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## Polish Ideas in Philosophy : (Polish Philosophy and Philosophy in Poland)

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## **Polish Ideas in Philosophy<sup>1</sup>** **(Polish Philosophy and Philosophy in Poland)**

Literature and philosophy are the loudest expression of what is important for the national culture

Literatura i filozofia są najgłośniejszym wyrazem tego, co jest istotne dla kultury narodowej

Andrzej Krawczak (1987)

Wszelkie tajniki myśli są słowu przystępne

Each single secret of the thought is approachable by means of words

August Cieszkowski (1869)

Żaden prawdziwy filozof nie był ani Lutrem, ani Maratem, ani Komunistą (pis. oryg.)

None of genuine philosophers was either a Luther, or a Marat or a Communist

Franciszek Krupiński (1863)

Various can be the criteria on the basis of which the philosophy practiced by a given nation is presented. Usually the attention is on autonomy, identity, or the internal cohesion of a given tradition. For people who do not know the intellectual culture of a given country presentation of distinguishing, characteristic features of its national philosophy seems to be the most important. The addressee of that profile is also important. It does not seem relevant, for example, to describe

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<sup>1</sup> Text prepared for the seminar „Polish Philosophers”, org. Institute of Philosophy, Jan Długosz University, 13 June, 2007, for ETABU – Texas, USA.

the main achievements of the speculative philosophy to the representatives of pragmatic culture. For the representative of the intellectual tradition of North America may also find connections with the American thought significant. In case of the relation between the American philosophy and the Polish philosophy the participation of Polish philosophers in the creation of the American philosophical culture is of great significance (Alfred Tarski – from 1939 in the USA, from 1946 the professor of Berkeley University of California, d. 1983, during World War I Florian Znaniecki lectured in Chicago, died in 1958 r.; Henry Hiż – abroad from 1944, professor of many American universities), or the wider Anglo-philosophical culture (Jan Łukasiewicz – from 1946 the professor of mathematical logic at the Royal Academy of Science in Dublin, d. 1956; Leszek Kołakowski – from 1970 professor of Oxford University, Zygmunt Bauman – until 1968 professor of Warsaw University, then professor of the University in Leeds). It should be reminded that the disaster of communism in Poland (and therefore its negative consequences for the Polish ideology and philosophy) took place with pronounced acceptance of the United States of America (F.D. Roosevelt – the post-Jalta arrangement and its consequences – the years: 1945–1989).

## 1. Preliminary remarks

### 1.1. Literature of the problem

The title distinction is the subject of two fields of reflection. According to Polish philosophical historians we can speak of the Polish philosophy just from the 19<sup>th</sup> c., however Poland has taken part in the European philosophical work since the 13<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>2</sup> More serious studies of the history of philosophy in Poland already appeared in 1863<sup>3</sup>, later in 1911<sup>4</sup>. The growing interest in Polish philosophy took place after the recovery of ideological and cultural independence in 1989. The interest was both in the history, its present ideas, and also in the possible connections with the world's philosophical literature.

Many serious literary studies relating to philosophy in Poland have been compiled. A more elaborate list of the most basic works (particularly earlier ones) is at the end of the text. It is presented mainly in the chronological order.

<sup>2</sup> A. Stöckl, J. Weingärtner, *Historia filozofii w zarysie* [*A Sketch on Polish Philosophy*], compiled by F. Kwiatkowski, Cracow 1930, s. 549 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition – revised, completed and expanded; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition – Cracow 1928, 1st edition – Cracow 1926). The book contains a supplement *Historia filozofii w Polsce* [*The History of Philosophy in Poland*], 73 pages.

<sup>3</sup> A. Schwegler, *Historia filozofii* [*The History of Philosophy*], Warsaw 1863, translated by F. Krupiński; (from the Pre-Socratesians until Hegel); contains a supplement: *Filozofia w Polsce* [*Philosophy in Poland*] of 100 pages (from Jan of Głogow until Wroński); the philosophy in Poland translated and compiled by Franciszek Krupiński.

<sup>4</sup> Compare: bibliographical supplement at the end of the article.

The number of taxonomical works is much smaller. There is a shortage of „great Polish” studies of the history of philosophy, reflecting the specificity of the Polish philosophical and philosophical and cultural reflection (special philosophical „Polish reason of state”). Because of the language barrier (and to some extent the problematic barrier as well) Polish philosophy is not duly valued in the world’s literature (maybe with the exception of logic)<sup>5</sup>. Polish participation in the European philosophical work is visible<sup>6</sup>. Though there are also many statements which confirm that „the accomplishments of Polish philosophy are huge”<sup>7</sup>.

## 1.2. Institutional determinants

The approximate condition of the philosophy in Poland can be presented by its institutional dimension. The first university in Poland – the University of Cracow was founded in 1364 (Vilnius University in 1579, Zamojska Academy in 1594, University of Lvov in 1661, Warsaw University in 1816). All these universities had philosophical departments. Presently 23 universities run regular philosophical studies, and in another 160 schools of higher education philosophy is taught as a supplementary subject. In Poland philosophy is taught by about 1500 academic teachers of philosophy (including almost 600 professors and doctors habilitated – independent scientific workers). About 30 academic philosophical periodicals and 30 editorial series are published. Approximately 100 original books on philosophy and twice as many translations come out every year. „Though we are not a power, we surely belong to the group of countries where philosophy is strong and practiced in an interesting way”<sup>8</sup>. According to other classifications Polish philosophers considerably undertake the issues of the world’s philosophical literature<sup>9</sup> and Polish philosophy is favored as the philo-

<sup>5</sup> E.g. computerized bibliography *The Philosopher’s Index*, compiled by „Philosopher’s Information Center” (The Dialog Corporation), Bowling Green, Ohio contains very little information about Polish philosophical literature.

