

ANNA MARKOWSKA

AROUND 1948: THE "GENTLE REVOLUTION" AND ART HISTORY

REVOLUTION: PLAYING A GAME WITH THE AUTHORITIES OR EMBRACING AUTHORITARIANISM FOR THE SAKE OF SAFETY?

Is it possible to visualize the Polish revolution which began in the 1940s without referring to socialist realist pictures? After all, that revolution started earlier than the rule of the socialist realism, thus the imagery of the post-thaw (post-1955) period, closely connected with the *École de Paris*, Picasso, and the *informel* – a kind of mimicry which was supposed to show that nothing happened¹ – can be considered the iconography of the triumphant quasi-communist revolution in its local variety. The postwar Polish revolution was inseparably related to modernity which I define, following Walter J. Adamson, as cultural regeneration through searching for new values, and, following Anthony Giddens, as an idea of the world open to changes brought about by human intervention.² On the one hand, the postwar period was marked by the common effort to initiate reconstruction and regeneration, on the other, the impoverished and traumatized society accepted the model of the authoritari-

¹ I am referring here both to Andrzej Leder's book *Prześlona rewolucja*, and to Wojciech Włodarczyk's argument. In his essay "Pięć lat," Włodarczyk wrote about a rapidly growing split between culture and political experience when in the early 1950s art could enjoy a little more liberty while political repression increased. See *Zaraz po wojnie*, eds. J. Kordjak, A. Szewczyk. Warszawa 2015, pp. 33–34.

² W. L. Adamson, "Modernism and Fascism: The Politics of Culture in Italy, 1903–1922," *The American Historical Review* 1990, 95(2), p. 360; Ch. Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens. Making Sense of Modernity*, Cambridge 1998, p. 94. In general, Giddens connects modernity with the West, see chapter "Is Modernity a Western Project," in: idem: *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 174–176. Considering Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism as one of the dark aspects of modernism, he believes that the integration of political, military, and ideological power to such an extent was impossible before the rise of nation states (see Giddens, "Is Modernity a Western Project," p. 8).

an personality.³ Detlef Oesterreich warned that autocrats seduce by promising power and greatness,⁴ while Hannah Arendt stressed the correlation of war and revolution.⁵

Rolf Reichardt and Hubertus Kohle, analyzing the imagery of the French Revolution, wrote about the seismic structural upheaval which combined the revitalization of the traditional iconography by making the spectators realize that the old Christian patterns did not match the new revolutionary ideology, blurring the boundaries within the classic hierarchy of genres (historical, genre, landscape, and portrait painting), the politicization of artists, and the popularity of present day topics.⁶ In Poland also Holy Mary changed into a suffering Mother, and martyrs, no longer connected with the Catholic Church, still spilled their blood. We had our revolutionary kind of blasphemy, such as *Mother with her Killed Son* (1949) by Andrzej Wróblewski, who followed iconography of the Pieta and lament over the victims of the revolution, while Electra in the painting by Szczęśny Kowarski played her old/new part of watching the crimes committed for the sake of justice: it was already 1947 so it was probably patricide and fratricide made easy by the wartime violence, and not the war itself which was already over.

The “gentle revolution”⁷ developed its own persuasive and heterogeneous visual convention which suggested that the new, transformed motherland of-

³ See Th. Adorno, E. Frenkel-Bruswick et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York 1950.

⁴ Oesterreich argued that even though Kant, Hegel, and Marx were interested in this problem as well, the systematic study of voluntary obedience and submissiveness in both small and large groups were conducted in the 20th century. See D. Oesterreich, “Flight into Security: A New Approach and Measure of the Authoritarian Personality,” *Political Psychology* 2005, 26(2), pp. 275–297. The question of the so-called authoritarian personality has been discussed by the philosophers of the Frankfurt School (such as Adorno) and scientists from Stanford University. Even though there are many opinions in this respect, and they depend also on political views, the so-called authoritarian reaction is related to the individual’s inability to cope with difficult situations has been often connected with passivity, sticking to fixed norms, and the reluctance to accept innovations. The received authoritarian norms turn out to have much protective power, which is why people do not oppose illegitimate control. Specifying situations in which a person may become autonomous or develop an authoritarian personality and explaining authoritarian socialization, scholars often stress the importance of economic conditions.

⁵ See H. Arendt, *On Revolution*, New York 2006.

⁶ R. Reichardt, H. Kohle, *Visualising the Revolution. Politics and Pictorial Arts in Late Eighteenth-Century France*, trans. C. Attwood, London 2008, pp. 7–8 and 91.

⁷ A. Ostrowski, “Hugo Koliątaj i łagodna rewolucja 1791 r.,” *Kuźnica* 1945, 4–5, p. 11; J. Borejsza, “Rewolucja łagodna,” *Odrodzenie* 1945, 10–12, rpt. *Czas debat. Antologia kry-*

ferred enough room for everyone. A good example was the use of both religious and communist symbols at the meetings of Bolesław Bierut and Władysław Gomułka with the people. The new imagery at its best was shown at the Exhibition of the Regained Lands (in the West), where the avant-garde and the socialist realism were brought together. Another typical instance of the “gentle” approach was the so-called neoplastic room arranged by Władysław Strzemiński in the City Museum of Łódź, opened in April 1948, called by Piotr Graczyk an “extraterritorial embassy of utopia”⁸ and by Jakub Woynarowski a “chapel of hermetic modernism.” As Woynarowski wrote, it was an ideal model which perfectly expressed the “contradiction between the desire to fossilize artifacts and a genuine need to liberate creative energy” combined with a rebellion against the building’s architecture.⁹ Those two cases exemplify two different revolutionary strategies: within an old building in a historical style Strzemiński distinguished a separate ideal section which suggested necessary liberating cuts in the outdated structures, while Jerzy Hryniewiecki, the main designer of the Exhibition, created more penetrable boundaries. Hryniewiecki was more open to diversity, which resulted in a different mode of transferring patterns – Strzemiński’s interior, focused on form and the purely visual, was far from the plebeian idea of giving away souvenirs that the visitors took home, identifying abundance (instead of discipline, as in Łódź) with a new communist state.¹⁰ Studying the imagery of the Wrocław Exhibition, one may quickly realize that it did not promote a clash of two artistic doctrines: the socialist realism and modernism, as Piotr Piotrowski claimed not long ago.¹¹ In that context, the most unsuccessful was the communist propaganda of the third important show of 1948 – the Cracow Exhibition of Modern Art, organized by Tadeusz Kantor and Mieczysław Porębski, which favored the “individual experience of strangeness.”¹² One of the participating artists, Janina Kraupe, made the following comment: “Actually Kantor lives on the Moon and he hopes that the government will support a club of egoma-

tyki artystycznej z lat 1945–1954, vol. I, eds. A. Pietrasik, P. Słodkowski, Warszawa 2016, pp. 21–30.

⁸ P. Graczyk, “Sala Neoplastyczna w Łodzi,” *Kronos* 2015, 3 [MOBI file]: pp. 51–52.

⁹ J. Woynarowski, “Taksydermia,” *Kronos* 2015, 3, no pagination.

¹⁰ An affective interpretation of Strzemiński’s art has been proposed by Luiza Nader in her book *Afekt Strzemińskiego. “Teoria widzenia”. Rysunki wojenne, Pamięci przyjaciół – Żydów*, Warszawa 2018.

