

ROMAN INGARDEN

**THE SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY OF
KAZIMIERZ TWARDOWSKI**

Philosophical investigations go from time to time through a period of fast and exuberant development. From very small beginnings, from a few introductory questions and comparatively primitive attempts at solving them, we come quickly to the development of rich problematic and to the rise of a number of more and more detailed theories; sometimes in a very few years the whole movement dies or such breaks in the construction of the theory appears that it falls to pieces. There often appear, too, contrary theories which, fighting against the opinions hitherto existing, bury even valuable thoughts under their ruins. When after passing through such a period, or

at the end of one we look at its initial stages and we want to render justice to the thinkers working at that time, we cannot measure their scientific achievements by what has been achieved at the culminating point of the movement; we must also remember that these achievements were preparing the way for everything that came later, a preparation without which there would not have come into existence the most important results attained at the height of the movement.

It is in this way that we must look at the achievement of Kazimierz Twardowski's thought, because his scientific activity was interwoven into the comparatively early stages of a philosophical period or rather into the development of two different but nearly simultaneously developing philosophical periods, one in the history of German philosophy and the other in the field of Polish philosophy. The first began in the seventies of the XIX-th century and came to an end about 1930, while the second is connected with Kazimierz Twardowski's coming to Poland and seems also to have come to an end. Judging the scientific achievement of Kazimierz Twardowski against this double background we shall be able to realize the main outlines of his role as one of the forces acting in philosophy at the end of the XIX-th and the beginning of the XX-th century.

Nevertheless it must be pointed out that what can be said about the philosophical achievement of Professor Twardowski and the role played by him in the historical process must be incomplete and in many respects hypothetical, as a great part of Twardowski's scientific work has not appeared in print. His manuscript bequest includes nearly one hundred small works and articles, besides a score or two of volumes of notes prepared for lectures, known only to those who once had the opportunity of attending them. Thus my deductions will be based on his published works only and I shall limit myself to a part only of Twardowski's scientific achievement. Besides, I have not sufficient historical materials at my disposal. So it is quite possible that later investigations will not corroborate the hypothesis I shall present here.

The first philosophical movement into which Twardowski's philosophy is interwoven is the renaissance of German philosophy at the end of the XIX-th century after a decline lasting many years, a decline which had become apparent after the downfall of German idealism. After a period in which it seemed that philosophy in general would cease to exist, its reconstruction began in many fields

and in many ways. The extensive historical studies both of Greek philosophy — made rather by philologists than by philosophers — and of German philosophy, formed a kind of preparation for it, and thanks to his studies an interest in the main philosophical problems revived in the minds of that generation. And out of this interest there arose in the first place neo-Kantism in its different forms and a number of other currents. On the other hand empirical and experimental psycho-physiology practised for the last 60 years by eminent natural scientists — to mention only Fechner, Helmholtz, Wundt or Mach — and the descriptive psychology of Francis Brentano and others did not remain purely psychological, contrary to the expectations of their authors. Partly under the influence of English philosophy (J. S. Mill) they had already led in the works of Helmholtz and Wundt to the empirical practice of epistemological research and simultaneously to the so-called psychologism of other investigators, that is to the opinion according to which psychology was to be the fundamental philosophical science. To its ideas and problems were to be brought the ideas and statements of all the remaining parts of philosophy disciplines beginning with logic, passing through the theory of knowledge, to ethics, esthetics and even including metaphysics. The followers of this trend of investigation coming from psychology held the opinion that they were the first to introduce scientific methods into philosophical investigations and this scientific character was specially underlined by them in order to emphasize its contrast with German idealism, the scientific irresponsibility of which they often blamed. This trend broke down only 1900 and underwent a very real transformation in the phenomenology of Husserl.

