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Education in the Lvov-Warsaw School as a Path to Independent Thinking: Introduction to the Archival Texts

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The overarching theme of the archival texts collected in this volume is the relationship of members of the Lvov-Warsaw School[1] to education in the broad sense. The selected contributions thus form an organic continuation of the previous volume, which presented the profiles of two great philosophers and teachers: Kazimierz Twardowski and Izydora Dąmbska. In this volume, readers encounter accounts by pupils of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Janina Kotarbińska, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Stanisław Ossowski, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, and Władysław Witwicki. As in the previous volume, the English translations[2] of these texts are intended to provide the international research community with insights into the vision of education and teaching activities within the Lvov-Warsaw School.

A distinctive text is Tadeusz Czeżowski's *On the Ideal of the University*, which – unlike the others – is not a memoir but offers a general reflection on the state of university education, its aims, and the role of the academic teacher in shaping young minds. It is worth starting this brief discussion with this very text, as it provides a framework within which the teaching activity of the School's other members can be situated.

[1] It should be noted here that Władysław Tatarkiewicz's affiliation to the Lvov-Warsaw School is a matter of dispute. However, there is no doubt that he was in the orbit of the School's influence, and his works are marked by a methodological style typical of this formation, which at least allows one to call him an author closely associated with the School. Cf. J. Zegzuła-Nowak, *Spór o tożsamość filozoficzną Władysława Tatarkiewicza*, "Edukacja Filozoficzna" 2010, Vol. 49, pp. 93–112.

[2] As before, the translations of these texts were prepared by the author of this introduction. The goal was to preserve the original tone and style while ensuring accessibility for an international scholarly audience.

In his essay, Czeżowski discusses the challenges facing the contemporary university in light of dynamic cultural changes. Despite these challenges, he points to certain enduring characteristics of the university that make it an essential component of culture. In his view, the university should fulfil a twofold function: a research institution and a professional school preparing students for academic professions that require mastery of scientific methods. Czeżowski sees the difference between the university and the higher professional school in the different aims of education. While the latter is supposed to educate standardized professionals, the university is supposed to educate creative individuals. Accordingly, the curriculum and teaching method at universities should be of a different character than at higher professional schools – it should emphasize the student's active attitude and self-education and, above all, cultivate the habit of independent thinking.

However, the student achieves independent thinking only by developing three cultures – intellectual culture, moral culture, and aesthetic culture. The formation of intellectual culture consists, in Czeżowski's view, not only in teaching a given scientific discipline, but above all in awakening in students a "logical conscience". This logical conscience includes sensitivity to truth and falsehood, clarity and precision in formulating and justifying theses, integrity and objectivity in thinking, as well as a rational tolerance that seeks to persuade an opponent rather than to destroy them. The formation of this intellectual culture in students fosters a number of virtues that extend beyond the field of science into social life and that possess moral significance. Among these, Czeżowski mentions perseverance in overcoming adversity, systematicity, conscientiousness, reliability and courage of conviction. The formation of a truly creative personality must, however, be at the same time the formation of moral and aesthetic culture. The former manifests itself in the fact that a person knows what is good and what is bad, while in their behaviour they strive for the good and avoid the bad. The latter kind of culture, in turn, involves knowledge of beauty and striving for that beauty in action and in life. In the final part of his lecture, Czeżowski comments on the role of the professor at the university and focuses in particular on the relationship between supervisor and doctoral student.

The picture sketched by Czeżowski of the capacities that lead to the cultivation of independent thinking in students also indirectly delineates what a good teacher should teach and what a good teacher should be like. This ideal ethos,

as I will try to show, shines through quite visibly in the memoirs collected here, albeit with varying intensity and differing emphases. It is worth noting that the model of a teacher which emerges from Czeżowski's remarks overlaps with the pedagogical practice of Kazimierz Twardowski, whose portrait was painted in different strokes by his students in the preceding volume. It is not an overly bold supposition that Czeżowski regarded him as the person who came closest to fulfilling the ideal he outlined. In the following pages, a brief account of each text is presented, with particular attention to how the protagonist of each account fits within the framework outlined by Czeżowski.

