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On June 20—23, 1977 the Polish Philosophical Congress was held in Lublin. It had been organized on the initiative of the Polish Academy of Sciences Committee for Philosophical Sciences, and in particular its Chairman, Professor Dr. Marek Fritzhand.

Lublin was once the first centre of socialist authority in People's Poland and its university was the first to start work after the war. The host of the Congress, the Inter-College Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at Maria Skłodowska-Curie University, succeeded in providing all necessary facilities for about 400 participants who represented all scholarly centres and particular branches of philosophy. The Institute is also to be thanked for having created that special atmosphere of scholarship and authentic philosophical discussion. The Congress was observed, with particularly vivid and friendly interest, by the whole Lublin centre, its Party and higher education authorities, scholarly and cultural circles.

The editors of *Studia Filozoficzne* and *Dialectics and Humanism* actively participated in preparing the Congress. A number of section reports were published in our monthly earlier this year so that both Congress delegates and all the readers could become acquainted with them (see *Studia Filozoficzne*, Nos. 12/1976, 2, 4, 7 and 10/1977; see also No. 5/1977, in which philosophical activities at Maria Skłodowska-Curie University have been presented).

The materials published below will be followed, in subsequent issues of our quarterly, by both selected items from the Congress reports proper and their aftermath in Polish humanities.

Editors

Marek N. Jakubowski

ON AUGUST CIESZKOWSKI'S "PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION"

Cieszkowski's "philosophy of action" is probably the most interesting conception among those of the 19th century Polish thought and as such it had to occasion emotions and therefore different opinions. Controversy about Cieszkowski, or rather about his posthumous works, has lasted to the present day and as a matter of fact it concerns two questions: the problem of consistence of Cieszkowski's views with fundamental Catholic dogmas or his heterodoxy and the position of "philosophy of action" amongst the contemporary intellectual trends in Europe. We shall be interested in the latter, considering its importance and topicality and also because it is connected with proper understanding of the conception of creative part of an individual building social reality, the idea which was the pivot of Cieszkowski's philosophy. This paper is meant to be a preliminary attempt at re-vindication of certain qualities contained in the system of the Polish philosopher, qualities which have not been wholly appreciated by historiography trying to put "philosophy of action" into the framework of fixed schemas of philosophy of life.

In the previous historical-philosophical literature two kinds of estimation of the ideas of the Polish Messianist were generally accepted. Some investigators are inclined to place Cieszkowski's thought on the left of contemporary philosophical trends, considering his work as the first expression of revolutionary transformation of Hegel's thought, transformation from logical speculation into the field of praxis.¹ A different point of view is represented by those historians of philosophy who see typically conservative ideas in Cieszkowski's work, the ideas which are incompatible with those included in the works of the Young Hegelians.² Some of them simply consider his

¹ This opinion is shared by A. Cornu (in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Life and Work* and "Introduction" to M. Hess' works, written together with M. W. Mönke) and H. Stucke (in *Philosophie der Tat. Studien zur Verwirklichung der Philosophie bei den Junghegelianern und wehren Sozialisten*, Stuttgart, 1963). However, the two authors differ. Stucke thinks that one should not simply include all the Young Hegelians among the Left of post-Hegel social thought and all the Old Hegelians among the Right. See also N. Lobkowitz, *Theory and Practice. History of the Concept from Aristotle to Marx*, Notre Dame — London, 1967, and C. J. Gulian's book on Hegel.

² See A. Śladkowska, "Stosunek polskiej filozofii połowy XIX w. do klasycznej filozofii niemieckiej" (The Attitude of Polish Philosophers of the Mid-19th Century towards Classical German Philosophy), *Myśl Filozoficzna*, 4/1954; idem, "Rozwój ideologiczny Edwarda Dembowskiego" (Edward Dembowski's Ideological

thought a step backward in comparison with absolute idealism of the Berlin philosopher. Characteristically, this duality of opinion originates already in the 1840s.³

