum into your mouth and chew it. While holding your nose, you’ll taste very little – depending on what the substance is, you’ll get sweet, salty, bitter, sour, and maybe some burning or tingling. This is because the information you’re extracting is limited to what the taste buds on your tongue and the roof of your mouth can extract. But then let go of your nose and breathe in. You’ll experience a wave of coffee or mint flavor.

Shepherd’s test highlights the role of retronasal olfaction in extracting information about the food or drink we are eating. Retronasal olfaction is the nasal passage that connects up with the back of your mouth. Of course, as wine and scotch drinkers know well, retronasal olfaction is only part of the story. Orthonasal olfaction, specifically, active sniffing, extracts yet further information about the substance you’re about to consume, or considering consuming.

When discussing Shepherd’s test, we mentioned that while you were holding your nose, you might experience some burn or tingle, depending on the substance. For instance, if you’re eating chili pepper, horseradish, or mint. Or perhaps you’re experiencing the delectable viscosity of some buttery or creamy dessert. The trigeminal nerve (touch) contributes these features of experience.

The ears also extract information concerning the texture of the food we eat, as mentioned above.

These are just a few examples of the many ways different sensory modalities are involved in flavor experience. And notice that activity is involved in all of this – chewing, breathing, swallowing, etc. It may be that, as Matthew Fulkerson (2014) argues, the distinct receptors involved in touch (somatosensation) work together in the activities involved picking up information about objects resulting in a unified phenomenology of touch. We suggest that these activities which structure the act of eating may help explain the *unified* phenomenology of flavor.¹⁶ For instance, the fact that when eating pretzels the experience is as of a smooth, crunchy, salty object located in the mouth, and not discrete sensations from each of the involved modalities (ears, tongue, mouth, etc.).

¹⁵ SHEPHERD [2012].

¹⁶ FULKERSON [2014].

1.3. Activity structures perceptual experience (form)

We have discussed the ways in which perception can be thought of as being for action (activity) and the ways in which activity can be thought to be important for perception. In this section, we discuss the ways in which activity figures into *what* is perceived.

On a traditional picture, activity simply doesn't figure into the content of what's perceived. Perception may be for action, and the functions of our perceptual systems, which on some traditional pictures play a role in determining content, may be related to behavior/activity on the part of the organism, *but* the behavior/activity has no place in the content itself.

One version of this static view is known as the "snapshot" theory of perception. According to this theory, (visual) perception is like a fast-acting camera, taking snapshot after snapshot, and then mentally stringing the snapshots together to form coherent scenes through space and time. As we move around in the world, it's just as if you are taking photographs from different angles or positions within the world, now of this object, now of that. Perception is just a series of static, momentary states.

Against this, Gibson asserted that perception is an event: it persists through time, it has duration. And one perceives the world not by standing still and snapping a perceptual picture, but by moving about in and acting on the world – e.g., walking around objects. Such activity is necessary to create access to information in the structure of the optic array. As Gibson explains:

The optic array *changes*, of course, as the point of observation moves. But it also does not change, *not* completely. Some features of the array do not persist and some do. The changes come from locomotion, and the nonchanges come from the rigid layout of the environmental surfaces. Hence, the nonchanges specify the layout and count as information about it; the changes specify locomotion and count as another kind of information, about the locomotion itself. (73)¹⁷

Gibson distinguished between two kinds of structure in the optic array: invariant structure and perspective structure. Perspective structure "changes with every displacement of the point of observation – the shorter the displacement, the smaller the change, the longer the displacement, the larger the change." (73) The invariant structure remains the same regardless of motions of the observer and thus "separates off best when the frozen perspective structure begins to flow." Further, information from invariants (about surfaces in environment) implies information about perspective (position, locomotion), and vice versa.

¹⁷ GIBSON [1986].

For instance, objects uniformly “growing” or “shrinking” as an observer moves towards or away from them is an example of an optical flow invariant, as the array will always transform like this under those changes.

It’s not that the information merely takes movement to be revealed, as if the movement were just needed to pull the curtain, making way for the perceptual systems to take a picture. Instead the act of moving, the dynamic inter-activity between the perceiver and the world, necessarily go together. As Gibson explains:

The geometrical habit of separating space from time and imagining sets of frozen forms in space is very strong. One can think of each point in the medium as stationary, and distinct to each such point there would correspond a unique optic array. The set of all points...and optic arrays is the whole of the available information about the layout...This is an elegant and abstract way of thinking, modeled on projective geometry. But it does not allow for the complexities of optical change and does not do justice to the fact that the optic array *flows in time* instead of going from one structure to another. What we need for the formulation of ecological optics are not the traditional notions of space and time but the concepts of variance and invariance considered as reciprocal to one another. (74 *ibid*)

It is important to realize that the flowing perspective structure and the underlying invariant structure are concurrent. They exist at the same time. Although they specify different things, locomotion through a rigid world in the first instance and the layout of that rigid world in the second instance, they are like the two sides of a coin, for each implies the other...there is nothing illogical about the idea of concurrent specification of two reciprocal things. (76 *ibid*.)

The environment seen-at-this-moment does not constitute the environment as it is seen. (195 *ibid*.)

Another way in which Gibson thought activity alters the very content of experience is in what he thought the content of experience was. Some traditional notions of perceptual or experiential content tend to be relatively thin. Organisms perceive colors, shapes, properties, and objects, e.g. the green leaves of a tree. But they do not see the leaves *as* leaves, or the tree *as* a tree, where this requires applications of concepts that only adult humans possess.

Gibson, in contrast, has a richer notion of the content (which he understood to be non-representational, though given the many different things “representation” might mean one must be cautious before assuming to know what he meant by this). According to Gibson, what organisms perceive are not, or at least not merely, objects and properties, but *affordances*; an affordance is what some object or situation allows an organism to do or not do, for example, a sharp drop in the plane on which the organism is moving affords falling (this situation is experimentally simulated by a visual cliff). The point is that seeing for Gibson

is *seeing as*, where the “as” is construed as information relevant to possible behaviors for the organism, and these possibilities need not require the capacity for high-level conceptual (or linguistic) thinking. Creatures see the world as opportunities for behavior or as meaning or entailing bodily consequences.

We have just suggested that activity determines content in terms of its duration, dynamic as opposed to static, and in terms of what the content means for the organism – affordances as opposed to subject-independent descriptions of objects and properties. Other philosophers of broadly Gibsonian, pragmatist, or phenomenological leanings have posited further roles for activity in determining and even constituting content.

For instance, Alva Noë (2004) has argued that organisms gain a kind of knowledge-how, a knowledge or expectation of sensori-motor contingencies by actively moving around in and exploring their environments.¹⁸ According to Noë, to perceive an object such as an apple as having volume, one must bring to bear sensori-motor knowledge, e.g. grasping, about objects of that kind,

Another claim Noë makes is about occlusion and a-modal completion. Organisms are able to perceive objects and shapes as the whole objects and shapes they are even when they are partially occluded. Noë borrows Gibson’s example of seeing a cat partially occluded by the rails of a picket fence. We perceive the cat as whole even though we are only directly visually confronted with cat slices. Saccadic eye movements are necessary to take in whole scenes or object, so even wholeness of object requires activity, which for Noë is largely proprioceptive. So for Noë, my visual perception as of a full object or scene includes in its content a kind of proprioceptive readiness to explore, via saccades, the visual scene, thereby making available information that is not currently visually available or presented.

We are not arguing in favor of Noë’s views. In fact, we want to emphasize Gibson’s notion of reciprocity in perception: every experience of the world also gives us egocentric proprioceptive information. It’s not just that proprioception informs vision, vision informs proprioception. We thus reject views that attempt or seem to attempt to make proprioception more basic than vision. However, we do think Noë highlights a potentially important feature about the content of perception that we are inclined to endorse, i.e., that content is sometimes, or perhaps even often, multi-modal, and multi-modality requires and implies potential activity. Sensori-motor content is about seeing and expectations of how we might act. Noë is right that the senses that carry information about an organism’s motor activity are somatosensory (e.g. muscle spindles), proprioceptive, and vestibular, but also, at times, visual.

¹⁸ NOË [2004]. We are aware that expectation plays a role in many theories of perception and knowledge, e.g. the perceptual schemata of Julian Hochberg [1964], Roger Shank’s [1990] scripts.

A fairly simple example of the way in which visual content relies on and may be thought to include proprioceptive information is in detecting movement. Movement of light across the retina can either be caused by the movements of the eye or the movements of a light reflecting object. To perceive an object moving, the visual system must distinguish an object's movement from the eyes' movement. Some theories hold that proprioceptive information is merely used in the computations that result in the perception as of a moving object. However, it's also possible *part of the content* of our awareness is that the perceived movement is not ocular or bodily movement. To wit, the content might be "moving object" or it might be "movement not from the perceiver" which entails that the movement is of something external. As should be clear, we endorse something along the lines of the latter interpretation of the content.

Another way in which visual content may be thought to be multi-modal is in the perception of visual texture and hardness. When a surface is represented as rough, this is different from representing a surface as smooth or merely patterned in a certain way. This information is important to how we attempt to interact with the object – for instance, how we should walk on that surface. Visual roughness seems to have direct tactile significance. The incorporation of tactical content in visual experience parallels the modal integration of information characteristic of flavor experience discussed above.

2. Knowing

As noted in the introduction, most epistemic theories, notably empiricism, hold that our knowledge of the world somehow derives from the content of our perceptions of the world. An active view of perception and knowledge does not deny this.

Rather, the active theory of perception holds that we get knowledge from perceiving, but often it is knowledge about how to act. (And so it is knowledge not in propositional form). It is, also, information about the layout of the world. In this way active perceiving is the basis for active knowing. How and why knowing is active may be explained in many ways.

Perhaps, the easiest way to conceive of the active nature of knowing is to contrast it with a passive view (as we saw earlier in perception). A passive state theory holds that knowledge consists in holding true beliefs, where holding or entertaining a belief is just for a person or mind to be in a stable relation to a proposition. This makes all knowledge propositional knowledge.

Now, commonly memory psychologists distinguish different kinds of memory. The memory system encoding propositions is called declarative or semantic memory, but then they add other memory systems, i.e. episodic memory, which is the system that encodes episodes in a person's life so there is always a reference to the person's ego or self, and finally, there is procedural memory, which is knowing how to do something. The first two systems are often conceived as having propositional content.

A few philosophers, e.g. Jason Stanley (2011), believe and try to argue that even knowing how is propositional, but we won't enter this dispute here.

But let's think about thinking (as John Dewey might say). When we think we seldom confine ourselves to one sentence-like thought, even if we think in words. Our thinking often races from thought to thought, drawing inferences, solving problems or constructing fantasies. That is, we actively use our knowledge when planning to do something.

So, e.g. when we move to get information about the shape and distance of an object, it might well be that we obtain this information or knowledge in order to grasp or lay hold of an object. Or, e.g., use the knowledge gained from the seeing of an object coming toward us to avoid collision with that object.¹⁹

But there are other less obvious ways to think about the active character of knowing: Most generally, knowing is an adaptation of humans interacting with their environment. And a person can come to know something more or less well. Knowing is not an all or nothing condition. We have to do things to gain more knowledge. Obviously learning and gaining knowledge is an active process.

But more about the active nature of knowing itself. First, a long-standing, fairly popular analytic tradition holds that knowledge is justified true belief. Now an influential group of philosophers hold the position that justification is comprised by the giving of reasons. And reasons must be made explicit and public by language. These arguments that follow should not be confused with any form of linguistic behaviorism (even in a Wittgensteinian or Ryleian form).

Yet another argument for the active nature of knowledge is that for any knowledge to be meaningful, it must be put to use, or, phrased differently, knowing must have consequences or effects, for the knower and/or for others. This would be to conceive of knowledge as dispositional. It must be capable of being actualized to count as knowledge. Actualization or consequences may come in many ways, e.g. as answers to questions, as bases for inferences, or as steps in problem solving, or even as constructing content for daydreams or fantasies by thinking.

¹⁹ See SCHIFF, DETWILER [1979].

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HOW TO DEFINE THE NOTION OF KNOWLEDGE WHICH SOLVES THE GETTIER PROBLEM

Abstract. Our contention is that to solve the Gettier Problem, a notion of infallible knowledge involving the substantial truth theory is necessary. We assume that acts of sense experience have propositional content, and that atomic empirical propositions need the existence of non-mental objects to be true. This approach allows for making the distinction between epistemically good justifiers and ontologically good justifiers, and leads to a definition of propositional empirical knowledge free of the Gettier Problem. Our explication of the Gettier Problem rejects Hetherington's (2012) view that the Gettier Problem rests on jointly unsatisfiable constraints, sheds a new light on Floridi's (2004) result, avoids the Pyrrhonian skepticism, as well as the skepticism defended by Kirkham (1984), and vindicates the substantial notion of truth.

Keywords. Evidence, truth, knowledge, fallibilism, infallibilism, Gettier Problem.

1. What is the Gettier Problem?

Gettier ([1963]) poses the question: What do we mean when we say that someone knows something, for example, that Smith knows that Jones owns a Ford? Although the Gettier type counterexamples have been familiar since the time Gettier's paper was published, the Gettier Problem is not recognized in the same way by those who deal with it. Kirkham ([1984]) defines the Gettier Problem as a problem which rests on a *mistaken* assumption. This mistaken assumption consists in the attempt to find such an explication of knowledge which

- (i) includes all or most of the beliefs we commonly regard as knowledge, and
- (ii) excludes any belief which the subject does not know on that explication, that is, is immune to all Gettier type counterexamples.

Kirkham concludes that there is no explication which fulfills both conditions (i) and (ii). He argues that to get the weakest explication of "a knows that p", which is immune to all Gettier type counterexamples, we must accept the following explication of knowledge: (1) p is true; (2) the subject believes that p;

and (3) justification needed for knowledge must begin from self-evident for the subject premises, and these premises must necessitate the truth of proposition p. Satisfying these conditions we fail to give such an explication of knowledge which includes all (or most) beliefs regarded as knowledge. Since, as Kirkham argues, there cannot be another explication which could be immune to all Gettier type counterexamples, there is no explication at all which meets parts (i) and (ii) of the mistaken assumption. The general conclusion of Kirkham's analysis of knowledge is that most of our ordinary knowledge attributions are incorrect. Kirkham includes in our knowledge only a few propositions, besides necessary truths, such as: "I believe something", "I think my name is Smith" (not "my name is Smith"), "I am in pain", "Somebody believes something" (deduced from "I believe something").¹

We do not define the Gettier Problem by the two-part condition formulated by Kirkham. Part (i) of Kirkham's condition is true when it is interpreted as a certain tendency existing at a certain period of time in a philosophical community. We agree that a comprehensive solution of the Gettier Problem should take into account most beliefs we commonly regard as knowledge. However, some restrictions are necessary, since any adequate definition of "a knows X", where X stands for an arbitrary belief regarded by "a" as an instance of knowledge, *ceteris paribus* is impossible. A definition of this kind should be formulated for a fragment of natural language. From our point of view, also part (ii) of Kirkham's condition should be modified, and should be understood in the following way. Any adequate definition of "a knows X" for a given fragment of natural language is immune to those Gettier type counterexamples which could be formulated exclusively for that fragment of natural language for which a given definition has been formulated. We are aiming at giving a definition of this kind in the present paper.

Kirkham gives us the following explication of self-evident proposition: p is self-evident for the subject if and only if (i) if the subject believes p, then p is true, and (ii) p cannot fail to be true whenever the subject believes p as subject's rational reason to believe p.² Kirkham's explication of self-evidence allows for different interpretations, because the concept of evidence, as well as that of rationality have many different senses depending on the philosophical context. Since we cannot formulate any adequate definition of knowledge without the concept of evidence, we need to have at our disposal a satisfactory explication of the evidence.

¹ KIRKHAM [1984], p. 502.

² Ibid.

2. What is Evidence?

The word “evidence” in one of its meanings means the ground for knowledge.³ The problem connected with this meaning of evidence, which is relevant to our further argument, is formulated explicitly in Davidson (1983). Davidson wrote:

The relation between a sensation and a belief cannot be logical, since sensations are not beliefs or other propositional attitudes. What then is the relation? The answer is, I think, obvious: the relation is causal. Sensations cause some beliefs and in *this* sense are the basis or ground of those beliefs. But a causal explanation of a belief does not show how or why the belief is justified (DAVIDSON [2006], p. 229).

The answer to our problem must then be to find a *reason* for supposing most of our beliefs are true that is not a form of *evidence* (DAVIDSON [2006], p. 232).

This view implies that sense experiences do not have propositional content, and if a mental state is to play the role of a justifier, it necessarily has propositional content. In consequence, on this view, sense experiences cannot play the role of justifiers, and Davidson’s argument contradicts the foundationalist account of justification which rests on the following thesis.

(F) Sense experience is a source of non-inferential justification.

The foundationalist may respond in two different ways to Davidson’s argument.

- (1) He (or she) may accept the claim that sense experience does not have propositional content, and may reject the claim that having propositional content by mental states is necessary for justification;
- (2) He (or she) may accept the claim that having propositional content by mental states is necessary for justification, and may reject the claim that sense experience does not have propositional content.

The rejection of Davidson’s claim that sense experiences are devoid of propositional content is supported by the theory of intentionality which states that mental acts, including acts of perception, like acts of seeing, hearing or smelling, as well as mental acts of loving, hating, desiring, believing, judging,

³ This meaning, besides two others, is explicitly specified in FENNELL, CARTWRIGHT [2010]), p. 291. I shall concentrate on this meaning, although the other meanings (leveraging and relevance) are also widely discussed by contemporary epistemologists. Cf. ROUSH [2005]. I should like also to mention WILLIAMSON’s [2000] concept of evidence identified with knowledge.

hoping, and many others are *intentional acts*, directed at their objects.⁴ We should note that the property of being directed at something is independent of the physical existence of the object towards which the mind is directed. In this respect, states of knowledge and belief states differ, and only beliefs, *not* states of knowledge, can be directed towards non-existent entities. One may say that unlike belief reports, reports of knowledge are veridical. It is not only Davidson who may be regarded as a critic of foundationalism. First of all, we must mention Wilfrid Sellars who in his famous (1956) paper aims at giving an answer to the question how sense-experiences play the role of justifiers. An accurate account of his position may be found in Matthias Steup's ([2001b]) paper which calls the problem the *Sellarsian Dilemma*. The foundationalist is faced with a choice; the sense-experiential state is either a belief, or it is not. If it is a belief, the question arises what could turn a sense-experiential state into a belief. It must be the possession of propositional content. If a sense-experiential state has propositional content, then such a state must be another belief which needs its own justification, and this way, we obtain the justificatory regress. On the other hand, if one assumes that sense-experiential states do not have propositional content, then they cannot be justifiers of any basic belief. Now, if we accept the position that sense-experiential states have propositional content, we need to argue that the presence of propositional content does not turn sense-experiential states into beliefs, since sense-experiential states, even with propositional content, are not something that can be justified. How can we argue that the presence of propositional content does not turn sense-experiential states into beliefs? Each sense-experiential state, if it has propositional content, is an intentional state directed at its object, that is, the proposition which has the same content. Note that not all intentional states possess epistemic justification; for example, hopes, fears and desires are intentional states of this kind. Having propositional content is insufficient to be epistemically justified. Matthias Steup gives the following argument for the claim that sense-experiential states have propositional content, but do not require justification.

Suppose you ask me: What justifies you in believing that your coffee is sweet? This is a sensible question, and it has a sensible answer. The answer would be: "It tastes sweet." But now suppose we were to ask: "But what justifies you in experiencing the coffee as tasting sweet, i.e. in having a sense experience that has as its content the proposition that the coffee is sweet?" Well, this is not a sensible question. If you were to ask me that kind of a question, I would have to reply that I don't know what you mean. Now, what this consideration suggest is this: the sort of mental states that are epistemically justified or unjustified are not sense experiences, but rather the doxastic attitudes we form in responses to sense experiences. So I conclude once again that sense experiences with propositional

⁴ This idea was considered by M. Steup in STEUP [2001b].

content do not admit epistemic justification, and thus can justify without being justified themselves (STEUP, [2001b], p. 5).

We regard Steup's way of replying to the Sellarsian Dilemma as convincing and conforming to our view concerning sensory contents. We shall be using the concept of sense experience in the intentional meaning outlined above. On this view, sense experiences may be regarded as legitimate justifiers.⁵

Let L be a simple *language of evidence* consisting of (1) symbols for n -ary predicates, for an arbitrary $n \in \mathbb{N}$, representing natural language predicates and relations; (2) symbols for individual constants representing proper names, demonstratives and other individual terms of natural language: a, c, e (with subscripts, if necessary); (3) symbols for sentential truth-functional connectives representing natural language connectives such as "either...or" "and" and others if necessary; (4) symbols for time intervals: t, t' ordered by the relation \geq . Sentences formed by a predicate and individual term(s) are denoted as p, q, \dots , and a proposition that p is denoted as $\langle p \rangle$. The proposition *that p holds at t* is denoted as $\langle p/t \rangle$. Compound sentences built with the help of truth-functional connectives will be denoted as P, Q ; the symbol $E!$ stands for "exists".

Definition 1 If " c " is an act of sense experience (act of perception) directed at $\langle p \rangle$ at time t , then $\langle p \rangle$ is an *epistemically good justifier* of $\langle q \rangle$ in L if and only if person " a " believes $\langle q/t \rangle$ is true. In other words, person a 's belief in $\langle q \rangle$ at t is a consequence of the occurrence of the sense experience directed at $\langle p \rangle$ at time t .

Example 1. Anticipating Gettier's examples, one may say that Smith has the visual experience at time t $\langle \text{Jones drives a Ford} \rangle$ which is an epistemically good justifier for the proposition $\langle \text{Jones owns a Ford} \rangle$ if and only if Smith believes that $\langle \text{Jones owns a Ford at } t \rangle$ is true.

Suppose that Smith has the visual experience $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$ when looking at an previously unknown cube painted white in a room where there is a red light-bulb in the room's light-socket at a certain time interval t . Then $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$ is an epistemically good justifier of the proposition $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$ in L if and only if Smith believes that $\langle \text{This cube is red at } t \rangle$ is true. But Smith may know that the light in the room is red, and may formulate the content of his visual experience as $\langle \text{This cube looks red} \rangle$, or as $\langle \text{In this light, this cube looks red} \rangle$. Then his sense experiences individually are epistemically good justifiers of the proposition $\langle \text{This cube looks red} \rangle$ in L if and only if Smith believes $\langle \text{This cube looks red at } t \rangle$. **Definition 1** does not exclude that all Smith's sense

⁵ I shall not discuss here the problem of epistemic circularity connected with the thesis (F). A nice account of this problem may be found in BERGMAN [2004].

experiences listed above are individually epistemically good justifiers of the proposition <This cube is white> or <This cube is green>, or even of another proposition. To exclude arbitrary epistemically good justifiers, **Definition 1** needs a proper understanding of the *subject* of beliefs.

Presupposition: We assume that the subject of beliefs is a self-conscious and competent speaker of his (her) native language, normally mentally developed, having statistically normal color vision at the time of his (her) visual experience, and is of a normal and undisturbed state of mind.

Let us consider episodic mental acts such as hearings in the role of epistemically good justifiers. Suppose that Mary has a baby whose name is Rupert, and that at a certain time interval *t* she hears <Rupert is howling>. Her act of sense experience at *t* is an epistemically good justifier of the proposition <Rupert needs something> if and only if Mary believes <Rupert needs something at *t*> is true.

How could we include testimony to epistemically good justifiers? Suppose Smith has been told by the president of a company that Jones is not well educated to get a higher post. Thus, Smith has at *t* the testimony <Jones is not well educated to get a higher post> which is an epistemically good justifier of <Jones is not well educated to get a higher post> if and only if Smith believes <Jones is not well educated to get a higher post at *t*> is true. Let us take another example.⁶ Suppose that Smith has been told by his cousin Ernie that the moon is made of green cheese, and Smith has at *t* the testimony <The moon is made of green cheese> which is an epistemologically good justifier of <The moon is made of green cheese> if and only if Smith believes that <The moon is made of green cheese> is true. We shall return to similar examples below.

These examples appeal silently to some important ontological distinctions. They involve individual objects like instances of colors and instances of events which in contemporary ontology are most frequently called *tropes*, and they involve ontological relation of *ontological dependence*. A trope is an object whose existence is ontologically dependent upon the existence of another object. How should this dependence be understood? The relation of ontological dependence is an *essential* property of a trope, and any account of this relation must appeal to the notion of ontological necessity, that is, *de re* necessity, understood as a consequence of the necessary structure of objects and their configurations. Those objects on which a trope depends are called its *fundaments*. Now, if an object has a part which is essential it is in one sense necessarily dependent on that part. But the fundaments of a trope cannot be wholly contained within it as its proper or improper parts. This requirement also excludes the case that

⁶ This example has been borrowed from KIRKHAM [1984], p. 504.

everything is its own fundament, and, in consequence, that everything is its own trope. Thus, tropes may be defined in the following way: T is a trope if and only if T exists and T is ontologically necessarily such that either T does not exist, or there exists at least one object O, which is ontologically possibly such that it does not exist, and which is not a proper or improper part of T.⁷ Objects which are not tropes are called *independent* objects or substances. Note that the relation of foundation may bind together individual objects, for example, an individual *location* and a trope, say, an instance of a particular color. These two individual objects are linked by the relation of *mutual foundation*. To give another example, two atoms such that atom A strikes at time t atom B are linked by two relations of foundation which hold between the *particular event* of striking, C, and A, and between C and B.

3. Explanatory Role of Truth

Although Davidson did not consider himself to be a deflationist, he held the view that truth is transparent.⁸ His view is close to the declaration upheld by deflationists who claim that the truth predicate is without any substantial content and without any substantial explanatory role, with its sole role being a “syntactic device”. Such a conception of truth will not be applied in the present paper. We need a substantial theory of truth whose main idea is expressed by the following assumption.

Assumption: The sufficient and necessary conditions of truth of atomic propositions is the existence of entities non-reducible to our mental states.

Example 2. Let “this speck” refers to location e_1 . Then the truth conditions of the proposition <This speck is red at t > should be formulated in the following way:

<This speck is red at t > is true if and only if the *location*, e_1 , and the *individual property of redness*, e_2 , exist at t and are linked at t by the ontological relation of mutual dependence.⁹

These truth-conditions make use of the ontology accepting the existence of two kinds of entities: independent and dependent. An individual property, being

⁷ Cf. MULLIGAN, SIMONS, SMITH [1984], p. 294.

⁸ DAVIDSON [2006], pp. 226–227.

⁹ Cf. MULLIGAN, SIMONS, SMITH [1984], p. 310. The entity e which is ontologically independent of the entity e' may be ontologically dependent on the entity e' . The meaning of *e being ontologically dependent on e'* has been given below.

a trope, is an entity whose existence is *essentially* dependent upon that of another entity.¹⁰ We may define the relation of ontological dependence (OD) in the language of the first order modal logic in the following way.¹¹

(OD) e is ontologically dependent on e' : $= \Box[\exists x(x = e) \rightarrow \exists y(y = e')]$.

Individual properties and individual events are regarded as examples of essentially dependent entities, whereas substances are regarded as independent entities.¹² We have to do with the ontological relation of mutual dependence of two dependent entities in *Example 2*: the location e_1 and the individual property (trope) of redness, e_2 . This means that the existence of the location e_1 is ontologically necessary for the existence of the individual property of redness, e_2 , and vice versa: the existence of the individual property of redness, e_2 , is ontologically necessary for the existence of location e_1 .

Our reasons for accepting the existence of independent and dependent entities are partly epistemological, because our aim is to formulate an adequate definition of knowledge for propositions formulated in natural language which is modeled by our language of evidence L . Hence, our ontology accepts the existence of those entities which are recognized by the users of natural language without making use of any advanced language of science, like the language of the special relativity theory, or the language of a theory of elementary particles, or quantum mechanics, or another language of a scientific theory.

What can we accept as evidence of beliefs if we assume, according to our *Assumption*, that the truth conditions of atomic propositions is the existence of entities different from our mental states? Foundationalists claim that our sense experiences are evidence of our true beliefs. Does it mean that epistemically good justifiers defined by **Definition 1** can play the role of sufficient and necessary condition of truth? No. Sense experiences which are epistemically good justifiers cannot play the role of sufficient and necessary conditions of truth on the ground of our *Assumption*. We need *ontologically good justifiers* of $\langle p \rangle$ as sufficient and necessary conditions of the truth of $\langle p/t \rangle$.

¹⁰ Individual properties as dependent entities are called moments in MULLIGAN, SIMONS, SMITH [1984]. At present, the widely accepted name for dependent entities is “tropes”. Cf. CAMPBELL [1990], SIMONS [1994], [2000], BACON [1995], MCDANIEL [2001], TRETTIN [2001], MAURIN [2002], [2010], HEIL [2003], to mention only a few philosophers arguing for the ontology of tropes.

¹¹ On the concept of ontological dependence cf. MULLIGAN, SIMONS, SMITH [1984], p. 294, and CAMERON [2008], pp. 37–38.

¹² An argument for accepting the ontology of substances and tropes has been convincingly formulated by R. P. Cameron in CAMERON [2008].

Definition 2 Entities e_1, \dots, e_n are *ontologically good justifiers* of the proposition $\langle p \rangle$ in L if and only if the joint existence of e_1, \dots, e_n at t is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth of $\langle p/t \rangle$.

If this cube is white at t , then the joint existence of this cube and the *individual property* of whiteness is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth of $\langle \text{This cube is white at } t \rangle$. The proposition $\langle \text{This cube is red at } t \rangle$ where “this cube” designates *this cube* is false, but false propositions do *not* have ontologically good justifiers. The proposition $\langle \text{This cube looks red at } t' \rangle$ is true and has its ontologically good justifiers: this cube, and the *individual event* existing at t' Smith of looking at this cube in the red light.

In *Example 2*, the joint existence of the location e_1 and the individual property of redness e_2 is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth of $\langle \text{This speck is red at } t \rangle$. Therefore, the location, e_1 , and the individual property of redness, e_2 , are ontologically good justifiers for $\langle \text{This speck is red} \rangle$. In *Example 1*, the joint existence of Jones, a Ford, and the *individual event of a Ford being driven by Jones*, e_3 , is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth of $\langle \text{Jones drives a Ford at } t \rangle$. Therefore, Jones, a Ford (independent entities) and the individual event, e_3 , (trope) are the ontologically good justifiers of $\langle \text{Jones drives a Ford} \rangle$.

We claim that accepting our *Assumption* excludes accepting sense experiences in the role of ontologically good justifiers. The metaphysical status of sense experiences and ontologically good justifiers is different, although ontologically good justifiers are objects of mental acts, in particular, of the acts of perception.¹³ Thus, we have two different concepts of evidence:

- (1) The evidence given by epistemically good justifiers, (EE) and
- (2) The evidence given by the perception of ontologically good justifiers, (OE).

Sense experiences, if they fulfill the condition of **Definition 1**, are epistemically good justifiers. The question arises if we really need the evidence given by the perception of ontologically good justifiers. Yes, we do. This kind of evidence may be properly called the *ground of knowledge*. We need this ground, since we need to formulate an adequate definition of propositional knowledge for natural language propositions modeled by our language L . We shall argue below that it may happen that sense experiences, being epistemically good justifiers, do not

¹³ For a discussion of dependent entities as objects of acts of perception see MULLIGAN, SIMONS, SMITH [1984], pp. 304–308. Here is a passage from this discussion concerning the perception of individual events: “When we see Rupert’s smile, we see something just as spatio-temporal as Rupert himself, and not something as absurd as a spatio-temporal entity that somehow contains a concept or a universal” (306). Cf. also SCHELLENBERG [2011].

guarantee knowledge, and we must take into account ontologically good justifiers to explain why that may happen.

The traditional definition of knowledge formulates sufficient (if taken jointly) and necessary (if taken individually) conditions of knowledge in the following way.¹⁴

Definition 3 a knows <P> if and only if

- <P> is true, and
- a believes <P>, and
- a is justified in believing <P>.

Gettier in his (1963) paper convincingly argues that **Definition 3** does not give us the sufficient condition of knowledge. Although the Reader may be familiar with Gettier's counterexamples, we must describe them to make our further discussion easier.

Case 1 Smith and Jones apply for a job in a company. The president of the company assured Smith that Jones would be chosen. Since it happened that Smith counted the coins in Jones's pocket a few minutes ago, Smith has strong evidence for the belief (B1):

(B1) <Jones will get the job, and Jones has 10 coins in his pocket>.

This proposition entails the formally correct conclusion (C1):

(C1) <The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket>.

Further facts are the following: Smith (not Jones) gets the job, and what is unknown to Smith, there are 10 coins in Smith's pocket. We get then:

- (a) Smith's conclusion <(C1)> is true;
- (b) Smith believes <(C1)>;
- (c) Smith is justified in believing <(C1)> by the closure principle for justification, that is, if Smith is justified in believing <(B1)>, and <(B1)> entails <(C1)>, then Smith is justified in believing <(C1)>, if he accepts (C1) as a result of that entailment.

But it is not true in this scenario that Smith *knows* <(C1)>.

Case 2 Smith remembers that Jones always in the past owned a car, and always a Ford. Recently Jones offered Smith a ride while driving a Ford. Thus, Smith has strong evidence for believing (B2):

(B2) <Jones owns a Ford>.

Smith has also a friend Brown, but he does not know where Brown is at present. Next, he formulates the formally correct conclusion (C2):

¹⁴ Cf. GETTIER [1963].

(C2) <Either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona>.

But facts are the following: Jones does not own a Ford, although he rented a Ford, and it happened – which is unknown to Smith – that Brown is in Barcelona. We get then:

- (a) Smith's conclusion <(C2)> is true;
- (b) Smith believes <(C2)>;
- (c) Smith is justified in believing <(C2)> by the closure principle for justification.

But it is not true in this scenario that Smith *knows* <(C2)>.

These two cases suggest that the traditional definition of knowledge does not offer the sufficient condition of truth for “a knows <P>”. We shall argue that in both cases Smith has epistemically good justifiers which do not guarantee knowledge. In **Case 1**, Smith thinks about Jones as the man who will get the job, while the truth is that Smith himself gets the job. Smith's conclusion <(C1)> is entailed by the false premise <(P1)>:

(P1) <Jones will get the job>.

Smith has strong evidence to believe that the premise <(P1)> is true, but his evidence being an epistemically good justifier has nothing to do with the ontologically good justifiers of <(P1)>, which could be recognized if <(P1)> was true. In **Case 2**, Smith's true conclusion <(C2)> is entailed by the false premise <(P2)>:

(P2) <Jones owns a Ford>.

Although Smith has strong evidence to believe that premise <(P2)> is true, and his evidence is an epistemically good justifier, the ontologically good justifiers of <(P2)>, which could be recognized if <(P2)> was true, do not coincide with Smith's epistemically good justifier of <(P2)>.

Why are Smith's epistemically good justifiers of <(C1)> and <(C2)> in both cases not ontologically good justifiers? The most straightforward answer would be the following. This is so, because Smith's conclusions <(C1)> and <(C2)> have truth conditions which do not coincide with Smith's respective epistemically good justifiers. In **Case 1**, the ontologically good justifiers are the existing non-mental entities whose joint existence is sufficient and necessary for the truth of <(C1)>, that is, Smith himself as employee at $t' \geq t$ and 10 coins in his pocket at t . In **Case 2**, the ontologically good justifiers are the entities whose joint existence is sufficient and necessary for the truth of <(C2)>, that is, Brown, the location = Barcelona, and the individual event of being Brown in Barcelona at t . In both cases the ontologically good justifiers do not coincide with the epistemically good justifiers: Smith's evidence that Jones will get the job, and Smith's evidence that Jones has 10 coins in his pocket (in **Case 1**), and Smith's

evidence that Jones owns a Ford (in **Case 2**). One may have an epistemically good justifier in believing a false proposition. But in the case of false propositions there are no ontologically good justifiers. Thus, in such cases, *no* coincidence between epistemically and ontologically good justifiers is possible. Let us now consider Gettier's counterexamples in our framework.

Example 3. Smith's visual experience at t <Johns has 10 coins in his pocket> and Smith's testimony at t <Jones will get the job> are epistemically good justifiers for <The man who will get the job has 10 coins in his pocket> if and only if Smith believes that <The man who will get the job has 10 coins in his pocket at t > is true.

Example 4. The joint existence of the man who gets the job at $t' \geq t$, and the existence of 10 coins in his pocket at t is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth <The man who will get the job has 10 coins in his pocket at t >. Thus, *the man who gets the job at $t' \geq t$* and *10 coins in his pocket at t* are jointly the ontologically good justifiers of <The man who will get the job has 10 coins in his pocket>, that is, of <(C1)>.

Example 3 and *Example 4* show that Smith's epistemically good justifier of <Jones will get the job> does *not* coincide with an ontologically good justifier of <(C1)>, because Jones \neq the man who gets the job at t' .

Example 5. Smith's visual experience at t <Jones drives a Ford> which is the epistemically good justifier of <Jones drives a Ford> *coincides* with the ontologically good justifiers of <Jones drives a Ford >, that is, with the joint existence of Jones, a Ford and the individual event of a Ford being driven by Jones at t , e_3 .

Example 6. The joint existence at t of Jones and a Ford, and the individual property of Jones's being the owner of a Ford, e_4 , is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth of < Jones owns a Ford >, and a sufficient condition of the truth of <Either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona at t >. Thus, *Jones and a Ford* and *the individual property of Jones's being the owner of a Ford at t* are jointly ontologically good justifiers of <Either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona at t >, that is, of <(C2)>. The individual property of Jones's being the owner of a Ford at t is essentially dependent on the existence of Jones and a Ford at t .

Example 5 and *Example 6* show that Smith's epistemically good justifier of <Jones owns a Ford>, that is, his visual experience at t <Jones drives a Ford>, does *not* coincide with ontologically good justifiers of <(C2)>.

