Writing this text does not come easy to me. It is not going to be a discussion of Professor, Leszek Kołakowski’s works. Instead, I set out to give a personal account of those years of mutual contact. My acquaintance with Leszek lasted for 47 years, it began in 1962. I do not call him by his first name simply because it is customary in Poland to do so upon a person’s death; in fact, he suggested that we should come to first-name terms in the late 1970s, and I honestly do not know how I deserved that. Later, he called me an “old friend.” I was one of the five doctors the Master had supervised; I have called him Master for decades. We have been scattered throughout Poland: Warszawa, Łódź, Poznań, Kraków and Sopot; the five of us—today holding the title professor ordinarius—have never met in one place and at the same time, not even at the burial...

But there is “something” that creates a close tie between us, also comprising a great number of other people who own up to being (rather than having been) his disciples. Unlike Plato or Aristotle, Leszek did not create a classical philosophical school … and yet he gave us the sort of guidance and taught us the kind of principles that allow us to say of ourselves we are “Leszek’s.” [In our days, this phrase will particularly come to mean more than it used to, and we—a large group of people—will be recognizable]. This was expressed by e.g. Barbara Labuda in 1997 when, representing President Aleksander Kwaśniewski in conferring upon Leszek an honorary doctorate of Gdansk University, which coincided with his birthday, following the President’s speech, she made her own address: “I came down here from Warsaw to pay back this debt on behalf of the cosmopolitan liberal intelligentsia, who opposed totalitarianism and for whom you were the Master … Your behavior, reasoning, as well as intelligence, and wit—were constitutive of my life path, too. I belonged to the generation of those young rebels who organized protest demonstrations at Poznań University. I am paying a debt—a karmic one, one might say—I have incurred with You.”

There are uncountable examples of statements and attitudes of this kind not only in Poland but across the civilized world, as well. Why do I write about the world? Is it justified? Among a plethora of awards, the rationale for the Italian Ninio of 1997 deserves a special mention: “to the master of our day, for the originality that manifested itself in an opposition to any dogmatism (!), totalitarianism and in solidarity with those who suffer physically and morally. (!)” Sapienti sat.
In reviewing the Gdansk honorary doctorate, Father Józef Tischner, who was being operated on the same day in Krakow, wrote: “Leszek Kołakowski’s liberalism cannot and will not be liberalism without values. If it is of value to him, it is just because freedom enables man to make choices between different values, try and implement them and become more human in this process.” Thus, Kołakowski was no relativist. Quite often he indicates what should not rather than what should be done. In one imperative he appeared consistent, though: “try not to do evil, do not harm others!” He was not (alas, from now on we will be using the past tense) indulgent towards totalitarian concepts: he exposed the lies of the ideology that made totalitarianism legitimate, in which he offered a form of “katharsis for enslaved minds.” Kołakowski was one of the critics of the criminal system, and was among its annihilators.

True, before Leszek started teaching freedom, he had to learn it. He initiated the process when in Moscow, and summed it up in saying “Heresies originate in party schools and monasteries,” and “heretics are more dangerous for a doctrine than its overt enemies.” No comment!

What is it then that brings together him, the five PhD holders he supervised and the great number of educated people worldwide? There is no doubt that it was honesty to himself and to others, scholarly, theoretical and—notably—practical reliability, and finally a continuous strife for truth. Like Lessing and Kirkegaard, he believed that if God held the truth in his right hand, and in his left the pursuit of truth, he would not hesitate to turn to his left. Understandably, Leszek fought dogmatism. Nonetheless, we find a number of universal themes in Leszek’s ideas, even if they do not form any coherent theory. May I point to one such theme: in his honorary doctor lecture in Gdansk, he made a reference to the Epistle to the Romans to commend cosmopolitanism: “There is no incurable incongruity between a cosmopolitan attitude where it is has a decent rationale and an attachment to one’s own national heritage. We need powerful cosmopolitan spiritual forces to muzzle manifestations of ethnic fanaticism... The ideas of culture closed in a national cage, as well as ideas of economic autarchy are an infallible recipe for national suicide...” the Professor concluded his lecture.

Another thing that characterized the Professor was his struggle to defend individual dignity. Still before, but congenially with, Gaudium et Spes, he wrote that untrue or undue statements need to be fought but the dignity of the critic, his person, must be respected.