<sup>6</sup> Compare: „We were not, we are not and we will probably never be a philosophical power. However, in the geographical zone from the Balkans to Scandinavia we have the longest non-interrupted tradition of sound philosophy”, Jan Woleński’s opinion in the *Introductory Word* in: M. Rembierz, K. Śleziński (ed.), „*Studia z Filozofii Polskiej*” [„*Studies in Polish Philosophy*”], vol. 1, Bielsko-Biała – Cracow, 2006, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> R. Wójcicki, *Filozofia polska 20. wieku (1897–1995)* [*Polish Philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.*], Internet website: [www.calculemus.org/forum/2/wojcicki.doc](http://www.calculemus.org/forum/2/wojcicki.doc) (Nov.2007).

<sup>8</sup> Estimates on the basis of: J. Jaśtał, S. Kołodziejczyk, J. Rabus (ed.), *Informator Filozofii Polskiej* [*Polish Philosophy Guide-Book*], Cracow 2004, pp. 7–8.

<sup>9</sup> The Polish philosophy guide-book distinguishes almost a hundred fields of interest (philosophical specialties?) of Polish philosophers together with a list of names of their representatives. Compare: J. Jaśtał, S. Kołodziejczyk, J. Rabus (ed.), *Informator filozofii polskiej* [*Polish Philosophy Guide-Book*], Cracow 2004, pp. 413–436.

sophy with a clear national character<sup>10</sup>. The main institution for professional philosophers in Poland is the Polish Philosophical Association (set up in 1904 r. in Lvov). It has 16 local offices in towns and cities with university traditions<sup>11</sup>. Congresses of Polish philosophers have been held since 1923. It's a great value of the Polish culture to be able to specify its rights within the philosophical convention, despite many limitations of historical nature (the period of annexations, World Wars, communist rape).

In Poland there is the possibility of philosophical education in high schools („philosophy” as an optional subject), ethics (interchangeable choice with religious studies) can be taught from the fourth grade of the elementary school. The possibility of taking philosophy as the final exam in high schools was introduced once in 2002. However, there are preparations for introducing philosophy as a high school final exam (in Poland called „the maturity exam”) since the 2008/2009 school year. An important element of propagating philosophy in high schools is the „Philosophical Contest” (it has already been held 18 times). Until World War II in high schools pupils were taught the subject called propedeutics, with strong domination of the course in logic).

### 1.3. Polish philosophical language

The first translations of philosophical texts (Aristotle) into Polish were done in 1535 by Andrzej Glaber from Kobylin. Sebastian Petrycy from Pilzno is considered to be the father of the Polish philosophical nomenclature (he translated some more of the Aristotle's works). Thanks to him the Polish philosophical nomenclature started to be created no later than the French or the Italian ones.

The proper basis of the Polish philosophical language started to be created quite late, in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. (Karol Libelt, August Cieszkowski). From the point of view of language brevity it was not beneficial for the development of the philosophical tradition. The need for the individuality of Polish philosophy was visible at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. (Feliks Jaroński *What Philosophy Do the Poles Need?*, 1810). In 1915 Jan Łukasiewicz said that the Polish nation is capable of producing the Polish national philosophy (as an analogy to German idealism,

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<sup>10</sup> *Philosophical specialties*, presented in w *International Directory of Philosophy and Philosophers*, Chicago (different dates) list almost two hundred specialties, with which the contemporary world philosophers identify themselves. The headword: *Polish Philosophy* is displayed there as one of a dozen or so national philosophies.

<sup>11</sup> Other institutions of philosophical life (in total about 30) include: Polish Aesthetic Society, Polish Phenomenological Society, Polish Society of Logic and the Philosophy of Science, Polish Semiotic Society, Polish Cognitivistic Society and those connected with the Catholic tradition: The Thomist Insitute, Thomas Aquinas Polish Society, John Paul II Institute and many other.

English pragmatism or Bergson's philosophy in France)<sup>12</sup>. In 1918 K. Twardowski pointed to the need of having a textbook of the history of philosophy written in Polish (voluntary distancing from translations from foreign languages). As one of his didactic postulates K. Twardowski pointed to special eclecticism: „so the young adept of philosophy knows how to draw the knowledge from philosophical works of all these nations” – and how to create one's own philosophy on its basis. The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>c. also poses valid questions about Polish philosophy.

Polish philosophy has been an element of culture, or the wider Latin civilization, from its beginnings. According to its tradition, in the predominant part it is separated from the religious reflection (just the opposite as e.g. in the countries of the Far East). From the perspective of analysis and transfer of ideas philosophy is treated as one of the forms of cultural self-awareness. In Poland the secular, rational way of practicing philosophy is predominant (with strong reference to the Greek ancient tradition). Philosophy is considered to be the kind of reflection of academic nature of a in which he treats each other her as the kind of the reflection about scientific character (one of the recognized academic disciplines). The title of professor of philosophy is one of the academic titles, authorized by the central state institution. However, the reflection of the philosophical and religious nature is also developing in Poland – mainly on the grounds of Catholic tradition, and defined as the classic philosophy (with strong reference to the Middle Ages). Ideological debates in philosophy as a science are of much smaller significance than in political activity or common-sense reflection.

#### 1.4. The criteria for separating of the Polish philosophy

Separating the specificity of the national philosophy can be conducted on the basis of various criteria. Proposals relating to the Polish philosophy include three concepts: the nationality is the internal continuity of its development (Henryk Struve), synthetic tendency (conscious assimilation of European ideas, strengthened by the spirit of Polish philosophy – Kazimierz Twardowski) and universal philosophy conditioned by the historical axiologic specificity of the nation (Jacek J. Jadacki)<sup>13</sup>. These criteria have been applied in this text. More precise analyses differentiate between „the history of the Polish philosophy” and „the history of the Polish national philosophy”<sup>14</sup>.

