

Prof. Dr. **Lech Witkowski**, Pomeranian University at Slupsk, Poland

Lech Witkowski is Emeritus Professor of Humanities at the Pomeranian University at Slupsk, Poland, and still teaches there. Born 1951, then he graduated with honors from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Faculty of Mathematics in 1974. In 1980 he got his Ph. D. in epistemology from the University in Lublin, receiving the prize of The Ministry of Science and got habilitation at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 1989. He became a full professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University in 1992 for his book on culture semiotics of M. Bachtin for which he was also awarded by The Ministry of Science. Three years later he received the title of ordinary professor. The reviewers in his academic career proceedings and nominations were, among others, outstanding Polish professors B. Skarga, J. Kmita, M.J. Siemek, A. Jasinska-Kania, M. Tyszkowa, S. Morawski, Z. Bokszański, representing philosophy, sociology, psychology and cultural studies. As an ordinary professor he worked at Nicolaus Copernicus University, Jagiellonian University, Casimir the Great University.

In the 1980's he participated in the seminar of B. Skarga at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw. He lectured (in English, Italian and French) at numerous foreign universities and international conferences in Italy, Canada, USA and Switzerland. Between 1993-1996 he served as Dean of Faculty of Humanities at NCU in Torun. He was then responsible for the prestigious series of "The Copernican Lectures" (lecturers included: B. Skarga, Z. Bauman, M.J. Siemek, S. Morawski). In 1995 he organized the 6th Polish Philosophical Congress and 2nd Polish Pedagogical Congress in Torun. He was also responsible for organizing international philosophical congresses in Kraków (2001) and Greek Olympia (2003) as the president of International Society for Universal Dialogue of that time.

He has tutored nine Ph.D students, many times reviewing both Ph.D. and habilitation degrees as well as applications and proceedings for professorship. He is an author of numerous "super-reviews" for the Central Board of Scientific Titles and Degrees in Poland. He was many a time a member or a chairman of the Philosophy Division of KBN (State Committee for Scientific Research). He was appointed ten times in a row as a philosophy representative and also to chair competitions for government funding of research; many times he was a member of review committees for the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in the field of philosophy and pedagogic. He was a member of the Committee on Philosophical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Science, as well as a member of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Science. He promoted as a tutor the honoris causa Ph. D. proceedings of Nicolaus Copernicus University for prof. Barbara Skarga and gave the laudatory speech for the honoris causa Ph.D. of Nicolaus Copernicus University for Karl Dedecius.

This year he has received the Medal for Achievement in Pedagogy by the Polish Pedagogical Society, and last year he was honoured with Medal of the Polish Ecology Chamber for the Merits for Sustainable Development. In 2009 he received the Wladyslaw Spasowski Prize of Polish Academy of Science for 'triptych essays' on the philosophy of education. In 2010 he was among the ten nominees for Jan Długosz Prize for the book *Wyzwania autorytetu w praktyce społecznej i kulturze symbolicznej* (Challenges of authority in social practice and symbolic culture) which was nominated the Book of the year 2009. In 2013 he was awarded with the title of The Master of Pedagogic and was chosen as a correspondent member of European Academy Sciences Arts Letters in Paris. In the year 2013 he was nominated a member of the Team of Experts of the National Science Centre in Kraków.

To honor the academic achievements of professor Lech Witkowski by the representatives of many fields of Polish human sciences, a Jubilee Book was published on the 35th anniversary of his academic work (among the authors were B. Skarga, Z. Bauman, S. Kowalik, Z. Kwiecinski, B. Sliwerski, T. Szkudlarek, Z. Melosik). Recently professor Lech Witkowski celebrated his 45th anniversary of academic work. The covers of the books bring appreciation from such outstanding scholars as Z. Bauman, P. Sztompka, Z. Kwieciński, Z. Kowalik, A. Michalska and T. Sławek. He was also in 2013 the guest editor of the highly appreciated monographic issue of the Journal *Er(r)go* on the theme: "Authority/hierarchy/influence."

