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## **Kant in Vilnius: some reflections on local encounter with "universal" canon**

In 1819, at the twilight of Enlightenment, Jan Sniadecki called Critique of Pure Reason *romansem metafizycznym* – a metaphysical novel. This metaphor was quite transparent for late Vilnius liberalisms. *Metafizyka* (for Sniadecki) represented a disgraceful past of philosophy, which was – in his opinion – successfully overpassed. *Romans* has clear reference to romanticism, to the war between reason and imagination and in this sense to an unwanted future. Together they were setting up an explosive mixture. So no wonder that the three from four philosophical works by Sniadecki of this period concerned with critique of Kant.

The first preparatory fragments of such critique made its appearance in 1811, in official address named “On religious instruction”, in which the topic of “dangerous science” emerged – with clear reference to fashionable German philosophical theories – and this means to Kant.

A little bit later, in the second volume of his writings in the paper “On metaphysics” Sniadecki applies to Kant and characterizes his project as “mystycizm metafizyczny”.

In 1818, delivering the paper “On Philosophy”, Sniadecki gives overall picture of Kants project again, -- in more profound manner -- and formulates four arguments against it. These arguments were used to convince enlightened public of the truth of Sniadecki’s position.’

But in most detailed and large-scaled way this critique was elaborated in “Supplement to the paper “On Philosophy”, -- a quite volumetrical work, which appeared as a response to pro-Kantian review in “Pamiętnik Lwowski”.

Thus for about ten years Kant was a central subject of Vilnius philosophical discussions, while Sniadecki’s critique – a core of these discussions.

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This encounter with Kant became a topic of reflections and later examinations, - particularly at the end of 19 century.

But questions were formulated quite narrowly. In fact there were two questions, which was interconnected.

Had Sniadecki reason (or at least was he correct?) in his critique?

And had he the right to it?

An answer on these questions for the majority of historians of philosophy was evident: Sniadecki's critique was based on same misunderstanding of Kant and this misunderstanding was – for its part - a symptom of intellectual lagging, a sign of

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At this moment I'd like to make some methodological remark.

Traditional history of philosophy proceeds from (the assumption of) existence of central canon of thought, consisted of high achievements (of thought) and provincial territories the only legitimate strategies for which could be strategies of reception or imitation.

Sure that from such assumption Sniadecki's critique is inadmissible from the very beginning.

In my paper I propose to change the standpoint and to look at Sniadecki's critique not as a pure fact of evolution of (local) thought but also as a symptom of a new epistemological situation.

This methodological shift could be described as transition from the history of philosophy paradigm to the history of ideas practices.

There is no problem of adequacy in this new paradigm. Furthermore – from the history of ideas perspective appropriate understanding is rather exception to the rule and seems to be a part of positivist mythology than a reality of tradition.

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Very early Kant was deprived from the context of German culture and become to exist in late Enlightenments cultures as independent and self-sufficient intellectual character.

In some sense the image of such Kant was independent from the reality of his works.

Kant as a conceptual character become at the beginning of 19 century a symbol of new autonomy of philosophy which while losing its universal status, cease to be episteme – become not only epistemology but also a critique of knowledge.

Critique of Kant was in that way an examination of this new situation, a symptom of some intellectual shift, and - finally - a witness of the birth of new episteme.