Let us look at the arguments of the two opposing parties. What made some scholars place Cieszkowski among the trends characteristic of the left of Hegel's successors? It was certainly due to the ideas included in the first and probably most famous work of our philosopher, *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie*, published in Berlin in 1838. It contained a number of ideas which were soon to become the leading slogans of young continuators of Hegel gathered round Ruge. The point is the postulate of going beyond Hegel's contemplativism, changing cognitive perspective of philosophy, and including the future into the sphere of its interests. Another point is abolition of opposition of the beyond (*Jenseits*) and earthly reality (*Diesseits*) with simultaneous introduction of differentiation between what is (*sein*) and what should be (*sollen*), and finally, an extrarational factor of volition and the fundamental slogan — action. It should be pointed out that all those elements appeared in the papers of Hegelian radicals in 1839—1840, that is, a year or two after the publishing of *Prolegomena*. An important argument for placing Cieszkowski among the leftist continuators of Hegel's thought is the fact that such thinkers as Hertsen, Dembowski or Hess referred to this conception (at least in their first writings).

A completely different valuation of Cieszkowski's work was presented in Polish Marxist literature of the 1950s. This literature, definitely opposing the former expressions in this respect, was characterized by a shift of interests: from the analysis of philosophical ideas to socio-political views. Researchers concentrated mainly upon those thinkers who represented the radical trend in Polish philosophy of the 19th century — first, of all, E. Dembowski and H. Kamiński. The scheme of non-Marxist historiography, showing Polish philosophical dispute of the first half of the 19th century as the opposition of two trends — anti-Hegelian and pro-Hegelian, was replaced by the scheme no less simplified. Polish reactionaries (this expression was attributed to both Catholic philosophers, with their leaders Rzewuski and Ziemięcka, and representatives of so-called national phi-

Development), in *Z dziejów polskiej myśli filozoficznej i społecznej* (From the History of Polish Philosophical and Social Thought), coll. work, Warszawa, 1957, III pp. 336—389; B. Baczeko, "Niektóre węzłowe problemy rozwoju polskiej myśli społeczno-politycznej i filozoficznej XIX w." (On Some Basic Problems of the Development of Polish Socio-political and Philosophical Thought in the 19th Century), in *ibid.*, pp. 10—68. In his later interesting paper, "Horyzonty problemowe polskiego heglizmu" (The Problem Horizon of Polish Hegelianism), Baczeko slightly toned down his opinion of Cieszkowski, leaving out the "reactionary", but still placed him definitely on the right. The same was true of T. Kroński, see his otherwise profound work *Rozważania wokół Hegla* (Reflections around Hegel), Warszawa, 1960, pp. 157—227.

³ E. Dembowski's attitude is very characteristic here: in one of his early works, he included Cieszkowski among the leading representatives of the Hegelian Left, see *Pisma* (Writings), Warszawa, 1955, I, p. 292, and three years later his opinion of Cieszkowski was quite different, see *ibid.*, IV, p. 346.

losophy — Cieszkowski, Trentowski and Libelt) were placed in opposition to representatives of progressive thought (Dembowski and Kamiński), progressiveness being identified then with social radicalism. A characteristic standpoint in this respect was presented by B. Baczeko, who wrote: "It would be wrong to divide Polish philosophers of that time into adherents and antagonists of Hegel. ... The divisional line, the front line in philosophical confrontation, ran within the camp of so-called 'Polish Hegelians'. On the one hand, there was 'National philosophy' with its liberal-and-gentry social postulates determining philosophical quests and solutions; on the other — philosophical conception derived from Polish democracy (above all, works of Kamiński and Dembowski)".⁴ It is easy to notice that this division results in disregarding both the variety of attitudes presented by the then leading Polish philosophers and the real character of the *Weltanschauung* polemics in that period. The validity of such a division let alone, Baczeko (and a number of other authors) commits another fault, employing a very vague notion of liberation. (As a matter of fact, the author of *Prolegomena* was beyond the current of properly understood liberal thought, which he himself criticized, though in fact some elements of his work brought him closer to it). This resulted in the statement that neither Cieszkowski nor any other of the national philosophers could possibly refer to Hegel's dialectics — what connected them with Hegel was not dialectics but its "mystical crust". A. Śladkowska refused Cieszkowski any merits in the development of the Hegelian school.⁵ The fact that Cieszkowski had an unquestionable influence on quite a number of representatives of philosophical left was either neglected at all or that influence was underestimated to the utmost.⁶ Some scholars, irritated by the Messianism of the

⁴ See B. Baczeko, "Niektóre węzłowe problemy...", *op. cit.*, p. 60. The same view was expressed in a joint paper of B. Baczeko and L. Kotakowski, "Tradycje naukowego socjalizmu i zadania marksistowskiej historiografii" (Tradition of Scientific Socialism and Tasks of Marxist Historiography), *Myśl Filozoficzna*, 4/1954, p. 101.

