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## Pro-pornographic Sex Education as an Ailment of the Polish Republic<sup>1</sup>: an Analysis of the Press Discourse of “Gazeta Polska”

This paper provides an analysis of selected elements of the press discourse of the “Gazeta Polska” weekly. It is demonstrative and concerns solely articles related to the so-called “gender ideology”.

Using Alvin Toffler’s ideology (1996), I can say that my interests have been focused on articles published in the mouthpiece of the so-called second-wave ideology (i.e. “Gazeta Polska”). The beginning of the third millennium is the time of a clash between supporters of two subsequent waves of ideology. On one side, there are representatives of the second wave together with the idea of a national state, which through a number of institutions (starting with school and ending with the army) provides conditions facilitating the development of the basic unit, i.e. the traditionally-understood family. Here, social relations are controlled not only by the legislator, but also traditionally-understood morality. On the other side, we can see the third wave approaching with its new idea of an open European society, in which the free flow of information replaces the traditional sources of knowledge and authorities. The axiology of the new society is based on entirely new foundations.

Publications of “Gazeta Polska” provide a testimony to the clash of these two systems. An analysis of selected articles will allow not only a determination of the used discourse strategies, but also a reconstruction of the vision of the society promoted by the weekly “on the advent of the apocalypse”.

### “Gazeta Polska”

This weekly has functioned in the Polish market since 1993, with Tomasz Sakiewicz as the editor-in-chief since 2005. The programme policy of the weekly clearly corresponds to the political programme of the main opposition party – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Law and Justice]. As one may read on the website of the “Gazeta Polska” Clubs, this policy is expressed through:

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<sup>1</sup> The title refers to *The Eight Sermons Before the Sejm* [Parliament] by Piotr Skarga, a Polish Jesuit, published in 1597 and discussing the major ailments of the Polish Republic.

Care for the national interest, sovereignty of the state, and the promotion of patriotism; construction of the state and society on the basis of traditional values originating from Christian culture; opposition against all forms of totalitarianism in public life, in particular communism and fascism; active fight against political censorship; promotion of behaviours fostering the development of free debate (“Gazeta Polska” Clubs Card).

The thus-formulated mission (this word seems to be the most appropriate here) determines the persuasive nature of the magazine. There is no mention of the provision of information. This (perhaps excessively passive) activity vanishes behind the screen of actions that are to change the status quo. The editors promote, build, oppose, and fight actively.

The Smolensk disaster was a breaking point for the magazine, as was its editors’ involvement in the debate on the form of the commemoration of its victims. In July 2010, the circulation was 88,000, and in September it rose to 110,800 copies. In March 2012, the circulation was 139,000. However, latest analyses show a decline of the popularity of the weekly. In 2013, the average single circulation was 134,832, while the average number of sales was 46,840 copies. In 2014, the respective data were 117,985 (circulation), and 36,177 (sales) ([wirtualnemedia.pl](http://wirtualnemedia.pl)).

The reasons behind this state of affairs may include an enlargement of the offer of publications addressed to the same group of recipients (2013 saw the establishment of the “Do Rzeczy” weekly, and “W Sieci” was established in 2012). On the other hand, we may presume that the previous formula of the magazine, fuelled by the aforementioned Smolensk disaster, reached its limits.

Being a conservative, politically engaged magazine (some of the editors include politicians from the Law and Justice party), “Gazeta Polska” mainly focuses on the critique of the currently ruling authority. Poland has been gradually losing its independence to become a “condominium” (also the name of a regular column). On the one hand, the decisive impact is attributed to Russia, and on the other – to the demoralized West, led by the European Union. According to the weekly, the negative impact, in particular of the latter, is especially prominent in the field of social and moral norms, which are increasingly discussed by the magazine, gradually becoming its *idée fixe*.