It was in this atmosphere of a psychology developing and confident, with marked philosophical ambitions and a strong echo of English empiricism and positivism and their German correspondents, amid lively discussions among the numerous philosophical currents arising in the German Reich, that young Kazimierz Twardowski was maturing and studying at the University of Vienna 1885—1889. He was there under the overwhelming influence of Francis Brentano and specially under that of his descriptive psychology, although the links between Brentano on one hand and Aristotle and medieval philosophy on the other were probably also not without importance. Twardowski belonged to the large circle of Brentanists then in

Vienna, such as Höfler, Ehrenfels, Kreibitz, Schmidkunz and others. He got his doctor's degree in Vienna in 1891 for his thesis „Idee und Perzeption, Eine erkenntnistheoretische Untersuchung aus Descartes“, which however was not written under the tutorship of Brentano. After a short stay in Leipzig with Wundt and in Munich with Stumpf, Twardowski came back to Vienna and wrote undoubtedly his most important book „Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen, Eine psychologische Untersuchung“. For this work he obtains, in the summer of 1894, *veniam legendi* as a docent (lecturer) in philosophy at the university of Vienna. The following year he moves to Lwów, where he becomes professor of philosophy and so not only a certain period in his personal life but also the period of his personal work in the field of German philosophy is closed. At the same time his activity in Poland begins. Although the book published in Lwów in 1898 under the title „Wyobrażenia i pojęcia“ (Images and Concepts) belongs to the cycle of thought of his Viennese period and is — so far as the theory of concepts is concerned — a continuation of his work from 1894 nevertheless owing to the radically different atmosphere in which it was written it is in its methodology and writing technique of a quite different character and so must be considered as belonging to the second period of Twardowski's scientific activity.

In spite of Twardowski's migration to Lwów the real presence of his views in German philosophy continues far later than 1895 and can be seen in many works of German philosophers more or less up till the Great War and in some cases even later. Thanks to his close relations with a group of Brentanists which was numerous and coherent at that time, Professor Twardowski's German works were known to these philosophers and in a short time became known to wider circles of scholars, specially after Husserl in his widely read „Logische Untersuchungen“ on several occasions took the ideas of Twardowski into consideration. In this way Twardowski's investigations of that time became one of the links in the history of the so-called Austrian school and the different factions of Brentanists and to a certain extent of Husserl's phenomenology. These investigations caused a number of reactions and oppositions of the part of the opponents of the Brentanists, for example of the neo-Kantists. So the docent's thesis of Professor Twardowski must be reconsidered in more detail.

Usually it is considered in Poland that the chief merit of this thesis is the discrimination between the act, the content and the object of a representation, as it can be seen from the title of the work. Nevertheless closer investigation shows that it is not quite the case. The work contains three main problems: 1) the above mentioned distinction between the content and the object of a representation, 2) the outline of a general theory of the object and 3) the question of the so-called general representations and objects. Of these three questions the least new perhaps is just the opposition of the content to the object of representations; although as far as Brentano and the Brentanists of that time are concerned — perhaps Höfler excepted — this distinction, so simple and obvious for us to-day, was rather revolutionary and no doubt very important in consideration of the fact that Brentano constantly used to confuse these two things and these two ideas. At the same time it is true that Twardowski is in this respect under the influence of Kerry and Robert Zimmermann, who promoted the future author of „Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand“, whereas Kerry in the years 1885—1891 published a series of articles under the title „Über Anschauung und ihre psychische Verarbeitung“. They form really a large volume of 400 pages in which, as Twardowski himself writes: „hat Kerry diesen Unterschied für Vorstellungen von Zahlen, also für Vorstellungen, deren Gegenstände nicht real sind, nachgewiesen“. We may say that Twardowski only generalised and gave better reasons for the above distinction. Under the influence of Kerry, Twardowski got into touch with the „Wissenschaftslehre“ of B. Bolzano, who also influenced Twardowski's opinions. It would doubtless be possible to find besides some kindred distinction in scholastic philosophy although one must remember that in those times scholastic philosophy was neither as well known nor so much studied as it is to-day. (Pope Leon XIII's famous encyclic *Aeterni patris* was already published in 1880, but only in 1889 was there founded in Louvain the „Institut Supérieur de Philosophie“, the history of which is closely related to the rise of neo-thomistic philosophy and to the renaissance of research in mediaeval philosophy). So the importance of this part of the book under consideration lies not so much in the distinction itself as in certain statements expressed in connexion with it.

