

The Question of the Persistence of Romantic Nationalism in Poland with Regard to its Religious Aspects

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Theoretical assumptions

Regarding a conceptualisation of ›nation‹ we find it necessary to accept the minimal assumption that the role of cultures of historical communities that call themselves »a nation« cannot be ignored. It also has to be acknowledged that collective imaginaries and social emotions evoked by them – at least in some societies – have strong propensity of longevity. A broad culturalist approach is adopted in this article embracing ethno-symbolism as well as some elements of Polish sociology on the topic of nation and nationalism. The fact that undue generalisation distance us from a genuine cognition speaks for a more nuanced research approach that gets closer to the anthropological historical particularism and takes into account the *longue durée* perspective. While bearing in mind that nationalist mobilisation is »also animated by all kinds of specific ideas and beliefs peculiar to the historical situation of the particular community«¹, it is important to realise that historical situation from even the far past can enter into vivid relationships with the perception of present conditions.

While modernistic or instrumentalist paradigms see nationalism as a mostly political and ideological phenomenon, a culturalist approach stresses the need to go beyond, or to be more precise – deeper. Anthony D. Smith speaks about »a tandem« of political and cultural nationalism². John Hutchinson also agrees that these elements are complementary to each other³. Moving from a distinction between political and cultural nationalism towards the acknowledgement of the interaction between these two elements, we can understand nationalism broadly enough to detect not only ideas and actions directly focused on ideological mobilisation and to the construction of political structures, but also much more stable components in the culture of a group, constituting a base of cultural resources for political activity.

Amongst Polish sociologists, the culturalist stance was presented first by Florian Znaniecki⁴. His, as well as Antonina Kłoskowska's⁵ elitist view on the

1 Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism. A cultural Approach*, Abingdon 2009, 63.

2 *Loc. Cit.*, 24.

3 John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Modern Irish Nation State*, London 1987.

4 Florian Znaniecki, *Modern Nationalities*, Urbana/Ill. 1952.

5 Antonina Kłoskowska, *National Cultures at the Grass-root Level*, Budapest 2001.

nation-making processes (ascribing the main role to the top-down vectors in the society) may be seen as contradictory to Anthony D. Smith's ethno-symbolism, but it should be noticed that their reflections focus on the later stages of nation-forming processes and are adapted to the specificity of Polish history marked by experiences and memory of denationalising efforts made by invaders during the 123-year period of Partitions and beyond. The other feature of Polish sociology of nation⁶ was a strong tendency to discriminate between invoking the ties ›of culture‹ (as the ones which bind together members of a society into a nation), and the ties ›of blood‹ (considered to be characteristic for ethnicity), motivated to show a clear-cut dissent from exclusive standpoints formulated on biological grounds⁷. It is also worth to mention in the context of this paper the remarks by Józef Chałasiński on the moral ideas specific to a nation⁸ directing our attention to another characteristic aspect of national ›discursive formation‹⁹, which lies in a particular set of values.

While modernistic approaches build a general model of nationalism, a culturalist approach is much less nomothetic and underlines the need of idiography. Though it is admitted that ›nationalisms share a number of key motifs and themes‹¹⁰, the attention is directed to particular societies with their peculiar histories, traditions, and cultural patterns. This theoretical stance stresses the role of the *emic* perspective, the most important recommendation of which is to get through to interrelated inner meanings learned on the basis of the subjective perspective of culture participants. This means a recommendation to focus on people's feelings and attitudes and on objectifications such as symbols, rituals, myths and narratives.

Gertrude Himmelfarb writing on the intermingling of nationalism and religion, despite the title of her essay¹¹ suggests moving beyond ideologically and volitionally motivated theses in order to get closer to reality and see the variety of nationalisms. The best way is to focus on ›the things themselves‹, speaking in the words of Edmund Husserl. That is why the general standpoint presented here tries also to be compatible with a phenomenological approach to the objects of our interest, which enables to read them in their complex contexts and with

6 The national question for a long time was under the spotlight of Polish sociologists. The wave of this interest floated away virtually at the time when it began to be a matter of concern for the Western scholars. Along with post-communist modernisation and globalised social sciences, the topic was treated as rather obsolete and taken up mostly in the context of stereotypes or prejudices.

7 The year 1939 as the publication date of Stanisław Ossowski's work on social bonds versus an ›inheritance of blood‹ is especially significant in this context; Stanisław Ossowski, *Dzieła t. 2. Więź społeczna i dziedzictwo krwi*, Warszawa 1966.

8 Józef Chałasiński, *Kultura i naród*, Warszawa 1968.

9 Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, Minneapolis/Min. 1997.

10 Smith, *Ethno-symbolism*, *Loc. Cit.* (Note 1), 62.

11 Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Dark and Bloody Crossroads: Where Nationalism and Religion Meet*, in: idem, *On Looking into the Abyss. Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society*, New York 1994, 107–121.

a strategy of bracketing preconceptions and judgements in order to avoid reductionism.¹²

The romantic pattern of Polish nationalism and the question of its duration

Anthony D. Smith points to the connection between nationalism and Romanticism as to a kind of rule¹³. Social, both cultural and ideological groups pursue their »destiny through sacrifice«¹⁴. Smith sees »romantic ideological devotion to a sense of national identity« as one aspect of a wider search for »authenticity«.¹⁵ The historian of ideas Marcin Król holds that Romanticism is wrongly overlooked by many historians of political thought.¹⁶ He also remarks that it was Romanticism that – along with its anti-universalism, historicism, intuitionism and individualism – proclaimed the postulate of treating societies as being of specific and exceptional character because of their particular histories, and that Romanticism believed in equivalence of individual cultures, with their traditions, religions, myths and symbols.¹⁷

Polish nationalism has often been described in the Polish identity discourse as romantic.¹⁸ Norman Davies agrees with this description.¹⁹ Maria Janion, the most famous researcher of Polish Romanticism, speaks about a »romantic paradigm«, which implies, *inter alia*, a specific manner of interpreting and experiencing reality – a »romantic mode of feeling«²⁰ grounded in a deep layer of social consciousness. The peculiar path with long periods of lack of political freedom created heroic values and ideas of great importance in Polish national culture. From the point of view of the topic under discussion, the following elements should be pointed out as belonging to the repertoire of the so-called classical Polish »ro-

12 Cf. Anna M. Królikowska, Beliefs in Manifestations of the Supernatural as an Element of Contemporary Religiosity, *Opuscula Sociologica* 18 (4/2016), 45–61.