Like Kant, Kołakowski assigned supremacy to practical rather than to theoretical thinking, as well as an uncompromising intellectual honesty which bent to no consequences, not even to those that might put him at risk in everyday life. No power could remain idle when criticized by someone who spared no effort to condemn anything that went against individual freedom and dignity. Not infrequently, his honesty and intellectual reliability enabled him to abandon once-professed ideas which, upon a more careful analysis, failed to withstand criticism. This was always a proof of exceptional courage.
He was an unquestionable authority for many intellectuals, for a wide circle of educated people worldwide, as is evidenced by the numerous academic distinctions conferred upon him.

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This text is not supposed to be scholarly, nor does it seek to synthesize the output of the deceased. That would take volumes. Also, it is not easy to interpret the Professor. The intrinsic meaningfulness of his thinking abhors an ultimate synthesis. His thought balanced between extremes. He was a dialectic philosopher who experienced a dramatic crack in our nature. In Józef Tishner’s opinion (and they knew each other well), Leszek proposed “understanding without indulgence.” Indulgence would be tantamount to a lack of rational criticism, and a lack of understanding would mean ignorance of the complex fate of man.

In many ways the Professor was a pioneer; he was a Pole and a defender of the tradition of European culture. His whole writing is a search for perils for culture, but he forever remained a philosopher, a historian of ideas, the most profound and comprehensive critic of Marxism, an author of tales, a priest looking for transcendence or a learned (!) jester exposing any dogmatism at its very core. He was fascinated by poetry, which he demonstrated in a booklet, a collection of the poems he deemed most precious and corresponding with his personality. On one occasion he tried to write a poem himself, but he backed off as he was facing the challenge of none other than Schopenhauer.

It would be easier to say what the Master did not do. Indeed, from the very beginning on, he was interested in religion. Here, too, he evolved from his Notes on the Current Counter-reformation as far as accepting the meaning of Christianity for the Mediterranean culture. His personal attitude to faith is another issue—Kołakowski’s religiosity can be a deterrent. He distinguishes between God and gods (in any meaning of the term), the latter of which he mercilessly attacks. He does not speak about God: the Divine is supra rationem and he was much closer to negative theology. The institutional side of religion was on numerous occasions harshly criticized in his writings on historical grounds, be it just owing to the history of Europe. He represented a non-denominational religiosity, perhaps even a non-denominational Christianity, which he studied and published on in the early 1960s. He never escaped difficult questions, although he did ignore some; he was a sceptic and an ironicist—he was a thinker who brought up aporia or stated their existence.

Even though I did not set out to speak about his intellectual output, and did focus on a personal recollection instead, an outcome of close to 50 years of acquaintance and then friendship, I simply could not fail to mention the values he professed.
Our fully-fledged acquaintanceship (and in connection with Kirkegaard) resulted from a meeting at a public lecture at Warsaw’s MKPiK which the Philosopher dedicated to the great Dane. I had just completed reading *Fear and Trembling*, and it was the book the thinker devoted his discourse to. I had a 25-page typescript with me, which I handed to the Professor. We arranged for a phone call. Two days later, Kołakowski “dragged” me out of bed in the heart of night and in mincing words, he said more or less this: “the text calls for some far-reaching alterations; it is not fit for printing. Do work on the problem, but there is no one in Poland who deals with the “Dane” except J. Iwaszkiewicz…” I hinted to the Professor that he should simply dump the text. “No, if your interests are in this direction, please, keep working on it,” I heard him say. As we can see, the Professor could just as gracefully discourage one from working as he could encourage one. Things then accelerated. We arranged that I should send my text to the Professor bit by bit, and I would then go to the Professor’s place in Senatorska Street after PAN science academy seminars, conducted by Prof. B. Baczko and attended by the high life of the Polish humanities. There we would discuss the texts submitted.

