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## About the book

### ***Humans in situations not only from a psychologist's perspective. Studies inspired by the theory of Tadeusz Tomaszewski***<sup>1</sup>

The conference *Humans in Situations: A Multidisciplinary Approach* took place in Warsaw on November 14–17, 2016. It was organized by the University of Warsaw's Faculty of Psychology, the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Tadeusz Tomaszewski Foundation for the Development of Polish Psychology, with support from the Polish Academy of Sciences' Committee for Psychology. The conference invoked the text of a subsection by Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski (*Człowiek w sytuacji*, i.e. "Humans in Situations") in the textbook *Psychologia [Psychology]* from 1975 (Warszawa: PWN). This time the participants invited to the discussion were not just psychologists (unlike 2015, when the first part of the conference was held; see the materials published by *Czasopismo Psychologiczne-Psychological Journal*, 2017, vol. 21, no. 1), but also representatives of other disciplines.

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<sup>1</sup> This text is the English-language version of the introduction to the book *Człowiek w sytuacji. Wprowadzenie do lektury* ["Humans in Situations: Invitation to Readers"].

The present volume contains studies inspired by Tadeusz Tomaszewski's theory of action and the related model of a **situation**. Previously, most of the works invoking this theory were written by psychologists (see e.g. Kurcz, Reykowski, 1975; Łukaszewski, 1995; Kurcz, Kądziaława, 2002; Ratajczak, 2006, 2008). Here, we present the thoughts of scholars representing different areas of knowledge. We want to show what contemporary research contributes to our understanding of the notion of a situation; to see – in the fifth decade since the publication of Professor Tomaszewski's text – what there is new to say about humans in the multitude of situations in which they are agents.

From the perspective of theory of action, the agentive character of humans lies in the fact that, firstly, “they are able to identify their objective situation and understand the significance of its individual elements.” This enables them – secondly:

to transform their perception of the situation into tasks to be performed. Tasks, in turn, lead to attainment, to the development of activity in a specific direction, and it is in this that one should seek the third manifestation of human agentivity, namely in the fact that people are capable of continual interpretation of incoming stimuli and their selection with a view to the task in hand (Tomaszewski, 1984, pp. 132–133).

Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski often underlined that a situation is always someone's, it belongs to an agent who is that situation's distinctive element. He also added: “Describing human behavior in a specific situation, we have to remember not only that it is a *response* to the situation, but that this behavior constitutes *resolving* the situation as well” (Tomaszewski, 1975a, p. 20). Thus, not only do situations affect people, it is also people who transform, change situations by their actions. This is an important and original aspect of Tadeusz Tomaszewski's theory. The formula from the theory of action expressing the idea of “humans as objects (of influences) and humans as acting subjects” is as follows (Tomaszewski, 1984, p. 131):

**STp [Z / S-O-R/ W] STk**

Where: **ST** denotes a person's situation while **STp – STk** is a series of events from the initial situation (**STp**), from which the person's need resulted and which became the basis for task (**Z**), to the final situation (**STk**), which was designed as the completion of the task and as the result of an appropriate intentional action. The **S-R** mechanism is subordinated to the **Z-W** system constituting its reference

system that each time defines the meaning of **S** and the response **R** appropriate for it. The inner structure mediating function **O** is also fulfilled in a task context.

## **Part I. Situational context, cultural context, ecosystem (*Kontekst sytuacyjny, kontekst kulturowy, ekosystem*)**

In several chapters of the present volume the Professor's former students outline his theory of action, including how it approaches situations. The volume opens with a chapter entitled *Sytuacja psychologiczna i zmiana psychologiczna* ["Psychological situation and psychological change"]. Echoing Tadeusz Tomaszewski, author **Wiesław Łukaszewski** presents a psychological situation as the triad "requirements – possibilities – circumstances". Outlining the main ideas of Tomaszewski's theory, he also argues that, in the light of today's knowledge, the task-related motivation underlying the performance of actions appears more complex than the Professor described. He points not only to the motive of change related to an imbalance between the aforementioned elements but also the motive of "optimizing the relations in the triad so as to prevent potential losses and costs and maximize the chances for psychological gains." In the light of the asymmetry between the actor's and observer's perspective, he indicates there is a certain cognitive distortion in psychology, stemming from analyses being performed mainly from the researcher-observer's point of view. This causes external factors to be overlooked, whereas their secondary consequences include changes in the very people who are the acting subjects of situations.

