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Małgorzata Fabiszak, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, Marcin Owsieński (eds.), *Znaki (nie)pamięci. Teoria i praktyka upamiętniania w Polsce* [The Signs of (Forgotten) Remembrance. The Theory and Practice of Commemoration in Poland], Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych UNIVERSITAS, Kraków 2016, pp. 252

Category of memory as an object of scientific research has consistently for years been of interest to representatives of various disciplines – mostly the humanities and social sciences. A consequence of this “memory boom” is presence on the current market of numerous publications on this subject. The book *Signs of (no) memory. Theory and practice of remembrance in Poland* (*Znaki (nie)pamięci. Teoria i praktyka upamiętniania w Polsce*), edited by Małgorzata Fabiszak, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, Marcin Owsieński and published in 2016 by Scientific Papers Authors and Publishers Society UNIVERSITAS (Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych UNIVERSITAS) based in Cracow fits very well within this overall trend. The authors and editors of the volume decided to approach the presented issues not only from a practical, but also theoretical perspective. This is undoubtedly a great advantage of the reviewed publication, as one of the main objections to publications by Polish researchers in memory is their insufficient ability to operationalize the categories discussed, which results in very limited spread of results and research conclusions outside the country.

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Also the way in which content is presented to readers is quite original, as the topics discussed are shown in two dimensions, namely, through the prism of mechanisms and social processes of remembering and forgetting. This interesting challenge culminated in a successful publication thanks to, inter alia, a select group of authors which included not only academics, but also practitioners – representing institutions dealing with widely understood remembrance. The papers gathering in the volume are divided into three chapters.

Chapter One: *Theory and definitions (Teoria i definicje)* serves a structuring purpose and introduces the categories discussed. The opening text by Wojciech Józef Bursza *Commemoration as a form of cultural practice (Upamiętnianie jako forma praktyki kulturowej)*, discusses the highly relevant at the moment problem of replacing communicative memory with various dimensions of cultural memory. The author argues that intergenerational communication – consisting in a symbolic hand over of memory by older people (parents, grandparents, authorities, witnesses of the past era) – is increasingly underappreciated, and instead replaced by self-commemoration, constant posting of one's own photos and information about themselves, mostly on the Internet. Easy access to information does not mean, however, that we know more. Bursza stresses that information overload results in social amnesia and decline of knowledge acquisition skills. Psychological aspects of memory are the focus of the next paper by Łukasz Skoczylas. His text: *Terms: trauma and pseudomemory in memory studies (Pojęcia traumy i pseudopamięci w studiach pamięcioznawczych)* highlights multidimensionality of these categories, while on the other hand also demonstrating their volatility. The author shows that seemingly identical terms and concepts used by both the social sciences and the humanities can and do indeed have different meanings and are interpreted differently. This leads to communicative chaos, confusion and misunderstanding between representatives of different disciplines, for example psychologists and sociologists. Bursza postulates creation of interdisciplinary teams whose task would be to establish order in the definitions. In the following paper in this part of the volume, Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs poses the problem: *Is the Holocaust "our history"?* (*Czy Zagłada jest „naszą historią”?*). The author concludes that despite efforts undertaken by educators representing institutions commemorating the Holocaust in Poland, *de facto* Polish youth still know little about it. She alerts readers to the fact that comprehensive and multidimensional research in this field conducted over many years does not translate into an improvement in this state of affairs. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs stresses that the resistance of current youth to historical facts makes it necessary to find new, more attractive means of transmitting knowledge about the Holocaust. Only in this way this tragedy can become

a significant element of the Polish community of memory. Natalia Krzyżanowska in the paper: *(Anti-) monuments as representations of (un-)memory in a city ((Anty) pomniki jako przedstawienia (nie)pamięci w mieście)* presents new ways and forms of commemoration of events and historical figures. The author emphasizes that contemporary artists are increasingly willing to depart from the traditional concepts of figurative sculpture, which are considered the norm by an average member of the public. Instead, artists tend toward non-obvious ways of artistic expression, surprising and often shocking with their choice of location, form, material, method of presentation of the content. The inspiration for this kind of work is often a protest against forgetting or silencing content that is troublesome and difficult to accept by the society. Architect and art historian Łukasz Strzelczyk in his text: *Social sculpture as a form of integrating of damaged space (Rzeźba społeczna jako forma scalania zaburzonych przestrzeni)* presents artistic ways of interceding in the urban space. Using Elbląg as a case study, he considers the role of so-called social sculpture of the 1960s and 1970s. The aim of the artists in this movement was to tame all the “new space” using spatial forms; a valid goal seeing as post-war Elbląg was largely inhabited by immigrants, who not only had to accept the city as their new “home”, but also to come to terms with the loss of their old homesteads. It was also – in the author’s opinion – a way to deal with war-time trauma. The theoretical part of the volume ends with the article “Wise memory”. *On the convergence of history and memory („Mądra pamięć”, czyli esej o zbliżeniu historii i pamięci)* by historian and political scientist, as well as employee of the Institute of National Remembrance, Tomasz Ceran. The author’s objective was to determine the relationship between history and memory, as links between them might be unquestionable, but in no way obvious. After all, on occasion historical sources are found to be in conflict with local traditions of remembering. Ceran draws attention to the fact that memory of a particular event confronted with the results of scientific research is often difficult to accept by the public.

