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IN MEMORIAM

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UNFINISHED BOOK: RASTKO JOVANOVIĆ (1977–2022)

It is difficult for me to write about my colleague. The Ancient world developed a special kind of genre, *ἐπιτάφιος λόγος*, speaking about one who passed away. That type of discourse had rules, *topoi*, structure. Something of the sort or perhaps analogous to that genre are contemporary obituaries or texts written *in memoriam*, remembering or honoring persons who left us. Our journal *Philosophy and Society*, which Rastko Jovanović headed successfully, published this kind of text, or better, nurtured this dignified literary form. It would have never crossed my mind that the time would come – and certainly not so suddenly, prematurely, out of the blue – that an *in memoriam* text would appear about Rastko in a journal he himself ran.

Rastko Jovanović took over working on *Philosophy and Society* when he returned from Vienna where he completed his doctorate in philosophy. Specifically, he became a journal editor in 2013, working diligently there until 2020. If I can put it this way, Rastko was himself not much older than the journal at the moment he took over as editor: the journal was in its 24th year, Rastko was 36. It seems only a decade, but the journal underwent significant change in that time, emerging from a volume series of the same name. 28 issues were published in seven long years, a seemingly irrelevant number, yet one that really showed the amount of effort and scope of work required – hundreds upon hundreds of meticulously edited pages – for these issues to see the light of day and be proffered to the reading public.

I dare say that this was a watershed moment in the life of the journal, when it underwent radical transformation. During Rastko's time running it, the journal switched to being published in English, French, German, becoming accessible to foreign academic readers, but also opening its doors to those authors, all with the aim of becoming a significant factor or actor on the European and world philosophical and humanities map. Prominent names among the disciplines covered by *Philosophy and Society* have since contributed, and for fear of overlooking some, I will refrain from singling any out; but time will show that the journal published articles that will be held in great esteem. Be that as it may, the journal Rastko led is a gallery of respectable and reputable thinkers, with new rooms or contributions added to this day. In other words, to speak of the journal as it appears today is nothing other than to speak of Rastko, of group work personified in Rastko. It stands as a metonymy between an oeuvre and its author.

Both before and after becoming an editor, Rastko also contributed articles to *Philosophy and Society*. He wrote about the philosophy of law, ecopolitics and geoethics, Ancient tragedy, social ontology. His writing did not only come in the journal pages. On the contrary, his bibliography was much broader. There were at least three books at various stages of writing. For this reason, I say that Rastko's intellectual life is an unfinished book.

Running and editing a journal can never be reduced to its editing: working side by side with Rastko was filled with beautiful moments, and I will only mention one. As I recall, in our office that doubled as the editorial space for the journal, Rastko was telling me about the strong impression one literary work had left on him. It was André Gide's *La Porte étroite*. It seems to me that it is not an insignificant page of Rastko's life and that the motif of the strait gate in the title of that work carries a strong message.