## Counter-revolution or death

The evil, just like in the times of the Polish Baroque, affects the society and originates from the West. The ailment Poland suffers from is now called the “gender ideology”, while the “Pro-pornographic sex education” featured in the title (Paliwoda 2011) is both an etiological factor and its symptom.

It was as early as in 2011 that Tomasz Terlikowski, noticing the demoralisation of the Western society, warned the readers of “Gazeta Polska”: *Counter-revolution or death!*

They want to legalise incest in Switzerland, and polygamy in Canada, and homosexual relations have been “equalised” in many countries. Let us not live under an illusion that this is going to be the last word of sexual revolutionists. To stop them, we need

more indignation. We need counter-revolution. [...] We are still before debates on the "equalisation" of certain forms of paedophilia, zoophilia, dendrophilia, etc. They will arrive here – and sooner rather than later [...] (Terlikowski 2011)

In the period under analysis, i.e. from 1 January 2013 until 10 April 2014, the magazine published more than 50 texts relating to issues connected with the so-called gender ideology. To say that they were polemical would definitely be too gentle. However, without any doubt their overall expression fits the phrase "moral panic".

Every month there is at least one text in which the authors express their attitude to the topic under analysis. Taking into account the target of the magazine, we need to reflect on the purposefulness of such a high concentration. The editors of the weekly in question are very careful to avoid any logical argumentation that could convince the readers or strengthen their beliefs. Mr Terlikowski is a specific exception here, as he consistently discusses selected issues, supplementing them with the official doctrine of the Church. However, it is not his goal, either, to prove any truths, because these truths, according to the authors, are obvious and result from the referred-to categories of natural law, Christian principles or simply from common sense. Poland faces a moral havoc. Like Tyrtaeus's poetry, the texts published by "Gazeta Polska" are to encourage rebellion and fighting.

### An ailment to be ashamed of

In this war – to continue the classical rhetoric – the notion of "gender" fulfils the function of a topos. Very often journalistic commentaries take the form of a single- or two-sentence long inserts placed between the readers' statements devoted to some other topic. In such cases, it is the alleged indignation of the readers' which becomes the connecting element for the contents, and journalists become the readers' advocates. The *vox populi*, marked for example by using personal pronouns in the first person plural, expresses fears related to the dramatic condition of the Polish state. Gender complements this topic – it is a ready argument activating primarily emotions. The ideology described in the weekly appears to be a plague, and, similarly to other diseases attacking broadly-understood intimacy, it has come from the West (let us only mention the etymology of the word "franca" [Polish for "French disease" or syphilis]. Interestingly, as such it is not only alien to us, but also anti-Polish.

### Genderism is non-patriotic

It is an opening of the road to depriving our social reality of its rooting in tradition and values building the national community, as well as the will to direct our country towards being a society of ruling moral relativism and hedonistic life without any ideals (Łebkowski 2013).

Journalists do not need any arguments, as gender is like biological warfare used against Poles. It initially attacked the healthy tissue, and now permeates

the body further, poisoning the nation's soul. The attack is aimed at the existing healthy social cells and young tissue (schoolchildren).

It is hard not to be under an impression that the purpose of the pushy promotion of the leader of transsexuals – an MP from the party Ruch Palikota – is exactly the same as the one Satanist Nergal was the subject of at some point. It is about making Poles get used to the most radical negation of the universally shared value system (Gójska-Hejke 2013a).

The polarisation of attitudes is an indispensable element of this rhetoric. In line with the principle: “who is not with us is against us”, all intermediate forms are impossible. Here, it is worth turning attention to an apparently unclear construction of the other extreme. The journalists do not say who leads the country towards moral relativism, who makes transsexuals trendy, who promotes a Satanist. It is not us – the readers of “Gazeta Polska” i.e. the peoples. “They” are external (models from Western Europe), “they” are a part of the society (not the nation) (Kozielski 2011, pp. 29–48), but almost all the institutions of authority and media are subordinate to them. There are no mentions of the concrete officials. Actions, although they are conducted on a mass scale and lead to social changes at all levels, resemble a conspiracy – the real goal is to weaken the country.

