
The series “Tradycja dla współczesności. Ciągłość i zmiana” [Tradition for Modernity. Continuity and Change], a result of cooperation between the Institute of Polish Culture and the Institute of Rural and Urban Sociology of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, prepared under the creative control of dr hab. Jan Adamowski, associate professor of the MC-SU, and professor dr hab Józef Styk, has completed its sixth volume, Pamięć jako kategoria rzeczywistości kulturalnej [Memory as a Category of Cultural Reality]. It is a compilation of academic articles, partially presented in the form of lectures during the conference on the subject of memory which took place in Baranów Sandomierski on June 6–8, 2011. The articles mainly deal with the multi-aspect role of memory in various contexts of tradition, from language to national cultures. Volume six was edited by Jan Adamowski and Marta Wójcicka. The book is divided into six parts, each focused on a different context of memory – cultural memory (three articles), linguistic memory (four articles), memory and oral history (two articles), narrative memory (six articles), memory and cultural identity (four articles). It was written by authors from various research centres, including: Bratislava, Cieszyn, Katowice, Kielce, Cracow, Lublin, Łódź, Opole, Toruń, Warsaw, and Wroclaw. All articles are appended with a list of source references and a short summary in English and Russian, except one, which lacks both the bibliography and the summary. In addition, some articles in the book are in Slovakian.

The first article, written by Barbara Szacka, highlights that a wave of interest in the memory of the past emerged as a significant aspect of social life as early as in the 1980s. Additionally, the author emphasises that there is no need for differentiating between the terms “collective memory” and “social memory”. In her article, professor Szacka analyses the works of German researcher Jan Assmann and the division of the sphere of collective, social and cultural memory into three distinct segments: of history as a story about the past recognised as science, collective memory as a vision of the past circling within the society, and the
Connertonian cultural memory as a memory of habits. Among other articles in the part devoted to the theory of memory, there is also an article by Jan Kajfosz that deals with the issue of cognitive and social conditioning of memory and a text by Stefan Bednarek on Polish topoi of memory, in which the author argues that the Greek word *mnemotopos* and its derivatives – mnemotope, mnemotopoi, and topoi of memory – should forever enter the Polish language as a term referring to the place of memory.

The second part of the book focuses on cultural memory. In one of the articles, Ewa Kosowska touches upon the issue of memory as a cultural phenomenon despite knowing that, in the European tradition, memory is primarily considered a psychological phenomenon, grounded in biology. The author boldly states that “cultural memory is a fundamental defence mechanism, protecting one against the invasion of culturally alien solutions, preferences, and choices”. Next, Anna Gomółka’s article, which is devoted to the cultural role of memory and its history embedded in the Polish identity, is a result of the author’s belief that the cultural memory has two intertwining aspects, temporal and personal, as it links people from the present with those from the past and the future through a network of mutual, direct and indirect relations. Next, Anna Zalewska, in her article, *Archeologia (uspołeczniona) w polu pamięci, tradycji i wiedzy* [(Socialised) Archaeology in the Field of Memory, Tradition and Knowledge], points at the motifs proving that archaeology, which is based on the unique quality of signs/archaeological sources, can be viewed as a significant, and for some historical periods, even the primary, means of stimulating interest in the past, of creating, nurturing, and retrieving knowledge about the past, as well as of maintaining the memory of the past.

The next part of the publication touches upon the issues of linguistic memory in the articles: *Polszczyzna o pamięci* [Memory in the Polish Language], *Pamięć ujęzykowiona* [Linguified Memory], *Co pamięta język: krzyk jednostki czy echo zbiorowości* [What Does the Language Remember: Scream of a Unit or Echo of Community], and *Fantomy pamięci. Pamięć semantyczna pocałunku* [Shadows of Memory. The Semantic Memory of a Kiss]. In her text, Anna Pajdzińska argues that memory is highly significant, both in the individual and the social dimension. This is not only because it reveals the temporal nature of human existence, but also because it makes the impossible possible, allowing the realization of long-time dreams, such as travelling back in time (e.g. recalling a past event, or “resurrecting” a deceased person in one’s mind). Next, Wojciech Chlebda in his article confirms the theory that human identity is “linguified”. Even though he admits that this theory is no breakthrough, he proposes a new understanding of “memory linguification”, stating that “the elements that constitute our memory to a specified degree (or, to be more exact, to a degree that requires specification) have verbal representation (linguistic exponent). In the act of remembering
and in the act of speaking of memories the author distinguishes four constituents: the subject of memory (one who remembers), the object of memory (what is being remembered), the substance of memory (built out of psychological components and experienced through various physical relations [narrations]), as well as the observer (one who observes the substance of memory and informs others about the narrations in these relations). Next, Przemysław Łozowski considers in his text the role of an individual’s experiences in the process of creation of the collective memory coded in the language of a given community. What is interesting, in almost the entire article he uses plural, first-person narration (e.g. “thus, we assume the existence”, “we could say”, “let us say”), as if the readers did not need to follow the author’s train of thought and instead accepted it as their own. This may strike one as irritating. In the last article of this part of the book its author, Ewa Masłowska, answers the following questions: which notional preschemes shaped the etymological meaning of a kiss; did the semantic memory of that notion maintain that meaning on the subsequent stages of the evolution of meaning; in what way did the cognitive paths determine the further semantic memory development of the notion and what metaphorical images have been created; which components of the etymological meaning have remained unchanged in the derivative meaning and what place did they take in their hierarchic structure; what symbolic substance does the notion of a kiss carry; in what myth does it originate; in which ritualistic cognitive scenes is the symbolic image re-actualized and in what way does the symbol insert meaning into the general concept of the world (into a network of semantic links constituting the conceptual system).

