MEMORY, TRADITION AND HERITAGE
A FEW REMARKS ON METACULTURAL REGION-AL PRACTICES[1]

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Abstract: Regional cultures have undergone intense cultural changes over recent decades. The predominant change was the transition from 'tradition', or a primary modelling system with an unreflective and emotive affirmation of the local culture, to 'heritage' or a secondary modelling system with a reflective and selective approach to the culture. Some experts and culture animators have rejected this distinction, leading to the erroneous mixing of tradition and heritage. Consequently, regional cultures are perceived to be based on their past quasi-museum shape with imposed, canonical, and reconstructed-only forms. They are also denied authenticity and an emotive, axiological significance in shaping the contemporary regional identities. This approach views a region's heritage only as a theatrical scene, or a repository of 'dead' forms. However, heritage is a 'living' form, which evokes strong emotions and engagement and stimulates new forms of art and social activity. Contrary to tradition, heritage has lost its sanctifying attitude towards the cultural past in favour of a selective, aestheticized attitude; however, like tradition, it provides a strongly emotive inspiration for grassroot culture-forming processes and the development of cultural identity.

Keywords: memory, tradition, heritage, transmission, metaculture

The following arrangements apply to various forms of cultures, above all regional, but also to those that exceed any local scale, including national cultures. Due to length constraints, the essay is limited to a synthetic overview of the subject matter, however the author of the essay hopes that it will help to illustrate the subject matter well and will stimulate the reader's imagination

with respect to local and global phenomena alike (for specific case studies, please see Barański, 2016; 2017; 2020). This deliberation will begin with a review of the relevant terms, such as *tradition* and *heritage*, which, following an analysis of selected topics, shall then lead to the essay's main thesis about metaculturality.

Contemporary humanities and social sciences are undergoing a significant semantic shift concerning various phenomena related to cultural transmission and cultural memory. Researchers are showing a growing acknowledgement of the role of heritage in these spheres, which is taking over from the role of tradition. To date, tradition has been considered to be the main factor in ensuring intracultural integrity, i.e. it is a type of anchor and transmission belt for routine, almost mindless practices, imaginings, creations and values, as well as being the key component that maintains the ontological safety of societies of different sizes. The model domain of tradition used to be the pre-modern world, where one's own tradition was considered sacred, along with its principles of respecting authority, sharing group values, maintaining the community and engaging in religious worship. In turn, the post-modern world differs greatly from the 'world of the scripture': it is a world of institutionalisation with a multitude of choices and lifestyles. As Anthony Giddens observed (1994, p. 73), the post-modern world replaces a non-reflexive (habitual) tradition with a highly-reflexive (ideological) cultural heritage. Giddens described this transition as follows:

> So far as the post-traditional society is concerned, what is interesting is what I shall call the process of excavation involved. 'Excavation', as in an archaeological dig, is an investigation, and it is also an evacuation. Old bones are disinterred, and their connections with one another established, but they are also exhumed and the site is cleaned out. Excavation means digging deep, in an attempt to clean out the debris of the past.

From the perspective of this essay, the *excavation* refers to heritage-related practices and to an attitude towards heritage that replaces the past tradition. At the same time, the excavation is a response to the process of being uprooted and a symptom of the long-term trauma of loss (Kapralski, 2014). Commemoration, auto-exotisation and folklorisation (a type of re-traditionalisation, or a return to the usually not-so-distant cultural past) are all phenomena that can counteract this trauma. However, this process often takes place through post-memory, i.e., indirect intergenerational bonding when the direct cultural transmission is discontinued (Kaniowska, 2014). This is now the dominant opinion in current studies on the cultural past within humanities and social sciences.