Once I took the liberty to disagree with the Professor’s opinion and anxiously awaited his reaction. He read the passage in question once more and—my heart trembling in waiting—I heard: this rationale is acceptable because **there is more than one correct opinion in humanities**. I sighed with relief. I believe the thought became Kolakowski’s intellectual motto, one he never dropped. This explains the openness of his thoughts and the respect he felt for a justified dissenting opinion, from which he endeavored to extract the values he considered precious and true. Contrary to a belief shared by some, and as I pointed before, he was no relativist; at best he made relative those values which could aspire to the rank of unshakable truths irrespective of the plane on which they appeared. Then he contrasted them with other arguments, convinced there are not only pros—there are cons, too. However, the point was not to demonstrate an equivalence of judgments. Leszek’s creed implied that our choices are made on the basis of incomplete knowledge, which means that in the volitional sphere they must be accompanied by risks, while in the cognitive one—by uncertainty. The results of the choices will thus be both predictable and unpredictable, expected and unexpected, positive and negative in their consequences, which means that there are no absolutely good choices, i.e. ones that end up in solely positive results. In other words, a choice of one value must be made at the expense of another. Such an attitude could not have been liked by any of those who had a deep conviction that only they knew the truth and were right, who thought only they knew what should be chosen and in what way. In intellectual terms, Kołakowski must have had both friends and foes.

The mere fact of the Mediterranean culture being rooted in a Judeo-Christian tradition, which was fundamental for the Professor, contradicts the claim of his ideas being relative. In my lectures I often make use of an example that comes from my conversations with the Master. “A person who hardly knows anything about Christianity, especially Roman Catholicism, will
never understand much of Hamlet, who—seeing the murderer of his father praying at an altar, which constitutes a unique chance to kill him—suddenly puts his sword down and goes away.”

How hard-working the Professor was may be illustrated by the following episode. It may have been around May, 1965. The heat in Warsaw was tremendous. Whoever could, fled to the country side, and when I came to the Professor’s home, he asked me to put some wet sheets on the window, which would enable him to continue his reading. What was he reading? Works by Church Fathers in their original versions... At that time he taught Latin translation classes at the department; I may be wrong, but that could have been some passages from St. Anselm which students translated with the Professor throughout the term and where they recuperated the nuances of medieval thought from. On a simple example he proved that one single sentence could be translated in a number of ways depending on the context; those might entail a number of theoretical and practical consequences. He demonstrated those latter ones time and again. On one occasion he indicated a wrong translation of the Bible by St. Augustine, which justified his concept of original sin, or actually created it, and which involved tragic practical consequences for Western Christianity.

One meeting resulted in convincing me to undertake a translation of Kierkegaard from the original. Until then I had read the Dane in English and German; the Professor was prophetic (this would come true) when convincing me that I should learn Danish. I remember his words: “This could turn out useful.” One effect of this conversation was putting me in touch with Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, as a result of which, paid by the Polish Writers’ Union [ZLP], I began visiting Copenhagen, first to learn the language and then to read “the recluse of the North” in the original. The President of the Writers was at that time translating Fear and Trembling from the original and then he submitted it to the Professor to review it. He asked me for my opinion on how faithful the translation was; under translation was another text, a philosophical treaty The Sickness unto Death. I appraised it along with my conscience: “In literary terms the translation is beautiful, but I would change a lot in terms of the substance.” The worried Professor wondered how he should convey that to the great Iwaszkiewicz straightforwardly. I suggested that he simply say it was my opinion. This was what would happen in the end, and for some time my contacts with the Writer ceased (history would confirm that particularly the translation of The Sickness unto Death had been carried out with no philosophical spark, as seen in the conference held by the PAT Theological University of Krakow on the 150th anniversary of the Copenhagen thinker’s death).

Another visit, with the then supervisor of my doctoral thesis, was taking longer than usual; about 10 PM Tamara, the Professor’s wife, entered the room. I thought I had been given to understand that it was time to leave. No way. Asked when my next train to Sopot was scheduled for, I said it was 6:30 AM. “Well, we have the whole night, then,” I heard him say. To the discontent of the family, we worked the night through until it was 5 AM. The
topic was the Hegelian Left. We had both read Karl Löwith From Hegel to Nietzsche. The Professor shocked me: not only had he contemplated the lengthy volume through and through, but he also reached out to the sources. He rattled off with quotes from Logische Untersuchungen by Trendelenburg (beside Jan Garewicz, he was the only contemporary philosopher who knew this work). So was the case with the writings by the Bauer brothers. I was always greatly impressed by Kołakowski’s unbelievable memory: As late as in 21th century he remembered our difference of opinion on some sections of the doctorate from 40 years before! I think I was not the only one who was struck by that phenomenon. I wish I had been able to record that night’s dissertations by the Master. Or maybe … this recording does exist; there was a post office under the Kołakowskiis’ home, and Professor was under surveillance at the time following Gomułka calling him a revisionist and his subsequent expulsion from the party [one reason being his “opinion on the notion of news,” virtually unknown in Poland and worth popularizing, prepared by the Professor and approved by Prof. Ossowska and Prof. Kotarbiński (Sep. 1965) as an expert analysis related to the trial of J. Kuroń and K. Modzelewski; the Author investigates, in his unique manner, the interrelationships between facts, judgments, ideas and interpretations].