The fourth part of the book deals with memory and oral history and features only two articles, one in Slovakian, written by Zuzanna Profantova, and the other, written by Halina Pelcowa and titled Pamięć i historia mówiona (na przykładzie wypowiedzi mieszkańców lubelskich wsi) [Memory and Oral History (on the Example of Statements by Inhabitants of Villages Near Lublin)]. In the latter text, the author points at three contrasting types of informers: one who passes information heard from others, the proper source (the author of the message) and the third type, which combines both forms of information transmission, by being a messenger as well as a commentator and reviewer of both the past and the contemporary reality.

The second to last part of the book is devoted to memory and narration and is the largest in terms of the number of articles. The opening article by Marta Wójcicka focuses on memory as a part of the folk artistic style. In the text, the author tackles the multi-layered issues of: folk artistic style as seen by folklore researchers, memory as a category of the world view and a source of collectiveness, memory as a pillar of morality, the formula as the primary product of memory, and memory seen as a repository of folklore in contrast with folklore seen as a narrative about memory. The article was appended with a glossary of abbreviations.
The next article, Żegnaj moja wiosko... Pamięć o Machowie i kulturze lasowiackiej w twórczości Marii Kozłowej [Goodbye My Village... Memory of Machow and Lasowian Culture in the Works by Maria Kozłowa] by Elżbieta Wiąca, views home as an anthropological category in an attempt to analyse the symbolic function of the image of a home in the works by Maria Kozłowa. The article was additionally appended with photos. This part of the book also features an article in Slovakian, written by Eva Krekovicova. Next, Joanna Bielska-Krawczyk, in her article, Obraz pamięta... Relacja pamięć – obraz na przykładzie twórczości Jana Lebensteina [The Image Remembers – The Memory-Image Relation on the Example of Works by Jan Lebenstein], presents her belief that because of iconographic quotations and stylistic allusions the works by the Parisian painter have become a memory of the European pictorial tradition and of cultures that are long since gone. This memory has given these works a unique quality, turning them into bridges between the past and the present and giving them a hint of reflectivity. In the next article Janina Hajduk-Nijakowska analyses latent memory in the context of the Silesian martyrology. According to the author, in the case of the tragic experiences of the Silesians, their memoirs bear features of latent memory, or, in other words, of memories which, for various reasons, are not revealed to outsiders, instead being exchanged (cultivated) mainly in family and in local tradition, between the trusted and the well-known. In the fifth part of the volume there is also the article Od reliktu do refleksji [From Relic to Reflection] by Grzegorz Żuk, dealing with education in places of remembrance. In the text, the author analyses such a place – the museum created on the grounds of the former concentration camp in Majdanek, which is the first such institution, as it originated as early as during World War II.

The sixth and final part of the publication edited by Jan Adamowski and Marta Wójcicka is devoted to the relation between memory and cultural identity. It features the following articles: Kult świętego Rocha jako przejaw pamięci społeczności lokalnej w parafii mikstackiej [The Worship of Saint Roch as an Example of Memory of the Local Community in the Miskitat Parish] by Małgorzata Strzelec, Tradycyjna funkcja dzwonów kościelnych w świadomości współczesnego człowieka [The Traditional Role of Church Bells in the Consciousness of Contemporary People] by Lidia Kwiatkowska-Frejlich, Twórczość ludowa jako element transmisji międzypokoleniowej [Folk Art as a Part of Inter-generation Transmission] by Kinga Czerwińska, and Muzycy ludowi – rodzimna transmisja kompetencji i pasji muzycznych [Folk Musicians – Family Transmission of Competence and Passion for Music] by Karolina Targowska.