Jan Strzelecki opens his reminiscences about Stanisław Ossowski (*A Remembrance of Stanisław Ossowski*) with the following words:

> These words will be about Stanisław Ossowski as a teacher, as he was one of the people who linked their life's project with this task, saw their social calling in this role, and in it achieved a form that would arouse gratitude and a kind of reverence from all those who had the opportunity to encounter him. (J. Strzelecki, *A Remembrance of Stanisław Ossowski*)

In Strzelecki's eyes, then, Ossowski was above all a teacher – someone whose social vocation lay in educating others, and the subsequent parts of the text detail how he enacted that vocation in practice. Strzelecki emphasizes that Ossowski not only imparted knowledge and taught how to acquire and develop it, but was also a model of conduct. He showed through his actions how to realize the values he professed in individual life and how to pursue them in social life – hence understanding his values is indispensable for understanding his teaching activity.

Strzelecki emphasizes that Ossowski was a humanist in the broad sense of the word – concerned not only with works of art and our interactions with them, but also with social matters. The latter manifested itself in various ways – from his participation in the work of the board of the Workers' Society for the Care of Children, through his studies on socialist democracy centred on human development, to his lecturing at the Underground University of Warsaw during the war. For Strzelecki, Ossowski's socialism was an extension of his humanism: working to rebuild institutions was a means to ensure that all are treated with the dignity human beings deserve. Strzelecki describes Ossowski's pursuit of truth and emphasis on the importance of non-conjunctural values as those fundamental human acts which confer dignity to human life. This fundamental dimension of

non-conjunctural values means that the restriction of them by political authorities inevitably leads to errors in the organization of social life. This approach is well reflected in the words of Ossowski cited by Strzelecki at the end of this text:

> Life itself is not something so very important, and the transition into an inorganic state is not something so very important. Life is important as an opportunity for experiencing and for doing things worth living for. (S. Ossowski, cited after J. Strzelecki, *A Remembrance of Stanisław Ossowski*)

This specific linkage of the transmission of knowledge and responsible ways of acquiring it with a moral and social attitude aligns with the teacher's ethos captured in Czeżowski's text, and which was embodied to a greater or lesser extent by members of the Lvov-Warsaw School. Ossowski's actions reveal the civic courage to teach amid the turmoil of war, the persistence and systematic effort maintained despite adverse circumstances, and a selfless dedication to the cause of social life, regardless of any immediate personal gain. All of those personal qualities reveal an outstanding teacher.

In his text (*A Remembrance of Professor Ajdukiewicz*), Stefan Swieżawski describes the role that Ajdukiewicz played in his intellectual formation.

According to Swieżawski's account, Ajdukiewicz exerted a significant and unique influence on his scholarly work, although he himself was not a researcher of medieval philosophy, which interested Swieżawski. What particularly impressed Swieżawski in Ajdukiewicz was, on the one hand, his uncompromising fight against all manifestations of verbalism and, on the other, his attempts to understand theses in their context most accurately – something he calls, following Tadeusz Kotarbiński, "profoundism." These elements of craft, which he took over from Ajdukiewicz during their joint discussions on the texts of his doctoral and postdoctoral theses, taught him to express historical philosophical concepts in a more comprehensible language and not to settle for a superficial grasp of a given concept but to strive for a thorough understanding of the issue. These discussions made Swieżawski realize that:

> All in all, I had to increasingly accept the truth of the Professor's saying that one of the most important "steps to Parnassus" is to be able to admit "I don't understand" when trying to grasp the views of the author I was studying. (S. Swieżawski, *A Remembrance of Professor Ajdukiewicz*)

In his memoir, Swieżawski emphasizes that Ajdukiewicz did not try to steer him towards his own interests but instead allowed him to develop in the direction that genuinely engaged him. Moreover, despite Swieżawski's medievalist interests, Ajdukiewicz made him his assistant at the chair alongside the logician Zygmunt Schmierer. Although all of Ajdukiewicz's colleagues at the chair held different worldviews, a deep friendship formed among them. Swieżawski further mentions that, although Ajdukiewicz himself had an aversion to institutionalized religion, he respected the religious beliefs of his student, whose philosophical content they sometimes discussed. In the final parts of the text, he describes what Ajdukiewicz was like in personal contacts – his kindness and sociable character.