¹¹ See P. Piotrowski, *Globalne ujęcie sztuki Europy Wschodniej*, Poznań 2018.

¹² J. Bogucki, “Miejsce opuszczone przez dziecięcy, czyli sztuka majaczenia i dyscypliny,” *Odrodzenie* 1949, 5, rpt.: *W kręgu lat czterdziestych*, Part III, ed. J. Chrobak, Kraków 1991, p. 32.

niacs."¹³ At any rate, it was a grass root offer addressed to the authorities, with large groups of workers, soldiers, and the so-called masses, as well as clearly revolutionary rhetoric.¹⁴ Artists wanted changes and power: they wanted to teach about historical determinism, while Kantor's attempts to find artistic hegemony abroad were an obvious effect of his failure to overcome modernist individualism.

The symbol of the "gentle revolution" was Picasso, popularized in Poland not because he was an outstanding artist, but because he was a member of the French communist party.¹⁵ This proves that at least in the beginning the pragmatic managers of the revolution did not want to win thanks to purely visual forms: the widest range of the new revolutionary sensorium was presented in Wrocław, where there was much more than "pure" and "sophisticated" art.

Whoever wants to describe the Polish revolution, must use the relevant theories developed in France and Russia (USSR) carefully. This is necessary for at least two reasons: first, because of the coexistence of different strata – in the postwar Poland the local needs and postulates of regeneration were imposed on the imperial logic of the relentless "*perekovka*"¹⁶ (violent transformation), and second, because the basic terms and concepts related to both strata in Poland and the Soviet Union were understood differently, regardless of all the correspondences. A possible way out of at least some problems would be to avoid explanations referring to the received binary oppositions and replace the ethically engaged concepts of victims and persecutors with a more neutral concept of players. In the common field of *perekovka* and regeneration binary oppositions are out of the question, and what is more important, this field is just a fragment of the field of art right after the war that neither aspires to represent all of it, nor limits itself to what Maria Dąbrowska called in her *Przygody człowieka myślącego* [Adventures of a Thinking Human Being] "neotelimenism."¹⁷ Drawing an outline of a small common area (even if it turned out to be a trap) would make the revolution visible earlier,

¹³ Janina Kraupe's letter to Lila Krasicka of November 29, 1948, in: *I Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej pięćdziesiąt lat później*, ed. M. Świca, Kraków 1998, p. 200.

¹⁴ Probably by no accident, the Cracow Exhibition of Modern Art was opened during the unification congress of the communist and socialist parties. See *Zaraz po wojnie*, p. 39.

¹⁵ See "Oświadczenie Pabla Picassa," *Kuźnica* [Łódź], 1945, 1, p. 21. Picasso confessed: "I became a communist because communists are the bravest people in the Soviet Union, France, and my home country. I have never felt so free, never been so much myself as now, after joining the party."

¹⁶ This Russian noun derives from the verb "to forge" [*kovat'*].

¹⁷ A reference to Telimena, a character from Adam Mickiewicz's narrative poem *Pan Tadeusz* (1834). [M. W.]

already during the war and right after it, while the art historian operating in that area would become a participant-observer. I was inspired to propose this idea after I came across a study by Maciej Szymanowicz, who showed how the conservative Poznań pictorialists anticipated the Stalinist structures.¹⁸ The publications of Karolina Zychowicz and Szymon Kubiak prove the Western European importation of the socialist realism, leaving no doubt that the infiltration of communism and the implementation of the socialist realism did not come only from the East.¹⁹ The so-called “gentle revolution,” a stage so far neglected by art historians,²⁰ allowed many heterogeneous institutions and individuals to exist and work, so that, when the authorities took more radical steps, when the “indulgent” were replaced by hard liners inspired by the Soviet model, a large number of culture managers and art historians, from the anarchist left to the authoritarian and nationalist right, found positions in the new power structure and contributed to the reconstruction of the devastated country. What is more, all of them believed to have been the co-founders of that new structure through which the state decided to support financially different grass root initiatives. A moderate cultural program with strong national overtones, combined with convincing financial promises, attracted to the communist power structures not only the left. Thus, the “gentle revolution” turned out to be a truly Machiavellian move resulting in the dissemination of power, which made it easier to centralize it in due time. In my opinion, the received idea, still widespread in Poland, that the evil regime was visualized by the ugly socialist realism is childish. It is a dream of historical innocence and purity: evil made visible by magic can be simply rejected, e.g., isolated in the Kozłówka museum. The handy scapegoat created a mirage, cast a spell under which it was easier – and prettier – for us to live. After the so-called “thaw,” Picasso and the *École de Paris*, intensely present at the “gentle” stage, were allowed to return. The iconography of the revolution was associated only with the socialist realism connected to the USSR, even though it was

¹⁸ According to Szymanowicz, the idea of Polish homeland photography, derived from the *Heimatphotographie*, formulated before World War II and continued after 1945, did not take into account all the “inconvenient” aspects of the German program, “connected with the Nazi race theory.” M. Szymanowicz, *Zaburzona epoka. Polska fotografia artystyczna w latach 1945–1955*, Poznań 2016, p. 69. The founding of institutions by photographers, who were perhaps both pragmatists and authoritarian personalities formed by fear and anxiety, is definitely connected with the idea of economic basis as a condition of liberty.

¹⁹ See K. Zychowicz, *Paryska lewica w stalinowskiej Warszawie*, Warszawa 2014; Sz. P. Kubiak, *Daleko od Moskwy. Gérard Singer i sztuka zaangażowana*, Szczecin 2016.

²⁰ One of few exceptions is the exhibition in the Warsaw Zachęta gallery, *Zaraz po wojnie* (2015). See footnote 1 above.

the painting of the *École de Paris* which best expressed the victorious stage of the revolution, cynically blurring its Soviet inspiration. That strange mixture of helplessness, pragmatism, good intentions, and self-mystification became an ethical platform of the intelligentsia for many years to come. In fact, the argument of the aestheticization of the revolutionary experience corresponds with a general diagnosis of Donald Preziosi that art history is a product of the aestheticization of social life and satisfying social needs.²¹ As a result, however, no remedy for social engineering was developed, i.e., there was no thorough analysis of the passage from modernism to communism, even though historical models of such analysis were available: after World War I, since in Italy modernism paved the way for fascism. This comparison seems to make sense for what connects the two situations is the experience of war – according to Walter L. Adamson, the political situation brought about by the Great War was “revolutionary” in many respects, favoring the politicization of modernism and connecting it with regenerative violence.²²

Zarys dziejów polskiej historii sztuki [An Outline History of Polish Art History] by Adam Bochnak, published in 1948, listed few scholars interested in modern art. Among them there was, of course, Jan Bołoz Antoniewicz, about whom Bochnak wrote that “several months before his death, he spoke at the opening of the Formist exhibition with such an insight in the intentions of the adherents of expressionism and cubism that everyone was impressed by the acumen of that sixty four-year old connoisseur of the Renaissance.”²³ Bochnak argued that Polish art historians were actually right not to have made Bołoz Antoniewicz’s dream about a wider scope of their research come true, but concentrated “first of all on the history of art in Poland, vernacular or imported, seldom choosing topics that were not related to their homeland.” According to Bochnak, Bołoz Antoniewicz’s program proved unreal because Polish art historians “could not work without direct access to the object of study on site,” which would require much traveling and long sojourns abroad. Therefore, he explained, instead of the Lvov option, the Cracow option of Marian Sokołowski was adopted, i.e., studying the works of art available in Poland. “Sokołowski’s program passed the test of time and is still inspiring today,” concluded Bochnak, although he added that Sokołowski “had spent many years abroad,” but still, having returned, published a long study *Ruiny na Ostrowie Jeziora Lednicy* [Ruins of the Lednica Lake Island].

