

# Tadeusz Rachwał

---

## Everyday Spaces : Introduction

---

Kultura Popularna nr 1 (55), 4-5

---

2018

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Tadeusz Rachwał

# Everyday Spaces

## *Introduction*

The notion of the everyday can be easily conflated with what is routine, mundane, usual, ordinary, perhaps also normal. The “where” of this normalcy, the space or place of the everyday, seems to be a fairly complex issue, if only for the fact that the scene of the everyday may always be the same as the scene of the unusual. Freud saw this duality at work in the German word *unheimlich* in which the security of the homely is as it were haunted by the irreducible sense of the unhomely, the source of homesickness which he famously located in the place of one’s “mother’s genitals or her body” (Freud, 245). From this perspective, anything beyond the body of the mother seems to be unhomely, with the home of everyday life being a remainder of something lost. What has thus always already been lost is the place where we are in an ordinary way, the place, or space where, as Maurice Blanchot phrases it defining the everyday, “[n]othing happens; this is the everyday” (Blanchot, 15). The everyday, for Freud and Blanchot, is a space of withdrawal and anonymity from whose perspective anything that happens, any event, may seem to be something unusual. If the “everyday is without event” (Blanchot, 17), as Blanchot has it, then any event is as it were eventful, something momentous and significant which evades the uneventful being of the everyday. The space of the everyday is not to be found at home for Blanchot, or indeed in any closed and regulated space. He sees the most uneventful of spaces outside, in the street of the city, in the environment of what seems to be fully constructed and controlled:

The everyday is human. The earth, the sea, forest, light, night, do not represent everydayness, which belongs first of all to the dense presence of great urban centers. We need these admirable deserts that are the world’s cities for the experience of the everyday to begin to overtake us. The everyday is not at home in our dwelling-places, it is not in offices or churches, any more than in libraries or museums. It is in the street – if it is anywhere. (Blanchot, 17)

The space of the everyday is, perhaps paradoxically, an unhomely space also exactly because it is a space rather than a place, it is an unmappable terrain which, however, haunts places with the impossibility of normalization.

The essays included in this issue address the everyday and its spaces as it were tangentially, without bringing the notion to the fore and thus without concretizing it as an analytical category. Rather, they approach the everyday spaces as nostalgic constructions of home and homeliness away from the street, within the enclosures of domesticity from which the everyday inevitably slips away and opens them up to what Henri Lefebvre called everydayness (*la quotidienneté*), designating with this term the destructive attractiveness of the banality of repetitive life. The space of everyday (*le quotidien*), unlike the places of everydayness, is a polyrhythmic construct, a realization of “the multiplicity of rhythms and the uniqueness of particular rhythms” (Lefebvre, 16) to which everydayness is as it were deaf.

**Tadeusz Rachwał** is professor of English at University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw. He published books and articles on British and American culture and literature, literary theory, and cultural studies. His academic interests concentrate on the cultural and ideological aspects of labour and the metamorphoses of its ethos in different discursive formations.

#### WORKS CITED

- Blanchot, Maurice. “Everyday Speech.” *Yale French Studies*, No. 73 (1987), 12–20.  
 Lefebvre, Henri. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. Transl. Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore. London and New York: Continuum 2004.