

THE FORGOTTEN MEME. ON THE EXAMPLE OF LIFE AND WORKS OF PLACYD JANKOWSKI

PATRYK CHŁOPEK

ABSTRACT *Placyd Jankowski (known also as John of Dycalp) was a popular writer active in the 1840s, he quickly gained popularity thanks to his humorous lyrics, but before his death in 1872 he was almost forgotten by readers. This raises questions about the rules guiding cultural memory. One of the concepts that could explain the process of cultural heredity is the memetic theory proposed by Richard Dawkins. The scholar assumes the existence of cultural units subject to the process of evolution, which he called memes. Their success and survival depend on the fulfillment of specific characteristics to which the human mind is particularly susceptible, i.e. topicality, originality, narrative, and universality. Using the tools developed by memetics, the article will attempt to describe the reasons for social forgetting on the example of the life and work of Placyd Jankowski.*

KEY WORDS *Placyd Jankowski, 19th-century literature, memetics, cultural memory, forgetting*

CONTACT *Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń; patryk.chlopek@gmail.com*