[...] Today's school (at least in the decisive majority) withdrew from childrearing, and limited its activity to the provision of care. This absolutely fundamental change of an attitude to the pupils is an excellent ground for gender revolution. [...] Fighting for the patriotic school is fighting for a strong Poland (Gójska-Hejke 2013b).

Sexual revolution turns out to be a revolt against patriotic values. A false correlation allows to justify objection. As if this was not enough, against the opinion promoted in the so-called progressive media, it turns out to be a form of discrimination. In his article *Tolerancyjna Polska* [Tolerant Poland], Filip Rdesiński in a slightly convoluted way uses *retorsio argumenti*, trying to demonstrate that the equalisation of sexual minority rights is an assassination of the Polish tolerance.

Poland treats homosexuals just like other citizens. She has not fell victim to the fashion of calling the discrimination of the majority by the minority “tolerance”. [...] making the family equal to homosexual relations creates such discrimination. Let us not allow it and let us defend the tolerant Poland (Rdesiński 2013).

### Who “they” are

The gender ideology, similarly to the aforementioned French disease, is one of the consequences of progress. A “progress” in quotation marks, whose promoters, also called leftists, “Gazeta Polska” portrays as resembling the Stalinist promoters of communism, to the point of confusion. And a certain ambivalence can be spotted here – on the one hand, there is danger and the war rhetoric, while on the other – we have got sarcasm and the sense of absurdity in relation to the deficient ad-

versary – “sodomites”, “masturbation minister”, or “non-fondled and oftentimes utterly ugly hags”. However, the editors argue that the conflict is global and poses a threat to millions of beings.

One of the greatest dangers to the future of the world is – as warns Pope Benedict XVI – the gender ideology. Its acceptance is tantamount to the end of the family, marriage, and social life. And although the ideology has no chance to win (as the reality is stronger than it is), its testing will claim millions of victims, just like the testing of Communism did (Terlikowski 2013).

The aforementioned ambivalence is expressed in the titles of articles discussing gender ideology.

In 2013, they were: *Złodzieje dzieci* [Thieves of Children]; *Myslałam, że pęknę ze śmiechu* [I Thought I Would Burst Out Laughing]; *Rewolucjoniści gotowi do walki z narkofobią* [Revolutionists Ready to Fight Narcophobia]; *Tęczowa tolerancja* [Rainbow Tolerance]; *Szmatą być nie jest już wstyd* [It Is No Longer a Shame to Be a Slut]; *Homokultura atakuje dzieci* [Homoculture Attacks Children]; *Europa budzi się z lewackiego letargu* [Europe Wakes up From Leftist Lethargy]; *Ma być głupio, goło, ale wesolo* [Let’s Be Stupid, Naked, and Jolly]; *Uczmy się od Cristeros* [Let us Learn from Cristeros]; *Pętla na szyi konserwatystów* [A Nook Round the Neck of Conservatives]; *Świat po upadku bomby obyczajowej* [The World After the Explosion of the Moral Bomb]; *Czy możliwy jest konsensus w sprawach oświaty* [Is Consensus Concerning Education Possible?]; *Zieloni zboczeńcy* [Green Perverts]; *Perwersyjny świat odwróconych pojęć* [Perverse World of Turned Values]; *Tolerancyjna Polska* [Tolerant Poland]; *Uczniowie w roli transseksualistów* [Pupils in the Role of Transsexuals]; *Cała prawda o życiu gejów* [The Whole Truth about Gay Life]; *Ministra od masturbacji* [Masturbation Minister]; *Anal, oral i vaginal w liceum* [Anal, Oral, and Vaginal in the Upper Secondary School]; *Czas na naszą cristiadę* [Time for Our Cristiada]; *Dziennikarze pedofile* [Journalists Paedophiles]; *Przedszkole zrobi Ci dziecko na tęczowo* [Kindergarten Will Make Your Child Rainbow-Coloured]; *Gdy chłopiec chce być dziewczynką* [When a Boy Wants to Be a Girl]; *Homoherezja dzieli Kościół* [Homoheresy Divides the Church]; *Teraz czas na zoofilię* [Time for Zoophilia]; *Wybierz sobie płeć – masz kwadrans na zastanowienie* [Choose Your Gender – You Have a Quarter of an Hour to Think]; *Platforma na rozdrożu między kościołem i burdelem* [Platform at the Crossroads between Church and Brothel]; *Cóż za niewiasta* [What a Woman]; *Kłapa lewicowej krucjaty Tuska* [Failure of Tusk’s Leftist Crusade]; *Poligamia na sztandary* [Polygamy to the Flags]; *Czasy ostatecznie ostateczne* [Ultimately Ultimate Times]; *Wstyd nie jest trendy* [Shame is Not Trendy]; *Niebezpieczne związki* [Dangerous Liaisons]; *Grodzka jak Nergal* [Grodzka Like Nergal]; *Homo małżeństwa – arogancja brytyjskiego rządu* [Same-sex Marriages – the Arrogance of the British Government]; *Ideologia gender jest jak marksizm* [Gender Ideology is Like Marxism].

