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Brentano and the Lvov-Warsaw School

Arianna Betti

1. Introduction

The Lvov-Warsaw School was one of the (two, in fact) most important movements in 20th century scientifically oriented philosophy. Its foundation can be uncontroversially identified with the appointment in 1895 to the Chair of Philosophy in Lvov (currently Lviv, Ukraine) of Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938), who had been a student and follower of Franz Brentano in Vienna in 1886-1895.[i] One can safely say that both the Lvov-Warsaw School's existence and its flourishing were mostly due to Twardowski's strenuous organizational and didactic activity – so much that 'member of the Lvov-Warsaw School' appears synonymous with 'direct or indirect pupil of Twardowski'.[ii] Also beyond doubt is that Brentano's influence on Twardowski was profound, that Twardowski arrived in Lvov with the intention of spreading Brentano's ideas on Polish soil, and that he emphatically put that intention in practice (Twardowski 1926: 26; cf. Betti 2006a: 55). Far from being conclusively established, by contrast, is the extent of Brentano's influence on the Lvov-Warsaw School. Shortly put, and in some anticipation of what follows, in certain aspects that influence was all-pervading, in other aspects quite limited. Jerzy Giedymin captured the situation like this:

> The Brentano-Twardowski philosophy did not appeal much to most of Twardowski's students. He influenced them not so much through any specific philosophical doctrine as

> through his teaching activities and the ideals of clarity, precision and rationality which he preached. (Giedymin 1986: 190)

Giedymin makes two points. The first regards issues of metaphilosophical kind (of great influence), the second 'Brentano-Twardowski' specific philosophical doctrines (of little influence).

The first point is ubiquitously echoed in the scholarly literature. There was a set of ideas regarding the nature of philosophical inquiry and the methodology of philosophy that simply *defined* the kind of philosophy done in the Lvov-Warsaw School. Philosophy should be clear, precise, anti-speculative (i.e. rationality-driven) and consisting of justified statements: as Brentano's fourth *Habilitation*-thesis stated, the true method of philosophy is the same as that of the natural sciences. As a corollary, German idealistic metaphysics was to be opposed (Woleński 2014: 174; see also Twardowski 1904: 49). To get an idea of the kind of philosophical work done and appreciated by the School, one might consider Kotarbińska 1932, where Janina Kotarbińska (Dina Sztejnbarg-Kamińska, 1901-1997) distinguished a full twenty-six different meanings of the term 'chance'.

Giedymin's second point is rarely echoed. Quite the contrary, in fact: there have been several attempts to establish that 'Brentano-Twardowski' specific philosophical doctrines *did* exert considerable influence upon the Lvov-Warsaw School. Most influential among these attempts is probably Woleński and Simons' (1989) seminal article on the influence of Brentano's ideas on truth in the Lvov-Warsaw School up to Tarski. The paper clearly focused on one theme, truth – but perhaps because truth is such an important and iconic theme, given its association with Tarski and his Polish background, a general picture somehow emerged according to which Tarski was Brentano's philosophical grand-grandson.[iii]

An alternative line of research has recently brought renewed support for Giedymin's stance. If specific 'Brentano-Twardowski' doctrines are present, it is

argued, they are present only in (some phases of the thought of) some exponents of the Lvov-Warsaw School. Even general philosophical stances such as the respect for Aristotle-style metaphysics in the sense of a (formal) theory of objects, including mereology,[iv] it is argued, are due to an intellectual mix stemming from the philosophical tradition in general, including a substantial share of ideas coming from Bernard Bolzano (Betti 2006a, 2006b, 2016). If so, similar considerations, one might argue, presumably hold for traits strongly connected to traditional metaphysics, namely realism and the correspondence theory of truth.[v] In this paper I will provide some additional focus to this alternative, back-to-Giedymin line.

2. The 'Brentano-Twardowski' doctrines

Importantly, Twardowski did not belong to Brentanian orthodoxy (unlike Marty, Kraus and Kastil; see Haller 1986: 17-8); he deviated instead in substantial aspects from Brentano's own stances (like Meinong and Husserl; *Ibid.*). Giedymin aptly speaks of 'Brentano-Twardowski philosophy', for Brentano's doctrines came to Poland thus variously altered. In this light, a good way to proceed is to first distinguish the specific themes on which Twardowski agreed with Brentano (the 'Brentano-Twardowski philosophy') from the specific themes on which he disagreed with him, and then investigate which (dis)agreements were actually taken up by Twardowski's pupils. In this and the following section I will offer some remarks on both points, and conclude with a general suggestion for further research.