13 Smith, Ethno-symbolism, *Loc. Cit.* (Note 1), 66–99.

14 *Loc. Cit.*, 97–99.

15 *Loc. Cit.*, 68. Charles Taylor links »the Age of Authenticity« with neo-Durkheimian attitude to religion, which can be seen as another, although not commonly present aspect of the mobilisation: Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge/MA 2007.

16 Marcin Król, *Historia myśli politycznej od Machiavellego po czasy współczesne*, Gdańsk 2001, 82.

17 *Loc. Cit.*, 83.

18 Maria Janion and Maria Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Warszawa 1978; Maria Janion, *Plaż generała. Eseje o wojnie*, Warszawa 1998; Danuta Dąbrowska / Ewa Szczepan (eds.), *Romantyzm użytkowy. Długie trwanie romantyzmu w kulturze polskiej*, Szczecin 2014; Danuta Dąbrowska (ed.), *Dyskurs powstańczy w kulturze polskiej*, Szczecin 2015; Danuta Dąbrowska / Magdalena Litwin (eds.), *Romantyzm w kulturze popularnej*, Szczecin 2016; Danuta Dąbrowska / Dominika Gruntkowska / Maria Zofia Bukala (eds.), *Romantyzm i polityka*, Szczecin 2018.

19 Norman Davies, *God's Playground. A History of Poland*, vol. II: 1795 to the Present, Oxford 1981.

20 Maria Janion, *Czas formy otwartej. Tematy i media romantyczne*, Warszawa 1984.

matic paradigm« which draws upon nineteenth century culture: putting ideas above material reality²¹; making judgements or decisions based on feelings²²; protest against thralldom; moral grandness of defiance and oblation²³; »internal obviousness of freedom, with the aspiration to liberation«²⁴; aestheticisation and a deep meaning of death (»Deaths created a different perspective for life«²⁵); the conviction that the dead, especially the martyrs who died »for Faith and Freedom« leave the last will and testament to the living²⁶.

Philosophy of history was perhaps the core element of Polish Romanticism. Janion states that in the romantic perspective history had its cohesiveness of meaning.²⁷ The metaphysical dimension undoubtedly played a crucial role there. However, the relations to religion were specific and composite. Just as it is difficult to imagine this cultural formation without transcendence as an interpretative horizon and without the category of holiness, so God and the sacred are significant elements in the respective historical thinking. For history was treated as hierophany²⁸, »historical thinking was harmoniously combined with mythical thinking«²⁹. People experiencing history were situated between destiny and providence.³⁰ As »God [...] is guided by the heart, which makes him support the cause of the oppressed«³¹, hence fate was not regarded as tragic in the sense of hopelessness or disaster³². Nonetheless, holiness is not confined to the supernatural world. The homeland, the most beloved object exposed to the capricious winds of history and subjected to difficult experiences is a *sacrum*, often portrayed as a person of special charisma – a mother.

In this paradigm of historical thinking, the past stays in dialectic interrelation with the future, the dead with the living, and all three worlds are joined by the *axis mundi* with each other. The initial ambiguity in the relation to Christianity is visible in the conviction that other forms of religious thinking are also noteworthy ways of seeking the unveiling of mystery. This, together with a praise of »the archaic« and »the folk«, made Adam Mickiewicz depict the pre-Christian White Russian feast of »Forefathers' Eve« (»Dziady, p. II«) and syncretise it with Christianity in the same way as the country folk did. Later on, the underlining strong relation with Catholicism became a rule.³³ Thus, the third part of Mickie-

21 Janion / Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Loc. Cit. (Note 18), 5.

22 Maria Janion, *Prace wybrane t. 1. Gorączka romantyczna*, Kraków 2000, 46.

23 Janion, *Czas formy otwartej*, Loc. Cit. (Note 20), 7.

24 Jean Fabre, 1956, after: Janion, *Prace wybrane t. 1. Gorączka*, Loc. Cit. (Note 22), 78.

25 Janion, *Czas formy otwartej*, Loc. Cit. (Note 20), 116.

26 Janion / Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Loc. Cit. (Note 18), 78–108.

27 Janion, *Czas formy otwartej*, Loc. Cit. (Note 20), 87.

28 Janion / Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Loc. Cit. (Note 18).

29 Janion, *Czas formy otwartej*, Loc. Cit. (Note 20), 89.

30 Maria Janion, *Prace wybrane t. 2. Tragizm, historia, prywatność*, Kraków 2000.

31 Maria Janion, *Odnawianie znaczeń*, Kraków 1980, 90.

32 Janion, *Prace wybrane t. 2. Tragizm*, Loc. Cit. (Note 30).

33 Janusz Tazbir, *Polskie przedmurze chrześcijańskiej Europy. Mity a rzeczywistość historyczna*, Warszawa 1987.

wicz's ›Dziady‹ is deeply permeated with Christian, and to be more precise, with Catholic notions, specifically the devotion to the Mother of God. Although it might be said that justification for ›tempering patriotic extremism‹ lies to a large extent in the logic of romanticism itself³⁴, this role is played by religion.

Nevertheless, the religiosity of Polish romantics, as well as of the literary characters created by them, was not easily subordinated to the official religious institutions. The religiousness of ›The Bards‹ Mickiewicz and Słowacki was problematic and far from Catholic orthodoxy, especially in the period of their affiliation with Andrzej Towiański's mystical-political sect. The institutional Church was judged by the romantics from a definite moral perspective and was judged as immoral in the case it stood on the side of the oppressors. For example, Juliusz Słowacki's character Kordian does not accept the papal condemnation of the November Uprising.

As Henri Desroche stated, messianism was able to shape »a cultural matrix – not logical, but symbolic – of extraordinary prolificacy«. ³⁵ Nonetheless, Maria Janion and Maria Żmigrodzka argue that »One cannot deny romanticism – as it has often been attempted – the ability to understand material and therefore technical and economic reality«. ³⁶ Janion acknowledges that symbolic romantic culture »for two hundred years constituted a fundament of existence of the nation, [...] organised them around values and helped Poles to survive in periods of disasters, partitions and slavery«. ³⁷ During that time span, Polish culture and Polish collective consciousness were the terrain on which a renewal of romantic values and ideas took place many times and in many ways. Both epigones³⁸ and talented creators³⁹ played a role in these processes of reuse and recreation. Romantic poetry was taught continuously at schools or in clandestine form; the communists accepted it because of its attitude towards the folk, revolutionary motives, and critique of czarism.

