

Summaries in English

Radosław Poczykowski

Between Sociology and Cartography, or a Map in the Head

Though contemporary sociology treats the phenomenon of space extremely seriously, it appears surprising that hardly any room is devoted to the discussion of representations of space, i.e. to maps. The article attempts to fill this gap through an analysis of the application of the idea of a “mental map” to a comparative cultural study. Adopting Kevin Lynch’s largely pragmatic notion of a mental map to a theoretically oriented sociological project, the author explores the relations between the concepts of history, cultural values and memory. The discussion is focused on the ways of construing mental landscape by the exiled members of the Jewish *shtetls* and similarly dispossessed inhabitants of the Mazury region in Poland. The demonstrated differences present in those reconstructions are, according to the author, an excellent reflection of significant diversity in cultural perception and values, and an indication that an analysis of this kind constitutes an original and productive element in the methodology of modern sociology and historical studies.

Iwona Kurz

City Map as a Memory Construct. Remembering Warsaw Uprising in Contemporary Warsaw

Contemplating the social and historical significance of the Warsaw Uprising and its 60th anniversary, the article points to a silent ever-presence of the event’s painful reminders in the city’s contemporary landscape, which – though seemingly erased from the map of everyday trivia and the city’s obsessive mobility – still appear and re-appear in the background of every-day actions and as such constitute the historical unconscious of the celebrated 2003 *Warsaw* movie. The key point of the article revolves around the anniversary’s celebrations, which, due to their scale and sophistication, rearranged the ordinary space of Warsaw turning it, through repetition and experience, into a space of “bleeding memory.” This particular balance between dramatic past and its contemporary re-enactment not only introduces what Marianne Hirsch calls “post-memory,” but also, if not in the first place, it provides one of the crucial cornerstones of national identity.

Marcin Mazurek

A New Map of the City: Between Boredom and Revolution

Taking Scott Fitzgerald’s prophetic prediction of the urban reality informed by “racy, adventurous feel [...] and the constant flicker of men and women and machines” as a departure point, the article aims at analysing the problem of contemporary representation and distribution of urban space. Populated in equal measures by the human and the technological, the cityscape inevitably enforces a redefinition of the urban self, locating it at the intersection of the technological, the textual and the virtual environments and thus narrating a significant departure from the traditional approaches to urban locality in favour of the cyber ones. Traces of the latter are identifiable across a number of textual representations, from the aforementioned Fitzgerald to William Gibson and Neal Stephenson, and from Melvin Webber to Jean Baudrillard and William Mitchell. Still, somehow contrary to Mitchell’s enthusiastic views of the cyber-urban future, there appears a much more sinister tone of the threats posed by the excessive development of technological consumerism, which as J. G. Ballard’s book *Millennium People* informs us, is likely to evoke all kinds of nihilistic and self-destructive reactions.

Katarzyna Smyczyńska

A Girl in a Big City. Identity and Urban Space in “Chicklit” Novels

The aim of the article is to portray the contemporary genre of “chicklit” as representative of dilemmas faced by a modern woman in construing her identity against the background of city culture. The main theme of the paper and the focal point of the analysis of various texts is the relation between space and identity, discussed primarily with reference to the cultural theories of Michel de Certeau and Anthony Giddens. The protagonists of the genre find themselves functioning in the ideologically defined public sphere, where space is marked by designated gender roles and thus largely determines patterns of expected behaviour. The author argues that

through their distinct treatment of the tension permeating such spaces and through a hitherto unencountered attitude and lifestyle, the heroines create a new type of identity, which although problematic and filled with internal paradoxes and conflicting desires, manages to leave an imprint on the city space and is ultimately responsible for its transformation.

Bożena Kucała

Searching for Frontiers of Civilization: J.M. Coetzee's Waiting for Barbarians

Following the titular threat of approaching barbarity the article explores the ambiguous concept of the Empire perceived in terms of a mental construct of its inhabitants located in a metaphorical space beyond history and beyond time. Futile attempts to mobilize the "civilised" Imperial identity seen as the barbarians' glorious Other demonstrate however the provisionality of all identity-related definitions based on binary oppositions, pointing to the devastating consequences such political/discursive strategy may bring about. This particular dichotomy, metaphorically located against the background of a symbolic journey into borderland of civilised culture, reveals nevertheless a disturbing truth; the real threat for the Empire's unity lies not in the mysterious and desolate land supposedly occupied by the barbarians, but in the Empire itself, in its spiritual emptiness and its inability to establish its own borders in a way other than that of a negative confrontation.