However, one should always be conscious of the fact that the criteria of separating the main trends in Polish philosophy are always artificial. The philosoph-

<sup>12</sup> According to: J. Woleński, *Szkola lwowsko-warszawska w polemikach* [*Polemics on the Warsaw-Lvov School*], Warsaw 1997, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Compilation by J. Wojtysiak: *Czy istnieje takie x, że x jest filozofią polską?* [*Does such x that x is Polish Philosophy exist?*], „Znak” [„Sign”], 2005, 600.

<sup>14</sup> W. Wąsik, *Historia filozofii polskiej* [*The History of Polish Philosophy*], vol. 1, Warsaw 1959, p. 14.

ical thought is much more complicated, than the possibility of its presentation in quite unambiguous classifications. Yet, for teaching aims some attempts to introduce basic outlines can be considered legitimate.

## **2. Main trends of the Polish philosophy**

The development of the Polish philosophy does not take place in some abstract space of ideas, but in culture and civilization conditions specific to a given nation. Scientist philosophy is relatively free from this kind of reference (there is one philosophy, in the same way as there is one mathematics – there is no „national mathematics”). However, cultural philosophy is strongly tied to these references. Therefore it is obvious that by nature it should appeal to its own experiences and its proper intellectual and spiritual property. Originality and social and cultural significance in the nation’s functioning have been considered to be a more detailed criteria for the distinction of the main philosophical trends.

The attempts to define the specificity of the Polish national philosophy refer to such trends as:

### **2.1. Socio-political philosophy**

The basic reason for this reflection is connected with the nation’s socio-political history. Historical events, connected with the geo-political position of Poland (a small country between powerful powers) forced more serious attention to the political and social philosophy. The tradition in this aspect is significant, it dates back to the Middle Ages (Mateusz from Cracow<sup>15</sup> – tutor of the first professors of Cracow, d. 1410; Stanisław from Skarbimierz – the first rector of the renewed university). In Poland the ideas of religious tolerance and the postulates on state reforms were accepted (Paweł Włodkowic, Jan Ostroróg, d. 1501; Stanisław Orzechowski, d. 1566; Łukasz Górnicki, d. 1566). The ideas of the renaissance found their outlet in political and social theories. Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski (d. 1572), who advocated the equality of all in the face of rights, the responsibility of the rulers towards the nation and the need to take care of the underprivileged. An example of putting the idea of tolerance into practice were the actions taken up by the Polish Brothers possessing their own Academy of Raków (religious freedom, condemnation of the evil and compulsion). Intensification of social and political problems (the need of the state’s consolidation and development) was in XVI and XVII centuries. (A. Frycz Modrzewski, S. Orzechowski, Sebastian Petrycy from Pilzno – democratic ideas, the need of joining philosophy with the nation’s life, d. 1627). Sometimes the attention is drawn to the social thought of the Baroque (Aleksander Fredro, d. 1876). The ideas of the

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<sup>15</sup> As the legatus a latere he was the co-founder of the oldest university in Germany, in Heidelberg.

enlightenment were propagated by Stanisław Leszczyński, the only „philosopher on the throne” (he engaged himself in the discussion with J.J. Rousseau) and by Stanisław Konarski. The enlightenment brought political and social thought related to further needs of the country – the reform of education, the popularization of science (Hugo Kołłątaj, Maurycy Mochnacki, Stanisław Staszic, Jan Śniadecki). Mature political and social thought was expressed by passing the Polish Constitution on 3 May 1791 (the second fundamental statute in the world – after the constitution of the United States).

From the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. a stronger influence of the historical situation of Poland on the social and political thought follows. The loss of independence by Poland was the main reason for the rise of the history-philosophy thought and the Polish national philosophy connected with it (Edward Dembowski, Bronisław Trentowski<sup>16</sup>). Patriotic ideas were important there – particularly exposed in more difficult historical conditions (the period of annexations, and later: World Wars, and the opposition against the communist rape). The Poles were familiar with getting engaged in other nation’s patriotic ideas – according to the motto: „for your and our freedom” (Tadeusz Kościuszko – the participant of the war for the independence of the United States, Kazimierz Pułaski – recognized as the national hero of the United States).

The democratic thought was being developed in Poland (Joachim Lelewel – the idea of power of the Slavic communities). Stimulation of the metaphysical thought took place (Józef Gołuchowski, Karol Libelt). The great historiosophic syntheses were presented by: H. Kamiński and August Cieszkowski. Polish Messianism interlaced with romanticism developed (Józef Hoene Wroński, Adam Mickiewicz, Andrzej Towiański, Józef Kremer). As its main distinctive features the historians of philosophy consider basing metaphysics on the notion of the soul and the notion of the and setting it the reformatory and soterological tasks. The Polish messianism (the motive of spiritual deliverance) is considered as an attempt to compensate for the defeats in the political sphere<sup>17</sup>. The idea of Messianism was propagated by Wincenty Lutosławski until gaining independence. The historical events that followed (the defeat of the January Uprising) led to the weakening of the historic and philosophical thought and redirecting the attention onto the positivist attitude. Unlike romanticism, Polish positivism was set on practical aims (reluctance towards idealism in politics, economic improvement, scientism, the development of education and sciences: Aleksander

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<sup>16</sup> Compare: „Works by Trentowski, Libelt, Cieszkowski were treated as most successful theoretical achievements of Polish Philosophy in 19<sup>th</sup> c.”, in: R. Palacz, *Klasyki filozofii...* [*The Classics of Philosophy*], p. 322.