**Ewa Kosowska's** chapter entitled *Kontekst sytuacyjny a kontekst kulturowy* ["Situational context versus cultural context"] considers "humans in situations" from a cultural anthropology perspective. It outlines the relationship between situational context and cultural context. The author notes that "insofar as to a sociologist or a psychologist, every human action results from a situation and changes dynamically with that situation, to an anthropologist an action is above all the effect of a given culture's accepted and 'normal' ... way of performing a given task; it is usually a variant of many earlier attempts to satisfy a specific need, and as a result – without losing its individual aspect – it proceeds in a manner modified by the cultural context (diachronic aspect) and by the situational context (synchronic aspect)."

Raising the question of cultural context is an important addition when considering the situation of agents in a specific social role that is culturally modified. Culturally modified social roles demand primary fulfillment of

the expectations linked to those roles. These are expectations that need to be concretized with respect to a given culture, at a specific time in its existence. “Cultural context is understood here as knowledge available to a person at a given time in a given place regarding the community’s ways of resolving problems analogous to the problem created by the current situation.”

The natural environment forms yet another context for humans in situations. It is the focus of the next chapter, *Przyrodnicze elementy egzystencjalnej i behawioralnej sytuacji łowcy paleolitycznego (na przykładzie badań na północno-wschodnim przedpolu Karpat)* [“Natural elements of the existential and behavioral situation of Paleolithic hunters (on the example of studies in the north-eastern Carpathian foreland”]. Authors **Maria Łanczont** and **Teresa Madeyska** introduce us to ecosystems in the Paleolithic era, in which “the situation of humans was determined by nature in a broad sense, namely the climate, the sculpture of the land, vegetation and fauna, or the whole set of components of the early natural environment.” From the viewpoint of paleogeography and geology, the authors present the main elements of Paleolithic humans’ environment determining their living conditions as well as their behavioral situation in the sense proposed by Tadeusz Tomaszewski. They acquaint us with ways in which humans adapted to existing conditions and used natural resources to satisfy their daily needs. Readers can learn about research methods that yield information about climatic and environmental changes over time and thus about the natural living conditions of Paleolithic humans as hunters. These methods can be used to identify locations of both base campsites and short-term hunting camps.

## **Part II. On the agentive power of situations, the impact of ideology, and indicators of an agent’s independence of situational pressure**

### ***(O sprawczej sile sytuacji, wpływie ideologii oraz wyznacznikach niezależności podmiotu od nacisków sytuacji)***

Referencing Tomaszewski’s theory of action, in which every situation is treated as a system of values and possibilities, and Kurt Lewin’s psychological field theory, **Maria Materska** analyzes the agentive power of a task situation (chapter *Sprawcza siła sytuacji zadaniowej*). After all, it is the product of values and possibilities that directly causes an agent to take appropriate action. “If one of these elements equals 0, the agent’s activity will be halted and the agent will wait either for the appearance of a worthy objective within

his or her life space or for circumstances to change to more favorable ones” (Tomaszewski, 1975).

Materska extends her discussion to include the temporal aspect of a task situation. She mentions the Professor's position on the temporal organization of human behavior, writing that behavior “is ... organized according to three principles simultaneously: according to a more or less random influx of current stimuli (reflexes), according to past experience corresponding to repeatable situations (habits), and according to anticipation of the future (tasks). These principles form a hierarchic system in which a task fulfills the primary organizing role” (Tomaszewski, 1975b, pp. 507–508). The chapter's author agrees with Tomaszewski that temporal aspects in deliberate action form a hierarchy, but argues that before a task takes control of behavior, it can shift from one temporal area to another even multiple times, assuming different incarnations. Therefore the author proposes that the definition of a task, one of the most important notions in the Professor's theory, should be expanded.