During all this time, Catholic religion contributed a lot to underpin Polish national identity, cohesion and readiness for resistance. The Catholic Church was undeniably a pre-eminent structure in times when there were no other official institutions that Poles would consider as authentically theirs. In this sense the Church was »the only bastion of independent thought and action«. ⁴⁰ Catholic themes blended deeply into an ideational layer of culture, like the concept of the Mother of God as a Queen and protector of Poland. And conversely, Polish themes were incorporated into Polish Roman Catholicism. Let us illustrate this with an extract from one of many patriotic homilies by cardinal Wyszyński: »The

34 Janion, *Czas formy otwartej*, Loc. Cit. (Note 20).

35 Henri Desroche, 1969, after Janion, *Prace wybrane t. 2. Tragizm*, Loc. Cit. (Note 30), 70.

36 Janion / Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Loc. Cit. (Note 18), 9.

37 Maria Janion, 1991, after: Zbigniew Pietrasik, *Rozmowa z prof. Marią Janion: Polska nie jest kobietą*, in: *Polityka* 2005, 19 (2503), 14 May, 75–77; here: 76.

38 Janion, *Prace wybrane t. 1. Gorączka*, Loc. Cit. (Note 30).

39 Janion, *Odnawianie znaczeń*, Loc. Cit. (Note 31).

40 Davies, *God's Playground*, Loc. Cit. (Note 19), 609.

Church has a deep respect for the history of the Nation. [...] We cannot renounce that what for centuries has been – in pain, sufferance, torment and blood, in work and toil, in living faith and hope – laid into this land.«⁴¹ Many priests were committed to the ›national cause‹ and stood oftentimes in a leadership position ›with the people‹. Stefan Wyszyński, Karol Wojtyła, Jerzy Popiełuszko, and Józef Tischner can be mentioned as those who accompanied Poles and gave them support in the communist times, in each case with their own characteristic way of being and thinking. Conversely again, the ideas of the Solidarity movement contained civil, national, and moral along with religious characteristics in a quite consistent manner.

The systemic transformation that began in 1989 was perceived by many observers as the end of ›great narratives‹, the expiration of the *Volkskirche*, and of the romantic paradigm, too. Shortly thereafter the shift from »religion of fate« to »religion of choice« was forecasted by a number of Polish sociologists of religion⁴². They adopted this conceptual motif from Peter Berger's formulation as referring to individual consciousness in the situation of pluralism⁴³. Secularisation became the most important topic in Polish sociology of religion and many sociologists were convinced that it would be an inevitable process in democratized Poland. This process was expected to be accompanied by a privatisation of religiosity⁴⁴. A decline in religiosity after discarding the ballast of extra-religious functions of religion was predicted. Indeed, indexes of religiosity slowly started to diminish, although secularisation has not been as quick as it was prophesied⁴⁵.

Maria Janion already in 1991 stated: »The homogenous symbolic Romantic culture is fading away in Poland before our eyes.«⁴⁶ Indeed, a shift to materialistic,

41 »Be proud of your past«, announcement of the collegiate church in Kruszwica the smaller basilica, 18 Sep. 1970: Katarzyna Lewandowska, Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński – obrońca historii, tradycji i kultury Polski, *Perspectiva*. Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne 20 (1/2012), 59–78; here: 72.

42 Władysław Piwowarski, Od »Kościoła ludu« do »Kościoła wyboru«, in: Irena Borowik / Witold Zdaniewicz (eds.), *Od Kościoła ludu do Kościoła wyboru. Religia a przemiany społeczne w Polsce*, Kraków 1996, 9–16; Irena Borowik, *Procesy instytucjonalizacji i prywatyzacji religii w powojennej Polsce*, Kraków 1997.

43 Peter L. Berger, *Sacred Canopy. Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York 1967; Peter L. Berger, *The Dilemmas of Pluralism*, *Sunstone Magazine* 6 (1981), Nov.-Dec., 38–43.

44 Irena Borowik, *Religia we współczesnych społeczeństwach. Instytucjonalizacja a prywatność*, in: Borowik / Zdaniewicz (eds.), *Od Kościoła ludu*, Loc. Cit. (Note 42), 17–33; Borowik, *Procesy instytucjonalizacji*, Loc. Cit. (Note 42). Here authors made references to Thomas Luckmann's *The Invisible Religion. The problem of Religion in Modern Society*, Basingstoke 1967.

45 E.g. Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej (CBOS), *Wiara i religijność Polaków dwadzieścia lat po rozpoczęciu przemian ustrojowych*, Komunikat z Badań nr BS34/2009, Warszawa 2009. Certain acceleration in decline of religiousness indicators after John Paul II's death may indicate that ›having the Polish pope‹ was a factor that had influenced the sense of Poles' identity: CBOS, *Zmiany w zakresie podstawowych wskaźników religijności Polaków po śmierci Jana Pawła II*, Komunikat z Badań nr 26/15, Warszawa 2015.

46 Maria Janion, 1991, after: Pietrasik, *Rozmowa z prof. Marią Janion*, Loc. Cit. (Note 37), 76.

pragmatic, and hedonistic values, together with a retreat from public matters was observed in the 1990s and early 2000⁴⁷. With modernisation and Westernisation speeding up, Polish society was quite disposed to leave behind the past heroes and the memory of those once almost sacral moments of glory or, more often, sacrifice and immolation. The entry into consumerist culture, with young generations being raised with ubiquitous commercials, was read as definitive and irreversible closure of pathetic national susceptibilities. Traditional elements were treated as an obstacle on the ›route to Europe‹. Globalisation not only seemed to erode national sovereignty until it was regained for good, but also decomposed cultural unity. Especially the merger of national ideas with religion, resulting in elevated religious interpretations of the former, begun to be treated as antiquated, obsolete, even ridiculous, and not functional any more. The blend ›Pole-Catholic‹ was presented as a mere stereotype, having not much to do with reality⁴⁸.

