

Anti-Irrationalism in Izydora Dąmbska (1904-1983)

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Izydora Dąmbska was the first Polish philosopher to develop a position known as logistic anti-irrationalism (1937/2016; cf. Ajdukiewicz 1949/1973: 46–49). Anti-irrationalism, on Dąmbska's account, is the view that only those judgements that may be expressed clearly and coherently and that in principle could gain consensus among experts and non-experts may be treated as worthy of common rational acceptance. Even more important for Dąmbska is what ought to be left out, which is four kinds of irrationalism: logical (the acceptance of logical or empirical impossibilities), psychological (the acceptance of irrational beliefs, such as wishful thinking, superstition, vetoing one's own interests, or deliberate neglect of countervailing evidence), metaphysical (the acceptance of the view that reality is irrational), and epistemological (the acceptance of the justification for manners of cognizing that establish as legitimate logically irrational statements). The three sources of such irrationalism are: (1) creating irrational hypotheses and theories whose function is to explain facts established in experience, (2) deriving extra-empirical conclusions from empirical scientific theses and (3) using judgements of value to accept or reject descriptive theses. These four kinds of irrationalism, while not authorized by science, do tend to occur within scientific practice, especially physics, and it is the job of the philosopher to determine the boundaries of this irrationalism and to determine whether there is an acceptable level of irrationalism being practiced. If not, then there should be some intervention.

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