⁵ *Myśl Filozoficzna*, 4/1954, pp. 111—112: "A certain myth (one of the insurmountable myths of bourgeois historiography) has been attributed to that outstanding and — let this be stressed — least brutal ideologist of liberalism, a man of considerable philosophical education [Cieszkowski — M. N. J.]. Namely, he has been credited with a significant contribution to transcending the limits of the Hegelian dialectic and included among the Hegelian Left (the latter having been done by virtue of a peculiar and unjustified interpretation of *Prolegomena*)... The historiosophic theory of Cieszkowski, as presented in his *Prolegomena*, assumes three fundamental historical epochs, the future being a synthesis of the other two. This made some historians of philosophy believe that Cieszkowski transcended the contradiction of the Hegelian dialectic (which is, of course, due to Hegel's apology of the junker Prussian state) and that he not only referred to dialectic but also developed it in a creative way".

⁶ In "Rozwój filozoficzny Edwarda Dembowskiego", *op. cit.*, p. 378, A. Śladkowska wrote: "It is true that for some time Dembowski was under the influence of Cieszkowski himself and his idea of 'great individuals' (but even then the individual's action was never for him a spiritual action of the self). However, this was just an error which was soon corrected by Dembowski himself".

Polish count and his religious language, forgot that a similar language was used by the thinkers whose progressiveness can hardly be denied (Mickiewicz, Słowacki or Królikowski).

As far as contemporary historians of philosophy are concerned, it is A. Walicki whose standpoint in the controversy in question is especially worthy of mention. He is the author of several most interesting works and probably the most competent critic of Cieszkowski's philosophy. His approach has resulted in rendering the former evaluations relative.⁷ He says: "Who was right in this matter? I shall try to show that neither one nor the other party was right. It may be put differently: both parties were right, but only partially."⁸ Thus Walicki's attitude is actually alternative in respect to those two points of view and, at the same time, it synthesizes them. In his opinion, the incompleteness and falsity of the two contrasting views results from the misunderstanding of Cieszkowski's work, from placing his conception solely in the context of German controversies over Hegel's heritage.

The attitude of the critics placing the author of *Prolegomena* on the left is one-sided in that they separate a part of his conception from the whole of his views. It can be said that they identify the starting point of his philosophy with the system itself, while the starting point was in fact the same for both him and the Young Hegelians and only the ways they followed obviously diverged. Any evolution of Cieszkowski's view is out of the question here: he was unusually consistent in his thinking and all fundamental ideas contained in his later writings followed in a logical way those of *Prolegomena*. The differences between his conceptions and those which almost at the same time appeared in the Young Hegelians' writings are quite distinct. In Cieszkowski's opinion, action was an organic human activity leading towards realization of the social ideal. In this connection, action did not have a destructive, revolutionary character but the constructive and evolutionary. On the other hand, the left of the Hegelians understood this category mainly as the political activity directed against the present; in order to construct you have to destroy first, and Hegelian radicals considered this to be their vocation. It was also connected with their different understanding of dialectics, above all, of the category of negation. Cieszkowski, being essentially faithful to Hegel, laid emphasis on retention of what was negated, on mediatization of the two antithetic elements. For the Young Hegelians negation meant total negation. Their attitude towards religion was also totally different and the palingenetic reflections of the Polish philosopher could not be appreciated by the associates of Strauss and B. Bauer. Besides,

⁷ See, i.a., A. Walicki's: *Filozofia i mesjanizm. Studia z dziejów filozofii i myśli społeczno-religijnej romantyzmu polskiego* (Philosophy and Messianism. Studies in the History of Philosophy and Socio-religious Thought of Polish Romanticism), Warszawa, 1970; Ch. I; "Cieszkowski a Herceń", in *Polskie spory o Hegla* (Polish Controversies over Hegel), Warszawa, 1966, pp. 153-205; "Introduction" to A. Cieszkowski, *Prolegomena do historiozofii...* Warszawa, 1972; "August Cieszkowski", in *Polska myśl filozoficzna i społeczna* (Polish Philosophical and Social Thought), I, Warszawa, 1973.

