



Eugeniusz Górski in memoriam

Recently released special volume of „Archive...” has its own both unique and, unfortunately, sad story. It was meant to become a special volume dedicated to Professor Eugeniusz Górski who celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his scientific work. Professor Górski used to uphold close ties with Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and lately became a director of one of its departments, namely Department of History of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy. Professor was delighted with the initiative, invited his friends both from Poland and overseas to contribute and awaited eagerly for the completion of editorial work. Regrettably, he suddenly left us; his unexpected and premature death changed the commemorative volume into a posthumous one.

Eugeniusz Górski studied philosophy and linguistics in the sixties at the Warsaw University; he began his scientific work in the seventies. It was a period of time marked by growing interest in the culture of Spanish-speaking countries and Latin American boom in literature, when revolutionary movements combating dictatures in South America were abound. All those facts put together could influence him to specialize in the history of Spanish and Latin American though but definitely his decision was not dictated by mere fad since he stuck to it for another several dozens of years.

Influenced by the tradition of the Warsaw School of the History of Ideas, he was focusing on the borderlines of philosophy, political thought and ideology. The object of his research was an exotic – in the case of several countries and epochs even closed – part of the world but nevertheless our part of Europe, including Poland, was not entirely absent. At least from a certain point in time his research was comparative in nature. He used to compare discussions regarding cultural identity, democratization, Occidentalism or civil society carried in Spanish speaking countries with those carried in Central Europe, therefore reading his always pithy works was fruitful not only for the narrow circle of professionalists but for generally educated humanists as well. Yet, his elsewhere highly esteemed, both eagerly anticipated and willingly published scientific output did not gain such fitting recognition

here, in Poland, outside the hermetic group of specialists. The reasons were probably twofold: firstly, the author himself, as an extremely winsome and modest man, could not get used to promote his works in a more methodic manner; and secondly, he did not care much about the superficial claptrap which could easily win him the reader.

Eugeniusz Górski's works do not do the justice to his brilliant intellect and profound knowledge; his erudition surpassed easily his field of professional specialty. I was lucky enough to get to know and regularly meet him for the last twenty years and I could frequently see it for myself. He was familiar with various philosophical epochs and traditions; even not so long ago I was astonished by his incredibly detailed knowledge regarding some XVIIth century Polish mystic woman.

During the course of the last years at least several times he said that "iberamerican culture domesticated death". We know that he was right when he spoke about cultural phenomenon. But on the other hand we know that when taken in literal meaning not a single culture can domesticate death. If culture means memory, then the only way to domesticate death is to fall into oblivion. I wish this volume could prevent us as long as possible from domesticating the death of a distinguished scholar, interlocutor and friend of many of us. 