The first of these statements says that there are no representations without objects. Or positively: that to every representation there corresponds an object, regardless of whether this object — as Twardowski says — is existent or non-existent, or even contradictory and impossible, provided that it is represented. Only „nothing“ cannot be represented. According to the second statement there is a *necessary* relation between the representation and its object.

There is a certain duality in the concept of a represented object: first the object is existent and real, then it is unreal and even non-existent, but only „represented“. Thus it follows that this concept gives an impulse to further considerations carried out later by other scholars. This duality together with the statements mentioned above may consequently lead to two contrary opinions. Either: that one should distinguish, in certain cases, between a represented object (intentional object) which corresponds to every representation and objects, real or ideal, existing independently of representations. Or: that *all* objects are only represented (intentional) and that one should not make any distinction between them and objects existing autonomically in relation to the experience, nor should such objects be accepted. If at the same time we accept Twardowski's thesis of the *necessity* of the connexion between the representation and its object we are led in the end to a distinctly idealistic opinion. The first of the above ways was taken by the so-called realistic current of phenomenology and culminated in the metaphysical ideas of M. Scheler, while the second was taken by Husserl himself, the author of phenomenology, reaching in the end the so-called transcendental idealism. In this way Twardowski's above-mentioned statements, which he himself considered purely psychological, were to have in the history of a certain school of modern philosophy very far-reaching consequences, which were certainly unforeseen by the author himself.

Much more important than the distinction between the content and the object of a representation are Twardowski's considerations concerning — as we should say to-day — the formal structure of the object. They form a theory consequently worked out. As a result of a certain shifting of the ideas in the work under consideration, Twardowski passes from the concept of an object as an object of some *actual* representation to the much more general concept of an object as something that can be represented. Thus he obtains the most general concept of an object (in the sense of something at all)

and referring to the Aristotelian concept of existence (*τὸ ὄν*) gives the outline of a general theory of its structure, that is an outline of metaphysics; because according to Twardowski's opinion at that time, metaphysics was for Aristotle nothing else „als die Wissenschaft von den Gegenständen überhaupt“.

It is — so far as I know — from the times of scholasticism and then from the „Ontology“ of Christian Wolf the first, consistently worked-out theory of the object forming a certain theoretical whole. It is many years in advance both on the one hand of Husserl's „Lehre von den Ganzen und Teilen“ in his „Logische Untersuchungen“ and of the later formal-ontological investigations of Husserl's followers, and on the other hand of the so-called „Gegenstandstheorie“ of Meinong and his followers (Ameseder and Mally). What is more, this „metaphysical“ consideration of the structure of the objects *really* carried out by Twardowski at once in a manner closely related to the way in which Husserl achieved it in his aprioristic theory of the „wholes“ and the „parts“, and which was later postulated by Meinong, emphasizing that the theory of the object is „eine daseinsfreie Wissenschaft“. Twardowski is quite explicit that his statements — and specially those concerning the object — claim to be true regardless of whether our point of view concerning the existence of objects is realistic, idealistic or any other. For he considers objects regardless of whether they exist or not.

As, however, we are speaking about the problem of the method of investigation we must turn our attention to the fact that Twardowski while analysing experiences and their corresponding objects did not trouble either about their extraphenomenal external causes, or of their physiological conditioning. Consciously excluding these questions from the scope of his investigations, he occupies a neutral position concerning the metaphysical problem of the existence of the world and is at the same time persuaded that the results of his psychological analysis do not depend on answering these questions. When this special method of investigating experiences was later properly understood by other scholars and methodically worked out it finally took the definite form of phenomenology as the science of phenomena, which at the outset of its analysis performs the so-called „phenomenological reduction“, i. e. the taking up of a neutral attitude towards the natural conviction, accepted also by special sciences, of the real existence of a world which is