Decidedly outnumbered were those who were of different opinion and suspected that romantic elements were still present amongst Poles in the manner of comprehending the world and politics. For example, Marek Cichocki and Dariusz Karłowicz hold that »Solidarity« was the last big movement springing from the tradition of Polish »messianism of a non-political (impractical) approach to politics«⁴⁹, but they doubt that these features should be spoken about solely in the past tense: »Does the attachment to values and ethics in the public sphere not grow out of the same source? And the common faith in transcendence? In the end, the approach to history as to a scene in which the moral drama of nations defending their dignity plays out, standing out in comparison to other nations in Europe?«⁵⁰

One might behold the cultural change of Polish society in terms not only of spontaneous processes, but also of stimulated ones. Then, certain intentional influences on people's values, attitudes, outlooks and horizons could be observed. In conservative circles it was noticed that »The passion of the III Polish Republic intellectuals has been to discredit the ›backward‹ and ›obscurantist‹ national tradition.«⁵¹ The patterns of thinking in ›old‹, national categories began to be extirpated as minatory and incompatible with liberal democracy, liberal customs, and dreams of a possible federalised Europe. At the turn of the century sociological research indicated that Poles, especially young people, developed very strong negative national auto-stereotypes⁵². In conservative journalistic writing

47 Marek Ziółkowski, *Zmiany systemu wartości*, in: Jacek Wasilewski (ed.), *Współczesne społeczeństwo polskie. Dynamika zmian*, Warszawa 2005, 145–174.

48 Krzysztof Koseła, *Polak i katolik. Splątana tożsamość*, Warszawa 2003; Rafał Boguszewski, »Polak-katolik«. *Casus polskiej religijności w warunkach globalizacji na podstawie badań empirycznych CBOŚ*, in: Maria Libiszowska-Żółtkowska (ed.), *Religia i religijność w warunkach globalizacji*, Kraków 2007, 239–253.

49 Marek Cichocki, Dariusz Karłowicz, *Mesjanizm – jednostka chorobowa czy wielkie wyzwanie?*, in: *Teologia Polityczna* 4 (2006-2007), 5–9; here: 9.

50 *Ibid.*

51 Grzegorz Górny, *Kompleks polski, Rzeczpospolita. Plus Minus*, 2002, 76 (6153), 30 Mar. – 1 Apr., A7.

52 *Ibid.*

the deliberate discrediting actions started to be called »pedagogy of shame«. The reduction in historical instruction in school programmes was perceived as aimed at reducing the historical memory of society⁵³.

A revival of community under the romantic paradigm?

Anthony D. Smith sees various »romanticisms« as »aesthetic and moral movements«. ⁵⁴ It can be assumed that moral aspects gain in importance especially in times of crises; most notably they are revitalised under such circumstances when members of a community perceive themselves and their cherished values as subjected to oppression or in an unjust position. The question of the significance of the moral dimension in the national context was raised by Florian Znaniecki⁵⁵. He noted that the cognitive and axiological context of national endeavours requiring a special sacrifice includes a conviction that a struggle between good and evil is being waged and that the community represents the first of these categories. This was the »internal logic« of Polish Romanticism: »the fight of two great forces – Good and Evil, Freedom and Despotism«. ⁵⁶ Fundamental moral values have an ability to unscramble the complexity of situations and have a dynamising effect.

After the shift to materialistic values described above, the combination of certain factors, or what is more important, their representations in social consciousness, have occurred in the last decade or more in Poland. Probably one should indicate among them too strong pressure for quick cultural change together with too intense to be widely accepted strains for cultural (and structural) one-sided adaptation of society to the »old European Union« countries. These might have provoked the dignity-related stance »we are not backwater«. Another element may be the conviction of parts of society that the Third Polish Republic has been a post-communist system – with more or less pathological consequences in economy and in other spheres of social life, including ways of narrating history⁵⁷.

53 This even induced some former members of the opposition to go on a hunger strike in a church in Kraków: Spór o lekcje historii – ograniczenie nauki czy jej rozsądna reforma, *Gazeta Prawna.pl*, 23.03.2012, <http://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl/edukacja/artykuly/606211,spor-o-lekcje-historii-ograniczenie-nauki-czy-jej-rozsadna-reforma.html> [23.04.2018].

54 Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism*, Loc. Cit. (Note 1), 67.

55 Znaniecki, *Modern Nationalities*, Loc. Cit. (Note 4).

56 Janion, *Czas formy otwartej*, Loc. Cit. (Note 20), 89.

57 Cf. sociological analyses by: Andrzej Zybertowicz, *W uścisku tajnych służb. Upadek komunizmu i układ postnomenklaturowy*, Warszawa 1993; Andrzej Zybertowicz, *III RP: kulisy systemu. Rozmawia Joanna Lichocka*, Warszawa 2013; Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, *Rozpad polowiczny: szkice z socjologii transformacji ustrojowej*, Warszawa 1993; Ivan Szelenyi / Don Treiman/ Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński (eds.), *Elity w Polsce, Rosji i na Węgrzech: wymiana czy reprodukcja?*, Warszawa 1995; Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Postkomunizm: Próba opisu*, Gdańsk 2001; Paweł Śpiewak, *Pamięć po komunizmie*, Gdańsk 2005; Zdzi-

There also arose some crisis of confidence in the then pro-European government (2007–2015), due to the knowledge about the scale of corruption in the country. The perception of the migratory crisis in Europe can be pointed out as the final factor: Migration has been seen as a threat to European civilisation, Christianity and European national cultures. A revival of historical memory in the national context was noticed around 2005. Some called it pop-patriotism, because it found new media typical to pop culture, like songs, comic books, printed T-shirts⁵⁸. At that time some activities were undertaken in the institutional sphere, such as the building of the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising opened at the 60 anniversary as one of the effects of the then president of Warsaw Lech Kaczyński's historical policy. Then Lech Kaczyński as a president of Poland launched the legislative procedure for establishing a National Remembrance Day of the »Cursed Soldiers«. The biggest triggering factor, however, was the Smoleńsk air disaster (April 10th 2010), and everything that happened afterwards, especially the Russian – and not Polish – investigation that very soon was recognised as untrustworthy. One should bear in mind the political aspects – in internal and international dimensions – of these events, and not forget about the close relations between knowledge and power, including so-called »soft power«.

The deep crisis of the Smoleńsk catastrophe, on the one hand brought again into existence the nineteenth-century tradition of romantic thinking about the nation, while on the other hand evoking sharp repulsion and anger to that kind of reaction. The situation was difficult to define, it contained many ambiguities, and soon it became apparent that the possibilities of a credible explanation were blocked. The »romantic reaction« was driven by strong emotions related to – as some people felt it – a violation of values and by the feeling that the nation's existence was threatened. Shortly thereafter, for the »romantic wing« of society the shock and sorrow caused by the tragedy itself were joined by the negative emotions associated with the abandonment, as they were convinced, by the state authorities⁵⁹ efforts to explain the causes and circumstances of the accident, as well as with big scale media disinformation. Later established monthly and anniversary marches were not only commemorative rituals, but also expressions of moral indignation and manifestations of commitment to remembrance against top-down promotion of forgetting. Moral reactions also referred to the previous unjust hostility that Lech Kaczyński had met during his presidency. The proponents of the »Smoleńsk cause« were of the opinion, that there was a morally grounded need to rehabilitate his name.