It is not hard to see that the portrait of Ajdukiewicz sketched by Swieżawski coincides to a large extent with the ideal of the teacher that can be indirectly gleaned from Czeżowski's text, discussed earlier. Ajdukiewicz taught Swieżawski to state theses clearly and precisely, to be candid about one's knowledge and ignorance, and at the same time, by his example, he bore witness to the role of rational tolerance towards people with different convictions. It cannot be overemphasized that it was precisely this attitude of Ajdukiewicz that overcame the particular alienation felt by the religious Swieżawski within the Lvov philosophical milieu. Although the text places less emphasis on Ajdukiewicz's moral culture, it also underscores that he was a kind, selfless person, sensitive to social matters. As Swieżawski says: "He was the antithesis of a scholar who sees nothing beyond academia and scholarly work."

Andrzej Nowicki's text, *Benedict, or, About Teachers*, is a rather unusual text among the reminiscences collected in this volume. It is an excerpt from his book *Uczeń Twardowskiego. Władysław Witwicki* [A Student of Twardowski: Władysław Witwicki], in which he presents his recollections of conversations with the titular figure – Władysław Witwicki, his "beloved teacher," as he calls him in the book's introduction. These are not, however, mere reports of these conversations, but dialogues in which the author supplements the deficiencies of his memory with his imagination. This form immediately brings to mind Platonic dialogues and, I believe, this is not an accidental choice on the author's part. Although Władysław Witwicki was a highly prolific and original intellectual and artist, there is little doubt that his greatest gift to Polish culture was his translations of nearly all of Plato's dialogues. In this literary form, Nowicki evokes Witwicki himself through

the very vehicle most closely associated with him in Polish cultural memory, rendering homage not only in content but also in form.

In this short dialogue, Fryderyk – the author's literary emanation – discusses with Witwicki the latter's teachers. The entire exchange is prompted by a lecture in which Witwicki commemorated the recently deceased Kazimierz Twardowski. The course of the dialogue, as well as the changes in Witwicki's appearance described in the text, make it plain that Twardowski was among his most important teachers. Fryderyk, however, presses him about other teachers – both those with whom he had actual personal contact and the spiritual ones separated by the abyss of time. Of particular note is the titular Benedict – Benedykt Tadeusz Nałęcz Dybowski, a naturalist and social activist – whom Witwicki regards as a teacher as important as Twardowski himself. Although the guiding theme of the dialogue is Witwicki's teachers, the conversation also clearly reveals the virtues to which he adhered: objectivity, an intellectual distance towards matters under examination, clear and critical thinking, as well as respect for people of different convictions and views. This text is half memoir, half psychobiographical miniature, which – like Nowicki's piece – may be taken as a kind of tribute to Witwicki. It is so because Witwicki himself dealt with such reflections in his writings, to mention only his psychological remarks on Socrates or the psychobiography of Jesus of Nazareth.

Mieczysław Wallis briefly sketches Witwicki's scholarly path and notes the great role played in shaping his outlook by Kazimierz Twardowski, from whom he took the cult of clarity and of substantive knowledge. He points out that the subject of Witwicki's first scholarly work – *Analiza psychologiczna ambicji* [Psychological Analysis of Ambition] – was hardly a coincidence, as it was one of the feelings that was the driving force of his psychic life. He further notes that despite his extensive knowledge, manifold talents, and pedagogical gift, Witwicki did not obtain a chair for over a dozen years, which, in light of his great ambition, bred an outwardly suppressed bitterness.