In the light of the above discussion, we have reasons to give the following sufficient (if taken jointly) and necessary (if taken individually) conditions for the truth of any proposition of our language L which stands for the schema: “a knows <P>”.

Definition 4 a knows < P> in L if and only if

- <P> is true in L, and
- a believes <P>, and
- a has epistemically good justifiers of <P>, and
- a’s epistemically good justifiers of <P> coincide with ontologically good justifiers of <P>.

It is easy to notice that Smith in the Gettier counterexamples does not know <(C1)> and does not know <(C2)> if “a knows <P>” is defined by **Definition 4**. As has been shown above, in both cases considered by Gettier, the condition of coincidence of epistemically good justifiers of <P> and ontologically good justifiers of <P> does not hold.

4. A Solution

We agree with the diagnosis of the Gettier Problem which points to the lack of successful coordination between the truth of <P> and the subject’s justification of <P>. The same opinion has been expressed by Floridi in his [2004] paper¹⁵:

A Gettier-type counterexample arises because the truth and the justification of p happen to be not only independent (as they should be, since in this context we are dealing with fallibilist knowledge) but also opaquely unrelated, that is, they happen to fail to converge or to agree on the same propositional content p in a relevant and significant way, without S realizing it (*Gettierization*) (FLORIDI [2004], p. 64).

Floridi makes use of the following assumptions concerning the Gettier Problem:

- (*) the conception of knowledge occurring in the Gettier Problem is entirely fallibilist,
- (**) the conception of knowledge occurring in the Gettier Problem is given by the traditional definition of knowledge (see **Definition 3**).

¹⁵ The literature on the Gettier Problem is vast. I should like to mention only some of the earlier works such as GOLDMAN [1967], LEHRER, PAXSON [1969], DRETSKE [1971], NOZICK [1981], KIRKHAM [1984], SCHREIBER [1987], ZAGZEBSKI [1994], STEUP [2001a], STANLEY, WILLIAMSON [2001], FLORIDI [2004], and HETHERINGTON [2012].

Therefore, Floridi's conclusion about the logical unsolvability of the Gettier Problem applies to the traditional fallibilist conception of knowledge, that is, such a conception of knowledge for which the lack of coordination between the truth of $\langle P \rangle$ and the subject's justification of $\langle P \rangle$ cannot be excluded. We agree with Floridi's conclusion that the fallibilist notion of empirical knowledge precludes a solution to the Gettier Problem.

Hetherington's diagnosis (in [2012]) of the Gettier Problem also appeals to the distinction: fallibilism vs. infallibilism. In his view, when we try to solve the Gettier Problem, we have "jointly unsatisfiable constraints", since we need to find a fallibilist analysis of knowledge, and retain a latent infallibilism of the standard interpretation of Gettier cases. Thus, Hetherington concludes:

To solve the standardly described Gettier problem in the standardly desired way is impossible (HETHERINGTON [2012], p. 228).

Fallibilism is generally understood as the view that we need not have *logically conclusive* justifications for what we know, that a justified true belief may be considered empirical knowledge even if we can rationally doubt it. Its opposition is infallibilism which is the view that knowledge is absolutely certain and it cannot be rationally doubted. The problem is that there are empirical justified true beliefs which are absolutely certain, that is, which satisfy the condition of infallibilism, as well as there being justified true beliefs which can be revised by further observations. We do not agree with Hetherington's conclusion quoted above. Our contention is that for indefinitely many instances of *infallible* empirical knowledge, the Gettier Problem has a solution. To make our discussion more perspicuous, let us define the fallibilist and infallibilist notions of knowledge.

Definition 5 The fallibilist notion of knowledge: a knows $\langle P \rangle$ in L if and only if

- $\langle P \rangle$ is true, and
- a is justified in believing $\langle P \rangle$ on the evidence $\langle c \rangle$, and
- $\langle P \rangle$ does not need to be entailed by $\langle c \rangle$.

Definition 6 The infallibilist conception of knowledge: a knows $\langle P \rangle$ in L if and only if

- $\langle P \rangle$ is true, and
- a is justified in believing $\langle P \rangle$ on the evidence $\langle c \rangle$, and
- $\langle c \rangle$ entails $\langle P \rangle$.

Let us compare these definitions with **Definition 4** which contains the additional condition of coincidence of epistemically good justifiers and ontologically good

justifiers. This condition tells us that we should be careful looking for evidence as the ground of our knowledge. We should be also careful formulating the content of our sense experiences, and in each case we should ask the question if our *epistemically good evidence* (EE) is *ontologically good evidence* (OE), that is, if the joint existence of entities perceived in our sense experience is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth of the atomic proposition which is epistemically justified by the respective sense experience. In other words, to get knowledge we should be able to consider our justification from the point of view of the attributor of knowledge. Smith's sense experience at t <Jones drives a Ford> is (OE) for the proposition <Jones drives a Ford>, since the *joint existence* of entities perceived at t by Smith, that is, Jones, e_5 , a Ford, e_6 , and the individual event of a Ford being driven by Jones at t , e_3 , is the sufficient and necessary condition of the truth of <Jones drives a Ford at t >. Table 1. below shows how we get knowledge from visual experience, if the condition of coincidence of epistemically good justifiers and ontologically good justifiers is satisfied.

Table 1. The illustration of Smith's knowledge <Jones drives a Ford>

EE	OE	EE \rightarrow OE	EE \Rightarrow OE
<p>:=visual experience = <Jones drives a Ford>	e_3, e_5, e_6	entailment	strict relevant entailment

Source: author coverage.

FACT (1)

The table illustrates the following logical relations¹⁶:

- (1) <p>:= visual experience entails $E! e_3$
- (2) <p>:= visual experience entails $E! e_5$
- (3) <p>:= visual experience entails $E! e_6$
- (4) $E! e_3 \wedge E! e_5 \wedge E! e_6$ strictly and relevantly entails the proposition <Jones drives a Ford at t >.

The joint existence of the individual event of driving a Ford by Jones at t , Jones and a Ford *necessitates* the proposition <Jones drives a Ford at t >, which is true at every time in every place, and for everyone.¹⁷ Thus, it is an instance of infallible knowledge. Smith's visual experience at t <Jones drives a Ford> entails the ontologically good justifiers of <Jones drives a Ford> whose joint

¹⁶ "entails" means "validly deduced". The logical form of visual experience content is regarded as closest to that as introduced by Davidson. See DAVIDSON [1967] and [2001].

¹⁷ Understood in that way, <Jones drives a Ford at t > is an *absolute truth*. For fuller analysis of the notion of absolute truth, see SIMONS [2003]. The concept of necessitation is discussed in CAMERON [2008]. Cf. also FORREST, KHELENTZOS [2000], and ARMSTRONG [2004].

existence necessitates the proposition $\langle \text{Jones drives a Ford at } t \rangle$. Therefore, Smith knows $\langle \text{Jones drives a Ford} \rangle$, and the proposition is an instance of infallible knowledge. This notion of knowledge excludes the case when the subject has an act of sense experience in normal conditions which entails OE, while the proposition $\langle p \rangle$ is false. The logical consequence relation of strict relevant entailment excludes as *illegitimate* such a conclusion which ignores any conjunct of the premise. This explication leads to our ultimate definition of “a knows $\langle P \rangle$ ” in L.

Definition 7 a knows $\langle P \rangle$ in L if and only if

- $\langle P \rangle$ is true in L, and
- a believes $\langle P \rangle$, and
- a has epistemically good evidence for $\langle P \rangle$
- a’s epistemically good evidence for $\langle P \rangle$ entails ontologically good evidence for $\langle P \rangle$ which necessitates the truth of $\langle P \rangle$.

Suppose that Smith’s epistemically good evidence is his visual experience at t $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$ in the room with a red light-bulb. Suppose that the proposition $\langle \text{This cube is red at } t \rangle$ is true. Then its being true entails the *joint* existence of this cube, as an independent object, and the trope of redness. Although this cube is a *part* of the ontologically good evidence for $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$, that is, a part of the joint existence of this cube and the trope of redness, as well as this cube being a part of the ontologically good evidence for $\langle \text{This cube is white at } t \rangle$, the *whole*: ontologically good evidence for $\langle \text{This cube is red at } t \rangle$ does not exist, because the proposition $\langle \text{This cube is red at } t \rangle$ is false. Therefore there is *no* the whole: ontologically good evidence for $\langle \text{This cube is red at } t \rangle$, because the conclusion asserting the existence of the individual property of redness of this cube is false, and according to our **Definition 7**, Smith does not know $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$. If Smith’s epistemically good evidence at t is $\langle \text{This cube looks red} \rangle$, then his evidence entails the existence of this cube and the existence of the individual event of Smith looking at the cube in the room with the red light. The joint existence of these entities is the ontologically good evidence for $\langle \text{This cube looks red at } t \rangle$, which strictly and relevantly entails $\langle \text{This cube looks red} \rangle$, and according to our **Definition 7** Smith knows $\langle \text{This cube looks red} \rangle$. Suppose now that this cube is red, and Smith’s epistemically good evidence for $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$ is his visual experience at t $\langle \text{This cube is red} \rangle$ in the room with a red light-bulb, and that Smith is unaware of the fact he is looking at the cube in this light. His epistemically good evidence entails the existence of this cube and the individual property of redness of this cube, and the joint existence of these two entities is the ontological good evidence of the proposition $\langle \text{This cube is red at } t \rangle$, therefore according to **Definition 7**, Smith

knows <This cube is red >. Even that case allows for knowledge-attribution without contradicting our intuitions.

Our definition cannot be regarded as an effective criterion of knowledge. It may happen that the subject does not formulate the content of visual experience with full awareness. In such cases, our definition will not help to decide whether the subject knows or does not. In this respect, our definition shares the lack of an effective criterion of defined concept with many standard definitions of formal semantics. Note that Gettier's counterexamples are formulated from the point of view of the attributor of knowledge, and from this perspective our **Definition 7** has been formulated.

Barn County Example. Let us consider the familiar Barn County case. Suppose that the landscape close to a road leading through Barn County has barn-facades which from the road look exactly like barns. If Henry is driving along the road he has each time a false belief in the presence of a "barn", although justified by his visual experience. Finally, when driving along this road, it happens that he looks at the one and only *real* barn in Barn County, so this time his belief that this is a barn is justified and true. But in this scenario, Henry's true and justified belief <This is a barn> is not an instance of knowledge. How could we explain the lack of knowledge in that case?

Each time in the presence of a barn façade Henry has epistemically good evidence given by his act of perception, that is, by his non-veridical visual experience directed at <This is a barn> for <This is a barn façade>. However, in each case of a barn façade, his epistemically good evidence does *not* entail ontologically good evidence, that is, the *existence* of the barn façade on such and such a location and at such and such a time. In consequence, his visual experience <This is a barn>, although it entails $E!e_7$ ($e_7 := \text{this barn}$), cannot be regarded as ontologically good evidence for <This is a barn façade>, and according to **Definition 7**, Henry does not know <This is a barn façade>. But if it is so, Henry, in the Barn County scenario, cannot make the distinction between his epistemically good evidence which entails the ontologically good evidence on the one hand, and his epistemically good evidence which does not entail the ontologically good evidence, on the other. In consequence, he cannot have knowledge of <This is a barn façade>. The lack of this instance of knowledge implies, on the basis of the Barn County scenario, that Henry also does not know <This is a barn>. If we apply our **Definition 7** to this case, we get the same conclusion. What is the ontologically good evidence for <This is a barn> in the Barn County scenario? It is the joint existence of this barn and its trope of real existence in space and time, very roughly speaking. What is the trope of the real existence of this barn? The phrase *the trope of the real existence* denotes

a bundle of tropes connected with the perceptible features of this barn as well with its utility functions. Although Henry’s epistemically good experience entails the existence of this barn, it does not entail many tropes belonging to that bundle of tropes, and, in consequence, Henry’s epistemically good evidence $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$ does not entail the joint existence of this barn with its bundle of tropes. We do not claim that Henry is not able to notice a difference between a *real* barn and a barn façade in general. We assume silently that he is *able* to make such a distinction. But in the scenario of the Barn County case, he is not aware of this distinction, and we suppose that Henry making it is impossible. Therefore, **Definition 7** attributes knowledge to subjects in conformity with our intuitions if the subjects of beliefs satisfy the *Presupposition* accepted above. The Barn County case is illustrated by Table 2. and Table 3. below.

Table 2. The illustration of the lack of Henry’s knowledge $\langle \text{This is a barn façade} \rangle$

EE	OE	EE \rightarrow OE	EE \Rightarrow OE
visual experience:= $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$	e_7 := this barn facade	-----	-----

Source: author coverage.

FACT (2)

- $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$ does not entail the existence of this barn façade.

Table 3. The illustration of the lack of Henry’s knowledge $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$

EE	OE	EE \rightarrow OE	EE \Rightarrow OE
visual experience:= $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$	The joint existence of this barn and its bundle of tropes	-----	-----

Source: author coverage.

FACT (3)

- $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$ does not entail the joint existence of this barn and its bundle of tropes.

Whether the epistemically good evidence entails the existence of the respective ontologically good justifier(s), or not depends on context. Imagine that there are no barn-facades in Barn County at all, but the only the real barn which Henry perceives from the road. Suppose that Henry’s visual experience is $\langle \text{This is a barn façade} \rangle$. Do we say that Henry knows $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$ in this case? Of course, not. We say that according to **Definition 7**, his epistemically good evidence does not entail the ontologically good evidence for $\langle \text{This is a barn} \rangle$. The analysis of different scenarios suggests that knowledge-attribution is highly context sensitive.

5. Conclusions

We have made use of the conception of substantial truth to explicate the Gettier Problem. Our definition of knowledge avoids the Gettier Problem. It defines empirical infallibilist propositional knowledge for the given language L which models simple resources of natural language, and which may serve to a certain degree as the ground for more complicated semantic constructions. The application of our definition of knowledge to the entire natural language, or to the entire language of an empirical science may encounter obstacles connected with divergent syntactic forms of natural language propositions and its semantic indeterminacy, the generality of scientific hypotheses, as well as with advanced methods of observation. But our definition applies well to less advanced parts of those languages. The truth and knowledge of scientific hypotheses have their own problems which should be left for another occasion. Concluding, we have reasons to claim that although our sources of knowledge are in principle fallible, we are neither compelled to accept fallibilism concerning knowledge, nor skepticism in its Kirkham version as well as in its Pyrrhonian version, meant as the attitude which refrains from opining about whether we can have knowledge.¹⁸

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¹⁸ The term “Pyrrhonian skepticism” has been borrowed by me from P. Klein who compares Pyrrhonian skepticism with Academic skepticism which is the view that we cannot have knowledge of a certain set of propositions. See Klein (2002).

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CONFLUENCE: THE GALICIAN ORIGINS OF POLISH ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Abstract. Separate Austrian influences, those of Bolzano and Brentano, came together in the work of Kazimierz Twardowski, the founder of the Lvov–Warsaw School and Polish analytic philosophy. From Bolzano he took the ideas of abstract content and absolute truth; from Brentano the centrality of intentionality and the role of psychology, and from both an awareness of the historical depth of philosophy. These streams flowed together in and through him to form central doctrines, attitudes and practices of that School, from its origins in 1895 to its continuation in contemporary Polish philosophy.

Keywords. Polish analytic philosophy, content, object, idea, intentionality, truth, absolute truth.

1. Prelude: The Geopolitics of Central – Eastern Europe

Near the Polish city of Mysłowice, south-east of Katowice in Silesia, two small rivers flow together: the Black Przemsza from the north-west, and the White Przemsza from the north-east, forming the Przemsza, a short tributary of Poland's main river, the Vistula. The confluence of the two tributaries of the Przemsza was, from 1871 to 1914, a geopolitical tripoint, where three empires met: the German Empire to the west, the Russian Empire to the north, and the Austro-Hungarian empire to the east, and it became known as Three Emperors' Corner, Dreikaisereck, Trójkąt Trzech Cesarzy, Уголтрѣхимператоров. I am using the flowing together, or confluence, of streams of water to form a new stream as a metaphor for the bringing together of two streams of thought to form a new stream, combining aspects of the two. The Dreikaisereck represents three of the polities figuring in my story: Germany, Austria, and Poland. I shall be talking about three philosophers: the German Franz Brentano, the Austrian, (Bohemian) Bernard Bolzano, and the Pole, Kazimierz Twardowski. Twardowski's is the mind bringing together the influences of Bolzano and Brentano and originating a new and powerful stream of Polish thought, which flowed metaphorically into the Vistula in Warsaw and became one of the chief

intellectual movements of the inter-war period, a veritable Golden Age of Polish science and letters: the Lvov–Warsaw School.

The story begins in 1866, in Vienna, where Kazimierz Twardowski was born to Polish parents. He attended Vienna University where he studied philosophy with Franz Brentano and Robert Zimmermann. In 1891 he obtained his doctorate with a dissertation *Idea and Perception in Descartes*. His breakthrough work was his 1894 Habilitation dissertation *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen, On the Theory of the Content and Object of Presentations* (hereafter: *IGV*).¹ On the strength of this work, he was appointed as associate professor (*professor extraordinarius*) at the University of Lwów (German: Lemberg), then in the Austrian province of Galicia, later in the second Republic of Poland, from 1945 to 1991 in the Soviet Union, and now as L'viv the chief city of western Ukraine. Twardowski's appointment was internal to the Austro-Hungarian Empire: when Poland regained her independence, his citizenship and employment changed with it, and he taught in Lwów almost until his death in 1938.

Under the relatively mild conditions of Austrian occupation, instruction in the two ancient Polish universities at Kraków and Lwów was in Polish. This contrasted with the extreme suppression of Polish culture in the German and Russian parts of the former Kingdom of Poland. So it was that Austrian influences could pass easily into Polish thought and form the basis for the Polish intellectual explosion of the interwar years. Lwów was the younger of the two universities, founded in 1661 by King Jan II Kazimierz, whose name it bore from 1919–1939.

2. Vienna, Brentano, Zimmermann

Twardowski's philosophical mentors in Vienna were Robert Zimmermann (1824–1898) and Franz Brentano (1838–1917). The latter is by far the better known so we start with him.

Franz Brentano came from the German Rhineland and studied and then taught in Germany, but from 1874–1895 he taught philosophy at the University of Vienna, inspiring a superbly talented array of students including Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Alexius Meinong, Edmund Husserl, Christian von Ehrenfels, Sigmund Freud and others. His lectures on ethics were famous and attracted huge numbers of students. More famous still was the scandal of Brentano's loss of his professorship. In 1880 he had married the daughter of a Jewish banker, an act

¹ TWARDOWSKI [1894].

which for him as a former priest was thought by some to be against Austrian law. To safeguard against possible legal proceedings, Brentano had resigned his professorship and married in Saxony. The expected reinstatement to his chair never came about, as his action had displeased the conservative Emperor Franz Josef, so from 1880–1895 he taught in Vienna as a mere unsalaried *Privatdozent*, unable to supervise dissertations. So it came about that Twardowski, while strongly influenced by Brentano's messianic vision of a new scientific rigorous philosophy based on psychology, had Brentano's senior colleague Zimmermann as supervisor.

Robert Zimmermann came from Prague. As a young boy, he had been a particular favourite of his father's friend Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848), the greatest of 19th century philosophers. Bolzano, who himself had suffered the loss of both his Prague chair and his priestly offices through the reactionary actions of church and state in Metternich's Austria, was particularly concerned to find someone able to appreciate and pass on his revolutionary views in logic and mathematics, and he adopted the young Robert as his intellectual heir, entrusting him with the manuscript of his incomplete final work on the foundations of mathematics, the *Größenlehre*. Unfortunately for Bolzano, Zimmermann was more interested in philosophy than in mathematics, and more unfortunately still, he soon lost sympathy for Bolzano's rigorous logical platonism and preferred the lesser philosophy of Johann Friedrich Herbart. As a result, he did nothing with Bolzano's papers until 1882 when he simply gave them to the Austrian Academy of Sciences. This inaction resulted in a further generation's delay in the reception of Bolzano's work, which only gradually came to the interest of a small coterie of philosophers, including Alois Höfler in Vienna and Edmund Husserl in Germany, in the 1890s. In 1853 Zimmermann had published a textbook of logic and philosophy for secondary school children,² based on the ideas of Bolzano's great *Wissenschaftslehre*, but without attribution (this was with Bolzano's approval). But a second edition of 1860 replaced Bolzano's clear ideas by Herbart's less clear ones, and that was almost the end of Bolzano's influence for more than thirty years.

However, as supervisor of Twardowski, it is very likely that Zimmermann told Twardowski about Bolzano's theory of ideas and propositions in themselves. Another possible source of Twardowski's acquaintance with Bolzano's thought was Alois Höfler, teaching in Vienna and interested in Bolzano. Certainly nowhere else in the world was as cognizant of Bolzano as the philosophy department in 1890s Vienna, so it was fortunate for posterity and for Polish thought that Twardowski studied there.

² ZIMMERMANN [1853].

3. Intentionality

Brentano's rightly most famous contribution to philosophy was his reintroduction, in his opus magnum *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*³, of the ancient and medieval doctrine of the intentional inexistence of objects of consciousness. The *Psychology*, which secured Brentano's professorship in Vienna, but whose first publication contained only two out of six projected parts ("books"), developed out of Brentano's study of Aristotle and the Scholastics, but also of the British empiricists and their founding of philosophy on the theory of the human mind. Brentano sought a criterion for distinguishing the subject matter of the mental science of psychology from the physical sciences, since he denied the then popular view that psychology was reducible to physiology. Method alone could not distinguish one science from another, since Brentano held that, with the exception of the *a priori* science of mathematics, all sciences, including philosophy, share the same method. Therefore, if psychology was to be an autonomous science, it had to be distinguished by its subject matter, what Brentano called mental phenomena.

Among several contenders for a distinguishing mark of mental phenomena as distinct from physical phenomena, Brentano selected what he called intentional inexistence. An idea, a judgement, an emotion, a desire, are all *of* something: they have what we can call "aboutness". I *see* a tree, I *judge* that its leaves are green, I *like* the flowers under the tree, and I *want* to lie down in its shade. By contrast, the tree, the leaves, the flowers, the shade, have no "aboutness": they are not *of* anything; they just are. So they are physical phenomena, while my idea, judgement etc. are mental phenomena. All mental phenomena have this aboutness or of-ness, no physical phenomenon has.

This feature is present in Aristotle's theory of perception in *De Anima*: when I perceive a tree, the form of Tree is present in my soul, but minus the matter that helps to make a real tree. Because of the general mistrust of metaphysics at this time, Brentano prefers to speak not of the soul but of mental acts, and influenced by Descartes and Comte, he prefers not to commit himself to the existence of an independent physical reality. The aboutness of a mental act is therefore modelled on the relation of whole to part. The object of a mental act is immanent in or part of the act itself. So the tree-I-see is not an external physical thing but a part of my seeing. This justifies the term 'inexistence': the tree-I-see *exists* as a physical phenomenon *in* the seeing of the tree as a mental phenomenon. Discussion of the several varieties of this inexistence are what forms the bulk of Brentano's *Psychology*.

³ BRENTANO [1874].

The nature of inexistence led Brentano to use as near-synonyms several different terms for that which a mental act is about: object, content, immanent objectivity. Brentano's defence of the autonomy of psychology and his selection of intentionality as the mark of its subject matter were to influence both empirical psychology and phenomenology. But the instability and potential scepticism of the inexistence doctrine led to dissatisfaction among Brentano's students. In 1890, Höfler and Meinong published a school logic and psychology textbook⁴ (replacing that of Zimmermann) in which they distinguished between an immanent or mental object on the one hand, and an external object on the other. This distinction and its terminological anchoring was to be the subject of *IGV*, Twardowski's *Habilitationsschrift*.

4. Ideas

In German, the standard term for the Cartesian – Lockean concept of *idea* is *Vorstellung*. The term *Idee* does occur, but less often (Twardowski used it in his dissertation on Descartes.) The word *Vorstellung* was introduced into German philosophical terminology by Christian Wolff as the German equivalent of the Latin words *idea* and *repraesentatio*.⁵ It is a regular German word with many meanings, it comes from the idea of putting (*stellen*) something before (*vor*) something or somebody. Generally, it was used where philosophers writing in Latin, French or English would use 'idea' or 'idée'. It has the disadvantage of being long, and of being variously translatable, giving rise to a rather pointless discussion in English translations of Kant, Schopenhauer and other Germans about whether 'idea', 'presentation' or 'representation' is the best rendering. On the other hand, it comes from a verb '(sich etwas) vorstellen', so that the verbs 'present' and 'represent' can be used, whereas the verb 'ideate' is extremely unnatural and can also have other meanings. I use 'present' for *vorstellen*, the verb, and 'idea' for *Vorstellung*, the noun.

5. Content and Object of Ideas

Twardowski's little book on the content and object of ideas was and is a classic. It is barely a hundred pages long, yet with a clarity and succinctness practically unknown in German-language philosophy it made the case for a clear distinction between an immanent, mental aspect of presenting, and a transcendent target of the presenting. The former Twardowski called *Inhalt*, the 'content', the latter

⁴ HÖFLER and MEINONG [1890].

⁵ KNÜPFER [1911], p. 14.

Gegenstand, the ‘object’, of the idea. Twardowski thus exploited the terminological redundancy in Brentano to anchor the distinction. The book had immediate influence on others of Brentano’s former students, in particular Meinong and Husserl, who went on to develop their own (differing) versions of the content–object distinction.

The arguments Twardowski uses to make the distinction are easy to summarize. They come in Section 6. If I think of something that does not exist, such as the god Zeus, then while Zeus does not exist, the content representing him does. So they cannot be the same. Content and object cannot be the same because they often have different properties and stand in different relations. The number 4 is divisible by 2, but the content presenting the number 4 is not divisible by any number. A mountain is extended and rocky, but the content presenting it is neither. Finally, different contents may present the same object. The content *the city on the site of the Roman Juvavum* is a different content from *the birthplace of Mozart*, but both present the same object, Salzburg. Such examples and arguments are commonplace today, though they are more often recounted in connection with Frege’s distinction between the sense and reference of expressions. Twardowski’s psychological distinction is indeed closely analogous to Frege’s linguistic one.

6. Two Kinds of Content

When he introduces the content/object distinction, Twardowski quotes Höfler with approval, where it is stated:

What we call ‘the content of an idea and a judgement’ lies just as completely within the subject as the act of presenting or judging itself.⁶

This makes the content of an idea something mental, and therewith something in time, if not (according to views then prevalent) in space. For this reason, I can think of something that does not exist at the same time as my thinking of it, or does not exist in space and time, or does not exist at all, but all the contents are in time and can be given a date. This conception of content as something immanent and mental is in accord with Brentano, and is the view adopted later by Meinong.

A little later in his monograph, however, Twardowski talks about naming and meaning. He notes that names and ideas are closely correlated with one another. When we name something, he says, we do three things: we indicate or express that we are presenting something; we intend to arouse in listeners a presentation with the same content; and we name, designate or refer to something. When I

⁶ TWARDOWSKI [1894], p. 4; HÖFLER and MEINONG [1890], § 6.

said ‘the same content’, this can be understood in two different ways. Someone other than myself cannot have the same content if we are two different people and ‘content’ refers to something mental, since my content and theirs have to be distinct. In that case, what ‘the same’ means must be something like ‘the same in kind’ or ‘similar’. On the other hand, if ‘the same’ means ‘identical’ then my content and someone else’s can be the same, but then content cannot be something mental, but must be something abstract, which two or more people can share in common. Twardowski’s use of ‘the same content’ in connection with naming in fact tends rather to support this second reading, of content as something abstract, since he equates the content I and my hearer have in mind when I use a name with the name’s meaning, and that is something abstract: “This content is that which is understood by the “meaning” (*Bedeutung*) of a name.”⁷

This uncertainty in the status of content (mental versus abstract) is I think not accidental: it derives from Twardowski’s two principal sources: Brentano and Bolzano.

7. Bolzano on Ideas

In *IGV*, two philosophers are mentioned more often than any others, and each is mentioned as often as the other. They are Brentano and Bolzano. The frequency of mentions of Brentano is unsurprising, since he taught and influenced Twardowski directly. That of Bolzano is more surprising. We already mentioned the likely sources, namely Zimmermann and Höfler. But Twardowski does not just refer to Bolzano, he employs (and criticises) his philosophy. Section 5 of Twardowski’s work is entitled “So-called ‘objectless’ ideas.” He quotes Bolzano’s *Wissenschaftslehre*,⁸ where Bolzano upholds the claim that there are ideas which have no objects. As examples, Bolzano gives ‘nothing’, ‘round square’, ‘green virtue’ and ‘golden mountain’. Students of Meinong will recognize some of these as familiar. Twardowski rightly objects against Bolzano that ‘nothing’ is a syncategorematic term, not in the business of presenting objects, but against the other three cases he argues quite fallaciously that Bolzano confuses not having an object with not being presented. Indeed, one of Twardowski’s chief theses in *IGV* is that all ideas have objects, even in those cases where the object does not exist. This was the view taken up and made famous, indeed notorious, by Meinong.

Twardowski’s acceptance of non-existent objects is not germane to our point, however. What is important for us here is rather that he quotes Bolzano’s

⁷ TWARDOWSKI [1894], p. 11.

⁸ BOLZANO [1837].

Wissenschaftslehre at a time when no one else was doing so. Indeed, he notes with approval in Section 4 that Bolzano makes and maintains a clear distinction between the content of an idea, what he (Bolzano) calls ‘objective idea’ or ‘idea in itself’ (*Vorstellung an sich*) and the object or objects (if any) of the idea. Bolzano’s robust platonist theory of ideas and propositions in themselves (*Sätze an sich*) is indeed the first feature of his logic reform that catches one’s attention. It is insisted upon by him as the key that unlocks the whole panoply of rigorous logical conceptions. Bolzano distinguishes, in particular, between ideas as something mental, subjective ideas, and ideas in themselves, or objective ideas, and he calls the objective ideas the *contents* of subjective ideas and the *meanings* of linguistic terms. As a logician, Bolzano dwells far less than does Twardowski on the subjective or mental aspect, but the relationship is exactly as Twardowski says. Bolzano, like Frege after him, speaks of the individual subject grasping (*erfassen*) objective ideas and propositions. So to the extent that Twardowski is using Bolzano’s conception of ideas in themselves as contents, he is using the abstract rather than the mental concept of content. In the context of his approval of Bolzano, Twardowski also approvingly quotes Zimmermann, who likewise emphasizes the distinction, and in addition the much younger Benno Kerry, another Brentano student from Vienna whose work on logic and mathematics famously came to the attention of Frege. The juxtaposition of the quotes from Bolzano and Zimmermann makes it plausible that it was Zimmermann who brought Bolzano’s discussion to Twardowski’s attention.

The first and perhaps most important way in which the initially very distinct streams of thought on ideas, coming from Brentano on the one hand, and Bolzano on the other, flow together is in the work of Twardowski on the content of ideas. The ambiguity or indecision of Twardowski’s conception as to whether contents are mental or abstract can indeed be taken as an implicit mark of the divergent origins of his conception. Of course, it is perfectly possible to reconcile the two conceptions, as Husserl was to do a little later in his *Logical Investigations*, by saying that an abstract content is the ideal type or species of which the mental contents are instances.

8. Truth

In his middle years, Brentano held to a somewhat tentative correspondence theory of truth, though he later repudiated it in favour of an evidence theory. Bolzano, on the other hand, had a very straightforward and, indeed, rather deflationary conception of truth. A proposition (henceforth I drop the ‘in itself’) of the form *A has b* is true if and only if every object falling under the subject

term *A* has some attribute falling under the predicate term *b*.⁹ For example, the proposition [Snow is white], in its canonical form [Snow has whiteness], is true if and only if every batch of snow has some type of whiteness. This is, appearances to the contrary, a general definition of truth, since Bolzano held that all propositions, no matter how expressed linguistically, can be put into an equivalent subject–predicate form *A has b*, where *A* is any term and *b* is a term denoting an abstract attribute. It is clear from Bolzano’s account that no proposition is true at one time and false at another: propositions are out of time and so are either true, period, or false, period. If a form of words, such as ‘Socrates is sitting’ or ‘I am tired’, expresses something true at one time and something false at another, then the different occurrences of the form of words in question express different propositions.

The idea that truth is thus absolute, and not relative to time, place, speaker or other circumstance, is one which Twardowski upheld and defended vigorously in a paper of 1900 with the title ‘O tzw. prawdach względnych’, ‘On so-called relative truths’, translated into German in 1902 as ‘Über sogenannte relative Wahrheiten’.¹⁰ In the paper, Twardowski upheld the view, consonant with that of Bolzano, and perhaps even inspired by him, that appearances to the effect that a proposition could change its truth value stemmed from elliptical uses of language, in which aspects of the circumstances of utterance of a sentence are exploited to make it unnecessary in the context pedantically to spell out all the features that would pin down a unique proposition as the meaning of the sentence.¹¹ The importance of Twardowski’s defence of absolute truth, then almost certainly a minority view, for the subsequent development of philosophy and logic in Poland, is considerable.¹²

9. The Lwów School, 1895–1939

On arriving in the Polish-speaking University of Lwów in 1895, Twardowski found Polish philosophy in a lamentably backward state by comparison with that of Vienna, then at the forefront of philosophical developments. He therefore set about transforming philosophical life, by his teaching, by reforms of the way in which philosophy was examined, and by the professional institutions supporting philosophy. He was tirelessly energetic in introducing and implementing these reforms, all of which were aimed at improving the standards of philosophy in his part of Polish-speaking Europe. The price he paid for this organisatory and reforming activity was that his own aspirations to be a researcher in philosophy,

⁹ BOLZANO [1935], p. 90.

¹⁰ TWARDOWSKI [1900].

¹¹ See SIMONS [2009].

¹² See WOLEŃSKI and SIMONS 1989.

publishing books and papers and gaining international recognition, had to be drastically curtailed. His energies went into producing the next generation of philosophers writing in Polish rather than into a large philosophical output of his own. His lectures, on the model of his teacher Brentano, were extremely clear and likewise extremely popular. Like his older colleague Meinong, whose advice he sought on the matter, he set up a laboratory of experimental psychology, and trained two generations of Polish psychologists. His rewards were not wide personal fame, of which he was certainly capable, but rather the satisfaction over the next four decades of seeing an immeasurable improvement in standards, and his own students coming to occupy a significant proportion of the chairs of Philosophy and Psychology in the independent Poland of 1919–39. Another achievement, for which Twardowski's own views as well as the generally liberal and progressive environment of Polish intellectual life were jointly responsible, was that a significant number of his students and pupils were female. Twardowski's advanced seminars contained in some cases a majority of women, at a time when female emancipation was making slower progress elsewhere.¹³

In the course of time, Twardowski attracted the brightest and best minds from all parts of the Polish-speaking world to study with him in Lwów. The first to make an independent name for himself was Jan Łukasiewicz, himself a native of the city, whose interests were in the methodology of science, logic, and the history of philosophy. Twardowski and Łukasiewicz indeed jointly translated David Hume's first *Enquiry* into Polish. The first lectures Twardowski gave in Lwów were on the reforms being made in elementary logic, a topic taking some ideas from Brentano but also looking at developments in Britain and France. Łukasiewicz took up this line of thought and very quickly advanced beyond Twardowski's rather rudimentary skills in logic. Łukasiewicz read and commented on Aristotle as well as Jevons, but he also read Bolzano, Frege and Russell, and visited Meinong in Graz, at a time when both were working on the logic of probability. Łukasiewicz's 1910 monograph *On the Principle of Contradiction in Aristotle* was already questioning the orthodoxy of entrenched logical principles, and this questioning attitude came to fruition during the Great War when Łukasiewicz, newly appointed to the reopened University of Warsaw, developed his most significant idea, that of many-valued logic. It was Łukasiewicz who brought the Lwów School into closer appreciation of the logical ideas of Frege, Russell, Couturat and Peirce. But Łukasiewicz also knew his Bolzano. His 1913 monograph on the logical foundations of probability theory, written and published in German, compared his own logical theory of probability with similar ideas of Bolzano. Łukasiewicz's clarity of style surpassed even that of his teacher, as indeed that of all other Polish philosophers

¹³ SIMONS [forthcoming].

and logicians. Though under the influence of Frege and Husserl he came to reject any admixture of psychology in logic, and replaced psychological terms such as *sąd*, judgement, and *przedstawienie*, idea, by linguistic ones such as *zdanie*, sentence, and *nazwa*, name, Łukasiewicz always remained respectful towards Twardowski.

Soon other talented students came to Lwów to study with Twardowski, among them Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Tadeusz Czeżowski, Władysław Witwicki, Roman Ingarden and Stanisław Leśniewski. Before the Great War they already formed a circle who discussed and published their ideas in Polish and who interacted with their teacher and amongst themselves. Leśniewski, Czeżowski and Ajdukiewicz were interested in logical problems; Ajdukiewicz and Kotarbiński in general philosophy and methodology, Tatarkiewicz in aesthetics and the history of philosophy, Ingarden in phenomenology and ontology, and Witwicki in psychology. When Poland regained her independence they spread out and populated her new or newly reopened universities in Warsaw, Vilnius and Kraków. Twardowski continued to teach in Lwów, and while his later students such as Leopold Blaustein, Daniela Gromska and Izidora Dąmbska did not attain the international standing of the earlier generation, they continued the high standards of their predecessors.

10. The New Centre of Gravity: Warsaw

When Łukasiewicz and then Leśniewski were both appointed Professors at Warsaw University after the Great War, that city and university could boast two more professors of mathematical logic than anywhere else on the planet. They were soon joined by a once-in-a-generation genius, Alfred Tarski (*né* Tajtelbaum), who studied mathematics as well as philosophy and went on to become the most prominent of Polish logicians. These three between them raised a generation of outstanding logical talent, the concentration of which has never been seen before or since. Twardowski was somewhat dismayed by their obsession with logical detail at the expense of sound common sense, but remained on relatively cordial terms with all of them, except perhaps Leśniewski, whose idiosyncratic and intolerant character led to his eventually falling out with everyone except his close friend Kotarbiński.