The 'Brentano-Twardowski doctrines' that are sensible for us to consider here – Twardowski's agreements with Brentano – are the following. (Agr.i) Twardowski took descriptive psychology to be foundational for the whole of philosophy, including logic (Betti and Raspa 2016: ix; see also this volume, CHAP. 4).

Twardowski's general apparatus of key philosophical concepts revolved around *intentionality* as mark of the mental, that is, concepts such as *presentation*, *judgement*, *inner perception*, etc., played a fundamental role in philosophy, and thus in logic (*Ibid.*); (Agr.ii) Twardowski adhered to the method of descriptive analysis or analytic description, rather than championing the formal methods of logic (Woleński 2014: 173-4). Moreover, (Agr.iii) descriptive psychology had to keep its primacy (Schaar 2015: 22), and was to be preferred to experimental psychology, especially as far as the role and value of introspection was concerned (Rzepa 2015: 240, 244), notwithstanding the fact that according to Twardowski descriptive psychology needed to be supplemented by experimental psychology to overcome certain shortcomings (Rzepa 2015: 243), for example, by Wundt's experiments, which had the advantage of being repeatable and accessible also to others, not only to the agent who has the perceptions (Schaar 2015: 22). Finally, (Agr.iv) Twardowski saw ethics as having cognitive content, with a basis on emotional experience (Brożek 2015: 163 n. 10).

All four points just highlighted are related in an important manner: in particular, (Agr.ii) and (Agr.iii) concern the method of (Agr.i), and (Agr.iv) derives directly from (Agr.i).

As to Twardowski's deviations from Brentano, those that might be sensible for us to consider here are the following. (Dev.i) Twardowski took *truth* to be absolute instead of time-dependent, a move which went hand in hand with his choosing judgement-tokens as truth-bearers, instead of judgement-types like Brentano (Betti 2006b: 378-79, especially n. 20).[vi] (Dev.ii) Twardowski took *truth-bearers* to come in two forms, existential and relational (instead of accepting only the existential form like Brentano – see CHAP. 10); those of relational form had S-P form, to wit the Bolzanian form of propositions 'A has b' (Betti and van der Schaar 2004: 8, Betti and Raspa 2016: xxxi). (Dev.iii) Twardowski took the (non-simple) *object* of truth-bearers to be of two kinds, complexes and relationships (instead of

one kind, complexes, as Brentano did), taking relationships to be Bolzano-like relationships of *having* between an object *A* and quality *b*. Twardowski's relationships as objects of judgements are special objects that have been likened to (Betti and van der Schaar 2004), or straightforwardly identified with (Betti and Raspa 2016), a state of affairs. (Dev.iv) Twardowski accepted *non-existing objects* in his ontology, a consequence of his specific grafting of the content-object distinction onto Brentano's theory of intentionality (Betti 2013: §2, §5); in this way, Twardowski legitimated Aristotle-style metaphysics (whether or not broadened with non-existents) as a respectable field of inquiry. Lastly, (Dev.v) by contrast with Brentano's theism (see CHAP. 27), Twardowski had a rather complicated relationship with religion (Brożek 2012: ch. 7, §2).[vii]

* * *

Let's now ask: to what extent did the Lvov-Warsaw School follow the elements above, in particular the agreements, the 'Brentano-Twardowski doctrines'? Given the sheer scope of such an investigation – (Woleński 1989: 15, 352-3) offers an incomplete list of *eighty* exponents of the Lvov-Warsaw School – nothing remotely near to an exhaustive answer is going to follow in the next couple of pages, nor is it in fact as yet available. At any rate, a credible conjecture should at least take the following into account.