The scientific achievements of professor Lech Witkowski represent the grand scope and a broad horizon. In his work, one can find papers on epistemology, history of culture, philosophical anthropology, theory of education and pedagogy, psychology and psychoanalysis, sociology, history of ideas, theory of literature and semiotics, critical theory, and hermeneutics. What is inspiring is not the sheer variety of research fields and familiarity with so many areas of modern human sciences but unmatched dexterity in combining different languages and stepping over traditional thresholds. The work of Lech Witkowski is the highest proof example and confirmation of the possibility of doing transdisciplinary humanities. No other author in this field in Poland having such a fluid command of idioms from so many disciplines and specializations. What is the most impressive is the ability to translate; causing the idioms to enter into a creative dialogue. This particular skill enables a philosopher to communicate with a psychologist, a sociologist with an anthropologist, and a historian of ideas with the psychoanalyst. And in this dialogue, or rather *polilogue*, they have profoundly more to say than in usual monologues. A preferred, documented with many studies, seen from various perspectives, idea of integral humanities is the proper focus point of this "Work."

Trans-disciplinary studies and research of Lech Witkowski are characterized by dexterous integration of historical and theoretical dimensions, insidious analysis, and panoramic synthesis. Most of all, however, which is a true rarity, the combination of patient "philosophical" inquisitive precision with genuine passion, curiosity, and devotion to the matter at hand. The passion that does not cease to question and probe, where each answer is verified in the fire of various arguments. The passion that searches and opens. The passion often takes the shape of passionate polemics but is always ready to listen to its opponents and give them their due recognition.

The research style of Lech Witkowski has nothing to do with a hostile “antagonism.” Still, it follows the long tradition of polemics as an agon where the goal is not to overcome an opponent but to bring to light and to recognize the matter of the argument itself. Reasoning “the other way round” and “across” Lech Witkowski never loses from his sight the problem of the thought itself. His thoroughness and passion for research are great examples of dialogue and transitive thinking. An exemplary way to do integral humanities.

In his research Lech Witkowski never limits himself to mere account but as a rule he seeks to present a problem which translates into in-depth and thorough study. His passion for questioning and opening of a research area makes his studies not only original but truly revealing – not in a sense of giving authoritative, conclusive answers but exactly in a sense of opening, organizing and broadening the space of dialogue and creative thinking. Whatever the matter, whether it is the problem of authority and dealing with the traditional superstition concerning one, an idea of “radical pedagogic” created in dialogue with an American scholar H. Giroux, “breaking point of dualism in humanities” constructed and reconstructed theoretically using critical studies devoted to “psychodynamic ecology of a life-span” of E.H. Erikson or “complete pedagogic” of H. Radlinska with a key idea of “invisible environment”, in all his studies the problems presented are creatively revitalized. Thus becoming an inspiration for all readers and commentators who share the inclination to think.

Monumental studies of “complete pedagogic” of H. Radlinska and „The Duality Turnover in Polish Pedagogy” are exquisite examples that Lech Witkowski is able to combine values of theoretical construction and reconstruction with a proposal of deconstruction of fossilized historical and speculative stereotypes. For example, undermining a very dominant idea that the only achievement of Polish science between two World Wars of international recognition were logic research of the so called “Lwow and Warsaw School” whereas discoveries in the field of “philosophy of education” have similar value. Another illustration of his ability to demythologize is equally monumental, stunning in its boldness and erudition, study of “authority” in the atmosphere of a global and thorough crisis of this institution. Which only proves that the author is able to perform not only deep diagnosis of a crisis situation but also to formulate proposal as to their repair and foresee groundbreaking critical solutions.

What should also be emphasized is that the studies and research of professor Witkowski are very systematic and consistent. His inherent logic and discipline of discussion does not only apply to the parts of his work but to a whole vision consolidating it into coherent anthropological and philosophical unity. He has not become an extraordinary thinker and scholar due to being the author of so many important and groundbreaking works but most of all because he is the author of the Work of an open thought, the thought that searches and inspires, the thought that is aware of its descent and its future.

Some of his above books are extensive monumental volumes. This quantitative result is not representative, though, considering the impact of his work for modern humanities, particularly within the philosophy of education while he teaches in various places in Poland and abroad.