The 1920s were a period of establishment and consolidation of the new logical approach to philosophy, the writing of Polish textbooks and the anchoring of new institutions, for which the pre-existing Austrian universities in Lwów and Kraków served as a clear basis. The 1930s saw the newly self-confident Poles reaching out to cognate movements of scientific philosophy in Austria (the Vienna Circle), Germany (the Berlin Group), Britain, France, Scandinavia and

Czechoslovakia. International congresses and exchanges with such rising talents as Kurt Gödel, Rudolf Carnap, W. V. Quine and Karl Popper, as well as loose participation in the Unity of Science movement, brought Polish philosophy and logic into the mainstream of European analytic thought. Łukasiewicz found a kindred spirit in the first German professor of mathematical logic, Heinrich Scholz, and indeed fled Poland to Münster and Scholz during World War II. It was Scholz, a trained historian of philosophy, who first pointed out the striking similarity between Tarski's 1936 definition of logical consequence and the definition of *logische Ableitbarkeit* given by Bolzano in 1837. Tarski's own attendance at a Unity of Science meeting at Harvard in 1939 literally saved his life, as he would almost certainly have ended his days in a Nazi death camp, as did most of his Jewish compatriots. Tarski's friend and collaborator Adolf Lindenbaum, and his wife Janina Hosiasson (original author of the Raven Paradox of confirmation¹⁴) did indeed meet such a fate in 1942. In the unstable atmosphere of Summer 1939, Hosiasson had failed, by only days, to obtain a visa to depart on the same ship as Tarski to the USA.

The emphasis on logic in Warsaw was driven in part by the interests of the main actors there, but also in part by the rare collaboration with the Warsaw mathematicians, who understood that it was necessary to specialize in new subjects such as logic, set theory and topology, in order to avoid competing with the established mathematical nations of Germany, France and Britain in areas such as analysis and algebra. The result was to bring Polish philosophy somewhat closer to its Bohemian roots in Bolzano, whose combination of mathematical and philosophical talents was echoed among the Poles. The obsession with truth that had characterized Polish thinking before World War I continued, with essays by Ajdukiewicz, Kotarbiński and Łukasiewicz feeding into the supreme achievement in this genre, Tarski's 1933 monograph *The Concept of Truth in the Languages of the Deductive Sciences*, translated into German in 1935 by Leopold Blaustein.¹⁵ Tarski's paper, technically masterful despite its limited philosophical scope, embodied Twardowski's conception of absolute truth in a new mathematically formulated way, continuing the influence of Twardowski's student and Tarski's teacher Leśniewski. Among the logicians, the only one to move slightly away Twardowski's notion of absolute truth was Łukasiewicz, whose three-valued logic envisaged propositions dealing with the future either changing their truth value from merely possible to true or false, depending on what contingently happened, or else being intrinsically tensed.

¹⁴ HOSIASSON-LINDENBAUM, J. [1940].

¹⁵ TARSKI [1933]. We now know, following investigation by Jan Woleński, that Twardowski materially assisted Tarski in getting Blaustein as translator, advising on the translation, and in smoothing the way to publication in German.

While the pre-eminence of Warsaw between the wars led to a restrained rivalry with the source in Lwów, and Twardowski no doubt felt himself somewhat upstaged by his younger colleagues, the flow of talent from those two centres continued and spread to other universities. Twardowski's greater emphasis on psychology led to his having a similar dominating influence on Polish psychology to that which he had exercised on Polish philosophy. He never completely gave up his view that psychology has a prominent role for philosophy, though his later writings also recognise the importance of logical and linguistic considerations, as indeed they had from the start.

11. The Virtues of Polish Analytic Philosophy

While they never subscribed to the label 'analytic' – there was no need to do so as they had no serious rivals from whom to distinguish themselves – Polish philosophers of the Lvov–Warsaw School were closest in spirit to the broad movement we now know as 'analytic philosophy', whose origins, whether in Prague, Jena or Cambridge, produced work with which theirs could compete on equal and similar terms. The historical *Bildung* of the school's founder was transmitted to the students, so that while, under the influence of Brentano and later of Frege and Russell, it was felt that Polish philosophy and logic were solidly scientific, modern and innovative, there was never any ignorant supposition that they had no intellectual predecessors, nor that they were launching an unprecedented "revolution in philosophy", a fancy which on occasion gripped Austrian and British philosophers alike. They eschewed the Vienna Circle's extreme and self-undermining critique of metaphysics, they never succumbed to French conventionalism or relativism, and they were never tempted by anything like ordinary language philosophy. Above all, they were epistemological realists and scientific optimists, even or perhaps especially those, such as Ajdukiewicz and Ingarden, who had encountered modern transcendental idealism in Husserl. Having their sources in two Austrian figures, one Bohemian, the other German in origin, both of whom were decidedly 'anti-Kantian', Polish philosophy was never in danger of succumbing to transcendental – or any other kind of – idealism. To employ the *bon mot* of the Vienna Circle's arch-historian, Otto Neurath, like Austrian philosophy in general, Polish philosophy was spared the Kantian interlude.

In addition to its doctrinal fortune, Polish philosophy has been blessed – again by and following the example of its founder – with the virtue of expressive clarity. There is rarely any doubt as to what a Polish philosopher means. There is no striving for verbal brilliance or literary effect for its own sake, even though Polish philosophers can be eloquent and pointed in their writings. These virtues, and the intellectual solidity of its surviving members, enabled Polish

philosophers to shrug off the challenge of Marxism–Leninism in post-Yalta Poland more quickly than in any other of the Soviet satellites.

Polish philosophy today still flourishes. It has its own emphases, which continue those of the pre-war years, and it is rightly proud of its own past. It now fits seamlessly into the general analytic movement, and indeed serves as a welcome counterbalance to some of that movement's more extreme excursions, whether into modal realism, monism, mereological nihilism, alethic relativism, Carnapian methodological insouciance or neo-Hegelian coherentist epistemology. This moderating influence echoes that of its interwar years.

Where the Black and the White Przemsza rivers flow together, three Empires once stood. Now that minor confluence is internal to the Republic of Poland, and its historical significance almost forgotten. The streams of thought of Bolzano and Brentano are not minor, indeed they represent perhaps the two most scientifically significant systems of philosophy in the 19th century (which is not to say they are the most influential!) Their confluence in the thought of Twardowski, who for influence rivals Brentano, and whose career as a leader in philosophy started in Austrian Galicia, is highly significant. Twardowski's judicious mixture of logical, ontological, psychological and historical considerations not only provided a firm and fertile basis for the development of a whole nation's philosophy, but also, in my opinion, got the balance right as to how philosophy should properly be done.

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ABSOLUTENESS OF TRUTH AND THE LVOV–WARSAW SCHOOL

(TWARDOWSKI, KOTARBIŃSKI, LEŚNIEWSKI, ŁUKASIEWICZ
TARSKI, KOKOSZYŃSKA)

Abstract. According to Twardowski, truth is if it is independent of temporal coordinates. This understanding was one of the main arguments against truth-relativism. Kotarbiński rejected this view as far the issue concerns sentences about the future, but he did not elaborated this idea from a logical point of view. Leśniewski offered an argument that truth is eternal if and only if it is sempiternal; Twardowski shared this opinion. Łukasiewicz rejected sempiternality but retained eternity. His main novelty consisted in applying three-valued logic to explain how it is possible that truth is not sempiternal. Łukasiewicz also pointed out that bivalence together with the principle of causality implies radical determinism. Kotarbiński accepted Leśniewski's criticism and he defended Twardowski's view in *Elementy*. Tarski did not explicitly addressed to the problem of absoluteness or temporality of truth. On the other hand, Kokoszyńska proposed an interpretation of the semantic theory of truth as absolute. It is possible to justify absoluteness of truth in semantics cum the principle of bivalence and show that bivalence does not imply determinism.

Keywords. Truth, absoluteness, eternity, sempiternality, temporality, truth-bearers.

The concept of truth was one of the most important philosophical topics investigated in the Lvov-Warsaw School (LWS for brevity). Most philosophers belonging to this group defended the absoluteness of truth.¹ I selected Kazimierz Twardowski, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Stanisław Leśniewski, Jan Łukasiewicz, Alfred Tarski and Maria Kokoszyńska as the most significant authors offering interesting logical argument for alethic, that is, pertaining to truth, absolutism and against truth-theoretic relativism.² In most cases, I will not review truth-

¹ But not all. Edward Poznański and Aleksander Wundheiler were the most notable exceptions. They proposed in 1934 a variant of the consensus theory of truth as more accurate for the philosophy of science.

² One should also mention Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Tadeusz Czeżowski and Zygmunt Zawirski who also belonged to the logical wing of LWS. However, they did not developed new separate argument for alethic absolutism. Władysław Tatarkiewicz or Izydora Dąmbska opted for the absoluteness of truth from the point of view of axiological or/and epistemological absolutism.

definitions proposed by the mentioned philosophers (a comprehensive account of related definitions can be found in WOLEŃSKI, SIMONS [1989]).³ In general, Twardowski and his most students accepted the classical truth-definition. Perhaps the following scheme captures the basic intuition:

- (*) A truth-bearer (sentence, proposition, statement, judgment, etc.) is true if and only if *A* says that it is so and so and it is so and so.⁴

The scheme (*) was in LWS concretized in various ways, for instance, by the formula “the sentence of the form ‘*a* is *b*’ is true if and only if the object denoted by the term *a* possesses a property expressed by the predicate *b*. Note that LWS generally avoided the label ‘the correspondence theory of truth’ as misleading.

Twardowski, influenced by Bolzano and Brentano, offered classical arguments against relativism (see TWARDOWSKI [1900]). He did not define the concept of truth (at least in TWARDOWSKI [1900]) and simply identified truth with true proposition. His main problem concerns the question whether truth is absolute or relative. According to Twardowski an utterance *A* is absolutely true if and only if *A* is true at all times, all places and all conditions, but *A* is relatively true if and only if *A* is true at some times, some place or certain conditions. Twardowski mentioned the following examples of relatively true utterances:

- (1) It is raining in Lvov today;
- (2) This flower has a pleasant smell;
- (3) Cold baths are healthy;
- (4) It is morally wrong to conceal truth.

According to standard arguments of alethic relativism, (1) can be false tomorrow, even if it is true today and, moreover, can be true in Lvov, but false in Cracow, (2) is (or can be) true for some persons and flowers, but false for other persons or flowers, the truth-value of (3) depends on who uses cold baths and, finally, (4) is a derivative of moral views. Consequently, sentences, according to relativists, can change logical values dependently on times, places or circumstances.

Twardowski did not agree with the above account. First of all, he distinguished propositions and sentences. The former, but not the latter are proper bearers of truth. On the other hand, sentences frequently have not fixed meaning, because indexicals, temporal and spatial coordinates, occur in them. An appeal to special

³ I will also not compare views about the (alethic) absolutism/relativism controversy advanced in LWS with ideas proposed in other philosophical circles.

⁴ In what follows, I will use the unified terminology, in particular, the nouns “proposition” and “sentences” are employed, even if original terminology employed the verb “judgment” or “statement”; I sometimes use the noun “utterance” in order to be terminologically neutral.

changing circumstances constitutes another reason for having inexact meaning by sentences. If we eliminate elements generating having inexact meanings by sentences, we obtain complete sentences expressing fixed propositions. Thus, (1) – (4) become:

- (1') It is raining in Lvov at the time t ;
- (2') This flower smells pleasantly for the person P ;
- (3') Cold bath is healthy for the person P ;
- (4') According to the moral view M , it is morally wrong to conceal truth

respectively. Converting incomplete sentences into propositions, complete by definition, result in possessing definite logical values by the latter. One can eventually speak about truth or falsehood of sentences, if it is known which propositions are expressed by them. Twardowski offered two other arguments against alethic relativism. Firstly, relativism confuses truth of A and the knowledge that A is true. Secondly, this view violates the principle of the excluded middle and the principle of non-contradiction, which are the fundamental laws of logic. However, this principles should be applied not to sentences, but to propositions. If A is a proposition, not- A is as well. Now, A and not- A cannot be both true and exactly one from this pair is true, but the second is false. Twardowski did not mention any representative of relativism in 1900. In (TWARDOWSKI [1975]), he exemplifies alethic relativism by the account of truth proposed by pragmatism.

It is convenient to introduce some terminology related to Twardowski's considerations with respect to temporal aspects of having logical values by propositions being their bearers. We say that truth and falsity are omnitemporal, that is, if A is true (false), then A is true (false) at every time (and reversely, of course). A is sempiternally true (false) if and only if provided that A is true (false) at time t , it is also true (false) at every time earlier than t .⁵ Finally, A is eternally true if and only if, provided that it is true at time t , it is also true at every time later than t . A very interesting question consists in the relation of absoluteness of truth to its omnitemporality, sempiternality and eternity.

In 1913 took place a very hot debate between Kotarbiński and Leśniewski. The former (see KOTARBIŃSKI [1913]) defended eternity of truth, but rejected its sempiternality. His concerns was the possibility of creative human action. According to Kotarbiński, the existence of a such action is inconsistent with sempiternality of truth. Consequently, he admits eternal truths which are not

⁵ We can also say that truth (falsity) is predetermined if it is sempiternal (I will omit the reference to falsity in most further remarks). It immediately suggests a connection of properties of truth with the perennial problem of determinism and indeterminism. However, this question was not touched in Polish discussions about alethic absolutism and relativism. I will omit the reference to falsity in most further remarks.

sempiternal. Consider an object O created by a human action in time t . Clearly, O does not exist before t . Kotarbiński, following Brentano, defines truth by the following formula:

- (5) A proposition A affirming an object O is true if and only if O exists;
 A is false
 otherwise.

Now, if O does not exist, A is neither true nor false. Consequently, A cannot be true or false and it is indefinite. By contraposition, A is definite if and only if A is true or false. Consider the following statements:

- (6) For any A , either A or not- A is true;
 (7) For any A , A is true or false;
 (8) For any A , if A is true, not- A is false,

as possible forms of the principle of the excluded middle. If we adopt that A is true is equivalent with A is not-false, (4) and (5) express the classical excluded middle. However, the admission of indefinite sentences is at odds with the equivalence of 'true' and 'not false', Consequently, (6) and (7) have a restricted validity, contrary to (8) which is universal. These considerations lead to

- (9) For any A , A is definite or A is indefinite,

as a generalized (or modified) the principle of the excluded middle. Clearly, (9) is fully consistent with qualifying some propositions as neither true nor false, but just indefinite.⁶

Leśniewski very strongly criticized Kotarbiński's account of truth tolerating indefinite propositions. He sarcastically remarked (see LEŚNIEWSKI [1913], p. 104, page reference to English translation):

No truth can be created! The need to stress and energetically instill this view in others is growing now that, at the present stage of development of Polish 'philosophy', voices claiming that truths are created are clamoring even more loudly. It is not only the protagonists of all sorts of 'Pragmatism', 'Humanism' 'Conventionalism', 'Instrumentalism', 'previdionism', etc. that speak of the 'creation' of truths', i.e. not only the representatives of these 'philosophical' trends according to whom a judgment 'becomes' true: if it is useful for the preservation of the species; if it is an effective instrument of thought; if it assists in predicting reality, etc. That is not only those for whom, like for the Greek sophist Protagoras and the Polish sophist Florian Znaniecki, 'man is is the

⁶ Kotarbiński is sometimes regarded as a forerunner of many-valued logic. See WOLEŃSKI [1990] for further remarks. Perhaps one remark is in order. Kotarbiński suggest nothing about the nature of indefinite propositions. In particular, he does not explain whether the indefiniteness should be considered as an additional logical value or a truth-value gap.

measure of all things' and thus a 'measure of truth'. Slowly, truth begin to become 'created' even by the representatives of the camp which has gathered at the Lvov University around Professor Kazimierz Twardowski; that is the camp, whose members have for such a long time believed that a judgment is *always* absolutely truth, i.e. that is true independently of whether it is useful or damaging; whether it helps to forecast the future or not; whether a scholar felt like 'creating' their given truth and he did, or refrained from such 'creation', etc. *No truth can be created!*

Although Kotarbiński is not mentioned in the above quotation, Leśniewski alludes to him as a person going against one of the most characteristic doctrines of Twardowski's school.

Leśniewski presented in his essay a very detailed criticism of Kotarbiński's view that some truths are eternal but not sempiternal. According to Leśniewski, a sentence (he used the nominalistic language in his works) of the type '*a* is *b*' is true if and only if the object signified by the term *a* has a property signified by the predicate *b*. It is just the case that the sentence possesses the function of symbolizing. Two conditions must be satisfied for possessing this function. Firstly, the term *a* cannot be empty, and secondly, the predicate *b* must connote a property of the object denoted by the subject term. If these conditions are satisfied, if *A* is true, not-*A* is false. This suffices for grounding the law of the excluded middle for sentences possessing the function of symbolizing; this principle is violated by sentences with empty terms, because if *a* is empty, '*a* is *b*' as well as its negation are false. Thus, although Leśniewski does not consider the excluded middle as a universally valid principle, he also rejects indefinite sentences. Assume that if a sentence *A* is not false it is also not true. According to Leśniewski's semiotic claims, this sentence fails to possess a function of symbolizing and it simultaneously does not possess such a function. Leśniewski argues that these assumptions produce a contradiction. I will not reproduce Leśniewski's proof (by *reductio ad absurdum*) that a contradiction actually follows from premises adopted by Leśniewski (see WOLEŃSKI, SIMONS [1989], p. 401–402); this paper shows that Leśniewski's argument is incorrect and must be supplemented by additional premises, where one can find which additional premises are to be added. The most important Leśniewski's result is following one:

(10) *A* is eternal if and only if it is sempiternal.

Due to (10) every truth is omnitemporal. It is important to note that Leśniewski used only classical logic. I will return to this problem at the end of the present paper.

Although it was 1913 and no non-classical logic was suggested to cope with the problem of sempiternality and eternity of truth, Leśniewski-type arguments

can be used by everybody who maintains that classical logical rules are sufficient to argue for the absoluteness of truth (see also below). Kotarbiński accepted Leśniewski's criticism and resigned from indefinite propositions and the view that truth can be eternal, but not sempiternal. In KOTARBIŃSKI [1929] he repeated Twardowski's arguments against relativism and considered truth as an absolute property of sentences (he also became a nominalism). Twardowski himself (see TWARDOWSKI [1971]); this paper was written about 1913)) joined Lesniewski in his criticism of Kotarbiński. Leśniewski did not return to the problem of temporality of truth in his later writings. However, he proposed (see LEŚNIEWSKI [1931]) certain interpretation of the phrase

(11) '*a is b*' is true at time *t*.

Leśniewski proposed to read (11) as

(12) '*a is b at time t*' is true.

This allows a simple interpretation of tensed sentences as absolutely true or false, because the letter *t* is a parameter, not functions as a variable. It also seems that constant Leśniewski's opposition against many-valued logic was motivated by his strong feeling that truth is omintemporal.

Łukasiewicz's standpoint toward alethic absolutism and relativism is connected with many-valued logic (ŁUKASIEWICZ [1922], [1930]). His discovery of this kind of logic was strongly motivated by the question of determinism and indeterminism. Łukasiewicz argued that two-valued (bivalent) logic supplemented by the principle of causality implies strong determinism.⁷ Consider the simplest case, namely three-valued logic. Future contingencies, that is sentences about future events exemplify those sentences which are neither true nor false in the moment of their issuing. Let *A* be such a sentence. We have (the symbol $v(A)$ means "the value of a sentence *A*) = $v(\text{not-}A) = \frac{1}{2}$). This sentence became true or false in the future. Otherwise speaking, sentences with the third value, denoted by the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$ become true or false.

Now the question arises whether Łukasiewiczian semantics implies alethic relativism. Clearly, truth is not sempiternal on Łukasiewicz's views, because if *A* is a future contingency and $v(A) = 1$ at time *t*, it can have another logical value in moments earlier than *t*. On the hand, if *A* becomes true (or false) at time *t*, it remains true (or false) for ever. Consequently, truth is eternal, although not sempiternal. According to Łukasiewicz, this consequence is coherent with alethic absolutism, because (I use another language than Łukasiewicz's did) this view concerns changing truth of *A* into falsity but not becoming *A* true. The property of eternity makes truth stable and it suffices for alethic absolutism.

⁷ Logical determinism is the view that (strong) determinism follows from the principle of bivalence. According to Łukasiewicz logic does not suffice for justify determinism from.

Two remarks are in order here. Firstly, we should distinguish strong absolutism and weak absolutism. The former considers truth as omnitemporal (sempiternal and eternal), but the latter attributes to truth eternity only. Leśniewski was a strong absolutist but Łukasiewicz accepted the weak form of alethic absolutism. Secondly, we can state a generalized version of the discussed problem. Typically, absolutism and relativism are discussed with respect to truth. Adding falsity does not create any specific problem. The situation changes, when we take into account other logical values, for instance, the third value in Łukasiewicz's semantics. Examples suggest that it is not eternal. On the other hand, if we accept that not possibilities will be realized in the future, at least some neither-truth-nor-falsehoods can be eternal with respect to their logical values. Similar considerations concern sempiternality of the third value. It seems that various ontological circumstances can influence specific semantic properties of sentences having other logical values than truth or falsity.

Tarski did not explicitly address himself to the philosophical problem of alethic absolutism.⁸ However, he mentioned the (see TARSKI [1933], p. 199; page-reference to English translation) that the concept of correct (or true) sentence in an individual domain, used in the Hilbert school, is of a relative character. Hence, he indirectly suggested that the semantic definition of truth as formulated in TARSKI [1933] is absolute. However, it only means that the absolutist semantic truth-definition is formulated for the entire domain D of individuals. Speaking more philosophically, this domain can be identified with the world in its integrity.⁹ Now, if someone selects a sub-domain $D' \subset D$, a relativized concept of truth is obtained. At least three reasons justify an analysis of the semantic concept of truth as related to the alethic absolutism/relativism problem. Firstly, Tarski explicitly considered his truth-definition as an answer to an epistemological issue. Hence, we can try to address typical epistemological problems to the definition in question, even if Tarski was silent about them. Secondly, Tarski relativized truth to a language. Thirdly, Tarski implicitly in TARSKI [1933] and explicitly in his later works, relativized truth to a model M . Summing up the second and third point, Tarski's analysis concerned the phrase

(13) a sentence A of a language L is true in a model M .

And now we encounter the question whether (13) implies that truth is relative.

It was Kokoszyńska (see KOKOSZYŃSKA [1936a], [1936b], [1948], [1951]) who offered an absolute interpretation of the semantic definition of truth.

⁸ Jan Tarski, Alfred's son, told me once that his (Jan's) father considered absoluteness as a very important property of truth. However, it could be that (Alfred) Tarski was thinking about an ethical problem, not epistemological one.

⁹ However, it is very likely that Tarski was thinking about mathematical domains and their sub-domains.

According to Kokoszyńska the predicate ‘is true’ is incomplete and can be qualified in various ways, for examples, by reference to circumstances C . A sentence A is relatively true if and only if there exist circumstances C and C' such that A is true with reference to C and not- A is true with reference to C' . This relativism is proper. It can be radical, provided that for every sentence A , A is true with reference to circumstances C and its negation is true with reference to circumstances C' , or moderate, provided that we have to do with truth-relativity of some sentences only. Moreover, we have improper relativism consisting in relativisation to models (possible worlds). More specifically, if A is true in one model, let say \mathbf{M} and not- A is true in another model, let say \mathbf{M}' , this situation leads to improper relativism. Although proper relativism tolerates the change of logical values of all or some sentences, dependently of circumstances, improper relativism entails the stability of truth and falsity in models.

Kokoszyńska’s views require some comments and supplements. First of all, she précised Twardowski’s criticism of alethic relativism. In fact, she repeated Twardowski’s arguments in setting them as using the concept of circumstance as a general relativiser. Secondly, Kokoszyńska assumed classical logic. Her definition would qualify so-called dialetheias, that is, pairs of sentences of the type ‘ A and not- A ’ which can be true, as true. Paraconsistent logic (more precisely, one of its versions) admits dialetheias. Hence, we have a problem how paraconsistent logic is related to the absolutism/relativism distinction. If d is a dialetheia with A and not- A as its members, both components of d can be true in the same circumstances. This means that paraconsistent logic (with dialetheias) does not imply even moderate dialethic relativism. I note this problem without entering into its more detailed analysis. Thirdly, many-valued logic proper moderate relativism, because if $v(A) = 1/2$, it becomes true or false dependently of some circumstances. It suggests that improper relativism considers truth (falsity) as omnitemporal and should be qualified as absolutism.

Kokoszyńska understood sentences as equipped with fixed meanings. Consequently, she could resign from the distinction (maintained by Twardowski) of sentences as incomplete utterances and thereby not proper truth-bearers) and propositions as items with complete meaning and being proper truth-bearers. This observation indirectly leads to a Twardowski-like reading of Tarski. The latter defined the concept of truth via the notion of satisfaction. Usually we speak about satisfaction of open formulas (formulas with free variables). For example, the formula ‘ x is a logician’ is satisfied by Tarski, but not by Heidegger. Sentences are formulas without free variables, for instance, ‘Tarski is a logician’ or ‘there is such x , that x is not a logician’. Tarski’s ingenious observation was that if sentences (closed formulas) are a special case of open formulas and sentences are true or false, truth (falsity) should be considered as special cases of satisfaction (non-satisfaction). Since we

can prove that for any sentence (a closed formula) A is satisfied by all infinite sequences for a model \mathbf{M} or is satisfied by no such sequence, it is natural to define truth of A as its satisfaction by all sentences and its falsity as satisfaction by no sequences.¹⁰ Now we can interpret sentences in Twardowski's sense as open formulas. In fact, the utterances 'it is raining today' and 'it is raining here' mean 'it is raining in time x considered as today' and 'it is raining in the place x considered as here'.¹¹ Consequently, we open formulas are relatively true (false) depending on circumstances (interpretations of free variables), but sentences are absolutely true, because (see note 10) their logical values are conditioned by the structure of models (possible worlds, etc.). Now, one could eventually observe that models are circumstances.¹² Thus, if we intend to interpret the semantic definition of truth as absolute, we need to justify that \mathbf{M} in the phrase 'a sentence A is true in a model M ' is not a circumstance in Kokoszyńska's sense.

Here is an argument that relativisation of truth to models is consistent with absolutism understood as the thesis that truth is omnitemporal (I follow WOLEŃSKI [2015]). The argument concerns future contingencies, that is, sentences which can be true or false in the future. I will identify possible worlds with models of maximally consistent sets and use the concept of branchability (ASSER [1972], 168-169) as defined by ('iff' stands for 'if and only if'):

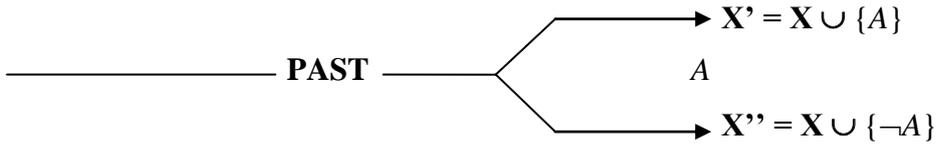
- (14)(a) a set \mathbf{X} of formulas branches at a formula A iff the sets $\mathbf{X} \cup \{A\}$ and $\mathbf{X} \cup \{\neg A\}$ are consistent;
- (b) a set \mathbf{X} is branchable iff there is a formula A at which \mathbf{X} branches;
- (c) a set \mathbf{X} is branchable iff \mathbf{X} is a consistent and incomplete set of sentences.

Let \mathbf{X} be a consistent set of sentences and A be a sentence independent of \mathbf{X} . Thus, due to the independence of A with respect to \mathbf{X} , this set is incomplete and the sets $\mathbf{X}' = \mathbf{X} \cup \{A\}$ and $\mathbf{X}'' = \mathbf{X} \cup \{\neg A\}$ are consistent. Consequently, the conditions listed in (14) are fulfilled and \mathbf{X} branches at A . Note that we do not need to assume that the sets \mathbf{X}' and \mathbf{X}'' are maximally consistent. The diagram (Δ) provides a scheme of this situation:

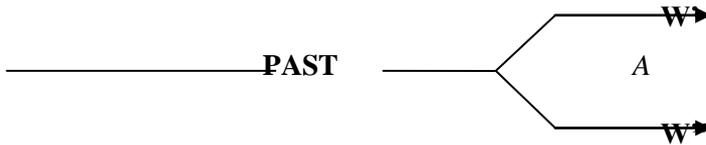
¹⁰ A warning. Sequences of objects are not to be understood as facts. The former are a technical device used in the semantic truth-definition. The basic intuition behind defining truth via satisfaction is that if A is a sentence, its logical value does not depend on valuation of bound variables (other not occur in sentences). Philosophically speaking, truth and falsity depends of how things are in a model M assuming that sentences having logical values have fixed meanings. Tarski's claim that his definition is applicable only to interpreted languages should be interpreted as an assumption that meaning are given in advance.

¹¹ Of course, interpreting indexicals as hidden free variables is nothing new.

¹² SUSZKO [1957] and HAACK [1978] interpret Tarski's original definition (that is, from TARSKI [1933] as absolute, but the predicate 'is true in \mathbf{M} ' as expressing a relative concept of truth.



Let *A* be a sentence uttered at *t* fixed as present and refers to a contingent future event (this means that **X** is branchable, that is *A* is independent of **X**). Assuming that **X** consist of all truths about the past, it is consistent (**PAST** is its model), and **X'** and **X''** are consistent as well and they have models **W'** and **W''** respectively. We change the diagram (Δ) into (Δ')



PAST can be considered as the initial segment of both **W'** and **W''**. Otherwise speaking, **W'** and **W''** enlarge **PAST**; intuitively **PAST** comprises everything what happened until the moment *t* (including this moment itself). Moreover, **W'** and **W''** are parts of different possible worlds, that is, models of consistent sets. They are different, because the world **W'** validates *A*, but the world **W''** verifies $\neg A$. **PAST** can be identified with the initial segment of the real world **W^R**, which grows through time. Depending on what will actually happen in the future, **PAST** will enlarge to **W'** or **W''** (for simplicity, I neglect further possible future cases of branching).

Truth-conditions for future contingencies can be easily stated by applying the standard possible world semantics associated with classical modal logic. In particular, sentences about future contingent facts are modals with the possibility operator \diamond . Suppose that $\diamond A$ is such a sentence. It is true in the real world **W^R** if and only *A* is true at least in one possible world accessible from **W^R** (in fact, **PAST** generates the accessibility relation); denote this world by **W'**. Consequently, due to the contingency of the fact described by *A*, the sentence $\diamond \neg A$ is true in **W^R** if there is a possible world **W''** in which $\neg A$ is true is true. The world **W'** and **W''** are just (different) worlds suitable for validating $\diamond A$ and $\diamond \neg A$ in the real world. Assume that *A* is true in the future. This means that *A* is true in **W'**. However, since **PAST** and **W'** are segments of **W^R**, *A* cannot be false in **PAST**. So if *A* is true, its truth is omnitemporal. Similar reasoning concerns the situation in which $\neg A$ is true.¹³ Now we can return to Leśniewski

¹³ This argument also refutes the view that classical logic entails strict determinism.

claim expressed by (10). Assume that A is true at a moment t . At first, we will prove that sempiternality entails eternity. If A is true sempiternally, it is true at every $t' \leq t$. Since the branching moment is critical, we assume that t is just this parameter. Consequently, A is true in \mathbf{W}' or A is true in \mathbf{W}'' . Furthermore, A is true in $\mathbf{M}' = \mathbf{PAST} + \mathbf{W}'$ or A is true in $\mathbf{M}'' = \mathbf{PAST} + \mathbf{W}''$. This implies that $\neg A$ is false in $\mathbf{M}' = \mathbf{PAST} + \mathbf{W}'$ or $\neg A$ is false in $\mathbf{M}'' = \mathbf{PAST} + \mathbf{W}''$. Clearly, A cannot change its logical value in a model belonging to $\{\mathbf{M}', \mathbf{M}''\}$ without producing inconsistency. Thus, if A is sempiternally true, it is eternally true as well. To prove the converse implication, suppose that A is eternally true, that is, if A is true at t , it is also true at any moment $t' \geq t$; of course, A is true in \mathbf{W}' or \mathbf{W}'' and *a fortiori*, in \mathbf{M}' or \mathbf{M}'' . Consider a moment $t'' \leq t$. Assume that A is false at t'' . This means that A is false in \mathbf{PAST} . However, this implies that A is false in \mathbf{M}' or \mathbf{M}'' , contrary to our earlier assumption. Thus, if A is eternally true, it is sempiternally true as well. This closed the proof that A is sempiternally true if and only if A is eternally true. Thus, truth in a model is omnitemporal and the semantic definition of truth defined the absolute concept of truth.¹⁴

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¹⁴ This conclusion must meet the existence of non-standard models. Let T be an arbitrary consistent set of first-order sentences. Due to the Löwenheim-Skolem it has a non-standard model. The situation cannot be generally solved by going to higher-order logic. The only possibility to defend the view defended in this paper (and following the main tradition of the Lvov-Warsaw School) consists in saying that the problem consists of how to select the standard model, but not the absoluteness of truth. Putting this in another words: truth in every model is absolute, but the criteria of selecting standard models are pragmatic and conventional to some degree. If we select the standard model \mathbf{M} as fixed, truth in \mathbf{M} is absolute, but truth in non-standard models can be considered as relative but only relatively to our choice (see PRZEŁĘCKI [1969]).

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CHAPTER III

Acting – Believing – Reasoning

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TADEUSZ KOTARBIŃSKI ON GOD AND RELIGION

Abstract. The aim of the paper is the presentation of the main reasons of Tadeusz Kotarbiński's atheism and an interpretation of his position in terms of the conceptual apparatus used in contemporary philosophical debate on atheism. William Rowe distinguished three types of atheism: friendly atheism, indifferent atheism and unfriendly atheism, a divide widely accepted in contemporary debates. It seems that Kotarbiński's position is a form of unfriendly atheism. However, the final conclusion will be that William Rowe's conceptual apparatus is not a satisfying tool for an evaluation and interpretation of Tadeusz Kotarbiński's views.

Keywords. Atheism, belief, theory of evolution, evil, God, religion.

It is a well known fact that Tadeusz Kotarbiński proclaimed atheism as a metaphysical thesis, saying that there is no God (KOTARBIŃSKI [1962], p. 9). He regarded a belief that God exists as false and irrational (KOTARBIŃSKI [1962], p. 13). In consequence, he also regarded as false and irrational other religious beliefs such as, the belief that God is a guardian of all people and animals or that there is an afterlife. He called such beliefs "phantasms", "daydreams of a sick imagination", "obvious untruths" (KOTARBIŃSKI [1962]). Kotarbiński's atheism was not a result of long-lasting considerations, since he accepted this view as a very young man and he defended it in all his writings. Therefore, we cannot say that Kotarbiński's atheism was a consequence of his reism. On the contrary, reism formulated in terms of pansomatism was consistent with atheism, which rejects the existence of any spiritual beings. Kotarbiński's atheism was nota conclusion drawn from ethical considerations either. Kotarbiński never claimed that morality based on the Christian religion was inconsistent with human nature or was incompatible with human conscience. Neither was his atheism a product of an anticlerical attitude or a result of disappointment understood as a subjective response to the history of religion, the Church and Christianity. So why was Kotarbiński an atheist?

The first reason for his atheism was his conviction about the irrationality of religious beliefs. Religious beliefs are irrational because they are inconsistent with the scientific knowledge about the world. It is not religion but science

(cosmology, physics and biology) which explains the origins of humankind and the universe (KOTARBIŃSKI [1970], pp. 376–377). When describing his turn from a religious world-view which took place in his youth, Kotarbiński wrote:

There is no God who takes care of people. They are left alone like all products of nature which came into being as a result of the evolution of our animal ancestors (KOTARBIŃSKI [1962], p. 10).¹

Darwin's theory of evolution and its philosophical consequences were particularly important for Kotarbiński's disbelief in a religious explanation of human origins. He stated that:

The achievements of biological evolutionism radically changed the system of values held by people thinking philosophically. Man could no longer feel like God's child, a reflection of God, a noble being who is in control of all other beings according to the will of the Almighty. Human faith in such a leadership collapsed because the subtle forms of structural and functional adaptations of plants and animals, which had induced an illusory idea of the divine providence taking care of every creature turned out to be a product of chance, mechanical adaptation, mutual relations of organisms with their environment, and a struggle for survival. In brief, all these facts provided evidence against the existence of any sympathetic cosmic guardianship. The illusion of the harmony of the world disappeared. The world has turned out to be a place of a mortal combat between species, and among individuals of one species (KOTARBIŃSKI [1970], p. 376).

The second reason for Kotarbiński's disbelief in God, already mentioned, was axiological, i.e. the existence of enormous evil and suffering in the world. There is a very well-known aphorism by Kotarbiński (repeated after Stendhal) saying that:

If there is so much evil in the world, it would be a blasphemy against God to believe in his existence (KOTARBIŃSKI [1986b]).²

It is worth noting that Kotarbiński was sensitive not only to human suffering, but also to the suffering of animals (including animal suffering caused by humans).

The third reason, let us name it "theological reason", was an argument from religious fatalism, i.e., the incompatibility of divine omnipotence with human freedom and moral responsibility. The argument consists in the claim that if there were an omnipotent being which decreed in the past what and in which way things would happen in the future (acts of human will and all beliefs

¹ See also: KOTARBIŃSKI [1986a], p. 363.

² We find in his notebook written during the Second World War another aphorism which he himself regarded as a synthesis of all syntheses saying in Polish that "życie jest to bycie połączone z wyciem", and which could be translated in a free way as meaning that "to live means to scream" (KOTARBIŃSKI [1970], p. 438).

included), then the freedom of will of all created agents would be impossible (KOTARBIŃSKI [1986a], p. 226).

