

## **The Research on Kant's Philosophy in the Institute of Philosophy at Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland**

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### **Abstract**

The paper shortly summarizes the research on the philosophy of Kant in the Institute of Philosophy at the Nicolaus Copernicus University (Toruń, Poland). About 30 years ago professor Mirosław Żelazny with a group of collaborators started their research which focuses on three main topics: the reconstruction of Kant's philosophical system against the background of eighteenth-century German philosophy, historical investigation into its reception in Poland, and the translation of Kant's works. One of the greatest achievements are the source investigations and the discovery of some unknown manuscripts, the first Polish edition of the "Collected Works of Immanuel Kant" and several monographies on various aspects of Kant's thought. The paper also stresses the importance of international collaboration with eminent Kant scholars from Germany and Eastern Europe for the projects carried out in Toruń.

### **Keywords**

Kant. "Collected Works of Immanuel Kant". German philosophy. Research projects. Nicolaus Copernicus University. Toruń. Poland.

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In the Institute of Philosophy at Nicolaus Copernicus University (NCU) in Toruń, Poland, systematic research into Immanuel Kant's philosophy and its reception has been carried out by professor Mirosław Żelazny and his team including prof. Jarosław Rolewski, prof. Tomasz Kupś, prof. Kinga Kaśkiewicz and dr hab. Rafał Michalski. Prof. Żelazny also supervises the Translation Class on German Philosophy being a unique project of the kind due to the quality of the publications and the scope of the endeavor. As the result of the work of Toruń scholars many monographs on German philosophy – especially on Kant – have been published together with numerous translations of his works as well as of other German philosophers (F. Schelling, J. Fichte, F. Nietzsche, K. Jaspers, A. Gehlen). The monographs have been published in the “Monografie z Historii Filozofii” series (“History of Philosophy Monographs”)<sup>1</sup>, whereas the translations have been printed by various publishers: Comer, Wydawnictwo Rolewski, Wydawnictwo Marek Derewiecki and by Nicolaus Copernicus University Press in its flagship series “Klasyka Filozofii” (Philosophy Classics)<sup>2</sup>.

However, the most significant achievement of Professor Żelazny's team is the first Polish edition of “Collected Works of Immanuel Kant” which is based on *Kants Werke* “Akademie-Ausgabe” by Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (vols. I–VIII) edition and contains only the works designed by the Königsberg philosopher for publication. The source edition by Prussian Academy of Sciences includes also manuscripts of Kant's lectures published during his lifetime: *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Jäsche's *Logik*, and *Über Pädagogik* (all three works are now available in Polish)<sup>3</sup> and *Physische Geographie*. The discovery of the hitherto unknown manuscripts revealed the fact that the criterion used in the Akademie-Ausgabe edition was unreliable. Currently we can refer to editions of numerous manuscripts of Kant's lecture notes, both on the abovementioned subjects and on morals, on philosophy of religion, and on philosophical encyclopedia. Thus only the acquaintance with all available sources can give the full knowledge of the contents of lectures given by the philosopher during his lifetime.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [http://www.wydawnictwoumk.pl/serie\\_Monografie+z+historii+filozofii.html](http://www.wydawnictwoumk.pl/serie_Monografie+z+historii+filozofii.html)

<sup>2</sup> Available at: [http://www.wydawnictwoumk.pl/serie\\_Klasyka+filozofii.html](http://www.wydawnictwoumk.pl/serie_Klasyka+filozofii.html)

<sup>3</sup> *Antropologia w ujęciu pragmatycznym*, transl. E. Drzazgowska i P. Sosnowska, Warszawa 2005; *Logika*, transl. A. Banaszekiewicz, Gdańsk 2005; *O pedagogice*, transl. S. Sztobryn, Łódź 1999.

The Polish edition consists of six volumes encompassing: *Pre-Critical Writings* (Vol. 1), *The Critique of Pure Reason* (Vol. 2), *The Critique of Practical Reason*, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Vol. 3), *The Critique of Judgment* (Vol. 4), *Metaphysics of Morals*, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, *The Contest of Faculties* (Vol. 5), and *Writings after 1787* (Vol. 6). The edition is designed for the wide public of all cultural spheres in Poland and due to the differences in the interpretation of Kant's thought offered by scholars it includes only the necessary scholarly comments. Polish translations included in the series are prepared by the investigators from the Translation Project on German Philosophy in the Institute of Philosophy, NCU as well as by the best Polish translators of German philosophy working in other academic institutions: prof. Aleksander Bobko, prof. Włodzimierz Galewicz, and dr. Krzysztof Rak. The translations were reviewed by such experts as Karl Dedecius, Ph.D., honorary degree at NCU, Rev. prof. Józef Tischner, prof. Karol Bal, prof. Zbigniew Kuderowicz, prof. Maria Szyszkowska, prof. Honorata Jakuszko, prof. Jarosław Rolewski. Also prof. Jan Garewicz, prof. Radosław Kuliniak, and prof. Bogusław Paż shared their valuable opinions with the editors and translators of the works. The translations of Latin texts were consulted with prof. Zbigniew Nerczuk. Several of the translations were prepared by prof. Mirosław Żelazny with the Translation Class on German Philosophy at The University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn.

The research on the philosophy of Kant and Polish editions of his works prepared in Toruń were carried out within many scientific programs financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, National Science Centre, and, first of all, by The Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation (Stiftung für Deutsch-Polnische Zusammenarbeit).

Two additional volumes of translations are being prepared now which will supplement the "Collected Work" with the texts not yet published in Polish: Kant's philosophical correspondence (a large anthology of the most important letters) and the philosopher's manuscripts known as *Opus Postumum*. The high quality of the research in Toruń is supported by constant collaboration with the prominent Kant scholars: Reinhard Brandt, Werner Stark, Heiner F. Klemme, Werner Euler, Bernd Dörflinger, Bernd Ludwig, Steffen Dietzsch, Alexey N. Krouglov and many others. Also of great significance for Toruń historians of philosophy are tight scientific contacts with Kant specialists from

academic centres in Eastern Europe (Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Slovakia, Ukraine and Czech Republic).

The systematic research is also focused on the reconstruction of the reception of Kant's philosophy in Poland. One of the achievements in this field are the new findings concerning the earliest, 19<sup>th</sup> century reception – especially the activity of Józef Władysław Bychowiec, one of Kant's students and the author of very good translations of his works into Polish. The effect of the research carried out by prof. Żelazny and prof. Kupś in this field (especially the discovery of hitherto unknown manuscripts) are published in the series "Biblioteka Studiów z Historii Filozofii" ("Library of Studies in the History of Philosophy") under the title "Recepcja filozofii Immanuela Kanta w filozofii polskiej w początkach XIX wieku" ("The Reception of Immanuel Kant's Philosophy at the Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century"); three volumes have been published so far, two others will be soon released. The effects of the studies were also announced during two international conferences held in Toruń: "Immanuel Kant i filozofia polska" ("Immanuel Kant and Polish Philosophy", 2014) and "Kant i przewrót kopernikański w filozofii" ("Kant and the Copernican Turn in Philosophy", 2014).

In recognition of the necessity of stimulating and coordinating Polish research on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and on German philosophy in general, Polish Kant Society was established in 2012, the president of which was elected prof. Mirosław Żelazny. The fact confirms the role of Toruń scientific circles in Polish studies on the history of German philosophy.