<sup>17</sup> Compare: „The factor of liberation, «Messianism» was to be the same philosophy which would reveal the truth to humans (that is what Wroński thought), or the Polish nation who will lead humans to the truth (as Mickiewicz thought)”, in: W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia filozofii* [*The History of Philosophy*], vol. 3, Warsaw 1988, p. 171.



Świętochowski, Julian Ochorowicz, Adam Mahrburg, Adolf Dygasiński). This distinguishing feature of the Polish positivism cost the loss of interest theoretical aspects. In historically unfavorable times for Poland (the breakthrough of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c.) the historic and philosophical thought was being developed (Cracow: Stefan Pawlicki, Maurycy Straszewski, Marian Morawski, Aleksander Raciborski, Wojciech Dzieduszycki, Warsaw: Henryk Struve).

A social thought with the socialist or even Marxist inclination and the opposition towards it appeared (E. Abramowski, S. Brzozowski, E. Kelles-Krauz, L. Krzywicki). The turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c. is the rebirth of the historic and philosophical, and romantic tendencies. The influence of the philosophy of life (Nietzsche, Bergson) appeared in the modernist writers' works (S. Przybyszewski, W. Berent, T. Miciński). After the recovery of independence in 1918 K. Twardowski's students seized the most important cathedrals of philosophy at universities (the main job: analytic orientation, investigation into the bases of logic). The second serious trend of the Polish philosophy in the interwar period developed in the direction of the philosophy of culture (F. Znaniecki, M. Zdziechowski, F. Koneczny, L. Chwistek). Reference to current social thought was made by: T. Kroński (the analysis of fascism) and B. Suchodolski (the perspectives of the civilization changes). The ideas laced-up with the development of sociology were presented (Bolesław Limanowski – the idea of the connection between socialism and the programme of the reconstruction of the independent Poland), Marxism (from Róża Luksemburg to Adam Schaff). The continuation of the social thought can also be noticed in the present political reflection, contributing to the overthrow of communism in 1989 (the fall of this system was started in Poland, not by accident, by Jerzy Giedroyc, Leszek Kołakowski, Czesław Miłosz, Witold Gombrowicz). After World War II the philosophical social thought underwent various phases, conditioned by political events (special liveliness in the periods 1956–1968, 1975–1981, after 1989). The Warsaw school of historians of the idea was established (L. Kołakowski, B. Baczeko, A. Walicki, J. Szacki, K. Pomian, B. Skarga). A more serious reception of the main European philosophical ideas was observed. Presently one should speak of the adaptation of Poland to the cultural idea of united Europe.

Despite many historical limitations of the basic character – the right for the nation's existence – Poland was successful in defending its national identity, securing its culture (including the socio-political thought) and developing the philosophy connected with it. Thanks to those limitations it is possible to oppose the theses such as „There is no Polish philosophy, there is no philosophy in Poland”<sup>18</sup>. The author of this study noticed that the only thing to be traced in the Polish philosophical literature is the influence of the Western-European thought.

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<sup>18</sup> E.L. Radłow, *Filosofskij słowar logiki, psychologii, etiki, estetyki i istorii filosofii*, S. Peterburg 1904, p. 204.

## 2.2. Polish humanism

The idea of humanism belongs to Poland's main philosophical ideas. A more serious attention to the human philosophy or anthropology is connected both with the socio-political thought pertaining to (especially with its moral contexts), and religious references which are of great importance in Poland (the matter of spirituality).

The beginnings of this reflection can be connected with the humanistic ideas of late Middle Ages (Jan Długosz, d. 1480; Kallimach, d. 1496). Grzegorz Sanok (d. 1477) is the first representative of the renaissance thought in Poland (the critic of Aristotle and scholasticism). There was marked university renaissance humanism in the country (Adam from Bochynia, Jerzy Liban, Wojciech Nowopolczyk). One can connect the concept of Polish stoicism with humanism (Jakub Górski, d. 1583; Adam Burski, d. 1611). The humanism which was not later accepted at universities found a more serious representation in the social and political philosophy.

The fundamental element of Polish humanism is the meaning of the moral thought. In Wincenty Kadłubek's historical treaties the reflection of a moralist character can be observed. The function of a theologian and moralist was performed by Mateusz from Cracow. In the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> c. the Polish moral thought, to a great extent, was connected with socio-political problems. The Board of National Education introduced a new school subject called: the „moral science”, based only on the natural law (currently ethics has been taught in Polish schools as a subject interchangeable with religious studies from grade four of an elementary school). Didactic questions alternated with scientific matters. Many Polish philosophers of the present day have dealt with the history of ethics (S. Jedynak, A. Krokiewicz, I. Lazari-Pawłowska, H. Elzenberg). Mature moral reflection was represented by the representatives of the Warsaw-Lvov school (K. Twardowski, T. Czeżowski, W. Tatarkiewicz, T. Kotarbinski, M. Ossowska). The feature characteristic of the Polish philosophy of humanism is a strong reference to the axiological reflection (sometimes of various character): J. Tischner, K. Wojtyła, K. Szaniawski, I. Lazari-Pawłowska, Jan Józef Lipski, Bohdan Cywiński (the author of , among others, the work *Poisoned humanities*).

One of the characteristic features of Polish humanism is the development of pedagogical thought. Already in the 16<sup>th</sup> c. Poland was listed as an important centre of the Renaissance humanistic culture. Humanistic junior high schools founded in the period of reformation played an important role in the development of science and culture. In the 17<sup>th</sup> c. a famous Czech educator K.A. Komensky was the rector of the school in Leszno. The reform of education, conducted in the enlightenment at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. by the Board of National Education (the first secular educational power in the middle of Europe) was of great importance. The Board worked out the first school code in Europe (including all the issues connected with the functioning of the school system) and the

concept of teaching in Polish on all educational levels. One consequence of the Board's actions taken up in the academic environment was resignation from Aristotle philosophy for the benefit of rationalism and turning towards mathematic and natural sciences. In Poznan in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. there worked a prominent educator E. Estkowski, and at the decline of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. J.W. Dawid. The representatives of historical sciences undertook the question of the history of education (A. Karowiak, A. Danysz), or the culture of the Renaissance humanism (W. Zakrzewski, Kazimierz Morawski – defined also as the „expert on Polish humanism”, S. Windakiewicz).

