

SUMMARY

That which does not die. The reminiscences of poets and poetesses

The book *To, co nie ginie. Reminiscencje poetek i poetów* (*That which does not die. The reminiscences of poets and poetesses*) contributes to contemporary research on individual memory and to be more concise, on autobiographical memory. The methodological basis for the analysis contained in this monograph draws from the works of the specialists on personal writing, i.e. mainly the theoretical works of Philippe Lejeune and Małgorzata Czermińska. The inspiration for the research contained in this monograph comes again, as in my previous publication (*Mnemosyna. O pamięci autobiograficznej w poezji polskiej* [*Mnemosyne. On autobiographical memory in Polish poetry*]), from Douwe Draaisma's works on memory. This time the focus is on phenomena of psychological reminiscence, i.e. personal memories (*Forgetting, The Nostalgia Factory. Memory, Time and Ageing*). Their poetic representations feature two main tendencies: the author's need to distance themselves from their own biography and the attempt to render their individual experience universal through the use of rhetorical means.

This monograph is an example of interpretative strand in literary studies. The author focuses on decoding the autobiographical features in the poetic works analysed here. This book comprises five chapters, each of which deals with a different aspect of reminiscence, as suggested in its title. Each poet, i.e. Tadeusz Różewicz, Julia Hartwig, Wisława Szymborska, Bogusława Latawiec, Waldemar Żyszkiewicz, reminisces about somebody and each in a different way.

Chapter One, i.e. *Tadeusz Różewicz's Travels*, deals mainly with the quest for the sacrum undertaken by this poet and author of *Niepokój* [*Unease*].

The motif of wandering contained in the title of this chapter can be understood in two ways. The first refers to the poet's pilgrimage to the places related to two popes, i.e. John Paul II and John XXIII, who are both mentioned in Różewicz's poems. In the second, metaphorical meaning, the topos of travel connotes the metaphysical meaning of the quest for the *sacrum*. Julia Kristeva's essays from the volume *This Incredible Need to Believe* and Zygmunt Bauman's sociological works, among them *Liquid Modernity*, are drawn on in this chapter in order to provide insight into the volatile condition of the postmodern individual.

In Chapter Two, *Julia Hartwig's Dreams*, the poetess' experiences with dreaming provide an illustration of various epistemological states. When referring to the biography of the French poet, Robert Desnos, Hartwig comments on the price poets have to pay for their talent. Douwe Draaisma's *Forgetting* is applied here as the most important interpretative context and enables a better understanding of the poetess' works, e.g. her *Czulość* [*Tenderness*]. Carl Gustav Jung's essay (*Archetypes and Collective Unconscious*), on the other hand, points to the archetypal nature of dream representation in Hartwig's poetry.

Chapter Three, *Wisława Szymborska's Works*, provides evidence that the Polish Nobel-prizewinner is very close to the tradition of lament in her poems written in memoriam of her parents and Kornel Filipowicz. The word "Works" used in the title of this part of the book is a reference to the classic essay *Mourning and Melancholy* by Sigmund Freud. Like Hartwig, Szymborska summons her close relatives who are dead in her dreams. In this way, in her poetry the sorrow at the loss takes the form of a light melancholy.

Chapter Four, *Bogusława Latawiec's Objects*, provides evidence that this author, originally from Poznań, is probably the closest to the classic paragon of nostalgia when compared to the other poets covered in this monograph. In her poetry, she also summons up her dead parents and her reminiscences bear a common feature of being embedded in the topography of her home city of Poznań. At the same time, the heightened intertextuality of her poetry renders her travels back to her childhood with particular originality. Moreover, the multi-sense nature of the memories' representations results in Latawiec's Proust-like returns to the past bearing a lot of family love, albeit set during the Second World War.

In Chapter Five, *Waldemar Żyszkiewicz's Points of Reference*, the basis of theoretical references to the representation of memory is Małgorzata Czermińska's notion of autobiographical place. The reminiscences create

a harmonious link between the poet's memory and particular features of the city's topography. We move back to 1950s' Poznań in order to walk around an old neighbourhood that, like Latawiec's works, bears the features of the city's Prussian past. Additionally, the idea of micro-history as designed by Ewa Domańska makes it possible to analyse the phenomenon of forced migration of Poles after the Second World War, from the eastern parts of what was Poland, in a context that is completely different to the traditional view of the loss of the Eastern Borderlands. This is because the poet's ancestors moved to Poznań from Lviv.

By way of conclusion, it is worth emphasising the humanist aspect of this monograph. Remembering loved ones is a cultural duty, in which the private dimension of the author's biography merges with patterns enshrined in European heritage.

Translated by Rob Pagett