Even if the School's most renowned exponents were formal logicians (notably Łukasiewicz, Leśniewski, and Tarski), Twardowski trained philosophers also in many other fields: epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and, importantly for us, psychology. Indeed, as it was common in his time, and in keeping with (Agr.i), Twardowski saw psychology as one of the 'philosophical sciences'.[viii] Now, as I show elsewhere (Betti 2006a, Betti, 2016), it was the logicians that were *least* influenced, when not outright critical of, the first two 'Brentano-Twardowski doctrines' (the foundational role of psychology in logic, and the primacy of descriptive analysis over formal logic). By contrast, the psychologists (and some of

the ethicists, arguably) seem to have built upon all four doctrines (Agr.i-iv) – while also taking up some of the deviating elements, notably Twardowski's absolutist position on truth (Dev.i). This is ratified by Kotarbiński's 1933 overview of what was going on in Polish philosophy at the time. After mentioning absolutism as a common trait of the School (notably the sole non-metaphilosophical trait he mentions), Kotarbiński writes:

> The group of the psychologists [has] come far less further from the original direction of the School than the logicians. I am thinking of Władysław Witwicki ... Stefan Baley … Stefan Błachowski … and Mieczysław Kreutz… (Kotarbiński 1933: 220)[ix]

> The main role is however played since a while by the Warsaw School, headed by three exponents of the logicistic direction: Prof. J. Łukasiewicz, Prof. S. Leśniewski and lecturer A. Tarski. (Kotarbiński 1933: 222)

In light of the above, a promising general reconstruction of the influence of (the early) Brentano upon the Lvov-Warsaw School should center around local and (inter)national developments in those philosophical fields that were soon to become separate scientific disciplines, to wit: psychology and logic. For a first sample, let's now take a brief look to a small selection of first-generation Lvov-Warsaw exponents.

2. The 'Brentano-Twardowski' doctrines in the Lvov-Warsaw School

2.1 (Mostly) agreements: primacy of psychology and descriptive analysis

Tadeusz Czeżowski (1889-1981) is considered the most Brentanian among Twardowski's students (Brożek 2012: ch. 10, §2.2.).[x] He followed Brentano's idiogenetic theory of judgement (Czeżowski 1925) and – at least after 1938 (Łukasiewicz 2006: 204 ff.) – a Brentano-like 'existential' reading of judgments (though modified as in (Dev.iii) above). He also clearly endorsed the method of analytic description (Agr.ii) – 'the most certain method of philosophy' (Czeżowski

1956: 51) – which, as mentioned, is key to Brentano's descriptive psychology as a science yielding self-evident, certain statements, and fundamental to its foundational role with respect to other sciences. The method consists in inferring general and apodictic statements from an analysis by a certain form of intuition of a single example taken to represent a totality, for instance '*every* mental phenomenon has its object' or 'in *every* conviction the existence of its object is asserted or negated' (Czezowski 1956: 44). Among examples of works in psychology that apply the method of analytic description, Czeżowski mentions Witwicki's psychological analysis of the concept of ambition (Witwicki 1900, the first PhD dissertation that Twardowski supervised).

Władysław Witwicki (1878-1948) was one of Twardowski's closest pupils. Though active in several other fields, including ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy of culture, he is most known for his work in psychology. He authored the first handbook of psychology in Poland (Witwicki 1925), a work reflecting introspection-based psychology *á la* Brentano. In keeping with (Agr.iii) above, in 1902 Witwicki visited both the Brentanian Alois Höfler in Vienna (see CHAP. 40), and Wundt's famous laboratory in Leipzig (Jadczak 1997: 30). Witwicki developed *cratism*, a theory including a concept similar to that of inferiority complex developed later by Alfred Adler, the main difference being Witwicki's positive evaluation of ambition (Nowicki 1982 63). Particularly interesting for (Dev.v) is Witwicki's work in psychology of religion, which was very critical of religion as meaningless (Grzymała-Moszczyńska 2008: 580). Worth mentioning in this connection is *La foi des éclairés* ('The Faith of the Enlightened'), written in 1935 but published in French four years later (Witwicki 1939), after editorial difficulties in Poland (Nowicki 1982: 8). In Witwicki 1939, he anticipated the idea of *cognitive dissonance* to explain religious belief among educated people – the *éclairés* of the title, today's individuals with an MA degree, say (Grzymała-Moszczyńska 2008: 581), by drawing upon conceptualisations resting on Alexius Meinong's concept of assumption (see CHAP. 32).