The alternative to the logic-oriented Warsaw-Lvov School was created by the Polish representatives of the philosophy of culture. Their proposals included historic and philosophical accents as well as those related to civilization threats (M. Zdziechowski, S.I. Witkiewicz, L. Chwistek, F. Koneczny). The connections with the history of art were also visible (W. Łuszczkiewicz, M. Sokółowski; later W. Tatarkiewicz – the history of aesthetics). Florian Znaniński and Feliks Młynarski represented the opposition of humanistic sciences against the natural science. In some studies one can notice that the attack on humanism came from the positivism and Marxism<sup>19</sup>, sometimes treated as the prolongation of the enlightening thought.

However „in our tradition humanism is connected with the characteristic Polish individualism, with respect of the individual and being fond of freedom, both on the individual and collective scale”. Poles often presented strong patriotism. Many keep the memory of Samosierra, the Eagles of Lvov, the Warsaw Uprising, they remember the experience of totalitarianisms (fascism, Stalinism – Katyn). This attitude may not be so noticeable in everyday existence, but in the moments important for the nation's existence it appears with total expressiveness (e.g.: John Paul II, L. Walesa). The Poles cannot be denied their philosophical engagement either. It was present in the messianists work, in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Catholic philosophy was „more fervent, than deepened and creative”, Stanisław Brzozowski presented his ideas „more ardently, than closely”.

### **2.3. Philosophy of nature – the philosophy of natural sciences (empirical natural science)**

Reflection relating to the philosophy of nature belongs to the oldest ones in Poland. Already Witelon (approx. 1225 – approx. 1280), though well-known mainly for his the work devoted the optics (*De perspectiva*), he also wrote work the work on cosmology and about the philosophy of nature (two last two listed

<sup>19</sup> A. Krawczak, *Rzecz o windykacji humanizmu w polskiej filozofii okresu „Solidarności”* [On the Vindication of Humanism in Polish Philosophy in the Period of „Solidarity”], [in:] W. Strzałkowski (ed.), *Filozofia polska na obczyźnie [Polish Philosophy Abroad]*, London 1987, p. 25.

above were not preserved until the present times). Witelon, recognized as the first Polish philosopher, is connected with the idea Neo-Platonism, exceptional in the 13<sup>th</sup> c. dominated by Aristotle's ideas. Although his the system was not „fundamentally original”, it is compared with the systems of such thinkers as Robert Grosseteste, or Roger Bacon. He can be treated as the „climax of the Silesian environment in the Middle Ages”, in a similar way to Copernicus who is the peak point of the Renaissance culture of Cracow<sup>20</sup>. In Cracow in the 15<sup>th</sup> c. there functioned two cathedrals of natural sciences. Copernicus appeared in the good centre of the philosophy of nature at the University of Cracow (Martin Król from Przemyśl, d. 1459; Marcin Bylica from Olkusz, d. 1495). This university became an international centre of astronomical studies. Copernicus's philosophical investigations contributed to the discovery of the heliocentric theory (the theories of the ancient people about the rotation of Earth). In the 17<sup>th</sup> c. in Leszno there was Jan Jonston, the follower of Bacon and experimental knowledge. It is sometimes said that in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. (dominated by speculative scholasticism) they tried to compensate for philosophy with mathematical and physical sciences (Jan Brożek – the mathematician; Walerian Magni – the enemy of Aristotle's physics; Wawrzyniec Susliga – Kepler's friend; Jan Heweliusz – the astronomer).

The return to a good scientific tradition, connected with natural sciences, took place not earlier than in the period of Enlightenment (K. Kluk, P. Czenpiński). In spite of the tradition of higher schools (dead scholastics strengthened by the counter-reformation, resistance by the professors from Cracow made the employment Christian Wolff impossible) the interest in natural sciences was being awakened (Galileo's, Newton's, Locke's ideas). Through Condillac (Sensualism) Polish Enlightenment reached Locke. Even in the period of annexations in Warsaw (S. Staszic), in Vilnius (Jan and Jędrzej Śniadecki) and in Cracow (L. Zejzner) the reflection of this domain was developed. After the November Uprising (1830) and many events of the Spring of the Nations (1848) many scholars emigrated abroad (P. Strzelecki studied the natural goods of Australia, I. Domeyko went to Chile, E. Malinowski to Peru). Prominent natural scientists lectured in Warsaw in the period of positivism: F. Szokalski, J. Natanson and B. Dybowski. In the period between the uprisings the following natural scientists were active in Cracow: F. Trojan and W. München. Another wave of emigration among Polish scholars took place after the uprising in January. Many Poles chaired cathedrals at foreign universities (M. Skłodowska-Curie in Paris – it got the Nobel Prize twice, in physics and chemistry). It was before the outburst of World War I that Polish explorers joined in the blood circulation of the natu-

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<sup>20</sup> W. Wąsik, *Historia filozofii polskiej [The History of Polish Philosophy]*, vol. 1, Warsaw 1959, p. 32.

ral sciences of Europe and with different intensification this attitude survived until the present times.