Was this discourse recorded in the end, perhaps? That would be an invaluable contribution to the history of philosophy, if found. The post office was one of the reasons why politics was practically never discussed in the apartment. The visit had one more funny aspect. When I tried to leave after 10, I explained I had not slept the previous night. The Professor asked, not without irony, “Who was the beauty that did not let you sleep? Was it worth it, at least?” A Sense of humor was not alien to the Professor. It was so human...

When, after nine months, I submitted my final doctoral thesis to the Professor, he summed it up briefly: “After 9 months children are born.” We sat down and the Professor sketched a new plan of the dissertation; I wrote it in the following 2 years.

A few more facts. At the Philosophy Department of Warsaw University, there were several people standing around the Professor: Adam Sikora, Andrzej Kasia were there for sure. I do not remember the fourth one. The Master said that the Office of Censorship, UKPiW, had records filed for each name or title “and you, gentlemen, will need to have texts published. Because there are no professional philosophers there or the employees suffer from overwork, there is an easy way of getting round their possible negative opinion: at the beginning or an end of the publication there should be a reference to some of the classics of the official ideology, and this should make their alertness grow dull.” This is what we did, and it hardly affected the quality of the papers. Apparently, even Kołakowski’s tales or biblical stories could have proved dangerous for the system, as evidenced by his “Lot’s Wife or the Charms of the Past” [Żona Lota czyli uroki przeszłości] not
making it through censorship. This is what the times were like, those were the tricks one needed to play, quite incomprehensible for today’s generation.

A meeting in a similar company resulted in one more suggestion by the Master. After the publication of a specialized text in the PAN annals, the Professor asked, “How many have read these expositions? Ten, perhaps? How many have drawn scientifically significant conclusions? Five, six? Gentlemen, you should take after Socrates and go to the street with your esoteric knowledge so that it will become exoteric. Write popular science, stories or even tales…” And so it happened. Adam Sikora wrote texts characterizing individual philosophers to Radar (they lost no appeal and recently they were republished), Andrzej Kasia “accessibly” fought the devil, whereas the undersigned has written a great number of commentaries, mostly of the Bible, from the perspective of ethics and the philosophy of religion. On Leszek’s 80th anniversary I published a book dedicated to him: *He/u/resies or the Proto-ancient Present; to Leszek Kołakowski on his 80th Birthday*, which was to some extent a collection of scattered texts. I think Leszek was glad to see his suggestion implemented by us all. Did he not provide countless examples of popularizing most difficult philosophical and existential issues in his TV lectures? The reader will not miss them now that they have been published e.g. *Minilectures on Maxiquestions* [*Miniwykłady o maksisprawach*].

In the mid-1970s I was abroad gathering materials for my habilitation when there came a proposal from Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz and PWN Publishing to translate *Either/Or* with him. I did not know what to do and asked the Professor for advice. It was my understanding that he would offer me an existential reply in line with his approach to many an issue: please decide for yourself, considering a number of possibilities, anticipating the consequences of the choice and weighing the pros and cons. He surprised me. I was given a series of very specific suggestions. To reconstruct it from memory: from Iwaszkiewicz you will learn a great deal in terms of literary techniques, you will enter the biggest scholarly publishing house in Poland, and this in a good company, which will pave the way for further publications there; and the family will benefit materially. However, you will need to postpone your habilitation.” Most importantly, “I think any philosopher or humanist aspiring to make a name for himself must translate at least one book; it is translation work that opens the depth of the author’s thinking, points to the many variants of understanding and interpretation, forces extreme precision of thought: it is a great school of philosophical thinking.” Each of the points He made proved true. The effect of the suggestions is known: *Either/Or* came out...

One more, very personal, remark in this context. It happened on a number of everyday occasions that I came to wonder what Leszek would advise me to do. It was a result of a very intimate contact with the Master. As someone put it, He was a genius of friendship and you could rely on him. He was this kind of “trustworthy guardian.” Is it not proof of the greatest
trust to ask a friend for advice, as if telepathically, aware of it being somewhat irrational?