Myths, heroisation of martyrs, symbols and rituals are important elements in confirming participation in communities of meanings and values in periods of

sław Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii*, Gdańsk 2005; Radosław Sojak / Andrzej Zybortowicz (eds.), *Transformacja podszyta przemocą*, Toruń 2008.

58 E. g. Mariusz Czubaj, *Narodowy pop*, in: *Polityka* 2005, 16 (2500), 23 Apr., 76–78.

59 It refers to the government of Civic Platform and Polish People's Party. The change of the ruling camp brought a change in the attitude of the state to the subject of the crash.

crisis⁶⁰, especially when the group is consolidated through the feeling of being endangered by another, mighty and inimical group⁶¹. It should be added, that the matter has been played out not only in the symbolic sphere. The same part of the deeply split Polish society who cultivated memory about this accident, applied mythicisation and referred it to religious meanings, also has striven for scientific research to be conducted and to involve international specialists. However, the opponents of the independent researchers group's work have tried – quite effectively because of the detainment of the wreck of the plane in Russia – to invalidate the seriousness of this research and discredit it as madness. Both the symbolic sphere associated with remembrance, as well as technical activities focused on attempts to explain the accident, were reduced by the antagonists to mere political struggle and recognised as instrumental means harnessed by Jarosław Kaczyński in his stride for power. Those scholars, who recognised in this a re-entry of the romantic paradigm also looked at the phenomenon with disapproval. Maria Janion claimed: »Smoleńsk religion is a malign pop-messianism«⁶², »messianism is a curse«⁶³. Andrzej Mencwel wrote: »Romantic messianism – all this historical-cultural set has been finished and got rotten. [...] nation cannot be supported by that what is old and supernatural. God does not call us to fulfil any mission«.⁶⁴ Wojciech Burszta states that »The Smoleńsk religion is a fragment of wider social engineering, an attempt to draw us back to the imagined community«.⁶⁵ And, in order to put a coda, a title of an interview with Zbigniew Mikołajko reads: »Professor Mikołajko: Smoleńsk religion is an evil. When it burns out, Poland will have to go through a therapy«, and at the end of the talk the interviewee says: »Its element must be something that I do not hesitate to call a punishment«⁶⁶. Those scientists, who describe and concomitantly value »the Smoleńsk folk« from the heights of their symbolic capital, are however themselves not situated beyond culture and social structure. They rather seem to take a stand as participants of the dispute.

60 Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism*, Loc. Cit. (Note 1).

61 Znaniecki, *Modern Nationalities*, Loc. Cit. (Note 4).

62 Kazimiera Szczuka, Janion: Religia smoleńska to szkodliwy pop mesjanizm, in: *Gazeta Wyborcza* 34 (2013), 18–19.

63 Maria Janion, Mesjanizm to przekleństwo. List Marii Janion do Kongresu Kultury, *Wyborcza.pl*, 10.10.2016, retrieved from: <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75410,20813344,mesjanizm-to-przeklenstwo-list-marii-janion-do-kongresu-kultury.html> [27.04.2018].

64 Andrzej Mencwel, Polska nie ma żadnej boskiej misji. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30.04.2011. Retrieved from: http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,9512012,Polska_nie_ma_zadnej_boskiej_misji.html [20.11.2017].

65 Joanna Podgórska, Kapłani smoleńskiej religii. Mit wyciszony będzie trwał. Rozmowa z prof. Wojciechem Bursztą, antropologiem i kulturoznawcą, o religii smoleńskiej jako politycznym narzędziu, in: *Polityka*, 03.04.2018, retrieved from: <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/1743846,1,kaplani-smolenskiej-religii.read> [27.04.2018].

66 Michał Gostkiewicz, Prof. Mikołajko: Religia smoleńska jest złem. Kiedy się wypali, Polska będzie musiała przejść narodową psychoterapię, *Gazeta.pl*. 2017, retrieved from: <http://weekend.gazeta.pl/weekend/1,152121,21607007,prof-mikolajko-religia-smolenska-jest-zlem-kiedy-sie-wypali.html> [28.04.2018].

Labels such as »Smoleńsk heresy«, »Smoleńsk folk«, »Smoleńsk religion«, and phrases like: »violation of death taboo«, »dancing on graves«, »playing with coffins«, »making political capital out of death« exerted strong pressure on the consciousness of individuals by introducing specific standards of normality. In such a cognitive situation, those who were committed to the »Smoleńsk matter« all the more could have felt the need to find themselves in a community, which would offer them the epistemic and axiological standards of normality and deviation. The affiliation to the proponents of not remembering was tempting, as it promised to find oneself on the side of the »rational ones«, especially since almost all media were controlled to broadcast the univocal messages. Media committed to the other narration, also those assuming an assassination hypothesis (like »Gazeta Polska«) found themselves in an almost out of bounds position. This climate of contempt and ridicule strengthened the feeling of being under siege and the moral conviction that one must be faithful and cannot betray this matter because the dead deserve the truth. In other words, costs of the adherence to the »Smoleńsk sect« were high, and the imperative to persist with the cause was felt as strong. Due to the politicisation of the discourse, those who displayed this kind of remembering about »Smoleńsk« were from that moment on counted to the »PiS folk«, which meant loss of status in many social milieus⁶⁷. This price was too high for most representatives of middle class and intelligentsia. This might be another reason for the fact that most probably the socio-structural profile of the »Smoleńsk sect« has been more marked by representatives of lower social strata, and by inhabitants of villages and small towns. This can however be stated only indirectly on the grounds of socio-demographic characteristics of political electorates⁶⁸.