Some researchers of regional cultures, especially ethnologists, are interested in the past insofar as it constitutes a cultural heritage and a potential means of preserving the past culture, which they treat as a passive repository

that is used to maintain the cultural memory. A good example is a monograph edited by the late Urszula Janicka-Krzywda (2012), a researcher and activist who made an unparalleled contribution to regional studies, called *Kultura Ludowa Górali Spiskich* (Folk Culture of the Spisz Highlanders). It is a comprehensive guide to the regional culture of Spisz, ranging from the geography and history, through the economy, architecture, traditional attire and annual customs, to the region's music; however, the primary focus of the monograph is the history of the Spisz culture. The near-absence of the cultural "here and now" is evident from the book's distinctive style, frequently found in other publications of its kind, that continuously approaches a culture in the past tense. Almost every page contains phrases such as "every household owned sheep", "carpenters used spruce wood", "people with anxiety were recommended to drink thyme tea", "the youth knelt before their parents to receive their blessings" or "the *sukmana* was the outerwear of choice among the residents of Spisz". The authors of this monograph seem to suggest that they only value things that belong to the past. Of course, these researchers do not write about what the residents of Spisz are wearing in modern times – even though they do, on very special occasions, wear the aforementioned *sukmana*, the monographs do not even mention this custom. Conversely, the researchers (who are, first and foremost, historians) who have adopted the other approach, called the *mnemonic turn*, underline the role of memory. However, these researchers, Pierre Nora (2009) included, also point out that the 'true memory' (homogenous, non-reflexive, subconscious, sacred and emotive) of tribal and folk communities is being overtaken by the "historical memory" (heterogenous, reflexive, conscious, secular and speculative) of urban communities and of science itself. The cultural past is viewed solely as the passive heritage of bygone generations, encapsulated in archives and museum exhibits. Such objects can only undergo a measured inspection, instead of serving as sources of invigorating faith in the ideas, values and meanings they represent. Both approaches revolve around a qualitative change in the status and role of the past, which ceases to be a source of emotively experienced principles and truths that are accepted *a priori*. As a result, culture is considered to have lost its original agency and mystical role (along with its constituent myths, beliefs, rituals and axiologies) through the modernisation and secularisation of societies, and has been replaced with a rational, instrumental understanding of culture.

The two approaches raise due doubts about their accuracy, as is indicated by different field observations, which have time and again confirmed that general conclusions have to be derived from empirical research rather than armchair speculations. Again, the main reason behind this discrepancy between the observations and the theoretical conclusions lies in Hegel's metaphorical epistemological axiom: "The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of dusk." In other words, knowledge, including scientific knowledge,

always falls behind the unfolding reality. In our case, this also includes a terminological falling behind: an oversimplified interpretation of heritage, as mentioned above, has replaced the notion of tradition. The most common interpretation of heritage no longer denotes a set of beliefs, practices and crafts that are "alive"; but rather, those that have been "killed" – it is a type of cultural necropolis, where the only purpose is to invoke the spirits of the ancestors and their world. Jean Baudrillard considers ethnology as a science that is the most prone to such metaphorical killing. He writes, "In order for ethnology to live, its object must die", while he writes and about the ethnologists themselves, "[they] were seeing the indigenous people disintegrate immediately upon contact, like mummies in the open air" (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 7).

With respect to the two standard approaches, those of ethnology and history, heritage and the various practices related to heritage become an antidote for this "death" and help to preserve that which, due to contact with the external world, is inevitably fading into the cultural past, which is mostly identical to cultural oblivion. Indeed, the publications about the realities in which people "built", "celebrated", "believed" and "practised", such as the monograph about the Spisz Highlanders, prove the usefulness of heritage as a notion that can preserve forms that are dead but are hopefully "mummified" well enough. However, Baudrillard (1981, p. 8) makes a sarcastic remark about this issue, saying:

> The Indian thus returned to the ghetto, in the glass coffin of the virgin forest, again becomes the model of simulation of all the possible Indians from before ethnology. This model thus grants itself the luxury to incarnate itself beyond itself in the "brute" reality of these Indians it has entirely reinvented – Savages who are indebted to ethnology for still being Savages: what a turn of events, what a triumph for this science that seemed dedicated to their destruction! Of course, these savages are posthumous: frozen, cryogenized, sterilized, protected to death, they have become referential simulacra.

By interpreting Baudrillard's pessimistic remark in universal terms, we are able to substitute the "Indian" with a resident of Spisz, or with any other representative of a community whose ethnic or typological aspects make it stand out from the greater whole. Consequently, we arrive at a model image of the "death" of a "live" culture that nevertheless remains in a 'mummified' form within the reach of the researcher, as well as to the outsider and the insider alike. The researcher can take advantage of archives, museum exhibits and long-past recollections as post-memories to share a phantom vision of the past with his/her contemporaries, or even to dress the present in reconstructed costumes.