independent of conscious experience. I do not maintain of course that this happened just under the influence of Twardowski's investigations. For it is well known that Husserl realized the difference between descriptive psychology and transcendental phenomenology only many years after having written „Logische Untersuchungen“. However the direct influence of philosophers on philosophers is one thing and the immanent historical development of thought that has already begun its course is another. In this immanent development of thought the way in which Twardowski really made his „psychological“ investigations — a way in its general outline taken over from Brentano only with its role more consciously realized by Twardowski — is one of the evolutionary stages of descriptive-psychological investigations developing into the transcendental analysis of the essence of pure consciousness experience. There is not the slightest doubt that Twardowski in his later years fought against the transcendental method of analysis of consciousness and rather avoided metaphysical solutions than searched for ways of solving them. But this does not contradict my statement. For Twardowski in the later years of his life abandoned quite a number of thoughts, the germs of which were contained in his docent's thesis.

To return to the theory of the object presented by Twardowski attention must be drawn to one more point. This theory analyses the object as a whole composed of parts, which are of different kinds and orders and between which there exist manifold relations. These parts are called by Twardowski *material* components of the object, while the relations between them are called formal components. It can be maintained with great probability that in such a conception of the object there is concealed the empirical conception of the object as the composite idea of Locke. But the most striking thing is that Twardowski's concept of the object does not bear any marks of the influence of Ehrenfels' investigations of the so-called „Gestaltqualität“ which were published a few years earlier and must undoubtedly have been known by Twardowski. Instead — perhaps under the influence of Sigwart, quoted by Twardowski, and probably also under the influence of reading Aristotle — there appears in Twardowski's work a notion proving that regardless of his yielding to Locke's conception, Twardowski does not treat the object simply as a *collection* of simple elements of *equal rank*. That is the notion of the *essence* of the object. Twardowski understands by it „die Gesamt-

heit der Eigenschaftsrelationen, aus welchen sich vermöge kausaler Abhängigkeit alle anderen Eigenschaftsrelationen eines Gegenstandes ableiten lassen“. So the components of the object are not all of the same rank, but there appears among them a distinct *hierarchy* as to the relation between the essence of the object and the rest of its „components“. However this idea has not been exploited by Twardowski, though an echo of it can still many a time be heard: nevertheless the conception of the object as a certain kind of „composed idea“ predominates in his considerations. This conception causes Twardowski in his analysis to establish formal components of ever higher order, and leads to great complications; at the same time the components of any higher order are treated in the same manner as the components of the lowest. As appeared later, this feature of Twardowski's theory of the object leads to very serious difficulties and perhaps even to antinomies. This was pointed out by one of Twardowski's followers, St. Leśniewski, who consequently tried to build quite a different theory of the object using quite different methods. Also the „reism“ of Kotarbiński, who assumes the existence of things only and denies the existence of attributes at all, is one of the attempts to avoid the difficulties to which Twardowski's theory of the object lead. In any case the respective theory of Twardowski again gave an impulse to new investigations in this field.

The third important problem in „Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand“ is — as I have mentioned — the question of general representations and objects. Here again Twardowski's conceptions refer to Locke's notion of general ideas, and, moreover, he does not give any detailed theory of general objects and representations. The essential thing in this question is not the *content* of Twardowski's opinions, but the *fact* that Twardowski, starting from empirico-descriptive psychology, in general opposed the very strong anti-aprioristic currents of his time and came forward as a defender of the existence of general objects. Perhaps Twardowski's reading of Bolzano's „Wissenschaftslehre“ was here not without significance. Whatever it was, the publication of this thesis is one of the first signs that in the philosophical literature of this period there have begun to appear serious breaks in the extreme psychologistic and empiristic point of view and the foreshadowing of a tendency to admit again aprioristic knowledge (in a new meaning, different from that of Kant), side by side with empirical knowledge. In 1900 the situation

was to come to a turning point: Husserl's „Logische Untersuchungen“ was published which — following Frege — showed the impossibility of maintaining the psychologistic point of view and tried anew to lay the foundations of a theory of „general objects“ and of their knowledge. Twardowski — in spite of his defence of general objects — was still a psychologist and remained one — as he himself writes in his „Selbstdarstellung“¹⁾ — till 1902 when he became acquainted with „Logische Untersuchungen“.