In the book's next chapter, entitled *Definicje społecznych sytuacji zadaniowych a ideologia* [“Definitions of social task situations versus ideology”], **Janusz Reykowski** underlines that “humans are not unequivocally controlled by situations ..., they retain their agentivity. Their behavior depends on how they understand, how they cognitively construct a given situation.” The author takes the view that this observation, evaluation and understanding of situations is socially constructed. It takes place in relations with others; it is the effect of social relationships, both past and present. The author founds his discussion on the idea that there exist certain prototypical social task situations which determine the survival and quality of life of human communities. Performing such tasks (e.g. economic, civic, caregiving and culture-building ones) is or should be based on specific principles stemming from the essence of these tasks. Such principles serve to form the ethos of different social roles within which the tasks are performed. The author argues that under the influence of the ideologies prevailing in a given society, social task situations are modified, distorted, and these changes can jeopardize the proper performance of important adaptation tasks. The author illustrates this with the example of changing social task situations under the influence of two increasingly expansive types of ideology: market ideology and authoritarian ideology.

The theme of ideology (totalitarian this time) is raised by **Iwona Jakubowska-Branicka** in the next chapter. Its title is very evocative: *Człowiek w niewoli nienawistnych narracji* [“Humans imprisoned in hateful narratives”]. The author argues that a situation is simply an individual's narratively ordered

knowledge about reality. “It is a story accepted as the truth about reality ... The story about the world ... determines an individual’s decisions and actions.” This discussion from the position of a political sociologist focuses on situations created by narratives in the spirit of totalitarianism that nevertheless are also present in democratic practice and communication. The author devotes special attention to the hate narrative and its impact on people’s way of thinking and therefore their political preferences and choices.

How is it that hate speech meets with a favorable response? How can we explain why people in situations of social change become susceptible to opinions or behavior patterns that are hostile toward others (and diverge from the acceptable norm)? Can people stay independent from such external pressure? We can find answers to these questions in the next chapter, *Podmiotowość w sytuacjach przemian społecznych* [“Self-agency in situations of social changes”]. The subtitle reads: *Emocje jako wyznaczniki niezależności podmiotu od nacisków sytuacji* [“Emotions as determinants of personal independence from situational pressure”]. Author **Maria Jarymowicz** set herself the task of “showing what emotional processes enable people to preserve their agentivity in different circumstances or else strip them of some important attributes of independence: 1) insights into the premises of their own reasoning and the structure of their beliefs, and 2) control over the reasons for and directions of their own actions.” Jarymowicz invokes the “emotional brain” model of Joseph LeDoux (1998/2000) which takes into account the role of different tiers of the nervous system in producing emotions. The author sees the diversity of emotions – from those which “blind” people to those allowing for thinking – as being a consequence of which neuronal areas responsible for emotions are stimulated. She outlines two judgment systems: automatic and reflective, using them to explain which elements of the world we are sensitive to. The question is whether we activate the reflective system essential to the development of specifically human morality or, under the influence of the automatic system, judge stimuli in terms of our own interests above all. The author warns: “When the automatic system prevails, failure to distance themselves prevents people from seeing they are betraying the truth or their own ideals.” This can lead to tragedies involving individuals, whole groups or communities. We should not forget that “people dealt this fate to people.”

*Człowiek w sytuacji granicznej w kontekście ekspozycji muzealnych* [“People in extreme situations in the context of museum exhibitions”] is the title of **Anna Ziębińska-Witek**’s chapter in which she reflects on an emotionally extremely difficult issue. However, it is also extremely important from the

point of view of commemorating the victims of mass exterminations as well as being crucial from the perspective of history education. The question is: How can museum exhibitions express the situation of people “in sudden, direct contact with their own death”? Depending on the mission of a given museum and the objectives defined by exhibition curators, people in extreme situations will be presented in different ways. This could be an individual in a large and anonymous group of people or a specific person with his or her own identity. The growing trend today is to individualize and personalize victims in an attempt to “give them faces.” The author discusses contemporary exhibition strategies used to show people in extreme situations. The reader will also wonder about the emotions of the audiences, their situation in the role of an acting subject absorbing museum exhibitions. What deeper reflections will be triggered in them?

