

Extra-Scientific Activity of Kazimierz Twardowski*

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Today marks 21 years since the death of Kazimierz Twardowski. These years were fraught with events that, through the most dreadful wartime upheavals, led to a complete change in the state of affairs that prevailed in our country during Twardowski's lifetime. These changes have had a particularly severe impact on the narrower and broader environment in which he worked and operated. This course of historical events has forced us, Twardowski's students, to pay tribute to his merits on the 21st anniversary of his death in a place different from where tradition preserves the memory of his deeds – those that did not perpetuate themselves in works lasting longer than a human lifespan.

In the lectures delivered here, Twardowski was primarily presented as a scholar. However, Twardowski was not just a scholar, nor was that his primary role. He was a man of immense knowledge, equipped with a splendid tool for scientific work, but he was not a prolific scientific creator with a rich legacy that dazzled with grand ideas and paved the way for further achievements. Therefore, it is difficult to speak of Twardowski as the founder of a specific philosophical school with distinctive theses. Thus, Twardowski's greatness lies not so much in his own scientific achievements. It lies rather in other areas of his activity, which were well known to his students, his colleagues, the professors of Lvov University, and also to the broad circles of society in his native city. They are less known here, where today's meeting dedicated to his memory is taking place. Therefore, as the last speaker, concluding today's Assembly, I believe I should draw attention to these wonderful aspects of Twardowski's character that are not immortalized in written works, which complement his characterization given in the already delivered papers. Stanisław Łempicki once spoke beautifully about this at an Academy organized

* K. Ajdukiewicz, *Poznanaukowa działalność Kazimierza Twardowskiego*, "Ruch Filozoficzny" 1959, Vol. 19, Nos. 1–2, pp. 29–35.

in Twardowski's honour shortly after his death by the Jan Kazimierz University and the Polish Philosophical Society, outlining Twardowski's character as a man and citizen and documenting it with a wealth of concrete facts. I will limit myself to general remarks, which I will illustrate with only a few concrete examples.

In the memory of all who remained in closer contact with the University of Lvov from 1895 to 1930, Twardowski's figure will remain central to this institution. The University of Lvov could boast in those times a magnificent array of scholars of great stature. Among them were historians: Oswald Balcer, Ludwik Finkel, Stanisław Zakrzewski, Jan Ptaśnik, Adam Szelągowski; Polish philologists: Roman Piłat, Konstanty Wojciechowski, Juliusz Kleiner, Eugeniusz Kucharski; anthropologist Jan Czekanowski; zoologists: Józef Nusbaum-Hilarowicz and Kazimierz Kwietniewski; botanists: Marian Raciborski, Seweryn Krzemieniewski; geologist Rudolf Zuber, petrographer Julian Tokarski; physicists: Marian Smoluchowski, Wojciech Rubinowicz, Stanisław Loria; mathematicians: Wacław Sierpiński, Stefan Banach, Hugo Steinhaus; biochemist Jakub Parnas, and many, many others who would have been assets to any university in the world. Although Twardowski may not have equalled the rank of his most outstanding colleagues in scientific achievements, he was, one might say, the backbone of this university. This central position of Twardowski stemmed, first and foremost, from his unyielding character, high sense of justice, noble understanding of the university's tasks and the calling of a professor at a higher education institution, his ability to deeply grasp and rationally resolve specific issues that university life presented; his outstanding organizational talent earned him exceptional authority, both within the university and with the state authorities, who had a decisive voice in many university matters. Twardowski also did not shy away from serving the university in matters of great importance, as well as in matters that may have seemed secondary. He considered service to the university beyond his teaching duties an important obligation and devoted a tremendous amount of his energy and time to this duty. The peak years of this service were the years in which he was elected rector three times; these were times of great trial, during World War I. In those years, when most professors and students were cut off from their university city, Twardowski continued the university's activities abroad in the form of organized academic courses and examination boards. At the same time, he excellently organized assistance for the academic youth, doubling and tripling efforts to raise funds for this purpose. After returning to Lvov, he worked tire-