Tradition related to the philosophy of nature (or better contemporarily: the philosophy of natural sciences) can be connected with the reflection devoted to the philosophy of science. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Józefa Krzyżanowska-Kodisowa was active in Warsaw. It was one of the first women in Poland and in the world to practice philosophy scientifically. M. Massonius, A. Mahrburg, W.M. Kozłowski and W. Biegański dealt with the theory of scientific knowledge. In Cracow Władysław Heinrich was developing the philosophy of radical empiricism. More contemporary philosophers of science include Thomas Kuhn – Ludwik Fleck. In the 70-ties they founded the Poznan methodological school (J. Kmita, L. Nowak). The most recent times already bring about such philosophers of the science as Stefan Amsterdamski, Władysław Krajewski, Zdzisław Augustynek or Michał Tempczyk.

#### **2.4. Philosophy connected with religion (metaphysics, the philosophy of religion)**

Poland's entry into the circle of western culture is connected with the acceptance of Christianity (the baptism accepted by Mieszko I from the Czechs in 966 r.). The development of Christianity caused widespread knowledge of writing, indispensable for practicing the cult. According to historians, we can already speak about religious education from the second half of XI century. Higher clergymen took part in the creation and the professorship of the Academy of Cracow (Paweł Włodkowic – the postulates of the Church reform). Catholicism became predominant religion in Poland – Catholics of the Latin rule made up in various historical periods from 65% (1931) to even 90% (1952) of the total population. The acceptance of Catholicism by Poland had momentous cultural consequences. Within the scope of reflection discussed here it meant tying philosophical thought with the Christian cultural formation (e.g. joining religion and morality, rationality and freedom<sup>21</sup>). The first fragmentary translations of *the Bible* into Polish were already done in the 13<sup>th</sup> c., its first complete translation into the Polish language was done in 1561 in Cracow.

Philosophical transformations related to the religious experience have had a long tradition and are similar to the analogous process, happening in the history of Europe. From the historical perspective in Poland scholasticism lasted the longest: the Middle Ages: *via antiqua* and *via moderna* (with the domination of nominalism), Scotism (Michał Twaróg from Bystrzykovo, d. 1520), later the Renaissance scholasticism, further the school philosophy of Baroque until the decadent scholasticism of the Enlightenment, neo-scholastics and modern Neo-

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<sup>21</sup> Compare: M.A. Krapiec, *Człowiek w kulturze [A Human Being within Culture]*, Rome – Warsaw 1990, p. 260.

Thomism. The main figures of the scholasticism from the period of the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> c. from the „former route” include Jan from Głogow and Jakub from Gostynin, and from the „new route”: Mateusz from Cracow, Stanisław from Skarbimierz, Piotr from Sienno. Paweł from Wrocław. The continuation of scholasticism in the 16<sup>th</sup> c. was represented by Andrzej Glaber from Kobylin. Scholastics of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. (in the form of school philosophy) had numerous representatives: Adam Burski, Marcin Śmiglecki, Tomasz Młodzianowski, Samuel Wierchoński. The original socio-religious doctrine was created by the representatives of the Arian church (S. Przytkowski, A. Wiszowaty), and even a special reformative philosophy of the religion (Faust Socyn). In the 17<sup>th</sup> c. as the result of conservatism of the scientific environment connected with the universities in Cracow and Vilnius, accepting the decadent scholasticism (the rejection of the idea of modern philosophy), there comes the weakening of the Polish culture, and philosophy as well. In Poland the attitude of suspiciousness towards the changing ideas of modern Europe was very strong. Decadent figures in traditional scholasticism of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. included: Andrzej Rudzki and Jerzy Gengell. Jesuit colleges criticized Descartes as well as the followers of empirical philosophy (Galileo, Newton, Bacon). The Catholic criticism of the Enlightenment was presented in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. (Karol Surowiecki). The characteristic of the Catholic philosophy of this early period is great changeability of positions – from the acceptance of dissenters to strong Counter-Reformation.

Sometimes, in the critical opinions of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. it is stated that the orthodox Catholic philosophy was a foggy mixture of spiritualism and mysticism. From time to time it is noticed that in that period „the Catholic philosophy was more fervent than original”<sup>22</sup> – the division between the opinions of the messianists and Catholic philosophers was becoming blurred. Catholic criticism of positivism was to be observed (Stefan Pawlicki, Marian Morawski, Maurycy Straszewski). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. strong neo-scholastics functioned in Poland (Franciszek Gabryl, Witold Rubczyński – ideal realism). In the interwar period the Catholic thought opened to the problems of modern civilization (Władysław Korniłowicz – J. Maritain’s personalism, Zofia Landy). Neo-Thomism (Jacek Woroniecki) flourished as well. Józef M. Bocheński and Jan Salamucha worked under the influence of logistics. The Catholic thought directed towards the philosophy of culture was represented by Konstanty Michalski and Andrzej Krzesiński.

Modern Neo-Thomism (Kazimierz Kłósak, Zofia Zdybicka, Mieczysław Gogacz) and the Catholic moral thought (Karol Wojtyła) start to develop after World War II. Reflection inspired by phenomenology (Józef Tischner,

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<sup>22</sup> W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia filozofii [The History of Philosophy]*, vol. 3, Warsaw 1988, p. 170 (chapter: „Philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. in Poland”).

K. Wojtyła) is widespread. Further receptiveness towards personalism and the philosophy of dialogue appears. The formation of the „original Polish school of Thomism” (Stefan Swieżawski, Mieczysław Krąpiec, Stanisław Kamiński) seems to be the most important for this period. The Catholic philosophy of nature (M. Heller, J. Życiński) must also be mentioned. Akin to other philosophical trends in Poland, the Catholic philosophy experienced special revitalization after 1989.

