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Volume 47

Transforming National Holidays. Identity discourse in the West and South Slavic
countries, 1985-2010

Edited by Ljiljana Šarić, Karen Gammelgaard and Kjetil Rå Hauge

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CHAPTER 3

The multiple symbolism of 3 May in Poland after the fall of communism

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The chapter shows the complex symbolism associated with 3 May, wherein secular and religious elements interact. In 3 May, two holidays coincide: the state National Holiday of May Third and the church Feast of Our Lady, Queen of Poland. The National Holiday of May Third commemorates the anniversary of proclaiming the 3 May Constitution in 1791. This event is considered a cornerstone of Polish political symbolism, on which the entire construction of modern Polish national and state identity is founded.

The analysis, done from a symbolic constructionist perspective, focuses on discursive symbolism and its use in symbolic politics after the fall of communism in Poland. Rhetorical categories such as genres and topoi, as well as Kenneth Burke's dramatistic pentad are employed. In terms of Burke's dramatistic pentad, it is pointed out that President Lech Wałęsa focused on the acting "agent," with the nation as a collective subject; in President Aleksander Kwaśniewski's rhetoric, the "act" became central, whereas in President Kaczyński's rhetoric, the "purpose" moved to the foreground. The chapter presents how Polish presidents and church dignitaries used discursive symbolism to shape state and national identity. It shows the complex interaction of civic, national, and religious identities in the context of Poland's most important holiday.

Keywords: dramatistic pentad, Kenneth Burke, metaphor, national holiday, Poland, presidential discourse, symbolic politics, religious symbolism, topoi

1. Introduction

The analysis in this chapter is based on the assumption that a collectivity needs images and symbols to represent its continuity and its transformation (Hałas 2008; Stråth 2000: 19–46). Such a symbolic constructionist perspective on questions of

nation-states and national identities comes close to the perspective of symbolization politics (Hedetoft 1998). Symbols, especially when used by leaders, gain political relevance via giving meaning to reality through struggles over a symbolic definition of situation (Hinckley 1990: 1–15). This chapter focuses on how Polish presidents and church dignitaries used discursive symbolism to shape both state and national identities after the downfall of communism. I present the complex symbolism associated with 3 May, wherein secular and religious elements interact. In 3 May, two holidays coincide: *Święto Narodowe Trzeciego Maja* (National Holiday of May Third, henceforth 3 May Holiday) and *Uroczystość Najświętszej Marii Panny Królowej Polski* (Feast of Our Lady, Queen of Poland). The 3 May Holiday commemorates the anniversary of proclaiming the Constitution of 3 May in 1791. In the frames of this holiday, two autonomous fields of discursive construction of national identity affect each other: the civic field of the state and the religious field of the Church.

The entire construction of modern Polish national and state identity is founded upon the Enlightenment Constitution of 3 May 1791 – a cornerstone of Polish political symbolism (Hałas 2005: 52). The 3 May Holiday was established as a state holiday in 1919, after Poland regained independence following World War I. The communist regime abolished it in 1951. It was reestablished in 1990 after that regime's downfall, during systemic transformation in Poland (Hałas 2002a, 2002b). The church holiday – Feast of Our Lady, Queen of Poland – on the same date was established in 1924. It is rooted deeper still, in a tradition that reaches back to 1656 and oaths taken by King Jan II Kazimierz during the Swedish invasion (the so-called Swedish Deluge). Continued celebration of this holiday significantly contributed to tension between the Church and the state apparatus under communist rule (1944–1989).

My analysis of two types of public discourse, state and ecclesial, shows the complex interaction of civic, national and religious identities in the frames of 3 May. For discourse analysis, I employ basic concepts of rhetoric such as genres, topoi, and metaphors, as well as the categories of Kenneth Burke's dramatisic pentad (Burke 1989: 135): "act," "scene," "agent," "agency," and "purpose." The dramatisic pentad is the core concept of Burke's new rhetoric; he relates five rhetorical elements to questions: "what is the action?" (act); "when?" and "where?" (scene); "who?" (agent); "how?" (agency); "why?" (purpose). These five elements serve as criteria for discourse typology. In my analysis of parliamentary and presidential speeches, I determine which of Burke's categories dominate a speaker's discourse. On the other hand, my analysis of sermons given on the church holiday is inspired by Burke's concept of the social reality of drama. The results of this analysis show the symbolic recreating of collective identity, as well as the meaning of the "redemption" metaphor.

1.1 The "scene" and the reinstatement of the holiday

On 6 April 1990, the lower house of the Polish parliament, the *Sejm*, issued a law¹ reinstating the 3 May Holiday. Two parliamentarians spoke on that occasion: *Sejm* Deputy Jan Świtka, who presented the bill, and Senator Jerzy Pietrzak, who spoke on behalf of the organ proposing the bill, the Senate.² An analysis of their speeches shows that both employ the same rhetorical strategy.³ They focused on the "scene," in other words, on the circumstances that led to formulating the proposal to reinstate the 3 May Holiday. Emphasizing the circumstances, both parliamentarians diminished the significance of the agent, and thus also of the act and its supposed purpose: the symbolic act of reinstating the 3 May Holiday.

In his short narrative, Deputy Jan Świtka described the history of celebrations associated with the anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May. He also presented arguments referring to the authority of tradition and to fixed national patterns of commemoration. Indeed, at the beginning of his speech, the Deputy ascribed mainly emotional significance to the Senate's initiative of reinstating the 3 May Holiday: "tak mocno poruszyła polskie serca," 'it has moved Polish hearts so strongly.' Thus, he considered 3 May primarily as a vehicle for patriotic feelings. He focused on the 3 May Holiday as a cultural construct, an objectified symbol representing a lost property of the Polish nation, a property which should be returned. The final justification, in fact, gives no "in-order-to motives" for this legislative act. Deputy Świtka's entire argumentation rests on "because motives,"⁴ referring only to the need to respect tradition under conditions which make acting otherwise impossible: "przemiany ustrojowo-polityczne w Ojczyźnie wymagają tego, aby Święto Narodowe Trzeciego Maja [...] zostało przywrócone," 'the systemic and political changes in our Homeland require that the National Holiday of May Third [...] be reinstated.'

1. Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 r. o przywróceniu Święta Narodowego Trzeciego Maja (Law of 6 April 1990 on Reinstating the National Holiday of May Third), *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* 28 (160) (1990). Available at <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19900280160>, accessed 24. Mar. 2011.

2. Deputy Jan Świtka represented *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (Democratic Party), a satellite of the communist party – *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza* (Polish United Workers' Party). Senator Jerzy Pietrzak, a historian, represented *Komitet Obywatelski* (Civic Committee), a formation advocating systemic transformation.

3. The speeches are quoted from the stenographic reports of the *Sejm* (*Sprawozdania stenograficzne* 1990).

4. Regarding in-order-to motives referring to the future and because motives referring to the past, see Schutz (1982: 69–72).

Senator Jerzy Pietrzak used similar arguments. He emphasized the “scene,” the situation that determines reinstatement of the 3 May Holiday. Like Deputy Świtka, he justified the reinstatement by invoking tradition and authority. Primarily, the Senator’s speech focused on the holiday’s emotional significance: “Naród jednak trwał w sentymentach trzeciomajowej tradycji,” “The nation, however, retained the sentiments of the tradition of 3 May” and “Senat [...] nie rozminął się z odczuciami narodu,” “The Senate [...] did not fail to recognize the feelings of the nation.” In the section containing arguments, the speaker concentrated on how the 3 May Holiday functions to maintain continuity of tradition, memory, and identity. The holiday is presented as a sentimental keepsake. Both parliamentarians focused on habitual and sentimental aspects of the 3 May Holiday, without explaining its symbolic meanings that might have been used to interpret postcommunist changes, for which a course had to be set by giving reality a meaning.

2. Using the symbolism of the Constitution of 3 May: Three presidential discourses

Presidential discourse associated with 3 May was initiated in the Third Republic of Poland when President Lech Wałęsa, the first president elected in a free, general election, gave a speech on this occasion in 1991.⁵ An analysis of the presidential speeches of Wałęsa and his successors, Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Lech Kaczyński,⁶ clearly shows that the speeches represent three different types of discourse.⁷ The differences lie both in their rhetorical definitions of the state of things (in other words, differences stem from how the presidents ascribed meaning to the symbol of the Constitution of 3 May) and in their ways of reinterpreting this meaning in the contemporary contexts of the state and of the nation. In terms of discourse structure, the speeches clearly differ regarding their choice of the

5. “The Third Republic” is a designation of the Polish state. It emphasizes the split with the Polish People’s Republic and the symbolic and moral junction with the Second Republic (1918–1939), as well as with the First Republic – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which came under the rule of the partitioning states (Prussia, Russia and Austria) in 1795.

6. Lech Wałęsa – president of the Republic of Poland in 1990–1995; Aleksander Kwaśniewski – president of the Republic of Poland in 1995–2005; Lech Kaczyński – president of the Republic of Poland in 2005 – April 10, 2010 (died before the end of his term in the plane crash near Smoleńsk, Russia).

7. The speeches of all three presidents are quoted from unpublished archive documents containing the authorized texts, provided to the author by the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland. See the list of primary sources at the end of this chapter.

dominant category of Burke’s dramatis personae. President Wałęsa focused on the acting “agent,” with the nation as a collective subject. In President Kwaśniewski’s rhetoric, the “act” became central, whereas in President Kaczyński’s rhetoric, the “purpose” moved to the foreground.

2.1 The “agent”: The nation and its fragile potency

The bicentenary of the Constitution of 3 May occurred in 1991, during the early period of postcommunist transformation, a period particularly susceptible to politicization of symbols (Hałas 2000). This occasion created an opportunity for, and simultaneously required, rhetorical articulation of the nation-state’s identity and its regained collective memory. The heritage of the 3 May Constitution’s symbolism and that event’s historical narration provided many potential topoi for defining the transformational situation and for projecting the significance of historical events. In his first 3 May presidential speech, Lech Wałęsa, the legendary leader of the Solidarity movement, openly employs the current frame for interpreting the 3 May Constitution’s historical significance: “Rodacy! To przesłanie jest nadal aktualne!” ‘Fellow countrymen! This message is still valid!’ The statement’s style is shaped by placing emphasis on the collective agent, in whose name President Wałęsa is speaking. In his first 3 May speech, he highlights citizenship rather than nationality in the ethnic sense. For instance, he speaks about *ogół obywateli III Rzeczypospolitej*, ‘all the citizens of the Third Republic.’

In President Wałęsa’s speech, the acting collective subject’s most significant attribute is liberty, as indicated by the proclamation: “O naszym losie decydujemy sami,” ‘We alone decide our destiny,’ which exaggerates unrestricted collective sovereignty and agency. The fundamental significance of the 3 May Holiday lies in the moral message of the idea of liberty, a message which transcends historical time: “Wolność nigdy nie jest dana raz na zawsze. Jest zadaniem, które musi podejmować każde nowe pokolenie,” ‘Liberty is never given forever. It is a challenge which every new generation must undertake.’

President Wałęsa depicts the main participants in the current political drama by using an analogy to the 1791 event: “zwycięstwo Solidarności podobne jest do zwycięstwa obozu patriotycznego przed dwustu laty,” ‘the victory of Solidarity resembles the victory of the patriotic camp two centuries ago.’ The two victories are depicted as analogous: the victory of Solidarity and the victory of the patriotic camp during the Four-Year Sejm, 1788–1791. Throughout the speech, drawing comparisons to historical events and situations helps ascribe a symbolic sense to contemporary events.

The rhetorical state of things is depicted by defining the event which occurred two hundred years ago as the “repair of the Polish Republic.” The current reinterpretation consists in rhetorically identifying historic moments – past and present: “i my żyjemy w czasach wielkiej naprawy Rzeczypospolitej;” ‘we, too, live in times when a great repair of the Republic is underway.’