⁸ A. Cieszkowski, *Prolegomena do historiozofii*, op. cit., p. IX.

Cieszkowski himself separated from the leftist thinkers when he said in *Gott und Palingenesis* (1842) that they use "a guillotine of thought."⁹

As I have already mentioned, to place the Polish philosopher on the right was considered by Walicki not entirely correct either. In this case the error lies in the fact that Cieszkowski's ideas, especially those contained in *God and Palingenesis* and *Our Father*, are studied only in the context of German philosophy. E.g. T. Kroński was one of those who seemed to forget about very strong links of our philosopher with the then French intellectual movement, strictly speaking, with the utopian socialistic thought. Those links were very distinct and they were noticed long ago.¹⁰ If we take these filiations into consideration, it will become evident that those trends of his work which appeared reactionary in the German context, were current ideas in the schools of Saint-Simon and Fourier and were integrally connected with their conception of socialism. Here belong both the palingenetic ideas connected with Cieszkowski's conception of immortality (to be found in France, e.g. in P. Leroux) and the new religion of the future (to be found also in the writings of the followers of Saint-Simon and Fourier) as well as the belief that there exists a relationship between the social system, the universe and God (cf. Fourier).

So Walicki declares for relativity of the opinions on Cieszkowski's philosophy according to the context in which it is examined. Obviously we cannot but agree with his criticism of the two one-sided standpoints we have mentioned above. The criticism can even be expanded because in the thought of the Polish Messiah there occurs a number of further ideas which only apparently justify their classification within the left or the right wing of post-Hegelian philosophy. However, one has a feeling that Walicki's comments lack something or even arouse certain opposition. Before I answer why, I should like to present the main items of Cieszkowski's concept of creativity.

*

The essential ideas of "philosophy of action" appeared, as has already been mentioned, in *Prolegomena to the Philosophy of History*. Later works, first of all *Our Father*, brought only their explication and concretization. The starting point for building his own system was for Cieszkowski Hegel's philosophy. There is no doubt that Cieszkowski, like many of his contemporaries, was fascinated by the author of *Phenomenology of Mind*. However, this fascination did not prevent him from attempts at overcoming critical philosophy. He did not mean the criticism of Hegel's system to be its revision, because "absolute idealism has reached the maximum of what philosophy can reach and if there is any imperfection in it, it is the fault of philosophy itself and the limitation of philosophical domain."¹¹ Thus Hegel is the supreme point of philosophy as such and it cannot be further developed in this form. "Philosophy has to agree to the fact that

⁹ Ibid., p. 190.

¹⁰ See A. Roszkowski, *Poglądy społeczne i ekonomiczne Augusta Cieszkowskiego* (August Cieszkowski's Social and Economic Views), Poznań, 1923.

¹¹ A. Cieszkowski, *Prolegomena do historiozofii*, op. cit., p. 84.

it will be mainly applied philosophy in future ... Practical philosophy or, rather, philosophy of practice, its most concrete influence upon life and social relations, the development of truth in concrete activity — this is future predestination of philosophy as such".¹²

The principles of development exposed and formulated by Hegel gave mankind invaluable practical possibilities. Unfortunately, Hegel's philosophy was comprised in the sphere of ideas only and those ideas remained in his system only possibilities. Thus Cieszkowski "transcends" the system of the Berlin sage and starts with the philosophy of history. Hegel completed his philosophy of self-knowledge at the present moment, so it was essentially a look back. The owl of Minerva flies out at dark — a man gains knowledge of what is just passing away. In Hegel's opinion, we cannot create future because we are not able to get to know it. What we can and do create (though unconscious of it) is the present, and in it there is an embryo of future activity as it were. The creative act is not directed towards the future but refers to the present moment, yet if it is in accordance with the order of the time, its results go ahead into the future; however, we cannot foresee it.