### **Part III. Humans among people, things and information (Człowiek wśród ludzi, rzeczy i informacji)**

This part of the book opens with the chapter *Jednostka w sytuacji definiowania społecznych zobowiązań – socjologiczny fenomen interakcji w przestrzeni międzyludzkiej* [“Individuals in situations of defining social obligations – the sociological phenomenon of interaction in the interpersonal space”]. In it, **Adam Bartoszek** continues the theme of obligations stemming from culturally modified social roles. He adds that next to cultural conventions, we also need to distinguish socially promoted models that constitute legal obligations (a set of rules of conduct formally enforced in a given community). Thus, defining social obligations is based on an interactive collision of cultural and institutional requirements on one hand and the agentive needs and moral orientations of individuals in given situational conditions on the other. From the viewpoint of a sociologist, the author offers an interesting presentation of the phenomenon of human encounters in situations activating people’s ethical obligations toward one another. Similarly to Iwona Jakubowska-Branicka, he expresses regret that “when social narratives start sharply confronting ... lifestyles and social practices as morally exclusive Matrixes, the sense of security in collective life becomes seriously diminished.”

The authors of the next chapter in this part of the book, **Janusz Kirenko** and **Anna Bieganowska-Skóra**, present an encounter between people with disabilities and able-bodied people. In this encounter there is no emphasis on the limitations and defects of the former, but only the recognition that “disabilities are one of the attributes of the human fate” (Kosakowski, 2003, p. 23).

The text's title is *Człowiek w sytuacji niepełnosprawności – nowe spojrzenie* ["Humans in situations of disability – a new approach"]. The value promoted here is "social *acceptance* [emphasis added] of people with disabilities (as opposed to *adaptation* that is the aim of actions in a biological approach to disabilities) and social change manifested mainly in society's improved attitudes toward people with disabilities." The primary focus should be on a person's capabilities and not his or her limitations. After all, a disability is just one feature of such people, not the only one. This is a fact worth noticing.

Starting his chapter *Ludzie pośród rzeczy. Ilu ich potrzebują, by żyć ze sobą zgodnie?* ["People among things. How much do they need to live in harmony?"], **Andrzej Waśkiewicz** writes: "The fact that material possessions can help people live in harmony together or prevent them from doing so is, of course, a banal observation, but it is less banal to consider that instead of influencing those relations directly (by passing laws, shaping customs, educating, etc.), we should try to modify them indirectly, by regulating the circulation of things among people." And it is this noteworthy idea that the author discusses from the perspective of political philosophy, presenting utopian visions of the state. First he invokes the vision of Plato, in whose ideal state things should be rationed (what is important is that there should be neither too little nor too much, because only then can people live in harmony). However, Waśkiewicz focuses the most attention on the most carefully drawn up and sophisticated regulatory utopian world, namely Thomas More's *Utopia*, and also mentions the concepts of utopians from the Enlightenment. Presenting these utopian visions of the state, Waśkiewicz presents readers with a vision – saturated with the spirit of egalitarianism – of people among things in a peculiar economic situation where things do not affect a person's status in the community and members suffer no form of deprivation.

But what happens when things do affect a person's status in the community? This is the focus of the next chapter, *Człowiek w sytuacji deprivacji. Badanie uprzedzeń w kontekście kryzysu gospodarczego w Hiszpanii* ["Humans in situations of deprivation. A study on prejudice in the context of the Spanish economic crisis"] by **Michał Bilewicz** and **Ewa Romańczuk**. From the viewpoint of social psychology, the authors analyze the effects of deprivation in Catalonia, a relatively well-off region of Spain which suffered a serious economic crisis in the past decade. A study from 2016 on the causes of prejudice displayed toward immigrants showed that it was not the objective economic situation but rather the explanation given for it that was responsible for increased prejudice, which supports a regulatory approach to research on the effects of relative deprivation. In the regulatory model of



deprivation, “the ways in which a crisis is explained thus become a kind of pattern responsible for responses to a situation of deprivation.”