In 2014 (until 10.01.2014), they included: *Saturnalia 2014* [Saturnalia 2014]; *Homoszczęście raportowane i faktyczne* [Reported and Actual Homohappiness]; *List do genderystek, gejów i tęczowego towarzystwa* [A Letter to Female Genderists, Gays, and the Rainbow Gang]; *Polacy kontra gender* [Poles vs Gender]; *Transrewolucja nadchodzi*

[A Trans-revolution Is Coming]; *Dzieci potrzebują miłości, nie seksu* [Children Need Love, Not Sex]; *Warto interweniować* [It is Worth Intervening]; *Dzieci jak z taśmy produkcyjnej* [Children Like from a Production Line]; *Homodyktatura nabiera rozpędu* [Homodictatorship Gains Momentum]; *Postępowe kola czyli kwadraty* [Progressive Circles or Squares]; *Genderowa rewolucja i pożyteczni idioci* [Gender Revolution and Useful Idiots], *Żyjemy w kulturze upadłej* [We Live in Fallen Culture], *Dominikanin, gender i rozmywanie doktryny* [A Dominican Monk, Gender, and the Dilution of the Doctrine]; *Dyktatura gender* [Gender Dictatorship]; *Resortowe feministki* [Ministerial Feminists]; *Genderman; Daddy, papa and me; Tampon wam w ucho* [Tampon up Yours]; *Młot na feministki* [A Hammer for Feminists].

## The battle for language

The above review allows to some extent to understand the discourse strategies used by the editorial team. Going back to the already quoted article by Tomasz Terlikowski (2013) entitled *Ideologia Gender jest jak marksizm* [Gender Ideology is Like Marxism], it is worth focusing on a semantic aspect of its content. This is because the journalist consciously manipulates the meaning of words, ideologically changing both their emotional feel, and the semantic field – sometimes this takes place even in contrast to the original meaning.

[...] abortion (also after-birth abortion, which until recently was simply referred to as murder) became the woman's right to become free of the unwanted offspring; and it is possible to be sued for questioning whether a guy stuffed with female hormones and (not always) castrated can become a woman... [...] And this is why it would be worthwhile to [...] start to fight genderism. We need anti-genderism now just like several dozen years ago we needed anti-communism (Terlikowski 2013).

What is particularly interesting here is the incorrect use of the word “genderism”. The essence lies in the play with words, or, to be more precise, the sounds of words such as genderism, Marxism, communism, ant-genderism, and anti-communism. The journalist, thus exposing the stylistic quality of otherness, simultaneously adds the issue to the category of hateful notions. The mastery of using linguistic eristic strategies is truly impressive. Mister Terlikowski readily resorts to hyperbolism and sarcasm.