However, one cannot help but have the impression that this image is overly one-dimensional; even though it does indicate a certain extreme, it fails to encompass the entirety of cultural continuation or change. After all, not all

cases of cultural continuation or change involve terminating and abandoning the old qualities and confining them to a museum in order to make room for a completely new set of qualities. The problem lies in the fact that the most common understanding of heritage, which is the one that Baudrillard would call a *simulacrum*, makes it difficult or sometimes even impossible to describe these new qualities, which are perceived to be but a pale shadow of the bygone tradition. It is as if we are unable to extricate ourselves from Lévi-Strauss's paradigm of "cold societies", or societies that are traditional and are hibernating in their established cultural shape. Such societies are non-reflexive and unchanging. They also emotively replicate the existing cultural resources, in contrast to "hot societies", which revolve around heritage and are reflexive, changeable and conscious. The aforementioned monograph edited by Janicka-Krzywda portrays Spisz as a "cold", unchanging society that is already hibernated in its posthumous form. It is likely neither the first nor the last portrayal of the region's history of this kind, but is it accurate? Studies on contemporary worlds subject to heritage, despite claiming the "hotness" of such worlds, usually still portray them as cold. In particular, in many ethnological and historical studies, various activities within a cultural heritage are considered to be exclusively reconstructive, which at the same time stigmatises them and denies them the authenticity that supposedly only belongs to the past tradition (Ługowska, 1996). However, even a cursory observation, not to mention in-depth ethnological field research, is enough to lead one to question this approach and conclude that the role of practices, which are the combined result of cultivating the cultural heritage to a varying extent, seems to extend well beyond the theatrical, reconstructed character of these practices and their tenuous rooting in the local communities. On the contrary, any such practices involve a considerable amount of emotiveness, engagement, identifying oneself with the native cultural past and celebrating the community (Hoelscher, 1998). The practices are much more than a sporadic regional education, stylisation and musealisation, or passive reservoirs and simulacra, and they do not amount solely to 'empty shells' (Szyfer, 2014) and weak traces of the past cultures.

At this point, there are justified doubts about the accuracy of Lévi-Strauss's model. Whereas the model used to be a practical tool – a tool simplified by a design that reifies, restricts and segregates – it does not contravene Weber's criteria concerning this type of conceptualisation. However, the owl of Minerva has spread its wings many a time since, and we are now able to conduct a more refined analysis. After all, there is no rule, nor has there ever been, stating that the history of cultures must be described from the perspective of passing time, in which the characters supersede one another. Ethnologists, in particular, were fond of invoking the transition from tradition to modernity. However, both of the terms are as misleading as the terms *cold* and *hot societies*, and modernity – no matter how one chooses to define it – does not displace a culture's tradition. Rather, modernity is sometimes built on the tradi-

tion, but it is tradition in the sense of a (hopefully) correctly-defined heritage. In Spisz, this process encompasses practices, which have not been considered in aforementioned book edited by Janicka-Krzywda, such as: adapting the regional style of the architecture to contemporary buildings; playing in local folk bands; wearing regional attire during religious and familial celebrations and designing everyday clothing stylised after the regional attire; periodic regional culture festivals; re-establishing past customs; knowledge contests about the regional culture; regional education classes at schools; publication of magazines, dictionaries of the regional dialects, stories and even poetry; preparing the local cuisine (such as the "Spisz Table") for weddings and family celebrations; establishing local museums to house artefacts from the past material culture; and decorating homes with such artefacts. Admittedly, the owl of Minerva does suggest this notion of heritage, which reflects the dynamic (or "fluid", as Zygmunt Bauman put it) contemporary reality well. However, this notion should be interpreted based on the categories of agency and emotiveness, i.e. the category of heritage that directly affects individuals and groups, generates moods and motivations, moves people to tears and inspires lively discussions; as opposed to a cold heritage that is purely cognitive, methodological, archival and musealising. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1988) claims that heritage is indicative of a reflexive adoption of various elements from the past and of shaping them into new qualities.