“Repair,” in the word’s literal sense, assumes that something has previously functioned properly. In the discourse of transition, the term “repair” characterizes the process as a reform rather than as a revolution. President Wałęsa’s first 3 May speech uses the convention of moralizing discourse, reminiscent of the judicial genre of speech. The moral message of his first speech reaches a lofty culmination in the following statements: “Po dwóch stuleciach przejmujemy wielkie dziedzictwo. Nie możemy go zmarnować,” ‘After two hundred years we are taking over a great legacy. We cannot waste it;’ “tym bardziej jesteśmy odpowiedzialni przed Bogiem, historią i przyszłymi pokoleniami,” ‘our responsibility before God, history and the future generations is all the greater.’

In his 1994 speech, President Wałęsa presupposed a politically unrealistic unanimous consensus and thus moralized in his presidential discourse: “Warunkiem powodzenia takich przemian jest jednak społeczne przyzwolenie. Powszechna zgoda,” ‘However, such changes can only take place under the condition of social agreement. General consent.’ President Wałęsa also portrayed the moral state of society in 1993, using the metaphors “building” and “connecting” – creating ties:

Gdy kończy się walka, nastaje czas budowania. Żyjemy właśnie w takim czasie, przed nami ogrom zadań. Łatwiej im podołamy, kiedy skupimy się na tym, co nas łączy, nie na tym, co dzieli.

When the fighting ends, a time for building comes. We live in precisely such a time, before us lies a multitude of tasks. It will be easier to tackle them when we focus on that which connects us, not on that which divides us.

President Wałęsa’s moral discourse during his last two years in office (1994–1995) assumes a tone of admonishment. The main political problem of that period was the parliamentarians’ inability to adopt a new constitution. His last speech, in 1995, is constructed around a vocabulary of negative emotions. Here, the way of depicting the state of things evokes unease and pessimism, because the historical events which occurred two centuries ago are shown from their tragic side: treason, foreign intervention and, ultimately, the country’s disintegration.

O losie Rzeczypospolitej decydowano już na obcych dworach. W Warszawie karty i pieniądze rozdawał poseł rosyjski. Werbował ludzi przekupnych do posłusznego imperatorowej legioni. Legionu rodzimych zdrajców, który miał uwia-rygodnić obcą agresję.

The fate of the Republic was already being decided at foreign courts. In Warsaw, cards were dealt and money was counted out by the Russian envoy. He recruited corruptible people to a legion that was loyal to the empress [Catherine the Great]. A legion of native traitors that was to justify the foreign aggression.

In contrast to President Wałęsa’s earlier speeches, especially his 1991 speech, which underscored the epochal significance of the Constitution of 3 May, in 1995 rhetorical amplification gives way to reduction: the speaker states that the Constitution was “w tych dziejach epizodem. Wydarzeniem, które nie zmieniło biegu historii, nie zatrzymało procesu upadku Rzeczypospolitej;” ‘merely an episode in history. An occurrence which did not change the course of events, did not halt the process of the Republic’s decay.’

In 1991, President Wałęsa also initiated the discourse associated with the constitution, paralleling such connotations of the 3 May Holiday as “liberty” and “repair of the Republic.” This speech was given before the first free general parliamentary election in postcommunist Poland: “Nie wyłoniliśmy Sejmu, który miałby prawo opracować i uchwalić nową konstytucję. Konstytucję na miarę czasów, w których żyjemy,” ‘We have not chosen a *Sejm* which would have the right to draw up and adopt a new constitution. A constitution to match the times we are living in.’

President Wałęsa’s first and last speeches delivered on the occasion of 3 May during his presidency contain opposing characterizations of the collective subject, the nation, as the agent. In his first speech, the nation achieves great things and participates in important historic events. The last speech focuses on the failure to act and to cooperate.

2.2 The “act” or what is to be done

President Kwaśniewski assumed office in December 1995. During communist rule in Poland, he had belonged to the *nomenclature* of the Party. President Kwaśniewski’s 3 May discourse differs significantly from that of his predecessor. Unlike the epideictic (demonstrative) rhetoric of President Wałęsa, who passed judgment on the contemporary state of affairs, the rhetoric of President Kwaśniewski’s discourse is deliberative and didactic: he deliberates on what has been done and focuses on what needs to be done. The key difference as compared to President Wałęsa’s speeches lies in making the “act” the leading category. The act-oriented rhetoric of Kwaśniewski’s presidential speeches creates a perspective of realism, founded on the principle of pragmatism. Pragmatism is explicitly declared as a priority.

Despite differences between his speeches and those of President Wałęsa, President Kwaśniewski elaborates on some of his predecessor's topoi. Certain elements defining the 3 May Holiday reappear – specifically, rhetorical depictions of the state of things and reinterpretations to give the 3 May Holiday a meaning of contemporary relevance. Significantly, his reinterpretation involves an orientation towards the future, already discernible in the speeches of President Wałęsa, who demanded proper management of the past's significance. This orientation becomes consistently elaborated in the speeches of President Kwaśniewski, whose electoral campaign slogan was *Wybierzmy przyszłość*, 'Let's choose the future.' The topos of "compromise" is also continued and expanded.

President Kwaśniewski adopted the term "repair of the Republic" to define the symbolic meaning of the Constitution of 3 May in his first presidential speech on that occasion. In subsequent years, "repair of the Republic" no longer served as a key term, and it disappeared almost entirely from his vocabulary. The 1791 event gains a new, moral frame of significance. In 1998, President Kwaśniewski defines the 3 May Holiday, above all, as the commemoration of an "act of civic maturity": "Święto Trzeciego Maja to upamiętnienie dojrzałości obywatelskiej najświetlejszych Polaków," "The Holiday of May Third commemorates the civic maturity of the most illustrious Poles." Maturity of the elites is emphasized. The symbolic equation consists in identifying the elites of the patriotic camp in the Four-Year Sejm of the 18th century with the elites responsible for the modern project and for progress of the transformation that started in 1989. The nation's lack of civic maturity is presented as a problem. In President Kwaśniewski's view, the civic society turns out to be immature, which appears to be all too natural, since the maturation process requires time.