Another kind of difficult situation, different from economic crisis situations, is related to overload as a result of too much information. Such situations are analyzed in the chapter by **Maria Ledzińska** entitled *Człowiek w obliczu przeciążenia informacyjnego: o sytuacjach trudnych w dobie przemian ogólnoswiatowych* [“Humans in the face of information overload: difficult situations in a time of global changes”]. Referring to Tadeusz Tomaszewski’s taxonomy of difficult situations, those connected with “tasks beyond capacity”, “complex tasks of variable and ambiguous structure in variable conditions”, “obstacles”, “conflicts” and “pressuring” (Tomaszewski, 1971, p. 125), the author puts forward the idea that the world treated as a “global village” endures multiple and coexisting difficult situations. Since the amount of information is growing at an alarming rate while the cognitive capabilities of the human mind are not growing at a corresponding pace (Attali, 2008; Spitzer, 2013), we can speak of chaos, the impossibility of integrating too many data, which causes “information stress” or, to put it more precisely, an “information syndrome.” The author explains this as follows: “The human brain has been programmed to gather information – we are unable to ignore it. Therefore assimilating simple content is not the problem, but selecting and processing data when its excess makes evaluation difficult. Constant stimulation causes stress, which the brain neutralizes by going into emergency mode and processing information more superficially.” A peculiar accessibility paradox is an immanent feature of global changes, since an overabundance of information results in difficulties with choosing what is important and necessary to a given person.

**Part IV. The situation of people of faith – the viewpoints of a theologian, a philosopher of religion, a historian of antiquity, and an Arabist**  
**(O sytuacji człowieka wiary – spojrzenie teologa, filozofa religii, historyka starożytności, arabisty)**

This overview of standpoints related to situations of faith opens with the chapter by **Andrzej Draguła** entitled *Człowiek w sytuacji. Wyznaczniki teologiczne* [“Humans in situations. Theological indicators”]. The author posits that “if a theologian is interested in humans in situations, then what defines a situation is a person’s eternity, their salvation. To a theologian, ‘humans in situations’ are humans perceived *sub specie aeternitatis*, i.e. from the point of view of

eternity, and *sub specie salvationis*, i.e. in terms of their salvation.” Draguła is interested in interpretations of people’s situations in terms of their chances for obtaining salvation or the risk of losing it. “Every situation seen from the perspective of salvation is a kind of challenge and demands that a person take specific action which has consequences for salvation.” In a theological sense, Tadeusz Tomaszewski’s position can be taken to mean that a person’s behavior in a given situation is a way of resolving that situation. Draguła adds from the position of a theologian that every person has a gift of grace that is sufficient to “cope with” the challenges of a situation of salvation. Applying a theological interpretation, the author analyzes situations that are widely known from the parable of the prodigal son.

Next, **Zbigniew Mikołajko** in the chapter entitled *Droga do Emaus: człowiek w sytuacji zwątpienia* [“The road to Emmaus: people in situations of doubt”] takes the perspective of a philosopher of religion and shows us Emmaus as “a place and at the same time, due to its universalism, a non-place.” He underlines that Emmaus, which belongs to people inalienably (*dubito ergo sum*), is not linked exclusively to people of the Christian faith, although it is especially important to them. Like Andrzej Draguła, he assumes that “Emmaus is not so much a place as a state of mind and heart” (Draguła, 2015, p. 39). He argues that “the story of Emmaus is a story of faith, which means that it opens up – it must open up – to Transcendence. And that it is impossible to disregard.”

Meanwhile, “Strategies of contact with the sacred in situations of insecurity and danger (based on Christian sources from late ancient Egypt)” [Polish title *Strategie kontaktu z sacrum w sytuacji niepewności i zagrożenia (na podstawie chrześcijańskich źródeł z obszaru późnoantycznego Egiptu)*] is the problem considered by a historian of antiquity, **Przemysław Piwowarczyk**. The author presents the practices of people in late ancient Egypt that served to obtain the support and guardianship of supernatural beings. He draws his knowledge from Egyptian sources (mainly of Christian origin) written down in Greek and Coptic between the 3rd and 8th centuries. Two main ways of contacting God in situations of danger are outlined in the chapter: through a holy man and by using “ritual power.” The power of holy men (who were distinguished by a special asceticism and had “better access” to God) manifested itself in miraculous interventions on behalf of the ill and unfortunate, in mediation between people “of this world” and God. Rituals involved a middleman magus who prepared the ritual and the incantation. In the incantation itself, it was important to manipulate the “power”; the expected results were achieved by invoking superhuman forces, and not by

the power of humans. With the help of source texts (literary and documentary), Piwowarczyk concludes that “the range of dangers and troubles with which Egyptian Christians came to magi was similar to that entrusted to the intercession of holy men.”