This schema of Hegelian thought, in which man was deprived of the ability of free and conscious creation, could not be approved by Cieszkowski. First of all, he questioned the division of history into four ages; in his opinion, the principles of dialectics imply the necessity of a trichotomic division. Those three epochs are: antiquity (the age of Art), the present (the age of Thought) and the future (the age of Action). It is necessary to include the third era into the sphere of philosophical interests because mankind has to develop further on, and so to have its future. In his monumental work *Our Father* he presented a vision of society in the times to come — a vision of Kingdom of God in this world. The trichotomic division of history is in correspondence with the analogical conception of the development of the spirit, which from the level of "being in itself" through "being for itself" is to reach the highest level of "being out of itself".

Cieszkowski's arguments for the coming of the age of Action were no doubt original. We know that he based his views on the principles of dialectics formulated by Hegel. However, it was not his only inspiration in this respect. Another one was an interesting interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. He considered "Our Father" as not just an ordinary prayer in the form of thanksgiving. "It is a universal request of the whole mankind, given by the Saviour, accepted and repeated by the whole Christianity regardless of denomination, and as such it is an expression of the strivings of the whole Christianity and the manifestation of its historical Future".¹³ So far the meaning of this prayer has been hidden from mankind because only on acquiring complete self-knowledge people become capable of discovering their own future. Owing to that, the shape of the future is not only the result of the development of history but it also obtains a moral sanction, and human actions aiming at the realization of the ideal

¹² Ibid., p. 87.

¹³ A. Cieszkowski, *Ojciec Nasz* (Our Father), Poznań, 1922, I, p. 10.

become a moral imperative. It does not mean at all that since then philosophy has been able to forecast future events. Such postulates would lead to utopian thinking, and Cieszkowski was very much against that. Giving us the principles of the development of reality, dialectics permits to forecast only a general trend of history, while particular events are not determined by these principles so they cannot be learned beforehand. Future epoch is to be a synthesis of ancient naturalness with Christian ideality, a transcending of antinomies which are characteristic of the present time.¹⁴ The aim of mankind is to gain a perfect form of social life, based on harmony, morality, and sociality. But it does not mean in any way that all internal fights will stop then; this would be the negation of the possibilities of further progress, as the latter is precisely the transcendence of contradictions. However, contradictions of the future will be a harmonious conflict. One day a complete realization of the ideal must come about, but what will happen to mankind then is now beyond our rational faculties and can only be imagined. Cieszkowski did, very cautiously, conjecture in this matter. Yet the Kingdom of God on the earth will not come by itself, it will not be given to people; on the contrary, it has to be won. And it is action which will be the means of achieving this social ideal, of realizing the future epoch.

Cieszkowski agreed with Hegel's statement that the spirit is a result of its own activity and that this activity is its essence. However, he questioned limiting this activity to the sphere of pure consciousness. The thought was indeed the essence of the second epoch, yet the essence of the future will be different — it will be man's superior power: the will. "The will associates feeling with knowledge and marries thought and being — and out of this union action is born, the third master of the world".¹⁵ So the will is not to be a negation of either feeling or thought — Cieszkowski is here consistent in employing his principle of mediatization. The will is the affirmation of two antithetic elements, and at the same time it is a new value — the supreme one. The will cannot exist without nature and also without thought. In the first two epochs the truly free will could not exist because human activity (unconscious of its final effects) was the result of participation in God's will. In Hegel's philosophy the will was annexed by reason, whereas Cieszkowski considered thought an integral evolutionary stage of the will: thinking (which is no longer pure abstraction) becomes expressed in the form of the will and action. Human creation will no longer be fortuitous activity (fortuitous in relation to the final purpose, of course) and will become the centre of social life. And only then man will really be a creative individual, creating his social reality. Previously he was only an unconscious tool in the realization of plans of the Providence. Cieszkowski performs a peculiar sacralization of practice. In this context, action becomes the moral dictate for every conscious individual and

¹⁴ The character of future, universal religion is to be similar. While acknowledging the historical authenticity of Christianity Cieszkowski, nevertheless, believed that it should be replaced by a superior form of religious life, a synthesis of ancient materialism and medieval idealism.

¹⁵ A. Cieszkowski, *Ojciec Nasz*, op. cit., p. 141.

for the whole society. It also becomes the fundamental element of the future religion of mankind — the universal religion.