²¹ See D. Preziosi, *The Art of Art History. A Critical Anthology*, Oxford 2009, p. 495.

²² See W. L. Adamson, *Avant-garde Florence. From Modernism to Fascism*, Cambridge, MA, 1993, pp. 219–227.

²³ A. Bochnak, *Zarys dziejów polskiej historii sztuki*, Kraków 1948, p. 29.

Consequently, Bochnak decided that in 1948 the most urgent task of Polish art history was to finish an inventory of all historical monuments and only after that time would come to work on more comprehensive studies. As one of major problems of art history he mentioned the “problem of the uniqueness of our artistic production,” arguing that “only a comparative method,” stressing its relations with foreign art, was appropriate.²⁴ On the one hand, Bochnak pragmatically limited the scope of research, but on the other, taking into consideration obstacles in traveling and everyday hardships, he wanted art history students to acquire possibly the widest knowledge of European art. For instance, in the academic year 1947/1948 he lectured on the Flemish art of the Baroque.²⁵

THE ART HISTORIAN AND MASSIVE EXPROPRIATION: AMBIVALENCE IN THE VERY HEART OF THE ETHOS

In the programs of reconstruction and projects of reorganization of artistic life which were publicized right after the war the question of property was not mentioned. Jan Zachwatowicz, who wrote that the nation and its culture were one, and that since Poles “could not accept the ruin of their cultural monuments, we would rebuild them from scratch to leave to the next generation their form which, even if not authentic, would be accurate – as preserved in our memory and available in historical records,”²⁶ knew that his idea was probably not compatible with the law: “Legal protection is above all prohibitions which do not create, but regulate. It is then not by means of prohibitions, but with a positive, vital program that we will make the question of historical monuments crucial.”²⁷ Tadeusz Dobrowolski hoped that a new kind of human being would appear: “Museums must meet the needs of people shaped by the wrong norms of social life, culturally passive, and mentally lazy. The people must also show more initiative and make an effort to wake up from mental inertia.”²⁸ Those Promethean words, increasing the gap between the

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 62.

²⁵ See A. Bochnak, *Malarstwo flamandzkie XVII wieku: Rubens – Jordaens – Van Dyck: wykłady uniwersyteckie z r. 1947/48*, Kraków 1949.

²⁶ J. Zachwatowicz, “Program i zasady konserwacji zabytków,” *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury* 1946 (June), p. 48.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 50.

²⁸ T. Dobrowolski, “Zagadnienie muzealnictwa,” *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury* 1946 (December), 3–4(8), p. 162.

“space of experience and horizon of expectations,”²⁹ so characteristic of the modern mentality, were written only two years after the land reform which theoretically consisted in dividing landed property into smaller, mostly private farms, but in practice it meant also re-appropriation of movable property as well, since one state proprietor of the land and all economic resources made it easy to develop new visions. Zachwatowicz made his statement already after President Bolesław Bierut’s decree of October 26, 1945, which in its Paragraph One read as follows: “To ensure a rational reconstruction of the Capital and its development according to the needs of the Nation, in particular to use the land without delay and properly, all the land within the limits of the city of Warsaw becomes, on the day of the present decree’s issue, property of the community of the city of Warsaw.”³⁰

Consequently, even though the problem of the ownership of works of art is more general, after the revolution in Poland it acquired a specific character, which is why requires a separate analysis, taking into consideration also the question of continuity that dates back to the times before World War II. Many experts considered the prewar decree of the President of the Polish Republic of March 6, 1928, concerning preservation of historical monuments, no longer adequate,³¹ and they wondered how to open in regenerated Poland a museum housing European masterpieces “without big state spending or no state spending at all, and without violating the legal principles guaranteed by the Constitution,” which resulted in introducing “the obligation to show the works of the old masters to the public” after their obligatory registration.³² The freedom of will, understood as an opposition to the historically valid law, is impossible without a revolution. No doubt, building in Warsaw wide avenues instead of narrow streets which demanded respect for property rights, or the reconstruction of the Warsaw Old Town implied a factor of necessary and irresistible change. It was a way to restore justice, justified by the chances offered by the revolution. Zachwatowicz wrote: “In its restored majesty, the historical monument must become alive and perform a social role as a necessary element of a settlement, with its full appeal [to the public].”³³ The revolution-

²⁹ Reinhart Koselleck’s concepts of the *Erfahrungsraum* and the *Erwartungshorizont*, referred to by Habermas. See J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. F. G. Lawrence, Cambridge, MA, 1990, p. 12.

³⁰ *Dziennik Ustaw* 1945, no. 50, item 279.

³¹ The President’s decree allowed the state to expropriate the owners of land on which historical monuments were discovered, as well as owners of the monuments themselves.

³² H. Gotlib, „Projekt ustawy o przymusie wystawiania obrazów dawnych mistrzów,” *Głos Plastyków* 1932, 4, p. 50.

³³ Zachwatowicz, “Program i zasady konserwacji zabytków,” p. 48.

ary space of reconciliation as the old form and its new content related to everyday life (Zachwatowicz claimed that monuments must regain “everyday life in a carefully designed, proper architectural form”³⁴) was supposed to be quite different from the ceremonial and ostentatiously vertical, foreign form of the Soviet-built Palace of Culture [in Warsaw], cancelling all that was before. That space was based on the visual, on form, but it was a new form – a new function of the old form that could actually illustrate the change. The form made violence less painful since it made the new look familiar. The goal of revolutions – French, Russian (October), and Polish (in progress) – was a transformation of social relations, resulting in the rise of the new man (*homme nouveau*).

The scholarly and social neutralization of expropriation favored the new man’s birth: already in November 1944, on the Zamoyski’s estate in Kozłówka a museum was opened in the palace.³⁵ Another example was the evaluation of the Potocki’s collection, appropriated by the state in October 1946, after the security police found it hidden in a monastery.³⁶ Kazimierz Malinowski (1907–1977), then the custodian and deputy director of the National Museum in Warsaw, a graduate of the University of Poznań and soon, since 1948, director of the Wielkopolskie Museum which was to be renamed as the National Museum in Poznań,³⁷ who evaluated the Potocki’s collection of paintings, argued that it was not a result of some particular aesthetic needs, since a big set of family portraits shows that its major goal was to commemorate family members and thus record the “continuity of the family, so important in the past.”³⁸ In the same text, considering the nineteenth-century portraits, Malinowski claimed that because of its popularity the portrait painting never played an artistically important role, as the “history of art recorded only the names of the avant-garde artists.” He added that it was not the fault of the Potockis, however, “if they had been motivated not so much by the wish to com-

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ *Zaraz po wojnie*, p. 10.

³⁶ *Pokaz obrazów i dzieł sztuki ze zbiorów Potockich zabezpieczonych przez władze bezpieczeństwa przed wywozem za granicę* [exhibition catalog, November–December 1946], Muzeum Narodowe, Warszawa 1946. The authors of the catalog were: Kazimierz Malinowski (painting), Maria Mrozińska (miniatures), Marisa Suchodolska (prints), Stanisław Gebethner (decorative art), Józef Jodłowski and Stanisław Gebethner (historical relics and jewellery). In an annex to the catalog one could find information about the legal aspect of the “collection’s appropriation,” including not only the postwar decree of March 1, 1946, but also the prewar President’s decree of March 6, 1928.