Thus, atheism in his opinion and *for him* was a true and rational belief, i.e., a sufficiently justified belief. Atheism was also coherent with his other semantic and metaphysical doctrines. Therefore, we are allowed to state that atheism was deeply rooted in Kotarbiński's philosophy. His atheism was not, of course, the main and most original of his philosophical achievements but he was probably the member of the Lvov–Warsaw School who declared his atheism most firmly and clearly (perhaps apart from Władysław Witwicki). Let us note here that other eminent representatives of the Lvov-Warsaw School, such as Kazimierz Twardowski, Jan Łukasiewicz and the so called Cracow Circle (Bocheński, Drewnowski, Salamucha and Sobociński), rejected atheism. Twardowski subscribed to a form of deism, Łukasiewicz defended nonorthodox Catholicism, and the members of the Cracow Circle started a new type of Thomism based on mathematical logic and logical analyses. Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz and Tadeusz Czeżowski – also Twardowski's disciples – represented an agnostic attitude.

Let us now consider the question of what Kotarbiński's atheism was like. I will not discuss here whether his atheism and arguments for it provided by him are fully convincing and cannot be refuted or at least partly weakened. I will rather try to analyse Kotarbiński's atheism with regard to its relation to theistic beliefs. As the starting point, I will resort to a typology of various forms of atheism proposed in 1979 by the atheist William Rowe. According to Rowe's typology, we can distinguish three forms of atheism:

- (a) A friendly atheism, which is a view (i) holding atheism to be true and (ii) holding that *some* theists may be rational in respect of their belief in God
- (b) An indifferent atheism, which is a view (i) holding atheism to be true and (ii) being indifferent concerning whether or not theists are rational in respect of their belief in God.
- (c) An unfriendly atheism, which is a view (i) holding atheism to be true and (ii) holding that no theist is rational in respect of their belief in God (Rowe 1979, 340).

We should keep in mind, however, that rationality is understood here in a deontological sense; namely, a given person is rationally justified to believe *p* if that person is blameless and has not violated his epistemic duties by believing *p*. Such a concept of rationality was not in use among the members of the Lvov–Warsaw School, but it seems that it is compatible with the concept of logical rationality typical of the School. According to the logical rationalism held by the representatives of the School, beliefs are logically rational if they are sufficiently justified, i.e., if there exist empirical reasons (evidence) or inferential arguments

supporting them. Now, it seems that logical rationality can be part of the epistemic duties of a given person: anyone who subscribes to logical rationality has a duty to accept only such beliefs which are formulated in a way which is semantically correct and for which there exists some empirical evidence or an inferential argument. Anyone is epistemically blameless who did not make a mistake deliberately.

Let us consider Rowe's friendly atheism in more detail. Friendly atheism allows us to assume that a theist or a believer may be rational while believing in God because

(1) he lacks evidence for atheism

or

(2) he is mistaken regarding the evidential force of the arguments for theism.

If either of the two cases above is present, a theist is making a mistake, and if he is making a mistake he is blameworthy for making a mistake. But friendly atheism allows for the rationality of beliefs when a believer expresses his beliefs in an understandable way (so that an atheist can discuss and refute them as false) and if he is arguing for theism in an argumentative way.

It is worth noting here that friendly atheism can be even turned into an even more friendly form of atheism than just friendly atheism is. Thus, in regard to case (1), when a theist lacks evidence for atheism, he is not necessarily blameworthy for his mistake. On the contrary, a believer can be rational and blameless. Such an evaluation is possible if we accept a modest version of evidentialism claiming that beliefs are rational if they are formed in accordance with the evidence one currently has. A theist – given the evidence he has at a particular moment in time – can rationally believe that theism is true or more probable than atheism. However, if we accept a radical or strong version of evidentialism, we are allowed to claim that a believer is irrational, which means that he is responsible for his mistake. It is so because a theist should strive for the broadening of his thought-horizon and gather more evidence over time. Thus, a theist can be rational in a synchronic sense by believing in accordance with the evidence he currently has, and he can be irrational in a diachronic sense because he has failed to gather more evidence than he currently has (JONBÄCK [2015]). It is, however, disputable whether a theist always has the duty to look for further evidence and whether he is always irrational and blameworthy if he fails to do so. Our evaluation of such behaviour depends on a given situation. A theist can be in a position which makes it difficult or even impossible to gather more evidence over time. He could have other obligations, more important ones, for example parental care. Such a person can be rational when believing in God although he does not have enough knowledge about atheism and he does not look for further evidence for atheism or theism. Of, course we could claim that

such a theist, say, a non-reflective theist, in such a situation should withhold his religious beliefs until he has gathered evidence for or against theism (Jonbäck 2015). If a theist does not withhold his beliefs, he makes an epistemic mistake for which he is blameworthy. But let us note that a theist is blameworthy for making a mistake only if he has direct voluntary control over his belief in God. The point now is that he may not have any control over his religious beliefs. It is possible that a belief in God has the same epistemic nature as the belief that Paris is the capital of France. If this is the case, a theist cannot stop believing in God as he cannot stop believing that Paris is the capital of France. Then, it seems that a believer cannot be regarded as an irrational person who is blameworthy because he did not withhold his belief in God. Such a modified version of the friendly atheism is called a “very friendly atheism” (JONBÄCK [2015]).

And we may also consider the second possibility (2) which says that a theist may be rational in his belief but is mistaken regarding the evidential force of the arguments for theism. Such a theist, say, a reflective theist, knows all the evidence and reasons for theism which are available at a given moment. It is also possible in this case to claim that a theist is not blameworthy in spite of his mistaken evaluation of all evidence and arguments both for theism and atheism. But there is still another epistemological possibility which is currently in the debate over the rationality of religious beliefs, according to which a reflective theist can regard correctly the evidence for atheism as convincing and yet be considered rational in believing in God (JONBÄCK [2015]). In this case, the reflective theist cannot resort to the classical arguments for theism. However, he can resort to a meta-epistemological consideration. He can be rational in his believing in the truth of:

(3) The belief that God exists constitutes knowledge.

In other words, he can believe that a belief that God exists is a typical case of knowledge. He can resort to – as Roderick Chisolm named it – epistemological particularism and not to epistemological methodism. Richard Fumerton has recently described these two positions quite aptly, so let me quote it:

Does one first decide what one knows and then try to learn from paradigmatic examples of knowledge the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge? Or does one discover first the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge and apply what one learns to discover what one knows? (Fumerton 2008, 36).

If we assume that neither particularism nor methodism are obviously true positions, it is quite rational to opt for one or the other. For a proponent of particularism, a typical way of choosing a particular case of knowledge as paradigmatic for knowledge is to appeal to intuition (JONBÄCK [2015]). If a believer (a theist) grew up in a theistic community, he might very well have the intuition that God exists, and therefore his believing in God is rational and blameless. The atheism claiming that reflective theists can be rational and

blameless in believing in God because they resort to particularism and regard the belief that God exists as a paradigmatic example of knowledge, is a “very, very friendly atheism” (JONBÄCK [2015], p. 70).

Thus, we have now a look at some possible forms of atheism and we can ask which of them is consistent with Kotarbiński’s position – if any. It seems that, from Kotarbiński’s point of view, indifferent atheism cannot be accepted. If you are a proponent of a universal, overwhelming care, as Kotarbiński was, then it makes a difference what kind of beliefs other people have: rational or irrational. It has special importance because rationality of beliefs and actions is much more valuable than irrationality of beliefs and actions.

Thus, could we classify his atheism as an unfriendly atheism in the sense exposed above? It seems that Kotarbiński’s atheism was a form of unfriendly atheism since he regarded religious beliefs as irrational. But perhaps it would be a good thing to ask at this point whether there are any reasons for a less categorical answer to the last question.

So, firstly, let us observe that beliefs (religious beliefs included) are always beliefs of real persons or, to put it in the language of reism, there are believing things, which can be called “persons” only in a certain secondary sense. Now, if we assume that the word “irrational” has a negative meaning and is closely related to the claim that irrational believers are blameworthy for making a mistake, then one should evaluate believers negatively as irrational persons. This is so because it is not possible to separate beliefs and persons, especially if Kotarbiński claimed that there are no beliefs but only believers. But it seems that it would be irrational from a praxeological point of view to divide people into two classes, rational and irrational, since effective and good work presupposes a high degree of cooperation between rational non-believers and irrational believers. My point is that there could be a tension between the theory of rationality of beliefs and the requirements of praxeology. This tension can perhaps disappear if we distinguish between logical and pragmatic rationality: believers are logically irrational but perhaps they are pragmatically rational. Secondly, Kotarbiński described his atheism as follows:

I simply stopped believing in obvious untruths. I saw that all Church teachings are groundless. It is good for kids – [he writes] – I do not want to be deluded. I will grasp the reality as it is... Let us no longer be deceived (KOTARBIŃSKI [1962], p. 10).

We could try to interpret the phrase “it is good for kids” as a suggestion that rationality of beliefs depends on someone’s situation and not only on the objective conditions of logical rationality. Kotarbiński’s point could be that a belief can be good (rational?) for one person and bad (irrational?) in a sense for another. But this generous interpretation of Kotarbiński’s words can be easily

objected simply by saying that what is “good for kids” is good for nothing. And it seems that here again the distinction between logical and pragmatic rationality may be useful. Because of some pragmatic reasons, it is a good thing for kids to believe in the Church’s teaching, but it does not change the fact that kids with respect to their believing in God are logically irrational persons.

What else could be taken into account when we try to weaken Kotarbiński’s unfriendly atheism? – if it is an unfriendly atheism indeed. We can resort to the fact that Christian morality was for Kotarbiński a paradigmatic case of moral perfection. But, is it really possible to regard Christian faith as “an obvious untruth” and, at the same time, to claim that Christian morality is a paradigmatic case of moral perfection? Well, perhaps only in terms of psychology, but not in terms of logic.

Having considered some possible ways how Kotarbiński’s atheism could be transformed from an unfriendly atheism into a form of friendly atheism, it is clear that it is not possible to turn Kotarbiński’s atheism into any form of friendly atheism. His atheism is really unfriendly.

But I think that there is something wrong in the very distinction between friendly and unfriendly atheism. A friendly atheism in all its forms can be regarded as a form of paternalism and elitism. This paternalistic approach can be formulated in the following way: a friendly atheist seems to speak to a believer: your beliefs are false or even obviously false and my beliefs are true or even obviously true, but I understand why you believe in the obviously false propositions and why you cannot stop believing in God. Because I can grasp all these things, I find your beliefs untrue but rational. Elitism consists in the fact that atheists consider themselves to be a rational minority in possession of the truth. It seems to me that, in order to avoid both paternalism and elitism, it would be sufficient simply to modify the previously mentioned definition of friendly atheism by saying that a friendly atheist is anyone who regards atheism as true but who does not exclude that he can be mistaken and theism can be true. And what about rationality of beliefs? Well, if we agree that there is a real choice between particularism and methodism and that none of the meta-epistemological views are obvious, then we may think, if we are atheists, that theists are rational in their believing in God, but let us add that it also seems to be the case that, if we are theists, we should take atheism as a rational position for exactly the same reasons we are ready to treat theism as rational if we are atheists.

Let us come back to Kotarbiński’s position. If unfriendly atheism is not paternalistic, and if friendly atheism is paternalistic, and Kotarbiński atheism was not paternalistic, then his atheism is not friendly indeed. But, if it is true, there is nothing wrong about it. Why should we think that Kotarbiński’s atheism was not a form of paternalism? The very idea of popularizing logical culture, so typical for the Lvov-Warsaw School, presupposes that it is possible and valuable

to address logical culture and arguments also to people believing in God, because it is possible to convert them to the scientific world-view and to atheism. The last presupposition makes sense only if we regard humans as rational beings able to think logically. And I think that if we regard people as rational beings, even when they have irrational beliefs, we do not take a position of paternalism. If we interpret Kotarbiński's unfriendly atheism in such a way, then I think that his atheism has some noble, honest and deeply human character. The only problem with the last interpretations is Kotarbiński's reism: there are believers but no beliefs.

There are two other solutions regarding the problem of rationality of religious beliefs, different from those proposed by Rowe and suggested by Kotarbiński; these were solutions elaborated by other followers of the Lvov–Warsaw School. The first of them consists in the distinction between logical and pragmatic rationality. This distinction was preferred by Kotarbiński's disciples Marian Przełęcki and Klemens Szaniawski, and now Jacek Jadacki. According to the doctrine of two kinds of rationality, religious beliefs are logically irrational but they can be rational in the pragmatic sense. The second of them consists in the distinction between many kinds of beliefs and the domain of discourse. According to the doctrine of the plurality of the domains of discourse, theistic and atheistic beliefs are parts of different world-views and as elements of world-views they can be evaluated with respect to their rationality in the way typical for the domain of a world-view but not to science or even philosophy. Beliefs which are part of a given world-view are rational if they are coherent with other beliefs of a given world-view, they are intersubjectively communicable (that is understandable to those people who do not hold those beliefs) and they are not incompatible with scientific knowledge. It seems that Kazimierz Twardowski had such an idea of rationality of religious beliefs (KLESZCZ [2012], pp. 176–220). Thus, it is possible that both theism and atheism are rational in this sense, provided only that they respect the criteria of rationality crucial for the world-views. That position was held by Tadeusz Czeżowski and Izydora Dąmbska (KLESZCZ [2007], pp. 23–24). Now, it seems that Jan Woleński subscribes to this weak notion of rationality of religious beliefs (WOLEŃSKI [1996]).

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THE NOTION OF ACTION IN KOTARBIŃSKI'S PRAXEOLOGY

Abstract. The aim of the paper is to recast main notions of Tadeusz Kotarbiński's praxeology in terms of Donald Davidson's theory of action. The paper focuses also on ontological commitments of both theories. Though Kotarbiński did not admit events in his reistic ontology, in his praxeology conceived actions as compounded entities without any clue how to reduce the parts of action into things. I argue that Kotarbiński's restrictive ontological reism cannot be maintained in case of praxeology, and propose to admit events as existing objects. This enables to simplify extremely complicated net of Kotarbiński's concepts and to find the counterparts of the parts of action in Kotarbiński's sense in Davidson's theory of action.

Keywords. Act, action, agency, agent, cause, effect, praxeology, reism.

1. Introductory remarks

Kotarbiński's *praxeology*, i.e. the theory of *efficient action*, is based on his *philosophy of action*, which comprises a rather complicated net of notions including the very notion of action, event, causal relation, agent, agency, and many more. This conceptual apparatus was originally presented in some early praxeological works (see KOTARBIŃSKI [1999]), in *Treatise on Good Work* [1955], and later, in an abbreviated form, in *ABC of Practicality* (see: KOTARBIŃSKI [1972]). Kotarbiński's reason to focus attention on philosophy of action was to give a useful theoretical tools for praxeology which was conceived as a philosophical theory with straightforward practical applications. From this point of view, the applied action-theory notions should be, and in fact are, rather intuitive, though as in every theory, the meanings of natural-language terms have been explicated, and some new, rather artificial terms have been introduced.

On the other hand, Kotarbiński's theory of action was conceived by him as compatible with his philosophical position called *reism* or *pansomatism*. From

a reistic viewpoint, events, actions, as well as properties and relations (e.g. causality) do not exist, and their names are *onomatoids* or *ostensible* names:

We deny the existence of something like the movement of a hand of a watch, the explosion of Vesuvius, the death of Caesar (...) (KOTARBIŃSKI [1961], (1929), p. 62).

The two demands, i.e. the use of intuitive praxeological terms and the denial of the existence of their referents, were reconciled by Kotarbiński's contention that ostensible names are *eliminable* from all contexts, i.e. all sentences with ostensible names can be translated onto equivalent reistically acceptable sentences with *real* names of individual objects called 'bodies', though, as we can learn from some examples given by Kotarbiński, the translation can be sometimes very troublesome, unintuitive, and even odd.¹ In consequence, every ostensible notion appearing in his praxeology and philosophy of action is supposed to be, in principle, eliminable. As the collection of praxeological ostensible names forms a rather complicated system of interrelated notions, the practical reduction of unacceptable event-language to reistic language was a very difficult task and was carried out only in the case of some examples. In fact, Kotarbiński seemed to be fully satisfied with the very possibility of this translation and used the praxeological language full of forbidden terms without hesitation.

The main aim of this paper is to challenge Kotarbiński's contention that names of events and actions can be eliminated from language and, in consequence, to acknowledge events and actions as existing individual objects. This enrichment of the original reistic ontology permits Kotarbiński's philosophy of action to be presented in a more coherent way. In order to achieve this goal, I reconstruct the main concepts of Kotarbiński's theory in terms of Donald Davidson's philosophy of action (see DAVIDSON [1980]). The choice of this perspective is not random, as Davidson's nominalistic philosophy in general, and his philosophy of action in particular, bears salient resemblance to Kotarbiński's theory. The application of Davidson's theoretical apparatus permits us to explicate better Kotarbiński's notion of free impulse (*impuls dowolny*), goal, and work (*dzieło*). It also enables us to establish the obvious and intuitive connection between an agent (*sprawca*) and his action. The proposed perspective can also help to solve some minor inconsistencies in Kotarbiński's theory.

¹ This can be considered as an example of a linguistic version of Ockham's razor – if a notion is eliminable from the language of the theory there is no reason to maintain the existence of its referent.

2. Action

According to Kotarbiński, the main aim of praxeology is:

(...) the analytic description of the elements of action and its various forms. By the elements of action, we understand acting subjects, material (*tworzywo*), means, methods, goals, products (*wytwory*), etc. (*Treatise*: p. 17).²

With minor changes, the list is repeated in *ABC of Practicality*:

In every action (...), act (...) take part various elements (...): agent (*sprawca*), material, product, free impulse (*impuls dowolny*), circumstances, effect, and goal (*ABC*, p. 32).

The every-day notion of *action* is rather vague and the notion of *act* is not only vague but ambiguous as well. One of the main aims of the philosophy of action is to clarify these notions. Kotarbiński consciously does not distinguish between every-day concepts of action and act, and introduces the neologism *free impulse* as one of the elements of action. From a reistic viewpoint the terms 'action' and 'act', as well as the names of some of their elements, are ostensible names without existing referents, which in principle can be eliminated from all contexts of use. But if the reduction of the notions is impossible, or at least implausible, then there is a good reason to enrich the ontology³. In the paper I try to apply the minimum of the strategy of enriching the ontology, just to avoid major conceptual difficulties of praxeological apparatus.

The first problem of Kotarbiński's notion of action we encounter in *Treatise* is the terminological one. In order to avoid it I depart from Kotarbiński's original terminology, and keeping the original notion of act unchanged, I will approximately identify *action* with *free impulse*, though I will not regard these terms as synonyms⁴. The proposed terminological change must cope with obvious connection between action (now conceived as free impulse) and other mentioned notions.

From Davidson's point of view, which I promote here, an action can be considered a *goal-oriented* event which is performed by an *agent*, and has *effects* compatible or not compatible with *goals*, or even unknown to the agent. I believe that this position is generally compatible with Kotarbiński's one. An action is always performed in certain *circumstances* and, in Kotarbiński's terms, its effects consist in changes in *material* that result in *product*.⁵ The intuitive

² All citations are in my translation.

³ Kotarbiński's semantic motivations for reism were described in WOLEŃSKI [1985], pp. 208–226.

⁴ I will explain his point later. In general After Davidson I consider free impulse as a special form of description of action.

⁵ Davidson does not apply this terminology.

connection between action and other notions just indicated was comprised by Kotarbiński in his definition of action as rather informal inclusion: action embraces agent, effect, goal, etc. As the existence of compound entities of this sort is not unacceptable to reism, Kotarbiński's notion of action is obviously an ostensible name. But if the reistic reduction were possible, the mentioned connection should be explicated in a different way – it should be revealed on the linguistic level in translations of sentences about actions, effects, agents, etc. into reistic language. I do not believe that it is possible to fulfill this postulate, nevertheless, I believe that it can be accomplished in the weakened version of reduction proposed in this paper. The relation between an action conceived as an event, i.e. an existing entity, and other concepts consists in their application in *description* of the action.

In *Action, Reasons, and Causes* [1963], Davidson defines an action as an *event* caused by its *reason* conceived as a *mental event*. As we remember, Kotarbiński did not treat events as existing beings, and he proposed a reistic translation of sentences about events to sentences about *changing objects*, and not *changes in objects*.⁶ In consequence, he proposed the *reistic* translation of sentences about the causal relation that holds between individual events to the sentences about changes in things. Let us consider Kotarbiński's original example: 'The explosion of Vesuvius destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum' can be reduced to the reistic sentence 'Vesuvius exploded in such a way that it destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum', where the name of the event 'the explosion of Vesuvius' has been eliminated (KOTARBIŃSKI [1986] (1929), p. 63 and WOLEŃSKI [1985], p. 211]. Unfortunately, the action-verb 'to destroy' is also an ostensible name that should be somehow eliminated. In consequence, the logical form of the proposed translation is rather unclear. The easiest solution is to translate 'to destroy' onto 'to cause the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum'. As destruction of an object is obviously an event, the phrase can be replaced by 'to cause Pompeii and Herculaneum to disintegrate', which would probably be acceptable by a reist if we managed to deal with the ostensible *relational name* 'to cause'. Kotarbiński's general idea was that relational names are in fact eliminable, and even if we use them, it does not commit us to accepting the existence of relations as their referents, e.g. Kotarbiński argued that there is no *relation of being taller*, but John and Peter can be related in such way that John is taller than Peter. Before examining the possibility of the reduction of sentences about events to sentences about changing objects, I will focus on Kotarbiński's approach to causality.⁷

⁶ Changes are events which were rejected by Kotarbiński.

⁷ Kotarbiński's views about causality constitute a rather complicated problem that I do not intend to solve here. In KOTARBIŃSKI [1929] he discusses the problem but is rather skeptical about the possibility of a definite solution see KOTARBIŃSKI [1961] (1929), pp. 269–274. Kotarbiński

Causality, even if conceived as a relation holding between changing objects, is a very special relation that sometimes has been treated as a logical one, and I think that it was basically Kotarbiński's position. In consequence, the possible supplement of reistic reduction of examples of the above kind consists in the translation of relational verbs (like 'to destroy') to constructions with 'to cause' and descriptions of changing objects, and treating 'to cause' as a disguised logical relation.

The minor linguistic difficulty connected with the verb 'to destroy' is that not every case of causing the destruction of something is destroying it, like not every causing of human death is killing somebody – compare the popular slogan 'Guns don't kill people. People kill people', though changes in guns can obviously cause human deaths (changes in humans). As I will argue later, the relational verb 'to cause' can be *literally* substituted by other verbs only in case of *actions* performed by *agents*. An explosion of a volcano is not an action, at least for the people who do not believe in ancient myths. So we can say that the exploding Vesuvius killed many people, as well as destroying Pompeii and Herculaneum, only in the *non-literal* sense. In fact, it *only* caused many deaths and caused the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum (or better, caused Pompeii and Herculaneum to disintegrate). This problem indicates that there is something special about agency, at least on the linguistic level, and I will focus on this problem at the end of the paper.

A much more serious difficulty with the proposed solution is connected with the *logical* reduction of 'to cause'. As I suggested earlier, it is possible that Kotarbiński intended to reduce the causal relation to the logical one:

The event *B* is the effect of the earlier change *A*, at a moment *t*, and the change *A* is the cause of *B* if and only if *A* is an essential element of the sufficient condition of the event *B* in respect of the moment *t* and a causal regularity of the succession of events [Treatise: 27].⁸

Kotarbiński intended to treat sentences about causal relation between particular changing objects⁹ as instances of "causal regularities of the succession of events" or simply *causal laws*. Causal laws are of the form of general

obviously owes much to J. S. Mill, though he criticizes his views as sometimes unclear. The subsequent claims about Kotarbiński's notion of causality do not pretend to be a profound reconstruction of his views, but rather claims about some aspect of his views about causality that can be encountered in his papers.

⁸ His fragment is a good example of normal event language.

⁹ In fact he permanently used 'event language' as much more neat than consequent reistic language.

equivalences.¹⁰ In consequence, the reistic reduction of the sentence ‘Changing *A* caused changing *B*’ as an instance of a general law should be exactly as in Kotarbiński’s formulation: ‘*A* changed in such way that *B* changed (in the described way)’.

The main problem of the proposed reduction consists in an unclear *logical form* of the last sentence. The sentence as it stands has no clear truth conditions, because we do not know what is, in fact, the logical connective. In his article *Causal Relations* [1967] Davidson argued that there is no reduction (translation) of sentences about causal relation between *individual events* which are grammatically simple sentences, to the grammatically compound sentences with logical connectives, (see Davidson [1980], pp. 153–155).

Now we can come back to the general difficulty of Kotarbiński’s contention that the sentences about changes in objects (events) can be reduced to sentences about changing objects. The difficulty in question is much more dangerous to Kotarbiński’s position than the remarks presented above because it is possible that the demand of the reduction of the causal relation to the logical one is too excessive. Perhaps, as Kotarbiński argued in case of other relations, the changes in objects are *causally related* in many ways (e.g. destroying, killing, etc.) without using the ostensible name ‘causal relation’. In consequence, Davidson’s objection, which was just presented, is not dangerous for the very idea of reistic reduction. But here comes other Davidson’s argument that undermines the very idea of reistic reduction of events. As Davidson argued in *Adverbs of Action* [1985] the logical form of sentences about events containing *adverbs of action* comprises existential quantification over events, which is not reducible in any plausible way. The idea is that the sentences in question have clear truth conditions if and only if they contain names of events and quantified events variables. In consequence, the names of actions cannot be treated as ostensible names.

The proposed correction of Kotarbiński’s original formulation consists in treating the names of individual actions and events as *real* names, and, in consequence, individual actions and events as rightful individual things. This is the unique departure from Kotarbiński’s original minimalist ontology that I propose in this paper.¹¹ In particular, I do not want to reify the causal relation, and when I insist that a causal relation holds between individual events (conceived from now on as *changes in individual things*, and not as *changing things*) I only mean that the relevant sentence is true, e.g. “The explosion of Vesuvius caused the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum”.

¹⁰ Here I assume general form of causal law as in DAVIDSON [1967].

¹¹ The enriched ontology is not reistic. Events obviously cannot be counted as *bodies*.

The aim of the rest of this paper is to show that the relation between some parts of an act or an action in Kotarbiński's sense can be established on the linguistic level. This nominalistic strategy is obviously not very remote from Kotarbiński's approach, but enables us to present his results in a simpler and more coherent form.

3. Goals, means, reasons, motives and intentions

Though Kotarbiński did not propose any strict definition of free impulse, which I treat here as a counterpart of the Davidsonian notion of action, it can be conceived as a goal-oriented change in an individual thing, or, as I assume here, a goal-oriented event.

According to Davidson, we redescribe in intensional terms or *rationalize* a performed action in terms of its *goals* when we give its *reasons*, i.e. *pro-attitudes* towards the actions of a certain type and a *belief* that the performed individual action is of this type (DAVIDSON [1980], pp. 3–4). The pro-attitude towards actions of a certain type can be considered the *goal*, and the belief that the performed action of a description given in the content of the belief belongs to this type usually expressing the *means* applied to perform the action in question. Of course, this distinction is rather vague because there is no clear borderline between goals and means. To illustrate it, let us consider Davidson's very well known example (see DAVIDSON [1980], pp. 57–58). If the queen pours a poison into the king's ear, her action can be *rationalized* as follows: she wanted (or felt obliged, etc.) to kill the king (goal), and believed that pouring the poison into the king's ear is killing him (means to achieve the goal). Of course, there are other possible rationalizations: 'The queen wanted (or felt obliged) to kill the king and believed that poisoning him is killing him', or 'The queen wanted (or felt obliged) to poison the king and believed that pouring the poison into his ear is poisoning him'. The point is that goals and means to achieve the goals are not elements of ontology but elements of the language of description. This approach is not only compatible with Kotarbiński's reistic strategy, but it explains as well the lack of the strict borderline between goals and means as description dependent 'objects'.

The possible pro-attitudes towards a certain type of action can be various propositional attitudes, sometimes mutually exclusive – compare, e.g. 'I don't want to but I have to'. A definite pro-attitude together with a relevant belief constitute the *reason* of an action if they in fact *cause* this action.¹² Many possible pro-attitudes can be counted also as *motives* to perform actions of

¹² We can be wrong about reason ascription of other people actions, as well as our own actions (self-deception).

various type, but it is not necessary that a motive causes any action of the relevant type. The idea of the distinction between reason and motive was conceived in *Paradoxes of Irrationality* (DAVIDSON [1982]). The difference is very important, as somebody can have motives to act, but in fact he does not act, or even does not *intend* to act according to these motives.

The reason ascription is prone to error and self-deception, e.g. the queen can rationalize her action of poisoning the king stating that she felt obliged to stop the suffering of her ill husband. Sometimes we cannot give the reason of an action, but we know that there must be *some* reason, and this conviction suffices to treat the event as an action and not as something that just happened to somebody. If an action is performed, an agent can fail to achieve the goal by accident, or as a result of an error, e.g. the queen can cure the king's hearing instead of killing him.¹³

In this place, an additional remark is necessary. The description of reason as a cause in terms of attitudes (wants, beliefs, etc.) seems to have one disadvantage – the causes of events are just events, and reasons seem to be dispositions. Davidson insists that the description in terms of dispositions is just the result of our disability to individualize *mental events* that actualize these dispositions.

The other counterpart of the notion of goal is an *intention*. Of course, every performed action is by definition *intentional* because the pro-attitudes have intentional character (they are wants, obligations, etc), but what matters here is the *action of forming an intention*, which often does not result in a relevant action. The queen could have formed the intention to kill the king (a type of action), but she never even tried to perform any action of this type (poisoning, shooting or stabbing the king), or even, she deliberately helped to cure his illnesses, saved his life, etc. This is the problem of the weakness of will which constitutes an interesting problem in philosophy of action, especially in causal theories.¹⁴

4. The problem of agency

Every performed action is intentional, but the effects can be unintended. The intended or unintended effects were called by Kotarbiński *works* (*dziela*):

The work is any effect of a cause that is a free impulse, and an effect is always an event (*Treatise*: p. 37).

¹³ Of course the effects of the action strongly modify its description. If the king managed to survive the queen's action would be counted as an attempt to kill.

¹⁴ This problem has been elaborated in DAVIDSON [1969].

(...) the fact that an event is or is not a work of an agent in respect of his free impulse does not depend on his intention of realizing it (*Treatise*: p. 38).

The problem only touched on here by Kotarbiński can be labelled the problem of *agency*. Every action has an agent and we can speak about the works of the agent in respect of the action. But as an event, every action has its causal effects. The question is if the set of works of an agent in respect of the action is identical to the set of all effects of this action conceived as an event. At the first glance there are two extreme candidates for the solution. Work can be conceived as an *immediate*¹⁵ effect of an action. But as immediate effects can have other effects, and these effects further effects, every effect in the causal chain initiated by the action can be considered work. Unfortunately, both solutions have obvious drawbacks. One can agree without hesitation that if the immediate effect¹⁶ of putting the poison into the king's ear is the illness of the king, and the further effect of the illness is his death, the king's death obviously counts as the queen's work. On the other hand, one of the effects of the death of the king can be a *coup d'état* initiated by one of the ministers, civil war, and even the division of the country. These events would hardly be counted as the queen's works, at least literally speaking. The problem is which effects of the causal chain initiated by an action cease to be the works of the agent or, in different terms, in what link of the causal chain initiated by the agent's action the agency expires.

More generally, the problem of agency can be divided into two subproblems: the agent – action relation and the action – work relation. As I have just mentioned, Kotarbiński did not define the action (free impulse), but he gave some examples: pressing a button, striking a key, and agents' behavior, like:

(...) making an effort to recall a forgotten occurrence or straining attention when adding numbers (*Treatise*: p. 30).

This approach is analogous to Davidson's understanding of action, who insisted that all actions are in fact *body-movements* comprising conscious mental events like the ones mentioned by Kotarbiński. In consequence, planning an action or forming an intention to act are also actions (or free impulses). The notion of free impulse serves Kotarbiński to define the notion of an *agent* of an event:

An agent of an event is the one whose free impulse is a cause of the event (*Treatise*: 30).

¹⁵ 'Immediate effect' means that there is no event in the causal chain between it and its cause. In Davidson's approach, actions can be conceived as immediate effects of their reasons.

¹⁶ I treat the king's illness as an immediate effect of the queen's action only for the sake of an example. In fact, one can indicate a long causal chain between these events.

This rather obvious definition is in fact not very illuminating because it does not explain the relation between an agent and a free impulse (an action). Moreover, it suggests that an agent conceived as a changing individual thing *causes* a free impulse¹⁷. This approach is known in the modern philosophy of action as *agent-causation* and is introduced usually to explain the *freedom* of the agent. Moreover, it is compatible with Kotarbiński's reism which does not admit events, and connects causation with changing objects. In the approach proposed in this paper, the relation between an agent and a free impulse (action) is a normal event causality – the cause of an action is its reason, i.e. a usually unknown mental event of an agent that can be described in terms of propositional attitudes. As Kotarbiński's reistic views evoke rather a suspicious notion of agent-causation, the Davidson's approach can be treated as another argument in favor of the contention that the cause of an action is not a *changing agent* but an event – *the change in an agent*.

Let us now focus on the problem of the relation between an action and a work. The work can be intentional or unintentional. Of course, the distinction between intentional and unintentional works is vague and ambiguous and strongly depends on the way we describe the events. If the queen committed an error and poured into the king's ear not a poison but a drug that cured his deafness, her work would be counted as unintentional. In this case, the action of the queen can be described as pouring a liquid into the king's ear, as pouring a drug into king's ear, or curing the king's deafness. As we can see, the descriptions of *works* of an agent can play an important role in describing the action. Of course, descriptions of works are not obligatory in describing actions which can be described in many different ways. An unsuccessful action can be described in terms of its causes, i.e. reasons: 'The queen wanted to kill the king and thought that pouring the liquid into his ear was killing him', or directly as an unsuccessful action: 'The queen tried to kill the king by pouring into his ear a liquid that she thought that was a poison'. Let us imagine that the queen managed to kill her husband because she wanted to remain queen after his death, marrying the king's younger brother, but she didn't know that one hour earlier that man had died. Her action could be described in terms of the mentioned effects of the action counted as the unintended works of the queen, e.g. as the extermination of the dynasty or becoming a lonely widow. Now let us imagine that the queen wanted to poison her husband because she wanted to stop being annoyed by his deafness. In this case, the accidental curing of the king's deafness can be described as stopping being annoyed, which turns to be an intended effect of the action, at least in this description.

¹⁷ I do not maintain that this was Kotarbiński's position. I insist only that this view is compatible with some of his contentions.

The examples given above serve only to prepare the answer to the question about the relation action – work. They indicate that any action can be described in potentially infinitely many ways. The problem of intended or unintended action is, in fact, the problem of its description in terms of intended or unintended effects (works), and it strongly depends on their description. In consequence, any action can be intentional and not-intentional depending on the way we describe it. The description of the effects appears to be the key to answering the question, which can be reformulated in the following terms: Which effects can be used to describe an action? In his article *Action and Responsibility* [1965] Joel Feinberg introduced the notion of the *accordion effect* which applies exclusively to actions and not to non-action events. In his original approach, Feinberg understood action more or less as Kotarbiński defined it in *Treatise*, i.e. as a compound entity. The accordion effect permitted, if necessary, stretching the action over its reasons (causes) or effects. In Davidson's nominalist approach, the accordion effect does not consist in stretching an action, but in describing it (see DAVIDSON [1971]). If necessary, the same action can be described in terms of its reasons (as their effect), as a body movement (description as a physical event or as a *free-impulse* in Kotarbiński's approach), or in terms of its effects (as their cause). Moreover, every action description can differ from another depending on the *circumstances* we know and take into account. This is the reason I approximately identified actions with free impulses. In fact, free impulses, as Kotarbiński conceived them, are just actions under body-movement descriptions. Other elements of actions in Kotarbiński's sense are just counterparts of the possible elements of their descriptions.

The description of an action can be more or less precise, but the causal relation holds (or does not hold) between events independently of the way we describe them. According to Davidson, Feinberg's approach to the accordion effect obscures the very notion of action because it confuses the reality with its description. The causal relation holds between events independently of their description, but the choice of description depends on our knowledge and is usually pragmatically motivated. Some inconsistencies that can be traced in *Treatise* suggest that the same critical remark can be applied to Kotarbiński, who obscured his notion of action trying to introduce into it all elements of its possible descriptions. In consequence, the inexperienced reader of *Treatise* who does not know Kotarbiński's reism is prone to interpret an act as a compound and complicated entity embracing many elements with the rather obscure notion of causality. It can provoke confusions as in the following example:

Let us assume that John became the new javelin champion and beat the record of n meters, while Peter, the non-living javelin ex-champion, could vaunt the throw

of *m* meters only. Did John *cause* with his throw that Peter's previous throw ceased to be the record? (*Treatise*: p. 34).

The example seems to be paradoxical because the effects cannot precede causes, and Kotarbiński proposes treating this example as a verbal speculation. From the presented point of view, the misunderstanding results from the fact that the description of a throw depends on changing circumstances and, in consequence, can change in time. The new throw is not the cause of changes in the previous one, but constitutes one of the circumstances that we take into account in its description.¹⁸

From the Davidsonian point of view, the accordion effect enables the problem of the limits of agency to be established in the following way: *instead of asking which effects of an action are the agent's works, and which are not, we can ask which effects can be used to describe the action*. Let us consider once more the example of the queen poisoning her husband and assume that she was motivated to commit the crime by the king's brother. Motivating or manipulating the queen is obviously the action of the king's brother. But where does the agency of king's brother expire? i.e. which effects of his action can be used to describe his action? The action of the king's brother can be described as the utterance of words and gestures, as motivating (convincing or manipulating) the queen to kill her husband, as causing the queen to kill the king, or even as causing the king's death, but it cannot be called the *killing of the king*. Let us recall the Vesuvius example. In the case of agency, the verb 'to cause' can sometimes be eliminated in literal language, e.g. 'to cause destruction' can be literally substituted by 'to destroy' and 'to cause death' can be substituted by 'to kill'. Where the indicated substitution is possible, the effect of an action can be counted as the work of an agent.