In his conception of action, the author of *Prolegomena* turned to the philosophy of old Fichte, for whom freedom was the basis of action and the cause of all reality. He followed Fichte's division of action into facts (*Tatsache*) and acts (*Tathandlung*). Facts are inappropriate action, incomplete, because they lack the most important element — consciousness of the aim of creation. "Facts are events which occur without any conscious will and designed purpose of the subject they refer to; consciousness comprehends them only *post factum*".¹⁶ Such incomplete creation was characteristic of practice in the first two epochs of history. Action was then of an a priori character in the sense that it was not preceded by the reflection of the real goal people tried to reach. Acts (action proper), which will become the essence of the future, are a different matter.

As I have pointed out, the conception itself was of Fichtean provenience but its content was different. Action, as in Fichte, has a moral character (because such is the aim), but at the same time it means an organic impact on the material-social environment of man. Cieszkowski restored nature to its proper place: like thought, it became the main constituent of action. Thus practice could assume a material dimension. In this connection, he realized the necessity of combining philosophical reflection with serious studies in the field of economy.¹⁷ It is worth pointing out that the Hegelian Left did not notice this fact. As a rule, Cieszkowski spoke about "Action", so he did not mean individual activity. Action is practice of the nations, of all humanity, it is the state of total and permanent social creation. As Lord's Prayer does not express wishes of an individual but of mankind, so the action, which is to bring realization of the prayer, is of "social" character.

It does not mean at all that Cieszkowski left no room for free creation of an individual; on the contrary, if he had, he would have committed the same error he charged Hegel with, namely the error of annexation of individuality by totality. Also, Cieszkowski speaks about "action" in the sense of creative acts of individuals. Every man will in future be able to act creatively, according to the level of his consciousness. Acts of some individuals will of necessity have a very limited range, the activity of some others will, in turn, have a supra-particular significance. Action is right, the lack of action is wrong. Social evil results precisely from the fact that instead of creating and acting, people are reluctant. Cieszkowski thus appeals mainly to propertied classes who as "elder brothers" should set a good example in acting. Progress is an inevitable process and all the efforts to delay it can in result lead to it working its way "from the bottom" — by way of bloody revolution. Cieszkowski wanted to prevent that. All people should work upon realization of the social ideal, and in the process of practice, through free action, they will certainly achieve

¹⁶ Ibid., III, p. 210 (footnote).

¹⁷ So A. Śladowska's remark that "Cieszkowski's 'action' was nothing else but the return to Fichte's concept and had nothing in common with real, sensuous action" is pointless.

self-creation and full affirmation of the essence of humanity. Work will become the right and duty of each man, and having the character of moral obligation, it will also be a pleasure.

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It is time now to answer the question posed earlier, why I consider Walicki's standpoint not quite satisfactory. It is not my intention to add one more opinion to the controversy over the place of Cieszkowski's philosophy: either on the left or on the right of the Hegelian school. Walicki's thorough analysis of the two extreme attitudes therein leaves no doubt that such controversy has now become pointless.¹⁸ So it is not the analysis, carried out by the prominent historian, that causes my objections. The point is that, paradoxically, in giving the discussion its appropriate dimensions Walicki, probably unintentionally, deprives Cieszkowski's conception of a very important quality. It is connected with its central category — action. Proper valuation of this conception is possible only if it is treated as a part of an autonomous philosophical system which was neither Hegel's nor Fourier's. Cieszkowski himself was conscious of the originality of his "philosophy of action", which he treated as an alternative (and, at the same time, consequence) in relation to great contemporary philosophical systems. There is no reason to treat it otherwise.

It is not enough to acknowledge Cieszkowski's formal priority in introducing certain ideas, different in their essence from those developed later by the Young Hegelians (who did it quite independently, to be sure, except for M. Hess' distinct reference to *Prolegomena*). Following this way, it might simply be noticed that the idea of associating philosophy and practice (political practice) appeared in the circle of the Young Germany (among others, in Heine's writings) already about ten years before *Prolegomena*. Neither does it seem right to compare the role of Cieszkowski's work with that of *Life of Jesus* in the dispute over the philosophy of religion.¹⁹ In the Hegelian school, the work of Strauss initiated a discussion on the historical character of religion, and this critical line was developed by B. Bauer and Feuerbach. Then, the role of this work consisted in introducing a certain problem into the sphere of interests of a particular philosophical school: It started a certain kind of criticism and that was its main merit.