Leszek’s 70th birthday was an opportunity to award him an honorary doctorate of Gdansk University. The municipal and provincial authorities received Leszek and His Wife in a truly regal manner. He was accommodated in a Sopot manor that hosted state leaders, including the crowned ones. Our families became friends, and the Professor demonstrated particular courtesy to our daughter Violetta, on whose head he would often put his world-famous hat. That was an extremely pleasant gesture.

His visit to the University resulted in another significant event. I asked Minister Labuda about a possibility of reinstating Leszek in the capacity of Professor at Warsaw University. Her surprise was great: how could it be that this had not occurred to any of the university authorities after 1989? Leszek was to celebrate his birthday in two days and there was no chance to set the move in course. But the idea did not die. A few days later the Minister, acting on behalf of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, asked me if the Professor would accept the Order of the White Eagle. I immediately contacted Leszek and he, in his usual modesty, wondered whether he deserved such a distinction; “there are people who deserve it more,” etc. In the end he gave in to the idea. We know the rest.

At the turn of 1988 I wrote a column that initially nobody wanted to publish, “A Letter to my Emigrant Friend.” The leading idea was: “come back, this is not exactly a desert here.” Readers instantly realized the addressee was Leszek Kołakowski. In the text he was identifiable e.g. in that during official ceremonies, the Master—surrounded by disciples (not necessarily collaborators)—started some thought, and each of the companions would complete the story until it came back to Leszek. He would then sit down upon it at home and create some tales from the Kingdom of Lailonia. People called from all across Poland to ask if Kołakowski was coming back. Is there a university brave enough to employ him, etc.?

Finally, Wroclaw University, where I completed my habilitation and professorship, also upon the review by Leszek, approached me about reviewing the honorary doctorate of my teacher. On the one hand it was an honor but, on the other hand, how could I write one: it is so hard to fathom the complexity of his output, not to mention its reception! I took pains for some time to complete it; the motto was THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CORRECT OPINION IN THE HUMANITIES, with all the possible conclusions that follow; i.e. in all questions they are arguments pro and contra. I included another observation: the Doctorate Candidate was a demon for work. Literally: “he was a workaholic,” which the Master later reacted to by saying, “My friend overdid, as usual.” Thanking all those who contributed to having the honorary doctorate conferred upon him, he said in a characteristic manner: “I did not read the reviews, but judging from the result, they must have been written in the spirit of friendship and cronyism.” It is a fact, and that too made its way to the review, that he had an
incredible gift for making a presentation on a recently assigned topic, like King Midas, who turned everything he touched into gold: each subject matter evoked a deep reflection with Professor Kołakowski, without a recourse to notes, systematic points or any loose sheets of paper. This was his normal practice. He would walk in the auditorium and gave fantastic lectures. He was helped by his phenomenal memory, a skill of eidetic thinking and an unbelievable ability to synthesize.

Prof. Leszek Kołakowski participated in all fundamental changes of modernity and the world, including the ones that took place in Poland, far away though he may have been. These included the changes in the fields of the spirit: political, economic, cultural, religious, etc. It was his tremendous erudition that helped him voice his opinion on the fundamental issues of the day. He was (alas, the past tense again) a classical example of open humanism, sensitive to people who have been wronged, to some basic questions people ask themselves. A characteristic of Leszek’s thinking, regardless of whether it was a scholarly treatise or another tale, was asking readers a lot of questions, forcing them to undertake an effort of independent (!) thinking, and he did not deem it right to give answers. Was he always consistent? Was his book *In Praise of Inconsistency*, accidental? No, it was one of the aspects of this ingenious thinker’s charm.

Reviewing the accomplishments of the Master at Wrocław University, I expressed a thought that has not become flesh, and so may I repeat it: THE TIME HAS COME TO PUBLISH *OPERA OMNIA* by Leszek Kołakowski. We owe it not only to him, but to the entire Polish and global culture. It is not going to be an easy task. The monograph by Father J.A. Kłoczowski discussing Kołakowski’s ideas, *More than a Myth...* indicates more that 350 texts. A number of years passed since in this seminal Oxford Philosopher’s life, and even the items published in the book do not include all publications scattered all over the world.