The final chapter in this part of the book brings us back to our times. **Katarzyna Pachniak** presents her analysis of the problem of “Muslims in Europe versus jihadist Islam” (Polish title *Muzułmanie w Europie a dżihadystyczny islam*). She writes that:

the analysis was conducted from the point of view of an Arabist and using the methodology of Oriental studies, but the impulse came from Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski's words about humans in situations (Tomaszewski, 1975a). Tomaszewski's idea that people function in groups and that problems emerge when a wide gulf appears between an individual's social position and that person's capabilities, talents and skills, can be applied to many Muslims in Europe. Such a gulf causes frustration, which in turn often leads to radicalization. It is worth underlining that radicalization would not have been possible if the very religious foundations of Islam did not include factors that facilitate it.

## **Part V. Humans in situations: referential analysis of statements (*Człowiek w sytuacji: analiza referencyjna wypowiedzi*)**

Tadeusz Tomaszewski's concept has also turned out to be inspiring for the referential interpretation of statements. Proof of this can be found in the chapter *Człowiek w sytuacji. Uwagi do manifestu Juliana Ochorowicza “Naprzód!”* [“Humans in situations. Remarks on Julian Ochorowicz's manifesto *Naprzód!*”] written by **Anna Gomółka**. The author analyzes a poem that Ochorowicz wrote at the age of 22 and published a year later in *Opiekun Domowy* (1873, No. 1, pp. 3–4) under the pen name Julian Mohort (the poem was subsequently reprinted and mentioned many times, but its author was not always indicated). Some researchers consider Ochorowicz's poetic manifesto to have been a positivism-era version of Mickiewicz's Romantic *Ode to Youth* (Baculewski, 1965). Analyzing this manifesto, Gomółka highlights what she describes as “its noticeable (especially compared to other poetic manifestos) problem of ‘people in situations’.” She notices some situational analogies between the two poems, Mickiewicz's and Ochorowicz's: the authors were both 22 years old; the poems were written during the festive season; they represent poetics typical of poetry involving a collective subject, with a clear community objective (cf. *together* in Mickiewicz and *we want* in

Mohort). However, contrary to Mickiewicz, Ochorowicz did not polarize the collective subject:

His vision does not assume placing the young in contrast to the old, and the reason why it sees similarities rather than differences lies in the reference to **situations**. *Ode to Youth* opens with a gesture of rejection and opposition: “No Heart, no Spirit – Lo! cadaverous crowds!”<sup>2</sup>, Mohort’s poem opens with lines expressing concern for suffering, lonely, rejected and unhappy humans – people – Humanity. These humans are going forward, [progressing] despite adversity, despite everything. Their opponents are conditions, circumstances – situations, not other people. ...

Mickiewicz juxtaposes his own kind (“the young”, “friends”) with “the other” (“shell-clad reptile”), judging the latter or even accusing them (anachronizing them, we might say) in terms of a struggle for survival when he shows them hunting “some smaller brutes.” Ochorowicz does not judge, he tries to see **humans in situations**, people restricted by their circumstances, and to these people he proposes a search for “a person, a spirit and brother” “among our kin and among those of a different faith.”

Gomóła’s analysis of the poetic manifesto *Naprzód!* is maintained in the spirit of referential analysis (linked to the notion of “reference”), of which Tomaszewski wrote that “One can say that the course of all actions of communication, and speaking in particular, is regulated by a coherent system of references (referential system), that they progress differently depending on what they concern, what they are directed at, to whom they are addressed, and to what they are relativized” (Tomaszewski, 1993, p. 18–19).

