

PROFESOR BOLESŁAW W. LEWICKI
(1908—1981)

On 23rd July 1981 there died in Lodz, after a short but very painful illness, Professor Bolesław W. Lewicki. This death deprived the Polish humanities of one of the most original and creative minds—a man with a very rich and versatile personality, a fascinating personality. The irreparable loss is felt most acutely by the Polish filmology, a new science, the main founder of which in Poland and ardent propagator was Professor Bolesław W. Lewicki.

Born on 28th August 1908 in Lvov. He drew the noblest elements from the intellectual and cultural atmosphere of this town. He completed His academic courses in Polish philology, at the School of Humanities, University of Jan Kazimierz under scientific guidance of prof. Juliusz Kleiner. Attending prof. J. Kleiner's doctoral seminar, Professor Bolesław W. Lewicki obtained in 1938 His doctoral degree for a dissertation treating relationships between the war lyric poetry and the folk soldier's songs. His other master over the same period was prof. Roman Ingarden, and in the period of 1932—1935 Professor B. W. Lewicki was attending his seminars on aesthetics. At first, still at the time of His academic studies, His scientific interests were quite diversified. Parallely with studying the Polish philology He was studying ethnography, devoting a great deal of His attention to linguistics. His treatise on *Social Jargons in Żeromski's Novels* from 1929 is quoted by Henryk Gaertner in his *Grammar of Modern Polish Language*. After completing His doctoral courses between 1933 and 1938 He was working as a teacher in secondary schools of Lvov. At this time till the outbreak of the Second World War He was actively involved in extensive publicistic and critical work. In 1931 Professor B. W. Lewicki became a secretary on the editorial board of "Ruch Słowiański". He was also one of founders of "Sygnały" edited in Lvov. His numerous critical works from that time are becoming increasingly dominated by the film. In columns of "Słowo Polskie" where He was editing a special supplement, "X and XI Muses" and in "Lvov Gazette" appear His film and play reviews. His articles dealing with the cultural life could be also found in "Życie Sztuki", "Pion", "Lwów Literacki", "Lwowskie Wiadomości Muzyczne i Literackie", "Teatr", and others. Starting from 1932 He had his first cyclic programme devoted to the film in the Lvov Broadcasting Station of Polish Radio.

The other channel of His activity over these years was a pioneer research work, the scientific object of which was the film art. Within the orbit of wide range of interests taken by the young humanist in the world of culture, the film became an object of a permanent cognitive passion, which called for a big doze of intellectual courage if we take into account the low cultural status enjoyed by the cinema at that time. The young scholar was embarking upon an unknown continent, which was almost completely deprived of topographic signs of the scientific tradition. The earlier expeditions of Irzykowski and Kleiner to this continent were of a rather incidental character. Lewicki was undoubtedly the first man to embark upon an exciting task of creating from its very foundations the aesthetics of film art. *Construction of Film Work* published in 1935 was prompted by marvellous ideas of Roman Ingarden. This publication contained the first outline of theoretical concepts of Lewicki: ergocentric starting point, morphological interests, and a concept of the film as synthetic art. Other publications belonging to the same period also delimitate the areas of His future scientific interests. The treatise *Jak patrzeć na film (How to Look at a Film)* from

1933 is the first reconnaissance into the area of film psychology, while His book *Młodzież przed ekranem* (*Youth before a Screen*) signals His sociological and didactic inclinations.

The Lvov period in Professor's life was not only a period of acquiring scientific experience, the value of which can be hardly overestimated from the viewpoint of His theoretical system. It is not restricted solely to quite imposing critical activity with the profound testimony of this side of His creative work to be found in many works treating the history of the film and theatre. But we can see here perhaps the most remarkable dimension of His existence in the world of culture — this is His social activity propagating the film and animated by His lively temper, ever-lasting passion of an organizer in the sphere of the film culture. In 1933 He was a co-founder, secretary, and later chairman of the Lvov club "Awangarda", which belonged to one of the most meritorious environments in development of the Polish film movement. Within the framework of "Awangarda", which was also producing its films, He shot several scientific-educational films benefitting from His practical knowledge acquired during supplementary courses at Lvov Polytechnic in the field of film technology. Before the war He was trying His hand in directing radio programmes and in 1938 He was appointed the programme director in Torun Broadcasting station.