The action of the king's brother can be called motivating (convincing or manipulating) to kill the king, because its possible effect can be the queen's reason to kill the king or the queen's reason to form the intention to kill the king. Killing the king or forming the intention to kill the king are, of course, the queen's actions, but the relevant reasons (i.e. reasons to kill the king or reasons to form the intention to kill the king) conceived as the queen's mental acts are, according to Davidson, not her actions¹⁹ and can be counted as the 'last' works of the king's brother in the causal chain of effects initiated by his action.

¹⁸ Of course, the causal relation is present in this example, but it holds not between the two throws, but between the second throw and the action of renaming the first one.

¹⁹ One of the most important conclusions in Davidson's *Agency* [1971] is that mental acts that are causes of our actions (the reasons) are in fact not actions. On the other hand *forming intentions to act* are actions.

Now we can now draw the following conclusion: The agency expires when the *effect* of an action is another *action*. In consequence, the queen's action of pouring the poison into the king's ear can be called *killing* the king (if it was successful), *trying* to kill the king (if it was not successful), but it cannot be called (at least literally) the *initiation* of the civil war which was caused after the king's death. It can be called 'the provoking of the civil war', because the last and probably unintended *work* in the causal chain initiated by the queen's action was somebody's else reason to initiate the civil war.

5. Concluding remarks

The aim of this paper was to indicate that Kotarbiński's philosophy of action can be presented in a much simpler and more coherent form by adopting Davidson's nominalistic conceptual apparatus, with as few ontological concessions as possible. The presented approach to the notion of action does not depart in an essential way from the Kotarbiński's original theory, and the only ontological difference consists in introducing events as individual things. In consequence, the essential body of Kotarbiński's theory can be expressed in the proposed form.

As the concluding remark, let us focus on the problem of *freedom*. There is a strong reason to talk about human actions in special way, but from the ontological point of view they are just events that appear, as other events do, in causal chains. Analogously, in Kotarbiński's event-free original theory, actions are, in fact, changing individual conscious objects. In spite of the event-language of praxeological works, a free impulse is conceived not as a change in an agent, but as a *changing agent* which invokes ontologically suspected notion of *agent causation* introduced to explain the phenomenon of the freedom of an agent who initiates the changes in objects. In this paper I proposed that it is an agent's *reason* (and not the agent himself) that initiates chains of events.²⁰ In order to preserve an agent's freedom, Davidson introduced the doctrine of *anomalous monism*, which assumes that all events (physical events, mental events, and actions) have the same ontological status and there is only one kind of causality. Contrary to Kotarbiński and many other philosophers, Davidson maintained that causal laws in form of generally quantified equivalences are 'language sensitive', i.e. can be formulated in physical language only. The freedom is preserved because *action predicates* are not *physical predicates*. In consequence, they cannot figure in causal laws and our actions are unpredictable or

²⁰ But, as Davidson maintains, the reasons of an action not actions. In consequence, planning, forming an intention to act, or volitions cannot be causes of actions.

anomalous. I believe that this idea can be reconciled with Kotarbiński who explained the term ‘free’, as it occurs in ‘free impulse’, in the following way:

(...) by freedom we understand here the characteristics of deliberate behavior well known to the readers from their own experience, and not some indeterministic freedom of actions conceived as their independence on causes (*Treatise*: p. 32).²¹

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²¹ Kotarbiński’s position expressed in this fragment, which bears some resemblance to Mills’ views about freedom, is not very clear.

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ACTION AND ETHICS A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE LATE FRANKFURT SCHOOL (APEL, HABERMAS, WELLMER)

Abstract. I shall delineate what I see as the strength and relevance of transcendental-pragmatics within the intellectual setting in the post-war period. I shall indicate how the discussions within transcendental-pragmatics have revealed inherent challenges, while at the same time the intellectual and institutional surroundings have changed unfavorably during the last few decades. And I shall briefly indicate how these inherent challenges and new constellations could and should be met, to the effect that transcendental-pragmatics could reveal its philosophical importance and practical relevance under changed conditions; the catchword here is gradual (melioristic) reasoning.

Keywords. Transcendental pragmatics, civilization crisis, principles for a civilized society, validity claims, argumentative redemption, truth, universal justification.

As a starting point I assume that Practical Philosophy includes Political Philosophy and Normative Social Philosophy. Moreover, I take it that Transcendental-Pragmatics, as a practical philosophy, has “temperature”. (Anyone who has met Karl-Otto Apel or Jürgen Habermas would understand.¹) So, for those working in transcendental-pragmatics, what is at stake?

Briefly stated, those doing transcendental-pragmatics have a mission: A calling to cope with civilizational crises, as a normative challenge, and a calling to cope with modernity, conceived in terms of science-based and institutionally differentiated societies, with various ‘cognitive interests’, not merely instrumental rationality, but also interpretive and liberating reasoning, conceived as discursive reasoning.

In short, I assume that their main concern is discursive enlightenment, i.e., a modern society moderated and normatively justified by self-reflective and discursive reasoning. That’s what really matters for philosophers engaged in transcendental-pragmatics and discursive reasoning.

¹ Cf. e.g. APEL [1998] and [2003], and HABERMAS [2001], [2004], [2005], [2012].

To elucidate this point, I shall situate transcendental-pragmatics historically, within changing intellectual and institutional constellations.

1. The post-war constellation and the role of transcendental pragmatics

I start with the following suggestion: Transcendental-pragmatics should be conceived as a philosophical and existential response to skepticism and civilizational crises. Hence, it is no accident that transcendental-pragmatics emerged after the Second World War, nor that it primarily emerged in Germany and not in the victorious Anglophone world.²

This is my first point: the general intellectual constellation in the post-war period, when transcendental-pragmatics gradually emerged, can be characterized by challenges from three angles:

(i) There was a need to respond to *the War and the Nazi period*,³ to cope with the civilizational damages. In this situation, transcendental-pragmatics represented an attempt to formulate a post-skeptical response to the question of how to justify universally valid principles and practices for a civilized society.

Moreover, broadly speaking there were two dominant intellectual positions in this post-war period, on the one hand (ii) *existentialism*, advocating normative decisionism⁴ (and cognitive relativism), and on the other hand (iii) *positivism*, defending normative decisionism and emotionalism (and epistemic scientism). Hence, transcendental-pragmatics had clearly recognizable adversaries in these two philosophical positions, existentialism and positivism.

Intellectually and politically, the emerging transcendental-pragmatics could thus be seen as located within a triangular constellation, with the challenges of war experiences as the overall background and with existentialism and positivism as two competing intellectual positions on each side.

² For this reason, transcendental-pragmatics makes sense primarily for those who are faced with these challenges. Those who remain unconcerned and self-content without questioning their own foundations will hardly grasp the intellectual importance and existential impact of transcendental-pragmatics. Cf. the difference in early life experiences for Richard Rorty and for Karl-Otto Apel. During WWII, Rorty was peacefully looking for wild orchids in the US, while Apel was exposed to the breakdown of civilization on the Eastern Front (see RORTY [1999], pp. 6–7). The same holds true for pseudo-skeptical intellectuals who refuse to pursue the skeptical challenge to the bitter end; a critique of this attitude, see SKIRBEKK [1958].

³ See APEL [1988b].

⁴ At least in its popular versions. Moreover, the decisionism in early Heidegger, cf. the politically ambiguous term “resoluteness” (*Entschlossenheit*) in *Sein und Zeit* [1927].

Add to this that the first generation of the Frankfurt school (T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer) relied heavily on a dichotomy of power-infected instrumental reason on the one hand, and liberating aesthetics on the other, with a similar neglect of argumentative and liberating reasoning as in Heideggerian existentialism. Against both these positions (Heidegger and Adorno/Horkheimer), and also against logical positivism (as in the Vienna School), a reconsideration of *various kinds of rationality* became an urgent task for the emerging transcendental-pragmatics. Thus, a discursive and reflective notion of rationality was elaborated and defended by those who tended toward transcendental-pragmatics (in the first place, Apel and Habermas), and at the same time the notion of rationality was being differentiated according to different sciences and different basic acts.⁵

2. Inherent discussions and challenges

There were inherent discussions and challenges.⁶ Just a few reminders concerning the notion of truth: At the point of departure, we have the relationship between justification and truth. Justification “can be lost”, it may change by “time and space” and by the persons involved, and justification is seen as gradual, as more or less well established, whereas truth “cannot be lost”, being independent of time and space and of the persons holding it.

Hence, *identifying* truth with justification renders truth relative.⁷ But, on the other hand, if one defines truth and justification as *radically different*, it is hard to see how truth could ever be reached by humans, because, as fallible beings, we depend on investigation and discussion, that is, on processes of justification.

The transcendental-pragmatic response to this dilemma consists in an attempt to conceive the notion of truth as an “idealization” in a transcendental-pragmatic sense, that is, as an unavoidably presupposed regulative idea.⁸ However, discussions within and around the community of transcendental-pragmatic

⁵ Cf. Habermas on different “cognitive interests”, and Apel/Kettner on “die eine Vernunft und die vielen Rationalitäten”.

⁶ The discussions within transcendental pragmatics are related to extensive contemporary discussions. Here are some references, ordered alphabetically: AUSTIN [1975], BAILEY [2013], BENHABIB [2009], BRUMLIK [1986], BRUNE [2003], GRONKE [2003], HELLESNES [2002a] and [2002b], JAKOBSEN [2012], KELLERWESSEL et al. (eds) [2005], NIQUET [1993], RAWLS [1993], [1995], RYLE [1945], SEARLE [1969], SKJERVHEIM [1996], STRAWSON [1966], WELLMER [2004], [2007], WERNER [2003], WITTGENSTEIN [1953], YU [2006].

⁷ Cf. Richard Rorty.

⁸ Not “idealization” in the sense of “idealized models” as in economics or physics.

philosophers reveal that this notion of truth remains controversial.⁹ Briefly, here is a reminder of some main points in that respect:

Karl-Otto Apel conceives of the notion of truth as a transcendental-pragmatic precondition in terms of an “ultimate opinion” of an ideal community of researchers and discussants “in the long run”, and hence as a speech-act inherent “regulative idea”, unavoidably presupposed in our interaction, and at the same time indicating the direction of our search for truth, but never fully realizable in real life and in human history.

This Apelian notion of truth as “ideal consensus” was attacked from various angles, for instance by Albrecht Wellmer who presented various counterarguments:¹⁰

(i) According to Wellmer, Apel’s notion of an “ideal consensus” in terms of an “ultimate opinion” entails a “God’s eye” view, contrary to Apel’s own intention. It entails a metaphysical rest, despite Apel’s claim of overcoming theoretical metaphysics by speech-act inherent transcendental arguments.

(ii) Moreover, due to our human finitude, there will always be a plurality of linguistic approaches and thus (Wellmer says) a “fight about truth”,¹¹ and hence there can be no final consensus.

(iii) The notion of an ideal consensus is therefore conceptually meaningless: It presupposes the end of history, the end of human conditions, and thus it does not make sense as a goal for human efforts. More specifically, it presupposes, according to Wellmer, complete transparency, absolute knowledge, and moral perfection – which makes the notion meaningless.¹²

The latter claim¹³ is explicitly repudiated by Apel, adding that such a claim would indeed have been absurd. However, to my mind, a problem remains in Apel’s own position due to the unavoidable pluralism of languages in most cases; not necessarily as a “fight” between conceptual perspectives (as Wellmer says), but as a linguistic and conceptual pluralism, (e.g.) due to the differentiation of a manifold of discipline-inherent conceptions and languages in modern science-based societies.

⁹ Some references, ordered alphabetically: APEL [1967], [1973], [1979], [1988a], [2001], [2003], [2011], BÖHLER [2003], [2013], BÖHLER et al. (eds) [1987], [2003], DORSCHER et al. (eds) [1993], HABERMAS [1983], [1984], [1991], [1992], [1999], [2000], [2003], KETTNER [1993], KEUTH [1993], KUHLMANN [1982], [1986], [1992], KUHLMANN et al.(eds) [1982], ÖFSTI [1994], [2003], RÄHME [2003], [2007], RORTY [1989], [2000], SKIRBEKK [1982], [1997], [2011], TRANØY [1976], WELLMER [1986], [2003].

¹⁰ WELLMER [2003].

¹¹ *Streit um die Wahrheit*, *ibid.*

¹² WELLMER [1993], p. 162, where he says that Apel presupposes *vollkommene Transparenz*, *absolutes Wissen*, and *moralische Vollkommenheit*.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Moreover, what about Wellmer's own position? Basically, Wellmer refers to what he sees as a grammatical point, namely a switch of perspectives between "my beliefs" and "the beliefs of others",¹⁴ the former perceived as true, that is, for me here and now, and the latter conceived as fallible.

To my mind, the strength of Wellmer's point lies in his emphasis on the unavoidability of truth-claims here-and-now, grammatically in the first-person indicative mood.¹⁵ But there are questions to be raised (as Apel was quick to point out), for instance, whether Wellmer's own claim about a grammatically founded epistemic switch should be conceived as a universal validity-claim, and thereby as a claim to consensus under ideal conditions, despite linguistic pluralism and human finitude.

Let me also recall some further objections to Wellmer.¹⁶ A distinction between "my beliefs" (in the first-person indicative) and "the beliefs of others" (in a third-person perspective) should not be construed as a strict dichotomy. There are evidently interconnections between the two perspectives, in the sense that "my beliefs" are those beliefs that have been established and tried out in interaction with other persons. Moreover, even though I take "my beliefs" here-and-now to be true, from experience I am at the same time reflectively aware of my own fallibilism. I know I am fallible; and that is exactly the reason why I recognize an urge to go further, to be open to trying out my present opinions by new investigations and renewed argumentations, possibly with new conceptual and disciplinary perspectives.¹⁷ But then we are underway, if not towards perfection, at least away from what can be recognized as less reasonable opinions – in short, a *gradualist meliorism*,¹⁸ as a transcendental-pragmatic precondition, and thus as a "constitutive regulative idea".

¹⁴ Habermas has a similar point (as Wellmer), emphasizing the switches between (i) taking something to be true and (ii) questioning something in further research (HABERMAS [1999]). But in Habermas this appears as a sociological point about scientific and scholarly research, not as a self-referential (transcendental-pragmatic) point – and that is a decisive difference.

¹⁵ Wellmer defends the view that the notion of truth is related to self-reference, but also that fallibilism may take different forms and degrees. Those are good points. But he does not delineate the melioristic, the dynamic drive toward improvement, away from that which is seen as less good reasons. Hence he does not talk about "regulative ideas", which he interprets as in Apel, and not melioristically.

¹⁶ Here we refer to WELLMER [2003], not WELLMER [1986]; see next footnote.

¹⁷ Concerning the need of deliberation and argumentation, for fallible human beings, cf. JOHN STUART MILL [1859], chapter II, "Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion".

¹⁸ This is in accordance with main points in WELLMER [1986], pp. 124–131 and 171–172, and [1993], p. 175, where he argues for a gradualist approach and for "negative justification" (*negative Rechtfertigung*). Similar points in SKIRBEKK [2002]. Also Kettner, [in:] APEL and KETTNER (eds) [1992], p. 22: "Der diskursethische Ansatz kritisiert das Bestehende im Lichte *regulativer* Ideen. [...] Regulative Ideen sind [...] Orientierungsinstrumente für die melioristisch-kritische

Two points are then decisive:

(i) Fallibilism is to be conceived as a plural notion, to be illuminated by various case-studies.

In discussing fallibilism Wellmer refers to Wittgensteinian arguments from life-world certainties and act-inherent ‘tacit knowing’. I agree. We should look into a variety of different cases of more or less fallible knowledge and insight: comprehensive theories, simple statements, conceptual frameworks (‘vocabularies’ in Rorty’s terminology), and act-inherent certainties.¹⁹ Moreover, in analyzing act-inherent competences and insights we may argue convincingly for necessary preconditions.²⁰ I would go further, arguing for the cautious usage of ‘arguments from absurdity’ on a variety of cases in order to reveal different kinds (and degrees) of ‘absurdity’, and thereby, reflectively, also to reveal different kinds of necessary preconditions.²¹

In short, fallibilism should be conceived of as plural, as gradual, and thus we should carefully look at different cases.

(ii) The notion of “regulative ideas” should be conceived melioristically, in terms of overcoming less good views and arguments, not in terms of a comprehensive final truth.

Wellmer refers to the importance of considering the question of various conceptual frames, or ‘vocabularies’ (referring to Richard Rorty, and thereby to Heidegger on ‘world disclosure’, *Welterschließung*). I agree. We should consider the tricky question of (relative) conceptual (in-)adequacy, not merely the question of truth (in terms of conceptually constituted statements and theories).²² Moreover, we may talk about conceptual (in-)adequacy in gradual terms, as more or less adequate or

Arbeit bestimmter Negation”. Further comments on the Apel-Wellmer controversy [in:] SKIRBEKK (ed.) [2004], pp. 7–27.

¹⁹ For instance, Darwinism is a fallible scientific theory, but definitely less fallible than creationism. And descriptive macro-anatomy of the human body is hardly fallible at all, since we know it all – it is no longer a subject for research, but merely a subject for the education of future doctors and health personal.

²⁰ Cf. the ‘praxeological’ analysis of Jakob Meløe et al., [in:] SKIRBEKK (ed.) [1983].

²¹ SKIRBEKK [1993]. For the term ‘arguments from absurdity’, cf. also Gilbert Ryle on informal ‘reductio ad absurdum arguments’, RYLE [1945].

²² E.g. SKIRBEKK [2012]. To make it brief: all statements in a scientific theory (say, in economics) may be well established, within its own conceptual frame, and still the theory may be blind for various phenomena within its field of concern (e.g. to the effect that economic theories often fail in predicting future events). In short, its conceptual ‘world disclosure’ is (relatively) inadequate for coping with important facts.

inadequate. Hence, to the extent that there is a spill-over between conceptual (in-)adequacy and truth-claims, we could even talk about gradual truth-claims, about (comprehensive) theories being more or less true.²³

In short, in discussing fallibilism we should also look at the question of conceptual adequacy and inadequacy (and at the possible spill-over to the question of propositional and theoretical truth), and in looking at cases of relative conceptual adequacy or inadequacy a melioristic perspective should be considered (avoiding what is less reasonable).

A reminder: in transcendental-pragmatics, four speech-act inherent validity-claims are paramount in this connection: truth claims, rightness claims, claims to truthfulness, and claims to meaningfulness. Briefly stated, truth and rightness claims are seen as argumentatively (“discursively”) “redeemable” under ideal conditions, characterized by “the forceless force of the better argument” and mutual recognition among the participants²⁴ – in short, under free and equal conditions for all participants, and by a willingness to seek better arguments and to listen to each other.²⁵ In transcendental-pragmatics, rightness claims are seen as claims for *norms* of justice and fairness, primarily for the regulation of conflicts, not as claims concerning *values*. Truthfulness claims are not seen as discursively redeemable. Such claims are “redeemed” by interpersonal experiences among those concerned. Moreover, meaningfulness is construed as a precondition of meaningful argumentation (and communication), though it may also be related to questions of conceptual adequacy or inadequacy. These are the main characteristics of the discourse theory of truth and rightness that pertains to transcendental-pragmatics (or respectively to “universal” and “formal” pragmatics in Habermas). However, there are various critical remarks to this conception of four validity claims, for instance: (i) There are arguments in favor of *further differentiations*, e.g. between truth claims of singular statements and truth claims of comprehensive theories, and also between these truth claims and claims of (relative) conceptual adequacy.²⁶ (ii) Simultaneously there are arguments in favor of *transitions* between various validity claims, e.g. between theoretical

²³ SKIRBEKK [2003].

²⁴ Personal autonomy (*Mündigkeit*) is not an empirical fact; it is a task (for each individual and also for society), and in that sense it is a regulative idea. This is a point with practical implications, though often overlooked in political theory. Cf. SKIRBEKK [2011], pp. 183–185.

²⁵ Similar points, e.g. J. S. MILL [1859] and TRANØY [1976].

²⁶ WELLMER [1986], p. 168, SKIRBEKK [2003] and [2012], pp. 73 f.

truth claims and conceptual adequacy claims, and also between conceptual adequacy claims and value questions.²⁷ (iii) Thus, there are arguments in favor of the view that the relative conceptual adequacy of “*situation descriptions*” is *decisive for normative (moral and ethics) validity claims*.²⁸

3. New constellations – institutionally, politically, intellectually

At first, some brief remarks on institutional changes: In academia we have had an increasing specialization and fragmentation, also within philosophy. Due to the Bologna reforms of European universities, time schedules for the humanities have been shortened and various disciplines are cut up into smaller units. Publishing houses, also those that are named university press, are increasingly commercialized, focusing on textbooks and light literature, rather than professional philosophy. These trends are bad news for philosophy, not least for transcendental-pragmatics, conceived as a comprehensive project, requiring discursive and self-reflective reasoning and a broad knowledge of opposing philosophical positions and of modern science-based societies.

As to changes on the intellectual level, I shall recall a few points: After World War Two, positivism was a philosophically well-articulated position and an easily recognized target for criticism. Today the situation is more diversified and amorphous. Modes of thinking reminiscent of positivism are certainly still around, but often embedded in implicit attitudes and suppositions within highly specialized disciplines and professions, such as neuroscience and biology, or economics and political science, professions that often disregard epistemic questions of a self-referential nature and questions of normative justification. Hence, in order to articulate a philosophical criticism that those concerned in these fields of research cannot ignore, it is decisive to be well informed about what is going on in these sciences and professions and to articulate one’s criticism in a language and in a way that is seen as relevant and important for those who are the addressees of this kind of criticism. Arguing in general terms for a supposedly superior philosophical counter position will not be seen as convincing. In order to be relevant, such criticism has to be specific and inherently situated in the disciplines and professions that are its target.

²⁷ E.g. SKIRBEKK [2012].

²⁸ WELLMER [1986], e.g. pp. 125, 134–5. In SKIRBEKK [2003] and [2012] questions of conceptual adequacy and of different “situation descriptions” are related to the plurality of scientific and scholarly perspectives, whereas Wellmer tends to refer to socio-cultural cases such as the fight for a revision of the “description” of women, children and homosexuals, see WELLMER *ibid.*, p. 125.

Today, existentialism is no longer a dominant position. But again, there is a variety of disciplines and professions that incorporate similar epistemic and normative shortcomings as did existentialism in the post-war era, such as ethical decisionism and cultural relativism with a disregard for argumentative and self-critically reflexive reasoning. For instance, within the humanities and social sciences, and related professions, there are various versions of contextualism, deconstructivism and post-modernism, each with a disregard or even an explicit rejection of self-critically reflexive argumentation in the search for truth and universal validity, seen as eurocentrism or logocentrism, and for these presumed flaws “Western Enlightenment” is blamed. For instance, there are strands within “cultural studies” that are uncritically inspired by Foucault and (so-called) “French theory”. There are strands in political multiculturalism and in academic postcolonial studies that are reminiscent of former leftist criticism of class-suppression and power in disguise, often without arguments for legitimate and universal principles, in opposition to illegitimate and contextual ones.

In short, the intellectual situation has become more opaque and amorphous, more difficult for the kind of criticism that transcendental-pragmatics articulates.

The same holds true for the general mood and basic political challenges: No more the predominant post-war front against the atrocities of the Nazi regime and its neglect of normative universality and self-critical argumentation. No more the cold war and the fight against Soviet totalitarianism. No more the politically motivating reactions against American warfare in Vietnam. Today, the situation is less clear. How should the main challenges be conceived? Is capitalism the main challenge? Or is modern technology the core of our problems, with its unprecedented and detrimental potentials? And what about politicized religion and premodern cultures, well equipped with modern technology and weaponry? What about new and increased differences between rich and poor? And what about environmentally unsustainable consumption and reproduction?

In short, after the Second World War the role and importance of the ideas brought forward by the emerging transcendental-pragmatics were easily recognizable, at least for an enlightened audience, against the backdrop of positivism, existentialism, and Nazism. Today the overall intellectual and political situation has changed. Even where transcendental-pragmatic philosophers argue convincingly for the philosophical strength of their mode of thinking, they are no more within an intellectual and political constellation where these ideas are easily recognized as relevant and important for a broader audience.

4. The philosophical importance and practical relevance

I shall briefly sum up what I see as the philosophical importance and practical relevance of a revised transcendental-pragmatics, under new institutional and intellectual constellations.²⁹ Here it comes:

Transcendental-pragmatics represents a resource for defending claims to universal validity for basic norms as well as for validity-claims in general. The clue consists in self-reflective arguments concerning act and speech-act inherent preconditions. In a pluralistic world, with a need to overcome “the fight of gods” (Max Weber), this is a decisive contribution. Even so, transcendental-pragmatics should be conceived cautiously and melioristically, with an awareness of nuances and differences, also for the main cases of self-reflective arguments.³⁰

In addition to strict self-reflection, as in the transcendental-pragmatics of Karl-Otto Apel, there are also self-referential arguments in a broader sense, as in “arguments from absurdity”, applied on contextual inconsistencies and category mistakes.³¹ Hence, there are transitions from the self-reflective core of transcendental-pragmatics to melioristically conceived precondition-analyses in a broader sense – e.g. concerning specific conceptual usages and perspectives, be it in various scientific and scholarly disciplines or in world views and “comprehensive doctrines” (Rawls).

Moreover, transcendental-pragmatics, when conceived cautiously and melioristically, supports and protects a discursive culture and an awareness of different types of rationality and reasonableness. In a pluralistic and precarious world, this is an important contribution. In this respect, transcendental-pragmatics represents a defense of a post-skeptical and self-critical enlightenment.

At the same time, transcendental-pragmatic thinkers ought to recognize and relate themselves to the considerable changes that have occurred within their institutional and intellectual setting. To my mind, the following revisionary steps ought to be undertaken:

Argumentative virtues of classical analytic philosophy should to a larger degree be incorporated into the mood and mode of thinking among transcendental-pragmatic philosophers.³²

²⁹ Cf. ”The Modernity Debate: Rationality – Universal and Plural?”, [in:] SKIRBEKK [2007]. German version in BURCKHART and GRONKE (eds), [2002].

³⁰ Cf. SKIRBEKK [2002].

³¹ Ibid. Also, RYLE [1945].

³² There should be less sweeping overviews and careless usage of comprehensive concepts on a high level of abstraction, such as the crude dichotomy between man and nature (in Habermas), criticized, [in:] SKIRBEKK [2012], pp. 57–72, or between man and animal, *ibid.* pp. 191–214.

Hence, we should more openly recognize and investigate the epistemic variety of what we conceive of as transcendental preconditions for valid thinking and argumentation.

Moreover, we should investigate the variety of basic preconditions inherent in various activities and professions in modern institutionally differentiated and science-based societies. In so doing, we should also investigate in which sense there are gradual transitions between philosophical reasoning and discussions in the public sphere, and between philosophical insights on the one hand and everyday actions and science-based activities on the other.³³

To the extent that such requirements are fulfilled, this revised transcendental-pragmatic philosophy could probably play a positive role by fostering and strengthening a self-critical and self-conscious enlightenment in academic life, in public opinion-formation, and in politics in general.

However, we should recall that philosophy is more than transcendental-pragmatics, even when the latter is revised and extended beyond the hard core of strict reflection on the primordial situation of argumentation.³⁴ In philosophy, there is *one focus* on truth, on validity-claims and argumentative redemption, but there is *another focus* on conceptual creativity and originality (on “world disclosure”, *Welterschließung*, in Heidegger's terminology). In philosophy, and in life in general, both are needed.

There are urgent questions facing our world today. These challenges are utterly complex, and to a large degree beyond the scope of transcendental-pragmatics. Nevertheless, a reasonably revised transcendental-pragmatics has a role to play in an ongoing and case-oriented critique of science and rationality, and in the critique of religion,³⁵ not least of the three monotheistic world religions with their inherent validity-claims for their specific notions of god and their interpretations of sacred scriptures. In this sense, transcendental-pragmatics could contribute to a moderating “modernization of consciousness”.³⁶

³³ When investigating the various specific or general preconditions for different societal and scientific activities, the investigators ought to be knowledgeable about what is going on in the field under investigation, be it in physics or social science. In this sense, they ought to have a “double competence”.

³⁴ “Strikte Reflexion”, in Wolfgang Kuhlmann's terms, cf. KUHLMANN [1993], p. 230. “Primordialialer Diskurs”, in Karl-Otto Apel's terms, cf. APEL [1998], pp. 794–797.

³⁵ Critique in the Kantian sense of purification, not rejection. As to critique of religion, cf. ROHS [2013].

³⁶ Cf. HABERMAS [2005], pp. 143 ff. In brief: (i) a recognition of the pluralism of ‘comprehensive doctrines’ (cf. also ‘reasonable disagreement’ in Rawls), (ii) a recognition of scientific and scholarly insights and discursive procedures, and (iii) a recognition of institutional differentiations, e.g. between law and religion, and about professional roles and private life.

Moreover, by furthering a dialogue between cultures, based on mutual recognition and a search for better understanding and better reasons – in contrast to unilateral and condescending preaching – the ideas and ideals of transcendental-pragmatics do have an important role to play in our contemporary and complex world.

In short, new civilizational crises may emerge. Dependent on form and extension, many things will then be required, but also this: A defence of universally valid normative principles, across cultures and material interests. A defence of Enlightenment, as a project with an on-going strengthening of personal autonomy, against ignorance and narrowness. A defence of serious discussions and open dialogues, across conflicting positions.

Hence, there is hardly any reason to assume that transcendental-pragmatics will lose its relevance in times to come. Presumably, it is rather the other way round.

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IS TADEUSZ KOTARBIŃSKI'S INDEPENDENT ETHICS PROGRAM IMPORTANT NOWADAYS?

Abstract. In the paper, the essential elements of Kotarbiński's independent ethics are presented. These are ethics which are one example of ethics in the broader sense, with a range of problems related to the question: how should we live our lives? Kotarbiński proposed an idea of independent ethics, ethics that are independent of religion and philosophy, ethics based on "platitude (obviousness) of heart". In the paper, some shortcomings of this proposal will be shown, but also, by analysis of the parable of the Good Samaritan, it will be shown how we can overcome the weaknesses of independent ethic theory.

Keywords. Independent ethics, obviousness of heart, conscience, dignity, anthropology, Christian Revelation.

Professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński, the first Rector of the University of Łódź, left a significant mark of his rich and creative personality in many areas of the humanities, especially so in philosophy. One of these areas is ethics, and one of his original ideas was the concept of independent ethics. The idea of such an ethics he presented as far back as 1948, then returned repeatedly to it – up until 1987. Initially, the idea was met with quite lively resonance among philosophers, and some took it up, sometimes critically, but approving the general thrust of independent ethics.¹ Later, however, from approximately 1970, interest in it waned. Below I shall first present the important elements of this concept, then try to show some of its weaknesses, which – perhaps – have

¹ Cf. esp.: A. Grzegorzczuk, *On foundations of natural ethics*, [in:] idem, *Diagrams and Man. Philosophical Essays*, Kraków 1963, pp. 166–184; T. Czeżowski, *On Tadeusz Kotarbiński's independent ethics*, *Philosophical Studies* 1976 No. 3, pp. 27–32; T. Styczeń, *Independent Ethics?*, Lublin 1980 (cf. esp. pp. 59–63). Each of these authors in a slightly different way included the proposal by Kotarbiński in their own ethical suggestions. Noteworthy is particularly Czeżowski, whose conception of ethics as an empirical science, published at the same time, comes especially close to Kotarbiński's idea of independent ethics. Cf.: T. Czeżowski, *Ethics as an empirical science*, *Philosopher's Quarterly* 1949, vol. 18. 2, pp. 161–171. Cf. Also: A. Szostek, *Ethics as an empirical science as presented by T. Czeżowski and Kotarbiński*, *KUL Annals of Philosophy* 1971, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 43–57.

caused loss of interest in it, to finally highlight these qualities of Kotarbiński's thought which, in my opinion, still deserve attention. The title question of this presentation ought to have an affirmative answer: I believe that the independent ethics program today is worth taking up,² even though it requires adjustment and development.

1. Outline of independent ethics by T. Kotarbiński

Let's start with the fact that Professor Kotarbiński presented his idea of independent ethics several times, although it was unlikely to be developed. The individual texts differ little, some are directly inspired by the intention of popularizing this idea, not its development. He most fully presents it in the papers: *The essence of ethical evaluation* and *Issues in independent ethics* – and first of all to these texts I will make a reference here.

So first Professor explains the meaning of the two key terms. Ethics can be, in his opinion, understood more broadly or specifically. Ethics in a broader sense includes any directive on the spiritual life of man. However, within that framework one can distinguish at least three types of evaluations, referring to threefold motivation. Firstly, actions can be judged from the point of view of their giving happiness, secondly, their efficiency, and thirdly, respectability. With reference to the three criteria for assessing human action, these can be distinguished: felicitology, praxiology and ethics in the narrower and proper sense. The term "independent ethics" refers exclusively to ethics in the third of the highlighted meanings.³ What then lies behind the postulate of the independence of ethics? Firstly, it is to be ethics independent of religion, secondly – from philosophy and any worldview-inspired assumptions, and thirdly – from the opinions of others. Emphasis on independence in the definition of ethics thus understood corresponds to an equally strong voice to emphasize the importance of individual conscience.⁴

² Kotarbiński first introduced the concept of independent ethics in a paper sent to the Philosophical Congress in Amsterdam (August 1948) *On the essence of ethical evaluation*. An extended version was published in the Philosophical Quarterly in that year. Subsequent texts devoted to this idea are: *On the essence of ethical evaluation*, *An attempt at characterizing ethical evaluation*, *Issues in independent ethics*, *Some independent ethics issues*, *Issues in independent ethics*, *Signposts in independent ethics*, *Independent ethics rules*, *How and why independent ethics established the main key pattern of a dependable guardian*, *Theses in independent ethics*. Most of these texts were published in various magazines (not only philosophical), all of them can be found in T. Kotarbiński, *Works in ethics*, ed. P. Smoczyński, Wrocław in 1987, in the section titled *About the essence and tasks of ethics*, pp. 91–208.

³ T. Kotarbiński, *Issues in independent ethics*, [in:] idem, *Works in ethics*, p. 141.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 140, 143, 149.

Even these preliminary assumptions to define the concept of independent ethics deserve comment. Firstly, Kotarbiński's intention was clearly socio-pedagogical, not just theoretical. "The problem is with us now current and socially important. For whoever keeps his eyes open, he sees around this moral anarchy," writes the Professor at the outset of *Issues independent ethics*- and let me remind that this text comes from 1956, an important year in our history, and the periodical "Chronicle", aimed at a wide social readership, not just philosophers. "In traditionalist, religious milieus, there developed over the centuries an awareness of the ethical, and that largely determines the behaviour of people so minded." But Kotarbiński was an atheist and a materialist who often sharply criticized the religious worldview, which in his opinion was doomed to gradual disappearance. "Scientific socialism, the leading current today [...] is essentially tied to the scientific worldview, in which view there is no place either for Providence, or the life to come. [...] It is hard not to suspect one of the most important sources of hooliganism among adolescents in the absence of ethical awareness, in the ethical void created in place of the lost traditional ethics. So even for medical and social needs we must try to create and build an independent ethics framework."⁵

What may then fill the emptiness in those who discard religious ethical assumptions? Simply put: moral convictions common to all and a similar assessment of human behavior that does not require supernatural reasons. "Then, after all, you do not need to appeal to Providence, nor to immortality, to consider it suitable to praise courage, goodness of heart, integrity, dignity, one's own nobility, righteousness of motivation. [...] Who so feels, they do not feel the need for otherworldly reasons to get going to defend the underdog, to return the borrowed money, nor would they allow themselves the betrayal of marital fidelity".⁶ Kotarbiński is aware of the fact that ethical concepts were diverse in different cultures and at different times, which makes some thinkers limit their attention in research only to the considerations contained within narrative ethics, sometimes called ethnology. Such a kind of departure from the ambition to build the foundations of normative ethics is definitely not enough for the Professor. "The result is this," regrets Kotarbiński, "that the most important question for a decent man (how to carry on if you want to be a decent human being?) does not even receive an attempt at a decent response from decent thinkers".⁷ Meanwhile – in his opinion – "active goodness has its sufficient justification in the obviousness of the heart".⁸ What then is the response to those who suggest that this conviction is by no means confirmed in the beliefs of other peoples in other times? The Professor replied: "We do not even intend to be tempted to

⁵ Ibid., p. 140

⁶ Ibid., p. 142–143

⁷ T. Kotarbiński, *On the essence of ethical evaluation*, [in:] idem, *Works in ethics*, p. 107.