Referential analysis of speech acts is the focus of the next chapter in this part of the book: *Jak kontekst wpływa na znaczenie przekazu; o rozumieniu pośrednich i niedosłownych wypowiedzi (metafory, ironia, pośrednie akty mowy, wieloznaczności)* [“How context affects meaning; understanding indirect and non-literal statements (metaphor, irony, indirect speech acts, ambiguity)”. The chapter’s author is **Józef Maciuszek**, who invokes the inferential model (predominant in modern-day pragmatics) which is based on conversational inference. The meaning of a statement is inferred by looking at the context (based on non-linguistic factors) and by identifying the speaker’s intentions. The author distinguishes the following components of context:

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<sup>2</sup> This and subsequent English quotations from Mickiewicz’s *Ode to Youth* are taken from *Selected Masterpieces of Polish Poetry* (translated from the Polish by Jarek Zawadzki), 2007, p. 49.

a) the listener's knowledge about language and the world, b) the circumstances in which a given communication act takes place (the situation), and c) information contained in earlier statements. The chapter presents some of the more important theoretical concepts and selected empirical studies related to the role of context in processing non-literal, indirect and ambiguous statements.

The final chapter in this part, Ewa Rudnicka's *Słownik – refleksje nad sytuacją zadaniową* ["Dictionaries: reflections on a task situation"] is also written in the spirit of referential analysis. From the point of view of lexicography and metalexicography (understood as the study of dictionaries and lexicography), this is an innovative approach, because – to the best of our knowledge – dictionaries have practically never been analyzed in this way in Poland before. Among other things, the author aims to answer the following question: "How can one approach the task of a lexicographic description of language in terms of a task situation, and what factors connected with the situation of working on a dictionary can be distinguished in accordance with the theory of Tadeusz Tomaszewski?"

The author performs analyses on the stimulation-related as well as the task-related aspect of working on a dictionary. She outlines situational factors involved in the production of a dictionary from the point of view of lexicographers. She draws upon stylometric comparative studies, using the *Stylo* software to create a list of stylometric similarities between the dictionaries being analyzed (note: the study involved samples from 11 Polish-language general dictionaries published in traditional, paper form). In her summary of the chapter the author underlines that "the factors making up the situational model can be a useful tool for explaining the phenomenon of the stylistic similarity of dictionaries."

## **Part VI. Humans in educational situations (Człowiek w sytuacji edukacyjnej)**

The teacher-pupil situation was a favorite theme of Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski, as shown very strongly in the book *Ślady i wzorce* ["Traces and Standards"] in 1984. And, in his 1966 interview "I Am Seven Years Younger than Polish Psychology" (interview granted to editors of the journal *Edukacja*, Stefan Kwiatkowski and Mirosław Szymański), Tadeusz Tomaszewski offered the following typology of teachers:

I have developed my own typology of university teachers, or maybe even all teachers. I've noticed that the predominant group are teachers who teach students

what they know themselves – these are ordinary teachers. Bad teachers are those, and they can sometimes be found at universities, who are afraid of their students surpassing them. If gifted students come along, they even try to hold them back, fearing they could become their rivals. But there are also good teachers, namely those whose students become better than them. And that’s progress – successors get better all the time. I decided I’d have students better than me (Jestem o siedem lat młodszy od polskiej psychologii ..., 2002, p. 190–196).

Therefore a collection of studies inspired by the theory of Professor Tomaszewski could not lack texts about humans in educational situations. This part of the book opens with a chapter by **Grażyna Czetwertyńska** entitled *Sytuacja nauczycieli języka polskiego i wiedzy o Polsce w szkołach polskich za granicą* [“The situation of teachers teaching Polish and knowledge about Poland at Polish schools abroad”]. The author sets out to find out who belongs to this group; where and in what conditions they work; what tasks they are given. The study was based on 202 questionnaires submitted by teachers, 16 group interviews, 12 in-depth interviews, 290 lesson scripts and 36 curricula from Polish schools in other countries, submitted for evaluation in 2014–2015. These data came primarily from the United Kingdom and Ireland, but also from Norway, Iceland, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Greece as well as the United States. An analysis of the curricula and lesson scripts enabled the author to “identify many serious problems with teaching at schools for expatriate Poles and observe how teachers try to deal with them, how they work and what makes their work difficult.” It is worth noting that these teachers show strong motivation to continue their mission, although they do seek support. Many of the teachers said they would do their best “despite everything.” Czetwertyńska shows the differences between curricula at schools for expatriate Poles and Polish schools in Poland. In the former, teachers write that they will “try” or “do their best” to make sure their students acquire the knowledge they should, while the latter state that “upon completion of the curriculum students will have the required knowledge.” There is no question that the situation of teachers at schools in other countries where expatriate Poles learn Polish and about Poland, as presented in the chapter, is a difficult one (due to the limitations indicated in the study), definitely requiring support from the Polish Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We must not forget that “training and educating is a special area of human experience that deserves out-of-the-box treatment and thinking.” This is how **Rafał Godoń** introduces us to the issues discussed in his text *Sytuacyjność*