The second chapter of the publication: *Case studies: the people (Studia przypadku: ludzie)* is dedicated to discussing broader issues of remembrance and forgetting starting with specific examples. Jacek Wajszczak in the paper: *Memory, yoga and mountain bikes (Pamięć, joga i górskie rowery)* reflects on the problem – already discussed in Chapter One – of (anti-) monuments. He discusses whether the Warsaw Uprising Mound – an artificial hill located in the Czerniaków neighborhood (in Warsaw’s Mokotów district) falls into this category. He clearly states that the idea of restoring and putting to order the long-unkempt mound of heaped war rubble has not been fully achieved. It is true that a statue has been erected at the top, thus creating a place of memory, but – Wajszczak argues – the

area around it has not been arranged in a consistent manner, which promotes its use for recreational purposes (allotments, bike paths). Not judging this co-existence, he argues that the residents passing by the area – even if for purely recreational purposes – are still aware of the history of this place. In the next paper, *Do we remember and how we remember? The crime in Karolewo (September–December 1939) in the memory of the victims' relatives and of the local community* (Czy pamiętamy i jak pamiętamy? Zbrodnia w Karolewie (wrzesień–grudzień 1939 r.) w pamięci bliskich ofiar i lokalnej społeczności), Izabela Mazanowska presents the results from analysis of testimonies of families of those killed by local Selbstschutz² members. Using the collected testimonies, the author identified specific characteristics of this category of memory carriers. While recognizing their imperfections, Mazanowska emphasizes how important they are as a source of knowledge about the history of World War II. An important conclusion from the article is also a call for more regional-level research into the history of German occupation in Poland, as together with their witnesses, also memory of the events of that time is dying out. The author also emphasizes the need to support local educational activities. The following paper, *The confrontation of individual and social memory with the experience of the memorial place and Museum Dulag 121³ in Pruszkow* (Konfrontacje pamięci indywidualnej i społecznej z doświadczeniem miejsca pamięci i Muzeum Dulag 121 w Pruszkowie) by Agnieszka Praga is devoted to another place of memory of World War II. The author conducted an extensive survey among visitors to the museum, and its analysis allowed to draw very interesting conclusions. The researcher has proven that Dulag 121 as a place of memory is an important element of collective memory of the town of Pruszków. This state of affairs has not been achieved, however, thanks to family testimonies – as is often the case – but mostly on the strength of consistently conducted remembrance activities of local schools and annual historical initiatives. How important education is in the process of commemoration is also highlighted by Wirginia Węglińska in the paper: *Resocializing through memory. A case study of the Youth Education Centre in Kamionek Wielki* (Resocjalizacja przez pamięć. Studium przypadku Młodzieżowego Ośrodka Wychowawczego w Kamionku Wielkim). A branch of the Stutthof Hopehill-Reimannsfelde concentration camp operated in the years

² Selbstschutz – a paramilitary formation officially established in the order of SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler dated September 26, 1939. It consisted of representatives of the German minority inhabiting the territory of the Second Polish Republic. The formation was responsible for mass extermination of the Polish population in Pomerania in the autumn of 1939.

³ Museum documenting and telling the story of the German transit camp Dulag 121 and the fate of inhabitants of Warsaw who were expelled from the city during the 1944 Uprising.

1942–1945 in this small town in today's Warmia-Mazury region. Its memory is used by employees of the Stutthof Museum and the Youth Education Centre in Kamionek Wielki in the work with their charges. The still neglected post-camp terrain and buildings remain under their care. Caring for this place is an important way of cultivating memory of the victims, while also constituting an important part of the process of rehabilitation of local youth. Next, Piotr Chruścielski in his study: *Make invisible visible. Project "Stutthof. New dimension" (Niewidzialne uczynić widzialnym. Projekt „Stutthof. Nowy wymiAR”)* proves how important from the point of view of contemporary audience – who grew up in the culture of the image – are modern forms of narratives about the past. A multimedia application has been created as a result of cooperation of the Stutthof Museum and Gdańsk University of Technology; with its help visitors to the Museum – mainly young people – learn the story of a witness, a former prisoner of the camp. Reading of the paper leaves one in no doubt as to which direction the contemporary historical education is headed in – as well as that there is no turning back from this ongoing process.