Giving in this way an outline of Twardowski's philosophy against the background of the then developing epoch of investigation, I am not going to decide where a positive influence begins and where only real relationship or immanent development of thought. To be able to make this decision I should have to have at my disposal quite different historical material from that which we are able to obtain to-day. I am not forgetting either how far the later considerations of other scholars were in advance of what Twardowski said in his docent's thesis: I only want to point out that Twardowski never lagged behind either in his private nor in his scientific life; he belonged neither to the imitators nor to the repeaters; he was in many problems a pioneer and his pioneering work was not wasted even in the cases when later solutions proved his theories wrong.

Meanwhile in 1895 Twardowski came to Lwów and the conditions of the philosophical work which he found there made him entirely change the program both of the chief purpose of his life in the future and of the method and technique of writing his works. At that time philosophical life in Lwów was very barren, and philosophy was rather disregarded in scientific circles there. Twardowski arrived in Lwów full of faith in the scientific achievement of Brentano and the Brentanists and at the same time deeply convinced that in the form of descriptive psychology he had a perfect instrument for tackling philosophy scientifically. He had advanced far on that way and had already put many problems behind him. However as we learn from his „Selbstdarstellung“ the philosophy of Brentano and his followers was quite unknown in Lwów (*terra incognita* as he writes and crosses it out considering these words too strong). Furthermore the method of philosophizing of which Twardowski had become so fond in

¹⁾ A fragment of this „Selbstdarstellung“, written for the series „Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen“, edited by R. Schmidt, was found in the manuscript bequest of Twardowski.

Vienna was there unknown too. Questions considered long ago solved in Vienna, or at least discussed many times from many points of view, were in Lwów something quite alien and incomprehensible. Probably the importance of those detailed analyses was not duly appreciated either. So it was impossible to follow his own interests, which were rather far advanced in the given direction. It was necessary to go back and begin everything *ab ovo*, to make many things rather elementary in order to be able to start a conversation at all. In a word Twardowski had to choose either to continue the study of problems which interested him and to publish the results of his investigations abroad, living in an intellectual atmosphere quite alien and cut off from the other people with whom he had to collaborate, or to postpone his own investigations till later, or at least place them in the background and take up something else, which was namely to create a new philosophical atmosphere and to train new young philosophers with whom it would be possible to collaborate in the future. Twardowski chose the second alternative, to the great benefit of Polish philosophical culture. First of all he begins to *teach* philosophy and philosophizing, starting with the very simplest things. Thanks to this and to his great educational talent and organizing ability, there arose in Lwów after many years of hard work a new Polish centre of intensive philosophical research. The history of this milieu is well known to us all in Poland and the incomparable merits of Professor Twardowski in this field are duly appreciated. But the creation of this milieu was at the same time the reason why his purely scientific publications could — as he writes himself — arise only under the pressure of some outside circumstance. While his Viennese works were primarily the expression of his own interests and investigations, his later essays written in Lwów were designed to *teach* the young adepts of philosophy in Lwów not so much philosophy as *philosophizing* in what Professor Twardowski considered the only proper way. Thus he had to put aside all the questions which interested him greatly but which were still too difficult for the rising generation of philosophers. That is to be observed already in his book „Wyobrażenia i pojęcia“ (Images and Concepts) in which Twardowski, referring to his earlier investigations, is bound to simplify or simply to pass over many questions. In connexion with this fact his method of philosophizing itself underwent many changes. It acquired certain properties which, although they were

the result of *didactic* necessities, were later many times (though ~~wrongly~~) considered as an example of the *scientific* treatment of philosophy. I shall not examine this question here in detail, because I should have first to trace the method of philosophizing used in the book „Vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen“, which differs much from what may often be heard on the subject. But I should like to point out in a few words those ideas contained in Twardowski's works of the Lwów period which have a purely theoretical significance. In the first place we must mention here the theory of concepts in the book „Wyobrażenia i pojęcia“ (Images and Concepts) published later (1902) in a somewhat modified form in German under the title „Ueber begriffliche Vorstellungen“ and a second time in Polish in 1923 „O istocie pojęć“ (On the Nature of Concepts). There must be mentioned here the defence of the unrelativeness of the truth in the publication „O tzw. prawdach względnych“ (On so-called Relative Truths) in 1900 and last, the publication „O czynnościach i wytworach“ (On Actions and Products) in 1911, to which I must devote a few remarks.