lessly to reopen the university during the ongoing war, at a time when the city lay in the front-line zone, and the roar of cannons could be heard. But even before and after his rectorship period, that is, during the partition era and in the years of independent Poland, Twardowski's non-didactic service to the university was marked by outstanding achievements. Much of the credit for admitting women to university studies is due to him, and it is mainly thanks to him that high school graduates from the Congress Kingdom could study at the University of Lvov on equal terms with graduates of Galician schools. Twardowski also undertook, for the benefit of the University, tasks so mundane, yet still so immensely important, such as organizing university offices, study regulations, enrollment regulations, etc. This organization became a model adopted later by other Polish universities and which survived without major changes until World War II. Perhaps these details suffice, but it is impossible not to mention one more thing and of immense importance at that. Twardowski organized within the University and, in his many years of leadership, brought to full fruition the Common University Lectures, through which the University popularized science among the broad circles of Lvov society and even in the distant provinces. It was an institution with almost as wide a scope of action as today's Society for Common Knowledge. Twardowski was not only the longtime head of the Common Lectures but also one of the most devoted and eagerly listened-to lecturers.

I have spoken so far about Twardowski's great authority and his dedicated service to the University as one of the manifestations of his central position within this institution. But alongside this, there was another aspect of his activity that made him a central figure at the University of Lvov. It was his teaching and educational work. It placed Twardowski at the centre of the University because it reached a broader audience than the teaching activities of any other professor. His lectures were attended by all students of the philosophical faculty, which encompassed all fields of study conducted in today's universities, both humanities and mathematical and natural sciences, except legal studies. But even law students attended Twardowski's lectures. Twardowski lectured in the largest hall of the University, but even that proved too small to accommodate eager listeners, and the University had to rent the largest concert hall in the city for Twardowski's lectures. Besides lectures, Twardowski conducted seminars and proseminars, which were attended not only by philosophy students but also by students dedicated to the study of other sciences. Under Twardowski's guidance, one could gain foun-

dational knowledge from all philosophical disciplines because Twardowski devoted a one-year, and sometimes longer, course to each of them, except perhaps aesthetics. Under his supervision, one could become acquainted with the greatest works of the philosophical classics, which were read, interpreted, and critically analysed in seminars. However, one could also learn something more: a rigorous method of scientific work, whose chief commandments could be summarized in the following three postulates: think so that you know well what you are thinking about; speak so that not only do you know well what you are saying, but also so that you are sure that the person listening to you attentively will think about the same thing as you; and whatever you claim, assert it with the decisiveness that the logical strength of your argumentation allows. This was the ABC of solid thinking, and many might dismiss it as elementary schooling. But unfortunately, this elementary schooling is not often part of high students', or even university graduates', education. This scientific *Kinderstube* was also missing in many who achieved fame as great thinkers, obtaining it through exciting appearances of depth created by the murkiness of their thoughts. Twardowski's didactic work focused precisely on freeing oneself from haziness, to see through a transparent current whether the essence of the matter is depth or shallowness, and to instil in listeners the need for clear thinking and a disdain for platitudes disguised as profundity. This elementary school of integrity, this ABC of solid thinking, set as the main task of didactic activity, left a distinct mark on Twardowski's students, not only those dedicated to philosophy but also others. Whoever among Twardowski's students was marked by it belonged to his school, regardless of whether they were a philosopher, Polish philologist, historian, or naturalist.

I said above that Twardowski did not create a philosophical school that could be distinguished by its own characteristic propositions. Instead, he created a different kind of school, which cannot be called a philosophical school, as it was a school with a broader scope – a school of rigorous thinking. Lutosławski once accused Twardowski and his students of constantly sharpening knives that they cut nothing with. This accusation was not right; sharpened knives were used by Twardowski and his students to prepare clear and distinct concepts, especially those encountered in philosophy – but not only those. The same thing was and is being done by the school, contemporary to them, operating in England, called analytical philosophy, founded by G.E. Moore, and continued by Broad, Bertrand Russell, Wittgenstein, Gilbert Ryle, and others. It was precisely this English analytical philosophy that

was most similar to Twardowski's school. Discussing the role and significance of such concept sharpening or refining – the work of cleansing and ordering concepts in collaboration with those who extract them from empirically studied reality in a raw and often crude form – would require a separate presentation. I will only mention here that this work is appreciated by all those who consider conformity with the fundamental methodological postulates of Twardowski's school as the chief criterion of correctness in scientific work.