The war-time was a turning point in His biography. After participating in defence of the country in September 1939 He spent the war in consecutive concentration camps. He was an intellectual in the "epoch of furnaces". Later on, after many years He published a volume of His reminiscences, which constituted His deeply personal settlement of accounts with the totalitarian "shadow line", which divided His life into two halves. The book took its title from Auschwitz saying *Wiesz jak jest* (*You Know how It is*), and represents one of the most unusual, and original documents of the experience derived from the concentration camp.

His post-war life was linked with Łódź, as a powerful centre of the film art. With His pre-war social passions still fresh in His mind, He started with programming the activities of the newly-reconstructed cinematography becoming the artistic director in the Film Studio producing feature films, the first editor-in-chief in the Educational Film Studio—to return back to the science shortly afterwards since He always felt best in its company. He organized His scientific workshop in the Academy of Film becoming soon one of its most notable, colourful, and distinct personalities shaping along with others its unique atmosphere. Between 1968 and 1971 He was holding the post of its Rector.

In His scientific-didactic work in the Academy of Film He was devoting special attention to problems of the scientific film and to methodology in analysis of a film. In the analytical workshop He elaborated an original system of a graphic recording of all structural components of a given film production in the form of the so-called score, which would arouse interest also abroad.

But His energetic nature drives Him to seek new areas of scientific activity. In 1959 within the Chair of Theory of Literature at the University of Łódź, directed by prof. Stefania Skwarczyńska He opens the first academic centre of filmology in Poland—Department of Film Knowledge. This return to the university is a period of His intensified scientific work. He published numerous treatises being of fundamental importance for the film theory: *Podstawowe zagadnienia budowy dzieła filmowego* (*Basic Problems of Constructing a Film Production*), *Gramatyka języka filmowego* (normatywna dziedzina teorii filmu) [Grammar..... Theory], *normatywna dziedzina teorii filmu* *Grammar of Film Language* (*Normative Sprehe of Film Theory*), *Problematyka rodzajów i gatunków w sztuce filmowej* (*Problems of Kinds and Genres in Film Art.*), *Słownik gatunków filmowych* (*Dictionary of Film Genres*), *Percepcyjne uwarunkowania estetyki filmu* (*Perceptive Determinants of Film Aesthetics*), *Funkcje informacyjne struktury dzieła filmowego* (*Informative Functions in Structure of Film Production*), *Formuła struktury estetycznej filmu* (*Formula of Aesthetic Structure of Film*). All these publications are summed up in books entitled, *Wprowadzenie do wiedzy o filmie* (1964) (*Introduction to Knowledge about Film*), *Scenariusz—literacki program struktury filmowej* (1970) (*Screenplay—A Literary Programme of Film Structure*), and *Kino i telewizja* (1977) (*Cinema and Television*). These publications are characterized with universal ambitions, a desire to grasp the film art in synchrony and diachrony of cultural processes. There is also manifested in them an attitude of cognitive and methodological maxima-

lism aiming at creating a possibly full and precise apparatus of concepts for the new discipline. This apparatus by right of osmosis was ensuing from theory of literature, creating a concept of the so-called literary origin of a film production well known in the Polish humanities.

The other area of His work became relentless development of the film culture in all its forms— He led the movement of film clubs, introduced the film to schools, and organized the academic courses in the theory of culture at the University of Łódź, where He was a director in the Institute of Theory of Literature, Theatre, and Film in the period of 1973—1978. His famous seminar on the theory of film was attended by people who can today be found in all spheres of the film-life in Poland.

Those who were allowed to meet Professor Lewicki would always remain hypnotized by His charming personality. We, His students and friends called Him Master as this today anachronic name suited Him ideally. It would reflect not only His peripatetic inclination to associate with a circle of His students through a lively dialogue in the human almost tangible warmth of which new thoughts and values are born but also the fact that He radiated the magic aura of one of the last inhabitants of the humanistic Atlantida. The radiance of His aura would enlighten His most unexpected and surprising intellectual concepts. He was a scholar whose most characteristic feature was imagination. He was a true geyser of scientific ideas and conceptions which He would generously spread about Himself being oftentime too impatient in the constant search of them thus cultivating their further development and growth.

And now when the time came to say good-bye to Him giving Him a sincere thought we keep fresh in our memories His credo of a humanist: "People—eminent and remarkable—create culture. People sensitive and seeking truth and beauty—remember. But human memory is not ever-lasting, people depart, and hence the role of chroniclers and historiographers is tremendous. And that not only to "save from forgetfulness" but also to help the future being born everyday, every moment. To help through pointing at continuity of history in its particular, meaningful revelations. Without this awareness of historical continuity there cannot be achieved the full human awareness".

Tadeusz Szczepański, Łódź