Another journalist of “Gazeta Polska”, Tomasz Łysiak, is sorry about some changed linguistic customs:

The equally “obsolete” pederasty is slowly becoming a word of the past. The change of linguistic awareness achieved after much battling by the corrupt global lobby now dictates us to call sodomites gays! (Łysiak)

And again there is a mention of the not entirely identified “them” in the form of a corrupt global lobby. It is not significant who its members are. What is important is the fact that they are not Polish.

Another favourite discourse strategy is an excessive use of neologisms created on the basis of word formations – examples include compound words such as “trans-revolution”, “genderwoman” and “genderman”. The distinguishing sign of Terlikowski’s articles are neologisms created as compounds including the morpheme “homo-”: “homomarriages”, “homolobby”, “homorelation”, “homohappiness”, “homoactivist”, “homodicatorship”, and “homoterrorists”.

The author of the above clusters consciously multiplies and displays them in titles and sub-headings, because he believes that we are in the middle of a war of words. The addition of the prefix “homo” tears out the added word from its standard use, changing the specific object into a deficient, illegal being. Homohappiness is not only quasi-happiness, it is also a parody of happiness.

Mister Terlikowski writes (2014a): “The language war is of key importance in the debate concerning the future of Europe”. The article entitled *Transrewolucja nadchodzi* [A Transrevolution is Coming] has five sub-headings. They are subsequently: *Lingwistyczna rewolucja* [Linguistic Revolution]; *Eunuch nie jest kobietą!* [A Eunuch is Not a Woman!]; *Sztuczne pochwy, penisy na pompkę* [Artificial Vaginas, Pumped Penises]; *Coraz młodszy pacjenci* [Ever Younger Patients]; *A to tylko początek* [And This is Just a Beginning] (Terlikowski 2014a).

What is clearly visible here is the rhetorical conception showing the total nature of changes – from linguistic customs to the children’s gender reassignment. This sense is intensified by the selection of emotionally-marked words: strong, shocking images are contrasted with the care for the youngest ones. The context always includes the category of the so-called natural law, which the editorial team of the weekly identifies with the teaching of the Church.

An attempt at or even an objection to stepping beyond this established order produces aggression. The questioning of gender roles must end with sarcasm – the word “eunuch” closes the discussion. And at the same time, aggression must be demonstrated on the other side, at least theoretically.

## Rainbow Armies

In February 2013, “Gazeta Polska” published an article entitled *Szafa pełna trupów* [A Wardrobe Full of Skeletons]. While criticizing the PO [Civic Platform] government, Mister Ziemkiewicz wrote: “how the homoleftist gang, attacking professor Zawadzki, refreshes the tradition of their predecessors from ZMP [the communist Union of Polish Youth], who in the Stalinist times hounded “reactionary elements” out of their professorship, enjoying the blessing of the centrist media – just like today” (Ziemkiewicz 2013).

Obviously, such a construction of the text implies not only the alleged relations between leftist environments and the communist authority apparatus. The former, being successors of ZMP, become rhetorically co-responsible for the malpractices of their predecessors. This phraseology very clearly takes us to the field of battle. The already quoted Tomasz Łysiak writes in a similar spirit:

“Rainbow armies” and the “real Europeans” who support them, brought up on political correctness, started to call the public via the internet to boycott Ciechan beer and pour it out in front of cameras. The manufacturer himself was almost lynched with words. This is nothing else but masked aggression, a kind of virtual attack, which is to trample and destroy all the people who do not agree with perverts. This is a terror of political correctness (Łysiak 2014).

Terlikowski writes openly about homoterrorists and homodictatorship (Terlikowski 2014b). Symptoms of aggression are also enumerated by another journalist, Robert Tekieli:

A rainbow in Warsaw, a bearded man in a dress in Europe – these are not only tools of appropriation of the public space by moral revolutionists – this is an introduction to the intimidation of ordinary people by LGBT environments. This is serious. It is an onset of violence (Tekieli 2014).