⁸ Ibid., p. 106.

show that just this common core is common to all known moral prohibitions and injunctions among all peoples of the earth and in every historical period. We set ourselves at ask incomparably more modest. We assume that the group of Readers of this article shall understand in the same way the words ‘venerable’ and ‘shameful’, which we use in assessing decent people as such and rogues as such”.⁹

Next, the Professor proposes a small catalogue of these obviousness of the heart common to us all, regardless of the professed beliefs, and first presents four obvious virtues (kindness expressed in deeds, courage, integrity, self-control and internal sublimation), which are the opposite of disgraceful attitudes: cruelty, cowardice, deceit, a kind of bankruptcy (as exemplified by succumbing to addictions)¹⁰. In *Issues in independent ethics* this catalogue is slightly adjusted and arranged in five moral oppositions: courage – cowardice, self-sacrificing kindness – selfishness; integrity (including the keeping of promises) – dishonesty; mastery (and willpower) – weakness of will (succumbing to addictions), noble motives – primitive motivation (yielding to instincts).¹¹ These virtues represent, according to Kotarbiński, the diverse manifestation of a fundamental attitude deserving moral recognition, for which he proposes the term “dependable guardian”. “And let style specialists allow us to use the Silesian adjective *spolegliwy*. Translated as dependable, trustworthy – it denotes the one you can rely on. Conversely, deserves contempt who leaves pupils in need”.¹² The obviousness of the heart is subject to a particular test in the light of the conscience of every human being, and also to the temptation to turn away from it in the name of extra-moral benefits that can be achieved when one ignores the voice of conscience. In the end, we all know that these benefits: a comfortable life, the effective implementation of the desired aims, etc. are easier to achieve if we give up demanding ethical standards. “Therein lies the hidden appeal from ethics to felicitology” – warns the Professor, adding: “Instead of questions about what is more noble, the question arises: what will you be better off with? This question dictates the one and only answer: for anyone who has our collective conscience, the largest misfortune is – to be at loggerheads with it. It is a disaster not comparable to any other loss”.¹³

Yet Kotarbiński recognizes that, apart from the cases in which conscience clearly shows us the proper way to proceed, we face situations often difficult to appraise unambiguously to indicate the proper course of action. Having set out a series of such moral dilemmas the Professor concludes that appeal to the obviousness of the heart of is not enough; in other words, it is not enough to

⁹ Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Idem, *Issues in independent ethics*, p. 142.

¹² Ibid., p. 144.

¹³ Ibid., p. 145.

refer to the strictly understood ethical arguments. “The voice of conscience, pronounced in very simple situations, begins to babble in the face of complications in tangled relations. [...] In many cases, it leaves us without answers, that voice of conscience, not sufficiently informed about things and regularities. We stay answer-less regarding what to do to behave as a good man should. Yet it is unbearable to unintentionally flutter in the chaos on the net. The extra-ethical need of order and stability demands definitive decisions in the fullness of action. Whenever the voice of conscience cannot provide them, we have to turn to other sources”.¹⁴ These “other sources” come close to ethics, and Kotarbiński indicates an approach of teaching which “may somehow be a substitute for an attitude strictly ethical. Unable to answer the question of what to do in a given social situation in order to fulfil really, not apparently, the motivation of a dependable guardian, we can often answer the question of how – if proceeding in such a situation – to best contribute to the release in people, within their own actions, dispositions of dependable guardians”.¹⁵ Moreover, the very idea of dependable guardianship – which does not need moral heroism, but stimulates man to achieve ever greater ethical maturity – is characterized, according to Kotarbiński, by three tendencies: to defend the weak in their conflict with the stronger, to extend its application possibly to all, and to refrain from excessive violence. In this context, Kotarbiński formulates the known aphorism: “not a single blow over militant necessity”.¹⁶

The Professor realizes that his idea of independent ethics is not an extensive system of ethics, to which, moreover, he himself refers with large reserve. In conclusion, the article *Issues in independent ethics* stipulates: “The least we are doing here is creating a semblance of completing an independent ethics system. We want to merely give an outline of the possibilities of such a system of ideas and directives. Moreover, ethical issues naturally are characterized by a certain plasticity. They do not tolerate solutions that are detached, and specific at the same time. [...] You should be aware of the main direction, and have something like a compass, and issues to execute [...] decide specifically for each individual case in all its fullness, in all its peculiar distinctness”.¹⁷

2. Problems with independent ethics

Next to the “obviousness of the heart”, man also experiences doubts, uncertainties about how to proceed. Kotarbiński remembers it, but does not consider these situations in too much detail, presumably stressing that he barely

¹⁴ T. Kotarbiński, *The essence of independent ethics*, p. 113–114.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁶ T. Kotarbiński, *Issues in independent ethics*, p. 147.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

draws a sketch of independent ethics. Meanwhile, when you pay more attention to it, then the ethics of independence itself is put into question – at least independence from philosophical premises. Here's an example: as it is known, the Professor kindly referred also to deliberate suicide, which he preferred to call euthanasia. Of course he did not encourage hasty deprivation of life, but pointed out that “over the years, the problem of euthanasia in general and, in particular, voluntary euthanasia gained weight.” He went on to encourage us to “by all means not only absolutely not disturb those who, after rational deliberation, want to speed the end of their own being and to liberate themselves from the inevitable anguish, but on the contrary, show them in this respect a friendly, legal and technical assistance”.¹⁸ It's hard not to notice that this perception is a consequence of his materialistic and atheistic worldview, in whose context the idea of an afterlife must be regarded as meaningless. There are, however, those who believe in God, who man will meet after death, and then the assessment of voluntary euthanasia (or simply suicide) must look different. For a Christian, life on earth bears the sort of relationship to eternal life as life in the womb to life on earth (hence the liturgical feast of Saints is usually associated with the date of their death). And just as the quality of earthly existence largely depends on the preparation for that in the womb, so also the shape and level of eternal life must be affected by what man on earth lived through, what he experienced. An important element of that preparation may also be the time of old age, the struggle with pain, the experience of loneliness. This is just one example, and more can be pointed out; they show how much beliefs about what is morally right and what is wrong appear as a consequence of a particular understanding of man and the world; in this sense they arise from the worldview, that is – in the broad sense – they convey one's philosophical assumptions.

Please note that the above takes a closer look at the obviousness of the heart. It is true indeed, we generally agree, that courage is laudable and cowardice shameful, that truthfulness is commendable and dishonesty shameful, etc., but it is not so that these assessments are in the sense as elemental and non-variable as is perception of certain colors.¹⁹ Such assessments not only allow further justification, but sometimes they even demand it – especially where the standards behind “obviousness of the heart” are not exception-less in character. Basically, truthfulness is laudable, but it is easy to identify situations where a waiver from speaking the truth seems to be more appropriate than a steadfast adherence to the principles of truthfulness. Kotarbiński prefers to talk not so much about activities, but rather about human attitudes and to those apply the term “obviousness of the heart.” I do not think that – while praising truthfulness

¹⁸ T. Kotarbiński, *Works In ethics*, p. 390.

¹⁹ Such sentences confirming elementary sensory experience equates initial assessments among others T. Czeżowski. Cf. his *Ethics as an empirical science*, [in:] idem, *Writings on ethics and theory of value*, ed. P. Smoczyński, Wrocław 1989, p. 97–104.

– he questioned the possibility of not telling the truth in some cases, but also moral assessment of attitudes, pretending to “obviousness of the heart”, provokes him to seek a kind of common denominator for the directory of virtues cited by him. The Professor sees the common denominator in the attitude of a dependable guardian; that is, the attitude of someone on whose help when needed and as far as it lies within his abilities one can count on. But is it not that the trustworthy guardian is in fact a kind of justification for what appears to be the obviousness of the heart? Is it not that we appreciate the courage, truthfulness, diligence, helpfulness, etc., and that in these very attitudes dependable guardianship is expressed?

But that idea itself also allows further justification. When Kotarbiński distinguishes ethics in a broader sense, which also includes felicitology and praxiology, from ethics in the strict sense, which deals with the fairness of our behavior, then in the end that fairness is associated with man's value, with his worth, often called dignity. Is not that why, just in a dependable guardian, he sees the culmination of moral fairness, and that this attitude is a particularly appropriate response to the dignity of every human being due to him? However, only the one who has any idea about who man is, what strengthens his humanity and what he is threatened by, may respect the dignity. For behind the so-called obviousness of the heart there seems to be hidden a certain human vision common to us all, at least in our cultural milieu. And if so, ethics turns out to just depend on how we understand the human being: his dignity rooted in who he is, that is, in his most generally understood nature. Where we share knowledge about man and in the cases where it is clear what attitudes and what actions serve him, and what attitudes and actions deeply hurt man – there can we talk about the heart's obviousnesses which mask a reference to his anthropological reasons; but then apparently there is no need to invoke those reasons. In situations when we differ as to the understanding of man, however, his nature and purpose of his life – e.g. when our beliefs differ as to the existence of God and the posthumous life of man – our assessment of individual attitudes and actions will be different. And even independent of the understanding of man's immortality, otherwise crucial to understand him, there comes the question: is it not the case that we draw different educational programs, depending on what in a child or young person we want to develop and strengthen? A multitude of pedagogical visions and programs herein find their foundation and reason: the different understanding of what the fundamental nature of humanity in man is. It seems that this anthropological perspective has led some critics sympathetic to Kotarbiński's independent ethics to propose a complementation of the ideal of a dependable guardian with a suggestion to form man's own completeness even when he has to deal with himself only, not with someone over whom he could exercise care. Robinson Crusoe, before meeting Friday, could behave in a manner either worthy of admiration or

reprehensible. A positive character is also described by de Saint-Exupery's pilot, though he fought only for himself, to save his own life.²⁰ Kotarbiński could retort that the attitude of dependable guardianship also encompasses the very subject of an action; for myself and my decent future I, too, am morally responsible, not only some others. That is correct, and such a possible reply by Kotarbiński is very close to me, but once again – and very clearly – it points out that the so-called obviousnesses of the heart and their culminations in the attitude of a dependable guardian are established within a particular vision of man and of what is important for his humanity morally understood.

“Obviousness of the Heart” is not fundamental in the sense that the Professor, as it seems, suggests in some of his texts. Furthermore, stopping at them as a basis to build ethics condemns us to helplessness in situations – how many! – when to such obviousness one can make no appeal, but you need to act. Kotarbiński attempts to weaken this uncomfortable consequence of his independent ethics plan, which is the need to appeal to extra-ethical criteria, when the conscience is “babbling”, unable to refer to any obviousness of the heart; this idea, supported by the prospect of teaching, can serve as a compass also in non-obvious situations. But it is hard not to report a substantial reservation: where the conscience clearly says what should be done, there is no need to appeal to ethical principles; if people need ethics at all, it is in non-obvious situations. What is an ethic worth which in these very situations makes you refer your criteria to outside ethics?

Behind this lies another, critically important question: what, in fact, is ethics? Kotarbiński definitely does not want to limit it to ethnology (descriptive ethics), he simply describes how people react to certain behaviours, some considered glorious, others heinous, and still others too difficult to clearly qualify ethically. In his intention, independent ethics has to be the foundation of normative ethics, not just descriptive and, moreover, normative ethics must indicate the reasons that justify both the obviousness of the heart and – in many cases – the lack of such obviousness. The Professor deplors the fact that the process of departing from the religious worldview that is otherwise-backed by him is accompanied by the abandonment of Gospel morality, which he highly appreciates. Why is it that those who abandon religion also abandon this morality? Crudely said, many are ready to abandon being motivated by the obviousness of the heart (also felt by themselves alone) because that ethical liberty does not threaten any punishment. Whoever believes in God, he – at least in a primitive version of Christianity – envisages a posthumous consequence of their actions. Simply put, he is afraid of hell. But if there is no God, then there is no hell either. What help will come

²⁰ An idea which complements Kotarbiński's independent ethics is postulated by A. Grzegorzczak. Cf. his *About the basics of natural ethics*, [in:] idem, *Diagrams and man*, Kraków 1963, pp. 174–176.

from a reminder of the obviousness of the heart, from imputation of the ideal of a dependable guardian? Kotarbiński feels the urgency of this problem, and so he says that the greatest misfortune is to be at loggerheads with one's own conscience. He adds that "it is a disaster not comparable to any other loss." This argument raises at least two observations. Firstly, man can cope with remorse; this is a rather pessimistic thesis, but it seems to be confirmed by numerous examples and studies showing how man can deform the voice of conscience, among other things using a so-called rationalization mechanism, known to psychologists, wherein we take recourse to an allegedly valued motivation for our evil deeds. Secondly, even if the disobedience to conscience is such a great human misery, is strictly an argument from felicitology, one from which Kotarbiński after all wanted to release ethics in the strict sense. It is not in the prospect for the sake of your own happiness that you look for a significant incentive for ethically fair activities.

It seems that, among other things, these understatements and ambiguities decided that the idea of independent ethics was not developed in the long term, and today it is invoked more as an original idea of Kotarbiński's than as a concept worthy of continuation.

3. Why the idea of independent ethics is worth reflecting on today

All said, I think that the idea of independent ethics is worth taking up today, both because of theoretical and pedagogical reasons, although it provokes expansion in such a way which I do not know whether the Professor would approve. Two of Kotarbiński's thoughts seem valuable and worthy of developing. The first is the distinction of ethics in the strict sense and ethics in a broader sense. It is true that strict ethical motivation (referring to the fairness of deeds) differs from both felicitologically and praxiologically. Since, however, only the first is considered by the Professor as strictly ethical, you have to ask how that is connected to the other two. Motivation and praxiological evaluation are by their nature intermediate: they speak of effectiveness of actions, not reaching over to the value of what the purpose of this action is. In this sense, they focus on the *bonum utile*, a useful good, which, however, of necessity, is linked to the rationale of the intended action, which also must be evaluated beyond the level of its effectiveness. This purpose can be the happiness of the subject; in this sense, the felicitologic argument overrides the praxiological. And we are familiar with such concepts of ethics which do not go beyond the felicitologic perspective. At the beginning of his most important work on ethics, Aristotle poses a question about the ultimate goal of all human efforts: the highest good

that does not require further justification. And he says: “As for the name of that good in most people almost universal agreement prevails, both generally uneducated and people with higher culture perceive that in happiness, while they think that to be happy is to live well and feel good”.²¹ As we know, this path to developing ethics was followed by many philosophers, including Christian thinkers, with St. Thomas Aquinas at the helm. Kotarbiński knows and trusts that ethical thought, but does not want to limit ethics so. He is known for his criticism of utilitarianism, which somehow fits into this felicitologic perspective.²² A trustworthy guardian is, after all, not one who thinks of his own happiness, who takes care of others not because in this finds his own happiness, but because his charge needs the help. The strictly ethical motive is the charge, and not the hope for self-happiness. Now I think Kotarbiński is right – and that view is confirmed very clearly in Judeo-Christian Revelation, whose ethical potential Kotarbiński valued anyway, despite his atheism and materialism. I am writing this as a Catholic priest who wants to be faithful to this Revelation. I want to say that the Gospel confirms the prime value of the basic moral intuition – and its importance – in relation to any religious argument.

May we recall the commonly known parable of the Good Samaritan, or rather its context. “And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying: ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” (Lk 10, 25). The lawyer, just like Jesus, is convinced that worldly human life has a further goal: eternal life unattainable on this earth. What really is more important than accurately knowing the way to the ultimate goal of human life? If by “morally good” we are to understand “what is good for man as man” (and I accept, not the least original of such an understanding of morality), this question from the expert in the law can be considered to be the question of the essence of morality. This is confirmed by other Evangelists, who refer to the same meeting of Jesus with scholars of law or similar (though only St. Luke cites the parable). In the version by Matthew, the question was: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Mt 22, 36). According to St. Mark the answer of Jesus to the question “Which is the first commandment of all?” (Mk 12, 28) gains recognition of the questioning scribe, which is appreciated by the Master (“you are not far from the kingdom of God”, see. Mk 12, 34). Each of these synoptic versions of the question is therefore a critically important issue for people. The greatest commandment (the first) is the one with reference to which you need to understand and interpret all the other commandments: such a one, the observance of which, leads man to eternal life. The answer of Jesus – mentioned by all the Evangelists – makes reference to the two commandments of love: to God and your neighbor. In St. Luke, the most important for us here, the lawyer

²¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. by D. Gromska, Warszawa 1982, p. 7–8 (1095).

²² T. Kotarbiński, *Utilitarianism and the ethics of mercy*, [in:] idem, *Works in ethics*, pp. 85–88.

turns to the Lord Jesus with the title of “Teacher”, treating him as an authority in the matter about which he interrogates Him, while the Lord Jesus refers to what is written in the law. He seems to respond: “You are a scholar, so you know the law, in there you will find the answer to your important question, then obey it.” Now, however, only in St. Luke do we find a continuation of this conversation, which seems to complete the clear and firm response by the Lord Jesus. The scholar has no comments to the commandment to love God, but the second one troubles him and – “wanting to justify himself” – asks further: “And who is my neighbor?” (Lk 10, 29). The question is not trivial. “Neighbor” is more or less the same as a fellow close-by, but “close-by” is a vague concept. The opposition “close – distant” is fluid, like the difference between small and large, heavy and light, the young and the old, etc. So whom do I have to love, “as myself”? This “wanting to justify” sounds a bit like a critical remark as “The commandment is beautiful, I myself quoted it, but it does not give me enough guidance on how I should proceed. The commandment of the love of God is clear, God is one – but the people are many, some closer, some distant, so still I do not know what I should do to inherit eternal life.”

The Lord Jesus does not respond directly to this question. In particular – and this is especially important for us – He no longer refers to the authority of either the Scriptures nor his own. He could recall a fragment of the Mosaic Law, which requires reacting to one who is in a difficult situation with compassionate care; striking and easy-to-understand examples can be found eg. in Deuteronomy 24, in harmony with Isaiah’s admonition: “Learn to do good! Seek justice, rebuke the oppressor, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Isaiah 1: 17). How many such texts are contained in the Law and the Prophets! But the Lord Jesus does not refer to these texts. Nor does He refer to his own authority. He was named Teacher, and could therefore say: “I, the teacher, I say to you, neighbor is the one who is in need, and you can remedy this need”. However, the Savior does not do that, but referring to the legal scholar’s second question, he tells us the well-known parable. Let us lift for a moment this entire conversation from its evangelical context. Suppose it is heard by someone who had never heard about the Gospel or the Lord Jesus, who lives in another culture, believes in another of God, or does not believe in any. Could he have doubts about how to answer the question ending this parable: “Which of these three proved to be, in your opinion, the neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” (Lk 10, 36) I do not think so. The Lord Jesus holds back this answer, making not the priest nor the generally revered Levite the “positive hero”, but the Samaritan, though the Israelis treated them with hostility. So what does the Teacher refer to in relation to such a crucial question concerning the human way to inherit eternal life? What does everyone who reads this parable refer to, while he is convinced that no different answer could be given in conclusion? Be it their own moral self-consciousness, the obviousness of the heart, or basic knowledge about what

is morally right and wrong – you can call it differently, but it is still the same thing: that what in a compelling way we recognize as morally obvious, and what it is not to be ignored. In this sense, this “obviousness of the heart” is grounded in *the moral experience*: the direct knowledge of what is good and what is evil, not based on theoretical, theological or political premises, but referring to specific facts and events as they are lived by man.

If I am right, this whole dialogue with scholars of the law is essential for the understanding of the relationship between ethics and religion, at least Christianity. It is not that a divine commandment constitutes the first source of knowledge about what is good and what is evil. Religion in this sense is not a provision of ethics, rather the opposite: the Christian revelation (which is filled and culminates in Jesus Christ) is associated with this moral experience, which is the foundation of revelation. Catholic theology coined the adage: *Gratia non destruit naturam supponit et perficit sed eam*: grace (the supernatural order, which stems from supernatural abilities and powers in man) does not destroy nature (what is given to us in the very humanity), but assumes that nature and strengthens her. This adage is also a reference – if not the main reference – to the realm of morality, of which ethics wants to be a theory.

Does the reversal of this relationship, which is derivation of ethics from theological premises (God’s commandment), not result in moral distortion, to the point of becoming fanaticism saturated with hatred (in spite of pious declarations)? The parable referred to above, together with its context, is not the only example that shows how Jesus understood the reference of Law to moral experience. In the Gospels we find many of his disputes with the Pharisees about the meaning of keeping the Sabbath behavior. When on the Sabbath day they brought to him a man suffering from dropsy: “And Jesus [...] spoke to the lawyers and Pharisee, saying: ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’ But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him and let him go. Then He answered them, saying: ‘Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?’ And they could not answer Him regarding these things” (Luke 14: 3–6). What, then, is the argument? Does not also here the Savior refer to accepting the primacy of the elemental, natural moral discernment, in front of which an otherwise valid law of keeping the Sabbath should not be placed?

In this sense, I believe that the moral message contained in the Gospel is not only not in opposition to the idea of Kotarbiński’s independent ethics, but even the idea to which it refers. Christian philosophy and Catholic theology developed it in the science of natural law. This is no place for its full presentation, but it is worth recalling that according to St. Thomas Aquinas, who in particular developed this teaching, the foundation of the law is the principle *faciendum est bonum, et prosequendum, et malum vitandum*: you must do good

and avoid evil. Standards cannot be reduced to a simple banality; if you define welfare as “what must be done”, and evil “what should be avoided”, it is obvious we come up with a very sterile principle, according to which “that should be done, what needs to be done and that avoided what must be avoided”. Well, this principle has a much deeper meaning: it indicates that the person *is able to recognize good as what needs to be done* and evil, as what should be avoided.²³ In other words, the man “sees good normatively”. It is much more than the attractiveness of good. At least in regard to the moral good (leaving aside other goods) it normatively means that the good *should* be met, and not only that it “attracts” the will of man, because such is the nature of human will. Each listener or reader of the parable of the Good Samaritan knows that his action is good, that he did what in this situation was to be done, while the priest and the Levite who “saw and passed” the wretch, acted morally wrong. Of course, into this knowledge is inscribed a certain perception of man; both the dignity that is owed him, and human nature. Based on this knowledge, we can identify what in a given situation is good and what is evil. Today, more likely than about the natural law, we talk about human rights, which should underlie all legislation – but the idea is the same: we are able to know man in his dignity and recognize how it is respected in relation to an elementary knowledge of man and to a number of situations in which this dignity can be compromised. The recognition of human nature and the dangers it meets is obviously vulnerable to error, but it does not override the fundamental way of knowing what man is due from others. In this sense, the ethical perspective turns out to be not only prior to the precepts contained in Christian revelation, but also – contrary to the opinion of extreme legal positivists – it underlies the legislation.

The idea of ethics independent of religious assumptions is therefore, in my opinion, incorporated into the Christian revelation. Is it therefore superfluous? For Christians, of course, not. The Christian sees in God the ultimate foundation of the dignity of every human person; in God, who “is love” (1 Jn 4,8), and who, to save man from eternal death, himself became Man and took upon himself all human weakness and sinfulness, which even led to the cross. But it does not lead to the justification of ethics with the same Revelation; rather it constitutes a development of the anthropological perspective reaching to God and eternal life. This theological thesis Kotarbiński did not share, however, he rightly appealed to the conscience of every human being, in which this basic provision of morality is contained. It is just that fidelity to moral challenges contained in the conscience cannot be justified by any profit, neither temporal nor outwardly. Resorting to such profit as the main moral motivation (whether hell or misfortune incomparable with any other) violates the essence of morality. Moral good, love as its highest expression, is justified by itself. He who does not

²³ S. Th. I–II, q. 94, a. 2.

understand that or rejects it, does not understand his own humanity or rejects it. It needs to be always remembered – and this is not so much a theoretical perspective, but rather pedagogical (in the Christian context: Pastoral). You can recall a number of reasons why today, also in Poland, we argue for the relevance of such actions (ideological pluralism, pervasive consumerist mentality, ideology of rivalry with others, promotion of one's own careers, etc.). But the need to evoke the basic moral intuition is always important, today not otherwise than yesterday and tomorrow. In this pedagogical, in fact, deeply humanistic sense, the idea of independent ethics is extremely important and always up to date. And in my opinion, it is also a profoundly Christian idea.

(transl. Anna Krotkiewska-Zagórska)

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BETWEEN CONTINGENCY AND NECESSITY OF HUMAN ACTION. ARE WE FREE IN OUR CHOICES?

Abstract. The point of departure of this paper is the characterization of human action as contingent or necessary (obligatory). The key question concerns the place for choice in the human action, i.e. *are we free in our choices?* Thus, the aim of this paper is to search for the answer to the question concerning human freedom and free will. In searching for the answer to this controversial question, consideration is focused on the cognitive structure of human beings. The research refers to Roman Ingarden's conception of the human being as a relatively isolated system of a higher order, contained in a compound hierarchical structure. In this way, the argumentation for the place of free will is supported by the structure of the human being, and joins both the ontological and the epistemic aspects. In consequence, methodologically they are treated as a primary to inquiries into the theory of action on one side, and into the biological approach of cognitive science on the other.

Keywords. Human actions, contingency and necessity of actions, concept of chance, human freedom, free will.

Introduction

The inspiration to this paper, which has been prepared for the jubilee philosophy conference of the 70th anniversary of Łódź University, was Janina Kotarbińska's approach to human events and actions, based on her analysis of the concept of chance (KOTARBIŃSKA [(1934) 1990]). The aim of the paper is not, however, a conceptual analysis, although basic concepts used to characterize human action will be defined. As announced in the title, I assume that human action is extended between contingency (associated with possibility) and necessity (associated with obligation). But what does it mean? To answer this question, I will provide the characterization of these modalities in reference to human action. Generally speaking, by human action I mean such an action which is undertaken by someone consciously with an intention to achieve something and performed at a time (usually in a period of time) at which a given agent has awareness of what he or she is doing as an acting subject. However, the above should not be understood in a strong sense, because a great number of actions, or

partial actions carried out over a period of time, can be performed in some sense “automatically”, e.g. driving a car on a motorway. But such an action as *driving a car on a motorway* occurs in a wider context and it is a part of someone’s action undertaken in order to achieve a goal (to travel for vacation, to transact business, etc.).¹ And this kind of action is relevant for my considerations, in which the key question *are we free in our choices?* concerns human freedom and free will. The answer to this question will be the aim of the paper. In looking for the answer to this controversial question, I intend to argue for the place of free will in the cognitive structure of human beings. Following Roman Ingarden, I will support my argumentation of the thesis according to which a human being is a relatively isolated system of a higher order, consisted in subsystems which build a compound hierarchical structure. In this way, I want to combine both the ontological and the epistemic aspects, and treat them methodologically as a primary to inquiries into a theory of action on the one hand, and to a biological approach in cognitive science, on the other.

1. Human action as extended between contingency and necessity. The place for choice: commitment to the problem of free will

The title of my paper points out my interest in the human action as extended between contingency and necessity. In which sense of “contingency” and “necessity”? What does the concept of “contingent action” mean? The earlier methodological question is: what is needed to characterize human action? As is known, human action can be characterized at different levels (which can be connected in different ways, although their connection is a serious problem of metaphilosophical controversies):

- (1) physical – in respect to its cause, which can be external (outside the agent) or inner (in his organism or mind) (see different approaches in: DAVIDSON [1963/1980], GOLDMAN [1970], ACQUILAR & BUCKAREFF [2010], PIETROSKI [2000]),
- (2) logical – in respect to its reason, which, treated as a normative statement, justifies agent’s actions (e.g. FINDLAY [2010])² or (2a) formal-logical – in respect to a formal analysis given in different systems of deontic logic (or wider – logic of action) (e.g. v. WRIGHT [1963], TRYPUZ [2008], CZELAKOWSKI [2015]),

¹ In analysis, the goal of action should be distinguished from the goal of its agent. The differences connected with the approaches to the goal are the subject of controversies among philosophers who deal with the theory of action.

² The issue of reason, however, is much wider and encompasses various approaches to reason. See an overview by ALVAREZ [2010], among others.

- (3) epistemic – respect respect to the agent’s intentions, beliefs, decisions, knowledge (different approaches given by ANSCOMBE [1963], GRICE [1971], DAVIDSON [1980], VELLEMAN [1989])
- (4) pragmatic – in respect to its intended goal and its effect (e.g. KOTARBINSKI [1975]),
- (5) psychological – in respect to the agent’s motivations, preferences, feelings, emotions (e.g. Zhu & Thagard [2002]),
- (6) social – in respect to interactions with other agents, communities, institutions (e.g. Gilbert [2000]),
- (7) axiological – in respect to the system of values and norms(which is especially seen in classical approaches of phenomenologists SCHELER [1973], [1992], HILDREBRAND [1916], or later approaches associated with Thomism, as in WOJTYŁA (1969) [1979]).³

Human action is included in the wide network of various (physical) events. In the standard approach, every event has its cause (as its efficient power) and happens under certain conditions which make it possible to realize.

Events are distinguished in respect of their character (although they can be connected in different ways). Let me distinguish here:

- (1) physical events in their nature, i.e. events of nature (such as storms, tsunamis, earthquakes etc.)
- (2) events in the techno-world (for example, a car or plane accident, the demolishing of a building, a nuclear explosion),
- (3) intended events being indirect results of someone’s actions (for instance, preparing this text for publication).

Further, in the human action one can stress its globality (the example of the Second World War) or locality, as in the case of the action of a team or of an individual agent. It is trivial to say that the dynamicity of human life in society, history and culture (science, art, religion) is manifested in human actions. Human action can be considered in relation to time, as a certain event which happens at a moment of time t_i (although it need not to be exactly “any moment”, for example, in descriptions of some cultural events such as “the Chopin competition in Warsaw in 2015”) or as a process extended in the period of time (for example, training, education, medical treatment, etc).

When I talk about action I distinguish it from behaviour as a result of biological processes of the body. I am not interested in the behaviour of the human body in everyday actions or actions of other kinds, unless it has a special meaning for a given action, for instance, when raising the hand in an election meeting. Then my focus is not on sensomotor processes, which are its efficient cause, but on

³ I do not mention the ethical level separately, as it is included in the axiological one, but also considerations which are made at other levels take into account ethical issues.

someone's conscious beliefs, which are the reason for undertaking this very decision. Thus, a particular action should be considered in a given situation in its special context. I am not interested in sensomotor processes because they should be identical for the same type of behaviour undertaken in different actions, while reasons can be different even in the same type of action undertaken by two agents or by the same agent, but at different times and situations. Beyond that, in the explanation, which is treated as a kind of compound reasoning, reasons (not causes) are taken into account. This is the essential difference between reasons and causes; reasons are considered at the logical level and concern beliefs given in a form of propositions, while causes are considered at the physical level (both macro- and micro-level) and concern events (or states). This means that a causal relation occurs between events (or states).

Let us come back to the example of election, for the time of Libet's experiment this is a standard example in the polemics on free will⁴. At this point, I want to refer to the subject matter of the paper stressed in its title. Is, for example, a presidential election contingent or necessary? According to the state constitution, it is necessary. But citizens in a democratic country can treat their participation in the election as their privilege and each citizen is free in their choice (both in his or her participation in the election and the choice of the candidate for president), although there are many factors which determine that choice. In the discussion of our choices (independently of their subject), first and foremost I take into account the agent's beliefs which lead him (or her) to undertake a particular decision. I do not take into account someone's spontaneous reaction without any reflection (as it would be in the case of pressing the button without any knowledge concerning the purpose of this kind of behaviour).

Let us establish the sense of contingency and necessity. Strictly speaking, contingency (Lat. *contingens*) is a metaphysical concept, and as such it is treated as an attribute of being.

(Df 1) "Something is contingent" means that it does not exist in and of itself but has the source of its existence in another being.

In this sense each of us, humans, is a contingent being because no one has given himself his biological existence. In consequence, a contingent being might not exist or might have other attributes. There is rich literature on the analysis of this concept in reference to traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics.⁵ Here, I distinguish between the metaphysical notion of "contingent" and the notion of

⁴ Here I will not refer to this experiment, there is sufficient literature on this issue. In Poland for instance BREMER [2013], pp. 186–224.

⁵ Various definitions of contingency by means of alethic modalities (given by Innocenty Maria Bocheński, Tadeusz Czeżowski, Jan Łukasiewicz, Jaakko J. Hintikka, among others) can be found in my book ŻEGLEŃ [1990].

“accident” (not in any metaphysical sense as a non-necessary attribute of being, but as a physical predicate which is ascribed to a description of physical events or processes). “Something happens accidentally” means “by chance” (but the analytic philosopher is dealing with a very rich analysis, in Poland excellently given by Janina Kotarbińska [(1934) 1990], and recently reconstructed and commented by Dariusz Łukasiewicz [2014]). In classical metaphysics, all real entities (i.e. beings in time) are contingent. They are not eternal, but destructible and mortal (if they are living creatures). The human being is contingent. In one sense, which I assume here, the contingent action is the one that its attribute (“contingency”) is derived from the nature of the agent who is the subject of the action and its author. Then, all human actions would be contingent. But I also admit another sense of contingency, when the attribute “contingent” is derived from the nature of the action. This sense of contingency is connected with the sense of accident in my analysis.

(Df 2) The action is contingent when it has not been intended (and/or is undertaken, at least at the beginning, without any plan), but the situation (under unexpected conditions) gives the agent occasion to act.

For example, an unexpected meeting in Łódź with my old friend. This means that the agent starts to act accidentally (by chance), for instance – to greet her old friend in a special way to manifest her sincere joy, to suggest a meeting in the evening. Thus, this notion of “contingency” covers the notion of “accidence” (although the notion of “accidence” has also many other meanings). Deeper analysis could show that it is contingent (by chance) at the macro-level, in referring to a particular event which is constituted for this action (and it is its cause), but it is not such in referring to other events which, in fact, are in the causal chain of this event and hence, they determine it (this case has been precisely analyzed by Kotarbińska/Łukasiewicz in a quoted publication). For a philosopher, it is the core of controversy which is much deeper than given in reference to our usual everyday actions and events. A deep philosophical question is: do we live in a determined world (in which all events are causally connected in a certain way, and then also events which seem to happen by chance are in fact determined), or is the world not wholly determined (and then there is room for events which happen by chance and are explained within the framework which permits indeterminism)? In the scientific worldview, the world (the universe) is a multi-dimensional and very compound closed system. Rejecting Laplace’s traditional determinism, contemporary science shows us a much more complicated picture of the world than the traditional scientific or philosophical one. This picture is not homogenous, even in one domain where the inquired events or processes are explained by different models, and physical events are governed not only by strict (deterministic) laws, but also by statistical and probabilistic ones. From the beginning of the 20th century research at the micro-levels (in quantum physics and molecular biology) has become

a challenge both for scientists and philosophers. The former, by their theories and discoveries, are committed to philosophical questions in their own disciplines, while the latter do not want to remain neutral towards a scientific worldview and even feel obliged to attend contemporary debates. Especially if in the light of discussed controversy, the possibility of free human choices is negated because of argumentation given on the basis of scientific data about the illusion of free will. If in turn the philosopher admits the worldview in which the world in its complexity is, however, an open system, then his picture of the world is quite different from a scientific one.⁶ Let us stay by this assumption with the scientific worldview in which the world is a complex close system.⁷ Where is there any room for human action in such a worldview? This question will carry further those considerations which belong to philosophy.

Let us ask now about obligatory actions. There are many cases which can be given as examples for required necessary actions, such as medical help, military defence, religious practices for believers, economic actions, etc. They are obligatory in a different sense, some in a moral and professional one, others in political or economic responsibility. But even if the agent is obliged to undertake an action (and to act in a certain way) he may not fulfil his obligations in spite of serious (sometimes dramatic) results and consequences of that for himself and others.

Thus, it is not the strong (logical) sense of necessity as the attribute of something for which it is impossible not to be (the same as it is impossible to be in another way). But I suppose that you can also give examples of many situations of determined action in which the agent (being constrained) has no choice. Then I take into account not only the external determination but the “inner attitude” of the active subject (as in the extreme cases of people in concentration camps or offers of a martyr’s death). Nevertheless, to be fully constrained externally, man can retain freedom in his way of thinking. But it is a topic for another consideration where the problem of free will is considered more holistically within a wider conception of human freedom like the self-determination of an individual person during the whole of his adult life. I do not develop this

⁶ Although some contemporary philosophers try to make the best of both approaches, mainly in cosmology (such as Michał Heller in Poland) or the philosophy of God (like Alvin Plantinga, for instance). In the recent Polish literature this topic is discussed by Łukasiewicz [2014].

⁷ A philosopher does have, however, the right to ask whether the scientific worldview is sufficient for the domain of the universe as well as asking *does a concept of scientific rationality exhaust the category of rationality*. In my own approach, I distinguish strictly scientific questions from philosophical ones, although in science there are also many philosophical questions. Nevertheless, some questions can be justified in philosophy, not in science, for instance, questions concerning the existence of God, the ultimate sense of the existence of man (or the world). It does not mean that philosophy is able to provide answers to them, nevertheless, it is qualified to ask them to look for their answers.

approach because I intend to deal with the issue of free will more in discussion with some aspects of the scientific worldview.

Let us return to the question concerning the action. What about the action itself? Is it necessary for the human being? The answer to this question concerns a strong (logical) sense of necessity. The human being is naturally a rational and active being. In my view, the argument of neurological deficits of human rationality does not concern human nature, although it points out cases in which particular human beings can have such deficits which break this rationality. It does not, however, concern the metaphysical concept of human nature as rational in spite of the fact that here this concept should adjust with the natural (biological) one. In the biological hierarchy of beings, a human being is rational and, as such, is able to act rationally. A human being, just as a rational being is able to guide their action by different reasons (to estimate them in the light of accepted criteria), is able to make choices (even if these choices are limited and determined by different factors and the agent is not always aware of them). Thus, where should we look for the possibility of choices in human actions? The simple reply “in free will” appears to be one of the most controversial philosophical answers. Let us try to deal with this problem here.

2. The search for the solution of the problem of free will in the structure of the human being

As a philosopher, I am looking for a solution which has its ontological ground in the structure of being, which should be complex in such a way that it would be possible for an agent to interact with other beings and which should discover the multiple dimension both for a human being and its action as specific for man.