In her article, Małgorzata Strzelec utilizes a source database consisting of the parish chronicle, texts published in academic and regional press, participant observations, as well as results of empirical studies. These studies were conducted in 2009 with 123 students between the fourth and the sixth year of their primary school education and
117 students between the first and the third year of their secondary school education. A total of 240 students that were born in the Misktat parish and were living there during the research participated in the studies. On the basis of the results of the empirical research the author tries to answer the question: do young Misktat parishioners know the origin of the church of Saint Roch and do they know why blessings are given to animals in Misktat. The studies reveal that the remembrance of the intercession of Saint Roch, which granted the grace of rescue to the townspeople of Misktat, lives on in both the non-physical and the physical form. The large participation of the citizens, also the youngest ones, in church fairs proves that they see the need to remember that legacy and pass it on to the next generation. Next, Lidia Kwiatkowska-Frejlich analyses statements supporting and opposing the use of church bells in cities. The informative, organisational, atmosphere- and rhythm-setting functions are most often quoted as arguments. The second to last article in the publication, written by Kinga Czerwińska, touches upon issues that include: the role and place of folk art in the contemporary culture, as well as folk art in the activity, the objective, and the subjective aspect of tradition. The publication is concluded by an article by Karolina Targowska, who discusses whether folk musicians are artists and, if so, what can support that claim. This article is a result of studies conducted by a team of sociologists from the University of Lodz as a part of the international project AMIEUROPE and covering the years 2010–2011. The main aim of the studies was to picture customs and folk culture in multi-generation families in central Poland. The studies clearly show that the methodology and form of passing on competence from generation to generation remains standardised: it starts from inner need, progresses through observation of others, visual repetition, repetition by the ear, up until the achievement of competence in the form of knowledge of notes, scale and tone in the case of the first and the second generation.

To sum up, the contemporary commonness of culture globalisation causes many people to be anxious about losing their ethnic and regional separateness and to seek support for identity awareness and connections with their place of birth or residence. This always was and still is guaranteed by cultural passed on from generation to generation and based on common culture. The issues tackled in the book are interdisciplinary and highly interesting. The variety of the subjects discussed in the publication, together with its clear thematic structure makes the book a very significant source of information in the studies of memory.

Analyzed problems are connected with broadly defined tradition – not only (as implied by the title) with the culture, but perhaps even closer to the social sphere. It should be noted that the previous volume, the third, fourth and fifth series of “Tradycja dla współczesności. Ciągłość i zmiana” [Tradition for Modernity. Continuity and Change] were devoted to the category of social reality or contexts of social tradition,
so one would expect that the publication will have proper proportion. Unfortunately, the readers are stirred by different level of knowledge contained in another articles. Many of them are descriptive, although the subject itself is very interesting, there is no adequate methodology (e.g. scientific problems), some of the articles unfortunately have lost its value. Proportion of the number of pages (one article should have about 13 pages) of the various parts is rather preserved, though not without exceptions. Unfortunately 8–10 typed pages with bibliography and an abstract of the research paper seems to be very small.

The reviewed “Pamięć jako kategoria rzeczywistości kulturalnej” [Memory as a Category of Cultural Reality], but mainly the whole series of publications, plays a significant role in interdisciplinary scientific inquiries concerning tradition. Continuity in subsequent volumes (two per year, exception in 2010) also provides a continuous actuality of the tested material. Therefore, we follow up on the outcomes of these conferences and meetings in the form of publications and subsequent volumes of “Tradycja dla współczesności. Ciągłość i zmiana” [Tradition for Modernity. Continuity and Change]. The advantage of the publication is a variety of thematic. The major criticism of the work is the lack of a clear ending, that could be a kind of summary of the main points of work or answers to questions.


On 16–17 May 2013, Toruń hosted the seventh international scientific conference on Asia entitled, “Asia in the 21st Century: Challenges, Dilemmas, Perspectives: Debating Economics, Politics, Security, Culture, and Education in Contemporary Asia”. The conference was held under the patronage of Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The conference was organized by the Association for Asia and Pacific, the Marshal’s Office of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodship, Professor Czesław Mojsiewicz’s International Cooperation Support Fund, and the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The interest in the conference – which was an important event not only in the scientific endeavors of the university, but also in the whole region – far exceeded the organizers’ expectations. Over 280 presentations were submitted to the organizing committee, which chose 210 and divided them into 35 panels. A few panels were held in English, such as Evolutions: “In the shadow of the Great Game” – Internal Dynamics of Central Asia, The New Geopolitics of Asia, Civil Society and National Identity Question in Asia, and Regional Economic Cooperation in Asia: Current Situation and Future Prospects. Guests from China, Germany,