## 2.5. Formal logic

Poland has considerable logical traditions. Accentuation of the meaning of logical reflection in the interpretation of philosophical problems is one of the outstanding distinctive features of Polish philosophy. Formal logic (beside Messianism) is recognized as one of the main achievements of Polish philosophy<sup>23</sup>. School philosophy predominant in Poland in the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> c. emphasized the meaning of logical education. In the 17<sup>th</sup> c., dominated by scholasticism, there appeared the work titled *Logic* (1618) by Marcin Śmiglecki, which was known all over Europe. Logic belonged to universally taught philosophical subjects. Until World War II it was taught within the frames of propedeutics of the philosophy at high schools.

The investigation of the bases of logic became the task of the Polish Warsaw-Lvov school. In 1895 Kazimierz Twardowski, the founder of this school, started his activity in Lvov, and his followers went far beyond the strict philosophical orientation. The main contributions in logic, developed by the Poles are essential. Jan Łukasiewicz created a separate logical notation, later defined as Polish (including the parenthesis-free notation: Kpq, KApqr, ApKqr)<sup>24</sup>. Łukasiewicz is also said to be responsible for the investigation into the theory of sentences, the methodology of axiomatic systems, and major works on the systems of multivalent logic. Alfred Tarski worked in meta-logic and meta-mathematics. He introduced the semantic definition of truth, including the famous theorem of his name (the definition of truth requires the resources coming from a richer meta-language – Tarski’s theorem). Stanisław Leśniewski and Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz carried out investigations into the axiomatic systems and the logical analysis of the scientific language. The representatives of the Warsaw-Lvov school in the interwar period dominated the Polish philosophical scene; many of them went far beyond the strict logical reflection (Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Tadeusz

<sup>23</sup> Compare: „The Problem of the Nation and Formal Logic – the Two Characteristic Features of Polish Philosophy”, in: headword: „Polish Philosophy” (compiled by J. Woleński), [in:] T. Honderich (ed.), *Encyklopedia filozofii* [*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*], translated by J. Łoziński, Poznań 1998, vol. 1, p. 705.

<sup>24</sup> J. Łukasiewicz, *Elementy logiki matematycznej* [*The Elements of Mathematical Logic*], Warsaw 1929.

Czeżowski, Zygmunt Zawirski, Daniel Gromska, Izydora Dąmbska, Seweryna Łuszczewska-Rohmanowa).

The representatives of the Warsaw-Lvov school (Roman Suszko, Klemens Szaniawski, Andrzej Grzegorzczak, Jerzy Pelc, Marian Przełęcki, Jan Woleński) represented a strong, clearly distinguished philosophical trend which was, alongside the Catholic philosophy, in firm opposition to the institutionally binding version of official Marxism (until 1989).

### **3. Philosophy in Poland. Tradition adapting the ideas of the European philosophical culture onto the Polish ground**

The European commune of welfare in itself is not anything bad. It makes it possible to reach the essential contents of a given formation and express it in various cultural conventions. Communication, adaptation, the cultural processing of European welfare by individual nations is a natural phenomenon. What is essential, however, is how their national variation is shaped, and what the specificity of the form and type of practicing philosophy is about. Important are those similarities and differences in the ways of practicing philosophy by individual nations which might have a particular influence on the special strengthening of the values of a given trend, caused by a stimulating ideological situation of a given nation. As far as Poland is concerned, one can also claim the existence of the characteristic core of national philosophy. After 1989 it was made up by: analytic philosophy (with logic being its strong component), phenomenology and Catholic philosophy (Neo-Thomism)<sup>25</sup>. Although the arguments have been common, it seems sensible to supplement of those trends with Polish „post-” philosophy (mainly the post-modernist), the philosophy of science, the trend of the historians of idea and, in a somewhat modest form, other traditions referring to the modern philosophy<sup>26</sup>, including e.g. bioethics, philosophy of the process, and artificial intelligence.

The tradition adapting the ideas of the European philosophical culture onto the Polish ground is probably the strongest way of practicing philosophy in Poland. It is widely stated that the history of philosophy in Poland reflects the general development of philosophy in Europe, and is dominated by the periods in which the Polish philosophy copied the patterns of more strongly developed

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<sup>25</sup> Compare headword: „Polish Philosophy” (compiled by J. Woleński), [in:] T. Honderich (ed.), *Encyklopedia filozofii* [*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*], translated by J. Łoziński, Poznań 1998, vol. 1, p. 706.

<sup>26</sup> Within the frames of VII Polish Philosophical Convention (Szczecin, 14–18 Sept. 2004) 20 thematic sections were created (among others: Philosophy of the Brain, Philosophy of the Language, Feminist Philosophy).



philosophical cultures<sup>27</sup>. The chronology of Polish reception and adaptation of the European philosophical thought is rich. Even listing only its main trends and representatives causes many difficulties.

The strongest cultural adaptive tradition relates to Aristotelism and Thomism, presented in Poland within the scope of scholasticism. It was developing since the beginning of the University of Cracow until the neo-scholastics at the beginning the 20<sup>th</sup> c. and modern Neo-Thomism. All its European historical forms were presented in Poland. Scholasticism had a remarkably long period of functioning – it prevailed at universities as long as the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> c. At that time it was a dominating period of the so-called school philosophy (strong Aristotelism), supporting the intellectual ossification of the philosophical environment. It was not until the reforms carried by the National Committee of Education that the institutional bases for practicing that kind of speculative philosophy were dropped. This cultural retardation of Poland was costly: even in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. the philosophy in Poland in relation to the European philosophy was complete, but it was not independent.

The representatives of the Polish Renaissance include Adam from Bochyn and Jerzy Liban (the influence of the Italian philosophy). In the 17<sup>th</sup> c. Condillac's sensualism (French philosophy) was accepted in the form of a textbook (a logic textbook accepted by the National Education Committee). The ideas of the Enlightenment (big differentiation of the national variants: the French, the Scottish, the English, and the German ones) were represented in the strongest way by: Jan Śniadecki, S. Staszic, H. Kołłątaj who introduced the moral empiristic attitude. The Polish adaptation of the Scottish *philosophy of the common sense* was represented by Jędrzej Śniadecki, Angel Dowgird and Józef Emanuel Jankowski.