The national cause, bards, religion and the Church

While resisting the strong pressure on consciousness, these people who were devoted to the memory about Smoleńsk could have had a feeling of participating in the struggle between good and evil and develop the need of gaining support from some unwavering source of truth. They also expected that the Church would not refrain from taking a position on the matter that they regarded as so deeply ethical, that it would speak up for those who cannot defend themselves (the dead who became martyrs) and for the truth in support of those who rebelled against the enslavement not in a physical sense but regarding concepts and values. The tradition of the Polish Roman Catholic Church of being »with its Nation« and guiding people was about to come back. However, not the entire »nation« has been

67 Harold Garfinkel, Aspects of the Problem of Common Sense Knowledge of Social Structures, in: Transactions of the IVth World Congress of Sociology. Vol. IV: The Sociology of Knowledge, Milan 1959, 51–56.

68 CBOS, Kim są wyborcy, czyli społeczno-demograficzne portrety największych potencjalnych elektoratów. Komunikat z Badań, 141/2015, Warszawa 2015.

committed to the Smoleńsk cause in this way, as we showed above, and not the entire clergy has been involved. There is also a current within the Polish Church that tends to denationalise and thus universalise Polish Catholicism. This tendency is congruent with the secularisation processes described as functional differentiation of social structures⁶⁹. In such secularised societies, religious systems fulfil their specialised function⁷⁰ and thereby leave other systems emancipated from religious interpretations. This meets expectations of supporters of disestablishment. For instance, modernising tendencies of that kind are popular in the Dominican order. Likewise, not all bishops and only some priests combine the narration of national community with a religious discourse. During the main celebration of the 1050 Anniversary of the »Baptism of Poland« at Gniezno cathedral (April 14th 2016) president Andrzej Duda gave a passionate speech intermingling patriotic and religious themes, mentioning Polish saints, blessed, rulers and lots of heroes devoted to God⁷¹, while the current Polish primate took the perspective of an individual rather than of the community in his homily⁷². At the celebration in Poznań the next day, the local bishop declaimed along the lines of the »romantic paradigm«: »from the moment of the baptism of Prince Mieszko and the baptism of Poland also in our homeland began the fight for fidelity, this unspeakably dramatic fight of truth with falsehood, good with evil, beauty with ugliness, ethics with sin, freedom with slavery, values with anti-values, sense with nonsense, life with death, existence with nothingness«.⁷³ These two ways of dealing with religion in the public sphere can be categorised according to Charles Taylor as neo-Durkheimian *versus* post-Durkheimian types⁷⁴.

After the Smoleńsk tragedy, prayers in front of the Presidential Palace were evoked spontaneously without stimulation from the Church. They became more ritualised, when the cross was erect by scouts. One priest, Stanisław Małkowski, came along regularly on purpose to pray with the people. When in accordance with the authorities' recommendation clergymen came (August 3rd 2010) to move the cross away and lodge it in the near-by church, people surrounding the cross did not allow to have it taken away, shouting »Priests, do not put the shame on yourselves«.⁷⁵ This event shows peoples' behaviour compliant with the romantic rule that the »holy order of values« is superior to institutional decisions and that

69 José Casanova, Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective, in: The Hedgehog Review. Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture 8 (2006), 7–22.

70 Niklas Luhmann, Funkcja religii, Kraków 1998.

71 Przemówienie prezydenta Andrzeja Dudy wygłoszone w 1050. rocznicę Chrztu Polski w Katedrze Gnieźnieńskiej, in: Niedziela. Tygodnik Katolicki, 14.08.2016, retrieved from: <http://niedziela.pl/arttykul/21780/Przemowienie-prezydenta-Andrzeja-Dudy> [28.04.2018].

72 Homilia Prymasa – 1050. rocznica Chrztu Polski, retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhLm1LdUZP0> [03.11.2017].

73 Bp Stanisław Gądecki. Polonia semper fidelis. 1050-lecie Chrztu Polski. Katedra Poznańska - 15.04.2016, Archidiecezja Poznańska, retrieved from: <http://www.archpoznan.pl/content/view/3951/109/> [05.11.2017].

74 Taylor, A Secular Age, Loc. Cit. (Note 15).

75 Cf. Ewa Stankiewicz / Jan Pospieszalski, Krzyż [film], 2011.

common people may have a better ability to discern between right and wrong than religious officials.

The following examples present relationships between the meanings characteristic for the national community and the contents characteristic for the religious institution.

A poet and prose writer Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz, called by Andrzej Horubała »the main demiurge on the Polish spiritual scene, a poisoner or, as someone else would prefer, a bard«⁷⁶ in 2013 wrote the poem »Blood«, printed in *Gazeta Polska*, the newspaper which from the very beginning devoted a lot of attention to the Smoleńsk cause:

Blood put up on posters
 Blood on sidewalks and walls
 Blood – like then the morning silence
 Blood – like then black stains on the screens

Blood on ashen stone slabs,
 On Tusk's white gloves
 Blood which ask you nothing
 Blood as little birch broken in an orchard

And as red poppies in the fields
 And white clouds over them
 They ascended there above
 Like signs given to the nation

The blood on Tupolew seats
 Being washed with a hose at dawn
 It will sing you a song again sometime
 This will be a hymn about Resurrection⁷⁷

The last stanza of the poem was cited by Waldemar Chrostowski, a priest and professor, at the end of his sermon during one of the monthly »Masses for the Homeland« (January 10th 2014) in the St. John's arch-cathedral in Warsaw. He introduced the citation of the poem in the following way: »As every poetic work, it can be interpreted on many levels. I read and experience it on a deeply religious and theological level. [...] And therefore, here, in front of the Christ's altar, lengthening and strengthening the memory, let us recall this, what he [the poet] has left for us as a guidepost, as light, which is given as a conductor in the labour of memory.«⁷⁸ After hearing the

76 After: Wojciech Chmielewski, Smoleńskie pisanie, in: *Rzeczpospolita. Plus minus*, 10.04.2016, retrieved from: <http://www.rp.pl/Plus-Minus/304079887-Smoleńskie-pisanie.html> [03.11.2017].

77 TYLKO U NAS! Wiersz Jarosława Marka Rymkiewicza – Krew na białych rękawiczkach Tuska, in: *Gazeta Polska*, 06.11.2016, retrieved from: <http://niezalezna.pl/47968-tylko-u-nas-wiersz-jaroslaw-marka-rymkiewicza-krew-na-bialych-rekawiczkach-tuska> [03.11.2017].