Much could be said about how Twardowski trained his students to think rigorously, and how much effort and time he devoted to his teaching duties; there is no time to delve into these matters here. However, it should be mentioned that Twardowski not only taught his students but also educated them, and not just them, but everyone he encountered. He saw the goals of this education clearly: his ideals were the cult of truth, the cult of justice, and placing social good over personal gain; as character traits necessary to approach these ideals, he considered self-control, conscientiousness, systematic and planned work, kindness towards others, maintaining one's dignity and the dignity of the social position one occupies. Twardowski educated primarily by the example of his own behaviour and by consistently and inexorably demanding from his students reliability, punctuality, conscientiousness, and systematicity: he was relentless on this point. A student who was late for a lecture would be sternly asked to leave the room. A student who missed two or three seminar sessions without justification would be removed from the class list. He himself never arrived late, never missed any lecture or meeting without a valid reason, was systematic to the point of pedantry, and every hour of the day had its purpose.

But this strict and demanding professor also set a vivid example of kindness towards others. How many people in difficult life situations did he serve with advice, comfort, and warm words, how many did he help materially! People from the city, and even from other places in the country where he was known, would seek him out for advice, much like they would go to a rabbi, seeking guidance on personal matters or more often on issues of a social nature, and Twardowski never refused to help. He ran his household in a Spartan manner and lived a remarkably modest life himself. His budget was not sufficient for more because, from the high professorial salaries at that time, enriched further by the per capita fee professors received for each student enrolled in their lecture during the Austrian times, a lion's share went to help those in need. It was sometimes temporary

help, but there were also unfortunate people whom Twardowski supported for many years along with their families. How many students Twardowski helped to obtain scholarships, how many to get a job, how many to secure a place in a sanatorium or clinic, cannot be counted. Students were afraid of the professor as a stern judge, whose reprimand felt like a reproach from their own conscience, and whose praise was an argument to lift their spirits. But fearing him, they also loved him at the same time because they knew that their well-being was dear to him and that they could turn to him as they would to a father. That there is no exaggeration or flattery in these words, will be unanimously attested by all who were students of the Professor. They will also attest that the Professor treated everyone equally. Among his listeners were Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians. Despite the spirit of the time, which was by no means favourable to this, Twardowski made no distinction between them. Students of all three nationalities reciprocated his respect and affection. In this way, primarily by leading through his own example, Twardowski cultivated his environment in the reverence of truth and justice, instilled a sense of duty, systematic work, and kindness towards others.

All that I have said above was meant to show what constituted Twardowski's exceptional position at the University. This could not be done without pointing out certain traits of his character to which he owed this position.

But Twardowski's university activities are only one aspect of his work. Twardowski was something more than just a university professor. He was a man of education in the broadest sense of the term. Therefore, to the matter of organizing lower and secondary education, to the matter of implementing appropriate educational and developmental content in these schools, he devoted many of his thoughts and organizational efforts. He did this mainly in the years when he was at the helm of the Society of Teachers of Secondary and Higher Schools, an organization that at that time encompassed the entire Polish teaching profession in Galicia. Professor Sośnicki has already discussed this aspect of Twardowski's activity, so I will limit myself only to this brief mention.