Concluding the recollections, obviously incomplete, I should like to stop over a significant and complicated problem: Leszek’s personal approach to faith—not to Christianity, which I have sketched above and for which there is a comprehensive literature. Leszek’s personal attitude to faith was greatly influenced by his thorough knowledge of the various doctrines of Christianity, chiefly Latin, the differences within it, disputes that were often bloodily settled, current discussions related to e.g. the increasing secularization processes, and finally his knowledge of Buddhist and Hindu texts. We can find out about that when we read *If There Is No God*. He did not limit himself to Christianity: religions of the East were His world, too. In one of his interviews he said “If someone complains that the book does not conclude with a clear declaration, they must bear in mind it was written by a philosopher. Let the human spiritual need speak with the language of religious texts.” Different ones, I should add as a side note to the book.

In an old essay concerning Jesus—probably coming from the 1960s—he wrote, “the personality and the teachings of Jesus Christ cannot be
eliminated from our culture or declared invalid if the culture is to exist and continue to be created.” This is some kind of macro plan by Leszek, impersonal but affecting the author of these words. Asked outright about his own Christian faith, he responded in a book-length interview, “I side with Christianity, but I am not its warlike ally; also I do not partake of its liturgy, and nor do I confess my sins. I do appreciate the institution of confession as I deem it important that people should confront their sinfulness.” He went on to say, “In some general sense I cannot define, I am attached to the Christian tradition, the great power of the Gospel, the New Testament.” One needs to know the precision of Leszek’s statements to realize it was not an answer to the question. Likewise, in an interview with Adam Michnik, he says in the end, “The wisdom of the Bible is absolutely remarkable; whenever I read the Book of Job, I am as astonished as I can be at how wise the people were such a long time ago.” This fascination with the Scripture considered revealed undoubtedly projected itself upon his personality. When in If There Is No God he analyzed the alternative—the world with or without God—he was quite unambiguously for God’s existence; more precisely, he writes about the usefulness of religion to people—they need it. But again, this is a macro plan. In it he spoke against a confessional exclusivity. In my opinion, he was more in favor of non-denominational outlooks (cf. “Świadomość religijna i więź kościoła” [Religious Consciousness and Church Bond], “Erasmus i jego Bóg” [Erasmus and his God]), not only Christian, but above all those.

When pressed against the wall by a friend, “Leszek, so is there God or not?” the Philosopher responded in a manner typical for his profession: “Yes, but ... hush, you should not speak about it aloud.” In 2007, answering the question asked by Martin Jay, he said, “I treat Christianity seriously, but I am not a Catholic in the sense of belonging to the Church or the confession, even though I do feel ... friends with Christianity.” This thought is no hindrance for some thinkers (Tony Judith) in classifying him a Catholic. Piotr Mucharski, in an interview published in the same Tygodnik Powszechny (no 43 of 28 Oct., 2007) elicited this from Leszek: “I am no Catholic philosopher” [understandably: he was too skeptical, even though neither did he extol reason]. Again, one needs to see a difference between a Catholic philosopher and a believer in that vein... Finally, when asked a specific question about his faith, he answered like a philosopher would, “God knows ...” Bishop Bronisław Dembowski, Leszek’s friend for years, when celebrating a mass in a church that had a rich history for the opposition, said that the Philosopher had never declared himself as a Christian, dismissed questions about his faith, but he had written much and well on religion, treating it as a foundation for culture and ethics. In conclusion of his sermon he quoted cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz: “May I ask God to accept the good that Leszek did.”...

Leszek made us sad. Sadness, though, may either result from weak faith or from the fact that for some time we simply feel orphaned. There is some void, a silence when you would want him to keep speaking to us, to keep being. This is so with people who are dear to our hearts, this is what we
clutch at most. We do not want to let him go. In some time, reading and
immersing in his reflections, new horizons will open up and our perception of
people and the universe will broaden to include the content we have not
noticed before. His inspirations will enrich us, and sadness will be replaced
by joy: such MAN was and lived among us!

“Leszek, come back!” I wrote 20 years ago, “This is not exactly an
(intellectual) desert here,” and it is also your achievement. He has returned,
albeit not in the form we would have desired... the Heroes’ Hill in the
Powązki Cemetery is no place where Leszek Kołakowski’s thought will rest in
peace; it cannot. His ideas will hover high above the earth—above the
ground where he was buried...