78 Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz – KREW – poezja polska [film], retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9y5PxqPIwY> [03.11.2017].

piece of the poem people in the church reacted with plaudits. Earlier, in this homily the priest said also: »We are the guardians of memory only when we are faithful to the truth, to the full truth. The truth will set you free, Jesus Christ taught.«⁷⁹

In Romanticism in general, but in Polish Romanticism in particular, poetry had primacy over reality⁸⁰, and for a long time poets played the crucial role in shaping Polish consciousness. Below I cite the fragments of the sermon by bishop Józef Zawitkowski, delivered at the third anniversary of the Smoleńsk air disaster⁸¹. At the beginning the sermoniser conflates the holy History with the history of the community in romantic style, and then, by conjuring up great words by great poets, he seems to raise the listeners by showing that their history is sacred too, and that it is a moral task for them.

Haven't you heard about Jesus of Nazareth
 Who was powerful in his deeds and speeches?
 [...] We have expected him to save Israel,
 But he has lied in a grave for three days already.
 It has been already the third year
 Since the Smolensk death.
 [...] And he explained them everything from the beginning,
 How he was to come to glory through suffering.
 The world would forget Katyń
 If it were not for Smoleńsk
 If I would forget you,
 My Homeland,
 My holy Jerusalem,
 Then let my tongue wither to my palate
 Let my arm wither
 And you, God in heaven,
 Forget about me⁸²
 We are despite everything
 The guardians of our brothers⁸³
 What have you done to the heroes
 To »Rudy« and »Zośka«⁸⁴

79 Ibid.

80 Janion / Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia*, Loc. Cit. (Note 18).

81 Homilia ks. bp. Józefa Zawitkowskiego podczas mszy św. w intencji wszystkich ofiar katastrofy smoleńskiej, Radio Maryja, 10.04.2013, retrieved from: <http://www.radiomaryja.pl/multimedia/homilia-ks-bp-jozefa-zawitkowskiego-podczas-mszy-sw-w-intencji-wszystkich-ofiar-katastrofy-smolenskiej-2/> [10.11.2017].

82 The evocation of Adam Mickiewicz's »Dziady part III«, written in 1832.

83 Two lines from Zbigniew Herbert's poem »Pan Cogito o potrzebie ścisłości«, 1983 [»Mr Cogito on the Need for Precision«, transl. John and Bogdana Carpenters, 1987].

84 »Rudy« (1921–1943) and »Zośka« (1921–1943) were members of Polish anti-Nazi scouting organisation »Gray Ranks«, incorporated into Home Army and dealt with so-called small sabotage. »Rudy« was captured by Gestapo, and though rescued from captivity during the operation Arsenal, died because of torture during interrogation. His friend and commander, »Zośka« died during the participation as an observer in attack at a German police station.

You are not from my Homeland
 And remember that blood of the innocents
 Will cry to heaven for redress
 [...] We do not come here for ammunition
 Nor for weaponry.
 We collect ghosts here
 And fortify our strength at Her
 Who is over *black forest*
Glare – church of sunny weather,
Who will bend our overcast guns
*When we shall start to fight by love*⁸⁵
 Katyń soil,
 Smoleńsk soil,
 Will you always be a damned Leviatan limbo,
 That wolfs into its oblivion
 Those who are noble
 And who are chosen by God?
 [...] Don't ask the godless people
 Who killed the President
 Black angels' specialty
 Is falsehood and destruction of love
 The love to God, to the Homeland
 And mutual love to brothers.
 [...] We are not insane for the Homeland,
 We just want to remember
 And keep our identity
 [...] Have we some Poland left still?
 Not much.
 They sold almost everything.
 Poland is dying out.
 No! No!
 I am praying with you
 with the words of Tuwim – a Jew,
 The one from my Homeland:
 Let us clean up our native home
 [...] Our home heaved out of cemeteries...⁸⁶
 Not all is lost yet
 [...] *You were saved not in order to live*
you have little time you must give testimony
 [...] *Be faithful Go*⁸⁷.

Presently in Poland the powerful role of poets as it had been in the nineteenth century is of course unrepeatable. Today poetry is rather a niche phenomenon. A

85 The excerpt from Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński's (1921–1944), *Modlitwa do Bogarodzicy* [Prayer to Mother of God], 1944.

86 The lines from »Kwiaty polskie« [»Polish flowers«] by Julian Tuwim (1894–1953).

87 The ending of Zbigniew Herbert's »Przesłanie Pana Cogito« [»The Envoy of Mr. Cogito«, transl. Bogdana Carpenter], 1983.

fortiori, this would be difficult to realise considering that only 38% of the society read at least one book a year⁸⁸. On the other hand, modern times are characterised by a multiplicity of media channels, and the ›poeticalness‹ that can be found in the cultural manifestations of nationalism can be perceived in a broader sense. Regardless of how broadly understood the poetry would be, pathos – so discordant with postmodern culture – seems to be its characteristic feature.

Perceiving the tragic situation of April 10th 2010 as intentionally caused and thereby as threatening the existence of the community became the basis for constructing an analogy to past situations. In the film ›Smoleńsk‹⁸⁹, which *nota bene* was solely financed by voluntary donations of citizens, the director risked the scene in which victims of the crash greet in heaven the officers murdered in Katyń. Antoni Krauze (1940–2018) experienced ostracism by the artistic milieu right from the moment he decided to undertake this topic. From the point of view of the ›Smoleńsk rememberers‹, this additionally put his work in a heroic context and romantically connected him with his work.

As far as poetry *sensu stricto* is concerned, a literary scholar wrote: »It was to be the end of history, and in the brave new world of postmodernity and conjoint Europe poets were expected just to deal with private duties, write funny poems about poems, cigarettes, rotten cherries in vodka... which means – about nothing. This was even nicely and aptly called banalism. April 10th [...] broke this idyllic mode. That was a shock for Poles. It must have been a shock for poets, too. [...] Our poetry accompanied these events, one would like to say – fortunately. [...] It was again as Antygona burying her dead, but it also helped us to overcome despair and pain, and to understand the mystery of what happened.«⁹⁰ The poet and critic Wojciech Kudyba states: »Exorcised, displaced for the last decade out of literature, history unexpectedly has manifested itself and begun to speak with the voices of poets [...] perhaps a peculiar new activation of the romantic tradition takes place before our very eyes. The thing is worth a deeper consideration.«⁹¹

Wojciech Wencel is the poet who perhaps reacted most to the event in Smoleńsk. Czesław Miłosz had said about him about two decades ago: »I do not know if it is any addiction to connect Catholicism with traditional, metric forms.«⁹² Later Wencel added themes of martyr moments in Polish history, becoming a poet of memory of national suffering. After 2010 he gained popularity among those who needed to get a formula of expression for their own experiences. In the night after the crash Wojciech Wencel wrote:

88 Biblioteka Narodowa, Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2017 roku, retrieved from: <http://instytutksiazki.pl/files/upload/files/Stan%20czytelnictwa%202017.pdf> [28.04.2018].