One can find a promising direction of studies in Roman Ingarden’s conception of the human being, inspired by Ludwig von Bertalanffy’s theory of system (BERTALANFFY [1957], INGARDEN [1972], p. 136).⁸ According to Ingarden, a human being is just a complicated, compound, multi-dimensional, relatively (partially) open and partially isolated system of higher order. As an open system, it is able to enter into relations with other objects which can also be interpreted as various kinds of similar (in respect to their structure) systems. Openness of a system allows for transition from its causal processes beyond that system. Without such processes, an individual being could not have any attributes which would be externally conditioned or acquired. But the system is not quite open because then it would be a process (not individual). It could not

⁸ Ingarden was only inspired by Bertalanffy’s idea, but in his critical reference to Bertalanffy’s conception he developed his own approach. Today such a system approach is developed by Mieczysław Lubański [1997] and Robert Poczobut [2010].

behave in its specificity or stability (in its integration). Thus, it is only relatively, partially open and partially isolated. It is isolated in a certain ontic sense which allows it to behave in its autonomy and distinctiveness. This ontological assumption concerning the structure of the human being as a compound, multi-dimensional system is in agreement with the biological approach to man as the organism taken together with its processes and subsystems which are causally conditioned by external factors, and produce various effects on their environment. In the hierarchical structure of the human being, all these subsystems are in special types of dependencies, such as:

- (i) existential – according to which the destruction of basic systems (including their functions) imply the destruction of systems and functions of a higher order;
- (ii) structural – according to which the systems of lower orders constitute or belong to the systems of higher order;
- (iii) functional – according to which each function of higher order is realized by the structure or mechanisms of lower order. (INGARDEN [1972], pp. 139–142).⁹

A given ontological background – as has already been said – is in agreement with a biological approach and does not distinguish a human being from other natural beings. But what is specific for man?

The essence is the specificity of a human being as a rational, active being which is able to make a choice in the light of accepted norms and values. Thus, relativeness in this system model is also essential in the interaction considered in the cultural-historical-social environment of the agent. But looking into the inner structure of the human being as a person, the constitutive factor for being a person is – in the language of phenomenology – its ontic centre which is the conscious “self”, taken together with its “flow of experiences” (Germ. *Erlebnises*). In such an approach, the “self” is treated dynamically. According to Ingarden’s conception, the root of the self, which is equipped by all its abilities, is the soul (*psyche*). Instead of Ingarden’s “soul” I prefer to speak about the content of consciousness, first of all its propositional content, organized in the system of someone’s knowledge together with his or her system of values and norms. In the flow of experiences someone’s feelings, moods, thoughts, emotions are appeared, one can say everything that has been traditionally prescribed to *psyche* (in fact – all psychic life). As it is seen, the category of “self” is not treated as pure and absolute, but it is the centre of a concrete psychophysical individual (INGARDEN [1961] p. 542). Some commentators of Ingarden’s writings mention three concepts of a subject (self): (1) as a realizer of acts of consciousness, (2) as a specific centre of human personality, (3) as something which conveys the whole human being in its psychophysical unity

⁹ See also POCZOBUT [2010], pp. 95–96.

(FIZER [1995], pp. 121–128). Speaking about the centre is not in the sense of the brain sciences, but in a certain sense of the ontology of the mind. This centre is just the essence of being a person who is able to undertake his or her action according to own choices, and to be responsible for them. Speaking in the language of Ingarden's epistemology, self by satisfying acts of consciousness is their realizers and bearers (cf. INGARDEN [1961], p. 191). As Poczobut stresses following Ingarden, in order to be a realizer as a subject of own acts the man must be partially independent from his environment – he must have his own relatively autonomous inner space (virtual space of his mind). But from the other side, he must admit causal-information interactions both inner (from the content of his consciousness, from his psychic life and from his bodily systems) and external (from his environment). (POCZOBUT [2010], pp. 93–94).

Ingarden's category of *psyche* (soul), like the body, is also treated as a relatively isolated system. Thus, they (i.e. soul and body) can interact with themselves. Taken into account what I have said about the soul, I repeat here that the agent's beliefs and thoughts influence his decisions to undertake his concrete actions (for instance, to visit his friend in hospital, to go to the theatre, to begin gymnastics). The body does not need to be especially manifested and the traditional dualistic frame is not adequate to give an explanation of human action because we are not dealing with any simple interactions between the *psyche* (here, mainly, the content of consciousness) and the body. Taking into account a human being as a compound multi-dimensional system consisting in different kinds of subsystems, connected in different ways and at different levels, we are dealing with a compound structure in the framework of which there are many different types of functions and processes studied by science. However, the basis of this structure is ontological.

Given such a “strong” philosophical perspective, how to reply to those naturalistically oriented philosophers and cognitive scientists who say that our consciousness is founded on brain processes and our choices are determined neuronally? I do not reject the scientific thesis that consciousness emerged from brain processes. But the content of consciousness (the content of mental states) requires access to the external world. In our mind we build our knowledge, we are able to make reflection, to utter judgments, to estimate our actions and so on. Thus, our choices are not only the result of neurophysiological determination. They are considered at a different level than the neurophysiological one, although they are not quite separated from it because they are physically realized in processes of thinking by undertaking our decisions. There can be cases in which human actions and decisions are not free, but determined neurophysiologically (as under the influence of special substances or in some cases of schizophrenia for instance). The presented approach within the framework of the Ingardenian conception of a system permits different degrees of determination of human actions which are extended in their varieties in

individual and social life. In the system model, the human being, in the inner structure of its organism, needs to be isolated in order to be physiologically determined, but, according to the assumption given in this paper, it is only partially isolated in a special way which allows it to interact with its environment and gives room for free will.

Conclusion

As a philosopher, I looked for the ontological framework which would give a theoretical foundation for human action undertaken as the result of free and rational choice.

The following statements were theses or assumptions of my view.

1. Causal conditions are not sufficient to make choices in the sense “to make a decision”.
It is so, because
2. Causality occurs at the physical level.
3. Decisions are at the epistemic level.
4. The mistaking of both levels comes to the error of justification (or the paradoxes of irrationality, as it has been described by Donald Davidson among others [1963]).

But

5. It (2 & 3) does not mean that there are no connections between domains of both levels (the same as among other levels important in studies of human actions).
6. The compound structure of the human being treated as a partially open and a partially isolated system (also in its inner structure as the set of subsystems) allows it to enter into compound (both intrinsic and external) interactions.
7. Taken into account, the inner complexity and integrity of the human being as a person open to the system of norms and values allows the thesis about the existence of free will to be defended.

It is so because

8. A person is able to undertake decisions in the light of accepted norms and values.

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CHAPTER IV

What about Humanities?

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ILL FARE THE HUMANITIES

Abstract. The starting point of our considerations is the two books published in 2010: “Ill Fares the Land” by the late Tony Judt and “Not for Profit” by Martha Nussbaum. The authors of both books share the conviction that neoliberal changes in the world of global capitalism radically impoverish culture and their consequences may be dramatic and irreversible.

In our paper we would like to emphasize the dangers to solidarity and social cohesion posed by neoliberal postulates. We also claim that promoting the neoliberal ideology in the context of higher education and institutions of civic society endangers the very democracy understood as reasonable pluralism (in John Rawls’ terminology), consisting in rationality, plurality of opinions, lifestyles and conceptions of good, as well as consensus as the aim of social and political practices.

Keywords. Democracy, humanities, Nussbaum, Judt, neoliberalism.

Introduction

Many aspects of the modern day cultural sphere are lacking the dimension which only the humanities, philosophy amongst them, can supply. The so-called “war on terror” yields Islamophobia and feeds on it at the same time. Popular culture is getting more and more vague and unreflexive. The public sphere has been diminishing and, as Naomi Klein famously noted, multinational businesses has been taking over the spaces which used to be public. Scientific progress is geometrical but its moral assessment is impossible due to the lack of humanistic thought popular and important enough. The notion of common good, fundamental in creating a deliberative democracy, subdued to the notions of the private and the corporate. Political life, defined in terms of creating and realizing common goals, ideal as well as material, became the spectacle of factional calculation, governed by media coverage and opinion polls. The social and political interplay of values was replaced by a neoliberal, economic game played for sheer profit regardless of social or ecological costs. *Homo sapiens* was replaced by *homo oeconomicus*. And this is not a manifesto. These are the facts.

All of which may or may not be deadly to Western democracies, time will tell. But what was always one of the strengths of liberal states was a well informed public opinion and powerful public sphere (in Habermas' sense) making communication between the government and the people possible and fruitful. For 200 years this public sphere has been constituted by independent media and intellectuals, creating a mirror which reflected the governing and the governed, formulated public goals achievable by means of rational policy, and controlled the exercising of power and bio-power by state officials. It would not, of course, be possible if not for the English and French Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the prolific idea of public education, and the massive growth of universities based – in continental Europe – on the Humboldtian model. The golden age of the public sphere must be located in the welfare states of post-war Europe, where governments formed after the massive war effort operated in the spirit of inclusion (of masses never before accounted for even by a democratic state) rather than exclusion and sheer administration. National health programmes (the NHS in Britain), social benefits, pensions and – in time – rights assigned to various groups of people (women, gays and so on), all of which struggled for decades to fully participate in public life, helped to build a powerful and audible public sphere, while respecting the subjectivity of those who constitute it.

But it was a long time ago. The financial crisis of recent years arose partly because of a gradual separating of the state from the individual in the context of an economic game, further undermining the idea of a welfare state, as deliberative democracy costs more than a mere neoliberal one. Funds were cut all the way with no group of interest left intact. For some it was a mere nuisance. For some it created a danger of extinction. The humanities, playing the first fiddle especially in the decades after the war, were among the first and most obvious victims of this neoliberal rant. It is what Terry Eagleton called recently “the slow death of the university”.¹ But perhaps what is endangering them is, at the same time, their biggest chance. The neoliberal paradigm, not only in economy, but also in anthropology and social sciences, was never so all-encompassing. But then were never so many cracks on its structure visible.

1. Tony Judt and welfare state

Diagnoses of something lost – or being lost – are not few. Among them there is a touching testament of the late Tony Judt, to which this paper owes its title. So what exactly has been lost, according to Judt? What are we missing now? The

¹ Terry Eagleton, “The Slow Death of the University”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Slow-Death-of-the/228991/>, 16.05.2015.

best way to answer these questions is to focus on what seems to be the main interest of his book. And that would be the role of the state and our contemporary attitude towards the state – its responsibilities, its problems, etc. Judt addresses these issues by presenting a kind of historical outline of crucial changes in the functioning of the state in post-war Europe or, broadly speaking, the post-war western world. This period, he claims, can be roughly divided in two parts [JUDT 2010, 20]. First, from the end of World War II to the late 60's we can observe the development of a welfare state. Apparently, as Judt indicates, we owe it to historical context, that both social-democratic and conservative governments of that time pursued a policy of social solidarity, and were aiming at reducing social inequalities (especially those of material, economical kind) as well as activating groups of exclusion (be they unemployed, illiterate, etc.) [JUDT 2010, 43]. This seems to be in accordance with some of Foucault's analyses, in which he claims that throughout post-war Europe economic policy was governed by a set of generally accepted imperatives, such as "reconstruction, planning, and, broadly speaking, socialization and social objectives – all of which entailed an interventionist policy on the allocation of resources, price stability, level of savings, the choice of investments, and a policy of full employment [FOUCAULT 2008, 98–99]. Pursuing such policy was possible on the premises that the obligations of the state are not only economical. Even if it was not a common or commonly expressed belief, the background of almost all political action of that period, as Judt argues, was the conviction that the understanding of the functioning of the state should not be reduced to its economic efficiency. According to this belief, the institution of the state should be conceived, first of all, as ethically responsible for its citizens. Hence, it is perfectly comprehensible and justifiable that a state has a right to intervene whenever the wellbeing of its citizens seems to be at risk – and this risk may be caused by natural and – what's more important – by economic factors as well [JUDT 2010, 62] (which simply means some form of state control over an otherwise free market). Moreover, the state is obliged to secure the wellbeing of its citizens by means of free education, public healthcare, and public transport.

However, in Judt's narrative, from the early 70's this model of understanding social policy starts to erode. The feeling of state-phobia – to use Foucault's expression – begins to manifest itself. Western societies became wealthier and wealthier, and members of those societies, feeling more socially secure and independent, began to perceive the political system in which they had been living, the political system that guaranteed such a strong, interventionist position of a state, as oppressive [JUDT 2010, 67–68]. And because of this they started to demand that the state step down, metaphorically speaking, from the chair of director of their lives (because that's exactly how they felt... they felt that their lives were being designed, directed and strictly controlled). This attitude was

founded on at he belief that by violating freedom and basic rights of individuals (by means of interventionist policy for example), a state loses its legitimacy, not in a sense of losing its sovereignty, but in a sense of losing its right of representativity (it is no longer representative of its citizens) [FOUCAULT 2008, 81]. So paradoxically enough, the source of a welfare state's crisis (or one of its causes at least) was that at some point in time, from the perspective of its citizens, the welfare state seemed to care too much for them.²

For Judt, this mental atmosphere is best epitomized by the student riots of 1968 and the so called sexual revolution of the same year. Both should be understood as manifestations of change of priorities and self-interpretation tools: being a member of a community was gradually replaced as a fundamental element of individual identity by individual freedom [JUDT 2010, 70]. Soon enough this change and its "widespread assertion that 'the personal is political'" found its more theoretical expressions, which transformed postulates of revolting youth into a fully developed critique of a welfare state. This criticism was labeled neoliberal theory and was further elaborated through the whole decade of the 70's. Proponents of this theory advocated for a radical restriction of the state's involvement or engagement in public life and economy, which was tantamount to market deregulation and social welfare limitation demands. Judt indicates that one of the fundamental presumptions of this stance is a kind of fetishization of economic growth, since neoliberal thinkers are usually deeply convinced that the growth of the economy is the main (if not the only) category that should be used to estimate the level of development of a country or a nation. Moreover, they conceive growth as a sufficient condition for providing a society with all the goods and social services formerly guaranteed by the state, which simply means that we should not bother ourselves with issues like the redistribution of goods, social equality, securing the stability of democracy or the quality of race and gender relations, as long as we commit ourselves to the pursuit of economic growth. And this conviction appears to be controversial (to say the least), since almost all of the cases of privatization or taking over selected functions of the state (like healthcare, transport, education) prove that after privatization none of those institutions function significantly better – quite the opposite, the priority of economic efficiency forces the policy of cutting costs (which always means reducing the quality of services) and eventually applying for public subventions (which seems to be particularly compromising for neoliberal theory) [JUDT 2010, 84–85].

² In opposition to Judt's reconstruction, Foucault locates the sources of this belief as far back as the late 40's and views what he calls state-phobia as the ever present (at least from the 18th century, when it was expressed as a criticism of despotism and tyranny) undercurrent of a political dimension [FOUCAULT 2008, 76].

Nevertheless, from the beginning of the 80's, neoliberal theory becomes the predominant political stance, contributing – as a consequence – to the constant weakening of the role of the state in the lives of modern, western societies, which eventually resulted in dismantling of the welfare state. Thus, answering the initial question, according to Judt, we have lost the welfare state or – to be more precise – the idea of a welfare state as a viable political option. This answer, however, is incomplete, since it is missing a very important element of Judt's argument. For his reconstruction of the process of change in our understanding of the state's functioning is not limited to the political dimension only. In other words, abandoning the idea of a welfare state and adopting neoliberal theory as a foundation or a handbook of our political practice entailed changes not only on the political level, but also changes in the members of western societies, i.e. changes in ourselves. Judt claims that this shift from one political and economic model to another was accompanied by a kind of anthropological shift as well. And he does not mean any elaborated anthropological idea here. What he has in mind is rather the common, privileged way we are taught to interpret ourselves, understand who we are. The way which, supported by hegemonic position of neoliberal thinking, in a sense became natural, instinctive for us. We all consider ourselves to be rational, and by rational we mean that our actions aim at maximizing utility and economic profit. So we consider far more important an argument for or against any legislative act (or almost anything else for that matter) if it's an evaluation of costs this act will generate, than an attempt to reflect on its fairness [JUDT 2010, 11]. "We know what things cost but have no idea what they are worth", as Judt states, and what he is trying to say here is that in our own eyes (or in our own actions at least) each one of us became *homo oeconomicus*, everyone defines her or his rationality the way neoliberal theory tells us. This is the privileged way of self-understanding in our times.

Obviously, the concept of *homo oeconomicus* is not a novelty. What is new and unprecedented, however, is the strength and the depth of the way those anthropological premises and their consequences are rooted in contemporary consciousness. We consider this concept simply as an accurate description of the natural state of our human condition. Judt points out this fact, observing that as far as our preferable vision of the state is considered, "we seem unable to conceive of alternatives" [JUDT 2010, 11], despite the overwhelming impression that there is something wrong in the way the state actually functions. In other words, the problem is that neoliberal theory became not only the predominant political stance of our times (that would mean that we are still able to see other options and conceive them as theoretically equally viable and possible) – it became the way of our thinking about the state and about us as its citizens, about what's possible and even natural as far as the functioning of the state and human live are considered. Or, as Žižek puts it in his *Pervert's Guide*

to *Ideology* (the film from 2012, directed by Sophie Fiennes and starring Žižek himself), the neoliberal vision of the state gained the status of integral part of reality, of what is real for us. And so he postulates that we should learn to be realistic once again by means of demanding what seems economically impossible.

Thus, we have lost not only the idea of a welfare state – we have lost something of ourselves. We have lost possibility to reflect on our rationality (we simply apply one of its possible definitions instead because we consider it to be our one and only possible and natural way of being rational). We have lost any quality of life that is not materialistic and selfish or needs an explanation or justification other than an economic one. We think what Judt is trying to say is that we have lost some part of our humanity. And what we are trying to say is that now, as a consequence, we are facing possibility of humanities being lost.

2. The Troubled Humanities

To justify this concern, let us begin with a simple and brief listing of the anthropological premises of neoliberal thinking and some of their political consequences, the way Judt seems to see them. Then we will consider their possible impact on humanities.

So, according to Judt, these are the most significant and dangerous results of the processes he analyzes in his “Ill Fares the Land”:

- man is mainly (if not only) *homo oeconomicus* and thus all his rights are eventually reduced to economic rights: gaining profit, the pursuit of economic growth and material self-interest – these are the highest steps of our axiology, both social and personal.
- The removal of common, political perspective and erosion of the sense of community in its other than economic aspects.
- all of the world and every aspect of human experience can be (and actually is) described as a commodity, including education, healthcare.
- choosing between different kinds or visions of states has been replaced by choosing between the state and the market, with the latter being privileged.
- public debate (or what is left of it) is economically and not ethically informed.

Now, what is specific to the humanities, among many other things, is their critical and speculative approach. This approach requires the development of a certain ability to think critically and to reflect on various problems and issues,

which also presupposes the capability of viewing them from many different perspectives. Why should we value and promote this approach? Because it is the best (if not the only) way of understanding human life in all its complexity: it opens one up to having concern for the lives of others; it helps one to imagine, feel and understand other people's situation, feelings, and beliefs; it renders one more immune to any attempts at manipulation; it enables one to have a fully human life [NUSSBAUM 2010, 7].

However, if we are indoctrinated to interpret ourselves as *homo oeconomicus*, we are automatically inclined to ask whether such an approach, and the development of abilities it requires, is profitable in an economic sense. We don't see this inclination as one of the possible perspectives, because – as Judt and Žižek argued – we are compelled and used to think of it as a part of our natural way of seeing things. So one of the first, important and extremely dangerous problems for the humanities is this demand to be economically profitable. And this prevalent demand is all the more perilous, since it manifests itself in many different forms. First of all, it serves as a choice criterion for young people deciding the best future career for them, and owing to the fact that they are making such decisions under the dictate of pursuit of economic growth, they reject the humanities as simply unprofitable and inefficient. They really do not need the ability to think critically and to view a variety of issues from many angles, for in a world where development or advancement is defined solely in terms of economic growth, all they need are really basic skills: literacy, numeracy, and, in some cases, more refined IT skills [NUSSBAUM 2010, 19]. The humanities appear to be completely useless and unnecessary.

On the other hand, this requirement of profitability shows itself as an institutional expectation of economic efficiency. Hence, the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, as well as its equivalents all over the world, is consistently pursuing a policy of cutting costs. As a result, humanistic faculties are being shut down, there are fewer university courses due to the new, limits on higher students, and young talented people have no chance for an academic career, since universities are not interested in giving them jobs, because they simply cannot afford it.

Economic efficiency means not only that humanistic faculties are forced to function with smaller budgets. It also means that they should make money. Thus, the requirement of the immediate, practical application of humanistic research became one of the newest obsessions of the governing institutions. This is particularly striking and puzzling at the same time, as it clearly exposes a lack of understanding of the ways humanities (and other sciences for that matter) function. Philosophical concepts or scientific theoretical explanations do not necessarily reveal the possibilities of their practical applications at the moment of their formulation or presentation. Just imagine Copernicus, for example,

applying for a grant and filling in the form with the rubric “practical application of your studies” with the sentence “space travel”.

The same can be said about so called parametrization, which is an instrument of control and supervision designed and implemented as a method of making universities more efficient. However, scholars obliged to fill in more and more inquiry forms and questionnaires, became more bureaucratic rather than more efficient. It simply does not work, since there is apparently no link between bureaucracy and more efficient scientific and academic studies: there is no one who became better lecturer and/or scientist thanks to filling in tons of these documents. Especially since parametrization clearly favors the quantity of texts and papers and not their quality.

Unfortunately, these actions affect scholars’ work more deeply as they feel more and more often compelled to choose the subjects of their studies in a spirit of opportunism in order to secure financing of their research and to secure time for all the bureaucracy. It leads to giving up what is really interesting for them, although perhaps it is a bit risky when it comes to the results of studies, and choosing “safer” issues, in a sense that those issues will enable them to successfully apply for a grant.

The primacy of the *homo oeconomicus* mentality and the removal of a common, political perspective, as well as the erosion of community spirit in aspects other than economic ones are profoundly changing all the connections and interrelations that the humanities function within. The sense of realizing a common goal or a sense of working on the basis of some common values seems to be of less and less importance among the community of scholars. It is being replaced by a more individualistic attitude and self-interest. When the common good is perceived mainly as an economic category, being a member of a given community becomes merely an economic transaction. And obviously, it is true both for scholars and students as well. Thus, the interrelation between the two groups evolves from the teacher-disciple model to the salesman-client pattern. Especially when every aspect of the world and human experience is described as a commodity, and the humanities and humanistic education become a product that needs to be sold according to the rules of the free market. And that is exactly what we are compelled to do. We sell our product according to the market’s demand. Our clients, however, do not demand the development of critical thinking, imagination, esthetical and ethical sensitivity. They demand more narrowly tailored education and that is what we are forced to supply.

This new context, in which the humanities strive to function, is characterized by the admiration for the unregulated market as the best field for fulfilling the ambitions of *homo oeconomicus*. It also means contempt for the public sector and disdain for humanistic education as a part of this sector. As a result, the

humanities are marginalized as unimportant and inefficient. This tendency is further intensified by the fact that public debate, as Judt has it, is economically and not ethically informed. Therefore, the main and most welcomed actors of public debate, as we can observe it, are economy experts and political experts, preferably with a neoliberal mindset, and not scholars of the humanities, artists or writers, who could promote alternative sets of values. Despite the fact that predominant economic theories and their advocates proved to be wrong so many times during the last few decades, the media and public opinion still seem to have no doubt about their expertise. And why should they have any doubts, if there is not any other option, no other perspective visible or hearable.

3. Is democracy in danger?

Of course, it's not as if there was no debate about the issue. In fact, it's been going on for at least 65 years, and the beginning of the debate may be marked by the 1947 speech given by Dorothy Leigh Sayers in Oxford, entitled "The Lost Tools of Learning". But that was the golden age of the humanities, or rather its beginning. 40 years later the climate changed and there's another milestone, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, a work much broader in scope, but concerned among other things with the twilight of the humanities and the degeneration of universities. Although Bloom's book met with much well deserved criticism³ (from Martha C. Nussbaum amongst others) some of its tenets happened to be prophetic. The twilight of classical, humanistic education, based on "Big Books" comprising the canon of human civilization came to being in modern, technocratic western democracies. Bloom's main concern was – unnecessary – the moral conventions and the consequences of an instrumental and liberal paradigm shift in education. But more important than those are the consequences of eradicating the humanities from universities and education based on humanistic values altogether. The changes in the education paradigm

³ The main issue being it promoted an imagined rather than a real vision of the past with its elitist view of democracy. Hence Bloom's ranting on Rawls, whom he associated with the new and dangerous ideas of equality and distributive justice. Here's Bloom's infamous remark on Rawls showing the impassable differences between the two of them: "John Rawls is almost a parody of this tendency [of anti-discrimination thinking – DM & TS], writing hundreds of pages to persuade men, and proposing a scheme of government that would force them not to despise anyone. In *A Theory of Justice*, he writes that the physicist or the poet should not look down on the man who spends his life counting blades of grass or performing any other frivolous or corrupt activity. [...] This folly means that men are not permitted to seek the natural human good and admire it when found, for such a discovery is coeval with the discovery of the bad and contempt for it. Instinct and intellect must be suppressed by education. The natural soul is to be replaced with an artificial one." [BLOOM 1987, 30].

and their consequences, predating the global economic crisis of 2008, are the main topic of the aforementioned Martha Nussbaum 2010 book entitled *Not for Profit. Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*.⁴ Nussbaum's insights will guide us through some points of the list of dangers faced by modern democracies.

However, as Frank Donoghue rightly points out, the antagonism between corporate America and the humanities and what they represent is not a new phenomenon, rather dating back to the beginning of 20th century, when the interests of the great capitalists and humanistic values taught at universities collided.⁵ So we may concede that antagonisms between business and the humanities is a given, but lately it has taken a new and troubling form. The close association of national governments with corporations working on global markets pushed the line dividing markets and universities and, most of all, changed the traditional alliances. Whereas so far national governments were interested in supporting the humanities, seeing it as a natural ally in making up the democracy from the grassroots level up, the rapid growth of the global market and its neoliberal ideology situated nations in anew and uncomfortable position. On the one hand, the democratic governments were obliged by their voters and the political and cultural tradition to support university education with the humanities as a necessary if not central part of it. On the other hand, the pressure from the markets was tightening and most democracies complied with the ubiquitous ideology of profit. As Martha Nussbaum puts it:

Thirsty for national profit, nations, and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements. The future of the world's democracies hangs in the balance. [NUSSBAUM 2010, 2]

2013's report of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, subtitled "The Humanities and Social Sciences for a vibrant, competitive, and secure nation" sounds similar if not identical:

The humanities and social sciences are not merely elective, nor are they elite or elitist. They go beyond the immediate and instrumental to help us understand the past and the future. They are necessary and they require our

⁴ The line of argument in this book can be described as a continuation and application to universities of the main ideas of her earlier work, *Cultivating Humanity* (1997).

⁵ The great capitalists of the early twentieth century saw in America's universities a set of core values and a management style antithetical to their own. Not only did they attack higher education, but, perhaps more surprisingly, even a hundred years ago they had already forced academics onto the defensive." [DONOGHUE 2008, 2]

support in challenging times as well as in times of prosperity. They are critical to our pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, as described by our nation's founders. They are *The Heart of the Matter*.⁶ [THE HEART OF THE MATTER 2013, 13]

There are many aspects in which the role the humanities play is crucial for modern democracies and the wellbeing of their citizens. The latest – and well heard – appeals and manifestos voicing the defense of the humanities touch upon many issues central to the very organization and axiology of democracies. By no means do the questions mentioned below exhaust the subject.⁷ What we list here is, nevertheless, crucial in modern-day debates about the status of the humanities.

Without the humanities there can be no reasonable pluralism which seems to be the *conditio sine qua non* of meaningful liberal democracy. There's a widespread agreement in modern liberal states, that there is no democracy in the true sense without some kind of public rationality, be it Rawlsian public reason, a Habermasian idea of deliberative democracy or a Rortian conversation of mankind. The basic idea is that to create a society based on an ideology of neutrality and equality of chances, there has to be some kind of consensus between competing world-views and conceptions of good. This can be achieved only by means of the ideological neutrality of the state, as Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor rightly point out [MACLURE, TAYLOR 2011, 13], establishing equality of all moral stances, be they religious or secular. But this neutrality, although a necessary condition of any rational pluralism, is not enough on its own. The functioning of modern democracies is dependent on the existence and health of the public sphere, as defined by Jürgen Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*⁸ [HABERMAS 1989]. For Habermas, the public sphere was “a social space—distinct from the state, the economy, and the family—in which individuals could engage each other as private citizens deliberating about the common good.” [MENDIETA, VANANTWERPEN 2011, 2]. Of course, the main interest of Habermas was an ideal type of the bourgeois public sphere (*bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit*). But “we are all bourgeois

⁶ One of the goals advanced by the report is described as educating “Americans in the knowledge, skills, and understanding they will need to thrive in a twenty-first-century democracy”.

⁷ In addition to being vital to core democratic values of human dignity and human development, the humanities serve as checks and balances to scientific progress. Without them it can go not only rogue and unethical, but supposedly also authoritarian (it is no coincidence, that all the great dystopias of modern day are basically the realities without books).

⁸ With minor modifications. As Mendieta and Van Antwerpen point out, “Habermas paid insufficient attention to religion in this early work” (MENDIETA, VAN ANTWERPEN [2011], p. 3). The mistake was corrected later, with Habermas writing more and more on the topic of religion and its place within the modern democracy in a post secular fashion (see for instance HABERMAS [2002] and HABERMAS [2003]).

now”. Meaning, that what was elitist at its source (liberal instead of plebeian (HABERMAS [1989], p. xviii), in modern democratic societies is becoming more and more egalitarian. The chief component of this new socio-political invention was that the public sphere was mainly a space of reason-giving, of debating and arguing about the common good and the (also political) trajectories to pursue it. This realm, in turn, demands an informed public opinion or finds its rationale in it (HABERMAS [1989], pp. 89 and further) and that can come to being only by means of public education independent on material conditions of the citizens. Public debating the ways to pursue common goals or creating one’s own ways of life isn’t possible without this “political and cultural paideia” – learning to live and cooperate with others, but also learning the basic facts of cultural tradition, of acceptable methods of argumentation, of the advantages of political and social participation which leads straight to the main issue of creating one’s own way of life and pursuing one’s own conception of good. It’s unnecessary to stress the role that a humanistic education⁹ plays in that understanding of a person’s choices in the democratic reality. Certain patterns of fulfilled life can emerge only from the knowledge of past and present ways of life, of which only the humanities can sufficiently inform us.

Without the humanities there is no valuable life possible. Nussbaum’s definition of democracy as a valuable and quality life encompasses, in a way, all of the most important modern-day concepts of democracy. First of all, there is the classical, political concept based on the premise that there is no real democracy without a politically informed public opinion able to make conscious political choices. Such a form of political community is impossible to maintain and reproduce without holistic humanistic education, recognizing competing world-views and following the consequences of one’s actions. Secondly, we have the Habermasian/Rortian idea of deliberative democracy, democracy in a constant act, never going all the way and based on the idea of communication worked out by means of rational discussion. Here as well, only the humanities can supply the participants with the tools necessary to create an environment of a free and unconstrained debate. Thirdly, we have the Rawlsian idea of democracy based on the principles of justice and the concept of overlapping consensus (of comprehensive doctrines). Even if Rawls thought otherwise, stressing the necessity of pure rational calculation and its sufficiency for establishing a just and equal society, obviously there has to be a *comprehension*

⁹ The noticeable diminishing of the public sphere is posing a danger to the very activity of the university, but at the same time it creates an opportunity of the universities to become the core institutions the future prosperity of democracy. As Michael Burawoy puts it, “the university has to be at the center of organizing public discussion about the direction of society. As the more conventional representatives of publics – trade unions, political parties, voluntary organizations, religious associations – are falling down on their public mission, the university has to take up its calling as the pivotal institution to orchestrate a deliberative democracy” (BURAWOY [2011]).

of these doctrines if they are not to be excluded from the public sphere by force or otherwise. This comprehension in turn must be something more than quasi-Kantian, an intellectual act of recognizing the mathematical necessity of, say, the principles of justice, because it has to be rooted in a deeper understanding of others' needs, values and presuppositions. Contrary to Rawls' main idea from *Theory of Justice*, we need something more than just reason to follow in his footsteps. Tolerance and openness cannot be an effective intellectual stance without empathy and sympathy, and those two we can learn from philosophy, literature and sometimes even from religion. If we take these three components of modern-day democracies (informed public opinion, communication and socio-economic justice) together, we can see that they add up to the basis of Nussbaum's own conception of democracy as a quality life. But they are not enough. Modern democracies seem to adopt two approaches (paradigms) of development. The first is human-oriented, the second, growth-oriented (NUSSBAUM [2010], p. 16). The former stresses the role of holistic human development, the latter considers economic growth as the priority. Both have educational consequences: people educated according to the growth-oriented paradigm are more specialized, standardized, but altogether less empathic and more limited in their perception of the world and other cultures. It is impossible to sustain vital democracy based on market- and growth-oriented education. Not only does this model promote inequalities (in wealth as well as in education), but it is also antidemocratic in the strict sense, because it doesn't recognize "the inalienable human dignity" (NUSSBAUM [2010], p. 24) which must be the sole base of democracy according to Nussbaum's Human Development paradigm. There are things such as health, concern for other species, bodily integrity, emotions, senses and life itself, among other capabilities central to democratic citizenship (see NUSSBAUM [2000]). Some of them are biological, but some overtly cultural. Among the latter there are – in one form or another – abilities usually associated with the humanities and the arts: "the ability to think critically; the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems as a 'citizen of the world'; and, finally, the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person" (NUSSBAUM [2010], p. 7).

Without the humanities there is no multiculturalism, because there is no understanding of what is strange and alien. This lack of understanding is true of religious and political divisions, at which Habermas encourages us to take a look, but there is also supposedly the most important and pertaining question of broader cultural differences as the vast majority of modern democracies are, or are rapidly becoming, multicultural. While ethnically and religiously homogenic states have started to become a relic, this is not necessarily true about the ways of life of smaller social groups. Some of them still live in a kind of ideological ghetto, be it political, ethnic or religious. Rawls' idea of an overlapping consensus of comprehensive doctrines in a liberal state (see esp. RAWLS

[1996], pp. 133–172) is certainly a noble if only regulative one. The idea demands not only the moral and religious neutrality of the state (relatively easy to achieve by constitutional means) but also self-regulation and self-control on the part of groups representing various conceptions of good. These self-constraints can only partly be achieved by means of state control, because, by definition, the belief of the groups are beyond the reach of a democratic state, as they should be. The implication is that there has to be some kind of natural process by which various religious groups come to understand and respect one another.

It is often assumed that multiculturalism is an issue to be treated on the national level. But that is not the case: as Martha Nussbaum points out, multiculturalism has its roots not in the separate states, but in the very character of issues we must confront. And instead of being national, they have become “global in their scope” (NUSSBAUM [2010], p. 79). What we need, then, is not merely inactive tolerance, but rather a “global understanding” (NUSSBAUM [2010], pp. 81–84), the teaching of world citizenship. Nussbaum claims that these humanistic sentiments necessary for fruitful cooperation instead of exploitation, can be fostered by education. “The world’s schools, colleges and universities, therefore, have an important task: to cultivate in students the ability to see themselves as members of a heterogeneous nation (...) and a still more heterogeneous world, and to understand something of the history and character of the diverse groups that inhabit it” (NUSSBAUM [2010], p. 80).

Without the humanities there is no society of dialogue, because there is no understanding of the other – their distinctness, needs, desires and sufferings. Metaphysics aside, in the (post)secular realm of liberal democracies, the dialogical society is a goal to pursue, but the metaphysical means offered by Levinas and other philosophers of dialogue are deeply flawed. They relate to a certain type of sensitivity which is basically of a religious nature. Postindustrial, postmodern and post secular societies do not all share the religious and metaphysical approach which enabling a dialogical contact with the Other to be established, be it by looking in his or her eyes or otherwise. Empathy is a tool necessary for democracies (or civil societies) to flourish, but it is an ability impossible to teach. As it guarantees moral progress (“enlarging the circle of the ‘we’, enlarging the number of people whom we think of as ‘one of us’”, as Rorty cites Peter Singer) it can be only encouraged by the knowing of cultural tradition, books big or little, philosophical treatises, ingenious novels, breathtaking music pieces. And by direct contact with popular culture as well.

And to do that there is a necessity to change the nature or the definition of cultural goods from commodities to carriers of values. Democracy, then, needs citizens’ understanding of various and diverse values, their cultural background and the necessity of a dialogue. Only the liberal arts can offer the education of

openness towards the other, of empathy towards those who are in pain. Only the humanities, at the university level as well as in public discussions, can enhance this sense of empathy, by concentrating on different cultural patterns of understanding reality, religion and the political. And – without appealing to the wrath of gods or authorities – only they can stigmatize any form of suffering despite the differences between us and those who need our help and solidarity.

Conclusion

Democracy has its checks and balances. Chief among them is the role played by public intellectuals in liberal societies. But this role can be played effectively only insofar as intellectuals are grounded in truly public and informed opinion. Without humanities or with humanities sent to a sparse ghetto of several academic institutions, such an opinion is flawed and impaired. Promoting humanities not only at universities, but also at other levels of education and in polytechnics is in best interest of democracies in dangerous state of economic and demographic tribulations and diversity of world-views.

Judt and Nussbaum sound dramatic but not utterly pessimistic or catastrophic. There is much to do to stop the process of devaluating the humanities by national governments and multinational corporations alike, but then there is a lot going on. For a long time now the voice of humanistic intellectuals has not been this audible and the possibilities of social and political participation of citizens of modern-day democracies has never been this many. Manifestos, reports and debates are not enough but they are definitely a step in the right direction which, if followed, would restore the powers of the public and create a space for emphatic and responsible citizenry that most of the ideologues of democracy ever dreamt of.

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AN ATTEMPT TO UPDATE EDWARD DEMBOWSKI'S PHILOSOPHY OF CREATION

Abstract. The article mainly discusses Edward Dembowski's philosophy of creation in connection with his Hegelian influences, leftist associations and the ongoing discussion in nineteenth century romantic polish philosophy. The nineteenth century, with its German Idealism and French tendency to act in the name of social rights, had introduced new ideas to work with during harsh historical times. Dembowski, amongst other Poles, was the closest to constructing a coherent metaphysical system for the philosophy of creation (*filozofia twórczości*). In the paper, I try to show a part of his intellectual evolution, stretching from defining philosophy as knowledge itself in the form of a Hegelian system, through his critique of Hegel's and Cieszkowski's systems, up to his own established system – the philosophy of creation and its social connections. I also speculate about which of his philosophical ideas can remain relevant today.