For argument's sake, let us assume that her view is accurate, while keeping in mind that the situation is not as simple as Lévi-Strauss's distinction between cold societies and hot societies, or between tradition and heritage. It should be noted that at least since the publication of Erica Hobsbawm's and Terence Ranger's book (1983), researchers have known that, just as every tradition contains the aspects of invention, reflexivity and purposefulness, heritage contains the aspects of passiveness, non-reflexivity and emotiveness. It seems that tradition and heritage are difficult to distinguish in individual cultural practices, and that, in Marta Trębaczewska's (2011) opinion, both cases involve the mutually complementary processes of reconstruction, deconstruction and construction, albeit in different proportions, within the general creation of culture. Admittedly, the amount of reflexivity towards both one's own and an alien cultural tradition is increasing today (Kubica & Lubaś, 2008); nonetheless, this trend is not irreversible, which means that the cultural transmission corresponds better to the notion of heritage than to tradition. Perhaps further in-depth research will help to create a new category. The theory of articulation, which approaches heritage as a dynamic, constructed, shared and causal part of culture, has the potential to provide an appropriate framework (Clifford, 2013). However, in order to arrive at a new, adequate term, a separate analysis is required.

Current researchers should take into account the reflexive, processual, syncretic, heterogenic, causal and emotive character of any cultural heritage,

including a regional heritage. In fact, these traits are also present in other cultural areas, which are influenced by both globalisation and glocalisation (Robertson, 1995). For instance, contemporary localism, in contrast to past localism that was characterised by a sense of rooting, antiquity and continuity, shows new elements such as: communal ideology, self-referentiality, openness to external influences, and even deterritorialisation, where all of the constituent elements are not necessarily tied to a native culture (Kempny, 2004). Furthermore, it seems that cultural heritage cannot be approached exclusively retrospectively because, according to Henry Glassie (1995), it is equally as prospective, i.e. it also continuously provides a sense of continuity with the future and all its ideas, values and meaning are related to the future. As a side note, accepting this remarkable fact may lead to a revision of the "anthropology of pessimism", as Appadurai (1996) calls it, i.e. an approach to research that is constantly looking backwards and focusing on passing forms, and is even somewhat imprisoned in a historicising discourse. The aforementioned monograph edited by Janicka-Krzywda represents this approach. Conversely, researchers should practice the "anthropology of optimism", in which they focus on what is emerging and happening, rather than on what is disappearing. In other words, the anthropology of optimism deals with the "genealogy of the present". In the case of the regional culture of Spisz, this would mean recognising not only its cold historical, theatrical and nostalgic forms, but also its hot current and emergent functions – to use Paul Rabinow's (2008) term. Incorporating this heuristic approach to a greater extent than now would help to enliven and enrich both studies on this subject and the general ethnological theory and methodology. Moreover, interpreting cultural heritage through the anthropology of optimism may help researchers to reconstruct the image of Spisz and its residents with respect to specific matters from other disciplines in humanities and social sciences, i.e. small-scale civil societies (Bukraba-Rylska, 2012), the notion of a small fatherland as an identity-related project, civil memory (Korzeniewski, 2010), absorption of external models, and the role of Spisz in the nation state and in larger structures such as the EU.

Even though only fifteen villages make up Polish Spisz, they are all culturally distinct in terms of their ethnic identity, dialect, folk attire, folk music, customs and business activities. These business activities are relying more and more on tourism, which in turn is influencing the local tourism activities through a feedback loop by providing income from tourist services and indirectly stimulating the regional culture; specifically, through local exhibitions and events. The Municipal Cultural Centre, local artists (poets, sculptors and tailors), animators (teachers, clergy and members of regional associations) and external experts (musicologists, museum staff and Spisz aficionados) are all working to popularise Spisz by organising picnics and festivals (*Spiskie Zwyki* and *Spiska Watra*), knowledge contests about Spisz, tailoring workshops and cooking workshops. Some people have also established regional proto-mu-