89 Antoni Krauze, Smoleńsk [film], 2016.

90 Maciej Urbanowski, Poezja w cieniu Smoleńska. Radio Maryja.pl. 15 Apr. 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.radiomaryja.pl/bez-kategorii/poezja-w-cieniu-smolenska/> [03.11.2017].

91 Wojciech Kudyba, Wojciech Wencel: Poeta wyklęty, poeta wyklętych, in: Rzeczpospolita, Plus Minus, 21.08.2016, retrieved from: <http://www.rp.pl/Plus-Minus/308189949-Wojciech-Wencel-Poeta-wyklęty-poeta-wyklętych.html#ap-7> [10.11.2017].

92 Ibid.

Poland has not yet perished, so long as we still die
 so long our older brothers still go to the ground
 [...] there the killed in a dark forest pray for us
 there the insurgents go through sewers to the Middle-earth
 a path leads through the tomb of the Lord – there is no other way
 one has to wrap oneself in a white and red shroud
 [...] and the more senseless your death seems
 the hotter render thanks for being a Pole
 only that nation wins together with his God
 which has its head marked with a kiss of death⁹³.

A direct reference to the iconic messianic vision from Adam Mickiewicz's »Forefathers' Eve« part III can be found here:

Nobody remembers the old life
 Candles are burning in front of the president's palace⁹⁴
 [...] Poland, in a darkness of your birthing
 You are not Christ of the nations
 You are Jonah in a stomach of a great fish
 Go, oh go to your Niniveh (»Forty and four«, April 2011)⁹⁵.

President Andrzej Duda, using his entitlements, decided to award the prize of the »Meritorious for Polish language« to Wojciech Wencel. A member of the Chancellery said: »We are outraged by the President Duda's decision. Wencel's texts strengthen the Smoleńsk myth and Polish divisions. Wencel describes post-Smoleńsk Poland by means of ideological language. [...] this is using Polish language for *stricte* political aims.«⁹⁶

This and many other manifestations of rebuff created astonishing new contexts for a status of *poete maudit*. Andrzej Horubała, who criticised Wencel as well as Rymkiewicz for their »obsession with death«, stated that even before April 10th one could sense that »a hecatomb would come«, which he attributed

93 Wojciech Wencel, *In hora mortis*, 2010. The poem starts with the paraphrase of the first two lines of Polish national anthem. Retrieved from: <http://wojciechwencel.blogspot.com/2010/04/in-hora-mortis.html> [29.10.2017].

94 The candles were extinguished and taken away by Warsaw municipal police before they burned out. This practice was called by commemorators the acts of »extinction of memory«, and it was recalled that czarist Russia and the communist authorities had acted in the same way: Akademycki Klub Obywatelski im. Prezydenta Lecha Kaczyńskiego, *Oświadczenie w sprawie usuwania zniczy po manifestacji 10 marca 2011*, retrieved from: <http://ako.poznan.pl/2921/>.

95 Wojciech Wencel, *Czerdzieści i cztery*, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://wojciechwencel.blogspot.com/2011/04/czterdziesci-i-cztery.html> [29.10.2017].

96 Agnieszka Kublik, *Wojciech Wencel nagrodzony przez prezydenta Dudę. Członkowie kapituły nagrody protestują*, in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21. 02. 2017, retrieved from: <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,21401826,wojciech-wencel-nagrodzony-przez-prezydenta-dude-czlonkowie.html> [29.10.2017].

to the hateful atmosphere in the country⁹⁷. The conflict, which intensified after ›Smoleńsk‹, has had a complex character, with its political, economic and cultural dimensions. It has concerned interests, values, and narratives. Tensions within the conflict and the mechanism of the conflict have been read by one party mostly in the perspective of a struggle between the enlightened, rational, modern liberals on the one side, and politically driven gamers, who use the regrettable parochialism and backwardness of the benighted ones on the other side. In contrast, the ›romantic party‹ sees this conflict primarily in an ethical perspective, in which the existence of a nation is at stake. Their attitude repeats the characteristic romantic combination of the particular (here: Polishness) with the universal (truth and justice). In this vision, the supernatural forces are the guarantor and the highest instance.

In the poem »An answer to friends in a foreign language«, written in September 2010, Artur Chlewiński reacted to the contempt for the cultivation of memory in the Krakowskie Przedmieście street, that escalated in different forms during the prayers, among others into the desecration of the cross and urinating on the candles:

I am inviting you
 With your friends
 You will also sightsee the capital;
 I deny
 That you would not find city toilets;
 I confirm,
 The whiff of candle put out
 With urine
 For some time was kept by violence –
 The stink of reasons
 Of Antichrist⁹⁸.

Conclusions

The definition of a nation by Anthony D. Smith contains important elements from the realm of culture: it is a »self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values«. ⁹⁹ The analysis of the romantic culture component in Polish nationalism reveals that these categories and their contents constitute not a simple collection, but a system. Associations between various elements of the cultural system under discussion, and the specific meanings of these components, both derived from the past and contextually shaped in the consecutive contemporariness, speak for the specificity of the configuration. The ability to fulfil certain functions may

97 Chmielewski, Smoleńskie pisanie, Loc. Cit. (Note 76).

98 Ibid.

99 Smith, Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism, Loc. Cit. (Note 1), 29.

suggest its durability. The culturalist approach to the national question is very pertinent as far as Polish nationalism is concerned. However, such a definition poses delimitation problems, since there are different versions of social forms of historical memory within a society, different degrees of feeling the need to keep ties with the past, conflicting attitudes toward some categories of the symbolic realm, and last but not least, strong antagonistic emotions generated by current political events and disputes.

Social consciousness of the members of Polish society is under constant construction – continuously including bricks of new historical events and their so very different interpretations. This means that it is under heterogeneous and contradictory pressures. The ›romantic paradigm‹ was certainly too soon diagnosed as already vanished. The revival of romantic feelings about the nation occurred especially after the liminal situation of the Smoleńsk catastrophe. Perceiving individual freedom as realisable in a collective context of national community, and therefore the concern about the existence of this community is, though not common, still present. The pattern of romantic feeling is still able to put the nation in a holy cosmic and nomic order.

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