In 1999, the Constitution of 3 May is referred to as a "part of history," "deserving the highest respect": "Polskie dzieje pełne są lekcji wartych namysłu i zapamiętania. Konstytucja Trzeciego Maja jest godną najwyższego szacunku częścią naszej historii," 'Polish history is full of lessons worth consideration and remembering. The Constitution of May Third is a part of our national heritage that deserves the utmost respect.' In subsequent years a number of expressions describing the 3 May Holiday appear in the discourse; together, they form a semantic field of civic virtues. In addition to civic maturity, we encounter: "a holiday of wisdom," "a holiday of civic sagacity." In 2000, the metaphor "gift of agreement" appears, whereas in 2002 the 3 May Holiday is referred to as "a holiday of national concord and reconciliation": "Jest więc dzień Trzeciego Maja świętem odwagi myśli, siły wartości państwowych, narodowej zgody i pojednania," 'Thus, the day of May Third is a holiday that lauds courage in thought, the strength of state values, national concord, and reconciliation.' This discourse builds an image of positive national habitus or national character.

However, during President Kwaśniewski's first term, the "repair of the Republic" still accompanies the topos of "civic virtues" in his rhetoric: it is a symbolic link between contemporaneity and the events of two centuries ago, as well as a basis for analogy. In contrast, during his second term, the topos of "constitutionalism" replaces the topos of "repair" in the 3 May discourse. In 2001, President Kwaśniewski called 3 May a "holiday of constitutionalism" when interpreting its meaning. In his presidential speeches, much space is devoted to praising the new constitution, adopted in 1997.⁸

The first speech in 1996 contained an opposition of the symbolic sphere and the sphere of practical actions. In other words, the speech questioned the significance of the 3 May Holiday as a symbol of aspirations to liberty and independence, as well as its identity-creating function:

Przywołujemy dziś pamięć najświetlejszych Polaków XVIII wieku. Pamiętamy więc, że chcieli oni zasłużyć „na błogosławieństwo i wdzięczność przyszłych pokoleń” nie za stworzenie symbolu, ale za praktyczne uregulowanie spraw Ojczyzny.

Today we recall the memory of the most illustrious Poles of the eighteenth century, so let us remember that they wanted to earn "the blessing and gratitude of future generations" not for creating a symbol, but for setting the affairs of the Homeland in order in a practical sense.

This interpretation not only contradicted the actual intentions of the 3 May Constitution's authors, who had simultaneously established "a national keepsake" in the form of the anniversary-commemorating feast, but it also missed the mark in terms of understanding the function of symbolism. The speeches given in subsequent years corrected the latter: they firmly emphasized the symbolic significance of the constitution.

President Kwaśniewski presented another opposition in his first speech – a transposition of the Marxist opposition between theory and practice:

Dzisiaj pomni polskich doświadczeń wiemy, że patriotyzm nie wyraża się w górnolotnych hasłach i teoretycznych rozważaniach, ale w konkretnej pracy dla dobra i pożytku ludzi – obywateli Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, dla Polski!

Today, remembering Polish experiences, we know that patriotism is not expressed in lofty slogans and theoretical reflections, but in actual work for the good and benefit of people – the citizens of the Republic of Poland, for Poland!

8. *Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Constitution of the Republic of Poland), *Dziennik Ustaw Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* 78 (483) (1997). Available at <http://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/konst.htm>, accessed 19 May 2011.

In this way, the metaphor “repair of the Republic” has been translated into categories of practical action and into instructions about how to act. This translation is associated with a special feature of this discourse – valorization of everyday life. As a result, the rhetorical style of these speeches differs markedly from the lofty rhetoric of historical responsibility in President Wałęsa’s discourse.

Unlike the 3 May rhetoric towards the end of President Wałęsa’s term, loaded with moralizing and criticism of society, President Kwaśniewski’s discourse over a period of ten years never ceases to be a voice of the high collective self-esteem of Poles, expressed in a vocabulary of positive emotions, of pride and of satisfaction. The discourse represents a certain rhetorical logotherapy – it dispels doubt, awakens trust and hope, and banishes negative emotions. President Kwaśniewski’s proclamation in 1999: “Historia dała nam, Polakom, niejedną powód do dumy,” ‘History has given us Poles more than one reason to be proud of ourselves,’ refers in particular to the most recent history – to the systemic transformation. President Kwaśniewski’s speeches draw an analogy between the reforms carried out during the Enlightenment, the Round Table agreements between communist party leaders and the opposition in 1989 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1997. The vocabulary of positive emotions functions as material for a narrative which assumes the form of a success story. Furthermore, it recommends an appropriate collective effort to master emotions. The proposed temporal strategy, as exemplified by the expression from 2001, is closely linked with an effort at emotion control – if the past is not a source of pride and satisfaction, it must be marginalized: “Ludzie wierzący w siebie, wierzący we własny indywidualny i zbiorowy sukces – wracają do przeszłości po to, by umacniać dumę i narodową tożsamość,” ‘People who believe in themselves, who believe in their own individual and collective success, return to the past in order to strengthen their pride and national identity.’

In President Kwaśniewski’s discourse, the politics of positive emotions in defining a collective “here and now” goes hand in hand with anti-historical politics. He stated this explicitly in 2001, using a maxim taken from the thoughts of Montesquieu: “Warto pamiętać starą prawdę, że narody szczęśliwe nie muszą ciągle odwoływać się do historii,” ‘An old truth is worth remembering – happy nations don’t need to constantly refer to history.’