*doświadczenia pedagogicznego* [“The situational nature of the teaching experience”]. Whereas Czetwertyńska’s chapter presented educational situations from a teacher’s point of view, in Godoń’s chapter the analysis of educational situations is supplemented with the learner’s perspective. The author argues that “the point of education ... is to change the human situation in the world to one enabling people to live better and more wisely.” The author explains the essence of the concept from the chapter’s title: “The situational nature of the teaching experience is a complex issue, just like the human fate and understanding it is complicated. Teaching is one of those human activities that help people assume a position in relation to the world, others, and also themselves. Sometimes, at special moments, fate allows us to understand fragments of what happened in these situations. The finiteness of our comprehension, however, offers a chance for a new, even more unexpected and surprising learning situation.”

## **Part VII. Humans as the object of research and humans as the researching subject** ***(Człowiek jako przedmiot badania i człowiek jako podmiot badający)***

The title of this part of the book refers to the title of Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski’s most interesting text, *Człowiek jako podmiot i człowiek jako przedmiot* [“Humans as acting subjects and humans as objects”] in the book *Ślady i wzorce* [“Traces and Standards”] (Tomaszewski, 1984). Let’s take a look at the situation of a researcher who, in the text entitled *Człowiek wobec genów* [“Humans versus genes”], summarizes the most important achievements of a specific field. In this case, **Magdalena Fikus** distinguishes some high points in the research on genes, starting from the work of Mendel, all the way to the interest in gene therapy that has been growing over the past quarter of a century. The author presents the process of arriving at a reliable theory in genetics as:

a hike in mountainous terrain, when we can see a gentle slope right in front of us, promising an end to the steep incline we are traversing. Unfortunately, usually once we get to this area it turns out it was just a turn of the ridge behind which you can see the next one that might finally be the last.

The theme of difficulties and obstacles that researchers face, and the doubts they have to contend with, is also present in **Karol Szymczak**’s chapter *Sytu-*

*acja badacza z perspektywy archeologa – uwikłania nie tylko terminologiczne* [“The situation of a researcher from the point of view of an archeologist: more than just terminological difficulties”]. As a specialist in studies on the oldest artefacts illustrating the history of our species, i.e. from the Stone Age, he discusses problems with introducing objectivism into studies on assemblages of flint artefacts, and particularly with identifying the degree of similarities and differences between individual assemblages (quantification procedures in archeology). The author shares his doubts concerning:

the bone remnants of anonymous people who died and were buried, or were not buried, hundreds, thousands, and sometimes tens and hundreds of thousands of years ago. ... where the boundary lies for treating human remains as archeological artefacts, the object of scientific research, and not as remains that do in fact deserve at least basic respect and a right to peace.

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The authors of the work presented here have tried to show how very much alive the concept of a situation as approached by Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski is in the academic community, how it inspires researchers representing different areas of knowledge, not only psychology. Just how much the young generation knows about this part of Professor Tomaszewski’s output and what it finds useful is discussed by **Łukasz Tanaś** in the text *Profesor Tadeusz Tomaszewski z perspektywy młodego pokolenia psychologów* [“Professor Tadeusz Tomaszewski from the point of view of the young generation of psychologists”].

Presenting this monograph to our readers, we want to draw attention to one more important aspect: in a situation when the relevance of scientific paradigms changes seasonally, Tadeusz Tomaszewski’s proposal can be an example of the benefits of lasting guidelines based on diligent research. Having the possibility of considering them through an “approval or negation” response (Szacki, 1971) becomes an argument supporting the value of tradition in science.

We would like to thank Professor Ida Kurcz for her kind support during work on the present volume.

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