A list of acts of violence allegedly committed by LGBT activists in Western Europe follows. The article ends with a provocative statement: “Homosexuals are straight about it: your children will be ours” (Tekieli 2014).

### It is no longer a shame to be a slut, i.e. feminism *ad personam*

The title of this sub-chapter refers to Krystyna Grzybowska’s column of November 2013. The author, using a provocative word with reference to protests against the justification of sexual violence against women, uses rough words to attack feminist circles. While the message of the protests was entirely omitted, the article set together the word “slut” with the activity of feminists – “non-fondled and oftentimes utterly ugly hags”, who “fight for their position and their grants generously paid by ‘elites’ of political correctness” (Grzybowska 2013a).

It is no longer a shame to be a slut, so the copycats of the top sluts earn using nakedness – their own, their daughters’ and their granddaughters’ (Grzybowska 2013a).

In December 2013, another column by the same author, entitled *Myslałam, że pęknie ze śmiechu* [I Thought I Would Burst Out Laughing] was published. Filled with poison, the text is also a blunt attack without any logical argumentation – just like its predecessor. The author assumed in advance that feminism fights *a priori* with the Church, promotes paedophilia, and is responsible for “trampling the moral norms contained in the Ten Commandments” and for “reducing women to the role of an instrument satisfying men’s sexual needs”.

Polish women will make do without the Congress of Women, a clique of cunning dames benefiting (also financially) from being feminists. They would do much better to take care of themselves, take a bath, and go to a hair-stylist, so as to make themselves resemble women – representatives of the fair sex (Grzybowska 2013b).



Travestying a quotation from the film *Sexmission* – the feminists are responsible for everything other than hailstorms, earthquakes, and whooping cough.

In Poland, the dangerous transformations are caused by, as aforementioned, the heirs of the communist regime. In January 2014, the main article was the text *Resortowe Feministki* [Ministerial Feminists] (Marosz 2014). It is yet another attack *ad personam*. This time, it was aimed at concrete activists of the feminist movement – their names were mentioned. Here, the anti-Polish origin of the gender ideology is to be proved by the origin of the activists, whose fathers were supposedly dignitaries during the times of the Polish People's Republic.

### The world is staring into an abyss

The above fragments of articles document one of the main journalistic directions taken by "Gazeta Polska". The world presented in the weekly is staring into an abyss. The authors consciously amplify the sense of danger. Poland has become the centre of a moral war, a war in which there are no ceasefires or compromises. Every campaign requires the appropriate means of rhetoric, but in this case it is not logical persuasion which counts. The fight with the disease threatening the nation allows all means, so moral panic is not only justified but also desirable here. No justification is necessary – the truth results from tradition and common sense. An eristic bent is fully admissible, taking into account that the adversary is contemptible. The authors use non-substantive arguments without any limitation. The range of their arguments includes arguments *ad personam*, *ad fidem*, *ad ridiculum* and *ad populum*.

Gender and feminism are ready-made labels – topoi which are to bring about associations with decay and moral corruption. They constitute one of the basic ideographs of the magazine and elements of its constitutive rhetoric. The category of an external enemy is indispensable for the existence of the weekly. The not entirely identified "global lobbies" and the "gender ideology" suit this role to a T.

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## Summary

### *Pro-pornographic Sex Education as an Ailment of the Polish Republic: an Analysis of the Press Discourse of “Gazeta Polska”*

The article explores gender discourses that circulate in the selected media in Poland and how this relates to the cultural sexual politics. It explores how feminism and sexual education are perceived and understood, what sexual politics are and why the idea of sexual discourses provides a useful analytical lens for looking at current debates around gender, equality and education in Poland.

## Keywords

gender, discourse, press, feminism, sexual education

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