seums (Barański, 2020). As with other regions, many Spiszans have migrated to distant parts of Poland and abroad. The majority of the diaspora has lived in the US since the 19th century. Other Spiszans migrate temporarily to work in Western Europe. These contacts have had a considerable effect on the changes taking place in Spisz, as well as on the economic, social, religious and aesthetic analyses of the region. The view of what it means to be a Spiszan is also changing: the western border of Spisz includes an especially high number of inter-regional syncretic forms, due to the influence of the Podhale Region. Improvements in education are also having an effect, although this factor has not reduced the residents' attachment to Spisz (Moskal, 2000, p. 57). Changes are also taking place in the other direction, i.e. towards a new highlander meta-region, already promoted a long time ago by Władysław Orkan, which transcends the regional borders or even regional qualifications to become almost a national emblem (Barański, 2016). Furthermore, practices are emerging that belong to two different cultural registers: elite festivals (e.g. *Barok na Spiszu*, „Baroque in Spisz") and popular festivals (e.g. *Wielkie Spiskie Granie*, „The Great Spisz Concert"). All of this is in addition to the widespread processes of modernisation (primarily technical modernisation), deagriarisation and suburbanisation (the villages are beginning to resemble typical suburbs). In this context, the on-stage practices (picnics, competitions and exhibitions) perform several important functions – specifically, identarian, ritualistic and commemorative – as do the proto-museum practices (Jannelli, 2012).

It is thanks to these initiatives that the regional culture provides a feeling of agency and distinctiveness. While the local authorities, family members and the Catholic Church still play a pertinent role, there exist other forms of practicing regional awareness; for instance, on social media (websites, forums and blogs). Field research that I have conducted in Polish Spisz for the last few years indicates that the regional cultural heritage is contributing significantly to the attitudes, choices and the self-assessment of the local community, as well as the assessment of the neighbouring regions. Cultural heritage is not merely an instrumental resource used by local activists, animators and aficionados to enforce certain festive culture scenarios, but is rather a sphere that is deeply and emotionally internalised. Likewise, participation in such cultural practices (picnics, folk bands, proto-museums, art and literature) cannot be reduced simply to on-stage cultural performances on the part of the authors, actors and the public, as some researchers suggest, because every participant in the vast performative field becomes both a creator and a recreator of the contemporary scattered rituals, which are necessary to maintain and transform the regional identity.

Today, heritage is taking over the causal and habitual role of tradition (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2006) to become a dynamic aspect in the lives of the local communities as a whole and their individual members. Furthermore, despite its considerable reflexivity, emblematisation and essentialisation, cultural heritage

is performing enculturative and identarian functions to the same extent as tradition defined these based on the past paradigm. Cultural heritage is shaping the image of Spisz. It is present in the process of identification with the neighbouring regions and the national, or even global, culture, as well as with the universal forms of elite and popular culture. Lastly, it is shaping the group and individual identities of the residents of Spisz. All of this is taking place not only through the distanced, reflexive analysis of old, musealised forms, but also through a high dose of emotionality, group solidarity and respect for authority.

According to Michel de Certeau (1990), this sometimes even leads to avoidance tactics, where one's personal sensitivities or value judgments predominate over how the local authorities organise and valorise the local culture (Hafstein, 2014). However, every instance comes with – to use a term coined by Victor Turner (1982) – a social drama. It is a social drama that, even though its scenario and structure lack the formerly common heterogeneity, still serves to regenerate the community, redefine the native culture and provide a response to the undeniable crisis that accompanies modernisation. The various elements of the local culture have a performative function in general (Fischer-Lichte, 2004) and a ritualistic function in particular (Schechner, 1993). They invoke diverse aspects of the local sensorium (Zubrzycki, 2015) and transform them, according to the continuously changing external context and internal trends. This concerns the following: the remains of material artefacts representing the past culture that are stored in regional facilities or used as decorations; folk music, poetry and literature, which are often used in artistic improvisations; regional attire that is adapted to new functions (religious vestments, home decor and everyday wear); vernacular forms of architecture that are inspired by historical buildings; values and ideals that govern both the familial and social life; or even political choices, which in Spisz lean towards the conservative option, i.e. the residents prefer continuation over change. Consequently, these and other elements of the local cultural capital have become the subject of metacommentary (Geertz, 1973), mythologisation (Barthes, 1957) and historical practice (Clifford, 2013). They have also become vectors for new meanings that help to sustain the livelihood of this heritage on a day-to-day basis, which is why activists, seniors (as the witnesses of culture) and most of the relatively unengaged Spiszan usually exhibit very different approaches to the native culture (Barański, 2016). Admittedly, the past is treated as a reservoir; but on the other hand, it informs diverse choices, which suggests the presence of a pluralised cultural memory that is often created anonymously and collectively, rather than the presence of an approach to the past that is homogenised, sanctioned and solidified by the force of an expert authority.