Wallis also does not omit that Witwicki sometimes had difficulties in dealings with others – he would enter into conflicts with family, and in discussions he could be intransigent and sarcastic. This latter trait stood in stark contrast to his proclaimed goal of discussion, namely, a common pursuit of truth. These circumstances also place in context the fact that in his dialogue Nowicki ascribes a mocking tone to Witwicki, even though Witwicki himself vehemently denies

this and explicitly states that it is only scientific distance on his part. The fact that both authors attest to this attribute of Witwicki significantly increases the likelihood that this is what he was like. In such a case, it would be easy to charge Witwicki with duplicity and hypocrisy. There is, however, an important nuance here, which Wallis makes clear at the end of his text, where he applies the concept of the "soul with an actor's background" introduced by Witwicki to himself. He writes thus:

> Well, it's hard to resist the impression that Witwicki himself was also a "soul with an actor's background." He created in his imagination an ideal figure of himself, some features of which he took from the Platonic Socrates, and he "played" this character, more or less consciously, before others. (M. Wallis, *Memories and Remarks about Władysław Witwicki*)

Perhaps Witwicki's behaviour was not conscious duplicity but rather a dissonance between the inborn dispositions of his personality and the ideal to which he aspired. Witwicki's innate ambition drove him to work tirelessly on his various projects, but he paid the price in the form of an uncontrollable need to dominate everything and everyone. This specific weave of ideals and personality traits could make Witwicki seem insincere in his attitude.

Wallis makes also no secret of the fact that Witwicki had various prejudices and antipathies, among which he mentions an aversion to modern art. At the same time, he underscores Witwicki's tireless work on further treatises and translations despite illness and the raging war. He recalls Witwicki's psychological research, within which the most original theoretical idea is the theory of interpersonal relations, premised on the assumption that every person avoids humiliation and strives for a sense of power. He praises Witwicki's textbook for its vivid, plastic style and a special gift for spotting the humorous elements of human nature. In his text, Wallis also mentions Witwicki's work on translations of Plato's dialogues, his replies to criticism of the colloquial style of those translations, and the Platonic perspective he adopted on the figures of Socrates and the sophists. He further notes that despite his religious upbringing, Witwicki faced a youthful religious crisis and arrived at rationalist and atheist views, and that his interest in people reconciling scientific convictions with religious faith prompted him to write *Wiara oświeconych* [The Faith of the Enlightened]. The text concludes with

the aforementioned remark about Witwicki's personality and his role in reviving the Platonic dialogues intellectually, aesthetically and morally.

In both texts about Witwicki, his role as a teacher may not be as visible as in the other contributions collected in this volume devoted to teachers associated with the Lvov-Warsaw School. In Nowicki's piece, the accent falls rather on Witwicki's own teachers, while in Wallis's text we learn more about what Witwicki was like and what he did. Yet from these texts one can reconstruct that, like other members of the School, he attached great importance to clarity of expression, and that his ideals were scientific distance towards analysed phenomena and a common pursuit of truth. At the same time, he was ready for hard work despite adversity. It is also impossible to overlook here the fact that he was an unparalleled popularizer. His translations made Plato's dialogues accessible to a wide audience, and Witwicki himself brought them to life by reading them in public (including on the radio). He also wrote popularizing books on psychology or ancient art. It can thus be said that Witwicki fostered intellectual and aesthetic culture among broad audiences, which certainly warrants calling him a great teacher.

In his memoir *Władysław Tatarkiewicz (3 April 1886–4 April 1980), or, On the Hidden Philosophy*, Andrzej Nowicki presents his first encounter with the subject of his text. As a high school student, he attended Tatarkiewicz's lecture, which captivated him not only with its content but also with its construction and performance. For Tatarkiewicz's lecture on aesthetics was not only clear, lucid and well-organized, but also interwoven with fragments of poetry that immediately made present to the listeners the very thing under discussion. This lecture was also what ultimately set the philosophical path the author chose to follow.