³⁷ H. Kondziela, “Malinowski Kazimierz (1907–1977),” in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny Konserwatorów Zabytków*, fasc. 1, Poznań 2000, pp. 47–49.

³⁸ *Pokaz obrazów i dzieł sztuki ze zbiorów Potockich*, p. 3.

memorate their relatives, but rather by the need to possess a valuable painting collection, their portraits would have had eternal value and would not have been reduced after several decades to simple illustrations of the taste of the time.³⁹ One might say that having been asked by the security police for an opinion, an art historian, a scholar with some “exegetic and cryptographic”⁴⁰ experience, was able to demonstrate his independence even when he wrote in the catalog that the “Security Authorities were alert,” helping the nation preserve its treasures,⁴¹ although on the other hand the same “Authorities” were busy not only doing that kind of job. Such a rescue transaction was possible thanks to the support of the academia which neutralized or perhaps appreciated the presence of the works of art in the museum even when they were placed there by hook or by crook. The question of ownership was irrelevant to scholars who examined the development of a particular form and asked questions about the historical significance of a given item, since the work of art is a bearer of “specimen data” in a specific “interrogative field.”⁴² The modern idea of transferring a large number of artworks which, having lost their habitat, were placed under new conditions to educate citizens belongs both to the Revolution, and to the Academia with its “laboratories of knowledge,” i.e., the privileged institutions of research, entitled to ask appropriate questions. Suggesting that the security authorities confiscated personal family relics, Malinowski was even able, as an expert, to discuss the appropriation of the collection as such. Still, classifying the Potockis’ portraits as little value items which belong to the decorative art section, illustrating the history of costumes, he pointed rather at the universalism of art history which could decide that any family memorabilia might become museum exhibits treated, regardless of their original function, as a document – in that case, of the history of costumes. The pride of the academic discipline that liberates objects from their old, particular identity to make them submit to the universal scholarly procedures can be seen also in reference to the “replicas or contemporary copies” of Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, and Giorgione, as having some artistic and didactic significance, they were purchased as authentic “and only the precise expertise of our times allowed us to classify them as works of lesser masters.”⁴³

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 16.

⁴⁰ D. Preziosi, “The Question of Art History,” *Critical Inquiry* 1992, 18(2), p. 374.

⁴¹ *Pokaz obrazów i dzieł sztuki ze zbiorów Potockich*, p. 55.

⁴² Both terms are coinages of Donald Preziosi. See: Preziosi, “The Question of Art History,” p. 375.

⁴³ *Pokaz obrazów i dzieł sztuki ze zbiorów Potockich*, p. 5.

In the same publication, Stanisław Gebethner tried a strategy of preserving the national heritage, describing a collection of ornate belts: since the pre-war collection of the National Museum was destroyed, the appropriated set was “unique of its kind in Poland.”⁴⁴ In a way then, after the national apocalypse the nationalization of private collections became self-evident at least for some intellectuals. Including works of art in the space of academic art history and applying to them expert procedures was so important because ultimately it could be used to annul property rights. Consequently, scholarship was used by the revolution, while modernity, thanks to its teleological model of history, succeeded in “closing off the future as a source of disruption.”⁴⁵ On the other hand, the “spell of the historical necessity”⁴⁶ allowed art historians not only to ignore the revolution, but also to turn it into mobilization for the sake of noble civic duty. Giving up the part of the legislator and satisfied with that of the interpreter, the art historian resolved to play the part of Hermes in a paramedic’s uniform, without eliminating from his horizon another world which theoretically could be saved only because of that. Establishing his autonomy, the paramedic-hermeneut paradoxically confirmed his rejection of tradition and the authoritarian self-proclamation of his unique position that could be granted only by himself.

Supporting modernity, the art historian accepted the Enlightenment ideals of separation-specialization, of which Habermas wrote so much later, trying to deal with the errors and misfortune of modernity, defined by him as the rise of three autonomous spheres (institutional fields of activity): science, morality and law, and art, each with its own specific set of rules. In the sphere of art, Habermas specified the problem of modernity as an expert, and thus self-constituted, approach to culture and institutionalization of the goal-oriented, rational administrative activity resulting in the universalization of norms and a new mythology in the service of ideas. In his opinion, a way out of this could be a communication-oriented model of action, coordination of the individual plans of interaction participants, and the renouncement of privileges. Giddens wrote about functional specialization and an expert system which one trusts, being unable to verify it. This leads to the nullification of social relations depending on the immediate context, i.e. the separation of time and space and the so-called disembedding of the social system.⁴⁷ The impersonal nature of expertise made the expert operate in abstract time and

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 47.

⁴⁷ A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 1991, p. 21ff.

space, undetermined by any specific context or locality, out of here and now, i.e., first, he abandoned the local tradition, and, second, put himself above the vulgar appropriation made by security police, even though – which a genuine paradox – their mutual relation must have been based on the Giddensian trust as a catalyst of symbolic exchange. That trust did not rely on the experts' belief in moral honesty, but only on the correctness of principles. In totalitarian or quasi-totalitarian regimes, whenever the principle of trust was violated as well, both the symbolic means of exchange and the belief in the correctness of principles were challenged. If the internal referentiality of the constructed norms and standards of expertise has no relations outside a definite specialist sphere – in other words, if it ignores God or the idea of God, as well as concrete people living here and now – then an expert system transferred into abstract time and space starts to serve itself. Art has to be redefined, irrevocably turning into an element of a closed expert system that has a rationale only as long as it serves the authorities and not people in a definite time and space. Describing the Potockis collection with the axioms of his discipline, the scholar achieved rational coherence and maximum certainty as regards his conclusions. Under the circumstances, he could be much more certain than if he considered the collection as family property important at specific moments of the family life. The weaknesses of modernism are obvious in their universal aspect, but in reference to the system implemented in Poland after World War II one might say that they became outright tragic. I recognize its tragic features in the inner tension of art history torn between the intention to focus on the national option, i.e. serving the local community traumatized by the war, and the hope that it would be possible to do it without subverting the expert foundations of the discipline that separated art from the people. Fortunately, in the communist Poland the system was not quite self-contained although the relation “structured by the system of reciprocally interlocked perspectives among speakers, hearers, and non-participants”⁴⁸ could not come into being as the decimated bourgeoisie was dependent on the ubiquitous power of the state and landowners lost their property to the rhetorically constructed “people.”