Yet another area of life to which Twardowski dedicated himself with full commitment was the organization of scientific life. In 1904, Twardowski founded the first philosophical society in Poland, which, although operating only in Lvov, was rightly named the Polish Philosophical Society. Because when later philosophical societies were established in Warsaw, Kraków, and other cities and there was no organization connecting them into one whole, the Polish Philosophical

Society in Lvov took over actions of general Polish significance. It organized the 1st Polish Philosophical Congress in 1923 and, above all, took care of the Polish representation at international congresses. Twardowski was the president of this society until his death and expanded its activities to the publishing sector, editing the “Biblioteka Wydawnictw Polskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego” [Library of Publications of the Polish Philosophical Society], which included dozens of volumes containing original Polish works and translations of classic philosophical texts. In addition to this, Twardowski, on behalf of the Polish Philosophical Society, published “Biblioteczka Filozoficzna” [Philosophical Library], containing mostly popular works of smaller size. At the end of his life, Twardowski became the head of the foreign-language organ of the society, which under the name “*Studia Philosophica*” went abroad and introduced the world to the achievements of Polish thinkers. Speaking of editorial and publishing work, it is impossible not to mention “*Ruch Filozoficzny*” [Philosophical Movement] edited by Twardowski, a journal published in ten issues annually. The majority of these issues consisted of a bibliography of philosophical novelties from around the world and a chronicle of philosophical life in the country and abroad. Twardowski personally developed this section with the assistance of Mrs Gromska, the then-secretary of the editorial office. Therefore, he was not only the editor but also the author of the majority of “Philosophical Movement.”

Directing the Philosophical Society, organizing congresses and conferences, and editing “Philosophical Movement” do not exhaust yet the list of Twardowski’s activities in the field of scientific organization. Active organizational participation in the Lvov Scientific Society, whose successor is today’s Wrocław Scientific Society, and activity within the Union of Polish Scientific Societies in Lvov, complement the list, and it should be closed with a reminder that Twardowski’s organizational activity also left its mark in Warsaw. From 1922 to 1932, he was the chairman of the Scientific Council of the Mianowski Fund. This institution was housed in the Staszic Palace, so Twardowski presided over meetings in the same hall where we are gathered today, beneath the portrait of Twardowski that hangs overhead.

His own scientific work, organizational, educational, and upbringing activities at the University, activities in the field of educational organization and upbringing at all levels, organizational activity in the field of scientific life, and editorial and publishing activities – does that cover everything? I am far from exhausting all that would be needed to outline the full profile of Kazimierz Twardowski. One

would like to also mention how he perceived the dignity of the university, and how nobly he understood the position of a professor at a higher education institution. One would like to complement his human profile, which has been depicted here as a stern image of a man of duty and work only. One would like to say what Twardowski was like in direct interaction. To paint his extraordinary personal charm, his tact and delicacy. One would like to say how deeply sensitive he was to beauty, how he loved music, of which he was a profound connoisseur, not only a connoisseur but also a performer and creator of musical works. One would like to say that although he officially renounced the issue of worldview because he saw not only no possibility of its scientific solution but even of responsibly formulating it, he nevertheless deeply experienced this issue and had his own position on it. However, he considered it his personal matter, too immature to proclaim with a sense of scientific responsibility and to win over others for it. He was also – as a rationalist – an enemy of any codified and dogmatized confession, and he considered it unworthy of a scientist to belong to any organization whose members were obliged to profess certain propositions regardless of whether they were justified or not.

I have attempted to give here an outline of Twardowski's personality and his actions. Many of his works, to which he devoted his zealous efforts, have ceased to exist. His Philosophical Department no longer exists, nor does the University of Jan Kazimierz. However, one of these works has survived all shocks and storms. The seeds he spread into the souls of his listeners survived, and they were passed on. The faithful adherence to the fundamental commandments of scientific integrity in philosophy and in every other science characterizes Twardowski's students and the students of his students. However, this beneficial influence of Twardowski's teaching radiates in Poland also beyond the circle of his spiritual descendants. It also influences representatives of various philosophical currents from other sources, which are flourishing to a greater or lesser extent in Poland, elevating these philosophical currents to a higher scientific level in Poland than is found elsewhere.

Instilling the habit of rigorous thinking into the souls of Polish philosophers is a lasting and invaluable contribution of Twardowski, which justifies the deep gratitude that all those practising philosophy in Poland, regardless of the position they occupy, feel for him.