Prolegomena was quite a different matter: the value of "philosophy of action" was due to its being, not preliminary or, so to speak, not initiating. An analysis of Cieszkowski's works proves that his conception of practice-action was the most advanced among those created by idealistic philosophy. The Young Hegelians, in their attempt at introducing the category of action into the framework of their Master's philosophy, were not able to produce a definite, non-abstract vision of a creative man. Their conception of activism did not go beyond a purely

¹⁸ I think that as far as the criterion of progressiveness is concerned, Cieszkowski's thought would be more accurately defined by the Marxian "feudal socialism".

¹⁹ A. Walicki, "Czyn, praca, twórczość w polskiej filozofii epoki między-powstaniowej" (Action, Work, and Creativity in Polish Philosophy of the Inter-insurrection Period), *Studia Filozoficzne*, 4/1977, p. 34.

intellectual sphere. No wonder that they hardly noticed Cieszkowski's work. Also Hess, in his *European Triarchy* referred rather to formal elements of Cieszkowski's thought; after all, it could not have been otherwise since he did not realize the importance of economic problems while writing this work. In Cieszkowski's work Human creativity was of a real-material character, but as consciousness anticipated action, there appeared the subjectivization of dialectics in his system. He was simply not able to indicate a real power which would make possible the realization of the social ideal. It was only Marx who did it when (in 1843—1844) he realized that the proletariat is such power and, consequently, acknowledge the priority of practice over cognition. In this context, Cornu and Lobkowicz are right in considering the "philosophy of action" the most important link between Hegel and Marx, but on the other hand they are wrong in relating Cieszkowski's philosophy to the radical trend in post-Hegelian thought.

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THE VARIETIES OF KITSCH

For a number of years the concept of kitsch has been a subject of growing interest. Among its definitional characteristics there appeared properties which make it possible not only to describe the phenomenon, but also to undertake attempts at its explanation within the framework of some sociological and psychological theories. The role kitsch plays in mass social processes has been investigated. Some look upon kitsch as a socially harmful phenomenon which should be counteracted. Still, others see it as a sign of social and artistic avant garde ideas to be used to break old habits. All are, however, unanimous in considering the phenomena and the related concept as something worthy of interest.

The rich stock of papers and monographs on the subject of kitsch collected over the years gives pause for methodological reflection. How is the concept of kitsch used currently? Is there one, or rather many different concepts of kitsch, involved in discussions? Is it at all possible to define kitsch? To which discipline does the concept properly belong: to aesthetics, psychology, sociology, or cultural anthropology? Perhaps to ethics? What is the connection between kitsch and repetition? Are copies and reproductions of paintings to be viewed as kitsch? I shall begin discussing some of these problems with a few examples illustrating the application of kitsch concept.

"A glass becomes 'new and original' in kitsch terms if its size for example is inflated out of all proportion to its function".¹ "... all 'literary masterpieces', merely as a result of becoming universally famous, have had to undergo the kitsch process. We need only think of *Les Misérables*, *Quo Vadis*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Hamlet*, much of D'Annunzio's work, and even Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, as well as Kafka's novels..."² Discussing kitsch in the art of cemeteries Gillo Dorfles writes: "The image of death needs vigour and severity, innocence and putrefaction, blacks and whites; it certainly needs no half tints, sky blues, pinks, angels wings, frilly chapels or sterilized technology devoid of any real ethical meaning".³

As the above examples show the concept of kitsch is understood in a number of ways. Today methodological considerations cannot be restricted to analyzing this or that particular meaning. To be able to

¹ V. Gregotti, "Kitsch and Architecture", in G. Dorfles, (ed.), *Kitsch. An Anthology of Bad Taste*, London: Studio Vista, 1969, p. 261. This book appeared in several language versions, also in Italian.

² G. Dorfles, "The Betrothed and Co.", in *Kitsch...*, op. cit., p. 91.

³ G. Dorfles. "Death", in *Kitsch...*, op. cit., p. 137.