FOLK ART AND *ART BRUT* – IN SEARCH OF COUNTER-HISTORY

If we agree with Foucault that the writing of history was long related to the rituals of power and became a kind of ceremony that legitimated and confirmed them as a discourse of splendor, then the role and way of represent-

⁴⁸ Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, p. 297.

ing the object of power turns into crossroads: we may choose between Livy and *The Bible*.⁴⁹ Folk art is today the object of interest of the critical folklore studies which analyze its “ability to decisively contribute to the critique of power and the dominating or oppressive habituses” and the rhetoric of folklore which contributes to the constitution of social order.⁵⁰ It must be remembered that the concept of “primitivism,” related to folklore, was connected to an ideological construct that justified imperial conquest,⁵¹ implying a different approach to time and history. Thus, a critical history of folklore has been written by those who do not trust the progeny of Livy. Among them there is also Piotr Korduba who aptly analyzed a combination of modernity and the local “primitivism.” The title of his book, *Folklore for Sale* [Ludowość na sprzedaż], indicates that the author does not ignore the problem of the instrumentalization of folk art and considers it in the contexts of the ideas of economic development, taste, and social order. Korduba shows many kinds of contextual involvement, writing, e.g., about folklore as a fad, the Secession or Art Deco “stylization” in the context of budding avant-garde movements, the development of tourism and the wish to experience something “authentic,” the connection of folklore with anti-machinery movements that contested industrial progress and the city as an alleged cause of moral degradation, the village poverty that preserves tradition and the related ethnographic idea of the apotheosis of artistic isolation opposed to encouraging intelligentsia to buy folk artifacts and decorate with them their apartments, which was supposed to help villagers become more affluent, brain addling by cottage industry, and finally, the role of state institutions which took up the role of tradition keepers already before World War II.⁵² One might say that Korduba managed to demonstrate what Livy would have most likely done with folklore: according to the book’s title and the author’s assumptions, it is not folklore’s “biblical history,” though a comprehensive critique of folklore for sale definitely opened some space for its counterhistory (to use Foucault’s term once again).

What interests me at the point of contact between folk art and the idea of the *art brut* which appeared right after the war is then the function of memory – not as preventing oblivion, but as showing what, according to Foucault,

⁴⁹ See M. Foucault, „*Society Must Be Defended.*” *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. D. Macey, New York 2003, p. 65ff.

⁵⁰ S. O. Gencarella, “Constituting Folklore: A Case for Critical Folklore Studies,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 2009, 122(484), p. 173.

⁵¹ M. Antliff, P. Leighton, “Primitivism,” in: *Critical Terms for Art History*, eds. R. S. Nelson, R. Schiff, Chicago 2003, p. 217.

⁵² See P. Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warszawa 2013.

“has been carefully, deliberately, and wickedly misrepresented.”⁵³ Korduba writes, with the words of Helena Schrammówna (d. 1942), about the tension between enlightening the people and making the intelligentsia aware that education may result in the folk artist’s loss of his or her original skills.⁵⁴ A surprising conclusion drawn by Korduba from his analysis of the concept of folk art in the interwar period stresses the crucial role of the state both before and after the war in the support of the folk industry. The centralized and monopolistic character of that support “which put the folk industry under the state’s control both in financial and artistic terms fostered the adjustment of the prewar experience to the postwar organization of that control in the communist Poland.”⁵⁵ However, before dealing with the mutual favors that the communist state and the anti-communist intelligentsia were doing to each other as regards the folk art, I want to discuss the search for the so-called “authentic” folk culture, taken up after the war by scholars all over Europe in the context of the decomposition of the imperial superpowers and the colonial oriental-ization and exoticization of the folk culture. A relevant example may be the sojourn of Claude Lévi-Strauss in New York (1941–1945), when he developed an interest in non-professional art and in whatever had nothing to do with the “cultural industry” according to Adorno – particularly significant were the anthropologist’s relations with surrealists and Native Americans. Inventing structural anthropology and a non-hierarchical idea of art, Lévi-Strauss used the surrealist idea of “bizarre combinations,” drawing on his strolls along the streets of immigrant New York, Roman Jakobson’s lectures in which the linguist minimized the role of the author, the inspirations by the Northwest Coast Indian Gallery founded by Franz Boas in the New York Museum of National History, and the art of prison inmates.⁵⁶ Having returned to Paris, he joined the *Compagnie de l’art brut* and saw the exhibition *L’Art Brut préféré aux arts culturels* (1949, Galerie René Drouin).

⁵³ Foucault, “*Society Must Be Defended*,” p. 72.

⁵⁴ Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż*, p. 60, 65.

⁵⁵ Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż*, p. 132. Although Korduba does not inform the reader whether Polish folk art sold by the Cepelia used the patterns characteristic of the ethnic groups that lived in the prewar Poland, it seems that the postwar geography was “naturalized,” focusing on the regions of Podhale and central Poland. If it was so, then the new “nation” and “people” were constructed according to the post-Yalta political logic which required loyalty to the USSR and forgetting about the eastern side of Bug river.

⁵⁶ K. Minturn, “Dubuffet, Lévi-Strauss, and the Idea of Art Brut,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 2004, 46, pp. 247–258. See also: J. Clifford, “On Collecting Art and Culture,” in: *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, eds. R. Ferguson, M. Gever et al. Cambridge, MA, 1992, p. 156ff.

More or less at the same time, from December 1948 until February 1949, the *Musée National d'Art Moderne* showed the Exhibition of Polish Folk Art and Artistic Industry [*Wystawa Polskiej Sztuki Ludowej i Przemysłu Artystycznego*], organized by the Office for the Control of the Aesthetics of Production [*Biuro Nadzoru Estetyki Produkcji*], founded by Wanda Telakowska. Surely, for Dubuffet the *art brut* was not connected with production at all: it brought hope to overcome national conflicts and historical conditions, and as such can be approached in the context of T. J. Demos's "aesthetics of homelessness" as the last "other" of modernism.⁵⁷ Even though today we tend to criticize the stereotypical "other" and his or her pathology which made him/her different from the "normal" artist,⁵⁸ as well as Dubuffet's innocent idea of the *art brut*, at the particular historical moment right after the war at stake was the inclusive character of European culture and art that would not impose patterns of domination,⁵⁹ i.e. opposition to the authoritarian conceptions of modernity. That critical aspect was characteristic not only of the *art brut*, but also of the Cobra group (1948-1951) and those of its members who were later to start the situationist movement. Foucault writes about counterhistory in connection with its potential "of deciphering, the detection of the secret, of the outwitting of the ruse, and of the reappropriation of the knowledge that has been distorted or buried,"⁶⁰ and with its revolutionary dimension. On the other hand, it may be worthwhile to find out whether the vernacular, Polish "primitivism" was used as an Aesopian language of counterhistory – for the time being, one may argue that such a line of reasoning was definitely not adopted by Polish art historians. "Folklore for sale" is a genuine paradox, a continuation of the prewar discourse of the authorities taken over by the communist state and its postwar revolution. With his rhetoric of the folk na-

⁵⁷ Minturn, "Dubuffet, Lévi-Strauss, and the Idea..." p. 255, 258.

⁵⁸ See *The Artist Outsider: Creativity and the Boundaries of Culture*, eds. M. D. Hall, E. W. Metcalf, Jr., Washington 1994; G. A. Fine, *Everyday Genius: Self-Taught Art and the Culture of Authenticity*, Chicago 2004; D. Wojcik, "Outsider Art, Vernacular Traditions, Trauma, and Creativity," *Western Folklore* 2008, 67(2/3), pp. 179–180.

⁵⁹ A relevant example in this respect is a series of assemblages for which he used caught butterflies. Their mass killing for artistic purposes was a provocation: according to the logic of modernity, it might seem absurd, i.e. economically useless, unmotivated, just as the idea of making pictures of humans turning similar to insects, which – in terms of the Batesonian mimicry, characteristic of defenseless creatures, revealed their miserable helplessness. However, the meaning of all those devices was a polemic with the idea of the "people" engaged in instrumentalizing projects, see S. K. Rich, "Jean Dubuffet: The Butterfly Man," *October* 2007, 119, pp. 46–74.