In Poland the influences of the German tradition were always strong. The Polish not very strong and rather minimalist Kantism was represented by: Jędrzej Śniadecki, Józef Szaniawski, Felix Jaroński, Józef Hoene-Wroński until Adam Mahrburg's Neo-Kantism. Józef Kremer and Karol Libelt, Henry Kamieński, August Cieszkowski, Bronisław Trentowski and Edward Dębowski represented Polish Hegelianism – it was characterized by its socio-political orientation (Henry Kamieński). Polish Schellagianism (Józef Gołuchowski) was also noticeable. J. Hoene-Wroński was the representative of Polish speculative philosophy (the beginnings of romanticism, idealistic messianistic „philosophy of the absolute”).

The return to the French tradition was marked in the socially-oriented Polish positivism (Julian Ochorowicz, Adam Mahrburg, Aleksander Świętochowski, Edward Abramowski, Franciszek Krupiński, Marian Massonius). However there was opposition against it – Polish anti-positivism (Henry Struve). Polish

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<sup>27</sup> Compare: [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filozofia\\_polska](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filozofia_polska) (Polish Philosophy), Nov. 2006.

empiriocriticism had its defender – Władysław Heinrich, half-metaphysicians were presented by Mścisław Wartenberg. Sometimes Polish existentialism includes the thought of Henryk Elzenberg, it has been continued even in modern times (Maria Gołaszewska, Józef Piórczyński). Polish phenomenology includes Roman Ingarden and Władysław Stróżewski. The Polish analytic philosophy is most strongly represented by the tradition of the Warsaw-Lvov school. Polish Catholic philosophy (Neo-Thomism) has already been mentioned. Aesthetics also belong to the valuable domains of the Polish reflection (R. Ingarden, W. Tarkiewicz)<sup>28</sup>. Nowadays Polish hermeneutics (Andrzej Bronk, Barbra Tuchańska), Polish post-modernism (Andrzej Szahaj, Zygmunt Bauman), cognitive science (Robert Piłat, Jerzy Perzanowski) and pragmatism (Piotr Gutowski, Marek Hetmański) are being developed.

## Conclusion

The strongest participation of Polish philosophy in the European philosophical work is connected with the philosophy of nature (Copernicus), logic (Alfred Tarski, Warsaw-Lvov school), phenomenology (R. Ingarden) and the Catholic philosophy (Neo-Thomism). The Poles created a specific Polish national philosophy (Polish Messianism), enabling them to survive in more difficult historical conditions. Philosophy in practiced in Poland, and the existence of the specific Polish philosophy can be confirmed to a high degree. According to historians of philosophy the primacy in this field from the perspective of all existing history is claimed by Messianism and the analytic philosophy (Warsaw-Lvov school)<sup>29</sup>. Distinctive features of Polish philosophy include a wide specter of reflection, specific pluralism, both the workshop pluralism and the one that deals with investigative issues. Sometimes the extremities can be really striking – as historically strongest formations: from the analytic philosophy (with a strong logical component) up to the Messianism and the philosophy of spirituality (the tradition of Catholicism). This feature can indicate a certain lack of stability – the significance of culture is therefore in a strong centre, and not in extremities.

In general studies of the history of philosophy in Poland one can notice the superiority of the practical reflection over the theoretical one (of the social and cultural thought over the speculative and metaphysical one, of ethical and psy-

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<sup>28</sup> J. Wojtysiak, *Czy istnieje takie x, że x jest filozofią polską?* [*Does such x that x is Polish Philosophy exist?*], „Znak” (Sign), 2005, 600.

<sup>29</sup> Compare: „Jan Woleński called the process of formation of the Warsaw-Lvov School «creation of something almost out of nothing», which suggests that this theoretical trend is only of Polish origin and successfully competes with the philosophy of Polish Messianism to be called «national philosophy, although perceived differently»”, in: W. Mackiewicz (ed.), *Polska filozofia powojenna* [*Polish Post-War Philosophy*], Warsaw 2001, vol. 1, p. 41.

chological questions over the ontologic or epistemological ones). The history of philosophy in Poland is mainly the oscillation between the influential ideas of the West and its political and cultural historical determinants. The problem of Polish philosophy is hermeticism, which is presently caused by the negative influence of the mass culture. Then there is this susceptibility to traditionalism – when the Poles happen to accept some idea, it takes a long time (scholasticism, psychologism). Sometimes there is clear opposition against new cultural ideas (at present: post-modernism). Accepting ideas of the European philosophy was often done with considerable delay (in particular the modern philosophy and the 19<sup>th</sup> c.). Further – there is a lack of great, independent philosophical projects. Addressing the cultural, practical philosophy: the philosophy of politics, economy, and professional ethics can be one of the conditions of cultural strengthening of the Polish philosophy.

The Poles have a clear predisposition towards the creation of the Polish national philosophy. However, they still lack this special „cultural power” to clearly specify it. Is the Polish philosophy an expression of the Polish national culture? It looks as if the conscious pursuit of philosophical presentation of the main achievements of the Polish intellectual and spiritual culture were not properly developed in the Polish professional philosophical environment. It rather seems that the contemporary idea of a united Europe does not favor this kind search and interpretation.

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## Summary

The article presents the approximate condition of the philosophy in Poland. The main discussed problems are: main trends of the Polish philosophy, tradition adapting the ideas of the European philosophical culture onto the Polish ground and the rise of the philosophy in Poland.