

## INTRODUCTION

Today, a hundred years or so after the original publication of the five volumes of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–1920), the work is considered to be the very first masterpiece of qualitative sociology and the very first sociological analysis of migration. The hundredth anniversary of the book's publication has occasioned a number of publications and conferences commemorating the outstanding work and its authors. William Thomas's and Florian Znaniecki's fascinating biographies and intellectual trajectories crossed in 1913, when Thomas visited Warsaw in order to find help in the realization of a grand research project concerning the migration of Eastern Europeans to the United States.

Thomas's empirical inquisitiveness, combined with the depth of Znaniecki's systematical thought, resulted in a very broad and theoretically creative contribution to the sociological canon. *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* pioneered or significantly enriched empirical research in such areas as the structure of ethnic identity, values and attitudes, organisation, disorganisation and reconstruction, pathologies of social consciousness, subcultures, urban influences, interaction between old and new worlds, Americanisation, deviance, relationships between individual attitudes, and control and social constraints. In general, it opened the way to empirically based analyses of modernity, especially studies that took modernity's dark sides into account.

*The Polish Peasant* is widely recognised to be a milestone of the Chicago school of sociology, but its influence is much broader, even if its theoretical programme and empirical material were not fully satisfactory even for Thomas and Znaniecki. As far as theoretical issues are concerned, the authors were both attracted by, and distanced from, the most influential social theories of their times. The parallels between their thoughts and pragmatism are unquestionable but still not fully analysed. Elżbieta Hałas

is probably the author who has gone furthest in demonstrating Znaniecki's originality in the context of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. On the other side of the ocean, Norbert Wiley interpreted Thomas and Znaniecki's ideas as an important contribution to the emergence of the "semiotic self," without, however, reducing Thomas and Znaniecki's work to pragmatism and by emphasising Kantian elements in Znaniecki's philosophy.

A comprehensive study of *The Polish Peasant*, as well as of Thomas's and Znaniecki's other works, still needs to be written. The present issue does not claim to outline such a project but hopes to call attention to several questions that have either been overlooked or did not play a central role in previous interpretations of *The Polish Peasant*. We open the issue with an English translation of Florian Znaniecki's article, "Elements of Practical Reality," from which it can be seen that the idea of biographical studies followed from Znaniecki's early philosophy and not solely from Thomas's anthropological approach. As Znaniecki clearly stated in the paper, "a social value must be considered in its emergence. [...] all 'pictures' of social life at a certain moment, which are so numerous especially in the history of literature, the history of art, etc., have absolutely no scientific significance" (38–39). Znaniecki's text also clearly shows that in 1912 his thought was already evolving towards sociological questions and concepts.

In the first contemporary text of the issue, Łukasz Dominiak focuses on Znaniecki's biography and raises doubts as to whether Znaniecki's work should be interpreted primarily through the lens of pragmatist influences. Instead, Dominiak argues that Bergsonian and Durkheimian inspirations played a much more significant role in Znaniecki's philosophical arguments, as well as in the main themes of *The Polish Peasant*.

Michał Kaczmarczyk, whose article may be read as a commentary on "Elements of Practical Reality," elucidates the advantages of Znaniecki's approach to the idea of values and compares it to other major theories of values in sociological theory. He argues that Znaniecki's collaboration with Thomas, which was interesting in itself, was also an opportunity for the Polish philosopher to apply his early ideas in sociological research.

In contrast to Kaczmarczyk, Łukasz Remisiewicz is concerned with Thomas's evolution from having a relatively simple quasi-behaviouristic approach to a much more balanced explanatory model in which nature and culture constitute a complex unity of interconnected empirical phenomena.

Remisiewicz places Thomas's intellectual trajectory in the context of major shifts in the relationship between biology and the social sciences.

Bogna Dowgiallo ties *The Polish Peasant* to the contemporary sociology of emotions by reconstructing Thomas and Znaniecki's theoretical models: in particular, their overcoming of the dualism of the individual and society. In Dowgiallo's interpretation, the focus on migration and the disorganisation of family life in the long term allowed the authors to identify several mechanisms of affective adaptation.

Sylwia Urbańska identifies gender biases and patriarchal schemes in Thomas and Znaniecki's work in order to reconstruct their "morally healthy" model of a national and patriarchal rural community of families untouched by individualisation and women's emancipation. As Urbańska writes, "[i]n *The Polish Peasant* we can find both a nostalgia – which was typical of its era – for a 'pre-modern,' rural, conservative civilisation, and worry about the moral health of women in the urban world. However, it is an ambivalent nostalgia, accompanied by a conviction of the inevitability of social change" (138).

The review section is opened by Marta Bucholec's essay "*Ubi Caritas...*," in which she criticises the diagnosis of Polish religiosity in Mirosława Grabowska's book *Bóg a sprawa polska* [God and the Polish cause], and consequently delivers a bitter appraisal of the condition of the Polish Church. Grabowska responds at length, defending the historical role of the Church and emphasising the broader context, which is necessary, according to her, for a just evaluation of the role of religion in Polish public life. Marta Kołodziejaska's book *Online Catholic Communities*, which is reviewed by Antoni Głowacki, is an empirical analysis of the online Catholic community. Next, Justyna Weber presents Katarzyna Leszczyńska's work *Płeć w instytucje uwikłana* [Gender entangled in institutions], in which the author studies research on stereotypes of masculinity and femininity among lay people working in the Polish Church. From the nature of the subject, all these works concerning Polish religiosity also always concern the essence of Polish society.

Dominika Michalak reviews Krzysztof Jaskułowski's book *The Everyday Politics of Migration Crisis in Poland*, which is the first qualitative analysis of Polish attitudes to the migration crisis after 2015. Tomasz Rakowski's book, *Przepływy, współdziałania, kręgi możliwego* [Inflows, cooperation, the realm of the possible], which Aleksandra Bilewicz reviews, changes the geographical context to Mongolia but remains within the thematics of this

issue as it concerns models of socio-economic transformation. Lastly, in reviewing Karolina Wigura's book *Wynalazek nowoczesnego serca* [Discovery of a modern heart], Agata Łukomska discusses how the work of this historian of ideas sheds light on contemporary social and political emotions.

*Michał R. Kaczmarczyk*