In his reminiscences, Nowicki recounts a series of conversations with Tatarkiewicz in which the teacher's genuine care for his pupil's intellectual development is made vivid – he proposes various readings, discourages overloading oneself with classes, and even assigns a very young student a report on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. He also encourages the young student of philosophy to think independently in analysing and interpreting texts. He motivates him to continue working by pointing out the positive aspects of his written work and by setting ever new challenges – from the aforesaid report on Kant to a piece for "Przegląd Filozoficzny" [Philosophical Review]. Tatarkiewicz, however, did not privilege students on the basis of their extensive knowledge, but assessed them

consistently on the basis of the material he required, as the course of Nowicki's examination with Tatarkiewicz indicates. Nor should one overlook the fact that Tatarkiewicz's lectures were extraordinarily popular – as the hall for over 800 people was overflowing.

Nowicki also notes that Tatarkiewicz tolerated people with different worldviews, including the author himself, who sympathized with currents calling for a revolutionary transformation of man and the conditions of human life. When faced with his pupil's intellectual attacks, he responded either with merciful silence or with calm understanding. Nowicki's reminiscences also document that Tatarkiewicz carried out his professorial service with civic courage – he conducted clandestine university teaching despite the brutal penalties imposed by the Nazi occupier on those who engaged in such undertakings. Nor should the teacher's concern for his students escape our attention – not only did Tatarkiewicz declare his availability in times of peace, but during the war, when his student stopped attending classes, he personally sought him out and convinced him to return.

In the final sections of the text, the author recapitulates the aforementioned traits of Tatarkiewicz as a teacher and casts them in a different light. In particular, he draws attention to the elements of the historian of philosophy's craft that Tatarkiewicz taught him. Once again, he draws attention to Tatarkiewicz's extraordinary tolerance, this time extending its scope to the historical philosophical positions he analysed. Although he stresses forcefully that he shares virtually none of Tatarkiewicz's views, he nevertheless singles out one very important idea that he took from Tatarkiewicz and developed in his own work. Namely, the conviction that aesthetic conceptions are not only formulated explicitly in treatises on art but are also contained implicitly in the very works of art themselves. Tatarkiewicz's idea can, moreover, be further extended to the matter at hand: the philosophy of education and upbringing is sometimes set out in theoretical treatises, but just as often it is embodied in the actions and stances of great teachers and in the effects of their work – that is, in students who, as Czeżowski says, have become truly creative individuals.

Although Nowicki's account is full of the author's personal experiences and reflections, it nonetheless provides a richer characterization of Tatarkiewicz's teaching activity than the other texts collected here about teachers of the Lvov-Warsaw School. From the portrait sketched by Nowicki there emerges an image

of a teacher who guided his student in a methodical manner while exerting no intellectual coercion on him. He cared for his student's well-being yet remained tolerant of his revolutionary convictions, which he did not share. Finally, he lectured in a clear and methodical way, yet could tastefully and sensitively adorn his lecture with poetry. His teaching activity thus fits perfectly into Czeżowski's programme of educating creative and independent individuals – he trained his students both by word and by example in the domains of intellectual, moral, and aesthetic culture.

Jerzy Pelc's brief reminiscences (*From the History of the Underground University of Warsaw*) from the period when he attended classes at the underground University of Warsaw essentially present an image of Tatarkiewicz's educational work consistent with Nowicki's account. We learn a bit more about the locations in which the classes conducted by Tatarkiewicz were held. Like Nowicki, Pelc emphasizes the extraordinary popularity of Tatarkiewicz's lectures, which, even during the war, attracted people who not only were not studying philosophy but were not students at all. Pelc also points out that this popularity was associated with a greater risk of repression by the occupier, as larger gatherings were easier to detect. He also depicts, in a more vivid and poignant way, the general atmosphere of dread and danger that accompanied functioning within an underground university.

In the same text, more attention is devoted to Tadeusz Kotarbiński. Pelc recounts the course of the first lecture conducted by Kotarbiński which he attended. He mentions the extraordinary clarity and precision of the lecturer's formulation of his thoughts, which posed a certain problem for the young students of philosophy, as every word spoken in the lecture seemed equally important and significant. He adds that there was no literary embellishment or excessive erudition in the way Kotarbiński lectured; instead, simplicity and economy of expression reigned. The text captures also the first impressions of peers after that lecture, vividly conveying the kind of agitation typical for young people on first encountering such an unusual lecturer.