⁶⁰ Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended," p. 72.

iveté, Dubuffet criticized the rational project of modernity with its patterns of domination. He believed in a “wild,” untamed idea of culture, shared also by the surrealists, which had emancipatory, revolutionary potential eliminated by the ordered education favored by the Enlightenment.⁶¹ Moreover, visiting Africa, Dubuffet never thought about drawing on the Gallic art since that would mean for him an obvious correspondence with the Nazi ideology of *Blut und Boden*. Thus, the *art brut* may be interpreted as a kind of counter-history of which a relevant example in Poland might have been an approach of Aleksander Jackowski, with its climax in an exhibition called *Others* [Inni], held in the Warsaw Zachęta gallery in 1965.⁶²

Including, wrote Jackowski, the “spurned” and the “unnoticed” became possible thanks to the changes in art,⁶³ yet he had no intention to challenge its hierarchy. He preferred to call the “others” amateurs, dilettanti, “Sunday painters” or primitivists, though the term “others” was the most appropriate since they had their separate inner worlds that made them different from the folk artists who lived in particular regions of Poland, such as Podhale or Kurpie. The “others” were not connected by any bonds, which Jackowski showed by including the whole spectrum “from the art bordering on folklore and church patron’s festivals ... through ... amateurs from suburbs and small towns, miners, workers, and craftsmen,” as well as the mentally disabled who used art to express their suffering. Indeed, the misfortunes that the “others” experienced must have been shocking: usually born in utmost poverty, tormented by depression, “epilepsy and the symptoms of somnambulism,” sick and handicapped, lonely and broken, they did not know their fathers fallen in the war, received only elementary education because “they had to work to help their grandparents” or the sick mother and siblings. They sometimes lost their jobs, fired for striking, old and tired, unable to keep working, “just taking care of the garden.”⁶⁴ Thanks to the label of “otherness,” in the times of “scientific atheism” the Zachęta gallery could show religious visions. Besides, it became possible to find some idiom for the art of Maria Blumenfeld, a nurse and mistress of Jerzy Panek, inspired by the *art brut*, and let all the artists listed in the catalog speak with their own voices, even though they were processed by the art gallery, an institution of modern art. Theoretically, letting Blumenfeld express herself meant sending the spectator to a different

⁶¹ L. Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, Chicago 2001, 14, pp. 9–151.

⁶² On the exhibition, see: G. Świtek, “‘Inni’ w kanonie nowoczesności,” in: *Polska – kraj folkloru?*, ed. J. Kordjak, Warszawa 2016, pp. 171–179.

⁶³ A. Jackowski [untitled], in: *Inni. Od Nikiifora do Głowackiej*, ed. A. Jackowski [exhibition catalog], Warszawa 1965, [unpaginated].

⁶⁴ Biography compiled on the basis of biographical notes included *ibidem*.

world which had no legitimacy and could refer to the history that favored vindication and insurrection, but the two worlds could meet only within a vertical hierarchy. One might say that the concept of the “other” introduces the third voice, contrasting with the idea of “folklore for sale” discussed by Korduba, which is located in the framework of the centralized state control and the ethnographic procedure of regional studies. Jackowski’s “others” were not a model for the nation’s regeneration since the origin of their art was often a disease. Jackowski connected what the British and Americans call “primitivism” which, according to David Maclagan, persecutes European culture from its inside, and the “outsider art” which refers to that culture’s inside.⁶⁵ Yet, even though Jackowski’s “others” seem to have been an attempt to work through the trauma of the Nazi exhibitions of the “degenerate art” in the 1930s, one must realize that those artists first of all deserved sympathy (of which Dubuffet definitely did not think), and, what is more, the vernacular “primitive” should be publicized and protected, but within its institutional position it was obviously culturally helpless and marginalized.⁶⁶ The intimate details of those artists’ biographies turned them into a sort of medicalized and class-positioned menagerie, fortunately, however, that ambivalent picture was disguised by the surprising and carefully arranged design of the show: on the floor, all over the exhibition space, full size photos of the artists were placed so that, writes Gabriela Świtek, the “spectators kept moving among [them] ... almost immediately getting in touch with the ‘others.’”⁶⁷ Still, that did not affect the ideological superstructure: the “folked” [*uludowieni*] “others” (Joanna Kordjak’s coinage⁶⁸) repeated and confirmed all the hierarchies based on the binary rhetoric of the “civilized” vs the “primitive,” speaking the mythic idiom independent of history – they belonged to the lower classes (evidently, no degraded aristocrat decided, out of despair, to become an artist⁶⁹), and there

⁶⁵ D. Maclagan, “Outsiders or Insiders,” in: *The Myth of Primitivism. Perspectives on Art*, ed. S. Hiller, London and New York 2005, p. 18.

⁶⁶ In this context, I find interesting Piotr Juskiewicz’s distinction between two approaches to folk art in the communist Poland: ethnographic (protective) and modern. They assumed different “relations between folk art and high art and popular culture, with emphasis on the protection of traditional forms against a pernicious influence of contemporary civilization and modern culture.” See P. Juskiewicz, “Ludowe, dziecięce, prymitywne, nowoczesne,” in: *Polska – kraj folkloru?*, p. 194.

⁶⁷ *Polska – kraj folkloru?*, pp. 177–178.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁶⁹ The only middle-class exception was Irena Trzaskowska, born in Lutsk and after the war living in Cracow, working also as a model in the Cracow Academy of Fine Arts. Her father was a military officer and her mother a dentist. The domination of the working class

were relatively many women among them (after all, “the female and the male are like nature and culture”⁷⁰). Even the rituals of Hruszka’s group, which, as the founder himself explained, derived from the “errors of the monks of Jasna Góra,” observed by him directly in their monastery, were shown in the convention of cheap sensation (trance “convulsions”) and in the context of “offending religious feelings,” rather unusual in the communist Poland, that ended with a lawsuit a long time before, in 1912. Besides, when one remembers that the Cepelia [chain of stores selling folk art items – M.W.] became a social enclave offering jobs to the intelligentsia, former landowners, and aristocrats, since ladies from the high society guaranteed “good manners and the command of foreign languages,”⁷¹ the class context of the *Inni* exhibition turns out unquestionable. Thus, although the relations between folk art and the art brut require more analysis, one may provisionally conclude that the postwar continuation of close ties connecting the state and folklore – a dream of the nineteenth-century political activists about the resurrection of the Polish state and a “stake in the game,” as Foucault would have put it – meant in the field of art adopting autocratic practices. We still cannot be sure, however, whether what was really at stake was defeating in that game the communist authorities.

CONCLUSION

Bochnak’s pragmatic program of focusing only on Polish art and the parallel fall of the “iron curtain” resulted in a disaster that he could not predict: two generations of art historians were educated looking at black and white reproductions, Polish art history became parochial, elitist access to international scholarship was available only to a few individuals, and only those world trends of modern art were tolerated which were accepted by official experts who used the discourses approved by the state. Since Polish society was ethnically monolithic, studying Polish art meant getting used to monophony. The denazification of Germany made it open to modern art from abroad (welcomed to Germany, Nam June Paik and John Cage “prepared” their impressive pianos), widespread interest in art brought about the aestheticization of the system and its submission to scientific rationalization and autocratic management. Despite the social revolution, the class division into ethno-

in the so-called naïve art is evidently an ideological construct. See K. Piwocki, *Dziwny świat współczesnych prymitywów*, Warszawa 1975, p. 12.