Chapter Three of the publication: *Case studies: the places (Studia przypadku: miejsca)* is devoted to selected Polish places of memory and how they narrate the past. The first study in this section by the employee of the Stutthof Museum, Marcin Owsiański, *“I havta see Stutthof...” – remembering the KL Stutthof in the first years after liberation (1945–1949). Between the memory of the survivor and the practice of the administrator („Stutthof oboczyć muszę...” – pamięć o KL Stutthof w pierwszych latach po wyzwoleniu (1945–1949). Między pamięcią ocalałego i praktyką urzędnika)* discusses the post-war fate of the place. Almost immediately after World War II, former prisoners of Stutthof – gathered in an association – took the initiative to transform its terrain into a place of remembrance. Their mission was to be also support and care for prisoners and their families. Unfortunately, despite the decision to grant the right to manage the former camp terrain to the association, it has been taken over by the State Forests. The author shows what circumstances contributed to delay in establishment of a place of memory of the Stutthof Camp. A similar story is recounted the article: *A tale of forgetting. The post-war history of the former extermination camp (Dzieje niepamięci. Powojenne losy terenu byłego obozu zagłady Kulmhof w Chełmnie nad Nerem)* by Andrzej Grzegorzczak and Małgorzata Grzanka. The case studied by the authors shows how negligence or errors in cultivating memory could lead to regional amnesia. Of the two parts of Chelm camp, only one still survives in the local memory, namely the mass graves in the Żuchów forest, where a memorial has been erected. The former estate and farm where the camp was located is today virtually forgotten. Błażej

Ciarkowski in his paper *The politics of forgetting – the traces of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto in the post-war history of the Bałuty district in Łódź* (*Polityka niepamiętania – ślady Litzmannstadt Getto w powojennej historii łódzkich Bałut*) shows a different – repressive – way of forgetting about the past of a place. After the war, local authorities have attempted – fortunately unsuccessfully – to build new socialist reality (pre-fabricated high rises) on the site of the former ghetto. Construction of concrete high-rises was, however, not possible in certain areas of the former ghetto, and some of the old tenements could survive. Nowadays – Ciarkowski stresses – various initiatives cultivating the memory of the Jewish Bałuty are undertaken in Łódź. The next two articles, closing the publication, bring a shift away from places of memory devoted to history of World War II. Sylwia Grudzień in her article *Żwirkowisko – a place of remembrance for the Polish minority in Zaolzie (Czech Republic)* (*Żwirkowisko – miejsce pamięci Polaków z Zaolzia*) presents the history of the field in Cierlicko near Czech Teschen where on September 11, 1932 a plane with Franciszek Żwirko and Stanisław Wigura onboard had crashed. A memorial was erected quickly thereafter, but during the war the Germans erased all traces of this past event. It was not easy to recover this memory also during the period of existence of Czechoslovakia. Initially, the rebuilt place of memory gained a plaque commemorating... the victims of fascism. This misrepresentation survived in the local consciousness until 1970s. In the closing paper *Gustav Manitiusz Park in Poznań: the transformation of space of old evangelical cemeteries and the social perception of the “dissonant” cultural heritage* (*Park im. Gustawa Manitiusa w Poznaniu: przemiany przestrzeni dawnych cmentarzy ewangelickich a odbiór społeczny „niespójnego” dziedzictwa kulturowego*) Joanna Wałkowska focuses on multicultural character of places of memory. The author analyzed the procedure, implemented by post-war authorities in Poznań, that culminated in the former Protestant cemetery being turned into a park. Today, the place serves recreational purposes, and based on research conducted by Wałkowska we can conclude that – in contrast to the example of the Warsaw Uprising Mound cited above – the residents of Poznań have little awareness of the original history of the park.

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The reviewed publication *Signs of (no)memory. Theory and practice of remembrance in Poland*, focused on topics of memory and forgetting, is an interesting and valuable read, worthy of recommendation. It is worth mentioning appropriate application and presentation of the terms used in different research contexts. Approaches suggested by the authors undoubtedly prove multidimensional and

interdisciplinary nature of research in memory. They also confirm the thesis – rising in popularity – of major changes in theoretical frameworks and methodologies occurring in the humanities and social sciences. Another advantage of the publication is also its consistency. The editors managed to not only skillfully select the papers published, but also appropriately present them to readers. The content of the monograph is coherent, and the reader is not left with the impression that it is a random collection of texts. The publication will certainly be of interest to researchers in memory, representatives of institutions dealing with remembrance, as well as to everyone that cares about what historical narratives say and for what purpose they are created.