

## Summary

Agata Tuszyńska is a contemporary writer of Polish-Jewish origin. Her literary output largely consists of non-fiction works – she experiments boldly with the *personal non-fiction* genre. She has written more than twenty books, including features, biographies, memoirs etc. She is also the author of biographies focused on Maria Wisnowska, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Irena Krzywicka, Józefina Szelińska and Wiera Gran. She makes multiple references to her own life in her literary works. Autobiographic themes play a crucial role in her books entitled *Family History of Fear* (*Rodzinna historia lęku*, 2005) and *Exercises in loss* (*Ćwiczenia z utraty*, 2007). All of her publications adhere to the widely understood notion of memory and its various forms which create the image of the past. A common denominator of numerous titles is the Jewish theme. The writer reconstructed the long-forgotten past, traditions and customs of the Jews. She studied the stories of Polish Jews, including her ancestors, and travelled around the world in search of their history. Her relationship to the Jewish nation was not easy. As an adolescent, she has experienced anti-Semitic remarks and her real lineage was hidden for many years. The moment she learned about her roots she was unable to accept the truth.

Tuszyńska's literary works show a gradual path to maturity and acceptance of her new identity, the need to understand the complexity of the situation the contemporary Jewish people found themselves in. In *Several portraits with Poland in the Background: Reportage from Israel* (*Kilka portretów z Polską w tle. Reportaże izraelskie*, 1993) she presented the image of a broken community of the post-war migrants who left their motherlands and were struggling to find their way in a hostile reality. Even more so as they do not constitute a unified group, they come from different countries, struggle with cultural differences and oftentimes do not share the same language. The writer used her trip to Israel to show the ties of the Jewish migrants to Poland in its widest possible sense. Those ties are not easy, as many Jewish people accuse Poles of anti-Semitism. The image of another group of migrants was presented in a book *Personal luggage. After March* (*Bagaż osobisty. Po marcu*, 2018), where, on the basis of individual stories, she illustrated the communities of Jews who left Poland for good in 1968. The writer does not shy away from inconvenient subjects in her books. She has learned to function in a two-fold, Polish-Jewish world which is not without mutual resentment and antagonism.

In her writings she also draws attention to detail. Photographs and everyday objects are valuable traces of memory for Tuszyńska. Her memory is also connected to the notion of *postmemory* introduced by Marianne Hirsch, referring to the Holocaust heritage remembered by families of the survivors, the representatives of the so-called “second generation”.

The memory category plays a major role in Agata Tuszyńska’s vast creative output, which is why the aim of this dissertation was to show how important memory in its various aspects – individual, collective, cultural, historical and regional – presented and interpreted in her writings is in the process of understanding one’s personal and collective identity and in the perception of values which condition one’s humanity. The writer is a narrator of memories and she often resurrects them from spaces which are difficult to reach. She studies individual and collective stories and reconstructs individual lives, focusing on details such as documents, memorabilia, places and legacies, at the same time providing her comments on generations. Memory is a deeply interdisciplinary notion discussed by representatives of various fields of studies. People’s interest in memory has piqued mostly thanks to Aleida and Jan Assman who devoted their scientific work to the issue on exemplification of the types of memory on the basis of various examples. Numerous researchers have based their studies on the theses posed by these German scientists. The literary works of Agata Tuszyńska form a perfect source material for detailed research on the significance of memory in contemporary literary science discourse.