2.2 (Mostly) disagreements: anti-psychologism in logic and formal methods

Singularly scarce are discussions of Brentano's ideas in the *oeuvre* of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890-1963). As Brożek (2012: ch. 10, §2.2.) also notices, there is, tellingly, no mention of Brentano in *Main Trends in Philosophy* (Ajdukiewicz 1923), a famous philosophical anthology in Poland. Although we find one mention of Brentano's existential reading of the traditional S-P syllogistic forms in Ajdukiewicz 1937, Ajdukiewicz calls such reading 'without existential import' – something that goes right against Brentano's view. Finally, Ajdukiewicz 1937, a popularising overview article on trends and currents in present-day philosophy, in which Ajdukiewicz quotes about a hundred other philosophers in six pages, devotes as much space to Brentano as to e.g. Mach and Avenarius, or Heidegger.

Likewise, despite the (dis)similarities between the reism of Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886-1981) and Brentano's post-1904 position (see CHAP. 15), Kotarbiński's *oeuvre* contains little acknowledgment of Brentano, except for a few cursory niceties,[xi] and for Kotarbiński 1966. The latter, together with Kotarbiński 1970, is particularly telling for us. Kotarbiński 1966 explains that the reason for his lack of consideration for Brentano's ideas as a young philosopher was his anti-psychologistic interest in formal logic; Kotarbiński 1970 mentions in a critical tone Brentano's view that psychology was 'even the main part of philosophy'.

This brings us to two towering figures of Polish logic, Jan Łukasiewicz (1878-1956) and Stanisław Leśniewski (1886-1939), most famously associated, respectively, with many-valued logics and with a nominalistic system of the foundations of mathematics and a formal mereology (roughly, classical extensional mereology). Both Łukasiewicz and Leśniewski had early traditional beginnings in logic (up to around 1915), during which they adhered to (Dev.i-iii) together with Kotarbiński, sometimes in an even stronger version. For instance, as regards the form of truth-bearers (Dev.ii), Łukasiewicz and Leśniewski departed completely from Brentano in taking *all* truth-bearers to have S-P form (Betti 2016: §2);[xii] as

regards (Dev.iii), they all took relations of inherence (as opposed to Brentano's complex objects) as objects of their truth-bearers of choice (*ibid.*).

No matter how strongly one might desire to find some element of general Brentanian continuity even in the Brentano-deviant traits I have mentioned, Leśniewski and Łukasiewicz forcefully recanted those traits as poor traditional 'philosophico-grammatical' beginnings. One might want to insist that Łukasiewicz's and Leśniewski's early beginnings still were influenced, respectively, by Marty, Mill and Husserl, and by Meinong, but in doing so, one should not forget that those juvenile flirtations were soon over; as soon as Russell's *Principia* and Frege's *Grundgesetze* arrived in Poland, what was kept of those beginnings were only those parts that could be recast into deductive theories using formal methods. In little known sources, Łukasiewicz appears as the most virulent anti-Brentanian of Twardowski's pupils.[xiii] By contrast with (Agr.ii), he radicalized as it were the scientific approach to philosophy into what Twardowski was to define as 'symbolomania', i.e. the acceptance of formal methods as the only method of philosophy (cf. Brożek 2012: ch. 10, §2.2.).[xiv] According to Łukasiewicz, Twardowski's worst mistake, next to psychologism, was the (strongly related) fact that he did not keep up with the newest developments in mathematical logic – or, as it was called then, *logistics*.

> I had been disliking the psychologism cultivated by Twardowski already for long time…. The apparatus of ideas and problems that Twardowski brought with him from Vienna to Lvov was incredibly poor and sterile. Whether a conviction was a mental phenomenon of a separate kind or a connection of concepts was incessantly under discussion, intuitions, presentations, concepts, their content and object were incessantly under discussion, and no one knew whether the analyses carried out … belonged to psychology, logic or grammar. (from Łukasiewicz's 1949-54 diary, quoted in Betti 2006a: 64)