In his memoir, Pelc reveals to us Kotarbiński's unusual meticulousness and tact, illustrated by his proposal to meet students for the next class on the Epiphany (Feast of the Three Kings). In Pelc's account, this stemmed from Kotarbiński's desire not to have the young people lose a class they had paid for and, at the same time, to spare them the awkwardness of having him return the money. Like Tatarkiewicz, Kotarbiński attracted with his person people with various interests,

not only philosophical – though perhaps not in numbers as great as Tatarkiewicz. He taught across many philosophical disciplines, and in his ethics seminars he discussed with students not only theoretical questions but also practical ones that arose in their minds from the gruesome reality they had to face.

Pelc further notes that Kotarbiński had a particular gift for extracting what was accurate or original from his students' remarks. This unusual capacity emboldened those only just learning the craft of philosophical discussion to speak up in the company of older colleagues. Pelc observes as well that Kotarbiński's seminar was a school that not only teaches but also educates: not merely by dry theoretical formulas but because the professor gave a living example of how one ought to speak and think, awakening in students the need to express themselves as the professor did – clearly and distinctly.

Pelc says more about Kotarbiński's teaching activity in *Tadeusz Kotarbiński – Teacher: On the 75th Anniversary of His Birth*. In particular, he stresses that for Kotarbiński teaching was not only a profession but above all a calling. Moreover, according to Pelc, all who had ever been Kotarbiński's students never ceased to consider themselves such, even long after their formal education had ended. He even claims that a specific intellectual and emotional bond formed between Kotarbiński's students, of which their professor was, so to speak, the centre.

Pelc underscores that Kotarbiński taught his students more by his example than by his theoretical works. That practical example served as a point of reference in hard moral and life decisions, since in such cases they asked themselves what their professor would do. Moreover, he epitomized the ideal of a guardian one can rely on, manifested in matters both small and great. And above all, he was an outstanding creator – he produced scientific works and shaped pedagogical ones through the lives and minds of his students.

In her address on Kotarbiński, Maria Ossowska in turn takes a closer look at the values that guided him. She recalls the motto proposed by Kotarbiński for the emblem of the University of Łódź, namely "Freedom and Truth," and emphasizes that these were values for which he did not hesitate to fight when need arose. He displayed tireless civic courage in this respect.

She then turns to a characterization of the liberalism he upheld. And it was a liberalism that opposed both economic exploitation and political oppression by the state. A liberalism which was not, however, individualism, but which was imbued with a spirit of solidarity. For Kotarbiński emphasized the impor-

tance and role of collective action, but one that is not driven by coercion. It was Kotarbiński's commitment to freedom that led him to place great emphasis on the role of freedom of expression in scientific research. In this vein, he criticized the participation of priests in the education of young people, because they solve issues according to preconceived positions, rather than according to the truth. Although this generalization is perhaps overly unjust, there is no doubt that the rationale behind it is by all means correct. One cannot be a good teacher if one's preconceived convictions – be they religious or secular – prohibit one from considering a certain problem or other ways of solving it. His personality and principledness are perhaps best summarized in the final words of Ossowska's address:

> One could hear discussions regarding whether, from the standpoint of the goals he himself set, this steadfast insistence on freedom and truth was justified. I believe that today no one questions this justification. The years behind us have made us all aware of the immense social value of a person in whom one can place absolute trust. (M. Ossowska, *Speech at the Jubilee Celebration at the University of Warsaw on 5 April 1956*)

Taken together, these three texts paint the portrait of an educator who taught responsibility for words – both by his example and by the content of his teaching. He was awakening in students what Czeżowski called a "logical conscience," one that, once awakened, as Pelc's account suggests, would never again fall asleep. However, he awakened not only the logical conscience but also the moral one, giving an example of how to act and how to stand in defence of truth and freedom even under adverse circumstances. He thus exemplified the intellectual and moral virtues that an academic teacher should possess in order to form in students the capacities that, in Czeżowski's account, enable authentic independent thinking.