The distinction to which this last publication, according to its title, is devoted, was made in a similar way a few years earlier by Stumpf in a publication entitled „Erscheinungen und psychische Funktionen“; the real importance of Twardowski's work does not lie however in the distinction itself, but in the purpose which it was to serve. As I have mentioned, Professor Twardowski before 1902 was a psychologist, specially in his logical ideas. Under the influence of Vol. I of Husserl's „Logische Untersuchungen“, he became aware that psychologism in logic could not be maintained. At the same time he could not agree, as it seems, with the positive part of Husserl's deductions (in the second volume of the above-mentioned work) according to which logical creations such as notions, judgments, or theories are a certain kind of ideal object. Knowing what they were not, he did not yet know what they were. And in the above-mentioned publication he tries to answer this question: they are the products of psychical or psychophysical actions and as such they are not something psychical but something dependent on these actions, born of them, and may be changed by them. In other words the essay „On Actions and Products“ is another attempt to defeat psychologism. One may agree with it or reject it, especially in certain details introduced by Twardowski. Nevertheless one must admit that

this attempt to pass between Scylla and Charybdis deserves great attention and scrupulous analysis.

One thing should still be mentioned: There came a time, when a current in philosophy, trying first of all to *describe* the phenomena given to us in some experience, began to decline, and at the same time there appeared at the head of the contemporary philosophical movement, also in Poland, a new force trying to impose on philosophy a method different from the descriptive, although often propagated already before — the mathematical method. Logical investigation more and more leaving the concrete and full of ever greater and more and more formalized abstractions gained many followers in Poland too and even among Twardowski's pupils. So Professor Twardowski, who in 1898 was the first in Poland to lecture on new experiments in reforming logic, perceived in this new current a danger to philosophy, the *understanding* of facts under consideration being its first aim. Thus he considered himself obliged to protest against this new current. He published in 1921 in „Ruch Filozoficzny“ (The Philosophical Movement) an article entitled „Symbolomania and Pragmatophobia“. The words of warning pronounced in it are as applicable to-day as they were then.

If now in conclusion, setting aside everything else which we might still talk over, we want to present a final view of the role played by Twardowski in the development of Polish philosophy, one thing must be placed before all others and that is the fact that Twardowski succeeded in developing in generations of Polish philosophers younger than himself, and also in the general consciousness of all educated circles, a lively and permanent conviction that *one might and should deal with philosophy in a way both morally and intellectually responsible. And that such philosophizing not only can have but also must have an important influence on human life.* Although he was later many a time disillusioned concerning what may be attained by philosophical investigations, although he would not probably uphold all the statements with which he first came to Lwów, although to-day the whole scientific and spiritual atmosphere has undergone a radical change, or perhaps just because of this change, to-day after 43 years he would probably — thoroughly convinced — pronounce the same words with which he ended his first lecture at Lwów University on 15th November 1895. Let me repeat these words to-day: „Philosophy is also a science, as well as

any other: its aim is to search for the truth and there is only one truth in every matter; no man has mastered all the truths, but in whatever respect it is presented to us, we shall willingly and gratefully accept it. Apart from the search for truth science has no ambition, and in searching for truth nobody would wish to discover himself the whole truth or to claim his discovery as his own merit. When all men dealing with philosophy will deeply feel its scientific message then they will not divide themselves into large or small groups but striving after a common aim by common means, they will follow the road that leads to the truth, the road of conscientious investigations accessible only to real arguments, not trying to raise themselves above others and not forgetting the words of Thomas à Kempis: »He who is conquered by the truth, will not be made proud even by all the world«.