Such a politics of memory and emotions is directly utilized in the discourse to manage the significance of the recent past – the period of transformation. Here, worth noting is a characteristic technique of neutralizing guilt by accusing the accusers and by referring to the highest moral arguments. In a postmodernist style of pastiche, the secular speaker unhesitatingly paraphrases the Gospel:

Ale warto i trzeba także samokrytycznie spojrzeć na zaniechania i popełnione błędy i przypomnieć słowa: “Kto bez winy, niech rzuci kamieniem”. Nie ma cudownych sposobów, pozwalających błyskawicznie uzdrowić system.

But it is worthwhile and necessary to also take a self-critical look at omissions and errors, and to recall the words: “He who is without fault should cast the first stone.” There are no miraculous ways to instantly cure the system.

President Kwaśniewski’s pragmatic discourse is oriented towards efficient action. Therefore, the vocabulary of positive emotions and the anti-historical politics of memory fit well into it. The speeches present an image of achieved successes. The topos of “success,” introduced in his first presidential speech in 1996, contrasts with the pessimistic last speech of President Wałęsa.

The vocabulary of positive emotions, civic virtues, and success represents material for a discourse which may be termed “postpolitical” because it creates a critical distance towards politics, which becomes contrasted with everyday life. Postpoliticity implies introducing alternatives to politics and criticizing its negative aspects. It is a rhetoric that discourages interest in politics. In his first speech in 1996, President Kwaśniewski already strongly demarcated the world of politics from the world of everyday life.

“Nie ma żadnego powodu, by Polacy musieli przez cały czas żyć wdzierającą się do ich domów agresywną polityką,” ‘There is no reason for Poles to have to constantly live with aggressive politics that forces its way into their homes.’

President Kwaśniewski gives his discourse a postpolitical character by taking a relativistic view of political opposites and by emphasizing consensus – an agreement. Ultimately, the most significant component of President Kwaśniewski’s postpolitical discourse is community. The semantic core *współ*, meaning ‘common,’ appears in his leading slogans, such as: *wspólna Polska*, ‘a common Poland,’ *współdziałanie ponad podziałami*, ‘cooperation above divisions.’ This “community parlance” frequently simulates religious language. This simulation is particularly apparent in the speech delivered in 2005, the year Pope John Paul II died. President Kwaśniewski’s discourse sets a double contrast between politics and shared everyday life on the one hand. On the other hand, politics is contrasted with a community of faith and future prospects that transcend this everyday reality.

2.3 The “purpose” and the significance of political action

President Lech Kaczyński’s 3 May discourse reflects the store of meanings and symbols carried by historical narratives regarding the Constitution of 3 May, as well as creative rhetorical possibilities of their interpretation. It differs significantly from his predecessor’s discourse and, although some elements of the

vocabulary used are common to both, Kaczyński's rhetoric is *de facto* based on different topoi. Furthermore, it deconstructs most of the leading topoi from President Kwaśniewski's discourse. First, it restores the perspective of political action. President Kaczyński's discourse has an openly political rhetoric, presenting an agonistic vision of reality: allies and foes. The acting subjects participate in political strife, which is not limited to a discrepancy of individual interests, but rather consists of a struggle to realize social values by properly shaping democratic institutions. In contrast to the previously analyzed discourses, organized around a "scene" (or situation), the "agent" or "act," in this discourse the "purpose" of the act plays a central role.

Following Kenneth Burke (1989), one may identify different types of discourse: deterministically oriented (when emphasis is placed on the act's circumstances – the scene), idealistically oriented (emphasis placed on the agent), realistically oriented (emphasis placed on the act), or pragmatically oriented (emphasis placed on the agency). Unlike these discourses, President Kaczyński's discourse is oriented towards a need to give political action a higher sense, an ultimate meaning (emphasis placed on the purpose of the dramatistic pentad). In 2007, President Kaczyński introduced a new topos – "honest authority":

Będziemy walczyć aż do chwili, gdy w Polsce prawo będzie rzeczywiście równe dla wszystkich, a obywatel będzie mógł podejmować demokratyczne decyzje w oparciu o gruntowną wiedzę, zarówno o naszej dzisiejszej rzeczywistości, jak i o niedalekiej przeszłości. To bardzo istotne, to podstawowe przesłanie dla każdej uczciwej władzy – każdej uczciwej władzy w naszym kraju. Z tej drogi nie zjeżdżamy ani dziś, ani jutro. Rocznica 3 Maja jest znakomitą okazją, żeby to właśnie podkreślić.

We shall fight until a time comes when the law in Poland is truly the same for everyone and every citizen is able to make democratic decisions based on thorough knowledge, both about the present reality and about the recent past. This is extremely important, this is the basic message for every honest authority – every honest authority in our country. We will not stray from this path, neither today nor tomorrow. The anniversary of 3 May is an excellent occasion to emphasize this.

In contrast to President Kwaśniewski's 3 May discourse during his second term, in the discourse of President Kaczyński the metaphor of "repair" is brought back, but "renewal" and "cure" appear as well, livening the metaphor of "repair" and giving it new overtones. This discourse emphasizes the significance of civic ties, and thus also the significance of a political society, the existence of which cannot be reduced to the level of everyday life. All this is stressed in the 2006 speech:

Jestem przekonany, że również i dziś [...] Rzeczpospolita Polska, nasze niepodległe państwo, nasz sukces sprzed szesnastu, siedemnastu lat, najwyższa wartość, która łączy wszystkich Polaków zostanie odnowiona, że zwyciężą ci, którzy tej odnowy chcą, bo ona jest dziś potrzebna.

I am certain that today, also, [...] the Republic of Poland, our independent state, our success achieved sixteen, seventeen years ago, the highest value that connects all Poles will be renewed, that those who want this renewal will prevail, because it is needed today.