Keywords. Polish philosophy, philosophy of action, philosophy of creation, German Idealism, nineteenth century romantic philosophy, messianism.

Why Polish Philosophy Does Not Exist is the title of Barry Smith's article in which the author discusses the problem of "Continental Philosophy" and scientific philosophy. He describes the first one in contrast to the philosophical purity of Polish Philosophy that held a strong connection with logic and science. Kazimierz Twardowski had a great influence on that tradition. He encouraged his disciples to study mathematics and science, and instilled a passion for clarity, rigor and seriousness.¹ These ventures were part of an attempt to create "collaboration between mathematicians and philosophers working in the area of logic"² in Lvov at the beginning of the twentieth century. In addition to that, logic, and mathematics with its scientific objectivity, stood outside the political discourse so they could be taught regardless of current political system. It's important to say that Smith understands by Polish Philosophy the one made by thinkers living at least after the year 1894, that will be later known as the Lvov–Warsaw School. However, he distinguishes this group only to show that the term Polish Philosophy is a misnomer, an inaccurate designation. Kotarbiński's

¹ SMITH [2006], p. 26.

² Ibid., p. 24.

philosophical solutions were equal to Brentano's; their thoughts are philosophies *per se*. The Viena Circle was also at "the rise of scientific philosophy [which] is an inevitable concomitant of the simple process of modernization".³ That is mainly why Polish Philosophy is, according to Smith, Austrian Philosophy. It is all a part of an inevitable, unifying process.

The demarcation line drawn by Smith is quite clear. Everything except the above mentioned obtains the problematic status of "Continental Philosophy" and is involved in scandal. This includes Hegelian, Heideggerian and Habermasian thought, as well as Deriddian and Irigarian.⁴ These types of thinkers have their moment of unity which is "*antipathy to science*, or more generally, antipathy to learning and to scholarly activity, to all the normal bourgeois purposes of the Western university"⁵ as Smith ironically states. It's a philosophy that heavily uses irony and pseudo-scientific jargonizing language inspired by sociology and psychoanalysis. He announces that empirical, more scientific philosophy, rather than German idealism tradition, constitutes the contemporary mainstream.⁶

However, this proposal is the result of a self-proclaimed establishment of the title of the real philosophy determined by active participation in the scientific, academic discourse. Thus, it defines its place in close relation to Science. Smith tries to depreciate Polish efforts to project any fertile thought other than an analytical one. The attempts of Polish romantic thinkers and writers were allegedly "overwhelmed by more forward-looking (...) 'positivists' in Warsaw".⁷ While he neglects the role of the early nineteenth century Polish philosophical attempts to introduce philosophical reflection about nation and society on a wider scale, he simultaneously favors late nineteenth century logic and positivist traces which will emerge in the twentieth century Lvov-Warsaw School.

Even if we agreed with some of Smith's critiques of contemporary "Continental Philosophy"⁸ his inaccurate and too general definition of "Continental Philosophy" is created only in opposition to science-oriented philosophy that, on its own, has no understanding of itself. Also, he misses at least two points. Firstly, what he calls a philosophical scandal is the type of discussion conducted independently, beyond ordinary, well-established scholarly interests. He narrows the problem of philosophy to a purely academic value. Secondly, although he tries to be respectful of different points of view, he is still very attached to the analytical perspective, which is highly promoted. He does not transcend his own scientific

³ Ibid., p. 34.

⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

⁸ Sometimes in its ambiguity and hyper relativization it is hard to find accurate meaning.

perspective to ask a philosophical question about philosophy itself. He assumes that the philosophical future in science is self-explanatory. I disagree with the statement that there is no Polish philosophy and also that a philosophical future can only be marked and determined by “a simple process of modernization”. Those intellectual eras that are discarded without a second thought by the author as attempts which are not philosophical enough triggered to the ones he refers to as philosophies *per se*. The question about our present, and consequently our future, is also a question of our relation to the past.

In *The Legend of Young Poland*, Polish thinker Stanisław Brzozowski states something different, opposite even to Smith's thought. He says that the way we – Poles – treat our own intellectual tradition is scandalous. Brzozowski writes between 1906 and 1909 that Polish romanticism is still unknown to us. We still have to understand and interpret its spiritual atmosphere.⁹ It's not about empty curiosity. Young Poland tried to understand itself via its interpretation of romantic thought; it was the ground work. They were lured by the distorted and fatalistic aspects of romanticism.¹⁰ Brzozowski was well aware¹¹ that Young Poland saw romanticism in its appearance on the stage of history, which was only a superficial understanding. We need to understand that concepts of freedom, independence or Volksgeist, were acts of their life; they emerged from the need to create independent national intellectual ground. Nineteenth century intellectuals wanted to see themselves as the creators of tamed historical forces. Polish writers and thinkers, detached exiles from intellectual ground, had their own practical and common goal: to create, based exclusively on their own individual spirits, a national, intellectual base on which they could build their self-consciousness.¹² Despite all flamboyant intentions they needed external philosophical inspirations.

Edward Dembowski¹³ in his *Outlines of the developing of philosophical concepts in Germany* states: “There are two (...) nations that cultivate philosophy: Germany and France, but each of them, in their own proper spirit, separately develop their field of thought”.¹⁴ He states that Slavs are only at the beginning of their philosophical journey.¹⁵ The development of Polish thought went in two main directions: the German abstract, idealistic and metaphysical tradition, and the French practical tradition, the tendency to apply ideas directly

⁹ BRZOZOWSKI [1910], p. 192.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹³ Polish philosopher, literary critic, and activist, also called the red castellan's-son, organizer of an unsuccessful Cracow Uprising, lived between 1822 and 1846, died at 27th of February in Pogórze Cracow shot by Austrian soldiers.

¹⁴ DEMBOWSKI [1955], p. 298.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

into socio-economic context. The first one was associated with post-Kantian, mainly Hegelian thought, and gave birth to attempts to create a *national philosophy* (Trentowski, Libelt). The latter, with political doctrines such as *millenarianism*, gave birth to its Polish equivalent – *messianism* (Mickiewicz, Słowacki).¹⁶ The third way was the combination of those two (Cieszkowski, Dembowski).

Polish messianism was firmly rooted in the contemporary Europe intellectual context.¹⁷ Not only Poland, but also France was called *The Christ of Nations*.¹⁸ The idea of *anew revelation* and everlasting peace was often associated with deep social changes that could be achieved by a certain task. Count August Cieszkowski directly calls it the *philosophy of action*.¹⁹ However, the ways this task can be realized are significantly different. Mickiewicz's position shows an intuitive attitude towards earthly salvation, whereas Cieszkowski thinks that without theoretical reflexion, action is worthless. All of those programs were realized, almost wholly, in the context of history. Thus historiosophy, as a philosophy, tries to understand the past and to project specific actions. It is somehow the legacy of German thought. Mickiewicz could not fully appreciate that tradition. It comes from his radical irrationalism and faith in mysticism. Mickiewicz's disdainful and frivolous attitude towards the limitations and strictness of the philosophical method was his own limitation. Total embodying faith in which he saw freedom was the weakness of Polish culture.

Cieszkowski, however, values German idealism, especially the Hegelian dialectic method that he used to conduct an immanent critique of Hegel's philosophy, in an attempt to "overcome the limits of all philosophy past and present", to process abstract reflectiveness into action.²⁰ He was one of many commentators and critics of the Hegelian system. Dembowski, commenting on the situation in 1843, states that, "No firm progress has been made (except by Cieszkowski, who might do it) in areas of expertise",²¹ and Cieszkowski was the one to build the new philosophical system, which would be an emanation of the Hegelian system. Cieszkowski wanted to transform abstract reflectiveness into life by establishing a corrected version of the system in *philosophy of action* (*filozofia czynu*)²². This would involve: 1) adding *future* to the organism of history so it would become an integral part; 2) changing the value of an independent unit, from a tool through which reason works to being self-aware,

¹⁶ WALICKI [1970], p. 29.

¹⁷ Loc. cit.

¹⁸ It was announced in "Globe" in 29 of January, 1832.

¹⁹ WALICKI [1970], p. 21.

²⁰ KOZŁOWKI [1999], p. 11.

²¹ DEMBOWSKI [1955], p. 397.

²² Ibid., p. 406.

creating people; 3) changing the arrangement of categories present in history. Cieszkowski wanted to apply categories that can be traced in nature and spirit to Hegel's historiosophy, which for him is insufficient. The Polish author rearranges the order of history and claims that it can be adjusted with three categories: a) the past, an age of *beauty* which is associated with *emotion* and was developed in Antiquity through the perfection of art; b) the present, the age of *thought*, which is associated with *thinking* and has developed throughout Christianity through the perfection of *knowledge* in philosophy; c) the future, the age of *goodness*, which is associated with *action* (*act*) and will be "developed in the world of the future, when knowledge will come to life while becoming an *act* and will give birth to absolute *virtue*",²³ all of the acts are going to be conscious, and people will become not thinking or feeling beings, but creative ones; it will be the time of universal reintegration. Just as Christianity was the age of human-God, the third one will become the age of Godlike-humanity. This religion will be the highest development of the "eternal religion" in the form of Paraclete Religion.²⁴ Liturgy will become art, science will replace dogma etc. There will be no priests, only artists, officials and scientists – all working for the public good.²⁵

Kozłowski points out that Cieszkowski uses philosophy, its dialectic method, as merely an instrument. It loses its independence. "Philosophy itself, even in its most perfect shape given to it by Hegel, becomes a historical phenomenon, essentially incapable of expressing the sense of history as a whole. It must, therefore give way – together with art – to another realm of absolute spirit, i.e. religion".²⁶ It serves as a means, and not as a goal itself. Cieszkowski becomes Hegel's competitor instead of a teacher of the practical use of dialectics.²⁷ By establishing the historiosophical problem of Slavs on the level of absolute spirit, a problem which in Hegel's system is solved within the framework of objective spirit, Cieszkowski wants to change an individual's own influence on history from a tool of "cunning reason", to a "conscious and independent" executor of principles. Yet the shift only establishes *how* individuals might view the content and does not answer the question: *what* will the content of the future be? Kozłowski comments on this attempt that "instead of concrete analyses of actually functioning institutions of ethnicity, Cieszkowski presents mostly sublime declarations, wishful thinking and expectations that individuals will become 'artists, scientists and public people'".²⁸ In conclusion Cieszkowski's

²³ Ibid., p. 408.

²⁴ Paraclete (παράκλητος) means advocate or helper. In Christianity, the term paraclete most commonly refers to the *Holy Spirit*.

²⁵ WALICKI [1970], pp. 67–69.

²⁶ KOZŁOWKI [1999], p. 12.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

attempt did not fulfill its obligation. Despite efforts to expand the organism of history, by shifting the categories and setting historiosophy as a realm of absolute spirit, only to extend the dialectic competencies that could predict future, he overestimated the possibilities of his programme.²⁹

Nonetheless, Dembowski had a deep respect for Cieszkowski's attempt to open the prospect for the future via a reinterpretation of Hegelian system. Much like the Count, Dembowski at the very beginning accepts Hegel's thought as an absolute reference point. In his first article, the author specifies significant problems which will be held later in his writings. He defines philosophy as *Knowledge*, which thanks to Hegel is no longer a love of knowledge (wisdom) but autonomous Knowledge itself. In addition, it enriches all human activities by giving them meaning.³⁰ He also complains that Poles are not interested in philosophy, and don't like to think at all. During 1842-1843, he published the culture-forming "Przegląd Naukowy" in which he promoted philosophy, gave lectures on the Hegelian system and on problems with our philosophical passivity.

In his text *Present idealistic position*, Dembowski states that the ultimate purpose of human existence is the happiness of others. That happiness can only be realized in a community. This understanding comes from within and is given through God's love. However, love deprived of thinking is madness. It is necessary to find a thought that will elevate like a spring all cognitive functions to knowledge. Knowledge is the motion and force of the world.³¹ "Progress is the nature of thought (...) the very thought itself".³² Thought must objectify itself and that process is necessary to produce self-consciousness. At this point he states that philosophy requires being Christian,³³ but in contrast to Cieszkowski, he does not simply leave the future of societies in God's hands but underlines Christianity's value as mature thought. In order to create *community*, the knowing of truth has to be combined with educated feeling.³⁴

Dembowski's own intellectual source of inspiration was, besides Hegel's system, philosophy of action. He critiques the arrangement of the categories proposed by Cieszkowski (emotion linked with beauty, thinking linked with truth and action linked with goodness). He states that emotion corresponds not with beauty, but with life, the primary unconscious act, whereas beauty is created only by the harmony of emotional engagement and thought³⁵. As for the basis for the whole

²⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

³⁰ DEMBOWSKI [1955], p. 3–4.

³¹ Ibid., p. 27–36.

³² Ibid., p. 34.

³³ Ibid., p. 37.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 39–40.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 408.

system, chosen categories have to be designed as a harmonized whole. "The most perfect of them must be unity with the previous two – action is only a symptom of a conscious thought, not the unity of thoughts and feelings"³⁶ because that is creation. Dembowski sees what Cieszkowski omitted – if philosophy is to retain its autonomy, and not become a means to some goal, it has to remain at the level of absolute spirit. If philosophy's goal is to determine the historical goal of a nation, philosophy ceased to be itself, and it becomes only a justifying rhetorical technique.

He gives a preliminary draft of his own system in the article *Position of the future of philosophy*, where he presents the philosophy of creation that reveals the nature of all elements (emotion, thought, creation) thanks to Hegelian analysis. It is progress. Thus, he makes an attempt to create a proposition of a System of Knowledge that would be based on the mentioned elements, would take account of them in relation to the entire system as an organic whole and would determine which fields they correspond with. "*Creation is harmonized emotion and thought, creation is identical with being*"³⁷ and through that principle the whole system will be developed. 1) Emotion as the most detached moment of creation, the most abstract one, not realized yet is *logic*; 2) a higher degree than emotion, its negation is thought – passed into reality. Thought knows but does not know that it knows, so its *nature*; 3) only the fully developed thought that knows and feels that it knows what and why it feels is creation – the field of the *spirit*.³⁸ All of those domains continue to be analogically developed, for instance: "thought as a thought is: 1) emotion, 2) thought, 3) creation.", and then in the footnote: "thought as a thought being creation is completely different to creation as creation being thought; the first one is *organism*, and the second *knowledge*".³⁹ But, what is most interesting is the author's arrangement of history. After dividing it into 1) *people of the east*; 2) *Hebrews, Greeks, Romans*; 3) the *history of Christian people*,⁴⁰ he says of the last period, "the third period will be the future. It will develop according to the thought divisions, and finally knowledge will go in life".⁴¹ He proposes this fractal historiosophical system of history that is never closed, always in movement and progressing towards the next *whatever*. He does not promote Polishness nor Slavs. He only describes the significance of history and states that the vacant position is up for grabs, history has not finished yet.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 409.

³⁷ Ibid., vol. III, p. 123.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 124–125.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

⁴⁰ That has its own inner divisions

⁴¹ DEMBOWSKI [1955], vol. III, p. 134.

Dembowski's Slavic promotion is not an element of absolute spirit, but a necessary part of creating an environment for the creation of philosophy. It is an outer-philosophical condition of possibility philosophy being created by Poles. His attempt was not about predicting, or even creating via Polish national philosophy or messianism, the *real* future of Poland. He referred to deeply rooted, already existing Western philosophical tradition and lively feelings evoked by national sentiments. His heroic, truly romantic attempt was rather to project and create a new space for future Polish thought. Its aim was the Polish new intelligent class that didn't yet exist but which would create modern society. Through all of his pedagogical attempts he tried to update the Polish soul into philosophy and independency. His attempt was about asking what philosophy is, at what point it currently is, what its competencies are and how we can justify its existence with our participation in the future. He does not ask wishfully how the future will look, but he tells us: if we want it to be with Polish philosophy, then we should create it.⁴² "Do not underestimate the work of centuries," Dembowki states, "(...) let's be their disciples, and when their knowledge becomes ours, let's look at ourselves and through knowledge that already for us is true let's expand, and we shall be on our way towards absolute progress".⁴³

Both French and German philosophical traditions were, as traditions, rooted in some sort of social environment. The nineteenth century was powered by the third state, by the bourgeoisie, which, at that time, did not exist in Poland. Dembowski was a landowner, Polish landed gentry, but the tradition he referred to was bourgeois. Western Europe built its thought on the basis of an existing or emerging middle class society. Dembowski built on a void. He made an attempt to build the basics for intellectual independence, which was not only intellectual independence, but Polish intellectual independence that was not fixated with the privileged God's chosen nation, but simply with a self-conscious nation. The category of *creation* that is identical with being, a pedagogical, almost Enlightenment-like attempt to promote philosophy, the creation of new Polish philosophical dictionary, and later social criticism, were a great base for the announced philosophy of the future. If not for the author's premature death, he probably would have made this the basis for the system objection against social evolutionism, a vision of the social doctrine of creativity as a system to promote an active, conscious participation in the creation of society and the collective determination of its future. What Dembowski was trying to do was, as Brzozowski would call it, *the impossible work* or *the impossible creation*. He wanted to single-handedly create what should be the work of an entire nation, its self-consciousness.

⁴² Ibid., p. 109-111.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 111.

An attempt to update

From the perspective of a person that made an attempt to create a philosophy that would be both established in the contemporary philosophy of its time and remain an integral character of a nation, we can grasp some interesting intuitions. However, not all of these elements have to remain relevant, as philosophical qualities today. The most interesting is the question of the philosophical future: the immanent trace of its progress and its independence. Thus, the question about progress emerges. This can go in one of two ways: 1) philosophical progress might be in relation to other fields of studies i.e. religion, history or literature but most likely science, 2) philosophy will try to retain its integrity and its indetermination (it's a little bit too late for independence). In the first case, we might predict that the engagement will be its determination. Science with its intense expansion, technical background, well-functioning international scientific community, well established division of labor, and its goal: specified and tangible success will dominate philosophical claim. Science will probably absorb philosophy, only if it has not happened yet, and its function will be to analyze on a more general level detailed information and build more general scientific theories. In the second case, the question that philosophy asks itself about itself is a question of *its* progress. It is the question of its future, not in a determined manner but in a creation manner (by *creation* I do not mean here the recent commonly used and overused understanding of creation as *creativity* in a market-determined way or arbitrarily constructed visions of philosophy of handicraft or housing design, but as a conscious, intentional act, according to some inner logic of the process). To avoid shallowness, thought must examine itself and recognize *its own* progress. Philosophy must avoid too strong relationships with other fields of knowledge. It cannot lose sight of understanding for its own progress, or else it will become merely a justifying rhetorical technique. In reference to Dembowski and opposite to Smith we might say that the creation of philosophy should be its own creation, self-conscious creation that would be, at least to some extent, independent from the "simple process of modernization". Dembowski's question about philosophy and its self-consciousness is still relevant. It is a purely practical act: philosophy will be what we will make of it. Of course, that is almost an obvious answer. But more important is: what is philosophy and who will answer this question?

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KOTARBIŃSKI'S ONTOLOGY OF HUMANITIES

Abstract. What is left of this initial project once Kotarbiński's textbook became obsolete – as Kotarbiński himself claims, perhaps too modestly, in the preface of its second edition, in 1959 – and also given the strong criticism of reism, particularly by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz [1966]? My answer is that the philosophical project of reism then became a methodological framework for intellectual work in general, and in particular for humanistic studies, or what we today call the Human and Social Sciences.

Keywords. Reism, ontology, humanities, nominalism, intellectual ethics, Ockam's razor.

What were Kotarbiński's aims with his first book, *Elementy teorii poznania, logiki formalnej i metodologii nauk*, published in 1929? Firstly, he wanted to provide a manual for the course, "Logic and General Methodology", at the University of Warsaw, as he himself said in the preface. A second objective was to provide the initial formulation of a semantic and ontological theory, reism. This theory was meant to disseminate and promote Stanisław Leśniewski's ontological theory. The idea of reism was to transform Leśniewski's logical ontology into a broader metaphysical worldview and to apply it in different fields, among which was the methodological status of sciences.

What is left of this initial project once Kotarbiński's textbook became obsolete – as Kotarbiński himself claims, perhaps too modestly, in the preface of its second edition, in 1959 – and also given the strong criticism of reism, particularly by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz [1966]? My answer is that the philosophical project of reism then became a methodological framework for intellectual work in general, and in particular for humanistic studies, or what we today call the Human and Social Sciences. I also think that Kotarbiński himself intended this as an objective for reism. This project is clearly expressed, in my opinion, in a paper by Kotarbiński, entitled "Humanistyka bez hipostaz. Próba eliminacji hipostaz ze świata pojęć nauk humanistycznych", "The Humanities Without Hypostasis: An Attempt to Eliminate Hypostasis from the Domain of the Humanities", published initially in 1952 (see KOTARBIŃSKI [1966]).

Concretism, somatism or reism are three names for the same theory. It “states that there are no other entities, and hence no other object of cognition, than physical bodies,” says Kotarbiński (in KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 481). In his paper, “The philosopher”, he also claims that reism stigmatizes, “meaning speculation resulting from taking names of properties, relations, contents, states, processes, etc., as counterparts of certain beings” (cf. KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 507). When someone claims that properties, relationships, contents, states or processes exist as entities in the world, or simply when someone behaves as if they exist as entities in the world, the person produces hypostasis. Under this term, “hypostasis”, Kotarbiński designated non-concrete entities, or entities which are not reducible to concrete entities, and these alleged entities are, according to the Philosopher of Łódź, pseudo-entities. He gives examples of such pseudo-entities in the domain of psychology: “fatigue, pain, intelligence, and psychic phenomena in general, dispositions to experience and to act, psychic acts and content of such acts” (cf. KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 481). All are hypostasis. He also uses this term to designate “various entities which are not physical bodies, such as paradigms, forms of sentence structure, meaning of words, and fictitious personages from literary works ... historical facts, culture phenomena, social systems, legal institutions and the like” (cf. KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 481). According to Kotarbiński, almost all objects of alleged knowledge in the Humanities are hypostasis.

A hypostasis is not a non-concrete entity, but it is not an entity at all. When we refer to it, we simply use an empty word or “*flatus vocis*”, to use the phrase attributed to early medieval Nominalists or “*nominales*”. In the best cases, hypostasis could be reduced to physical entities through a paraphrase procedure. This procedure allows us to move from statements including terms of hypostasis to other statements, which do not use them. This kind of procedure is based on a “concretist” ontology, which claims that only physical entities actually exist. It is an ontological requirement that hypostasis should be reduced in this way and thus ontology is an imperious standard for all linguistic meaning.

But why should we need to eliminate hypostasis if it comes spontaneously to mind when we work in the fields of psychology, sociology, history or literary theory, when we discuss cultural phenomena, legal institutions or social systems, or indeed, more generally, in the domain of Humanities? After all, what harm do these hypostases do?

I remember a remark made by my former supervisor, Frédéric Nef, when I was writing my thesis on Nelson Goodman, now a long time ago. Goodman is a nominalist. He begins one paper by saying that the world is a world of individuals (GOODMAN, N. [1972]). He defended theories which were not so dissimilar to Kotarbiński’s and indeed both belong to a tradition of thought which goes back at least to Roscelin de Compiègne and Pierre Abelard. They

have all requested the removal of superfluous entities and used what was much later called “Ockam’s razor”, after the Fourteenth century philosopher William of Ockham. With this razor, one eliminates unnecessary entities. Goodman developed a mereological, strictly extensionalist, ontology in which any complex reality (he calls them *concreta*) is reducible to simple entities which he calls *qualia*. Technically, Goodman’s theory in *The Structure of Appearance* (GOODMAN [1977]) is phenomenalist rather than physicalist in that the simplest realities in his system are phenomenal rather than concrete things. But Goodman believes it could also have been possible to construct a physicalistic system and considers that it is a matter of choice and not of correspondence with a ready-made reality. What is really important for Goodman is that all entities are of the same ontological type, even if they can be described as mereological compounds. There is a strong proximity between Goodman’s mereological project and Leśniewski’s ontology. In my youth, I did my utmost to make that kind of theory plausible and to apply it to aesthetics. However, as mentioned, my supervisor once asked me: “But why do you have to be nominalist?” For several days, this prevented me from advancing, which is the worst situation for a PhD student. I continually asked myself “Well, yes, why be a nominalist?” In a sense, I found the answer to this question in Kotarbiński’s theory, although I don’t have a true motivation to be a nominalist.

Surely, one can be particularly fond of desert landscapes like Willard V. Quine claimed to be, but this is only a matter of taste and certainly does not represent a philosophical justification for the use of Ockham’s razor to shave Plato’s beard, full, as one might say, of non concrete-realities – ideas, forms and other abstract entities. Some philosophers think that nominalism has the epistemic advantage in that it avoids errors by limiting the number of entities about which it is possible to be wrong. But is this a relevant argument? Nominalism requires complex paraphrase procedures to remove hypostasis from our theories and limit ourselves to indisputable entities, a procedure which in itself is a source of error! Curiously, ontological austerity, or the elimination of terms of non-concrete entities, often leads to semantic inflation insofar as nominalist paraphrase procedures are often very laborious. The Nominalist resembles someone who eventually makes himself ill by paying too much attention to his health.

In a sense, nominalist ontology, especially its mereological version, seems to be a philosophical mania. Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz showed that Kotarbiński’s nominalism paraphrase program is more problematic than he thought. In particular, the argument that there could be only one legitimate semantic category – words corresponding to the experience we have of physical entities – is quite dubious. The whole story of this critique by Ajdukiewicz is well known and constantly repeated but, in my view, not very useful. What I am trying to show is that Kotarbiński’s nominalism is less theoretical than methodological or even practical. He uses ontology to question undue scientific claims, and thus

sophistry spreads through the Humanities. One of the reasons why Kotarbiński never renounced reism, despite the strong criticism he faced, appears in his paper on hypostasis in Humanities. Ultimately, the term “reism” does not designate a respectable ontological or semantic theory and is instead a kind of battle cry against “*nazwy pozorne*”, “onomatoids”. These need to be countered because they are intellectually dangerous, and are indeed the worst calamities for sane and safe intellectual work or for serious thought. Reism is primarily, in my opinion (POUIVET [2006]), an intellectual ethic.

Peter Geach says that Kotarbiński’s battle against onomatoids “is like the Irish hero’s fight with his sword against the sea waves; for Kotarbiński is fighting against a strong tendency of natural languages, at least of the Indo-European family” (GEACH [1990], p. 33). Geach gives a very convincing example: “How readily we turn from ‘When a man marries his troubles begin’ to something like ‘A man’s marriage makes the beginning of his troubles!’” (GEACH [1990], p. 33). The term “beginning”, in the second formula, is a pure product of language, and a true onomatoid. However, one may then be tempted to ask: “What is a beginning?” and even ask students to write an essay on what a beginning is and what is the essence of the beginning. Here is another example. At the time of writing this paper, I read the following sentence *Le Monde*, which is considered as a very serious French newspaper: “The persistence of unemployment, despite the efforts of government, is the only real shadow cast on the re-election of François Hollande who has succeeded in transforming the impact of terrorist attacks in a new Republican energy.” It shows that a newspaper can do far more for the proliferation of onomatoids than for the dissemination of information.

In his fight against onomatoids, Kotarbiński undertook a major demythologization of the field of Humanities. For him, we never need to pretend that there is something other than concrete entities. We must beware of language’s ontological proliferation and also of what the Second Scholastics philosophers called “*entia rationis*”, “beings of reason”. For a nominalist, beings of reason are beings of unreason. There is a strong temptation to believe that some realities do not exist in the same way as concrete things, but in their own way, which implies that modes of existence are numerous and varied. Kotarbiński devoted a large part of his work to warning us about this temptation and encouraging us to greater caution in this regard. In the field of Humanities in particular, we must practice a virtue of parsimony if we are to avoid the vice of talking about nothing while pretending to say particularly deep things.

We could find add other examples to what Kotarbiński was fighting against in the domain of Humanities. One of the most famous reifications is found in the immortal work of the greatest French philosopher. Descartes blithely moves from “I think” to “There is an ego that thinks”. When I was a student I did

a course entitled "The Discovery of the Ego", a formula used in exactly the same way as, say, "The Discovery of America." The professor saw Descartes as the Christopher Columbus of Subjectivity. Descartes was also supposed to have discovered the ego in the same way as today we may discover that there is palm oil in almost everything we eat! Irony with regard to discovery made by Descartes seems particularly misplaced because it has profoundly changed the history of thought. To say that Descartes simply committed the fallacy of nominalising the personal pronoun "I" would seem a very poor understanding of what is considered a fundamental discovery by many philosophers. However, G.E.M. Anscombe (cf. ANSCOMBE [1975]) defended such a claim by saying that "I" do not refer to the self and it is likely that Geach thought the same. I suppose that Kotarbiński would agree with them, given what he says about onomatoids.

The same Kotarbińskian method could be applied to another discovery often considered to be famous. It is not difficult to notice that we are sometimes unaware of certain events which may even play an apparently causal role in the formation of our personalities. Should we conclude, like Freud did and many others since, that there is an unconscious psychic reality, the Unconscious, which conflicts with other psychic realities such as the so-called Ego and Superego? This would mean that a large part of the Human and Social Sciences would thus be based on pitiful semantic and ontological confusions, and even perhaps that the Human and Social Sciences would be no more than semantic and ontological confusions nonetheless viewed as marvellous discoveries.

I will now focus on an example given by Kotarbiński: intentional objects. The first reason is personal. The ontology of art has been my daily bread for over thirty years and the few pages Kotarbiński devoted to the ontology of art had a profound influence on my written work on this topic. The second reason is that Kotarbiński's ontology of art is directed against another Polish philosopher, Roman Ingarden, and more generally against Phenomenology. Ingarden and Phenomenology are never quoted in Kotarbiński's paper on Humanities but there is no doubt they were the main topics of his highly critical views.

According to Kotarbiński, "an intentional object is that alleged object towards which we turn our acts when these are aimed in a vacuum" (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 486). Thus, we are tempted to think that a fictional character is an intentional object and an object to our thinking even if this entity is not in the empirical world and actually is not a real object. Kotarbiński adds: "in the opinion of many theorists of literature, a literary work just consists of such objects" (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 486). The thesis that a literary text is a series of marks on paper or other media which make it a physical thing has not found many supporters among literature theorists and philosophers, even those most likely to adopt materialistic theories (except Nelson Goodman who agrees

with this kind a characterization!). The result is that a work of art is quite often conceived as a non-physical entity, “built at least in part from meaning of words, from immanent images which are contents of productive images, and finally of imaginary things, persons and events” (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], pp. 486 – 487). Thus, a work of art would be the correlate of an intentional activity of the mind, which constitutes its own object. “The somatist must firmly protest against all that” (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 487), says Kotarbiński. He firmly rejects the phenomenon of nominalization. This is not because one thinks that, for example, Adam Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz* is a non-physical entity – *Pan Tadeusz* – which is an object of our thought and perhaps of our aesthetic appreciation.

Some philosophers will insist that there are obviously different modes of existence. Like Ingarden, they will distinguish between the absolute mode of existence, which applies only to God, the ideal mode of existence, which applies to mathematical objects, the real mode of existence, which concerns physical objects, and the intentional mode of existence, which includes aesthetic objects or fictional entities. The very notion of the object, alone seems particularly apt for the production of hypostasis in that the term is so vague and indefinite that it allows all sorts of things from or outside the world to be added simply by virtue of a further qualification. An adjectival term can be added to the word “object”; an example would be an “aesthetic object” - an alleged object whose mode of existence is supposed to be aesthetic. The second way of producing hypostasis is to use a genitive term; one can for example speak of an “object of thought”. For many thinkers in the Humanities, it seems to be sufficient to qualify an object to make the object exist in its own way. Do you need a new domain you are presumed to have discovered and in which you will therefore be the main specialist? This can be achieved by using the process of nominalization. The ontology of the Humanities is sometimes too easy and based on an uncontrolled transformation which takes thinkers from a completely free semantic analysis to a very generous ontology.

Kotarbiński claims, however, that “there remains the question as to whether a lyrical poem came into being only when it was externalized – for example, in the form of a manuscript – or when its author formulated it in his mind, when he felt as if he heard that poem recited by himself or by someone else” (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 487). Kotarbiński also realizes that it is not so easy, as a reist is tempted to claim, to eliminate intentional objects. He even concludes that the ontology of a literary work includes the authors of the works and their inner psychological life. Such a claim would be close to the eliminativist attitude in contemporary philosophy of the mind. Works which seem to be non-physical entities are in fact physical but not as things within the word and rather as processes in the brain. However, Kotarbiński is too smart to believe that such a solution is plausible and quickly proposes another solution. He says: “in the last analysis, there are, strictly speaking, no literary works, as there are no works

when people talk with one another or when they perform physical exercises” (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 487). I would say that we may dance a waltz with a person, but this does not mean that the waltz exists in addition to the people who dance or who make certain movements together. Accordingly, there are people who narrate, but no narrative exists in itself in addition to what they do and there is in fact no narrative, understood as an entity in the world!

Kotarbiński returns in his way to a fundamental distinction which is often made by scholastic philosophers between *actio manes in agente* – when I like or want something, but there is nothing in addition to what I do – and *actio transiens in objectum* – when I cut something or make a cake, and thus something is cut or made which exists independently of my act. Kotarbiński finally critically examines another scholastic notion, used by Franz Brentano and by Roderick Chisholm, that of intentional inexistence. Sometimes those who use this concept tend to act as if inexistence was by itself a mode of existence, but to inexist is not to exist otherwise – it is simply to not exist. One can say: “in the somatist’s opinion, the literary historian has no objects of study other than texts and their fragments, their authors and their readers, and if the literary work is to consist of some other elements, then the search for such an object is a search for a non-entity” (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 488).

What, then, is the result of this discussion? My view is that, strictly speaking, there is no ontology of humanities as there are no literary works and legal codes. Kotarbiński says: “there are texts, there are authors of those texts, and there are readers of those texts; ... a given legislator ordered that under given circumstances people should act in a specified way” (KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 489). But there are no objects such as meanings of sentences, and it is the main reason why there are no literary works or legal codes. We could then conclude: “if a person demands that the humanities should study the history of sciences, of philosophical systems, and of legal systems, and understands this in the sense that they are the subject matter of the humanities, in the same way as minerals, plants and animals are the subject matter of natural science, he falls victim to an illusion and commits a hypostasis” [1966, 489]. If we agree with Vincent Descombes's idea that metaphysics is to make and unmake hypostasis (cf. DESCOMBES [2000]), Kotarbiński’s metaphysics consists mainly of ‘undoing’ hypostasis. His metaphysics leaves us with just objects in the physical sciences while the Humanities do not possess own objects.

“University of Łódź” is not a hypostasis, because it has students, professors, a rector, rules and programs, and of course because we are here at the University of Łódź which is hosting this conference. But this is nothing other than what people make or remake, the story they tell, and the memories they have. The former Rector Magnificus of the University of Łódź said that, “in the strict, fundamental meaning of the world, only groups of institutionalized human

beings exist in a given way and function collectively in a given way because of the specified dispositions of human beings and other component parts including certain specified convictions and aspirations” (cf. KOTARBIŃSKI [1966], p. 490). If I understand Kotarbiński correctly, the University of Łódź does not exist, but still we can commemorate its Seventieth Birthday, appreciate its hospitality and admire the work done by the colleagues and students of this university. We thus see where we are led by hunting down onomatoids. The world contains only concrete material entities, inanimate things and people. Anything else must be understood as what people make with the things they use, among them texts, images, sonic sequences or corporal movements. Overall what we call works of art.

Peter Geach said that reism honestly made him perplexed. His perplexity is related to other difficulties than those already reported by Ajdukiewicz and others. I do not think it is important here to recall these difficulties. Indeed, Kotarbiński was so far from denying them that he joined the critical text of Ajdukiewicz at the end of the second edition of his book, *Elementy*. It seems more interesting to me to ask why the fight against onomatoids survived the logical and semantic criticisms made by great philosophers. The reason is, in my opinion, the role of this battle against onomatoids. We know that Kotarbiński wrote, in addition to his *Elementy*, another very famous book – his *Traktat o dobrym robocie*, translated into English under the title *Praxeology*. But in fact, at least in part, *Elementy* already was a “treaty of good work”, of good intellectual work. Finally, what is important in Kotarbiński’s reism is more intellectual prophylaxis than ontological economy. In the Humanities, in particular, our good intellectual health is subject to risks inherent in the language we use, at least if we are not attentive to the phenomenon of nominalization. We need strict ethical standards to prevent a bad use of language leading us to produce the object we claim to study. Nominalization is always an intellectual temptation, especially in the Humanities. Only the sense of intellectual dishonesty when we nominalize may require us to avoid nominalization, or at least to remain vigilant about it, even if its possibility is inherent in the languages we use. Also, Kotarbiński had a moral sense that nominalization can be morally repugnant and even a moral fault in intellectual life.

Kotarbiński invites us to link the practice of Humanities with an intellectual ethic. This ethic is both individual and social. Individually, we should not be too easily satisfied by ontological vigilance in our scientific life. Socially, it would be desirable that cultural institutions protect themselves from and fight against the inherent tendency to nominalization in the Humanities. I am convinced that Kotarbiński’s warning against onomatoids, and his defence of ontological parsimony, especially in the Humanities, has lost none of its intellectual necessity or ethical value.

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... and prof. James E. McGuire



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M. Nowak, K. Misiuna, dr K. Bednarska, dr K. de Lazari-Radek, P. Simons
D. Łukasiewicz, dr R. Trypuz)



Prof. Elżbieta Jung (Pro-Dean for Research) greets all participants (left to right Professors: A. M. Kaniowski, G. Skirbekk, pr. A. Szostek dr R. Trypuz...)



Last photograph, after some participants had left. In the middle of the photo (i. a.) Professors (left to right): J. Kaczmarek, M. Kwietniewska, E. Jung, T. Gerstenkorn, M. Gensler, R. Kleszcz, J. Czelakowski, A. Indrzejczak and students