Łukasiewicz's points, minus the contempt, resonate in every published piece by Kotarbiński in which the heritage of the 'Twardowski-Brentano doctrines' is discussed in the context of the developments of the relationship between logic and

psychology with respect to philosophy ("From today's perspective, the times of psychologism, when formal logic considered itself as a part of psychology, appear prehistorical", Kotarbiński 1933: 221). Łukasiewicz's points are also indirectly confirmed – from the opposite point of view, this time – in letters to Twardowski from those pupils who instead remained closer to the master's original doctrines.[xv]

3. Conclusion

The influence of Brentano on the Lvov-Warsaw School was all-pervading as far as metaphilosophical ideals such as rationality and scientifically oriented precision and clarity of style were concerned. As far as specific doctrines were concerned, however, things stand otherwise. The considerations in this paper suggest that it might be sensible to investigate the issue further from the perspective of the general historical development, in and outside Poland, of those disciplines that, at the time, were about to become independent sciences: logic and psychology, and including, importantly, their relationship to philosophy. For the more an exponent of the Lvov-Warsaw School was involved in the development of formal *logic* as a discipline, or *logistics*, it seems, the further away s(he) was from what I have marked as 'Twardowski-Brentano doctrines'; whereas the closer s(he) was to *psychology* as a discipline, the closer s(he) stayed to those doctrines. To test this claim adequately, a more extensive investigation, preferably aided by quantitative analysis, of the works of the exponents of the Lvov-Warsaw School (ideally, all eighty!) would be desirable.

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[i] On this period of Twardowski's life, see Brożek 2012.

[ii] For a problematisation, cf. Zamecki 1977: 33 ff. A good place to start for information on the Lvov-Warsaw School is (Woleński 2015).

[iii] Along this line, Rojszczak (2006), followed by Schaar (2015), maintains that Brentano's choice of *judgments* as primary truth-bearers was influential on the choice of *meaningful sentences* as truth-bearers in the majority of Twardowski's students (and up to Tarski).

[iv] This was an important element of difference between the Poles and the Vienna Circle (see Łukasiewicz 1936 §II).

[v] Here I thus dissent from Albertazzi 1993: 28.

[vi] Note that we cannot ascribe e.g. (Dev.i) in full to the later Twardowski (1912), because according to the latter, the truths of logic aren't token-judgements (cf. Betti, 2006b: [15]).

[vii] I disregard here a possible (Dev.vi), i.e. the fact that Twardowski accepted four kinds of mental phenomena instead of three (Schaar 2015: 90).

[viii] See Brożek 2015: 158 and the references to Twardowski's writings there.

[ix] This and all other translations in this paper are my own.

[x] For an extensive introduction to Czeżowski, see Coniglione 1997.

[xi] Kotarbiński (1929), arguably his *opus majus,* contains exactly *one* insignificant footnote mentioning Brentano. It is appended to a discussion of psychology characterised in a non-Brentanian way as a *natural* science next to physics and biology.

[xii] Kotarbiński, and according to Łukasiewicz (2006: 202 ff.), Czeżowski at least at some point, endorsed (Dev.ii).

[xiii] The last three claims find their support in Betti 2006a: esp. 64-6, 69.

[xiv] *Pace* Woleński's (1989: 45 ff.), Twardowski's target seem to have indeed been Łukasiewicz (and arguably Leśniewski). In a latter of January 11, 1920 from Witwicki to Twardowski, we read: "I don't know which tooth actually aches me when next to me Łukasiewicz talks to Lesniewski about 'sentences', as if it were only about the grammar of words and about expressions, and not about things, objects, and, facts, statements, rejections, cognitions and about the objective world, and knowing subjects and their mutual relations" (quoted from Jadczak 1997: 32). See also Halpern's letter to Twardowski from May 2, 1921 on http://segr-did2.fmag.unict.it/~polphil/PolPhil////Lesnie/LesnieDoc.html#IH1921

[xv] "He [Leśniewski] says that while sciences were confused and not worth a damn, they were grouped under the name of 'philosophy' - and as soon as one of them improved, a special science was suddenly made of it, to indicate just physics, which came from philosophy. They say the same about logic, which now abjures its great link with philosophy; the same applies to psychology, which has ceased philosophizing and only measures response times." Witwicki to Twardowski, December 3, 1920, see http://segr-did2.fmag.unict.it/~polphil/PolPhil//Lesnie/LesnieDoc.html#Witwicki See also the previous note.