The speech, however, assigns a leading role to the topos of "constitutionalism," obviously associated with commemorating the events of 1791. This discourse is plain, uses metaphors sparingly and is careful in employing metonymy, although it also obliges the speaker to use the symbol of the Constitution of 3 May to give meaning to contemporary phenomena. When defining the state of things – explaining what the 3 May Holiday stands for symbolically – President Kaczyński concentrates his attention on denotation. He focuses on the current anniversary (216th and subsequent ones) of the historical fact and act which are commemorated. Here, in turn, rhetorical inventiveness lies in the difference in presentation. Unlike his predecessors, President Kaczyński in his discourse refers neither to an episode nor to an event, but rather to a stage in the long historical process of reformatory efforts to strengthen the state. Thus, emphasis is placed on the significance of purposeful action over a long time, not just on an isolated moment in history.

President Kaczyński's first speech in 2006 and his subsequent ones adopt a definition of 3 May as a holiday of the constitution that aimed at a repair of the state and at Poland's return to its proper place in Europe. Emphasis is placed on the fact that this is an anniversary of the first constitution in Europe. Once again, President Kaczyński proves inventive in modifying this topos, which was also present in his predecessors' speeches. Here, the discourse underscores the significant role played by the tradition of Polish juridical and reformatory thought in drawing up the Constitution of 3 May. The discourse is pro-European, but simultaneously it clearly highlights the distinct Polish identity.

The symbolic equation consists in identifying the entire Polish nation with the creators of the Constitution of 3 May: the Constitution becomes linked with a nation existing through generations, and not merely its elites, some political camp or trend of political thought. Compare the speech of 2009: "218 lat temu uchwalono pierwszą w Europie Konstytucję. Kto to zrobił? My Polacy." "The first Constitution in Europe was announced 218 years ago. Who achieved this? We Poles."

As it reconstructs the cognitive layer of the symbol of the 3 May Constitution – in other words, selected and relevant elements of knowledge about this

event – this discourse simultaneously introduces a language of positive emotions: joy, satisfaction, and national pride. This rhetoric retains a feeling of security, which is also depicted as the *differentia specifica* in defining the situation more than two centuries earlier as opposed to the present-day situation. Thus, it builds a distance between these two historical situations. It also creates a need to seek a suitable ground for analogy to interpretatively use the symbolism associated with the Constitution of 3 May, facilitating the comprehension of present conditions in Poland.

To highlight the contemporary situation, President Kaczyński concentrates on one thread of events from the historical tale about the events of the 3 May Constitution: the actions of its opponents, the drama of national treason. His goal is to focus attention no longer on the sagacious elites, but rather on the treacherous oligarchy. The topos of “endangered democracy” extracted from the story of the 3 May Constitution in the 2009 speech serves, primarily, to help interpret the contemporary state of events: “Jak twierdzili: w imię demokracji [...] została obalona konstytucja, która [...] była uwieńczeniem dzieła naprawy naszego państwa,” ‘According to their claims: in the name of democracy [...] the constitution was overturned, that constitution which [...] was the crowning achievement of the efforts undertaken to repair our state.’

In this discourse, attention is focused on the process of communicating and on the possible divergence of actual intentions in communication, on the content of the message and on the perceived meanings. The topos of “oligarchy” and the struggle against it give the discourse associated with 3 May a political character: it relates to a fight for true democracy, an essential requirement of which is adequate knowledge about the present and the past. This discourse never openly discusses the topic of the communist past. It only occasionally alludes to that period as “the bad times.” In contrast, frequent references are made to social solidarity. Describing privileges (and their defense by oligarchy two centuries ago) with the help of these images of past social relations, President Kaczyński characterizes the contemporary situation of the Polish society, deconstructing the topos of “success” which dominated in the rhetoric of his predecessor.

Repair, renewal or curing the Polish state is in this discourse not merely an autotelic aim of home politics, but also has a European dimension. The European angle of the narrative referring to the Constitution of 3 May, the fact that it was the beginning of European constitutionalism and the then-valid political model of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, serves to help interpret the contemporary situation. It permits formulating the modern international mission of the Polish state, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. The 2008 speech presents the Constitution of 3 May as a work of two nations – Polish and Lithuanian,

and in truth others as well – which together constituted the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth:

Znów mamy do czynienia z sytuacją, w której solidarność Polski i Litwy, solidarność Polski i innych narodów bałtyckich i solidarność Polski z narodami, które leżą na południowy wschód od Polski jest wielką wartością.

Once again we must deal with a situation in which the solidarity of Poland and Lithuania, the solidarity of Poland with other Baltic countries, as well as the solidarity of Poland with nations situated to the southeast of Poland is of great value.

Thus, events which took place in the eighteenth century – even bearing in mind that the analogy concerns a quite distant time – supply a script for interpreting contemporary international relations in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe. The speech uses a foreign intervention in 1792, which supported opponents of the Constitution of 3 May (under the pretext of defending democracy in the form of the Polish *demokracja szlachecka*, ‘democracy of the nobility’), to allude to the contemporary situation in Georgia.

The topos of “constitutionalism” appears in all three presidential discourses. If the first discourse portrayed a need for a new constitution, and the second one did likewise, only to subsequently praise the Constitution of the Republic of Poland adopted in 1997, President Kaczyński’s speeches mention the need for changes and improvement. Simultaneously, they emphasize – as in 2009 – respect for the existing constitution. “Konstytucje można naprawiać, zmieniać, ulepszać, ale dzisiaj stoi ona ponad wszystkimi różnymi źródłami prawa, powtarzam, tak jak została zapisana,” ‘Constitutions may be amended, changed, improved, but today it [the existing constitution] stands above all the various sources of law, I repeat – just as it has been drawn up.’

The presidential discourses analyzed here are almost exclusively limited to secular meanings and values. They lack religious content, even though 3 May has a long tradition as a church holiday. The ecclesial discourse associated with 3 May is different in this aspect – here religious, national and civic topics intermingle.