In contrast to *mnēmē*, or habitual, retentive memory related to model tradition, heritage involves *anámnēsis*, or conscious, "reminding memory". Hałas (2012, p. 163) states:

By this, I mean the memories of something invoked by something else, imbuing the past with life based on a discourse, and making that which is absent and belongs to the past present again. All such memories are semiotic: they rely on signs and symbols to protect them from oblivion, whether these are iconic signs, guidelines of some kind, fragments of written notes and conversations, or erected monuments.

These monuments are not limited to stone or metal sculptures. The list also includes regional attire, annual dances, music and oratory festivals, religious ceremonies, buildings built to resemble the native architectural style and techniques, dictionaries of the local dialects, books of poetry, the Spisz dialect itself that is a lasting monument to the local culture – and as an even more lasting example, the axiology that always surrounds the population's important values, such as family, religious beliefs, work and, last but not least, causal distinctiveness. This set of monuments displays the characteristics of an orderly system, or a subject of observation and description that always refers back to itself (Luhmann, 2007, p. 407, as cited in Hałas, 2012, p. 165). Luhmann refers to reflexivity, which in this essay is interpreted as self-referentiality and metacommentary, or a "tradition of tradition" signifying heritage. More specifically, reflexivity encompasses references to cultural models (attire, folklore, architecture, language, customs, religious ceremonies, etc.), but in a self-aware, deeply experienced act of creation.

Ryszard Tomicki coined the term *integral tradition* to denote tradition that is characterised by cultural particularism, awareness of cultural exclusivity, sacralisation, direct cultural transmission and a strong relationship with the natural order. This model approach to one's own culture now belongs to the past due to the ongoing modernisation, which in contrast to integral tradition, is characterised by universalism, cultural openness, secularisation, technicisation and indirect cultural transmission. However, this does not mean that the characteristics of tradition are gone forever; rather, as Tomicki (1981) suggests, today's society is adopting traditionalism with a conscious and reflexive approach to heritage. Tomicki distinguishes between secondary traditionalism and prospective traditionalism, where the former involves a feeling of endangerment, isolationism, confinement and resistance towards change; while the latter involves the apotheosis, revalorisation and aesthetisation of the native culture, creative adaptation and openness to change (1981, p. 362 and following). We may add to these conclusions Hobsbawm's and Ranger's (1983) aforementioned concept of the invented tradition, which eliminates all categorical distinctions, such as Tomicki's secondary traditionalism and prospective traditionalism. Every tradition is invented in one way or another, even if it is transcendentally sanctioned, rather than being man-made. Therefore, to use another legitimising analogy, a paraphrase of Benedict Anderson's (1991) imagined community would point to the existence of an imagined heritage. It should be noted that even an ideational world is not real in terms of the shared

forms of experience. This is because tradition and heritage are spaces of experiences, emotions and values that are real, even if some of them are immaterial. However, for clarity's sake, let us continue using the notion of heritage as the most adequate conceptual tool for an assessment of the contemporary approaches to a past culture. Self-referentiality and Clifford Geertz's metacommentary are notions that also seem highly pertinent to the concept of heritage. They both guide us away from the self-explanatory, autotelic and, to some extent, arbitrary model tradition into an equivocal, purposeful and reflexive heritage. Krzysztof Kowalski (2013, p. 161) provides a good insight with respect to the global aspect of heritage:

> Globalisation has confronted one tradition with another. It has demystified all of them in order to then re-mystify them and sanction their coexistence, alternativeness and conflicts; all these traditions contain various partimonialised pasts. This new distribution of emphasis marks the transition from tradition to heritage.