⁷⁰ *Critical Terms for Art History*, p. 220.

⁷¹ Korduba, *Ludowość na sprzedaż*, p. 149.

graphy and high art was not subverted – it was a genuine paradox that Poland, a “people’s republic,” had to learn to challenge the separation of fine arts museums from the ethnographic ones from the so-called West. Close relations of art and the state, so desirable right after the war, are unfortunately, *per fas et nefas*, still crucial for Polish culture since after 1989 the range of diversification has not been too wide. Almost all private galleries are still highly dependent on state subsidies as the post-communist *nouveaux riches* did not learn in the post-communist schools what they could do to open their minds, take up challenges, and do something for the common good. For Malinowski, the work of art was material evidence in the interrogative field (an independent *locus* of human creativity and aesthetic expression as well as a demonstration of human culture⁷²) where certain questions, legitimized by the tradition of art history, were formulated. The placement of the work of art in that field was its ultimate objective, while the problem of ownership did not belong to the problematic of research in that laboratory space. The private use of artworks by the Potocki family and their secondary, particular functions (religious practices, entertainment, various everyday activities, and commemorating ancestors) should succumb to the authority of scholarship. One may assume that the revolution could provide new evidence and examples thanks to which the narratives of art history would become more and more perfect. For Jackowski, those “others” in the gallery provoked questions concerning their actual presence: full size photos were a compromise between the “human zoo,” discredited in ethnography, and their total absence and appropriation of their voices by objective scholarship. In contrast to the separation of individual proprietors from their artworks, implied by art history, to offer them to the people, ethnography made it possible to reveal the broken connections. There was, however, one obvious condition: it was the people who were offered both to modern art and to scholarship, while the ethos of ethnography allowed to liberate human sensitivity from the fetters of the academia and pointed at the revolutionary potential not only in looking forward, but also backward, which is a fundamental idea of modernity. Jackowski evaded the taxonomic structures of art history with their usurpation of universal knowledge, but the narrative which it produced turned out to be an aesthetic monophony of mourning. Even though consequently art sided with religion and magic as well as particular, individual life interests, not just with scholarship despite its focus on

⁷² This is how exhibits in traditional exhibitions are defined by R. B. Phillips, in: eadem, “Disrupting Past Paradigms: The National Museum of the American Indian and the First Peoples Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization,” *The Public Historian* 2006, 28(2), p. 79.

the “savage mind,” the exhibition resulted in a unified assemblage of specific media accepted by art history: paintings and sculptures. Thus, ultimately the “others” were reduced to the familiar.

The art historian is a child of his or her times. Hiding an ideological background behind noble slogans, fabricating qualitative differences between individuals and communities by the Enlightenment, universalist idea of art,⁷³ and the production of knowledge bereft of the religious initiation⁷⁴ are only some of the objections formulated against art history that appeared soon after the period under scrutiny. In the communist Poland the art historian played the role of a filter of the omnipotent state, disguised as an expert and a scholar. Yet under an autocratic regime, the filter of good taste does not mean good education, but a gag. After 1989, it was forgotten that after 1945 the ethos of modernity was developed in a series of extremely difficult choices of the “lesser evil”: the revolution was naturalized only because it was visualized by the *École de Paris*. Still, the basic strategy of revolution in art usually consists in giving new meanings to old forms. Focused on the analysis of form, art history was unable (did not want to? could not?) to analyze the changing meanings of the same forms which underwent a semantic change during the Polish revolution. Why do we not try to show the complexity of the network of meanings? Historians are educated to be judges. Art historians, additionally or on the contrary, must be aesthetes.

Finally, one may ask a question whether the postwar dilemmas of art historians could be found in a nutshell in the prewar considerations of the young scholars who after 1945 were bound to determine the evolution of the discipline. A female student of art history at the University of Poznań described in her journal the impressions after her visit to the poor districts of the city of Lublin during an academic field trip in 1939: “Dark streets with no sidewalks, houses in ruin, built chaotically, sometimes one on another, attached to steep slopes ... from them one could smell bad food, washed underwear, filth, and utmost poverty ... thin Jewish kids were chasing each other on cobblestones, shouting.” That student, Aniela Sławska (1918-1997), who after the war became the custodian of the Department of Polish Painting of the 16th-18th Century, wrote that Zdzisław Kępiński, M.A., who was also there, did his best to persuade the group that those picturesque views were “just like Siena” so that eventually the future art historians watched miserable life as a “theatrical per-

⁷³ See Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, pp. 497–500.

⁷⁴ C. Farago, “Silent Moves. On Excluding the Ethnographic Subject from the Discourse of Art History,” in: *Art History and Its Institutions. Foundations of a Discipline*, ed. E. Mansfield, London–New York 2002, pp. 192–193.

formance.” In her journal, Sławska also wrote significantly that most likely none of the members of the student group would dare to live there, and even if that would have happened, none of them would muster enough courage or strength to “appreciate the picturesque quality of those places.” Sensitive to poverty as she was, Sławska continued: “Apparently I will never be a good art historian. I am unable to stop thinking about those places, and what is even worse, I don’t know if I can cope with that experience for myself, in my own life? ...”⁷⁵ No doubt, her unusual sensitivity denied the autonomy of the purely visual tradition of art history to such an extent that she did not believe to become a good art historian. Her *pensée-corps*, as Lyotard put it decades later, exposed itself to sense data and to concrete experience, which turned out a wound. Kępiński, a future director of the National Museum in Poznań and a university professor, did not react to that experience, even though already before the war, as Sławska mentioned in her diary, he was considered a “dangerous man” since his views were hyper-liberal and generally “subversive.” “Not a word about religion, but some communist ‘hanky-panky’ for which he was once almost locked up.”⁷⁶ The war did not allay that youthful anxiety – quite on the contrary, it made it even more acute. Still, the definition of “good art historian” did not change for a very long time.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- I Wystawa Sztuki Nowoczesnej pięćdziesiąt lat później*, eds. M. Świca, J. Chrobak, Kraków 1998
- Adamson W. L., *Avant-garde Florence. From Modernism to Fascism*, Cambridge, MA, 1993
- Adamson W. L., “Modernism and Fascism: The Politics of Culture in Italy, 1903–1922,” *The American Historical Review* 1990, 95(2), pp. 359–390
- Adorno T. W., E. Frenkel-Bruswick et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York 1950
- Antliff M., P. Leighton, “Primitivism,” in: *Critical Terms for Art History*, eds. R. S. Nelson, R. Schiff, Chicago 2003
- Arendt H., *On Revolution*, New York 2006
- Art History and Its Institutions. Foundations of a Discipline*, ed. E. Mansfield, London–New York 2002
- Bochnak A., *Zarys dziejów polskiej historii sztuki*, Kraków 1948

⁷⁵ A. Sławska, “No i co teraz zrobimy?” *Pamiętnik z pewnej wycieczki*, Poznań 2019, pp. 129–130.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