3. The spirituality of the nation: Ecclesial 3 May discourse

The ecclesial discourse, structured in a completely different sphere of symbolic imagination, is marked by the discernment of inner-worldliness and other-worldliness. Thus, the structure of this discourse focuses on the visible and the invisible worlds, the sacred sphere that exists beyond the profane reality (Weber 2004: 81–100; Schluchter 1990: 249). The religious symbolic system constitutes a spiritual

dimension in the experience of a suprarality (Wuthnow 2001). Consequently, the rhetorical categories of the dramatistic pentad are shaped in a unique fashion, since here we are dealing with the action of a divine factor and the dramaturgy of redemption which transcends historical time.

The homiletic rhetoric largely employs a language of metaphors, not just metonymies and analogies. Sermons delivered on the occasion of the church holiday of 3 May, both before and after the transformation, are characterized by a marked persistence of symbolic forms of expression, created by the late Primate Stefan Wyszyński (1901–1981) and condensed within the “Millennium Act,” announced in 1966 on the thousandth anniversary of the Christianization of Poland. A few months before becoming pope, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła summed up and repeated this paradigm of symbolic actions in his sermon in the sanctuary at Jasna Góra on 3 May 1978 (Wojtyła 1979: 327–335). He distinctly explicated the meaning of this symbolism and simultaneously consolidated it as the “Akt oddania Polski w macierzyńską niewolę Maryi za wolność Kościoła w świecie i w Polsce,” ‘Act of surrendering Poland into the motherly servitude of Mary in return for the freedom of the Church in the world and in Poland.’ Explaining the paradoxical connection between freedom and servitude, Cardinal Wojtyła said: “Najpełniejszą wolnością jest ta, która płynie z najpełniejszego oddania się Bogu. Człowiek wolny to jest człowiek bez reszty oddany Bogu [...] Tak jak Maryja Służebnica Pańska,” ‘The fullest freedom is that which comes from the fullest devotion to God. A free man is a man completely devoted to God [...] Just like Mary, Servant of God.’

This teaching simultaneously shows the universal and the national meaning of the holiday’s symbolism. The message is directed concurrently at the person and at the community, both in the universal and in the local sense, because the addressee is both humanity and the nation: “Przez serce każdego człowieka idą niejako wszyscy ludzie, nikt nie jest sam [...]. Możemy też powiedzieć, że przez serce jednego Polaka przechodzi cały naród,” ‘In a way, all people walk through the heart of every man, nobody is alone [...]. We can also say that the entire nation walks through the heart of a single Pole.’

The discourse of the sermons from Jasna Góra binds together the identity of the person with the identity of the community, and religious identity with national identity. The latter two identities intermingle:

Żyjemy całym dziedzictwem, któremu na imię Ojczyzna, któremu na imię naród. I żyjemy jako chrześcijanie, tym naszym, polskim dziedzictwem, tym naszym polskim Millennium, tym naszym polskim chrześcijaństwem. Takie jest prawo rzeczywistości.

We live with our entire heritage, the name of which is Homeland, the name of which is nation. And we live as Christians, with our Polish heritage, with our Polish Millennium, with our Polish Christianity. This is the law of reality.

Noteworthy here is that Cardinal Wojtyła represented religious identity by a more general category than Catholicism – Christianity. This representation differs from the widespread stereotype of the “Catholic Pole.” Religious symbolism, with its coincidence of oppositions that overcomes antinomies, especially the antinomy of death and life, lends a spiritual dimension to identity, both individual and collective. The theological foundations of this holiday, belonging to the cult of the Virgin Mary, can be traced to the Gospel (John 19:26–27), in other words, to a belief in redemption, which is simultaneously a rebirth (hence the expression “confiding ourselves to the motherly care of Mary”). This holiday, which commemorates an occurrence on Calvary (Jesus’s words to Mary and to the disciple John standing by the cross) and thus an occurrence in the history of redemption, is simultaneously a holiday of the Polish nation’s memory as a Christian nation’s memory. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican secretary of state, succinctly and accurately characterized this holiday in a 2009 sermon, recalling Cardinal Wojtyła’s speech delivered in 1978: “Ta ewangeliczna scena została wybrana na Uroczystość Królowej Polski, święto Matki, która w doświadczeniach, przez jakie przeszedł Wasz naród, nigdy Was nie opuściła,” ‘This gospel scene has been chosen for the Feast of the Queen of Poland, a holiday of the Mother who, during all the hardships your nation has gone through, has never deserted you’ (Bertone 2009). Thus, this holiday, with its specific spirituality centered around the Virgin Mary, represents the Polish national identity, reinforced by religious culture. As we can see from the analyzed sermons, this discourse takes place both on the level of the symbolic language and on the level of metalanguage when it refers to symbols: “Królowa i Matka z Jasnej Góry stała się symbolem narodowej wolności i uczuć religijnych Polaków,” ‘The Queen and Mother from Jasna Góra has become a symbol of national freedom and of the religious feelings of Poles’ (Bertone 2009). Cardinal Bertone uses metaphors when speaking about the sanctuary: “the Polish Nazareth,” “the Polish Cana,” “the Polish Calvary.” These metaphors can easily be translated into narratives interpreting collective past experiences. The mystical meaning of the cross is conferred on the national experience: “To sanktuarium jest też ‘polską Kalwarią,’ gdzie pod krzyżem Chrystusa i pod krzyżem historii Polaków jest zawsze obecna Maryja,” ‘This sanctuary is also the “Polish Calvary,” where by the cross of Christ, as well as by the cross of the history of Poles, the Virgin Mary is forever present’ (Bertone 2009). He also paid tribute to the work of Cardinal Wyszyński and Cardinal Wojtyła which, thanks to the pontificate of the latter as John Paul II, became “dziedzictwem Kościoła powszechnego,” ‘a heritage of the universal Church.’ The speech constructs a perspective of the continuing existence of Christianity and a millennial perspective of Polish history, as well as of the Polish nation’s future.