Indeed, it would be difficult to talk about culture today in its original – extensional, so to speak – meaning, which is related to the aforementioned integral tradition, due to the increasing amount of intentionality and multidirectional, polysemic contextual relations that change over time and space. This means that the lives of human beings, including the Spiszans, are moving towards metaculturality, or openness to external influences and a reflexive attitude towards the cultural resources of various scales. The term *metaculture*, the use of which has been explained in this essay, should serve as a signpost to reach a better understanding of contemporary Spisz and other regions that are no longer the cold isolates of culture (as some of the guardians of cultural purity, including ethologists, would want them to be), but instead are hot, open and emergent cultural areas. According to Turner (1982, p. 104), the aforementioned metacommentary, which is a vital part of these regions, entails "not only a reading of its experience, but an interpretive re-enactment of [a society's] experience". It is akin to a cultural hall of mirrors, where each mirror corresponds to a different form of cultural expression. Turner (1982, p. 105) adds:

> In this hall of mirrors the reflections are multiple, some magnifying, some diminishing, some distorting the faces peering into them, but in such a way as to provoke not merely thought, but also powerful feelings and the will to modify everyday matters in the minds of the gazers.

It seems that when the metacommentary is more prevalent, the more a given culture moves away from the initial, model form of Tomicki's integral tradition, which contained no such metacommentary at all. The presence of metacommentary increases as we move towards traditionalism or heritage of any kind. The residents of Spisz are aware of this property, even if they do not voice it explicitly, as is evidenced by their attitudes towards their own cultural heritage.

To conclude, in contrast to model-based tradition, or the primary modelling system as a semiotician would put it, model-based heritage is a quality the belongs to the metalevel of cultural practice (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006) or the secondary system (Kowalski, 2013, p. 111). In this sense, heritage is meta-cultural, i.e. it is 'culture that is about culture' (Urban, 2001, p. 3) and the aforementioned tradition of tradition. It can be both explicit (open and discursive) and – as is perhaps even more likely – implicit in form, unattached to any conceptualised practice. Disregarding this characteristic may prevent us from understanding the distinctive aspects of heritage not only in terms of theoretical aspects, but also practical aspects, such as those related to the politics of heritage, which is important for groups of all scales. Treating heritage as a form of quasi-tradition, burdened by the indelible disadvantage of only being able to reconstruct past forms, is incorrect: heritage is neither dead nor is it exhumed, as Baudrillard and Giddens put it, respectively. On the contrary, the content and forms we can observe today are very much alive, equally as experienced and internalised as in the model-based tradition, even if due to constant change and adaptation to new human worlds, including the regional worlds, heritage is performed rather than owned, and constitutes a moment of action rather than a frozen material form, as Laurajane Smith (2016, p. 43) emphasises. Failing to acknowledge this characteristic of heritage may be harmful for the creative grassroot cultural practices, which many experts confine to a mystified past. Indeed, Appadurai (2013, p. 288) observes that when people reach for their personal "archives of memory", they do this not only (or not primarily) to invoke the past, but also to discuss and shape the future. Appadurai (2013, p. 285) continues by referencing one of Geertz's last publications, *After the Fact* (1996) to comment on this issue from the broader perspective of the mission of anthropology and the essence of culture:

> Still the intellectual infrastructure of anthropology, and of the culture concept itself, remains substantially shaped by the lens of pastness. In one or another way, anthropology remains preoccupied with the logic of reproduction, the force of custom, the dynamics of memory, the persistence of habitus, the glacial movement of the everyday, and the cunning of tradition in the social life of even the most modern movements of communities, such as those of scientists, refugees, migrants, evangelists, and movie icons. We maintain the voices of re-production, durability, and resilience in human life, while the culture concept maintains an epistemology for the discovery of the variety of ways in which human beings absorb newness into frames that they always carry with them before the fact.

Figure 1

Whenever the Śpisoki [a folk band] is playing, I cry (...). When I leave the Spiska Watra [a local festival], I am moved as if I just attended a funeral.
Source: J. Barański

Figure 2

When I put on the traditional attire, I feel connected to this region.
I feel proud to be a member of the community.
Source: J. Barański

Figure 3
Tradition is very important to me (...). It is where my roots are.
Source: J. Barański

Figure 4
What is our goal? Are we changing everything for the better,
or was the past better than what we have now?
Source: J. Barański

Figure 5

This is our history. It tells us about our ancestors.
Source: J. Barański

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