- Bochnak A., *Malarstwo flamandzkie XVII wieku: Rubens – Jordaens – Van Dyck: wykłady uniwersyteckie z r. 1947/48*, Kraków 1949
- Bogucki J., "Miejsce opuszczone przez dzięcioły, czyli sztuka majaczenia i dyscypliny," *Odrodzenie* 1949, 5, rpt.: *W kręgu lat czterdziestych*, part 3, ed. J. Chrobak, Kraków 1991
- Borejsza J., "Rewolucja łagodna," *Odrodzenie* 1945, 10–12, rpt: *Czas debat. Antologia krytyki artystycznej z lat 1945–1954*, vol. 1, eds. A. Pietrasik, P. Słodkowski, Warszawa 2016
- Clifford J., "On Collecting Art and Culture," in: *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, eds. R. Ferguson, M. Gever et al. Cambridge, MA, 1992
- Dobrowolski T., "Zagadnienie muzealnictwa," *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury* 1946, 8(3–4)
- Foucault M., "Society Must Be Defended." *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. D. Macey, New York 2003
- Fine G. A., *Self Taught Art and the Culture of Authenticity*, Chicago 2004
- Gencarella S. O., "Constituting Folklore: A Case for Critical Folklore Studies," *The Journal of American Folklore* 2009, 122(484), pp. 172–196
- Giddens A., *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 1990
- Gotlib H., "Projekt ustawy o przymusie wystawiania obrazów dawnych mistrzów," *Głos Plastyków* 1932, 4
- Graczyk P., "Sala neoplastyczna w Łodzi," *Kronos* 2015, 3 [MOBI file], pp. 51–52
- Habermas J., *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. F. G. Lawrence. Cambridge, MA, 1990
- Jackowski A. [untitled], in: *Inni. Od Nikifora do Głowackiej*, ed. A. Jackowski [exhibition catalog], Warszawa 1965, [unpaginated]
- Kondziela H., "Malinowski Kazimierz (1907–1977)," in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny Konserwatorów Zabytków*, fasc. 1, Poznań 2000
- Korduba P., *Ludowość na sprzedaż. Towarzystwo Popierania Przemysłu Ludowego, Cepelia, Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*, Warszawa 2013
- Kubiak Sz. P., *Daleko od Moskwy. Gérard Singer i sztuka zaangażowana*, Szczecin 2016
- Leder A., *Prześlona rewolucja: ćwiczenie z logiki historycznej*, Warszawa 2014
- Maclagan D., "Outsiders or Insiders," in: *The Myth of Primitivism. Perspectives on Art*, ed. S. Hiller, London and New York 2005
- Minturn K., "Dubuffet, Lévi-Strauss, and the Idea of Art Brut," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 2004, 46, pp. 247–258
- Oesterreich D., "Flight into Security: A New Approach and Measure of the Authoritarian Personality," *Political Psychology* 2005, 26(2), pp. 275–297
- Ostrowski A., "Hugo Kołłątaj i łagodna rewolucja 1791 r.," *Kuźnica* 1945, 4–5
- Phillips R. B., "Disrupting Past Paradigms: The National Museum of the American Indian and the First Peoples Hall at the Canadian Museum of Civilization," *The Public Historian* 2006, 28(2), pp. 75–80
- Pierson Ch., *Conversations with Anthony Giddens. Making Sense of Modernity*, Cambridge 1998
- Piotrowski P., *Globalne ujęcie sztuki Europy Wschodniej*, Poznań 2018

- Pokaz obrazów i dzieł sztuki ze zbiorów Potockich zabezpieczonych przez władze bezpieczeństwa przed wywozem za granicę* [exhibition catalog, November-December 1946], Muzeum Narodowe, Warszawa 1946
- Preziosi D., *The Art of Art History. A Critical Anthology*, Oxford 2009
- Preziosi D., “The Question of Art History,” *Critical Inquiry* 1992, 18(2)
- Reichardt R., H. Kohle, *Visualising the Revolution. Politics and Pictorial Arts in Late Eighteenth-Century France*, transl. C. Attwood, Reaktion Book, London 2008
- Rich S. K., “Jean Dubuffet: The Butterfly Man,” *October* 2007, 119, pp. 46–74
- Shiner L., *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, Chicago 2001
- Sławska A., “No i co teraz zrobimy?” *Pamiętnik z pewnej wycieczki*, Poznań 2019
- Szymanowicz M., *Zaburzona epoka. Polska fotografia artystyczna w latach 1945–1955*, Poznań 2016
- Świtek G., “‘Inni’ w kanonie nowoczesności,” in: *Polska – kraj folkloru?*, ed. J. Kordjak, Warszawa 2016, pp. 171–179
- The Artist Outsider: Creativity and the Boundaries of Culture*, eds. M. D. Hall, E. W. Metcalf, Jr., Washington 1994
- “Outsider Art, Vernacular Traditions, Trauma, and Creativity,” *Western Folklore* 2008, 67(2/3), pp. 179–198
- Woynarowski J., *Taksydermia*, „Kronos” [MOBI file] 2015, 3, pp. 53–59
- Włodarczyk W., *Pięć lat*, in: *Zaraz po wojnie*, eds. J. Kordjak, A. Szewczyk, Warszawa 2015
- Zachwatowicz J., “Program i zasady konserwacji zabytków,” *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki i Kultury* 1946 (June)
- Zaraz po wojnie*, eds. J. Kordjak, A. Szewczyk, Warszawa 2015
- Zychowicz K., *Paryska lewica w stalinowskiej Warszawie*, Warszawa 2014

Anna Markowska

University of Wrocław

AROUND 1948: THE „GENTLE REVOLUTION” AND ART HISTORY

Summary

Just like after World War I Italy experienced a transition from modernism to fascism, after World II Poland experienced a passage from modernism to quasi-communism. The symbol of the first stage of the communist revolution in Poland right after the war, the so-called “gentle revolution,” was Pablo Picasso, whose work was popularized not so much because of its artistic value, but because of his membership in the communist party. The second, repressive stage of the continued came in 1949–1955, to return after the so-called thaw to Picasso and the exemplars of the *École de Paris*. However, the imagery of the revolution was associated only with the socialist realism connected to the USSR even though actually it was the adaptation of the *École de Paris* that best expressed the revolution’s victory. In the beginning, its moderate program, strongly emphasizing the national heritage as well as financial promises, made the cultural

offer of the communist regime quite attractive not only for the left. Thus, the gentle revolution proved to be a Machiavellian move, disseminating power to centralize it later more effectively. On the other hand, the return to the Paris exemplars resulted in the aestheticization of radical and undemocratic changes. The received idea that the evil regime was visualized only by the ugly socialist realism is a disguise of the Polish dream of innocence and historical purity, while it was the war which gave way to the revolution, and right after the war artists not only played games with the regime, but gladly accepted social comfort guaranteed by authoritarianism. Neither artists, nor art historians started a discussion about the totalizing stain on modernity and the exclusion of the other. Even the folk art was instrumentalized by the state which manipulated folk artists to such an extent that they often lost their original skills. Horrified by the war atrocities and their consequences, art historians limited their activities to the most urgent local tasks, such as making inventories of artworks, reorganization of institutions, and reconstruction. Mass expropriation, a consequence of the revolution, was not perceived by museum personnel as a serious problem, since thanks to it museums acquired more and more exhibits, while architects and restorers could implement their boldest plans. The academic and social neutralization of expropriation favored the birth of a new human being, which was one of the goals of the revolution. Along the ethnic homogenization of society, focusing on Polish art meant getting used to monophony. No cultural opposition to the authoritarian ideas of modernity appeared – neither the *École de Paris* as a paradigm of the high art, nor the folklore manipulated by the state were able to come up with the ideas of the weak subject or counter-history. Despite the social revolution, the class distinction of ethnography and high art remained unchanged.

Keywords:

revolution, art after 1945, communism, autocracy, folklore