This church holiday, established in 1924 by Pope Pius XI on the day commemorating the Constitution of 3 May, transcends historical time as a religious holiday, but simultaneously lends a spiritual dimension to the Polish nation's past, bringing this past into the dimension of the history of redemption. Therefore, sermons constantly carry memories of the Constitution of 3 May, an achievement which was, as Cardinal Wojtyła repeated in 1978: "początkiem nowego dążenia do niepodległości, z której naród polski nigdy nie zrezygnował," 'the beginning of a new drive towards independence, which the Polish nation never forsook' (Wojtyła 1979:327).

The duality of this holiday is clearly articulated and emphasized. In the words of Cardinal Wojtyła in 1978: "przybywamy więc tutaj prowadzeni podwójną motywacją. Zresztą ta dwoistość motywacji zawiera się w samym tytule Bogarodzicy, który nas tutaj dzisiaj sprowadza – Maryi, Królowej Polski," 'we thus arrive here led by a dual motivation. Moreover, that duality of motivation is contained in the very title of the Mother of God which brings us here today – Mary, Queen of Poland' (Wojtyła 1979:327).

In 1991, this duality was suggestively depicted by Primate Józef Glemp:

3 maja w kalendarzu naszych świąt to święto wyjątkowe. Przepojone jest ono wartościami religijnymi i narodowymi. Nie potrafimy ich dobrze rozgraniczyć. Z jednej strony kierujemy nasze uczucia ku Matce Najświętszej, wyznając wiarę i zaufanie w Jej opiekę, a jednocześnie kierujemy wzrok na Orła Białego, widząc w nim wartość naszej narodowej egzystencji, naszych zmagania, walki, cierpień i zwycięstwa. I te wartości – religijne i narodowe, nadprzyrodzone i ziemskie, nie tylko są obecne, ale scalają się w polskiej duszy.

In our calendar of holidays, 3 May is unique. This holiday is saturated with religious and national values. We cannot clearly differentiate them. On one hand, we direct our feelings towards Our Lady, having faith and trust in Her care, but simultaneously we gaze at the White Eagle [emblem of Poland], which to us embodies the value of our national existence, our struggles, our fighting, sufferings, and victory. (Glemp 2004: 229)

The Feast of Our Lady, Queen of Poland, unlike the National Holiday of May Third, continued to be celebrated under communist rule. Hence the civic significance of this holiday's symbolism was also transmitted unceasingly, closely connected with its religious content, creating an image of the national community where, as expressed by Cardinal Glemp in 1985, "identyczność narodowa i identyczność wiary," 'national sameness and sameness of faith' remain tightly intertwined (Glemp 2004:88).

4. Conclusion

The power of the 3 May Holiday's symbolism stems from its long tradition. It is the oldest of Polish public holidays, representing the sovereignty of the state, constitutionalism, and national identity. In the symbolic politics of systemic transformation, the holiday was reinstated after the foundational symbol of the Second Republic, *Narodowe Święto Niepodległości* (National Holiday of Independence) celebrated on 11 November, was reintroduced by the communists on 15 February 1989. The symbolism of 3 May fuses the secular and the sacred. This is reflected in the state and ecclesial discourses associated with this double holiday. The discourses, secular (in Warsaw) and religious (at Jasna Góra sanctuary), are differentiated from one another in terms of spatial location and belong to separate institutional areas of the public sphere, in accordance with the principle that the state and the Church should remain autonomous. However, in the temporal dimension they coexist, underscoring the dual character of 3 May, which is simultaneously a national holiday and a church holiday. The state discourse is free of religious content, whereas in the ecclesial discourse, a central role is played by the sacral symbolic universum, into which the symbolism of the national community fits by means of its identification with the community of faith. In this way, the spiritual dimension of the double holiday of 3 May becomes its distinctive feature and a significant trait of Polish national culture. The 3 May holiday is a symbol of the national identity in the civic sense, and the church holiday symbolizes the nation's cultural identity, wherein Christianity has always been a constitutive factor.⁹ The conceptual opposition between the nation in a cultural sense and the nation in a civic sense turns out to be non-applicable in the case of Poland, where collective identity is articulated in both ways. These discourses show the complex symbolic construction of the Polish national identity, which lacks primordial ethno-symbolic depictions of kinship, race, and territory.

The strength of the symbolism associated with the 3 May Holiday has undergone trials, including the rule of the communist regime, and has emerged unshaken. The symbolism of the 3 May Constitution has been a source of flexible interpretations on the threshold of the systemic transformation and in rhetorical strategies of successive presidents. The ecclesiastical discourse from that period reproduces the fundamental rhetorical pattern of national drama. So far, the persistent use of this symbolism signals its lasting presence in the Polish public sphere, with continuing autonomy of the civic and religious spheres, but with no immediate possibility of breaking their subtle connection.

9. For a comparative perspective, see Thorsen (2000).

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CHAPTER 4

“Dan skuplji vijeka,” ‘A day more precious than a century’

Constructing Montenegrin identity by commemorating Independence Day

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This chapter describes how one version of Montenegrin identity was constructed in the Montenegrin newspaper *Pobjeda online* (Victory online). This construction was analyzed in connection with commemorations of the Montenegrin *Dan nezavisnosti* (Independence Day), 21 May, from 2006 to 2009. The elements analyzed within a social semiotic approach are layout, photographs, verbal text, and discourse models. The results of the analysis suggest that Montenegrin identity was constructed as a continuation of independence achieved in the past, and then unwillingly interrupted. The results indicate, moreover, that identity was also constructed as having been achieved through conflict with both internal and external enemies, and through concepts like independence, democracy, modernity, and European values.

Keywords: Montenegro, *Pobjeda online*, Montenegrin identity, Milo Đukanović, front pages, discourse models, social semiotics

1. Introduction

This chapter shows how one version of Montenegrin identity was discursively constructed in the newspaper *Pobjeda online* (Victory online). This construction was analyzed in connection with the commemoration of the Montenegrin *Dan nezavisnosti* (Independence Day), 21 May, from 2006 to 2009. Two important areas of social life are therefore covered, politics and the media, as is their connection with language. Both political and media discourses contribute to building identities and relations through the construction of, for example, closeness