Marian Przełęcki's text on Janina Kotarbińska, *Janina Kotarbińska (1901–1997)*, was written shortly after her death. The author was one of her first students. Przełęcki briefly presents her scholarly path and philosophical interests. He highlights her scientific achievements in the logical theory of language and the logical theory of science, while stressing that her manner of philosophizing exemplified the style characteristic of the Lvov-Warsaw School. Her works are written in clear and precise language and are marked by the School's hallmark responsibility for words; nowhere do we find rhetorical showiness or intellectual shortcuts. As Przełęcki sums it up: "With all her theoretical activity, Janina Kotarbinska taught us scientific integrity."

The philosophical sources of this stance, Przełęcki locates in her critical rationalism – eschewing dogmatic resolutions, consistent, and above all universal. Her rationalism did not confine itself to theoretical matters but extended to practical ones, and her judgements on these matters, as Przełęcki notes, were always sober and free of prejudice. Przełęcki also underscores her role in sustaining the tradition and ethos of the Lvov-Warsaw School in the difficult postwar reality, which she passed on to her listeners, students, and colleagues.

This rationalist and secularist outlook did not stand in any opposition to the highly noble morality that characterized her. Her moral stance embodied Tadeusz Kotarbiński's guardianship ethics and practical realism, and in particular the "ethics of mercy". As Przełęcki notes, these moral ideals were hardened by her exceptionally difficult and tragic life – the early death of her father and the burden of supporting her family, her stay in the ghetto and concentration camps, the loss of loved ones and the serious illness and death of her husband, Tadeusz Kotarbiński. In Janina Kotarbińska we thus once again see the conjunction of traits that characterize the ideal teacher and that can be indirectly gleaned from Czeżowski's account – educating intellectual and moral culture, both by word and by the example of one's life.

In the light of this brief overview, it seems well founded to hold that the teachers of the Lvov-Warsaw School in many respects embodied – or at least strove to embody – the virtues Czeżowski mentions in his text. They did so in different ways and with different distributions of emphasis depending on their talents and personality traits. It should not escape our attention that, like everyone else, they had their flaws and limitations – perhaps too often ignored by the laudatory tone imposed by the circumstances of many texts collected here. Overlooking these flaws can at times lead to an apotheosis of these figures, and, in turn, to perceiving their achievements – both intellectual and educational – as something beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. The consequence of such a perspective can be discouragement, even among those with the talent to equal or even surpass those remarkable accomplishments. At the same time, one should avoid the opposite extreme – an insistent debunking of everything that seems in their actions and stances too laudable to be true. In line with the demands fundamental to the Lvov-Warsaw School, we should, above all, always assess them fairly and on a duly justified ground, which in itself may be treated as a tribute to their memory.

The foregoing discussion certainly does not exhaust all the relevant themes to be found in these texts, for I have concentrated here only on sketching, from

a bird's-eye view, the picture of the educational activity of the thinkers discussed here. Some of these contributions contain much more – valuable and interesting information about the authors' experiences and stories, various colourful anecdotes about the protagonists of the memoirs, and other information that yield a better and more complete picture of the relations that prevailed in this scientific milieu. I hope that this unavoidable incompleteness and other shortcomings of this introduction will be all the more an encouragement to read these texts.

It is worth, in closing, to return once more to Czeżowski's text, which summarizes his vision of university education as follows:

> I may be exposing myself to the objection that I am painting an idealized picture, far from reality, and indulging in fantasy. To this, I would reply: let us not dismiss dreams, for they often contain a potential correction to an imperfect reality. (T. Czeżowski, *On the Ideal of the University)*

In light of this brief survey, one can probably agree with Czeżowski and complement his thought with the following conclusion: living by that fleeting dream – when joined with enough effort and sober selection of means – yields greater and more beautiful results than reams of laments about yet another alleged collapse of education.